DOES THE INDIAN ELECTORATE BENCHMARK PARLIAMENTARY PERFORMANCE?

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ABSTRACT

The Indian electorate elects the Members of Parliament (MP) to represent them in the biggest forum of Indian democracy – the Parliament. The MPs represent the people's hopes and aspirations and play a key role in furthering the voters' social and economic welfare. However, does the electorate consider their representative's performance when casting their ballot? I hypothesize that parliamentary performance does not play any role in an MP's chance of re-election. Using data on the 2019 general election results, I show that parliamentary performance in the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19) - measured by the number of questions, the private member legislations, attendance, gender, age, the term of office, debates participated did not enhance the likelihood of a representative parliamentarian to get re-elected. From a policy perspective, my findings underscore the importance of decline in the spirit of parliamentary democracy. This also hints at the significance of other mechanisms such as social biases, cash-based vote-buying, and campaign financing, which might play a far more important role in determining a policymaker's destiny in Indian politics.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of India is a federal union with 28 States and 8 Union Territories (UT). The Parliament of India is the supreme legislative body, and it comprises the two Houses - Rajya Sabha (Council of States) and Lok Sabha (House of the People). While the Rajya Sabha is a permanent body where the representatives are elected by an indirect election method[1], the Lok Sabha comprises representatives of people chosen by direct election based on Universal Adult Suffrage. The House of the People's current strength is 543 members representing the States and the UT.

Seventeen General Elections to the Lok Sabha have been held since India's independence in 1947. In a representative election, 800 million Indian citizens cast their ballots, making India the world's largest democracy. The increased participation of the people over the elections stands testimony to the successful working of Indian democracy. An array of political parties, regional diversities, and societal cleavages make India's Lok Sabha elections unprecedented and exciting. According to the Centre for Media Studies, political parties and candidates spent around 8 billion USD during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The Members of Parliament (MPs) represent the hopes and aspirations of the people and play a key role in furthering the social and economic welfare of Indian citizens.

As people's representatives, MPs have four key roles: Debate and pass laws that govern the country, oversee the work of the Government to ensure effective governance, guarantee efficient allocation of public resources, be an active voice of the electorate in Parliament (Sinha, A. and Kanwar, S 2019). The fulfillment of this mandate depends on the effective participation of MPs in

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[1] The people (electorate) do not directly elect the Members of the Rajya Sabha. Members representing States are elected by elected members of the respective States' legislative assemblies under the system of proportional representation. Members representing UT are chosen in such a manner as Parliament by law prescribes. The term for a Rajya Sabha (RS) member is six years. The RS is not subject to dissolution and one-third of RS members retire every second year.

Parliament proceedings. Participation in Parliament includes attending parliament sessions, asking questions to the executive, participating in debates, and introducing private member legislations.

The Indian electorate elects the Members of Parliament to represent them in the biggest forum of Indian democracy – the Parliament. While a few Members of Parliament participated in more than 500 debates during the previous tenure of the Lok Sabha (2014-19), as many as 28 members did not participate in a single debate, and 40 MPs did not ask a single question during the five years (Krishnan, V. B. and Deepalakshmi 2019). So, my research question is, does the Indian electorate take the performance of their representative into account while voting? Is greater participation of MPs in Lok Sabha associated with a higher probability of getting re-elected?

My hypothesis is: Parliamentary intervention does not play a statistically significant role in getting re-elected. The reason for my hypothesis is reflected in the reduced Parliamentary session sittings and legislative business[2] and the decline in the Indian Parliament as an effective institution of accountability (Verma and Tripathi 2013). Moreover, previous studies on Indian voting behavior indicates that the cash-based vote-buying, social biases, financial and human resources available for a political party, political campaign expenditure, corruption, national security, and public sentiment play a vital role in influencing the behavior of a voter (Hazarak 2015; Banerjee, Kumar, et al. 2011; Vaishnav 2015). For most of these attributes, it is not easy to get an exact quantitative estimate. Therefore, given that 70 percent of the Indian electorate are in villages, with nearly 35 percent not having a television (Kaushik 2019), I believe that the socio-economic factors mentioned above outweigh Parliamentary performance in electoral success.

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[2] The 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19) had 331 session days, whereas on average, previous full-term Lok Subhas had 468 session days. Session days are the number of days the Parliament is in session during the five years.

I answer the above research question by exploring the relationship between parliamentary interventions during the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19) and the incumbent candidates' electoral success in the 2019 general elections. Using data on the 2019 general election results, my analysis of the 16th Lok Sabha indicates that Party affiliation to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) plays a dominating role in determining the political fate of a candidate. Parliamentary performance - measured by the number of questions, the private member legislations, attendance, gender, age, the term of office, debates participated for each member of the 16th Lok Sabha does not enhance the likelihood of an MP's re-election. According to my estimations, being a member of the BJP increases the chance to win the re-election by 30 percent.

From a policy perspective, my findings underscore the importance of decline in the spirit of parliamentary democracy. Certain parliamentary practices recently followed, such as reduced legislative business hours, the Government increasingly resorting to ordinances[3] bypassing multiple layers of scrutiny, the reduced number of legislations sent to parliamentary committees for examination are a few parameters that highlight the declining trend in Indian Parliament as an effective legislative institution which will have a wide-ranging impact on the lives of every citizen.

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[3] Ordinances are special legislative powers using which Government can enact laws through the President only when the Parliament is not in session. Ordinances can be promulgated when the President "is satisfied" and that there are circumstances that require taking "immediate action".

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE

Several published works look at various models to determine electoral outcomes. Some of them include - Individual attributes such as criminal charges and wealth of an incumbent candidate (Duraisamy and Jérôme 2017), individual and village characteristics (Besley, Pande and Rao 2005), caste and religious identification (Banerjee, Gethin and Piketty 2019). Economic development and corruption: Economic voting (Arel-Bundock, Blais and Dassonneville 2021), political corruption (Banerjee and Pande 2007), targeted welfare and electoral outcomes (Khemani 2004), and illicit election finance (Kapur and Vaishnav 2013). Information campaigns including political advertisements (Sohal and Kaur 2018), minority government performance in parliamentary democracies (Strom 1985), and the correlation between re-selection and re-election of parliamentarians with their parliamentary work in Europe (Papp and Russo 2018). However, there is little literature on the relationship between Parliamentary performance and electoral success in India.

While analyzing the Indian Parliament as an Institution of Accountability, a study stated that there had been a decline in Parliament's effectiveness as an institution of accountability and oversight over several years (Kapur and Mehta 2006). Another study by the former vice-chairman of NITI Aayog (a policy think tank of the Government of India), Dr. Arvind Panagariya, noted that while individual characteristics of a legislator matter, the most significant effect on electoral outcomes are influenced by the incumbent party's performance measured by economic growth. The incumbent candidates who delivered high growth and development in states were rewarded in parliamentary elections (Gupta and Panagariya 2014). A similar evaluation in India established that the incumbents belonging to the ruling party had greater chances of winning and improving

their vote share. In particular, the political party incumbency effects had a more considerable effect on election success than criminality and wealth status (Duraisamy and Jérôme 2017).

A post-electoral survey analysis for national and state elections in India from 1962-2014 underlined caste and religious identity as one of the essential drivers of voter choice during this period (Banerjee, Gethin and Piketty 2019). Research also suggests that such an identification based on caste and religion negatively affects the legislator's quality and leads to a higher incidence of political corruption (Banerjee and Pande 2007). Recent studies showed the increased influence of social media, which augmented voter engagement, especially among the young and educated voters (Sohal and Kaur 2018).

While several factors mentioned above might influence voting decisions, my study contributes to the existing literature by estimating the impact of Parliamentary performance on the incumbent candidates' re-election. Further, I also establish the relationship between Parliamentary performance and getting a party nomination to contest the election.

CHAPTER 3. THEORY

Members of Parliament hold an important position in Indian parliamentary democracy. With 543 MPs from 28 States and 8 UTs representing 1.3 billion people, a Lok Sabha MP represents 2.5 million people on average. By asking questions, participating in debates, introducing private member legislation, and raising their constituents' concerns, MPs play a vital role in holding the government accountable and ensuring that the concerned Ministry officials address peoples' concerns. The MPs' responsibility is to make laws and raise matters of public importance on various aspects. Parliamentary interventions and discussions have a substantial impact on a wide range of subjects such as health, education, agriculture, internal security, infrastructure, among others. A well-informed MP can participate in the House and determine the shape of the law and constituency.

I analyze whether the relationship between Lok Sabha members' parliamentary performance and their re-election prospects is statistically significant. This is to determine if the greater participation of Parliamentarians in the Lok Sabha is associated with a higher probability of electoral success.

My hypothesis is: Parliamentary intervention does not play a statistically significant role in getting re-elected.

According to an analysis by PRS Legislative Research, the 16th Lok Sabha worked for 1,615 hours from June 2014 to February 2019. This was 20 percent more than the 15th Lok Sabha (2009-14). However, the working hours are 40 percent lesser than the average working hours of all the previous full-term Lok Sabha tenures (2,689 hours). Moreover, there has been a typical decrease in the number of days a Parliament is in session. The 16th Lok Sabha, in total, had 331 session days. On average, all the previous full-term Lok Sabha had on average 468 session days. A similar scenario is witnessed in the state legislatures where, on average, state assemblies across the country

meet for less than 30 days in a year. In addition to the decline in legislative business hours, research in India indicates that the information gap on candidates' policy positions, participation in Parliament, and other performance metrics lead many voters to vote along with the social factors (Kundu 2020). Moreover, the rise in illicit money and campaign financing, alcohol distribution, gifting precious metals including gold and silver, and various other measures taken by the candidates to influence their voters during the elections might play a more significant role than an MPs parliamentary participation. The Election Commission seized more than 44 million USD of illicit Alcohol, 122 million USD unaccounted cash, 143 million USD worth of precious metals during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections (Reuters 2019).

CHAPTER 4. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

The data is provided by PRS Legislative Research, an Indian non-profit organization, and comprises all the members elected during the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19). The information includes the name of the member, term of office, political party, state, gender, number of debates participated, number of questions, number of private member bills, attendance percentage. Therefore, I am gauging members' performance in the Lok Sabha between 2014 to 2019 with reelection prospects in the 2019 general elections. The detailed variable description is provided in Appendix Table 1.

I use ordinary least squares (OLS) and logistic regression methods where the probability of candidate successfully running for office is the dependent variable. To measure the parliamentary performance, I rely on several indicators such as the number of questions asked, attendance of members, number of debates participated, number of private member legislation tabled for each member of the 16th Lok Sabha. My subsequent models focus on adding individual characteristics – age, the term of office, and party affiliation as additional controls. Model 5 and Model 6 include the Political party and State Fixed Effects. The specification of my model is given below:[4]

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i + \beta_i \sum_{j=2}^{n} X_j + \gamma + \delta + \varepsilon_i$$

Where Y_i is the binary dependent variable – CandidateWin, which is coded 1 if the member won the 2019 general elections, and 0 if the member lost the election or failed to secure the party nomination. This measures the electoral outcomes for the members of the 16th Lok Sabha based

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[4] This specification is for the LPM model. The logit specification will be different.

on their performance in Parliament. The 2019 general election results for each member are available on the Election Commission of India website.

X_i denotes the key Parliamentary performance attributes as primary dependent variables. They are the log of the number of questions asked by the members (Questions (log)), the number of session days attended in percentage (Attendance), the log of the number of debates participated (Debates (log)), and the number of private member legislation introduced (Legislations). Thus, I am relying on quantitative performance measures. The data for these variables are obtained from PRS Legislative Research which has compiled the information on Parliamentary performance for each MP in the 16th Lok Sabha.

Generally, the first hour of a Lok Sabha sitting is devoted to the Questions during which MPs ask questions on every aspect of administration and Governmental activity, and it is an inherent and unfettered parliamentary right of the members. Government policies come into sharp focus as MPs seek pertinent information during the Question Hour. The number of questions asked by the MPs in the 16th Lok Sabha ranged from 0 to 1186, with an average being 262. Due to such a large variation, I have taken the logarithmic transformation.

The number of session days attended by the members' measures the days a member attended the Parliament during the session in percentage terms. An inspection of the data shows that Members who had greater than 75 percent of attendance in Parliament, on average, participated in 76 debates, asked 293 questions, and tabled nearly 3 legislations. However, members who had less than 60 percent of attendance, on average, participated in 13 debates, asked 128 questions, and tabled less than one private member legislation. While over 410 members had greater than 75 percent attendance, 70 members had less than 60 percent attendance. This shows that the majority of the

MPs were proactive, and members who attended the Parliament session regularly participated more frequently.

The members may raise and debate various issues. Some of the debates are voted upon by the House and some are discussed with no successive voting. The debates include participation in government legislations, private member resolutions, discussion on matters of urgent public importance, among others. The number of debates participated by MPs during the term of the 16th Lok Sabha ranged from 0 to 2095 with 60 being the average. Therefore, I have taken the logarithmic transformation to improve the fit of the model.

The private member bills are an essential aspect of law-making where a Member (who is not a Union Minister) introduces a legislation to draw the government's attention to important issues requiring legislative intervention. The number of private member legislation introduced in the Lok Sabha by a member ranged from 0 to 48.

X_j represents the additional controls about a member's individual attributes such as age, gender, term of office, and political party affiliation. The reason for including these controls is to determine if these traits have a significant role in Parliamentary performance or re-election prospects.

CHAPTER 5. RESULTS

Model (1) OLS shows the re-election outcomes when regressed with the key Parliamentary interventions such as log number of questions (Questions (log)), attendance of members in percentage (Attendance), log number of debates (Debates (log)), number of private member legislation (Legislation). The private member legislations and attendance are positively correlated with the re-election possibility, but the reported point estimates are rather small. An increase in the number of private member legislations by one increased the re-election possibility by less than 1 percent holding other variables in the model constant. Model (2) OLS is an extended version of Model (1) after adding the controls relating to a Members' individual characteristics such as age, gender, and term of office. Results show that the individual attributes had little influence on Parliamentary performance or re-election outcomes of the members.

Model (3) and Model (4) include the political party affiliation. BJP is a binary variable which is 1 if a member is affiliated with the ruling BJP or 0 otherwise. Indian National Congress (INC) is 1 for all members of the INC and 0 otherwise. Others are 1 if a member is not affiliated to either BJP or INC. Model (5) and Model (6) include the State Fixed Effects (FE), and State and Political Party FE, respectively.

The Political Party FE control for features such as Party Whip[5] which vary across political parties, however, remain fixed for every member belonging to a particular political party. Political parties issue whips to their members to either vote for or against the bill, based on their party line. When the whip is issued, the MPs should attend the Parliament and obey the whip or else risk losing their

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[5] A whip is a directive from the political party that binds the party members of a House to attend the session and obey the line of the party. The members lose party membership if they are not present inside the house at the time of the voting on important legislation/government business or as indicated by the party.

seat in Parliament. More Whips issued by a political party will necessarily increase the attendance and other parliamentary performance metrics. The ruling BJP often issued Whips while passing the annual Finance Bill and voting on important legislations. During a discussion on the no-confidence motion, almost all the parties including the main opposition INC issued Whips to its members to vote in favor or against the Government.

Similarly, the State FE control for attributes such as "State Assembly Election" which vary across different states but remain mostly fixed for every member of a state regardless of the political party. For example, if there is a state assembly election in Maharashtra, most of the Lok Sabha members from Maharashtra, irrespective of the member being part of BJP, INC, etc., will be campaigning in Maharashtra for their local candidates than attending Parliament session in Delhi.

While Model (1) used OLS, Model (7) is logistic regression. Since CandidateWin is a binary variable, logistic regression is applied as a robustness check to measure the log odds of the outcome when modeled as a linear combination of the independent variables. Although the magnitude of coefficients in the table is different in Model (1) and Model (7), the predicted probabilities of logistic regression in Model (7) are similar to the magnitudes obtained through OLS in Model (1).

The results show that parliamentary interventions are not statistically significant at conventional levels to determine the reelection prospects of an incumbent MP. Being affiliated with the ruling BJP is associated with more than 30 percent increase in the possibility of getting reelected. Although the private member legislation and age are statistically significant, their magnitude is small.[6] The analysis suggests that Parliamentary performance has little impact on members' reelection.

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[6] The mean age of the members in the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19) was 58.4 years. The mean age difference between candidates who won the re-election (56.24) and the candidates who lost the re-election (59.6) is 3.5 years.

Table 1: Results analyzed for the 16th Lok Sabha[7]

	Dependent Variable: CandidateWin						
	OLS						Logit
Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Questions (log)	0.005	0.002	-0.004	-0.004	-0.001	0.003	0.02
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.05)
Attendance	0.002*	0.003**	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	0.01*
	(0.014)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.006)
Debates (log)	0.01	0.008	0.033*	0.031*	0.037*	0.031	0.04
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.02)	(0.021)	(0.08)
Legislations	0.009**	0.009**	0.008*	0.008*	0.005	0.005	0.041**
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.02)
Age		- 0.007***	- 0.007***	- 0.007***	- 0.008***	- 0.008***	
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	
Term of office		0.01	0.013	0.012	0.014	0.027*	
		(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.015)	
Male		0.037	0.04	0.04			
		(0.07)	(0.064)	(0.06)			
BJP			0.322***	0.323***			
			(0.044)	(0.046)			
INC				0.01			
				(0.072)			
Constant	0.153	0.532***	0.67***	0.67***	0.672***	-0.225**	- 1.49***
	(0.11)	(0.156)	(0.15)	(0.151)	(0.238)	(0.391)	(0.52)
Party FE	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
State FE	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Observations	523	523	523	523	523	523	523
R-squared	0.03	0.054	0.142	0.142	0.289	0.366	

The dependent variable is CandidateWin for all the models. CandidateWin is a binary variable which is 1 if the candidate won the 2019 general elections and 0 if the member lost the election or failed to secure party nomination. Members who are union ministers are not included in the sample. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

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[7] Lok Sabha members who are Union Ministers are part of the Government. They do not ask questions or introduce private member legislation, and their attendance or debate participation information is not maintained. These members have been dropped from the regression model.

In Table 2, I dissect each of the key metrics of Parliamentary performance to identify the individual magnitude of the relationship of each of the performance metrics with the re-election prospects of an incumbent candidate. Due to collinearity, the magnitude of the indicators might get shadowed by other metrics, and a true measure of these indicators is hard to estimate. Therefore, in Model 1 of Table 2, I regress my dependent variable CandidateWin with the number of questions asked by the MPs. Similarly, in Model 2, I regress re-election outcomes with the number of debates participated by each member. Model 5 is an overall version which comprises all the indicators. In all the models of Table 2, I use the State and Political Party Fixed effects.

Table 2: Individual magnitude of the relationship with re-election

Dependent Variable: CandidateWin					
Variables	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Questions (log)	.029**				0.003
	(0.012)				(0.016)
Attendance					-0.001
					(0.002)
Debates (log)		0.042**			0.031
		(0.015)			(0.021)
Legislations			0.09**		0.005
			(0.004)		(0.004)
Age				-.447***	- 0.008***
				(0.108)	(0.002)
Term of office				.009	0.027*
				(0.015)	(0.015)
Male				.086	
				(0.064)	
Constant	-0.8	-0.838**	-0.68*	0.754***	-0.225**
	(0.03)	(0.361)	(0.39)	(0.102)	(0.391)
Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	523	523	523	550	523
R-squared	0.33	0.336	0.33	0.343	0.366

The dependent variable is CandidateWin for all the models estimated using OLS method. The Fixed Effect includes both the State FE and Political Party FE. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

The results suggest that each of these individual attributes when measured individually with candidates' re-election, becomes statistically significant even if the magnitude is small. This could be since a member attending Parliament more regularly is likely to ask more questions to the executive, frequently participate in debates which are colinear as explained.

Since Party affiliation to BJP played a dominating role in a candidates' re-election, in Table 1, I analyze the performance of BJP members on re-election. The results show that even among the 254 BJP MPs, their role in Parliament played a little impact on election outcomes.

Table 3: Parliamentary performance of BJP members and re-election outcomes

Variables	CandidateWin
Questions (log)	0.002
	(0.023)
Attendance	0
	(0.002)
Debates (log)	-0.05*
	(0.03)
Legislations	0.004
	(0.004)
Age	-0.008***
	(0.003)
Term of office	0.009
	(0.022)
Constant	0.98***
	(0.28)
Observations	254
R-squared	0.08

The dependent variable is CandidateWin. BJP members who are ministers have been dropped as they do not ask questions, or table private legislations. Robust standard errors in parentheses.
*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

CHAPTER 6. EXPLANATION

So, what explains these results? Several studies in India have indicated various factors that influence the voting behavior of an electorate, such as sociological (caste and religion), economic, national security, and region of residence (urban or rural) (Banerjee, Gethin and Piketty 2019; Vaishnav 2015). Scholars have also examined the models of economic voting where voters have rewarded or punished the incumbent candidate for the success or failure of the national economy and their economic situation (Dash and Ferris 2018; Verma 2012).

In India, during elections, several reports indicate the substantial increase in illicit money and campaign financing, alcohol distribution, saree distribution, and various other measures taken by the candidates to influence their voters (Chawla 2019; Reuters 2019). In Tamil Nadu, a southern state of India, the illicit cash seized by the Election Commission of India during the 2014 general elections was over 20 million USD (Pandey 2016). The case of Tamil Nadu is likely not an exception but might be an important driving force explaining the success of certain candidates, even considering their lousy performance. During the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, approximately 464 million USD worth of cash, drugs, and narcotics, liquor, precious metals - gold and silver, and other materials were seized by the enforcement agencies. The overall value of the confiscated goods is estimated to be 90 percent of the amount spent by the government to conduct the 2014 Lok Sabha elections (Rawat 2019).

The estimated expenditure to the Government for conducting the 16th Lok Sabha election was 5.5 billion USD, according to a 2019 report by the Centre for Media Studies. The Election Commission of India has fixed a cap on the amount of expenditure a candidate can incur during the election campaign, which is approximately 100,000 USD. However, on average, candidates contesting a Lok Sabha election spend around 1 million USD for their campaign. Buying votes by providing

cash, jewelry, alcohol, drugs, clothes, and other freebies to voters is widespread (Sahoo 2017). Most of the data, such as illicit money, alcohol, campaign money, are not maintained, and its influence on the electoral outcomes cannot be accurately estimated. Perhaps, the factors mentioned above tend to undermine the influence of Parliamentary participation in a candidate's re-election.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

Members of Parliament are expected to reflect public opinion and voice the concerns of their voters in Parliament through debates, legislations, and questions to the concerned ministers. Every minute of running a Parliament session is estimated to cost 3,500 USD to the exchequer (NDTV 2012). While it is the Parliamentarians' responsibility to attend sessions and actively participate, many Lok Sabha members do not give much importance to Parliamentary interventions. As all the members are ultimately accountable to their voters, the study analyzed the impact of Parliament's performance on electoral outcomes and getting a party renomination.

The results suggest that Party nomination plays a vital role in electoral success than Parliament's performance. Affiliation to the ruling BJP is associated with a 30 percent greater chance of getting re-elected. Further, the BJP party renomination of the incumbent candidate was not dependent on Parliamentary performance. Perhaps, the Indian electorate does not benchmark the Parliamentary performance.

Critical roles of Parliament include passing legislation and ensuring the Government's accountability through questions and debates. Policies and legislation proposed by the Government should see a practical counterpoint to refine and finalize a policy or a law. However, the declining trend in MPs participation in Parliament and Parliament as an Institution of Accountability can be attributed to lack of incentives to the Parliamentarians concerning the electoral outcomes.

The study's purpose is to determine if Performance in Parliament measured by quantitative outcomes had any role in re-election prospects. Although the research focus on the number of debates, questions asked, and legislations tabled, the study does not provide information on the type of debate. For example, a member participating in a controversial or more important debate might get more viewers' attention than a routine debate. In other words, the research does not

explore the qualitative aspect of Parliamentary Participation. In addition to that, as mentioned previously, it is challenging to get an exact estimate of factors such as cash-based vote-buying, social biases, political campaign expenditure, corruption, and other behavioral aspects which influence electoral outcomes. Due to this, the Parliamentary effect on re-election might get convoluted.

Continuous scrutiny by legislatures is central to improving governance in the country. However, with parliamentary performance having no significant impact on electoral outcomes, do MPs have any real incentive to care for their legislative responsibilities?

Evidence from India and other developing countries highlights that when information on candidates' policy positions and performance were provided to the voters through a credible source, they effectively increased the vote share for less corrupt and better performing candidates. For example, in India, information on politicians' performance provided to the households through report cards increased vote shares for better-performing incumbents (Banerjee et al., 2011).

Several studies have shown that information campaigns are an effective accountability mechanism by allowing the electorate to select better performing candidates and monitor incumbent candidates when they are in office (George, Gupta and Neggers 2018; Platas and Raffler 2018). Information campaigns tested rigorously shows that periodic voter engagement leads to a better selection of candidates.

Discourse and debates on national and state-level issues are vital for good governance and highlight Parliament sessions' significance. Members of Parliament are representatives of the people. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the importance of public awareness as it is their right to make their representatives accountable to them. It is time to leverage evidence, ensure

accountability of representative parliamentarian, and make every vote count. As the world's largest democracy, India must prosper and lead the way in good governance. Otherwise, the most vibrant democratic system will have the least effective, perhaps most dormant forum of Indian democracy – the Parliament.

APPENDIX: SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

Table A1. Variable Descriptions

Candidatewin	An incumbent member who won the reelection is coded 1 and 0 if the incumbent member lost or failed to get party re-nomination. Example: For a 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19) member, Candidatewin is coded 1 if the member won the 2019 general elections. 0 if the member lost the election or failed to secure party re-nomination.
Partywin	The incumbent party/alliance which won the reelection is coded 1 and 0 if the incumbent party/alliance lost the election. Example: A political party, "ABC," say it has won an election from Lok Sabha Constituency "X" in the 2014 general elections. Partywin is coded 1 if "ABC" won the 2019 general elections from the Lok Sabha Constituency "X." 0 if "ABC" lost the election.
Questions (log)	The number of questions asked by the members in the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19) ranged from 0 to 1186. Due to such a large variation, I have taken the logarithmic transformation to improve the fit of the model. Mean was 262 questions per member.
Attendance	The total number of days attended by the member of the overall number of Lok Sabha sittings in percentage terms during the Lok Sabha tenure. Attendance percentage of members ranged from 6 percent to 100 percent in the 15th Lok Sabha.
Debates(log)	Measures the total number of debates participated during the 16th Lok Sabha by a member. The number of debates during the term of the Lok Sabha has ranged from 0 to 2095. Due to such a large variation, I have taken the logarithmic transformation to improve the fit of the model.
Legislations	The number of private member legislation introduced in the Lok Sabha by a member. The number of private member legislations varied from 0 to 48.
Age	Age of the incumbent member. Age of the member ranged from 30 to 91.
Term of office	The number of times a member has been elected to the Lok Sabha. 1 refers to the First time and 9 is the Ninth time. (Range 1 to 9)
Male	1 if the incumbent member of parliament is male. 0 if female.
BJP: INC: Others:	1 for BJP members 1 for Indian National Congress Members 1 for all members not belonging to BJP or INC.

Table A2. Descriptive Statistics 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19)

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	Median	SD	N
Age	30	91	58.4	59	11.57	569
Term of Office	1	9	1.91	1	1.54	569
Debates	0	2095	60.04	30	137.58	542
Questions	0	1186	262.42	219	249.09	542
Private Legislations	0	48	2.05	0	5.41	542
Attendance Percentage	6	100	79.57	84	16.56	542
Candidate Win	0	1	0.436	0	0.496	550
Male	0	1	0.88	1	0.324	569

* SD: Standard Deviation, N: Number of MPs

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