

PRESS RELEASE

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Performance of MLAs and Legislative Assemblies going to polls

- Among the 5 states going to polls, the Kerala Legislative Assembly sat for the largest number of days (240 days in last 5 years)
- The lowest number of sittings is that of the Puducherry Assembly which sat only for a total of 123 days in last 5 years.
- The average number of days that these Assemblies sat is way below the Lok Sabha sittings
- TN Assembly passed the largest number of bills (225), the lowest numbers of bills were passed by Puducherry(42)
- Individual details of MLAs performance are now available for these states at <http://adrindia.org> (except for West Bengal)
- National Election Watch demands that political parties include the parameters for functioning of Legislatures in their Election Manifestoes.
- National Election Watch also demands that parties give tickets to candidates suitable for legislative work.

Delhi/Chennai/Puducherry/Kolkata/Guwahati/Trivandrum: Association for Democratic Reforms(ADR) and National Election Watch (NEW) had filed RTIs to all the Assembly Secretariats asking for the information pertaining to the performance of the MLAs and the Legislative Assemblies. The following information was received:

	INFORMATION REQUESTED	INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM	INFORMATION <u>NOT</u> RECEIVED FROM
1.	Attendance of the MLAs in the Assembly	Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam, Puducherry.	West Bengal
2.	Number of Questions asked by the MLA	Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry.	West Bengal and Assam
3.	Total number of days the Assembly was in session	Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam, Puducherry.	West Bengal
4.	Total number of days it was adjourned	Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam, Puducherry.	West Bengal
5.	The average attendance in the sessions	Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.	West Bengal, Kerala and Assam
6.	Total number of bills passed	Tamil Nadu, Kerala, WB,	None

		Assam and Puducherry.	
7.	Time spent in discussing bills/disruptions	Puducherry	West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Kerala

From the responses received, the following information has been generated:

Analysis based on performance of Legislative Assemblies (compared with Lok Sabha)

The legislative assemblies have been meeting for a very short time despite legislative work being the main task of the MLAs. The best performance in terms of number of sittings is that of Kerala which has met for 240 days in the last five years. This amounts to an average of only 48 days per year. Kerala is followed by WB which sat for 219 days in five years (average of 44 days a year) and Tamil Nadu (214 days in five years with an average of 43 days a year).

This compares very poorly with Lok Sabha which in itself sits for small number of days. The current Lok Sabha in last 1.5 years has sat for 135 days which averages to about 90 days in a year. All states have sat way below the number of days Lok Sabha has sat (most has set for less than 50% of the days).

State Assembly	Years considered	Number of Sessions held by the Assembly	Total number of sittings	Average number of sittings /year	Bills passed
Puducherry (till Dec '10)	5 years	11	123	25	42
Kerala (till Jan '11)	5 years	17	240	48	135
Tamil Nadu	5 years	14	214	43	225
Assam (till Feb '11)	5 years	17	131	26	125 (2 bills withdrawn by the Minister concerned)
West Bengal (till Dec '10)	5 years	8	219	44	149
Lok Sabha (till Dec '10)	1.5 years	6	135	90	74

Longest and Shortest Assembly sessions:

The longest session held was of 42 days of the West Bengal Assembly in 2010. It also sat for 39 days in 2008 and 38 days in 2007. Right behind is Tamil Nadu which sat for 35 days for its 5th session. The shortest sessions were the Budget sessions of Puducherry which on 3 occasions lasted for only a day.

Demands of National Election Watch(NEW)

NEW which is a coalition of more than 1200 organisations active across all the states of India, demands that political parties should disclose their criteria for selection of candidates. The criterion must contain the ability and willingness of these candidates to do legislature work. Candidates with criminal background must not be given tickets by the political parties.

Whereas most legislatures are now passing recommendations for increase in MLAs salaries and perks, there is virtually no discussion on the role of MLAs. The parties must include various parameters for functioning of Legislatures in their Election Manifestoes. They must also ensure that once they come to power they will make it easy for people to access information pertaining to performance of MLAs and State Legislative Assemblies by their Secretariats on their respective websites.

PRESENT MEANS OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION:

The National Election Watch is a conglomeration of about 1200 organizations working for electoral and political reforms across the country.

1. During the elections, the NEW volunteers in Delhi, Chennai, Trivandrum, Kolkata, Guwahati and Puducherry will also be running a **10 to 6 toll free helpline at 1-800-110-440** where information on candidates and winners can be acquired.
2. The same information can be acquired for constituencies by an **SMS service (SMS Myneta [PINCODE] or MYNETA [name of constituency] to 56070)** to get information on candidates and elected representatives.
3. Further information can be acquired from the websites: <http://adrindia.org> and <http://myneta.info>

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About NEW

The **National Election Watch** (NEW) is a nationwide campaign comprising of more than 1200 NGO and other citizen led organizations working on electoral reforms, improving democracy and governance in India. The National Election Watch is active in almost all states of India and has done election watch for all states and Lok Sabha elections since 2002. ADR, along with couple other organizations, won the PIL in Supreme Court in 2002 to making disclosure of educational, financial and criminal background of electoral candidates mandatory.

About ADR

Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) is a non-political, non-partisan and a non-governmental Organization whose PIL filed in Dec 1999 culminated in a Supreme Court order on Mar 13, 2003 requiring disclosure of criminal, financial and educational background of all contesting candidates. Since then ADR has done Election Watches in almost all State Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. It continues to work towards strengthening democracy and governance in India by focusing on fair and transparent electoral and political processes. It is currently conducting election watch in all states going for assembly polls.

You can learn more about ADR at: <http://www.adrindia.org>