

Child Focussed Questions in Parliament In 2012



HAQ: Centre for Child Rights



One third of the population of India are children below the age of 18 years. They are citizens of this country. Even though they do not vote, they have all rights as equal citizens of the country. How concerned are our parliamentarians about them- after all they represent them too.

To understand this, since 2003, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights has been analysing the questions asked in Parliament. How many and how frequently are children's issues raised in Parliament? Who raises them? What are the issues that concern our MPs?

In 2012, only 3.5 % questions in all three sessions were about children.

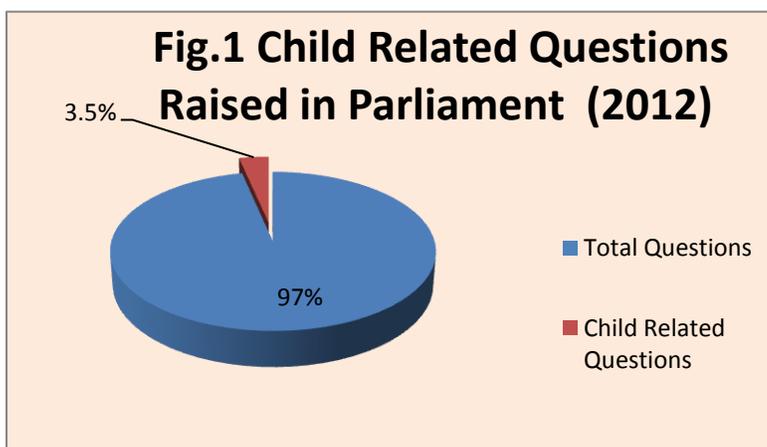


Table 1 shows the questions raised in the three sessions of Parliament i.e. Budget, Monsoon and Winter¹.

Table 1 Child Focused Questions in all sessions of Parliament- 2012						
House	Budget Session		Monsoon Session		Winter Session	
	Starred + Unstarred	Child Related	Starred + Unstarred	Child Related	Starred + Unstarred	Child Related
Lok Sabha	8250	265	5000	124	5611	167
Rajya Sabha	5775	320	3499	129	3542	104

Source: parliamentofindia.nic.in

¹ This analysis is based on the questions raised in the three sessions of Parliament, 2012. Information for the analysis has been obtained from website www.parliamentofindia.nic.in

Key Findings

- The maximum number of questions related to children was raised in the Budget Session (4.17 %). Of which 265 questions were raised in the Rajya Sabha and 320 in the Lok Sabha.
- Of the four sectors into which the questions have been classified, the maximum questions (602) were related to education and least attention was paid to development.
- Issues with the education sector related to quality of education, mid-day meals and implementation of the Right to Education Act and inclusion.
- Within the protection sector the issues covered were crimes against children , abuse in institutions for children, child marriage, child labour, and juvenile justice.

How interested are our MPs on children's issues?

That only 3.5 % questions concerned children in 2012 is not a new phenomenon. As table 2 shows, our Members of Parliament have shown very little interest in children in the past too. The maximum number of questions regarding children were raised in 2008, in a year when there was no winter session.

Year	Budget			Monsoon			Winter			Percentage of child-focused questions in the year
	Total	Child		Total	Child		Total	Child		
		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%	
2003	13602	401	2.95	8246	235	2.84	6379	207	3.2	3.00
2004	7326	232	3.16	NA	NA	NA	6929	213	3.07	3.12
2005	14913	423	2.84	8753	202	2.31	9054	177	1.95	2.45
2006	10182	270	2.65	7787	240	3.08	7925	141	1.78	2.51
2007	11882	471	4.00	7462	280	3.75	6113	185	3.02	3.67
2008	10856	441	4.06	6423	331	5.15	NA	NA	NA	4.47
2010	13528	355	2.62	10057	276	2.74	10420	244	2.34	2.57
2012	14025	585	4.17	8499	253	2.97	9153	271	2.96	3.50

² Source- HAQ: Centre for Child Rights, Says a Child..... Who speaks for my Rights? Parliament in 2008: Budget & Monsoon Sessions (for year 2003- 2008) and updated for year 2010 & 2012.

Which are the issues that concern our MPs?

We have divided the questions into four sectors- education, health, development and protection.

Sector	Budget Session	Monsoon Session	Winter Session	Total
Protection	40	42	54	136
Education	182	52	90	324
Health	28	24	15	67
Development	15	6	8	29
Total	265	124	167	556

Sector	Budget Session	Monsoon Session	Winter Session	Total
Protection	91	42	32	165
Education	169	50	59	278
Health	44	17	11	72
Development	16	20	2	38
Total	320	129	104	553

As always, education sector among four sectors received the maximum attention during the year 2012. Out of the total 556 questions asked in Lok Sabha and the 553 asked in Rajya Sabha; 324 and 278 respectively were on Education (Table 3 A and B). The sector-wise detail on the questions asked is given in the tables below.

As we analyse the children issues that Parliamentarians were concerned about in 2012, it is important to also critically look at their performance.

Our Parliamentarians utilised approximately 57 hours of the 146 allocated for the question hour in both the Houses. 36% of the allocated time was lost due to disruptions in 2012.³ The attendance of Members of Parliament in 2012 on an average was 78% in both houses.

Lakhs of taxpayers' money is spent on running a day's session in Parliament. Disruption not only results in ineffective use of public money but also affects Parliaments capacity to make laws.

'Each minute of Parliament in sessions costs Rs. 2.5 lakh'

PTI New Delhi, September 07, 2012

Each minute of running Parliament during sessions costs the exchequer Rs. 2.5 lakh. This was reminded by the government to the Opposition as the monsoon session of Parliament was almost completely washed out over the controversy on coal block allocations with BJP insistent on Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's resignation.

"In one year, Parliament runs for eighty days during sessions. Each day, business in both Houses is transacted for around six hours. If we take into account the total annual expenditure on Parliament, then for each minute of running the House costs Rs. 2.5 lakh," Parliamentary affairs minister Pawan Kumar Bansal said.

He said 77% of the session's business time in Lok Sabha and 72% in Rajya Sabha was lost due to disruptions in this session and asked the Opposition to realize that "enough is enough".

Bansal said Parliament will lose its relevance and significance if only disruptions take place in the House.

Minister of State for Planning Ashwini Kumar said "lakhs of rupees of taxpayers' money has been spent on everyday in the stalled procedure of Parliament, which has not been accounted for".



<http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/Each-minute-of-Parliament-in-sessions-costs-Rs-2-5-lakh/Article1-926235.aspx>

³ PRS Legislative Research, Vital Stats: Parliament in 2012 <http://www.prsindia.org/parliamenttrack/vital-stats/parliament-in-2012-2621/>

It is unfortunate that accountability to the citizens, whom they represent, never seems to cross our Parliamentarians minds.

The attention that children’s issues get is as we have seen, so less that they do not seem to figure on the Parliamentarians minds when they disrupt the Houses.

Child Focussed Questions raised in Parliament: Some Glimpses

Session	Protection	Education	Health	Development
Budget	<p>Crime against Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases of missing children on the rise • Kidnapping of School going children • Cases of child abuse in the country <p style="text-align: center;">Children in Armed Conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding United Nations Report titled ‘Children and Armed Conflict’ and situation in India <p style="text-align: center;">Child Labour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Child Labour Act • Child Labour rescued and rehabilitated. • State-wise Grants released under the NCLP scheme <p style="text-align: center;">Adoption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of children adopted by Indians and foreign nationals <p style="text-align: center;">Juvenile Justice</p>	<p>Right to Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of education under RTE Act • Universalisation of school education through RTE Act • Annual Status of Education Report • Vernacular Medium in Primary Schools <p style="text-align: center;">Toilets in Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether Supreme Court has directed State Govts. to ensure construction of toilets in schools <p style="text-align: center;">Mid May Meals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate nutrients in mid-day-meals • Centralized kitchens in Mid-Day-Meal Scheme <p style="text-align: center;">Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of Teachers <p style="text-align: center;">Kendriya &</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Polio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of Polio eradication programme • Expenditure incurred by Government (Govt.) for organising national Pulse Polio Immunization • Quality of Polio drop <p style="text-align: center;">Malnutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study by Govt. on malnutrition among children <p style="text-align: center;">Vaccines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of Pentavalent Vaccine Programme <p style="text-align: center;">Infant Mortality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on Infant mortality rate in Rajasthan 	<p style="text-align: center;">Integrated Child Development Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of scheme under ICDS in Maharashtra • Whether Government proposes to open Anganwadi in areas having number of children below fourty • Child population covered under ICDS • Implementation of SABLA for Adolescent Girls

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether NCPDR has taken note of the large number of children being kept in jails for minor offences. 	<p>Navodaya Vidyalays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts where Kendriya Vidyalayas haven't been opened. • Quality of Education in Kendriya Vidyalays • Details of Navodaya Vidyalas which aren't operational till date. 		
<p>Monsoon</p>	<p>Crime against Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether Govt. has information on recruitment of children into naxalism • Incidents of kidnapping of children on the rise • Abandonment of children <p>Child Labour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of special schools being run in the country for Child Labour <p>Juvenile Justice System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploitation of children in juvenile homes • Details of Child Welfare Committees & District Child Protection Units • Whether Govt. is trying to sensitise police on Juvenile justice issues • Steps taken by Govt. 	<p>Right to Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of RTE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whether government plans to extend the deadline of implementation of RTE Act which was set as 2013 <p>Schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of funds under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) • Schools opened under SSA <p>Mid Day Meals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of Mid day meal scheme to the entire country <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Details of Central assistance for Mid Day Meal Scheme <p>Kendriya & Navodaya Vidyalayas</p>	<p>Polio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of international agencies such as Unicef in Polio Eradication • Reported cases of increase and decrease in the incidents of Polio <p>Malnutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of child mortality due to malnutrition <p>Vaccines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details on infant death due to immunisation • Whether as per World Health Organisation Report 74% injections administered to newborn babies at vaccination centres are unsafe 	<p>Integrated Child Development Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurances in ICDS scheme • Per capita expenditure on child • Implementation of ICDS is taking place across the country • Whether Govt. is displaying details of beneficiaries at Panchayat offices and anganwadi centres under ICDS to ensure transparency • If Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme has been suspended due to non-utilisation of funds • Total number of projects sanctioned & operational under the Kishori Shakti Yojana

	<p>to monitor functioning of Orphanages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening of new Navodaya Vidyalayas in the country • Whether expert committee constituted by Govt. to improve management of Kendriya & Navodaya Vidyalayas <p>Special Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of disabled children under RTE act • Establishment of schools for SC/ST 	<p>Anaemia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether more than 70% children in Andhra Pradesh anaemic <p>Infant Mortality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neo-Natal diseases which result in Infant Mortality • Death of children due to Pneumonia and Diarrhoea 	
<p>Winter</p>	<p>Crime against Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on child abuse in the country • Details of sexual harassment of children and women by tourists • Whether incidents of female foeticide are on the rise • Implementation of Child Marriage Restraint Act and details if such cases are on the rise <p>Child Labour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases of child labour and bonded labour reported 	<p>Right to Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violation of Right to Education Act • Whether the student- teacher ratio is maintained as per the norms • Literacy Rate and Dropout rates <p>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds released for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan <p>Mid Day Meals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination in providing Mid 	<p>Malnutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unicef Report on malnutrition • Provision of food grains for malnourished girls women <p>Anaemia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescent girls and children affected by anaemia <p>Infant Mortality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant/ Child Mortality rate 	<p>Integrated Child Development Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Integrated Child Development Scheme • Govt. taking measures to strengthen Integrated Child Development Scheme • Details of Schemes for Women and Child Development

	<p style="text-align: center;">Juvenile Justice System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether Child Tracking systems have been installed by the Govt. • Condition of juvenile homes • Details of atrocities in the Juvenile homes • Information of cases of child abuse in Orphanages <p style="text-align: center;">Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds allocated, released and expenditure incurred by states under ICPS 	<p>Day Meals to students</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Special Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School admission to mentally retarded children • Whether education is being provided to disabled children <p style="text-align: center;">Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of teachers in Govt. schools 	<p>across the country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for death of children in Kalavati Saran Hospital 	
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About HAQ

HAQ: Centre for Child Rights works towards the recognition, promotion and protection of rights of all children. It aims to look at the child in an integrated manner within the framework of the Constitution of India, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which India ratified in 1992, and contribute to the building of an environment where every child's rights are recognised and promoted without discrimination. At HAQ we believe that child rights and children's concerns have to be mainstreamed into all developmental planning and action, and must also become a core developmental indicator.

To carry forward its mandate HAQ undertakes research and documentation. It is actively engaged in public education and advocacy on children's rights. It also seeks to serve as a resource and support base for individuals and groups dealing with children at every level. It not only provides information and referral service but also training and capacity building of all those working with children or on issues concerning them, and the children themselves.

Over the last 13 years HAQ has been working on areas of children and governance, violence and abuse of children, child trafficking and juvenile justice. HAQ provides legal support to children in need, particularly those who are victims of abuse or are in conflict with law.

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