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Title: Shri Gurudas Dasgupta made submission regarding continued reduction in the number of sittings of Parliament.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (PANSKURA): Sir, I seek your permission to raise an important issue concerning the entire Parliament. The Parliament is being made irrelevant. Sessions are being shortened every year. It is also true that holding up of session impairs upon the parliamentary system. It seems – it is for the Government to clarify – that Parliament has become too much inconvenient for the Governments that come into power.

Parliament is the highest national forum. Debate, discussion, difference and divergence are always bound to be reflected, because of the plural nature of our society. But this discussion leads to or seeks to lead to consensus, which may add to the advice to the Government. It may help the country to understand the reality of the Indian situation. The regular parliament sessions can hold the executive and the Government accountable to the people because we are elected Members of Parliament.

What is happening today? Earlier Parliament used to meet for 120 days, some time it has met for even 128 days. Now, it has been, unfortunately, reduced to 65 to 80 days.

I am referring to the present Parliament Session. The present Parliament Session is the shortest in nine years. It was slated to sit for 17 days. One day we paid homage to one of our colleagues; and two days we lost because of interruptions. So, we are left with only 14 days. Out of these 14 days, three days are Fridays. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: We are aware of all that.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : This means, in this Parliament Session we are left with only 11 days. I do not blame anybody. I call for introspection. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Good. It is a matter we should discuss in the Business Advisory Committee.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : The way in which the Parliament is being bypassed, it is outrageous and it is ominous for the parliamentary system.

In the whole of South Asia, India is the only country where there is deep-rooted democracy. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: We should endeavour to maintain it.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : Yes, of course.

Democracy depends on the fruitful functioning of Parliament. People are fighting for parliament in Nepal. People are fighting for elections in Pakistan. We are having our Parliament. But Parliament is being totally bypassed. As a result, we are not able to discuss price rise and other important issues. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Let us not go into the details. It is not a debate.

...(*Interruptions*)[\[MSOffice15\]](#)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : We are not able to discuss the Sengupta Committee's Report which says that 77 per cent of the Indian population is poor and vulnerable. So, I call upon the Government to kindly respond to the suggestion that Parliament should meet at least for hundred days in a year as suggested by the All India Speakers' Conference two years back. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: It is all right. Names will be recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)

रेल मंत्री (श्री लालू प्रसाद): मैं गुरुदास जी की बात पर कहना चाहता हूँ कि हम गवाह हैं कि वचैशन ऑवर के बाद क्या स्ट्रैथ रहती है, कितने मैम्बर रहते हैं, इस पर भी विचार करने की जरूरत है।

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : Sir, I agree. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: There has to be introspection on all sides, by all the hon. Members. I have been repeatedly requesting all sides for cooperation.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : Sir, please allow me to say only one sentence. I want introspection by the entire Parliament. I do not blame anybody. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: That is good.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, first of all, I strongly disapprove and disagree the expression linked with that the Parliament is day-by-day becoming irrelevant. I do not agree and the Government is also not in agreement with Shri Gurudas Dasgupta's contention that the Parliament is becoming irrelevant. On the other hand, the way the Members of Parliament work in the late evening and till night, and sometimes I even find ten Members, sincerely I pay salute to them. So, the Parliament is not irrelevant. This is my point number one.

Secondly, the Government has been trying for two- three years to respond to the call of the Speakers' Conference message and the Conference of the Golden Jubilee. There are two sincere promises made. One, there should be hundred days of Session. Two, nobody should go to the well and disrupt the Question Hour. The second got priority to violate. First, we could not convene...(*Interruptions*)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (SOUTH DELHI): Are these things to be discussed in the House? ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No. Since it has been raised, the Minister is responding.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No name has been taken. Mr. Minister, please do not take any name.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, I did not take any name. ...(*Interruptions*) Why are you getting up? ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members including the Minister, please allow me to make my submission. This is an issue which we have discussed earlier. I will call a meeting once again.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Shri Dasgupta, with all due respect, I would like to correct the third point. It is not the nine years' shortest Session. If you take the earlier balance sheet, you will find that there are 16 days Winter Session and even five days Winter Session. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : Sir, he is misleading the House. There were elections at that time. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I have said that I am going to call a meeting especially to discuss this issue. Now, there should be no more discussion on this issue.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: It is not proper that you will make your points and others will not be able to say their views. That is not fair. The most important part of democracy in Parliament is that one has to be patient and hear others. So, please try to understand this.

Sir, therefore, we are applying our mind and we shall try as best as to find a solution under your leadership. The Parliament can sit as many days and we would like always to be accountable to the Parliament. This is the only solution. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I am deeply touched by the concern shown by all sides about the proper functioning of Parliament. I hope it will be translated into action.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY : Sir, we are sitting late in the night, but the Government is not appreciating. ...*(Interruptions)* We are doing over time and sitting late in the night also. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: But there is no 'extra allowance.' I am sorry.

...(Interruptions)
