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Interrogating education policy: A mega-analysis of 17th Lok Sabha parliamentary questions

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DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26175754.2025.v8.i2b.536

Abstract
Education contributes to the development of the individual on a holistic level. It is necessary for the development of a person's intellect as well as the development of a nation. Furthermore, the educational sector plays a critical role in expanding and increasing human capital to meet the needs of the business, which is referred to as Industry 4.0. As a result, it is critical to comprehend and analyze the creation of educational policy, as well as the concerns expressed by different political parties during questioning in the Legislature Assembly. Questions from the legislature aid in understanding the collection of ideologies that are used to address economic and social issues for the benefit of the economy and to increase the standard of living, a process known as economic development (or economic development theory). The purpose of this paper is to provide an evaluation of the legislature's questioning over education policy through the use of massive policy analysis. For the purpose of this paper, we have examined 177 questions pertaining to the education sector that were asked during the 17th Lok Sabha questioning in order to determine the disparity between the promises made in various political parties' manifestos and the questions discussed during the Lok Sabha questioning. Besides, this study assisted in determining the participation rate of political parties, evaluating the involvement of regional and national political parties, and evaluating the level of participation for each region in the educational policymaking process, among other things. This paper deals with the qualitative analysis of reasoning and on the basis of content analysis of manifest of major political parties in India, this research study tries to find out the policy gap in educational policy making process.

Keyword: Parliament questions, policy evaluation, policy analysis, education policy, policy initiative

Introduction
The historical nature of the research on parliamentary questions is apparent. However, there are only a few researchers who have concentrated on the analysis of questioning behaviour in order to understand different perspectives of political parties' manifests, areas of interest shown in questions, and socio-economic causes catered at a broader level. This paper contributes to the understanding of the relationship between the dependent variable, which is the representation rate, and the independent variable, which is the participation rate, in more detail.

Related research in Questioning Behavior
According to Jane Martin (2011) [11], many legislatures allow parliamentarians to ask questions of members of the executive branch, either in writing or on the floor of the chamber. Parliamentary questions frequently attract a lot of attention from the media and the general public. Despite its relevance and interest, the nature and repercussions of parliamentary questions remain unknown. Questions, as a working tool for MPs, give statistics on individual members as well as the parliament as a whole. The study by Jane Martin proposes analyzing parliamentary issues as a tool for better understanding individual lawmakers' preferences and behavior, as well as the purpose and function of modern-day parliaments (Martin, 2011) [11]. Each Parliamentary Question includes at least two pieces of informative relevance for legislative or comparative scholars, as well as country-specific experts. First, Parliamentary Questions enable for the identification of a question's topic and, as a result, the formulation of an opinion about the questioner's policy interests and agenda. Second, evaluating the question may reveal the representational tendency of specific legislators.

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By emphasizing on the difference between personal and non-personal vote cultivation, as many of the works in the collection do (Carey and Shugart 1995) [4], the personal vote earning orientation of a parliamentarian, if any, should be clear from the content of questions posed. As a result, questions may reflect preferences for national and/or international policy, as well as more local, constituency-focused problems. The way a legislator uses the questioning tool reveals a lot about his or her legislative behavior and role orientation.

An examination of parliamentary issues to determine role orientation has several advantages over existing systems for determining personal vote-getting behavior as: firstly, when a parliamentary question is tabled, time and resources are allocated. A parliamentarian or staffer must conduct research, format the question properly, send it, and wait for a response. Even if it is done by personnel and the process is efficient and quick, tabling Parliamentary Questions is not a completely costless exercise in terms of time and opportunity cost. Effective limits limit the number of questions a legislator or employee can ask. As a result, the use of parliamentary questions provides insight into legislators' goals. Secondly, unlike most other parliamentary activity, such as legislative voting and speeches, the party leadership has less authority over parliamentary questions (Judge 1974) [9]. Control over oral questioning, in particular, appears to vary between countries, although it appears to be minor when compared to control over floor debate and vote. The ability to control written inquiries appears to be even less important. As a result, questions provide a more trustworthy perspective on lawmakers' choices of whether to focus on local, national, or international matters. Thirdly, Selection bias and internal validity issues associated with observational, interview, and survey-based research on lawmakers' activities are eliminated because politicians' behavior may be evaluated using parliamentary questions.

Rather than relying on a legislator's recollection and self-analysis of role orientation and behavior, the analysis of parliamentary questions provides a direct and unmediated measure of role behavior: observations in the analysis of Parliamentary Questions are of actual behavior, removing differences between a parliamentarian's normative perception of role and actual behavior. The information is easily accessible. Parliamentary questions are recorded and typically available to the public. The raw data is freely accessible for (computer-assisted) textual analysis in many circumstances since the data is electronically readable. Replication is available, unlike many other data gathering approaches in role-orientation and role-behavior studies, strengthening the scientific. Specific guidelines should govern the determination of whether questions have a national or local emphasis to help replication.

Whereas according to a study conducted by M.K. Mohapatra (Mohapatra, 1969) [13] the majority of research on Indian legislatures has been historical-legal in nature. Some scholars have conducted behavioral analyses of Indian legislative systems, primarily using socioeconomic data from official biographies as a starting point. However, such research has stayed at the level of profile analysis. Most attempts to describe the conduct of individual legislators have been based on impressionistic and intuitive observations, and there have been few systematic attempts

to link legislative behavior to characteristics that influence it.

Mohapatra derived three major results as follows: to begin with, it appears that issues in Indian Parliament tend to reflect important public policy problems in India in 1952. Another noticeable tendency is politicians' overriding concern for local and state demand. This brings the Legislators' errand-running duty into sharper perspective. This role has been stressed in several European legislatures with a parliamentary style of government. Second, the number of questions asked in a given category is unrelated to the number of people that participated in that category. For example, while questions about constituency and state demands appear to be the most frequently asked in Mohapatra's research sample, the average number of participants in this category is relatively low. The obvious reason is that because such questions tend to focus on a specific region, other members are unlikely to be interested. Because no clear results could be reached based on background data, our examination of the persistent questioners seemed to necessitate more investigation. Explaining the behavior of the 'persistent questioners' in terms of systemic determinants is an important question.

According to Ayyangar and Jacob (2014) [3], over a 30-year period (1980-2009), this research paper examines legislator behavior during Question Hour in India's lower house of parliament (the Lok Sabha). It proves that legislator activity varies significantly, with some Members of Parliament (MPs) remaining mute throughout their tenures (even as opposition MPs for complete Lok Sabha terms), while others make extensive use of Question Hour. Surprisingly, government backbenchers are only a few steps behind opposition MPs in terms of involvement. The research paper develops stylized facts on the relationship between three sets of covariates and the number of parliamentary questions answered by legislators: MPs' personal traits, legislative roles, and the states they represent. The picture that emerges is one in which symbolic and substantive representation are at odds. Despite greater symbolic representation, several groups, including women and Scheduled Tribe MPs, but not Scheduled Caste MPs, continue to underperform. At the same time, other groups-men and upper caste MPs, as well as younger MPs and those with a college education-use Question Hour more effectively. MPs from Orissa, Gujarat, and Maharashtra appear to participate more than MPs from Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and the Northeastern states, according to our findings.

Despite being the world's largest democracy, India's legislative processes have garnered significantly less scholarly attention than those of several other parliaments (Agarwal, 2005) [1]. According to both existing scholarship and popular opinion, while India's parliament is becoming more representational of the country's diverse democracy, this has not been matched by increased efficacy in the institution's deliberative functions.

Because it is the sole open plenary where MPs are not formally subject to party whip or other restrictions, the Lok Sabha's Question Hour is a particularly interesting legislative instrument of accountability. Despite its relevance in providing legislative oversight, it has never been thoroughly investigated (Arora, 2004) [2]. These data suggest that, while the Lok Sabha has become more

inclusive, this has not always translated into equal participation; some groups continue to be marginalized. Furthermore, we show that particular groups-such as men, non-STs, MPs with prior legislative experience, and MPs from specific states-seem to participate in greater scrutiny than others, to the extent that the volume of inquiries is a proxy for the extent of legislative monitoring. This indicates that the Lok Sabha's broad representation has not yet translated into equitable participation, and it appears that the Question Hour is a more effective tool of accountability for some groups than others.

As an exploratory effort with minimal data, this research project was performed largely to determine whether or not it was possible to make significant use of parliamentary questions in India's legislative research. There was no precise hypothesis that was put up for testing. However, in light of the findings of the other research on parliamentary questions, it was decided to look to the data for the answers to the following reasonable questions.

1. To measure the participation rate of political parties in process making of education policy
2. To evaluate the role of regional and national parties in making the process of education policy
3. To assess the region-wise participation rate in making the process of education policy
4. To measure the relationship between the creation of educational policy and participation rate of political parties of India

Questioning in Indian Parliament

When the Indian legislature began to question members of the executive after a long period of constitutional development, the practice was known as "questioning of the executive." The extent and amount of question posed on the floor of the former imperial legislature rapidly expanded as the colonial legislature became more democratic over time. In India, the legislatures have enacted detailed regulations surrounding the procedure for asking questions, which are currently in effect. It is important to note a few of the other rules for the purposes of this discussion. According to these rules, all questions, with the exception of those that are submitted on short notice, must be submitted by the participants at least 10 days in advance. Depending on what the questioner wants, questions can be answered either verbally on the floor of the house or with written responses,

which can be delivered to them. The only exception is that no member is allowed to ask more than three oral questions per day. It is the presiding officer of the house who ultimately decides whether or not such a question is acceptable, and he or she is advised by a set of rules established by the legislature. These rules emphasize that the questions must be geared toward obtaining information from the government and must be related to the considerations of the level of government involved in the investigation. So questions pertaining to matters that are strictly within the jurisdiction of a state government would not be permitted to be raised in the Union parliament. Questions must not be interpreted as recommendations to the government for action.

Methodology

To obtain the results for the decided objectives, it is suitable to use non-experimental research methods, where the dependent variable is educational policy and the independent variable is considered as the participation rate of political parties. This will decide how the ideologies and participation of different parties shape the educational policy and its formation.

With this research methodology, it would be helpful to understand the individual participation rate of political parties, the role of regional and national parties, and region-wise participation in making the process of education policy.

To obtain the results, 177 questions of 17th Lok Sabha (Legislature assembly) have been analyzed. To understand the process questions have been categorized in five categories (Srivastava, 2020) [18] as follows: Setting Standard, Planning, Asset Creation, Operation and Maintenance and Monitoring and Evaluation

The original questions were content - analyzed on the basis of their manifest content. The data was analyzed using frequency tabulations only, which was a limitation. Because the data was so limited, it was determined that no statistical tests were necessary.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Before beginning with the analysis of data, it is necessary to understand the distribution of Lok Sabha seats among parties:

Table 1: Party Position in Lok Sabha

S. No.	Party Name	No. of Members
1	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	301
2	Indian National Congress (INC)	52
3	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)	24
4	Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSR Congress Party)	22
5	All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)	22
6	Shiv Sena (SS)	18
7	Janata Dal (United)(JD(U))	16
8	Biju Janata Dal (BJD)	12
9	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)	10
10	Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS)	9
11	Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJSP)	6
12	Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)	5
13	Samajwadi Party (SP)	5
14	Others*	38

*Includes 24 political parties which have either 3 or 2 or 1 member in Lok Sabha

Note: Authors' calculation using Lok Sabha Questions from http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/Qtextsearch.aspx From above data, it can be inferred that Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have majority of the seats in Lok Sabha. Now let us understand the distribution of 177 questions used for analysis of parliamentary questions. In addition, there are 16 political parties which had zero questions in 17th Lok Sabha.

Table 2: Distribution of analyzed questions according to the political parties

S. No.	Political Parties	No. of ques.
1	BJP	88
2	Indian National Congress	28
3	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	13
4	Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party	9
5	All India Trinamool Congress	5
6	Communist Party of India	5
7	Biju Janata Dal	4
8	Nationalist Congress party	3
9	Shiv Sena	3
10	Telangana Rashtra Samithi	3
11	Indian Union Muslim League	3
12	Janata Dal	2
13	Bahujan Samaj Party	2
14	All India United Democratic Front	1
15	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	1
16	All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen	1
17	Telugu Desam Party	1
18	Lok Jan Shakti Party	1
19	Revolutionary Socialist Party	1
20	Independent	1
21	Indhiya Jananayaga Katchi	1
22	Congress Jananayaka Peravai	1

Note: Authors' calculation using Lok Sabha Questions from http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/Qtextsearch.aspx

From the above table it is possible to draw the inference that the questions in 17th Lok Sabha came from both side of the aisle. It can be said that questioner will ask the question whether their party is in power or not. A more interesting pattern emerges, when we examine the distribution of 177 questions included in our analysis among the parties.

Table 3: Distribution of persistent questioners according to their party affiliation

S. No.	Political Parties	Number of questions	No. of questioners	Average No. of question per person
1	BJP	88	63	1.3
2	Indian National Congress	28	19	1.4
3	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	13	9	1.4
4	Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party	9	7	1.2
5	All India Trinamool Congress	5	5	1
6	Communist Party of India	5	3	1.6
7	Biju Janata Dal	4	2	2
8	Nationalist Congress Party	3	2	1.5
9	Shiv Sena	3	2	1.5
10	Telangana Rashtra Samithi	3	2	1.5
11	Indian Union Muslim League	3	2	1.5
12	Janata Dal	2	2	1
13	Bahujan Samaj Party	2	2	1
14	All India United Democratic Front	1	1	1
15	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	1	1	1
16	All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen	1	1	1
17	Telugu Desam Party	1	1	1
18	Lok Jan Shakti Party	1	1	1
19	Revolutionary Socialist Party	1	1	1
20	Independent	1	1	1
21	Indhiya Jananayaga Katchi	1	1	1
22	Congress Jananayaka Peravai	1	1	1
	Total	177	129	1.37

Note: Authors' calculation using Lok Sabha Questions from http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/Qtextsearch.aspx

The above table indicates that in general "Communist Party of India" tend to ask more questions per person than others.

It appears that average number of questions per person asked is lower with BJP as compared to Indian National

Congress, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Nationalist Congress Party, Shiv Sena, Telangana Rashtra Samithi and Indian Union Muslim League.

Since these 177 educational questions are analyzed considering them in five categories: Setting Standard,

Planning, Asset Creation, Operation and Maintenance and Monitoring and Evaluation. It is important to understand how these questions can help in understanding the area of development in the following table:

Table 4: Questions variety as per the concerns of legislative questions

S. No.	Nature of concerns	Type of questions asked as per the concerns
1	Setting Standard	whether the Government proposes to formulate any policy to make the Social Work subject popular; whether the Government is aware that the National Education Policy 2020, unfortunately, does not seem to even acknowledge what the constitution mandates for all its children; whether the Railways is considering to educate its officials on internet ethics, cyber hygiene and best practices in the use of IT equipment, including mobile phones;
2	Planning	the steps taken by the Government for quality education of children during COVID - 19 in various districts of Uttar Pradesh including Prayagraj; the details of the steps taken to impart quality education to the children of Scheduled Tribes and poor families who do not possess smart mobile phones?;
3	Asset Creation	whether the Government is aware of the rising shadow gig economy in education sector, where students are being robbed by online fake educational institutions, many of which operates from outside India; whether the Government proposes to inculcate Artificial Intelligence (AI) for better educational transformation at secondary and higher secondary level; whether the Government proposes to formulate any scheme to promote Sanskrit and Moral education in all schools/educational institutions;
4	Operation and Maintenance	whether the 15th Finance Commission has allocated Rs.5,000 crores for promotion of online education in the country; whether huge disparity exist in education level of various Universities in the country; whether the Government is aware of persistent media reports of substandard education & food, sexusl assault, and deaths, reported in Government-run residential schools for tribals;
5	Monitoring and Evaluation	whether the Government has implemented any new scheme for the educational upliftment of minority communities in the country after 2014 and if so, the details thereof; whether the Government is providing higher education loan for various courses like MBA, MBBS, BTech etc. to Scheduled Castes (SCs) students at zero interest rate; whether the Government is having any proposal to create higher education fund?;

Note: Authors' calculation using Lok Sabha Questions from http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/Qtextsearch.aspx

From the above table, it can be inferred that legislative questions related to education can be broadly categorized in five categories as mentioned above.

Table 5: Questions under each category

S. No.	Nature of concern	Percentage of no. of questions	No. of questions
1	Setting Standard	28%	49
2	Planning	13%	23
3	Asset Creation	5%	9
4	Operation and Maintenance	23%	41
5	Monitoring and Evaluation	31%	55

Note: Authors' calculation using Lok Sabha Questions from http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/Qtextsearch.aspx

From table V, it can be inferred that out of 177 questions, 31% questions have been asked in "Monitoring and Evaluation", 28% sitting standard, 23% Operation and Maintenance, 13% Planning, and 5% Asset creation.

It can be understood that political parties focus more monitoring and evaluation as compared to asset creation. However, few studies show that asset creation is the need of the hour in the field of education. Further, this leads to two different situations: Either government is least interested in creating new asset and focuses on the improvement of "Monitoring and Evaluation" area or it might be the case of budget allocation from the central government to state government which can be justified by saying that out of these 177 questions, 28% of questions asked by Regional Party and 72% of questions asked by National Party.

In addition to this, Region wise participation can be derived from the analyzed questions in below table.

Table 6: Region-wise participation rate in Legislative Assembly

S. No.	Region	Participation Rate
1	South	42%
2	West	17%
3	East	13%
4	North	23%
5	Nort-East	4%
6	Union Territories	1%

Note: Authors' calculation using Lok Sabha Questions from http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/Qtextsearch.aspx

From the table VI, it can be deduced that highest percent of questions have been asked from south region and lowest percent of questions have been asked from Union territories. It provides two aspects of participation rate: firstly, region wise budget allocation varies and secondly, awareness of different schemes provided by the government for the upliftment of the education sector might vary.
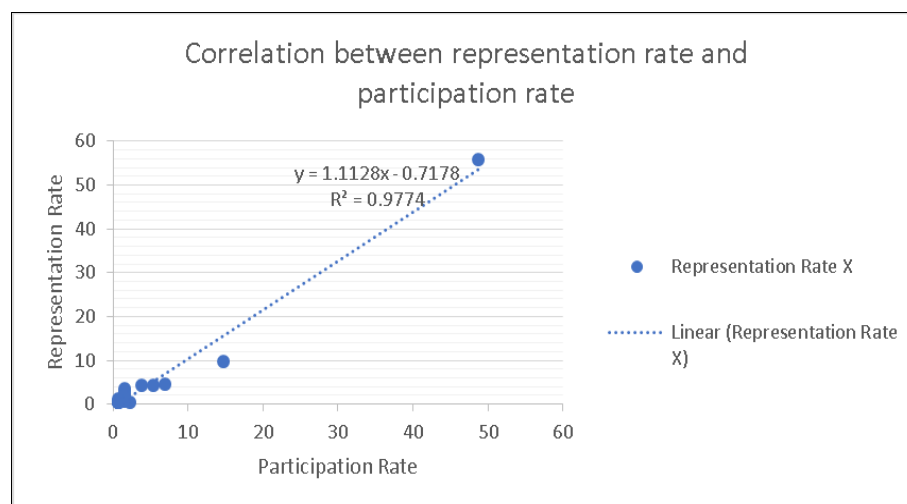
Table 7: Representation and Participation Rate of Political Parties

S. No.	Political Parties	Participation Rate Y	Representation Rate X
1	BJP	48.83	55.74
2	Indian National Congress	14.72	9.63
3	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	6.97	4.44
4	Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party	5.42	4.07
5	All India Trinamool Congress	3.87	4.07
6	Communist Party of India	2.32	0.37
7	Biju Janata Dal	1.55	2.22
8	Nationalist Congress party	1.55	0.93
9	Shiv Sena	1.55	3.33
10	Telangana Rashtra Samithi	1.55	1.67
11	Indian Union Muslim League	1.55	0.56
12	Janata Dal	1.55	2.96
13	Bahujan Samaj Party	1.55	1.85
14	All India United Democratic Front	0.77	0.19
15	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	0.77	0.19
16	All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen	0.77	0.37
17	Telugu Desam Party	0.77	0.56
18	Lok Jan Shakti Party	0.77	1.11
19	Revolutionary Socialist Party	0.77	0.19
20	Independent	0.77	0.56
21	Indhiya Jananayaga Katchi	0.77	0.19
22	Congress Jananayaka Peravai	0.77	0.19

Note: Authors' calculation using Lok Sabha Questions from http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/Qtextsearch.aspx

From Table VII, we can understand about the relation between dependent variable that is participation rate and independent variable that is representation rate can be. From table VII, correlation between representation rate and participation rate can be derived.

Fig 1: Correlation between representation rate and participation rate

Note: Authors' calculation using Lok Sabha Questions from http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/Qtextsearch.aspx

Table 8: Regression Statistics

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.988616194
R Square	0.977361979
Adjusted R Square	0.976230078
Standard Error	1.803444887
Observations	22

Note: Authors' calculation using Lok Sabha Questions from http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/Qtextsearch.aspx

From Table VIII, it can be seen that the value of R square is .973 and value of adjusted R square is .976. Through above analysis, two results can be deduced: firstly, there is higher degree of correlation between representation rate and participation rate. Secondly, higher the representation rate, higher the participation rate. This indicates degree of concentration of ruling party in policy making process and giving Small parties should also get rights in the debate of policy matters and this is also necessary for the democratic process.

Conclusion
Before we arrive at any conclusions, the limitations of the data involved, have to be borne in mind. Table VIII

represent higher degree of correlation between participation rate and representation rate. It shows that if given chance to minor political parties of a greater number of seats in lok sabha or higher number of seats in legislative assembly assigned to multiple political parties, the participation rate would be higher. It further reveals that the number of questions asked in a particular category does not relate to the number of participants from specific political party in this category. For instance, in table V, in our sample majority of the questions asked are related to "Monitoring and Evaluation" but it does not relate to the number of participants involved from different political parties.

When it comes to the Legislatures, a comparative study of questioning behavior appears to have some potential for comparative study of legislative bodies in India. It may also make it possible to compare Parliamentary bodies across different countries, at least among those that follow the procedure of interpellation or questions.

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