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The Role of the Opposition in the 18th Lok Sabha of the Indian Parliament

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Abstract

The 2024 Indian general election resulted in a greatly stronger parliamentary opposition. For the first time in a decade, the Indian National Congress won enough seats to become the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha. This study investigates the numerical structure of the opposition in the 18th Lok Sabha, the institutional function of the LoP, the opposition's participation in constitutional amendment discussions, and the opposition's role as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). Through the use of official parliamentary records, legislation, statutory provisions, and secondary scholarly literature, this paper contends that the 18th Lok Sabha represents a qualitative shift in the functioning of India's parliamentary democracy, with a reconstituted opposition providing substantive oversight, legislative scrutiny, and constitutional vigilance.

Keywords: 18th Lok Sabha, NDA & INDIA Alliance, Leader of the Opposition, PAC, Constitutional Amendments, Parliamentary Democracy

Introduction

Parliamentary democracy is most successful when there is a robust and structured opposition to examine government activity, represent minority interests, and enforce accountability. India's Westminster style system, as incorporated in the Indian Constitution (1950), explicitly acknowledges the role of the opposition through conventions, statutory provisions, and procedural procedures. Nonetheless, for a decade spanning the 16th and 17th Lok Sabhas (2014-2024), no opposition party commanded sufficient numerical strength to claim the statutorily recognized position of Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the lower house of Parliament, a flaw widely criticised by constitutional scholars and parliamentarians. The 2024 general election dramatically changed this dynamic. The Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), an opposition alliance created in 2023, won 234 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha, with the Indian National Congress (INC) alone obtaining 99 seats nearly double its 2019 total. This outcome reinstated the official institution of the LoP, with Rahul Gandhi nominated to the office, and paved the way for a reenergized opposition presence in parliamentary committees, legislative discussions, and constitutional processes.

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This research paper examines the opposition's role in the 18th Lok Sabha through four thematic pillars: (i) the opposition's numerical representation following the 2024 elections; (ii) the opposition's engagement with constitutional amendment processes after 2024; (iii) the LoP's constitutional and statutory role in the Lok Sabha; and (iv) the opposition's stewardship of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). This study employs a qualitative, document-analysis technique based on primary sources such as parliamentary bulletins, legislative provisions, official records of the Lok Sabha, research papers, and books complemented by reliable secondary literature.

Research Objectives:

1. To illustrate the opposition's numerical composition in the 18th Lok Sabha, which was established following the Indian general election of 2024.
2. To examine how the opposition participated in discussions over proposed constitutional reforms in the 18th Lok Sabha between 2024 and 2026.
3. To examine the institutional, statutory, and conventional role of the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, with reference to Rahul Gandhi's.
4. To assess, with particular reference to the 18th Lok Sabha, the opposition's role as chair and participant in the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

Research Questions:

1. In comparison to the previous two Lok Sabhas, what is the opposition's numerical strength in the 18th Lok Sabha?
2. How has the opposition engaged in the 18th Lok Sabha's constitutional amendment procedures?
3. According to Indian parliamentary law, what are the official duties, rights, and powers of the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha?
4. How has the opposition performed its duty in the Public Accounts Committee during the 18th Lok Sabha?

Numerical Representation of the Opposition in the 18th Lok Sabha

After seven stages of general elections between April 19 and June 1, 2024, India's 18th Lok Sabha was established. On June 4, 2024, the results were announced. The 2024 election was acknowledged as the greatest democratic exercise in history, with over 968 million registered voters and over 642 million voters (a turnout of almost 67%). A simple majority, or 272 seats, is needed to establish a government in the Lok Sabha, which has 543 directly elected members. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which won a strong majority in both the 2014 (282 seats) and 2019 (303 seats) elections, won just 240 seats in 2024, falling short of a majority for the first time in a decade. With a total of 293 seats won by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and allies like the Telugu Desam Party (16 seats) and Janata Dal (United) (12 seats), Prime Minister Narendra Modi was able to form the government for a third term in a row and The Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), formed in 2023 as a

broad opposition coalition to counter the BJP's dominance, secured 234 seats in total. The alliance was composed of the Indian National Congress and multiple regional parties including the Samajwadi Party (SP), the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray faction), the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar), the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). The party-wise seat distribution within the INDIA alliance was as follows: the INC led with 99 seats; the SP secured 37 seats; the AITC won 29 seats; the DMK won 22 seats; the SS (UBT) faction obtained 9 seats; the NCP (SP) secured 8 seats; the RJD secured 4 seats; the CPI (M) won 4 seats; the IUML won 3 seats; the JMM secured 3 seats; and the AAP won 3 seats (Congressional Research Service [CRS], 2024). Seven independent members and candidates from smaller parties constituted the remaining seats outside both major alliances. In terms of proportional representation, the INDIA bloc's 234 seats constituted approximately 43.09% of the Lok Sabha's 543 seats the largest opposition presence since the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) era. In contrast, the opposition had held only 91 seats collectively in 2019, with the INC alone winning just 52 seats below the 54-seat threshold (one-tenth of 543) required for statutory recognition of the LoP.

Party-wise seat distribution, national vote share and alliance

No.	Political party	Seats won	National vote share	2024 alliance affiliation
1	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	240	36.56%	NDA
2	Indian National Congress (INC)	99	21.19%	INDIA
3	Samajwadi Party (SP)	37	4.58%	INDIA
4	All India Trinamool Congress (AITC/TMC)	29	4.37%	INDIA
5	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)	22	1.82%	INDIA
6	Telugu Desam Party (TDP)	16	1.98%	NDA
7	Janata Dal (United) [JD(U)]	12	1.25%	NDA
8	Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray)	9	1.48%	INDIA
9	Nationalist Congress Party–Sharadchandra Pawar (NCP-SP)	8	0.92%	INDIA
10	Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde)	7	1.15%	NDA
11	Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) [LJP(RV)]	5	0.44%	NDA

12	YSR Congress Party (YSRCP)	4	2.06%	other
13	Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)	4	1.57%	INDIA
14	Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)]	4	1.76%	INDIA
15	Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)	3	1.11%	INDIA
16	Other and Independents	44	17.76	

Source note: The seat counts are supported by the ECI results and the IPU election record. The vote-share figures above are a working compilation, not a claim that every row has been independently reconciled against the ECI's underlying valid-vote totals. For formal publication, verify each party's percentage against the ECI's complete party-performance statistical report. (ECI, 2024; Press Information Bureau, 2024; IPU, 2024).

Alliance-wise seat

Alliance / category	Main parties	2024 seats
NDA	BJP, TDP, JD(U), Shiv Sena (Shinde), LJP (Ram Vilas), JD(S), Janasena and other allies	293
INDIA	Congress, SP, TMC, DMK, Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP-SP, RJD, Left parties and other allies	234
Other parties and independents	YSRCP, SAD, AIMIM, regional parties and independents	16

Significance of the Opposition's Numerical Strength

The significance of the 234 seats held by the INDIA alliance extends beyond mere numbers. Most importantly, the 99 seats secured by the Indian National Congress (INC) surpassed the 'one-tenth' threshold (10% of total seats) required for the formal recognition of a 'Leader of the Opposition' (LoP) under the 'Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977'. This brought an end to a decade-long period spanning the 16th and 17th Lok Sabhas during which the House functioned without an official Leader of the Opposition. Legal experts and observers of democracy had repeatedly highlighted this absence as a structural weakness in parliamentary accountability. The opposition in the 18th Lok Sabha appears to be a much stronger, alliance-based entity compared to those in previous parliaments. In this Lok Sabha, the BJP’s seat count fell short of the figure required for a clear majority, meaning the ruling coalition itself was dependent on allies whose interests sometimes diverged from the BJP’s core agenda. This created an environment in Parliament where the opposition could effectively exploit fissures within the ruling coalition. A prime example of this was seen during the introduction of the 'Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024', where the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) a

key ally within the NDA initially refrained from taking a clear stance (The Tribune India, 2024).

Provisions for Constitutional Amendment in the Indian Constitution

The Constitution of India, under Article 368, outlines two primary methods for constitutional amendment: amendment by a special majority in Parliament, and amendment by a special majority combined with the consent (ratification) of at least half of the state legislative assemblies (provisions that can be amended by a simple majority fall outside the scope of Article 368). Under Article 368, two conditions must be met to pass a constitutional amendment: the support of a majority of the total membership of each House, and the support of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting in each House. In the 18th Lok Sabha, the ruling NDA holds 293 seats—which exceeds the absolute majority of the total membership (272)—but, absent a broader consensus, it lacks the numbers required to secure a two-thirds majority. Consequently, for major constitutional amendments, the government requires the support of the opposition. This legislative arithmetic has rendered the opposition an indispensable party and a powerful 'gatekeeper' in shaping constitutional changes during the 18th Lok Sabha.

The Opposition's Role in Constitutional Amendments Post-2024

Under Article 368, the passage of a constitutional amendment requires an absolute consensus that transcends standard party-line voting. In a fractured lower house, the opposition's primary role shifted from symbolic dissent to procedural veto power (Lok Sabha, 2026). Because the ruling coalition lacked the independent capacity to marshal a two-thirds majority (approximately 362 votes if all members are present), any legislative proposal attempting to alter the text of the Constitution required active negotiation with, or the strategic capitulation of, the opposition benches. The opposition utilized this leverage to enforce a rigorous standard of legislative scrutiny, demand federal accommodations, and compel the executive to refer contentious constitutional changes to parliamentary committees.

During the term of the 18th Lok Sabha, there were three significant occasions when the government introduced Constitution Amendment Bills. On each occasion, opposition parties adopted different strategies to oppose them. These included the 129th Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024, concerning 'One Nation, One Election'; the 130th Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2025, related to accountability; and the 131st Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2026, pertaining to delimitation.

The 129th Amendment Bill aimed to implement the framework proposed by the 'High-Level Committee on Simultaneous Elections,' chaired by former President Ram Nath Kovind. The Bill proposed amending Articles 83, 172, and 327, and inserting a new Article 82A, to synchronize the election cycles for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. The opposition strongly opposed this, expressing concerns that it would undermine the principles of federalism. Led by the 'INDIA' alliance, opposition members argued that simultaneous elections would structurally disadvantage regional parties, weaken the constitutional sovereignty of the states, and effectively transform India’s parliamentary democracy into a 'presidential system.' As the government lacks a two-thirds majority, the opposition’s

significant involvement in these major institutional reforms achieved through extensive deliberation underscores the importance of the opposition. Subsequently, the 130th Amendment Bill was introduced. It proposed a constitutional provision stipulating that if a Minister, Chief Minister, or the Prime Minister remains in judicial or police custody for more than 30 consecutive days due to serious criminal charges, they shall automatically cease to hold their constitutional office. While acknowledging the stated objective of ensuring political probity, the Opposition in Parliament argued that central investigative agencies could misuse this amendment; they could systematically destabilize state governments led by the Opposition by placing their leaders in custody. They further contended that the Bill bypasses a fundamental principle of criminal jurisprudence the presumption of innocence until guilt is proven. Consequently, following extensive debate and commotion, the government much like it did with the 129th Amendment Bill referred the 130th Amendment Bill to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for detailed review. The 131st Amendment Bill, 2026, sought to amend Article 55, 81, 82, 170, 330, 332, and 334A, with the objective was to expedite the implementation of the 33% reservation for women (introduced via the 106th Amendment Act, 2023). To achieve this, the provision was decoupled from the condition that it remain frozen until the census conducted after 2026, thereby paving the way for an immediate delimitation exercise based on the 2011 census. It proposed increasing the total number of Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 850, based on new criteria. The executive linked this expansion to the immediate implementation of the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' (the 106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023). They argued that increasing the size of Parliament was structurally necessary to implement a one-third reservation quota for women without displacing incumbent Members of Parliament (The Hindu, 2026). Opposition lawmakers highlighted the structural implications of the bill, noting that expanding seats based on population would shift the center of national politics toward the Hindi-speaking states of North India, which have rapidly growing populations. This, they argued, would disadvantage southern states that have successfully implemented the central government's family planning policies. The leadership of the Trinamool Congress, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), and the Congress party accused the government of using women's empowerment as a political ploy to redraw the electoral map to its own advantage (The Hindu, 2026). When the bill was put to a vote on April 17, 2026—a process requiring a two-thirds majority under Article 368—the opposition decided not to support it. Consequently, the bill received 298 votes in favor and 230 against, falling short of the requisite two-thirds majority. As a result, the bill was rejected (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2026).

This marked a watershed moment in modern Indian parliamentary history, as the opposition's disciplined voting led to the defeat of a major constitutional amendment bill proposed by the government in the Lok Sabha. The role of the opposition regarding constitutional amendment bills in the 18th Lok Sabha signifies a return to the traditional model of parliamentary 'checks and balances.' Leveraging their electoral mandate, opposition parties successfully resisted proposals that threatened to disrupt the federal balance or alter established constitutional norms. The stalling of the 129th Amendment, the referral of the 130th Amendment to a committee, and the outright rejection of the 131st Amendment in the Lok Sabha in April 2026 demonstrate

that the opposition in the 18th Lok Sabha has evolved from merely being a voice of symbolic dissent into an effective 'constitutional gatekeeper.'

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha

In India's democracy, the position of 'Leader of the Opposition' (LoP) in the Lok Sabha holds significant importance. Although it is not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution of India (1950), the position has been granted legal recognition through the 'Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977'. According to Section 2(b) of this Act, a 'Leader of the Opposition' is defined as "a member of the House who, for the time being, is the leader of the largest opposition party against the government and has been recognized as such by the Speaker." The numerical threshold required for this recognition is based on Mavalankar's Direction 121(1)(c)—a parliamentary convention. Successive Speakers have interpreted this to mean that an opposition party must hold at least one-tenth of the total membership of the Lok Sabha; in a House of 543 members, this translates to a minimum of 54 seats. It is due to this requirement that there was no 'Leader of the Opposition' during the 16th and 17th Lok Sabha (2014–2024), as the Indian National Congress (INC) held 44 and 52 seats, respectively—both of which were below the required number.

In common parlance, this position is also referred to as a 'shadow Prime Minister,' reflecting its role as the primary interlocutor between the opposition and the executive branch in power. Ram Subhag Singh of the Indian National Congress became the first formally recognized 'Leader of the Opposition' in the Lok Sabha in 1969, during the fourth Lok Sabha. Since then, this position has served as a key institutional mechanism through which the principal opposition party holds the government accountable within the House. Notable leaders who held this position prior to Rahul Gandhi in the 18th Lok Sabha include Sushma Swaraj (BJP, 2009–2014) and L. K. Advani (BJP, 2004-2009) and Sonia Gandhi (Congress, 1999–2004). The fact that this position remained vacant for a decade from 2014 to 2024—was a structural anomaly that had a profound impact on parliamentary accountability.

Rahul Gandhi as Leader of the Opposition: Appointment and Significance

On June 25, 2024, Congress General Secretary K. C. Venugopal announced that Rahul Gandhi, the Member of Parliament from Rae Bareli, would serve as the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party, communicated this decision in writing to the Pro-tem Speaker, Bhartruhari Mahtab. Concurrently, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge assumed the role of Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha. This marked the first time in his parliamentary career, spanning over two decades, that he held a formal constitutional position. While taking the oath as a member of the 18th Lok Sabha on June 25, 2024, he held a copy of the Constitution in his hand a gesture widely interpreted as a message affirming the opposition's commitment to constitutional values. The Leader of the Opposition leads the opposition in critiquing government legislation. This involves participating in debates, proposing amendments, and utilizing procedural tools such as 'adjournment motions' and 'calling attention motions'—to ensure that government policies remain accountable to the public. Rahul Gandhi has consistently employed these mechanisms to raise issues such as unemployment, economic inequality, and the rights of minorities. During

the parliamentary 'Question Hour' and 'Zero Hour'—key instruments for ensuring the government's daily accountability—he has coordinated efforts among opposition members. He provides guidance on strategies for posing questions and ensures that Parliament maintains a sustained focus on critical policy matters. Furthermore, Rahul Gandhi has participated in selection committees for key positions, including the Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Central Vigilance Commissioner, the Chief Information Commissioner, the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners, and the Lokpal (The Tribune India, 2024). The absence of an official Leader of the Opposition during the 16th and 17th Lok Sabhas meant that these selection processes either proceeded without the mandatory participation of the opposition or resulted in prolonged vacancies; although, in some instances, the leader of the largest opposition party was invited to participate a practice that sparked controversy. The 18th Lok Sabha has effectively resolved this issue.

Additionally, he has been actively involved in the Public Accounts Committee, the Committee on Public Undertakings, the Estimates Committee, and various Joint Parliamentary Committees (JPCs). Through these committees, the Leader of the Opposition gains the authority to exercise direct oversight over specific areas of government functioning and expenditure. Gaurav Gogoi, the Congress MP from Jorhat in Assam, has been appointed as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha; in this capacity, he will assist Rahul Gandhi, who serves as the Leader of the Opposition. Gogoi has further strengthened the office of the Leader of the Opposition by acting as a spokesperson during significant legislative debates, including those on amendment bills and budget-related proceedings.

The Opposition and the Public Accounts Committee

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is a standing financial committee of the Parliament of India. It was first constituted in 1921 following the 'Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms' and was reconstituted after 1950 under the post-independence constitutional framework. In the current Lok Sabha, its legal basis is derived from Rules 308 and 309 of the 'Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha'. The PAC can have a maximum of 22 members: 15 members are elected from the Lok Sabha, and up to 7 members are elected from the Rajya Sabha. All these members are elected annually through a system of 'proportional representation' by means of a 'single transferable vote'. Ministers cannot be members of this committee. The term of the members is one year, and the committee is reconstituted at the beginning of each financial year.

The Convention of Opposition Chairmanship

The Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is appointed by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Until 1966–67, this position was invariably held by a member of the ruling party. However, in 1967, Lok Sabha Speaker Hukam Singh appointed a member from the opposition as the PAC Chairperson. Since then, this has become an established parliamentary convention, which holds constitutional significance by empowering the opposition—at the highest formal level to directly oversee government expenditure. This convention reflects a broader principle of parliamentary accountability: public spending should not be scrutinized by the same party

that authorized and managed those expenditures. This tradition has been strictly upheld in the 18th Lok Sabha as well, with the largest opposition party, the Indian National Congress (INC), holding the chairmanship of the PAC.

KC Venugopal as PAC Chairperson and the Opposition's Exercise of Oversight

Following the constitution of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for the 18th Lok Sabha, Congress MP K.C. Venugopal was appointed as its Chairperson on August 16, 2024. The committee comprised 10 MPs from the BJP, 4 from the Congress (INC), 2 from the AITC, and 2 from the DMK, with one MP each from the Samajwadi Party, Jana Sena, NCP, and TDP. Venugopal—who has previously served as the General Secretary (Organization) of the Congress and as a Minister of State for Civil Aviation during the UPA government—brings extensive parliamentary experience to this role. He was subsequently reappointed as the PAC Chairperson for the 2025–26 and 2026–27 terms. The Lok Sabha Secretariat noted that "during the first year of the 18th Lok Sabha, the Public Accounts Committee (2024–25) demonstrated exceptional diligence. The primary function of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is to examine Appropriation Accounts, Finance Accounts, and the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. The CAG an independent constitutional authority under Article 148 of the Constitution—audits the accounts of all major sectors of the central government, including civil administration, defence, posts, railways, and taxation. Beyond technical compliance audits, the PAC also scrutinizes government expenditure for economy, efficiency, and propriety. It investigates instances of financial irregularities, wasteful expenditure, losses, delays, and corruption, subsequently submitting its recommendations to the government and Parliament. When government spending exceeds the amounts sanctioned by Parliament, the PAC examines the reasons behind such excesses. Its findings are later utilized during parliamentary debates and the appropriation process.

In the 18th Lok Sabha, the PAC, under the leadership of Venugopal, selected 161 subjects for examination during its first year—a list that included pending matters from the previous committee. On its own initiative (suo motu), the committee undertook reviews of several areas, including the functioning of regulatory bodies established by Acts of Parliament; reforms in the banking and insurance sectors; the implementation of centrally sponsored welfare schemes; policy measures for the energy sector; and the determination and regulation of fees, tariffs, and user charges for public infrastructure. In 2024, the PAC also drew significant public attention when Venugopal indicated that the committee might consider summoning Madhabi Puri Buch, Chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), for questioning regarding allegations levelled against the regulatory body. This instance illustrates that the PAC does not limit the scope of its inquiries to routine audits; rather, it can extend its reach to broader matters concerning public and financial accountability. The Committee has expressed its objection to the tendency among ministries to fail to submit 'Action Taken Notes' responses to the recommendations of the Comptroller and Auditor General in a timely manner. Consequently, in the 18th Lok Sabha—where an opposition, brimming with renewed energy, has assumed leadership with political seriousness and an ambitious agenda the role of the Public Accounts Committee in ensuring financial accountability has become significantly more critical than it has been in recent years.

Analysis and Findings

A study of the opposition's expanded role in the 18th Lok Sabha, along with the preceding analysis, supports several conclusions that clarify the opposition's function within Parliament.

1. First, the 2024 election results brought about a significant structural shift in the parliamentary standing of the Indian opposition. The 234 seats secured by the 'INDIA' alliance—a net gain of 140 seats compared to the combined opposition in 2019—have restored conditions that make a meaningful parliamentary opposition institutionally viable. Most importantly, the 99 seats won by the Indian National Congress (INC) paved the way for the formal position of 'Leader of the Opposition' (LoP), thereby resolving a democratic anomaly that had persisted for a decade.

2. Second, the opposition's involvement in the constitutional amendment process demonstrates that the opposition in the 18th Lok Sabha is not merely symbolic, but an active participant in constitutional proceedings.

3. Third, the restoration of the 'Leader of the Opposition' (LoP) position carries both practical and symbolic implications that transcend the individual occupying the role. The LoP is now a member of various statutory appointment committees—ranging from those selecting the CBI Director to the Lokpal—ensuring that the opposition's voice is formally integrated into the selection of key institutional guardians.

4. Fourth, under the leadership of K.C. Venugopal, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has adopted an ambitious agenda covering 161 subjects, including the ongoing scrutiny of CAG reports and the review of contentious institutional appointments; this indicates that parliamentary financial oversight is now being conducted with far greater rigor and seriousness.

5. Finally, the 18th Lok Sabha illustrates both the possibilities and the limitations of the opposition's role within the 'Westminster parliamentary framework.' Evidently, in the current context, the opposition is able to leverage coalition politics for instance, by demanding that proposals be referred to committees following extensive parliamentary debate—while also utilizing the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) as an independent audit and accountability mechanism, and exercising a form of 'constitutional veto' during the amendment of laws. Overall, these measures make a meaningful contribution to parliamentary democracy.

Conclusion

The 18th Lok Sabha of the Indian Parliament, constituted following the 2024 general elections, marks a highly significant milestone in the continuity of India’s parliamentary democracy. With the 'INDIA' alliance securing 234 seats including 99 for the Indian National Congress (INC) the formal position of 'Leader of the Opposition' has been restored after a decade-long hiatus. Rahul Gandhi’s assumption of this role has had a tangible impact on constitutional appointment committees, legislative debates, and broader discussions concerning accountability. The opposition's participation in constitutional amendment processes demonstrates that, even without a parliamentary majority, an opposition with substantial

numerical strength can exert a meaningful constitutional influence. Furthermore, the Public Accounts Committee, chaired by K.C. Venugopal, has actively exercised financial oversight of government expenditure. These developments underscore that the quality of parliamentary democracy in India is significantly shaped by the numerical and institutional strength of the opposition. Structurally, at least, the 18th Lok Sabha has restored the conditions necessary for effective parliamentary accountability a development of profound and lasting consequence for India's constitutional order.

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