
DEMYSTIFYING QUESTION HOUR: BUDGET SESSION, 2013



QUESTION BRANCH
RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

JULY, 2013

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA
RAJYA SABHA

DEMYSTIFYING QUESTION HOUR:
BUDGET SESSION 2013

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QUESTION BRANCH RAJYA
SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI
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P R E F A C E

The Question Hour invariably marks the opening of the day's proceedings of the House. It is an important part of the business which enables individual Members to elicit information and responses from the Government on matters affecting the citizens. This is of immense public significance and puts authentic data into public domain. The Question Hour is scheduled over five working days in a week and divided into equal number of groups corresponding with different ministries.

2. This booklet on "Demystifying Question Hour" has now become a regular publication which analyses different aspects of these proceedings. It is interesting and informative. It also provides an insight into the efforts made by the Members in carrying out their parliamentary duties.

3. We do hope that the efforts of the Secretariat will be useful to everyone.

NEW DELHI;
12 September, 2013

SHUMSHER K. SHERIFF
*Secretary-General,
Rajya Sabha.*

QUESTION HOUR

Introduction

1.1 Proceedings of Rajya Sabha, whenever it is in session, invariably begin with the Question Hour. This Hour reflects the manifold role of our public representatives. Among the various Parliamentary devices available to Members, Question can be considered as the most potent and effective mechanism. It acts as a facilitator for them through which they can ask specific questions on the various schemes/programmes of the Central Government, raise queries about their efficacy and impact, draw the attention of the Government towards the inherent shortcomings in the governance structure and give valuable suggestions/inputs. Alert and vigilant Members, with their rich experience of ground-level realities, have been using this Parliamentary device, as evolved over the years, in a very effective manner. Not only this, it is perhaps the only mechanism where Members come out in their individual capacity, not restrained by party dictats.

1.2 It would not be wrong to say that Question Hour acts as a very vibrant link between Members and their constituency and public at large. The very fact that Visitors Gallery is invariably packed with viewers from different walks of life during the Question Hour indicates the importance of this Hour. Many a times, nature of the Question being asked is such that coupled with the inputs being shared by the Minister, public is made aware about the level of involvement and concern of their representatives.

1.3 Another significant aspect of this Parliamentary device is that although frequent instances of disruption result in Question Hour being not held, but its relevance is not totally lost. Unlike other listed items of business in the House, which are simply washed away once the House is adjourned, listed questions and their replies get laid on the Table of the House and thus become part of the recorded business. The only loss is that Members do not get the opportunity to raise supplementaries and elicit further information on the floor of the House.

1.4 It would not be out of place to mention that the one hour devoted to questions involves a very extensive exercise by a dedicated team of Secretariat Staff. This team has to work under a well-defined and time-tested system. Adherence to the prescribed time-limit always remains the bench-mark for the process of scrutiny, listing, translating, printing and circulation of List of Questions. Question-related work does not have any parallel as it has to start more than 15 days before the commencement of the Session. Secondly, Question Branch cannot function in isolation as it has not only to operate in perfect coordination with Translation and Printing Services, IT Cell and Distribution Branch but also maintain a sustained and healthy relationship with all the Ministries.

1.5 Another significant characteristic of Question Hour is the level of participation and involvement of the Executive. Preparation of replies to questions means a very intensive exercise on the part of the Ministries which are mandated to gather information from different sources, sometimes across the country and ensure the correctness of replies to questions. It is only this mechanism which involves a two-way system, questions given by Members and arranged in the Lists by the Parliament Staff and replies being sent by the concerned Ministries.

II. Budget Session, 2013

2.1 Analysis of notices of questions, listed questions and their replies during a session reveals very interesting facts which not only throws light on the level of involvement of Members but also gives a clear idea about the functioning of the Government. Budget Session is the first and the longest Session of the year. Summons for the Budget Session, 2013 were issued by the President of India on 6 February, 2013 for both Houses of Parliament to meet on 21 February, 2013. The first phase of the Session was from 21 February, 2013 to 22 March, 2013 and the second phase was from 22 April, 2013 to 10 May, 2013. The House was scheduled to have 32 sittings with Question Hour fixed for 30 sittings. However, the House was adjourned *sine die* on 8 May, 2013, thereby cutting short the Session by 2 sittings. Due to unprecedented disruptions, the House failed to transact any business during the second phase of the Session. In other words, Question Hour could be held only during the first phase of the Session.

2.2. Being the first hour of the day, Question Hour often becomes the casualty. At times issues of public interest, sometimes affecting a particular State and sometimes the entire country continued to engage the attention of Members during the Budget Session, 2013. In the process, in spite of persistent requests and directions from the Chair, Members kept on raising their issues. There was one occasion when notices for suspension of Question Hour were given by about 7-8 Members. One notice was admitted by the Hon'ble Chairman. However, attempts being made by agitated Members simultaneously to have their say led to considerable time being spent on the debate as to whether the Question Hour could be suspended. In the process, dedicated time of the Question Hour was over and the admitted notice for suspension became infructuous.

III. Notices of Questions

3.1 Question is the one Parliamentary device which elicits the maximum response from Members. Under the Directions by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, a Member can give 7 notices per sitting and can have 5 questions listed in his name per sitting. In all, 14,446 notices were received from 154 Members for

different dates during the Budget Session, 2013. Some of the subjects which invited maximum notices of questions/answers were on railway projects, schools, MGNREGA, safety and security and crime in Railways, crime against women, etc. A Ministry-wise statement indicating main subjects on which questions were asked is at Table-I.

IV. Starred Questions

4.1 The instrument of Questions has been evolved so as to give an opportunity to Members to raise pertinent queries to the Executive, thereby giving them an idea about the functioning of various Ministries. This instrument becomes more effective if Members are able to have their questions included in the Starred List. It is precisely due to this fact that the general trend among Members has been to give more notices of Starred Questions as compared to notices of Unstarred Questions. Out of the 14,446 notices received from Members, as many as 10,040 were for Starred Questions.

4.2 Each day of the week is allotted a group of Ministries for asking of questions. By and large, it is a mix of big and small Ministries. A perusal of the number of notices of Starred Questions given by Members indicates the preference of Members for certain Ministries. The maximum number of notices were given for the Ministry of Finance (725) followed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (604), Home Affairs (604), HRD (596), Railways (552) and Agriculture (528). Ministries like Road Transport and Highways (370), Civil Aviation (288), Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (290), Communications and Information Technology (298), Defence (284), Environment and Forests (392) and Petroleum and Natural Gas (327) were the other Ministries for which maximum notices were given by Members. This was also reflected in the questions being listed as Starred Questions. It was observed that major Ministries like Home Affairs, Finance, Agriculture, HRD, Railways, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Civil Aviation, Road Transport and Highways, Coal, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Minority Affairs got maximum positions in the Starred Lists. In contrast, presence of Ministries like Parliamentary Affairs, Statistics and Programme Implementation, Corporate Affairs, Power, Food Processing Industries, Heavy Industries, Earth Sciences, Science and Technology, Space, Textiles and Youth Affairs and Sports was not very visible.

4.3 As a Starred List contains only 20 questions, it is a matter of sheer chance for Members to find a place in it. An analysis of notices given during the Budget Session, 2013 reveals very interesting findings. Out of the total 244 Members of Rajya Sabha, 90 Members did not give any notice during the Session. These 90 Members include 16 Members, being Ministers and Deputy Chairman and Leader of Opposition who do not give notices of questions.

There were 34 Members who gave more than 100 notices of questions, with one member giving the maximum number of 243 notices of questions. There were 46 Members giving 50 to 99 notices, out of which 11 Members gave more than 90 notices. Out of the 154 Members giving notices, 24 Members belonged to the 'Others' category representing parties having four or less Members, nominated and independent Members. In other words, out of the 41 Member 'Others' Group, more than half gave notices, with 7 Members giving more than 100 notices. For example, both the CPI Members gave more than 100 notices. Similarly, out of the 4 Shiv Sena Members, there were 3 Members giving more than 100 notices.

4.4 Data regarding major Parties also makes an interesting reading. Out of 70 Members belonging to INC, 15 Members being Ministers/Deputy Chairman, do not give notices. Out of the remaining 55 INC Members, 34 Members gave notices, with 7 Members giving more than 100 notices. With regard to the main Opposition Party BJP, with a strength of 49 Members and with the Leader of Opposition not expected to give notices of questions, 41 Members gave notices; with 7 Members giving more than 100 notices. Out of 9 Samajwadi Party Members, 8 Members gave notices, with 4 Members giving more than 100 notices. Similarly, out of 11 CPI (M) Members, there were only 3 Members who did not give any notice and out of the 8 Members giving notices, 1 Member gave more than 100 notices. Only 8 Members gave notices out of the 15 BSP Members. Out of the 5 AIADMK Members, 3 Members gave notices with 1 Member giving more than 100 notices. Out of the 6 DMK Members, notices were given by 5 Members. Out of the 9 JD(U) Members, only 1 Member did not give any notice.

4.5 Question Hour can be considered to be the only time when the Members participate in their individual capacity as well as in accordance with their interest or involvement in particular subjects. This is borne out by the fact that very senior leaders, cutting across the party lines, have been giving large number of notices. Few examples are worth mentioning, *i .e.*, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar (128), Shri Y.S. Chowdary (104), Shri Vijay Jawaharlal Darda (124), Shri Rajkumar Dhoot (128), Dr. Najma Heptulla (127), Shri Prakash Javadekar (117), Shri D. Raja (102), Shri Sanjay Raut (190), Dr. Prabha Thakur (180) and Shri Motilal Vora (133). New Members also give a serious competition to their seniors, *e.g.* Shri Ashk Ali Tak (134), Shri Anil Desai (150), Shri Devender Goud T. (127), Shri Piyush Goyal (239), Shri Mahendra Singh Mahra (144), Shri Dilipbhai Pandya (110), Shri Baishnab Parida (147), Shri C.M. Ramesh (206), Shri Arvind Kumar Singh (172), Shri Alok Tiwari (168) and Shri Darshan Singh Yadav (189).

V. Initiatives taken by the Chair

5.1 Experience so far has been that if the Question Hour proceeds smoothly, on an average only 5 to 6 questions can be covered. There is no other alternative but to lay the answers to the remaining Starred Questions included in the List. Attempts have been made by the Hon'ble Chairman to accommodate maximum number of questions by streamlining the procedure of raising of supplementaries by Members. Maximum number of supplementaries which can be raised on a question is five. Besides that, both Members and Ministers are sensitized from time to time by the Hon'ble Chairman to ask specific and crisp supplementaries and give concise answers respectively. However, this has not resulted in any significant improvement. Average number of questions covered during the Question Hour remains virtually the same.

5.2 This issue has been engaging the attention of the Hon'ble Chairman for quite some time. Two significant initiatives taken in this direction are worth-mentioning. Earlier, the practice used to be to allow a Starred Question listed in the name of two Members, in the event of two identical notices given by two Members and one Member getting his place in the Starred list. However, one indirect effect of this procedure was lesser number of questions being covered and also Members in spite of not getting any position in the Ballot getting a preference on other Members securing a position in the ballot. This practice is no longer in vogue and has resulted in more coverage of questions.

5.3 Another very common occurrence which was being noticed was the absence of those Members who had their questions included in the Starred List, especially those among the first ten Members. A very discouraging impact used to be that questions, in spite of raising very pertinent issues, could not be taken up. To check this practice, a conscious decision was taken to treat such questions as regular questions, Members being absent notwithstanding. General consensus was that a question once listed became the property of the House. Rules were modified accordingly. This has led to very positive results. No Member by default can now get the opportunity to raise a supplementary. The Executive also has to be on guard constantly. Even if the listed Member is not there, there are other Members to do full justice to the question of their fellow Member.

VI. Ballot position

6.1 Data about number of notices given and the ballot position secured by Members throw light on another aspect. Number of notices did not guarantee more positions in the ballot. It was observed that Members giving very few notices, *e.g.* only 24 notices, 36 notices and 35 notices could secure as many

as 10 positions in the ballot. In contrast, in spite of giving 112, 133, 134 and 239 notices, only 5, 6, 7 and 10 positions respectively could be obtained by Members in the ballot.

6.2 Out of 154 Members giving notices of questions, only 145 Members could secure position(s) in ballots. Out of these 145 Members, ballot position upto 7th position could be obtained by 105 Members. And out of these Members as many as 53 Members could not avail the opportunity to raise supplementaries. Reasons being that either the Question Hour was disrupted or the Questions did not go upto 7th position, or this position was obtained by them only in the second half of the Session. A Member-wise statement showing notices of questions given, supplementaries asked and ballot position secured is at Table-II.

VII. No Admitted Question

7.1 Before being listed, every notice of question is scrutinized to ensure that it is in accordance with the conditions of admissibility and well-established conventions and does not go against the Directions of Hon'ble Chairman. As per the prescribed procedure, ballots for different sittings are held on fixed dates. A Member can give upto 7 notices per sitting and number of Members is the criteria for holding a ballot. The process of scrutiny starts thereafter. It sometimes so happens that a Member has given only one or two notices and those notices, not being as per the Rules/Directions, cannot be listed. In such a situation, there is no other alternative but to include the question of the Member whose name is next in the ballot list. Such instances are few. However, during the Budget Session, 2013, on 13 out of the 30 sittings, there were "No Admitted Questions" in the Starred List. While there was a single NAQ in ballots for six sittings, two NAQs were there in ballots for five sittings and three NAQs in ballots for two sittings. Majority of these questions could not be included in the Starred List as they were covered by replies to previous questions.

VIII. Supplementaries

8.1 There were 88 Members who were lucky enough to get the opportunity to raise supplementaries. Out of these, 16 Members were those who had not given even a single notice. There was one Member, Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel who in spite of not giving any notice, could raise 5 supplementaries. There were other Members, who in spite of giving less number of notices and not securing effective ballot position, had the opportunity to raise 5-6 supplementaries. In other words, luck plays a prominent role in getting a chance to raise a supplementary. Getting a position in the ballot can not guarantee an opportunity to a Member to raise supplementaries. One has to secure a position upto 7th in the ballot and also in the event of the Question Hour being run smoothly without

any disturbance, to utilize this device.

8.2 Endeavour of the Chair is always to give maximum number of Members an opportunity to raise supplementaries. While Members having their question included in the Starred List and in the event of that question being taken up, get this opportunity without fail, for the remaining Members present in the House, it is the discretion of the Chair. Such Members get the chance by rotation. It is ensured by the Chair that Members across the party lines get the chance to raise supplementaries by rotation. By and large, this system has been working satisfactorily. Party-wise break-up of supplementaries asked by Members, *i.e.*, INC -33, BJP- 40, BSP-10, SP-08, AITC-06, JD(U)-06, TDP-07, BJD-01, NCP-02 and Others-32 is self-revealing.

IX. Participation of Women Members

9.1 Women Members actively participate in the proceedings of Rajya Sabha. In spite of having a very small representation in the House, when compared with the strength of male Members, their presence is very much evident during the Question Hour. In a House of 244 Members at present, there are only 26 Women Members and one of them is a Minister. Out of the 25 Women Members, 18 Members gave notices of questions. There were 3 Members who gave more than 100 notices, with Smt. Prabha Thakur giving the maximum number of notices (180). If we look at the data about supplementaries asked by Women Members, very interesting facts emerge. Members who gave lesser number of notices, proved more lucky. Dr. Vijaylaxmi Sadho gave only 14 notices but secured 3rd, 5th and 1st position in ballot and could raise three supplementaries. Similarly, Dr. T.N. Seema, in spite of giving only 35 notices, secured 4th and 2nd position in two ballots and thus could raise four supplementaries. Likewise, Smt. Maya Singh gave only 21 notices but by securing 1st position in one ballot had the opportunity to raise two supplementaries.

X. Analysis of Questions taken up during the Question Hour

10.1 A close scrutiny and analysis of questions taken up during the Question Hour indicate the areas of interest and concern of Members. Broadly speaking, the issues raised by Members through questions can be categorized as those relating to burning issues of public interest - both highlighting the domestic problems and those affecting the security of the country and its international relations. In the succeeding paragraph, an attempt has been made to analyse questions dealing with issues where Members had shown maximum interest. It throws light on the level of concern and awareness of Members on areas ranging from national interest and those impacting the masses.

10.2 Reduction in the Defence Budget for 2013-14 led the Members to raise concern about its likely adverse impact on the country's security. Assertion of

the Minister about the adequacy of allocation for its requirements was not found acceptable by Members. Attention of the Minister was drawn to the wide gap between the actual requirements of the Ministry and funds allocated and the enhanced funds available with the neighbouring countries. It was also emphasized that rising inflation, if taken into account, would worsen the situation further. Suggestions made were streamlining the procurement procedure and focus on research and indigenous production (SQ 121, dt. 6.3.2013).

10.3 Attention of the Government was drawn to problems being faced by migrant workers in spite of there being a number of schemes and laws serving their cause. Feeling dissatisfied by the various measures taken by the Government, it was suggested that mandatory identity cards and inter-state and intra-state portable essential documents like ration cards could be provided to migrant workers. In response, assurance was given by the Minister to have the suggestion considered in consultation with other Departments. Specific query about district-wise data relating to reduction in migration of workers due to implementation of MGNREGA failed to elicit any positive response. Finally, assurance was given to look into the problems being faced by migrant workers in States like Maharashtra and Kerala and take up the issues with the Home Minister also (SQ 125, dt. 6.3.2013).

10.4 Functioning of Coal India Ltd. in the backdrop of increasing requirement of coal across the country, especially for the power plants, engaged the attention of Members. Referring to the ambitious plans of Coal India Ltd., it was pointed out that apart from inadequate quantity, the quality of coal being supplied by it to States was questionable. The Minister, while accepting both the constraints, assured that every attempt was being made to increase the production rate of Coal India Ltd. Simultaneously, foreign countries like Mozambique, South Africa, Indonesia, Australia, USA, Columbia, etc. were being approached for acquisition of coal blocks. To the query about setting up of coal washeries for improving the quality of coal, the House was informed that 19 coal washeries were proposed to be set up (SQ 181, dt.11.3.2013).

10.5 Another area of concern for Members has been the large number of vacancies of judges in various courts of the country leading to huge backlog of pending cases. During the course of supplementaries on a Question on this subject, it was recommended that Central assistance may be given to State Governments for increasing the number of judges. Responding to the suggestion, the Minister informed the House that a Central Scheme was in operation from 2005 to 2011 and ultimately, the State Governments will have to come forward to share the responsibility. Attention of Members was drawn to the factors like lack of infrastructure, lack of quality lawyers and the appointment procedure of judges aggravating the problem. Another emphatic point made was

unprecedented level of pending cases in the Allahabad High Court. Attention of the Minister was drawn to a State Government proposal for increasing the strength of judges from 80 to 160 in the Allahabad High Court pending for the last eleven years with the Centre. Response of the Minister was that the proposal was at the final stage of consideration (SQ 183, dt. 11.3.2013).

10.6 Questions raised by Members also dwell on areas which impact our society, especially its most vulnerable section. Issue of very meagre amount being given as pension to handicapped persons/widows/senior citizens, was the subject of one Starred Question. It was admitted by the Minister that quantum of pension being given needed to be increased and the proposal was under the consideration of the Government. At the same time, attention of the Members was also drawn to the fact that States also needed to contribute their share for such pension schemes. It was impressed upon the Minister to take action on the recommendations made by the Task Force of the Planning Commission and the Tendulkar Committee for substantial enhancement of pension. In response, the Minister apprised the House that the current Pension Programme was going to be substantially revised with regard to criteria of handicapped and widows, addition of single destitute women and universalizing pension with exclusion criteria. House was assured that within a period of next six weeks, a final decision on restructuring of the Pension Programme would be taken. Another pertinent issue raised was undue delay involved in the disbursal of pension which was not being given on monthly basis in majority of the States. Pointing out that it was the responsibility of the State Governments to ensure the pension reaching the beneficiaries in time, the Minister informed the Members that they were being sensitized to introduce a procedure whereunder pension funds would be sent directly to the Rural/Welfare Ministry of the State which would be sending the pension directly to the concerned beneficiaries (SQ 282, dt.18.3.2013).

10.7 Members' concern on country's dependence on import of fertilizers was voiced through a Starred Question. The kind of supplementaries raised by Members indicated the level of understanding and sense of urgency on resolving this problem effectively. To a specific query of Members about increase in prices of fertilizers in spite of Nutrient Based Subsidy being brought into force in 2010, it was clarified that expectations of fertilizer prices being brought down due to competition proved to be wrong. Rather international prices reported an increase. Government's efforts to set up a plant as a joint venture also could not succeed. Due to total dependence on imports, Government had no control on deciding the MRP. Attention was drawn to another area of concern. Due to availability of highly subsidized urea in the country, it was being smuggled out to neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan. Government's response was that steps have been taken to curb the smuggling of Urea. Another allied

issue was diversion of Urea meant for agriculture purposes to industries. It was informed that State Governments were being sensitized in this regard. A suggestion came from Members to have consultations with Ministers of Agriculture and Finance and interested MPs to have a permanent solution for curbing the massive increase of prices of DAP and NPK. The suggestion was accepted by the Minister (SQ 63, dt.1.3.2013).

10.8 There were a number of occasions when issues impacting particular States were raised by Members. One such instance was when flood situation in Bihar was brought to the notice of the Minister. Voicing their disappointment about no progress being made in the Indo-Nepal talks being held on flood control issues during the last more than sixty years, a specific query was made about the exact loss occurred so far. The response was that a loss of approximately ₹ 13,655 crore had been incurred by Bihar with an annual loss of ₹ 242.71 crore. It was emphasized by Members that initiative had to come from the Central Government. Awaiting a State Government proposal would serve no purpose. The Minister assured the House that proposals were being duly sent by the State Government of Bihar which were being considered by the Centre. Already, talks were going on with the Nepal Government on Saptkosi Project and inter-state linking projects (SQ 284, dt.18.3.2013).

10.9 Reform measures for making our election procedure free from any adverse impact of malpractices like excessive usage of black money in elections have been engaging the attention of public representatives. This issue was also raised through the mechanism of questions. Members were given to understand that the Law Commission had been asked to give a concrete set of suggestions by April which would then be put for consultations with Leaders of all political parties so as to arrive at a broad political consensus for framing a legislation on electoral reforms. The problem of 'paid news' was also brought to the notice of the Minister. Admitting the increasing impact of 'paid news' and its becoming a corrupt electoral practice, the Minister informed the House that the matter had been considered by a GoM. Suitable amendments have also been recommended by the Press Council of India so as to effectuate the Representation of the People Act in order to make the 'Paid News Syndrome' as actionable. The House was also given an idea about the measures taken by the Election Commission like appointment of expenditure observers, deployment of flying squads and State and video surveillance teams, media certification and monitoring committees, etc. To a specific query about banning of direct corporate funding to political parties and use the same for State-funding in elections, the Minister stated that it could be considered as one of the mechanisms (SQ 283, dt.18.3.2013).

10.10 A number of notices pertaining to women and children related concerns were given by Members during the Session. Increasing incidents of violence

and crime against women raised the apprehensions of Members. Through Questions, attempts were made by Members to understand better the complexities of such happenings and also to sensitize the Government by giving suggestions for taking remedial measures. Attention of the Government was drawn to instances of police officers not registering cases of crimes against women. The response of the Minister was that Government was already seized of the gravity of the issue and departmental proceedings had already been initiated against such officers with eleven officers of various ranks being suspended and seven senior officers proceeded against. Conviction rate reported in such cases was 34.6 per cent in 2010 and 41.5 per cent in 2011 (SQ 43, dt. 27.2.2013).

10.11 State-wise data regarding missing children made available through a reply to Parliament Question (SQ 123, dt. 6.3.2013) led to Members raising a number of supplementaries on the plight of missing children. When asked about the status of anti-trafficking units in all the police stations of the country, the House was informed that an advisory had gone to all the State Governments from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

10.12 Undue delay in the implementation of the Protection of Women against the Domestic Violence Act, 2005 was the subject matter of a Starred Question (SQ 41, dt. 27.2.2013). It was clarified by the Minister that non-availability of required funds for carrying out the provisions of the Act was the main factor responsible for such a situation. A new scheme was in the offing for which various procedural formalities were being completed. State Governments were also being sensitized to have the required manpower for the purpose.

10.13 Members keep on voicing their dissatisfaction with the written replies and response of Ministries to their supplementaries. High level of their alertness was very visible on one occasion. Starred Question 42 regarding "IPS Officers charge-sheeted for criminal activity" was listed for 27 February, 2013. Factual information about IPS officers charge-sheeted for criminal activity during 2012 was asked through this Question. However, only an assurance that information was being collected and would be laid on the Table of the House was given. When the Question was taken up in the House, strong reservations were expressed about the kind of reply given by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Sensing the mood of the House, a direction was given by the Chair for postponement of the question to the next date, *i.e.*, 6 March, 2013. On 27 February, 2013, information was received only from eleven States. However, on the next date when the question was again taken up, details from all the States were available. Interestingly, with the exception of four States, nil information was furnished by all the States. It was a clear case of non-submission of full details, that too on a factual issue in the first instance,

without any justified reasons.

XI. Conclusion

11.1 The above analysis of some of the Starred Questions listed and the nature of supplementaries raised by the Members during the Budget Session, 2013 clearly indicates the efficacy and far-reaching impact of this Parliamentary device. It would not be wrong to say that Members are well-conversant not only about the procedural aspects but also experienced enough to make use of this mechanism. It is evident that queries and concerns of Members are based on their assessment about the ground realities. It is a two-way flow of information in the form of valuable inputs from Members by way of suggestions and response of the Government. By and large, this Parliamentary device is being used as a means of giving insight into the various programmes/schemes of Government, both from the point of view of implementing agencies and public representatives speaking on behalf of the beneficiaries. With the information gained from the replies, Members go back to their constituencies, better equipped to take up their cause. Questions also work as a guiding force for the Executive to have a proper idea about the positive aspects and shortcomings of their various initiatives. In short, this Parliamentary device works as a powerful tool in the hands of public representatives to ensure better governance. In the recent times, with the IT advancement, replies to Parliament Questions have also proved to be a valuable source of authentic information, especially for Parliamentary Committees and researchers and also for public at large.

TABLE-I**Statement showing the subjects on which maximum number of Questions were asked/answered**

Sl. No.	Name of Ministry/Department	Subject	Total No. of Questions asked (including supplementaries)
1.	Agriculture	Drought	18
		Organic farming	11
		Production of foodgrains	31
2.	Atomic	Nuclear Plant	14
3.	Chemicals and Fertilizers	Demand and production of fertilizers	31
		Drug prices	16
4.	Civil Aviation	Condition of Air India	15
5.	Coal	Coal allocation	28
		Coal production	14
6.	Commerce and Industry	Import/Export	21
7.	Communications and Information Technology	Post Offices/Postal Services	14
		Telecom policy/services	24
8.	Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution	Godowns/storages/warehouses	23
		PDS	16
		Price rise/inflation	20
9.	Culture	Protection of monuments	30
10.	Drinking Water and Sanitation	Sanitation projects/issues	21
11.	Environment and Forests	Forest conservation	24
12.	External Affairs	Pakistan	14
13.	Finance	Inflation/price rise	18
		Loans from banks	24
		Taxation matters	20

Sl. No.	Name of Ministry/Department	Subject	Total No. of Questions asked (including supplementaries)
14.	Health and Family Welfare	Diseases	14
		National Rural Health Mission	18
		Tobacco-related health issues including cancer	6
15.	Home Affairs	Crimes against women	43
		Terrorism	
16.	Human Resource Development	Schools	61
17.	Labour and Employment	Provident Fund	12
18.	New and Renewable Energy	Solar energy/projects/pumps	18
19.	Petroleum and Natural Gas	LPG and availability of CNG	18
		Petrol prices	9
20.	Power	Power projects (Hydel, thermal etc.)	15
21.	Railways	Rail lines	18
		Railway network/connectivity/new trains	30
		Rail policy and administrative matters	30
		Rail projects	81
		Safety/security and crime	46
		Sanitation, travelling conditions and passenger facilities	20
		MGNREGA	56
23.	Urban Development	Metro Rail	5
		Projects under JNNURM	20
24.	Water Resources	Irrigation projects	18
		Rivers	17
25.	Women and Child Development	ICDS	20

TABLE-II

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Statement (Member-wise) showing Notices of Starred Questions given, Supplementaries asked and Ballot Position secured

Sl. No.	Name of the Member	Party	Notices of Starred Questions given	Supplementary asked by Member	Number of time Member secured position in Ballot
1.	Abraham, Shri Joy	KC (M)*	10	—	1
2.	Achuthan, Shri M.P.	CPI*	104	2	5
3.	Adeeb, Shri Mohammed	IND.	112	1	12
4.	Aga, Ms. Anu	NOM.	—	—	—
5.	Agrawal, Shri Naresh	SP	105	4	7
6.	Aiyar, Shri Mani Shankar	INC	—	—	—
7.	Akhtar, Shri Javed	NOM.	—	—	—
8.	Ali, Shri Munquad	BSP	—	—	—
9.	Ali, Shri Sabir	JD(U)	79	—	11
10.	Anand Sharma, Shri	INC	—	—	—
11.	Ansari, Shri Ali Anwar	JD(U)	7	—	—
12.	Ansari, Shri Salim	BSP	38	—	7
13.	Antony, Shri A.K.	INC	—	—	—
14.	Ashk Ali Tak, Shri	INC	134	—	6
15.	Ashwani Kumar, Shri	INC	—	—	—
16.	Azad, Shri Ghulam Nabi	INC	—	—	—
17.	Bachchan, Smt. Jaya	SP	63	—	3
18.	Baghel, Prof. S.P. Singh	BSP	—	5	—
19.	Baidya, Smt. Jharna Das	CPI(M)	39	—	3
20.	Baishya, Shri Birendra Prasad	AGP*	59	1	9
21.	Balaganga, Shri N.	AIADMK	70	2	8

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Sl. No.	Name of the Member	Party	No. of Starred Questions given	Supplementary asked by Member	Number of time Member secured position in Ballot
22.	Balagopal, Shri K.N.	CPI(M)	140	5	11
23.	Balmuchu, Dr. Pradeep Kumar	INC	96	—	14
24.	Bandyopadhyay, Shri D.	AITC	52	5	4
25.	Batra, Shri Shadi Lal	INC	47	—	7
26.	Behera, Shri Shashi Bhushan	BJD	—	2	—
27.	Bernard, Shri A.W. Rabi	AIADMK	—	—	—
28.	Bhattacharya, Shri P.	INC	42	1	9
29.	Bhunder, Shri Balwinder Singh	SAD*	61	1	7
30.	Bora, Shri Pankaj	INC	88	—	8
31.	Bose, Shri Srinjoy	AITC	—	—	—
32.	Budania, Shri Narendra	INC	—	—	—
33.	Chakraborty, Shri Shyamlal	CPI(M)	—	—	—
34.	Chandrasekhar, Shri Rajeev	IND.	128	—	12
35.	Chatterjee, Shri Prasanta	CPI(M)	18	—	4
36.	Chaturvedi, Shri Satyavrat	INC	—	1	—
37.	Chavan, Smt. Vandana	NCP	5	—	2
38.	Chiranjeevi, Dr. K.	INC	—	—	—
39.	Chowdary, Shri Y.S.	TDP	104	2	13
40.	Chowdhury, Smt. Renuka	INC	—	—	—
41.	Daimary, Shri Biswajit	BPF*	3	—	—
42.	Dalwai, Shri Husain	INC	152	—	12
43.	Darda, Shri Vijay Jawaharlal	INC	124	—	11
44.	Das, Shri Kumar Deepak	AGP*	50	6	5
45.	Dave, Shri A. Madhav	BJP	10	—	3

46.	Deora, Shri Murli	INC	—	—	—
47.	Desai, Shri A.	SS*	150	4	9
48.	Dhindsa, Sardar Sukhdev Singh	SAD*	15	—	6
49.	Dhoot, Shri Rajkumar	SS*	128	—	9
50.	Dua, Shri H.K.	NOM.	25	—	2
51.	Dwivedi, Shri Janardan	INC	—	—	—
52.	Elavarasan, Shri A.	AIADMK	121	1	8
53.	Faruque, Smt. Naznin	INC	43	—	8
54.	Fernandes, Shri Oscar	INC	—	—	—
55.	Ganguly, Dr. Ashok S.	NOM.	—	1	—
56.	Gehlot, Shri Thaawar Chand	BJP	65	3	8
57.	Ghosh, Shri Kunal Kumar	AITC	—	—	—
58.	Gill, Dr. M.S.	INC	—	—	—
59.	Gnanadesikan, Shri B.S.	INC	16	—	1
60.	Goud T., Shri Devender	TDP	127	3	7
61.	Goyal, Shri Piyush	BJP	239	1	10
62.	Gujral, Shri Naresh	SAD*	3	—	1
63.	Gupta, Dr. Akhilesh Das	BSP	—	—	—
64.	Gupta, Shri Prem Chand	RJD*	—	3	—
65.	Gupta, Shri Vivek	AITC	65	—	1
66.	Haque, Shri Md. Nadimul	AITC	—	—	—
67.	Hashmi, Shri Parvez	INC	22	1	5
68.	Heptulla, Dr. Najma A.	BJP	127	2	13
69.	Irani, Smt. Smriti Zubin	BJP	82	—	8
70.	Jain, Shri Ishwarlal Shankarlal	NCP	212	2	10

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71.	Jaitley, Shri Arun	BJP	—	—	—
72.	Jangde, Dr. Bhushan Lal	BJP	2	—	1
73.	Javadekar, Shri Prakash	BJP	117	3	10
74.	Jayshree, Smt. B.	NOM.	—	—	—
75.	Jethmalani, Shri Ram	BJP	75	1	4
76.	Jha, Shri Prabhat	BJP	243	—	10
77.	Jinnah, Shri A.A.	DMK	78	—	5
78.	Jois, Shri M. Rama	BJP	—	—	—
79.	Jugul Kishore, Shri	BSP	34	—	2
80.	Kalita, Shri Bhubaneswar	INC	31	3	4
81.	Kanimozhi, Smt.	DMK	70	—	4
82.	Kannan, Shri P.	INC	—	—	—
83.	Karan Singh, Dr.	INC	—	2	—
84.	Karimpuri, Shri Avtar Singh	BSP	19	1	2
85.	Kashyap, Shri Narendra Kumar	BSP	42	—	9
86.	Katiyar, Shri Vinay	BJP	—	—	—
87.	Keishing, Shri Rishang	INC	—	—	—
88.	Khabri, Shri Brijlal	BSP	—	—	—
89.	Khan, Shri K. Rahman	INC	—	—	—
90.	Khan, Shri Mohd. Ali	INC	83	4	10
91.	Khanna, Shri Avinash Rai	BJP	50	6	7
92.	Khuntia, Shri Rama Chandra	INC	99	2	11
93.	Kidwai, Smt. Mohsina	INC	—	—	—
94.	Kore, Dr. Prabhakar	BJP	67	—	12
95.	Koshyari, Shri Bhagat Singh	BJP	48	—	5

96.	Krishna, Shri S.M.	INC	—	—	—
97.	Kshatriya, Prof. Alka Balram	INC	—	—	—
98.	Kulaste, Shri Faggan Singh	BJP	26	—	3
99.	Kurien, Prof. P.J.	INC	—	—	—
100.	Lachungpa, Shri Hishey	SDF*	—	—	—
101.	Lad, Shri A.H.	INC	32	—	—
102.	Lalhming Liana, Shri	MNF*	1	—	—
103.	Mahendra Prasad, Dr.	JD(U)	—	—	—
104.	Mahra, Shri Mahendra Singh	INC	144	2	9
105.	Maitreyan, Dr. V.	AIADMK	93	2	11
106.	Malihabadi, Shri Ahmad Saeed	IND.	—	—	—
107.	Mallya, Dr. Vijay	IND.	13	—	2
108.	Mandaviya, Shri Mansukh L.	BJP	59	—	11
109.	Mangala Kisan, Shri	BJD	—	—	—
110.	Manjunatha, Shri Aayanur	BJP	96	—	11
111.	Masood, Shri Rasheed	INC	68	—	6
112.	Mathur, Shri Om Prakash	BJP	46	—	6
113.	Mayawati, Km.	BSP	—	—	—
114.	Miri, Prof. Mrinal	NOM.	1	—	—
115.	Misra, Shri Satish Chandra	BSP	—	1	—
116.	Mitra, Dr. Chandan	BJP	104	—	8
117.	Mohapatra, Shri Pyarimohan	BJD	7	1	2
118.	Mohapatra, Shri Rabinarayan	BJD	10	2	2
119.	Mukherji, Dr. Barun	AIFB*	—	—	—

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120.	Mukut Mithi, Shri	INC	—	—	—
121.	Mungekar, Dr. Bhalchandra	INC	15	1	3
122.	Nadda, Shri Jagat Prakash	BJP	35	—	4
123.	Naidu, Shri M. Venkaiah	BJP	15	3	1
124.	Naik, Shri Shantaram	INC	19	—	1
125.	Nanda, Shri Kiranmay	SP	16	—	1
126.	Nandamuri Harikrishna, Shri	TDP	—	—	—
127.	Nandi Yellaiah, Shri	INC	33	—	6
128.	Naqvi, Shri Mukhtar Abbas	BJP	—	2	—
129.	Narayanan, Shri C.P.	CPI(M)	42	2	5
130.	Natarajan, Smt. Jayanthi	INC	—	—	—
131.	Natchiappan, Dr. E.M. Sudarsana	INC	18	—	2
132.	Nathwani, Shri Parimal	IND.	—	—	—
133.	O' Brien, Shri Derek	AITC	—	1	—
134.	Pande, Shri Avinash	INC	2	—	—
135.	Pandian, Shri Paul Manoj	AIADMK	—	—	—
136.	Pandya, Shri Dilipbhai	BJP	110	—	10
137.	Parasaran, Shri K.	NOM.	—	2	—
138.	Parida, Shri Baishnab	BJD	147	—	10
139.	Parjapati, Shri Ranbir Singh	INLD*	—	—	—
140.	Parmar, Shri Bharatsinh Prabhatsinh	BJP	20	—	6
141.	Paswan, Shri Ram Vilas	LJP*	39	3	9
142.	Patel, Shri Ahmed	INC	—	—	—

143.	Pathak, Shri Brajesh	BSP	—	2	—
144.	Patil, Shri Basawaraj	BJP	24	1	10
145.	Patil, Smt. Rajani	INC	—	—	—
146.	Pilania, Dr. Gyan Prakash	BJP	96	1	6
147.	Pradhan, Shri Dharmendra	BJP	20	—	4
148.	Pradhan, Smt. Renubala	BJD	37	—	4
149.	Prasad, Shri Ravi Shankar	BJP	93	5	7
150.	Punj, Shri Balbir	BJP	—	—	—
151.	Rai, Smt. Kusum	BJP	147	—	8
152.	Raja, Shri D.	CPI*	102	2	14
153.	Rajan, Shri Ambeth	BSP	8	—	3
154.	Rajaram, Shri	BSP	—	—	—
155.	Rajeeve, Shri P.	CPI(M)	36	2	10
156.	Ram Prakash, Dr.	INC	40	2	11
157.	Ramalingam, Dr. K.P.	DMK	96	5	6
158.	Ramesh, Shri C.M.	TDP	206	2	10
159.	Ramesh, Shri Jairam	INC	—	—	—
160.	Rangarajan, Shri T.K.	CPI(M)	17	3	2
161.	Rangasayee Ramakrishna, Shri	BJP	—	—	—
162.	Rao, Dr. K.V.P. Ramachandra	INC	91	—	4
163.	Rao, Shri V. Hanumantha	INC	12	1	2
164.	Rapolu, Shri Ananda Bhaskar	INC	—	2	—
165.	Rashtrapal, Shri Praveen	INC	—	—	—
166.	Ratanpuri, Shri G.N.	J&KNC*	24	—	5

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167.	Ratna Bai, Smt. T.	INC	87	—	9
168.	Raut, Dr. Bharatkumar	SS*	17	1	3
169.	Raut, Shri Sanjay	SS*	190	—	9
170.	Ravi, Shri Vayalar	INC	—	—	—
171.	Reddy, Dr. N. Janardhana	INC	—	—	—
172.	Reddy, Shri Palvai Govardhan	INC	112	—	5
173.	Reddy, Dr. T. Subbarami	INC	96	1	14
174.	Rekha, Ms.	NOM.	—	—	—
175.	Roy, Shri Mukul	AITC	—	—	—
176.	Roy, Shri Sukhendu Sekhar	AITC	23	3	7
177.	Roy, Shri Tarini Kanta	CPI(M)	—	—	—
178.	Rudy, Shri Rajiv Pratap	BJP	63	4	4
179.	Rupala, Shri Parshottam Khodabhai	BJP	59	2	10
180.	Sadho, Dr. Vijaylaxmi	INC	14	3	2
181.	Sahani, Prof. Anil Kumar	JD(U)	82	3	11
182.	Sahu, Shri Dhiraj Prasad	INC	48	—	9
183.	Sai, Shri Nand Kumar	BJP	121	—	9
184.	Saini, Shri Rajpal Singh	BSP	—	—	—
185.	Saleem, Chaudhary Munabbar	SP	23	—	4
186.	Sancheti, Shri Ajay	BJP	6	1	2
187.	Sanjiv Kumar, Shri	JMM*	—	1	—
188.	Seelam, Shri Jesudasu	INC	5	1	1
189.	Seema, Dr. T.N.	CPI(M)	35	4	10

190.	Selvaganapathi, Shri T.M.	DMK	92	—	10
191.	Sen, Shri Tapan Kumar	CPI(M)	24	—	3
192.	Shafi, Shri Mohammad	J&KNC*	—	—	—
193.	Shanta Kumar, Shri	BJP	17	1	4
194.	Sharma, Shri Raghunandan	BJP	12	—	3
195.	Sharma, Shri Satish	INC	—	—	—
196.	Shukla, Shri Rajeev	INC	—	—	—
197.	Singh, Shri Amar	IND.	—	—	—
198.	Singh, Shri Arvind Kumar	SP	172	2	10
199.	Singh, Shri Bashistha Narain	JD(U)	5	—	1
200.	Singh, Shri Birender	INC	18	2	2
201.	Singh, Shri Ishwar	INC	—	1	—
202.	Singh, Shri Jai Prakash Narayan	BJP	58	2	10
203.	Singh, Dr. Kanwar Deep	AITC	93	2	16
204.	Singh, Dr. Manmohan	INC	—	—	—
205.	Singh, Smt. Maya	BJP	21	2	8
206.	Singh, Shri Mohan	SP	13	—	2
207.	Singh, Shri N.K.	JD(U)	89	2	12
208.	Singh, Shri Ramchandra Prasad	JD(U)	—	—	—
209.	Singh, Shri Shivpratap	BJP	—	—	—
210.	Singh, Shri Veer	BSP	1	1	—
211.	Singh Badnore, Shri V.P.	BJP	9	1	1
212.	Singhvi, Dr. Abhishek Manu	INC	—	—	—
213.	Siva, Shri Tiruchi	DMK	—	1	—

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214.	Solanki, Shri Kaptan Singh	BJP	78	—	5
215.	Soni, Smt. Ambika	INC	34	—	5
216.	Sood, Smt. Bimla Kashyap	BJP	24	—	6
217.	Soz, Prof. Saif-ud-Din	INC	12	1	3
218.	Stanley, Smt. Vasanthi	DMK	79	—	4
219.	Sudharani, Smt. Gundu	TDP	125	—	11
220.	Swaminathan, Prof. M.S.	NOM.	—	—	—
221.	Swamy, Shri A.V.	IND.	14	—	—
222.	Tariq Anwar, Shri	NCP	—	—	—
223.	Tarun Vijay, Shri	BJP	98	—	5
224.	Tendulkar, Shri Sachin Ramesh	NOM.	—	—	—
225.	Thakor, Shri Natuji Halaji	BJP	90	—	3
226.	Thakur, Dr. C.P.	BJP	—	2	—
227.	Thakur, Dr. Prabha	INC	180	—	12
228.	Thangavelu, Shri S.	DMK	85	2	14
229.	Tirkey, Shri Dilip Kumar	BJD	—	—	—
230.	Tiwari, Shri Alok	SP	168	—	8
231.	Tiwari, Shri Shivanand	JD(U)	1	4	1
232.	Tripathi, Shri D.P.	NCP	79	—	6
233.	Trivedi, Dr. Yogendra P.	NCP	85	2	6
234.	Tyagi, Shri K.C.	JD(U)	48	—	2
235.	Vasan, Shri G.K.	INC	—	—	—
236.	Vegad, Shri Shankarbhai N.	BJP	—	—	—
237.	Vora, Shri Motilal	INC	133	2	7

238.	Waghmare, Dr. Janardhan	NCP	93	—	9
239.	Yadav, Shri Bhupender	BJP	56	—	—
240.	Yadav, Shri Darshan Singh	SP	189	1	11
241.	Yadav, Prof. Ram Gopal	SP	—	1	—
242.	Yadav, Shri Ram Kripal	RJD*	59	4	14
243.	Yechury, Shri Sitaram	CPI(M)	—	1	—
244.	Zhimomi, Shri Khekiho	NPF*	7	—	1

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ABBREVIATIONS

INC	Indian National Congress
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
CPI(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
JD(U)	Janta Dal (United)
AITC	All India Trinamool Congress
SP	Samajwadi Party
AIADMK	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazagham
BJD	Biju Janata Dal
DMK	Dravida Munnetra Kazagham
NCP	Nationalist Congress Party
SS	Shiv Sena
TDP	Telugu Desam Party
SAD	Shiromani Akali Dal
RJD	Rashtriya Janata Dal
J&KNC	J&K National Conference
CPI	Communist Party of India
BPF	Bodoland People's Front
AIFB	All India Forward Block
INLD	Indian National Lok Dal
JMM	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha
KC(M)	Kerala Congress (M)
LJP	Lok Janashakti Party
MNF	Mizo National Front
AGP	Asom Gana Parishad
NPF	Nagaland People's Front
SDF	Sikkim Democratic Front
NOM.	Nominated
IND.	Independent & Others