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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

From Parliament's Inefficiency, the Cost That Can Be Measured, and the Loss That Cannot

 **INDIAN EXPRESS**

14 August 2026 ·

POLITY**GS2**

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From Parliament's Inefficiency, the Cost That Can Be Measured, and the Loss That Cannot

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GS2



INTERVIEW ANGLE

"The editorial distinguishes the measurable fiscal cost of parliamentary disruption from the unmeasurable cost of lost legislative scrutiny. If a bill passes without committee review because a session was disrupted, how would a citizen ever know what scrutiny was lost, and does that invisibility make the loss more or less serious?"

 Every fact web-verified against primary sources

THE LIFT LINE

Money lost to a disrupted session shows up in a ledger. Scrutiny lost to a bill that skipped committee review shows up nowhere, until the law it produced fails in practice.

WHY THIS EDITORIAL MATTERS FOR YOUR EXAM

This editorial's central move, distinguishing a measurable cost (fiscal) from an unmeasurable but arguably more significant one (lost legislative scrutiny), is a precise, transferable analytical framework for any GS2 question on parliamentary functioning, worth citing by name in an answer rather than a generic "disruptions are bad" observation.

GS Paper 2: Parliament and State Legislatures, structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers and privileges.

CONCEPT	MEANING	WHY IT IS TESTABLE
Fiscal cost of disruption	The calculable public expense of disrupted sitting time	The editorial's quantified, measurable claim
Standing-committee scrutiny	Detailed, expert examination of bills before passage	The specific process at risk during disrupted sessions
Invisible cost of lost scrutiny	The unmeasurable governance quality loss from bypassed review	The editorial's more significant, harder-to-quantify claim

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

India's parliamentary standing-committee system exists to subject bills to detailed examination beyond floor debate, drawing on subject-matter expertise and stakeholder consultation before legislation is finalised. When sessions are disrupted, governments have at times bypassed this referral process to pass bills quickly once order is restored, or passed legislation with minimal floor debate, a pattern that has drawn recurring institutional and academic concern over declining committee referral rates across successive Parliaments.

THE ANALYSIS

- 1. The measurable-versus-unmeasurable cost distinction is the editorial's central analytical contribution.** Citing a specific fiscal figure, roughly Rs 2.5 lakh per minute of session time, gives the disruption-cost argument concrete, quotable specificity, while the argument's real weight rests on the harder-to-quantify scrutiny loss that follows.
- 2. The invisibility of lost scrutiny is precisely what makes it easy to underweight in policy discourse.** Because there is no straightforward metric for the quality of legislative examination that did not happen, this cost tends to receive less public attention than the readily quantifiable fiscal figure, even though its governance consequences may be more serious.
- 3. Standing-committee bypass is a specific, checkable institutional pattern, not a vague concern.** Declining committee referral rates for bills across successive Parliaments is a documented trend, giving the editorial's concern an [empirical](#) basis beyond the specific instance being discussed.
- 4. The dissent-legitimacy counter-argument complicates a purely efficiency-focused framing.** Treating all disruption as simple inefficiency risks delegitimising a genuine, if [blunt](#), tool available to opposition parties when other procedural avenues for raising serious objections have been exhausted or denied.
- 5. This points toward a structural, rather than purely behavioural, solution.** Rather than simply calling for less disruption, in a Mains answer worth noting is that protecting committee referral as a near-automatic step regardless of session disruption would address the scrutiny-loss problem more directly than reducing disruption itself, which does not resolve its underlying causes.

DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

PRELIMS-GRADE FACTS:

Parliamentary session time cost cited: approximately Rs 2.5 lakh per minute

Standing committees: detailed, expert legislative-scrutiny mechanism, distinct from floor debate

WATCH THE TRAP: DO NOT TREAT THE FISCAL-COST FIGURE AS THE EDITORIAL'S CENTRAL ARGUMENT. ITS ACTUAL EMPHASIS IS ON THE HARDER-TO-MEASURE, ARGUABLY MORE SIGNIFICANT COST OF BYPASSED COMMITTEE SCRUTINY, NOT THE MONEY SPENT ON DISRUPTED SITTING TIME.

THE DEBATE

Argument FOR treating disruption as a serious governance failure. Both the direct fiscal cost and the harder-to-measure scrutiny loss represent genuine harms to legislative quality and public resources, and normalising disruption as routine practice erodes Parliament's core **deliberative** function over time.

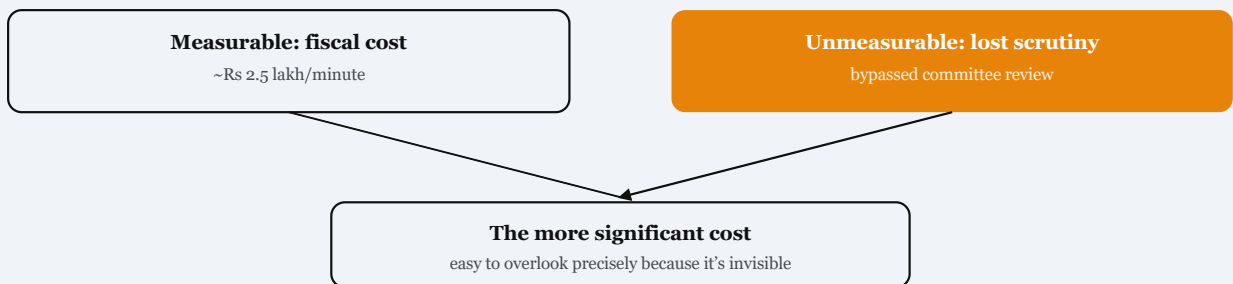
Argument AGAINST treating all disruption as illegitimate inefficiency. Disruption can function as a genuine, if costly, tool of opposition dissent when other procedural avenues have been exhausted, meaning eliminating it without addressing underlying grievances risks simply suppressing dissent rather than improving legislative process.

Balanced verdict. The most productive response addresses the structural cause, protecting committee referral as a near-automatic legislative step regardless of session disruption, rather than focusing primarily on reducing disruption itself, which treats a symptom without addressing the underlying procedural or political grievances driving it.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS

The transferable pattern: **when evaluating any institutional inefficiency, distinguish the readily measurable, quantifiable cost from the harder-to-measure but potentially more significant cost, and be alert to the risk that public and policy attention naturally gravitates toward what can be easily quantified rather than what actually matters most.** This applies well beyond parliamentary functioning, to any governance-quality question where visible costs can crowd out attention to invisible ones.

DIAGRAM-IN-WORDS



The fiscal cost of disruption is measurable and quotable, but the editorial argues the invisible loss of committee scrutiny is the more significant, easily overlooked cost.

TAKEAWAY BOX

Money lost to a disrupted session shows up in a ledger. Scrutiny lost to a bill that skipped committee review shows up nowhere, until the law it produced fails in practice.

*parliamentary session time cost, approximately **Rs 2.5 lakh/minute**; **standing committees** as the legislative-scrutiny mechanism.*

should Parliament adopt a rule making standing-committee referral automatic and non-waivable for all substantive legislation, regardless of session disruption, and what political resistance might such a rule face?

UPSC has repeatedly tested parliamentary functioning, standing committees and legislative scrutiny (GS2); this editorial's measurable-versus-unmeasurable framing sharpens any such answer.

“The fiscal cost of parliamentary disruption is real but secondary to the erosion of legislative scrutiny it causes.” Examine this claim with reference to standing-committee referral practices.

Sources: *Indian Express, Lok Sabha Secretariat*

Source: From Parliament's Inefficiency, the Cost That Can Be Measured, and the Loss That Cannot — Ujjayanti.com |

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● KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE

The Indian Express quantifies the direct fiscal cost of parliamentary disruptions, citing session time valued at roughly Rs 2.5 lakh per minute and crores lost per disrupted sitting day, while arguing the deeper, unmeasurable cost is the erosion of legislative scrutiny, bills and ordinances pushed through without committee review when sittings are disrupted.



SUPPORTING

- Parliamentary session time carries a specific, calculable fiscal cost, roughly Rs 2.5 lakh per minute, meaning disrupted sitting days translate directly into crores of public money spent without corresponding legislative output.
- Beyond the fiscal cost, disrupted sessions frequently result in bills being passed with truncated or no debate, and without the standing-committee scrutiny that is meant to subject legislation to detailed, expert examination before passage.
- The loss of committee scrutiny is structurally invisible in a way the fiscal cost is not, since there is no straightforward metric for the quality or thoroughness of legislative examination that did not happen, making this cost easy to overlook relative to the quantifiable fiscal figure.



COUNTER

Disruptions are sometimes a legitimate, if blunt, tool available to opposition parties to register strong objection when other procedural avenues for raising concerns have been exhausted or denied, meaning framing disruption purely as “inefficiency” risks delegitimising a genuine, if costly, form of parliamentary dissent.



WAY FORWARD

The editorial implicitly calls for procedural reforms that reduce the incentive or need for disruption as a dissent tool, alongside stronger institutional commitments to routing bills through standing-committee scrutiny regardless of session disruption, so that legislative quality does not depend on smooth session functioning.


MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK
QUESTION

Examine the argument that the fiscal cost of parliamentary disruptions is less significant than the erosion of legislative scrutiny that results when bills are passed without adequate committee review. (250 words)

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Express quantifies the direct fiscal cost of parliamentary disruptions, session time valued at roughly Rs 2.5 lakh per minute, while arguing the deeper, harder-to-measure cost is the erosion of legislative scrutiny when bills and ordinances are pushed through without adequate committee review.

BODY

Parliamentary sitting time carries a specific, calculable public cost, and disrupted sessions translate this into a directly quantifiable loss, crores of rupees spent without corresponding legislative output on a given disrupted day. But the editorial's more significant argument concerns a cost that resists straightforward measurement: when sessions are disrupted, bills are frequently pushed through with truncated debate or bypassed standing-committee scrutiny altogether, the detailed, expert examination process meant to catch drafting flaws, unintended consequences and implementation gaps before a bill becomes law.

Because there is no clear metric for scrutiny that did not happen, this cost is structurally easy to overlook relative to the fiscal figure, even though its consequences, poorly examined legislation entering force, may be considerably more significant for governance quality than the money spent on disrupted sitting time. The counter-consideration, that disruption sometimes functions as a legitimate tool of opposition dissent when other procedural avenues are exhausted, complicates a purely "disruption equals inefficiency" framing, since eliminating disruption without addressing its underlying causes could simply suppress dissent rather than improve legislative process.

CONCLUSION

A complete answer should treat the fiscal-cost and scrutiny-loss arguments as related but distinct: the fiscal cost is a real but ultimately secondary concern relative to the scrutiny loss, and addressing the latter requires structural reforms, protecting committee referral even amid disruption, rather than simply reducing disruption itself, which risks conflating a symptom with its underlying cause.

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