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1. Working of the Indian Parliament has been witnessing declining debate and discussion over bills and important matters.

Discuss.

- India is a parliamentary form of government and therefore, Parliament has a central role in the governance of the country, it is a key institution to formulate policies, laws, to ensure the accountability of executive.

Witnessing decline in debate and discussion

- Subhash Kashyap in his book “Reviewing the Constitution” mentions that Indian parliament is passing through the phase of decline. He believes the following factors to be responsible for decline.
 - ✓ The presence of archaic practices, lack of expertise, inadequacy of time, results into poor quality of legislation and unsatisfactory surveillance of the government.
 - ✓ Little effort has been made to develop essential pre-requisites for the success of parliamentary political system i.e. discipline, character, sense of public morality, ideologically oriented party system, willingness of the government to accommodate minority views, constructive opposition.
- Pratap Bhanu Mehta and Devesh Kapur have discussed the following weaknesses of parliament in India –
 - ✓ Criminalization: The biggest cause of decline is the increase in the number of persons coming from criminal background (43% of MP’s in the present parliament).
 - ✓ Complexity of new age: Globalisation has also increased the complexities in the formulation of laws. In the absence of adequate training and capacity building programs, it is difficult to expect the qualitative outcomes. This has also resulted in increased subordinate legislation.
 - ✓ Decline of Rajya Sabha: There is a decline in the significance of Rajya Sabha. Since, there is a possibility of Rajya Sabha being dominated by the parties other than the party in the government. We have witnessed increased bypassing of Rajya Sabha with even acts like Aadhaar being passed as money bills. Various important bills like Jammu and Kashmir reorganization, provision of reservations to Economically weaker sections were passed without much discussion and in less time.
- Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo argues three-line whip and the anti-defection law further curtails the freedom and independence of MPs. The weakening of the “grand inquest of the nation” has been accompanied by a decline of the Parliamentary committee system which were meant to provide necessary time and expertise to study a bill in depth.
- Further, Chakshu Roy points to the increased disruptions in Parliament which further cut down on productive hours. Coupled with the breakout of Covid19 pandemic and cutting down of Parliamentary sessions, this has also led to limited government accountability with the question hour even being suspended during the Monsoon session.

Way forward

- A.B. Vajpayee while talking on the role of Parliament in democracy had remarked upon the ancient dictum, 'Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah'- Dharma, protected, protects. In the same way, institutions like Parliament, protected, protect.
- Chakshu Roy underlines the need for increasing the meeting days of Parliament and making its calendar inviolable. According to NCRWC (National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution), at least parliament should meet for 120 days.
- Subhash Kashyap underlines for the need to reform the party system itself to improve the quality of members. He further suggests measures like reduction of the financial cost, capacity building, codification of parliamentary privileges, tackling absenteeism.
- M.R Madhavan argues for pre-legislative scrutiny of all government Bills. It requires the administrative ministry to publish the proposed legislation on the Internet and through other media, and include the reasons for the Bill, the financial implications and impact on the environment, society etc.
- Committees should also be provided with an adequate number of researchers to help them understand complex and technical issues. Requiring all government bills to be looked at by a parliamentary committee is an easy step in strengthening Parliament's deliberative ability.
- John Locke in his theory of government argues that legislature is the most important institution because it represents the people. The capacity of Parliament for discussion and ensuring accountability is a pre-requisite for ensuring the smooth functioning of India's popular sovereign.