

ABSTRACT

Questions raised by the Parliamentarians reflect the concerns of their constituencies, and also help to keep a check on the government. Parliamentary questions play an important role in policymaking by ensuring that all relevant concerns of the society are represented on national agendas in a well-functioning democracy. Using the questions asked by the Parliamentarians in during the Lok Sabha question hour over the three Lok Sabha terms (2004 to 2019), this research attempts to understand environmental consciousness in parliamentary discussions. In addition to question addressed to the Ministries concerned with environment, the research focusses on questions related to environment in general independent of the Ministry to which they are addressed. The results suggest that despite an increase in the questions related to environment over the three Lok Sabha terms, the interest in environment seems insignificant in Indian Parliament. The results also show that the Parliamentarians from regional parties have raised significantly more questions than their counterparts from the national parties. The study also analysed the determinants of environmental consciousness of the Parliamentarians from Indian states – captured through activity score. While literacy levels and extent of industrialization seem to influence the activity scores of states, other state specific factors such as its vulnerability to natural disasters and geographic location did not play significant role in enhancing the environmental consciousness of the Parliamentarians.

Key Words: Lok Sabha, Parliamentary Questions, Environmental Consciousness, Sustainable Development, Political Party

JEL Codes: H11; Q50; Q56