

CLIMATE ON THE FLOOR

**India's Parliamentary Discourse on
Environment since the Paris Agreement**



CENTRE
for FINANCIAL
ACCOUNTABILITY

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Environment since the Paris Agreement**

Hajira Puthige

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Form
AIPA	Apex Committee for Implementation of the Paris Agreement
CBAM	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
CBDR-RC	Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities
CCUS	Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage
CCTS	Carbon Credit Trading Scheme
CDRI	Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
CZMP	Coastal Zone Management Plan
FAST 3.0	Forest Fire Alert System 3.0
FGD	Flue Gas Desulphurisation
GBA	Global Biofuels Alliance
GLOFs	Glacial Lake Outburst Floods
ICM	Indian Carbon Market
IRIS	Infrastructure for Resilient Island States
JETP	Just Energy Transition Partnership
LT-LEDS	Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy
MISHTI	Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
NADAMS	National Agricultural Drought Assessment and Monitoring System
NICRA	National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture
PM-RKVY	Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana
PM-KUSUM	Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan
RLDCs	Regionally and Locally Determined Contributions

PREFACE

Across the world, climate crisis induced extreme weather events are on the rise. India is not a stranger to these events. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, between 2020 and 2025, nearly 11,000 lives were lost, nearly 27 lakh houses were damaged and over 153 lakh ha of land was damaged due to hydro-meteorological disasters. In addition to the countless personal miseries these disasters have caused, they have also resulted in significant economic losses for farmers, traders, and others. Much of this loss is not adequately compensated, leaving many unable to repay previous loans and forcing them to take on additional loans to service existing ones.

With the cost - both economic and personal - of the climate crisis at monumental levels, the issue warrants the highest level of attention. Policies of the government - both those aimed at mitigating the immediate impacts of these weather events and those concerning adaptation - define the preparedness of a country. As the highest policy making body, the role of Parliament is extremely critical.

This report examines parliamentary discourse on climate change during the first ten years of the Paris Agreement. It analyses questions raised in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha between December 2015 and December 2025, alongside broader parliamentary debates, to understand the issues that have received political attention and the ways in which climate change has been framed in relation to economic, social, and developmental concerns. The analysis examines not only the volume of questions, but also the themes, sectors, and regions receiving attention, the nature of government responses, and the extent to which Parliament has sought information on policy implementation and accountability.

These findings should not be read as a definitive measure of Parliament's overall commitment to climate action; rather, they provide insight into how climate change has entered India's legislative discourse during the first decade of the Paris Agreement, and where parliamentary scrutiny could become broader, deeper, and more closely aligned with the scale and complexity of the climate challenge.

Concerns around climate are as much about carbon capture and emissions as they are about social inequities and just transition. After all, it is those who contributed the least to the crisis who bear its heaviest burden. As such, the correctives cannot be yet another burden on them. It is imperative that the Parliament emerges as a forum for robust discussions on the various aspects of the climate crisis, the culpability of Global North, the inequities of emission within the country, questions of adaptation and mitigation, and so on - such that the problem is not just dealt with in a matter that is simply technocratic, but also socio-political in content.

One cannot miss the point that the period this report is analysed in this report is also a period when the parliamentary record has been at its lowest. The 17th Lok Sabha (2019-2024) held only 274 sittings, marking one of the lowest averages for productivity and sittings for a full-term House in Indian legislative history. The proportion of bills referred to Parliamentary Standing Committees dropped sharply over the years. A significant percentage of legislation has been passed with minimal or brief debate, with some bills taking only a few minutes.

In a democracy, Parliament has a significant role to play, even when there are times when it functions suboptimally and not always in the best interests of the people. It is for the people to reclaim the space and make it function as a true representative body, with accountability to the people.

We hope this report helps in that direction. We hope the insights and analysis presented in this report will help people and Members of Parliament identify the gaps and work towards strengthening parliamentary engagement, improving accountability, and ensuring more effective and responsive climate action.

Joe Athialy

Centre for Financial Accountability

FOREWORD

India's Parliament has set the agenda on equity and the need for sustainable development

Climate change is an intensely political issue. It is about sharing the economic and ecological space in the world. This is why the attention of India's Parliament to all matters concerning the climate change crisis and sustainable development has been vital. It has played the role to provide voice to the views of the developing world, so that it can stress the need for equity and justice in the agreement.

This is because when it comes to climate change, three truths have defined the way the world, and India, must act to combat this challenge. First, there is the urgent reality of extreme weather, attributed to emissions from burning of fossil fuels, that is devastating India, and in particular, its poorest. It is exacerbating their poverty as repeated extreme weather events devastate homes, fields and livelihoods. Therefore, the Indian Parliament has been right in calling for the world to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, fast and drastically. There should be no arguments on this.

Second, greenhouse gas emissions - mainly emitted from burning of fossil fuels -- are related to economic growth as we know it and more importantly, the emissions have a long-life in the atmosphere. So, when the world talks about an agreement to mitigate emissions it is discussing sharing the growth between nations and between generations. This is why global action to reduce emissions must be differentiated, based on the country's contribution to the problem. Climate justice is not a moral but essential pre-requisite.

Third, a country like India, which has not contributed to the stock of emissions in the atmosphere; but it is a victim of climate change - the poor in our world are the worst hit today because of intensification of tropical cyclones or extreme weather and rain -- must act to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in its self-interest. It must do so, not only to help the Planet combat climate change, but to ensure that its toxic health burden from a fast-degrading environment is reduced.

The opportunity is to build an agenda for economic resilience that will reduce the risk of climate change impact and build livelihoods and wellbeing. It is a co-benefit agenda, which most importantly, reworks the development paradigm so that it is affordable, inclusive and so sustainable.

This is the time when the World Meteorological Organization confirms that 2015-2026 are the hottest 11 years on record. This signals new threats of rising temperatures and more extreme weather events. In India, our official data shows that we are seeing almost one extreme event a day, with huge and crippling impacts on the economies of the poor.

The Indian agenda, as discussed in Parliament, is based on the idea that co-benefit is not just desirable, but also within reach - clean energy for livelihoods and also local air benefit, which in turn reduced greenhouse gas emissions. In this way, our Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which puts together the package of actions to reduce emissions, would be based on co-benefits; development, if done right, will also address the urgent crisis of climate change. We know that it is in our interest to achieve this twin goal.

The opportunity is for countries to deepen their ability to manufacture green technologies, secure vital components and build confidence in the new supply chains. The need is to build an economic growth model to put money in the budgets of the most vulnerable countries so that they can invest in the green transition.

This is the big agenda in this big churn so that it can lead to a better tomorrow: more resilient, more inclusive and more sustainable. This is why, at the beginning of the epoch of climate change, now that the world has moved into a different today, we can and must plan for a different tomorrow. The role of India's Parliament will be even more important as we move toward this new green future; it will need to continue to be the voice of the marginalized, the farmer, the fisherfolk and the tribal woman, who seek a greener world that will also secure their livelihood. This is about the politics of development and this is why politicians will steer the narrative towards an affordable and equitable world that is sustainable.

Sunita Narain

Centre for Science and Environment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the evolution of India's legislative engagement with the climate crisis during the critical decade following the adoption of the Paris Agreement in December 2015. As the world's largest democracy and one of the countries most vulnerable to extreme weather events, it is essential to understand how India's institutional systems are translating climate commitments into domestic political action. The analysis addresses whether parliamentary scrutiny is keeping pace with the country's growing climate vulnerabilities and if current parliamentary discussions reflect the level of ambition that the climate crisis demands.

The report covers the period from December 2015 to December 2025, focusing on a dataset of 8,702 parliamentary questions raised in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. The analysis is organised into eight key thematic areas: Clean Energy and Decarbonisation; Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters; Forests and Land Use; Climate Change and Global Impacts; Environment; Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management; Climate Finance and Markets; and Global Climate Governance.

Key Findings:

- In total, the dataset comprises 8,702 parliamentary questions, of which 713 are starred, and 7,989 are unstarred.
- Climate change remains a relatively small component of the national agenda, accounting for just 3.3% of all parliamentary questions that have been asked over the decade.
- Legislative interest is heavily concentrated on Clean Energy and Decarbonisation (33.81%), which aligns with prestige-heavy international targets. Conversely, Climate Finance (0.26%) and Global Climate Governance (1.2%) are significant blind spots.
- The National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC), once a flagship for vulnerable sectors like agriculture, was downgraded and reclassified as a "non-scheme" expense from FY 2023-24, and no new projects were to be initiated under it.
- The Executive consistently maintains that there is "no conclusive data available to establish a direct correlation of death/disease exclusively due to air pollution," citing overlapping factors like diet and lifestyle, thereby limiting the attribution of health outcomes exclusively to air pollution.
- The government has rejected proposals for a dedicated "Climate Change Act" or a separate high-power committee, asserting that the current Environment (Protection) Act is sufficient.

- Legislative attention predominantly seems to be event-driven and reactionary rather than strategic. For example, the February 2021 Uttarakhand glacier burst forced a spike in questions concerning glacier melt and cloudbursts, while the record-breaking heat of 2022 marked the first substantial parliamentary focus on heatwaves, previously a deadly hazard blind spot.
- The analysis reveals a clear partisan pattern in the parliamentary questions. Members of the ruling NDA tend to predominantly ask status-oriented questions that provide the government an opportunity to celebrate its programmes and offer technical updates on missions such as PM-KUSUM or Green Hydrogen. In contrast, members of the opposition parties tend to focus on implementation gaps, funding shortfalls, and policy effectiveness.
- Members of Parliament rarely view the climate crisis as an isolated environmental problem; they frame it through its deep connections to developmental and socio-economic concerns such as farmer distress, public health, and energy security. However, a significant gap exists between monitoring and accountability:
- The government consistently prioritises technological optics, such as the Flood Watch India App and the Van Agni portal, as evidence of action. Yet, it often lacks operational benchmarking; for instance, the Ministry has admitted to having no nationally benchmarked firefighting systems despite tracking fires with satellite precision.
- The Executive frequently invokes the federal shield, deflecting responsibility for disaster relief, urban flooding, and forest management to state governments by labeling them as “state subjects.”
- A data blackout often acts as a policy shield, with the government stating it does not centrally maintain data on climate-induced migration, heatwave deaths among informal workers, or the exact forest area destroyed by wildfires.
- Ten years after the Paris Agreement, India’s political attention is not keeping pace with its continuous threat status or its rising economic exposure. While India has institutionalised its climate commitments, Parliamentary oversight has yet to evolve into a comprehensive mechanism for ensuring climate accountability, reacting to shock-value events rather than providing systematic oversight of long-term preparedness.



INTRODUCTION

On 12 December 2015, representatives of nearly 195 countries adopted the Paris Agreement, one of the most significant international agreements on climate change. The Agreement emerged from more than two decades of international climate negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Established in 1992, the UNFCCC provides the institutional framework through which countries, referred to as “Parties”, coordinate action on climate change. It provides a platform for negotiating measures related to emissions reduction, adaptation, finance, technology, and international cooperation. Since 1995, Parties have met annually (almost!) at the Conference of the Parties (COP), the Convention’s principal decision-making body. These meetings review progress, consider developments in climate science and negotiate measures to strengthen global climate action.

The international climate regime has evolved through several important milestones. The Kyoto Protocol, adopted in 1997, established legally binding emissions-reduction targets for developed countries. The Paris Agreement, adopted at COP21 in 2015, introduced a different approach by requiring all Parties to communicate and maintain nationally determined contributions (NDCs). These contributions outline each country’s climate commitments and reflect its national circumstances, development priorities and capabilities.

The Paris Agreement therefore combines nationally determined action with common processes for transparency, reporting and review. Its long-term objective is to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C. The Agreement also provides for successive rounds of NDCs, periodic assessment through the Global Stocktake, and efforts to strengthen climate action over time.

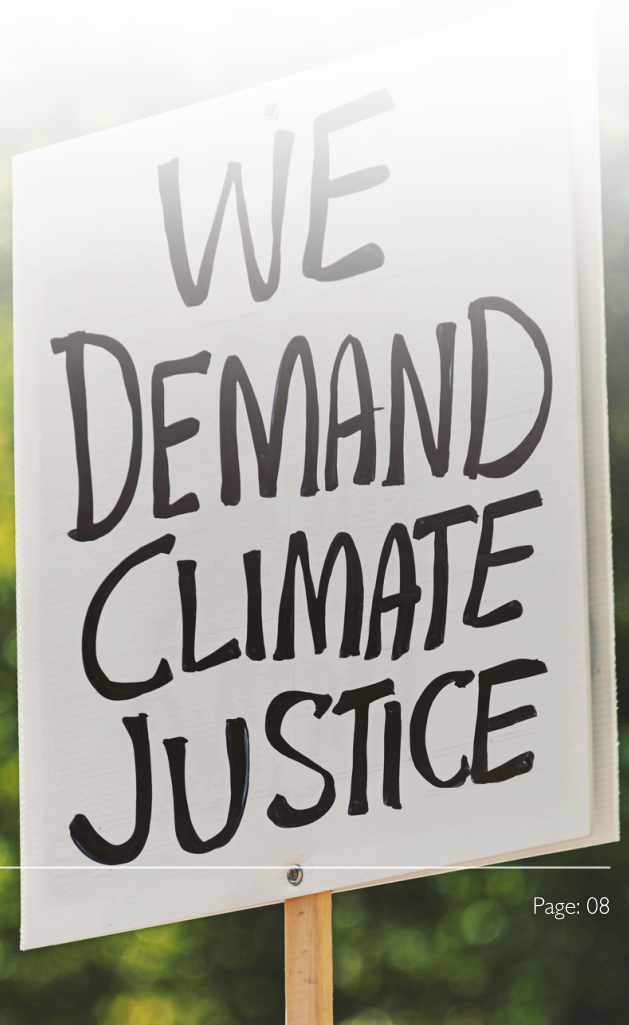
The effectiveness of this framework, however, depends on how international commitments are translated into domestic policies, institutions and implementation. Climate action is shaped not only by international negotiations, but also by national political priorities, public institutions, financial systems and development choices. The extent to which countries debate, scrutinise and implement their climate commitments is therefore central to understanding the progress and limitations of the Paris Agreement.

For India, the Paris Agreement provides the international framework within which climate commitments are articulated through NDCs. India’s climate policy is also closely linked to questions of economic growth, energy access, poverty reduction, industrial development and public finance. The country’s climate response must consequently be understood alongside its continued dependence on fossil fuels, rapid expansion of renewable energy, exposure to extreme weather events and the developmental needs of a large and diverse population.

This report examines how these issues have featured in India's parliamentary discourse during the first ten years of the Paris Agreement. It analyses parliamentary questions raised in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha between December 2015 and December 2025. The analysis considers not only the volume of questions, but also the themes that receive political attention, the sectors and regions that are prioritised, the nature of government responses and the extent to which Members of Parliament seek information on policy implementation and accountability.

Parliamentary questions provide an important, although incomplete, lens through which to examine political engagement with climate change and related environmental concerns. They can indicate which issues are being raised, how climate-related concerns are framed, and how elected representatives connect climate change with economic, social and developmental questions. They can also reveal areas that receive limited attention. At the same time, parliamentary questions do not capture the entirety of political engagement, and the absence of questions on a particular issue cannot by itself be treated as evidence of the absence of concern.

By examining parliamentary questions alongside broader parliamentary debates, this report seeks to understand how climate change and related environmental issues have been discussed, prioritised and contested in India's Parliament over the first decade of the Paris Agreement. It identifies patterns of political attention, areas of sustained or limited engagement, and possible gaps between India's climate vulnerabilities, policy commitments and parliamentary scrutiny.



INDIA'S NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (NDC)



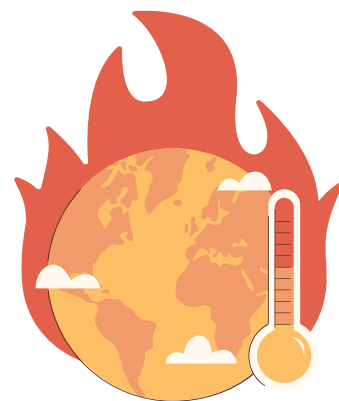
India submitted its first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2015 and updated it in 2022. The country has reported achieving important targets under its first NDC ahead of the 2030 deadline. It achieved 40 per cent cumulative installed electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel-based sources in 2021 and reduced the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 per cent from 2005 levels by 2019. As of 28 February 2026, non-fossil fuel-based sources accounted for 52.57% of India's total installed electric power capacity, while the emissions intensity of GDP had declined by 36% between 2005 and 2020. India has also reported creating an additional carbon sink of 2.29 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through forest and tree cover between 2005 and 2021.

In April 2026, India communicated its third NDC for the period 2031-2035. The new NDC commits India to reducing the emissions intensity of its GDP by 47 per cent from 2005 levels by 2035, achieving approximately 60 per cent cumulative installed electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel-based sources, and creating an additional carbon sink of 3.5-4.0 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through forest and tree cover, compared with 2005. It also places emphasis on adaptation in climate-vulnerable sectors, including agriculture, water, health, coastal areas, the Himalayan region and disaster management. The NDC further identifies finance, technology transfer and capacity-building as important means of implementation.

These commitments provide an important reference point for examining parliamentary engagement. The report therefore considers not only whether Members of Parliament raise questions about climate change, but also whether parliamentary scrutiny addresses the implementation of India's climate commitments, the financial and institutional requirements of the transition, and the social and developmental implications of climate policy.

At the same time, these achievements need to be viewed within the context of India's broader energy and development trajectory. Although non-fossil fuel capacity has expanded rapidly, investment in fossil fuel-based power generation continues, reflecting the competing priorities that shape India's energy transition. The extent to which India's climate commitments translate into changes in its energy system and wider economy therefore remains an important area of examination. This also raises questions about the extent to which parliamentary scrutiny addresses the pace of the transition, continued fossil fuel dependence and the institutional and financial conditions required to implement India's climate commitments.

INDIA'S CLIMATE VULNERABILITY



India is highly exposed to the human and economic consequences of extreme weather events. The Climate Risk Index 2026, published by Germanwatch, ranks India among the ten countries most affected by extreme weather events between 1995 and 2024, placing it ninth globally. The report records more than 9,700 extreme weather events worldwide during this period, resulting in over 832,000 deaths, nearly 5.7 billion people affected, and direct economic losses of almost USD 4.5 trillion. It identifies India as a country facing recurring extreme weather events, highlighting the continuing nature of these risks rather than their concentration in a single exceptional disaster.

The impacts of extreme weather are shaped not only by the frequency and intensity of events, but also by underlying social, economic and institutional conditions. India's large population, dependence on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and fisheries, uneven access to infrastructure and differences in adaptive capacity increase its vulnerability. Heatwaves can affect public health and labour productivity; changes in rainfall can disrupt agriculture, water availability and rural incomes; and coastal regions face risks from flooding, erosion and saline intrusion. In urban areas, extreme rainfall, waterlogging, heat stress and pressure on basic infrastructure can intensify existing inequalities.

These risks have implications beyond immediate disaster management. Repeated extreme weather events can affect livelihoods, public health, food and water security, infrastructure and public finances. They can also undermine development gains and increase the resources required for relief, reconstruction and adaptation. The CRI's findings should therefore be understood as an indication of the scale and persistence of observed extreme-weather impacts, rather than as a complete measure of India's climate vulnerability. The report also notes that limitations in data availability and reporting may result in the underestimation of impacts, particularly in countries of the Global South.

Against this backdrop, it is important to examine how climate change and related environmental concerns are reflected in India's political and institutional processes. Parliamentary questions provide one way of assessing whether elected representatives are engaging with immediate climate-related events as well as longer-term issues such as adaptation, climate finance, institutional capacity and the protection of vulnerable communities. This report therefore examines the extent to which parliamentary attention reflects India's exposure to climate risks and corresponds with the country's climate commitments and implementation requirements.

WHY TRACK PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE?



India's exposure to climate-related risks, together with the need to implement its climate commitments, makes it important to understand how climate concerns are discussed and prioritised within the country's political and institutional systems. The tenth anniversary of the Paris Agreement provides an opportunity to examine how these discussions have evolved since 2015 and whether parliamentary attention has kept pace with changing climate risks and policy requirements.

Within India's democratic framework, Parliament plays an important role in scrutinising government action, shaping public policy and providing a platform for public deliberation. Parliamentary questions are a useful source for examining these processes, while parliamentary debates provide a broader view of how these issues are discussed and deliberated upon. They provide insight into how elected representatives frame climate change and related environmental concerns, which sectors and regions receive political attention, and how climate risks are connected to wider developmental, economic and social issues. While parliamentary questions help identify the issues raised by individual Members of Parliament and the information sought from the government, parliamentary debates help show how these issues are discussed, contested, and placed within wider political debates.

Tracking parliamentary questions also helps identify the issues that receive sustained attention and those that remain less visible. Questions on extreme weather events, pollution, or immediate environmental problems may reflect urgent and visible concerns. At the same time, relatively limited questioning on issues such as long-term adaptation, climate finance, institutional capacity, livelihood impacts or continued dependence on fossil fuels may suggest that these concerns receive less sustained parliamentary attention. Such patterns should not be interpreted as proof that an issue is absent from political concern, but they can indicate its relative visibility within parliamentary deliberations.

Analysing parliamentary questions and debates therefore allows the report to assess how climate change and related environmental concerns have entered parliamentary discourse over the past decade. It examines the distribution of attention across themes, the differences between the two Houses of Parliament, changes over time and the relationship between parliamentary questions and government responses. It also considers what these patterns reveal about the priorities, concerns and possible gaps in India's democratic engagement with one of the defining challenges of the twenty-first century.

METHODOLOGY



This study examines parliamentary questions on climate change and related environmental concerns during the first ten years of the Paris Agreement, covering the period from December 2015 to December 2025. It includes questions raised in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

Parliamentary questions were identified through keyword searches on the official [Lok Sabha](#) and [Rajya Sabha](#) websites. To identify relevant parliamentary questions, the keywords were searched only within the subject/title fields of the questions and not across the full text of the dataset. The aim was to capture not only questions directly related to climate change, but also those concerning its impacts, related sectors and institutional responses. A broad set of keywords was used to ensure wide coverage. These included terms relating to clean energy, forests and land use, climate change and global impacts, extreme weather events, mitigation, adaptation and carbon management, global climate governance and climate finance. The full list of keywords is provided in Annexure 2.

All keywords were grouped into seven broad categories to organise the analysis:

Theme 1: Clean Energy and Decarbonisation

This category captures discussions around the energy transition, which is central to mitigation efforts. It helps track how Parliament engages with shifts away from fossil fuels and towards low-carbon technologies. The keywords include renewable energy, solar, wind, green hydrogen and electrification.

Theme 2: Forests and Land Use

This category covers discussions on forests, trees, mangroves, and other land-based ecosystems that play an important role in climate action. These ecosystems contribute to mitigation by storing carbon, while also supporting adaptation through biodiversity conservation, livelihood protection, and reduced vulnerability to climate-related risks. The category helps examine how natural resources are discussed in relation to climate policy. The keywords include forest, tree, mangrove, afforestation, reforestation and deforestation.

Theme 3: Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters

This category focuses on extreme weather events, which are among the most immediate and visible manifestations of climate-related risks and often generate political attention. It helps assess how Parliament responds to climate-linked disruptions on the ground. The keywords include heatwaves, floods, cyclones, droughts, and wildfires.

Theme 4: Climate Change and Global Impacts

This category captures broad and cross-cutting references to climate change, particularly where it is framed as a global or systemic issue. It helps identify how Members of Parliament engage with the overall climate narrative and its wider environmental and social implications. The keywords include climate change, global warming, biodiversity, air pollution, and sea-level rise.

Theme 5: Environment

This category captures broader discussions on the environment, ecology and ecosystems that may intersect with climate change but are not necessarily specific to climate policy. It helps examine how environmental concerns are discussed in Parliament alongside, or in relation to, climate-related issues. The keywords include environment, ecology and ecosystem.

Theme 6: Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management

This category focuses on policy measures intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, manage carbon and strengthen resilience to climate impacts. It helps assess parliamentary engagement with both mitigation and adaptation, including the balance between reducing emissions and responding to existing risks. The keywords include mitigation, adaptation, carbon sink, carbon capture, carbon management, and climate resilience.

Theme 7: Global Climate Governance

This category captures references to international agreements, institutions, and partnerships that shape national climate commitments. It helps assess how global frameworks influence domestic parliamentary discourse. The keywords include the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC, COP, NDCs, and the Global Stocktake.

Theme 8: Climate Finance and Markets

This category captures discussions on the financial dimensions of climate action, which are critical for implementation. It helps track how issues such as funding, investment, and market mechanisms are addressed. The keywords include climate finance, carbon markets, the Clean Development Mechanism, and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

In total, the dataset comprises 8,702 parliamentary questions, of which 713 are starred and 7,989 are unstarred. Starred questions are those that are answered orally in Parliament and allow for supplementary questions, often indicating issues of higher immediate political interest. Unstarred questions, on the other hand, receive written responses and typically do not involve further discussion during the session. Of these, 4,908 questions were raised in the Lok Sabha (355 starred and 4,553 unstarred), while 3,794 questions were raised in the Rajya Sabha (358 starred and 3,436 unstarred). This lopsided distribution shows that parliamentary discussions are heavily bureaucratized, relying overwhelmingly on written, administrative responses (Unstarred) rather than spontaneous oral debate and follow-up (Starred).

The selection of keywords was based on prior understanding of climate-related themes and their relevance to parliamentary discourse. While efforts were made to ensure broad coverage, it is possible that some relevant terms were not included. As a result, certain parliamentary questions may not have been captured in the dataset. Additionally, because the search relied on multiple keywords, the same parliamentary question could have been retrieved more than once if it contained more than one keyword. Further, the thematic categories used in this study are not always mutually exclusive. Certain issues cut across multiple dimensions of climate policy. For example, air pollution may be discussed as a climate-related impact under Climate Change and Global Impacts, but also in relation to emissions reduction under Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management. Consequently, individual parliamentary questions were assigned to one or more thematic categories where relevant, meaning that the same question may appear across multiple themes in the analysis. These are inherent limitations of keyword-based searches and thematic classification approaches and should be considered while interpreting the results.

The analysis is organised around four dimensions:

- **Statistical analysis:** the volume and distribution of questions across themes, Houses and years;
- **Temporal analysis:** changes in parliamentary attention over the study period and their relationship with major climate-related events;
- **Political engagement:** participation by political parties and Members of Parliament, and the issues they raise;
- **Government responses:** the nature of official responses and the extent to which they address policy commitments, implementation, accountability, financing and social impacts.

Following the thematic analysis, the report examines parliamentary debates on climate change to complement the analysis of parliamentary questions. The debates were identified through keyword searches on the official [Lok Sabha](#) and [Rajya Sabha](#) websites. The same set of keywords used to identify parliamentary questions, as listed in Annexure 2, was used to identify relevant debates and proceedings.

A total of 1,254 parliamentary debates and proceedings across both Houses were analysed. The analysis covers a range of parliamentary proceedings in which climate change and related environmental concerns were raised or substantively discussed, including Short Duration Discussions, Calling Attention, Government Bills, Private Members' Bills, Statutory Resolutions, Private Members' Resolutions, Special Mentions (Zero Hour), Matters under Rule 377, Matters raised with Permission, Statements by Ministers, References by the Chair, and other relevant proceedings. Certain categories of parliamentary proceedings such as Demand for Grants and Statements Laid on the Table were excluded, and the analysis was therefore limited to proceedings considered relevant for examining substantive parliamentary discussion, deliberation and contestation on climate change and related environmental concerns. While questions provide insight into the issues raised by individual Members of Parliament and the information sought from the government, debates offer a broader view of how climate change is discussed, contested and deliberated on the floor of Parliament.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is organised to provide both an overview and a thematic analysis of parliamentary engagement on climate change. The following section presents descriptive statistics of the dataset, outlining the overall volume, distribution, and basic characteristics of parliamentary questions over the study period. This is followed by eight thematic sections covering Clean Energy and Decarbonisation; Forests and Land Use; Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters; Climate Change and Global Impacts; Environment; Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management; Global Climate Governance; and Climate Finance and Markets.

The report then examines parliamentary debates to complement the analysis of written and starred questions. Together, these sections provide an overview of the issues receiving parliamentary attention, changes in that attention over time, and the relationship between parliamentary discourse, climate risks and India's climate commitments.

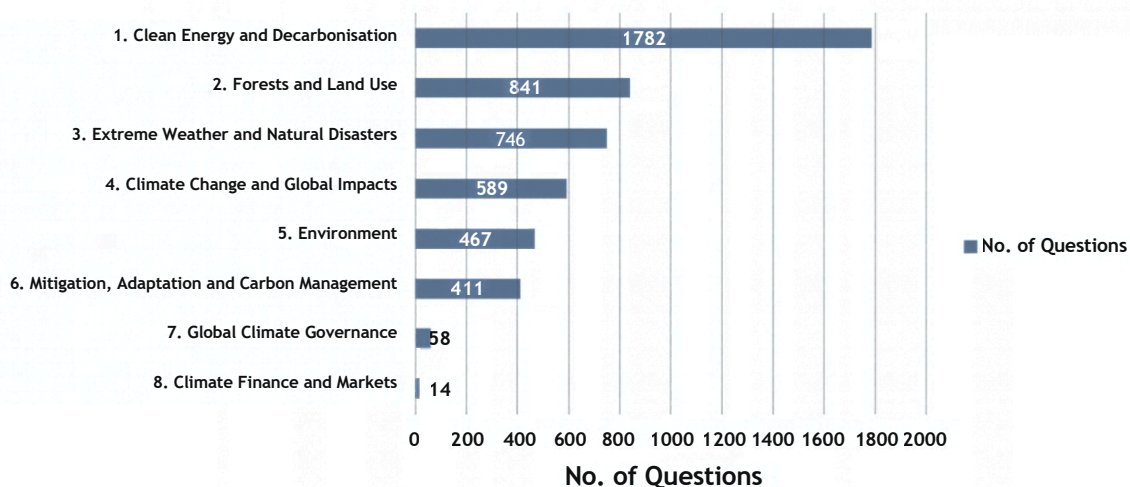


This section presents the overall distribution of parliamentary questions identified in the dataset. It compares the number and percentage share of questions across the eight thematic categories in the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and both Houses combined. Since questions may be assigned to more than one theme, the thematic totals should be read as overlapping rather than mutually exclusive categories.

Distribution of Thematic Questions in the Lok Sabha (Dec 2015-Dec 2025)

Theme	No. of Questions	Share of Questions in the Dataset	Share of all Parliamentary Questions (1,44,143)
Clean Energy and Decarbonisation	1782	36.30%	1.20%
Forests and Land Use	841	17.10%	0.60%
Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters	746	15.20%	0.50%
Climate Change and Global Impacts	589	12.00%	0.40%
Environment	467	9.50%	0.30%
Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management	411	8.40%	0.29%
Global Climate Governance	58	1.20%	0.04%
Climate Finance and Markets	14	0.30%	0.01%
TOTAL	4908		

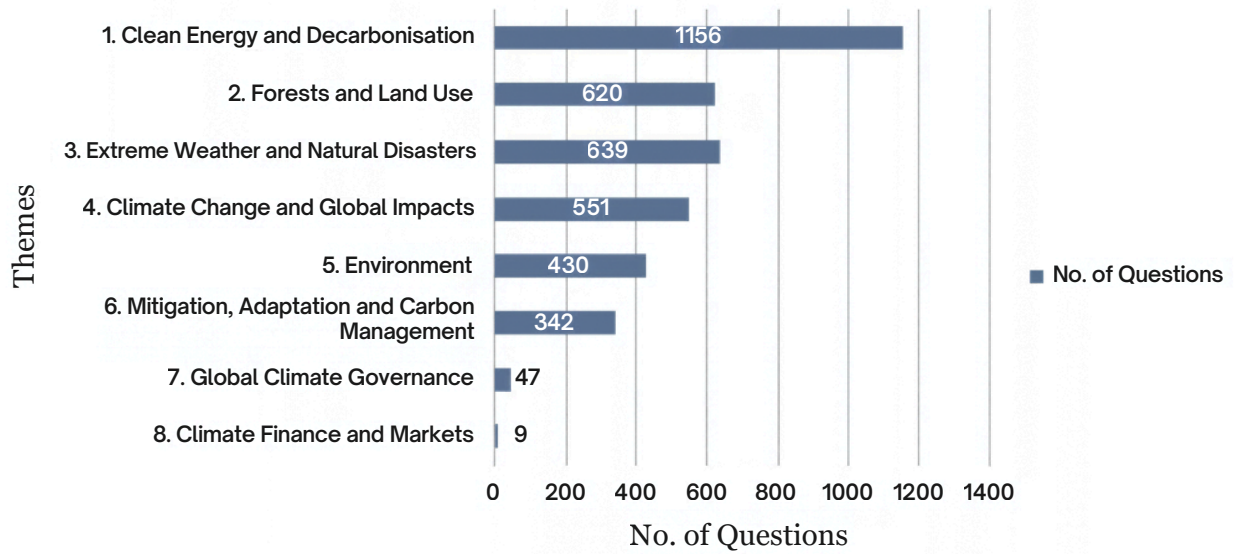
Distribution of Thematic Questions in the Lok Sabha (Dec 2015-Dec 2025)



Distribution of Thematic Questions in the Rajya Sabha (Dec 2015-Dec 2025)

Theme	No. of Questions	Share of Questions in the Dataset	Share of all Parliamentary Questions (95,378)
Clean Energy and Decarbonisation	1156	30.47%	1.20%
Forests and Land Use	620	16.36%	0.60%
Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters	639	16.86%	0.60%
Climate Change and Global Impacts	551	14.43%	0.50%
Environment	430	11.35%	0.40%
Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management	342	9.03%	0.30%
Global Climate Governance	47	1.24%	0.05%
Climate Finance and Markets	9	0.24%	0.01%
TOTAL	3794		

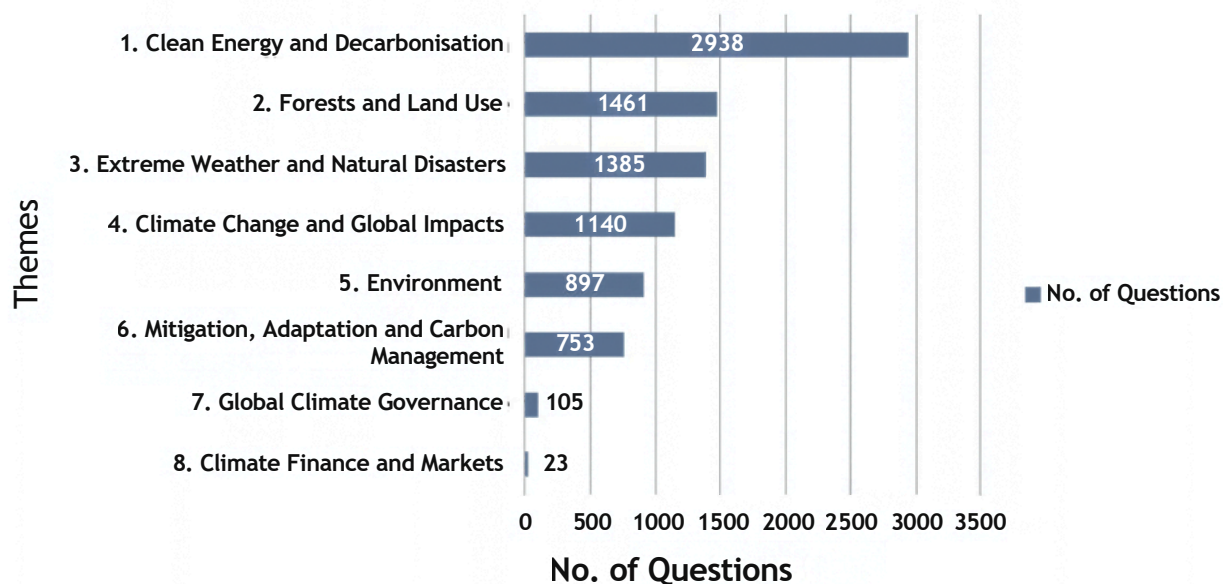
Distribution of Thematic Questions in the Rajya Sabha (Dec 2015-Dec 2025)



Distribution of Thematic Questions across both Houses (Dec 2015-Dec 2025)

Theme	No. of Questions	Share of Questions in the Dataset	Share of all Parliamentary Questions (2,39,521)
Clean Energy and Decarbonisation	2938	33.81%	1.20%
Forests and Land Use	1461	16.81%	0.60%
Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters	1385	15.94%	0.50%
Climate Change and Global Impacts	1140	12.99%	0.40%
Environment	897	10.32%	0.38%
Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management	753	8.66%	0.30%
Global Climate Governance	105	1.21%	0.04%
Climate Finance and Markets	23	0.26%	0.01%
TOTAL	8702		

Distribution of Thematic Questions across both Houses (Dec 2015-Dec 2025)



Between December 2015 and December 2025, questions in the parliament on climate themes across both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha comprised 8,702 questions in a total of 2,34,724 questions and answers. Keywords related to ‘Clean Energy and Decarbonisation’ were the most discussed, accounting for the largest share with 2,938 questions (33.81%). This was followed by Forests and Land Use with 1,461 questions (16.81%) and Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters with 1,385 questions (15.94%). Keywords relating to other themes such as Climate Change and Global Impacts 12.99%, Environment (10.32%), and Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management (8.66%) accounted for a substantial share. In contrast, systemic governance and market themes saw minimal coverage, with Global Climate Governance generating 105 questions (1.21%) and Climate Finance and Markets drawing the lowest interest at 23 questions (0.26%).

Note: A single parliamentary question may contain multiple keywords and may therefore appear across more than one keyword or thematic category. As noted in the methodology, the categories are not mutually exclusive, and the figures should be read with this overlap in mind.



THEME 1: CLEAN ENERGY AND DECARBONISATION



Statistical Analysis

Between December 2015 and December 2025, the Clean Energy and Decarbonisation section emerged as the most discussed theme in the Indian Parliament's environmental discourse. A total of 2,938 questions were asked under this theme, accounting for 33.8% of all environment-specific questions in both Houses. However, they represented only 1.2% of the total questions asked in Parliament. The focus mostly remained on established and emerging technologies. Within the overall scant attention paid to climate change-related concerns, the keyword renewable energy leads with 1,278 questions (43.5%), followed by Solar at 723 (24.6%), Smart Grid at 434 (14.8%), and Wind at 170 (5.8%). Emerging sectors such as Green Hydrogen (84 questions, 2.9%), Energy Efficiency (80 questions, 2.7%), and Hydropower (80 questions, 2.7%) maintain smaller shares, while themes such as Energy Transition (32 questions), Decarbonisation (36 questions), Fossil Fuel (20 questions), and Electrification (10 questions) collectively represent less than 3% of the total volume.

The high frequency of questions on Renewable (1,278) and Solar (723) correlates with India's massive capacity expansion, achieving 50% non-fossil installed capacity (242.78 GW) in June 2025, five years ahead of its NDC schedule. However, the low frequency of Fossil Fuel (20) and Energy Transition (32) keywords is disproportionate to the actual ground reality, where fossil fuels still account for 48.63% of the energy mix and coal demand is not expected to peak until 2040, while “no transition away from coal is happening in the foreseeable future”. Furthermore, the high volume of questions on Smart Grid (434) reflects a parliamentary attempt to address power sector inefficiencies through technical modernization, including the deployment of over 40.19 Lakh smart meters to reduce AT&C (Aggregate Technical and Commercial) losses. However, despite these efforts, a structural bottleneck exists: as of October 31, 2025, approximately 42.6 GW of renewable energy capacity remains “stranded” because state distribution companies (DISCOMs) have not signed the necessary Power Sale Agreements (PSAs). While the Parliament has focused on the technical infrastructure required for grid integration, it has not yet resolved the underlying financial distress and procurement hesitancy of DISCOMs, which continue to constrain the absorption of new renewable capacity.

Temporal Analysis

Phase 1: 2015 - 2018:

During the initial years, the Parliament's focus was on establishing national ambitions and India's identity as a global leader in clean energy. There were various questions regarding the revised target of 175 GW of renewable energy by 2022, which was first announced in the 2015-16 Budget. A significant surge in questions occurred following the COP21 (Conference of the Parties) Paris Agreement (Nov 2015) as well as the launch of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). Members frequently questioned the "modalities" of these new international frameworks. By 2018, questions moved to assessing the "environmental balance" of energy projects.

Phase II: 2018-2022:

Following the launch of the PM-KUSUM scheme (an initiative to subsidise and encourage solar power production and use in agriculture) in March 2019, questions regarding solar pumps and "de-dieselization" as a provision of the initiative became a dominant theme in both houses. Following the Prime Minister's announcement of the "Panchamrit" goals at COP26 in 2022, there was an increase in questions on the 500 GW non-fossil capacity target and the roadmap for Net Zero by 2070.

Phase III: 2023-2025:

The most recent phase shows a shift toward "hard-to-abate" industrial sectors and emerging green technologies. Questions on green hydrogen increased exponentially following the January 2023 approval of the National Green Hydrogen Mission (₹19,744 crore outlay). Further, the discussion moved beyond general energy, into the decarbonisation of steel, the building sector (National Mission for Sustainable Habitat) and road transport (FAME-II- Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) Electric Vehicles - Phase II). In early 2024, questions on solar increased following the launch of PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, aimed at one crore households.

Over the past decade, parliamentary discourse on clean energy and decarbonisation has been predominantly event-driven, shaped by mission launches and international commitments, but has reoriented towards disaster resilience, as climate volatility (GLOFs, heatwaves, air pollution) begins to threaten the very infrastructure meant to provide clean energy.

Political Engagement

Members of the ruling party, led primarily by the BJP and allies such as the Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) and JD(U), focus their questions on the expansion of flagship national missions, specifically the National Green Hydrogen Mission, PM-KUSUM and PM Surya Ghar. Their questions often highlight constituency-level implementation and regional potential, such as solar parks in Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan.

- The questions frequently showcase India's global leadership through the International Solar Alliance and high-profile international MOUs. This engagement is often framed within the context of "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliance), with queries on the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes for domestic solar manufacturing and the use of green hydrogen to achieve self-sufficiency in fertilizers.
- Furthermore, ruling party members tend to emphasize rapid target achievements, such as India reaching its 50% non-fossil fuel capacity milestone five years ahead of schedule, effectively using parliamentary questions to validate government success stories.

In contrast, political engagement from opposition members, including the INC, AITC, DMK, AAP, and NCP, is on structural bottlenecks, missed targets, and the hidden costs of the energy transition.

- Questions from the opposition frequently address the gap between "installed" capacity and ground reality, specifically highlighting the shortfall in rooftop solar adoption and the existence of over 44 GW of stranded renewable capacity due to unsigned Power Sale Agreements with state utilities.
- They are notably more engaged with the environmental and social footprints of clean energy, with Partap Singh Bajwa (INC) raising questions about the mortality of the Great Indian Bustard due to transmission lines and Rahul Kaswan (INC) on the ecological stress caused by large-scale solar expansion on fragile desert ecosystems.
- Mallikarjun Kharge (INC) questioned the government on its "Just Transition" vacuum, asking about the welfare of coal-sector workers and the economic stability of mining regions such as Jharkhand and Odisha, which the government has admitted is not currently under policy consideration.
- Additionally, opposition members focus on technical and financial accountability. Sayani Ghosh (AITC) questioned the effectiveness of PLI selection processes, P. Wilson (DMK), the impact of high customs duties on project viability, and Niranjan Reddy (YSRCP), the cybersecurity risks associated with imported solar components.

Nature of Government Response

The government's response across keywords such as Renewable, Solar, and Decarbonisation relies heavily on existing government schemes and standardized lists of initiatives. For instance, regarding the decarbonisation of the steel industry, the government often lists initiatives such as the 14 Task Forces constituted by the Ministry of Steel to define pathways towards decarbonisation of the steel sector, the Steel Scrap Recycling Policy (2019) and the National Green Hydrogen Mission to answer different questions. While these initiatives are part of fulfilling the 2070 net-zero goal, the government admits that "no interim target for reducing carbon emissions in the steel sector" has been set so far.

The government accelerates the expansion of Solar and Wind power plants by significantly reducing environmental regulations. They place these projects in a "White Category," which classifies them as "non-polluting" and exempts them from requiring a formal Environmental Clearance (EC) or an Environmental Impact Assessment. While the government sets the national targets, the private sector is the primary driver of these projects, with private developers taking the lead in identifying and acquiring the vast amounts of land required, often averaging four acres per megawatt.

The irony lies in labeling these massive infrastructure projects as purely "green," as their ecological footprint is often severe. The government's own research admits that the massive power lines and rapid expansion into desert ecosystems have killed many rare birds, most notably the Great Indian Bustard (GIB), which frequently dies from electrocution or collisions with the wire.

Government replies often point to State Governments when explaining delays or environmental concerns, noting that land is a "State subject" and that matters such as land acquisition fall under State authorities. While States do handle these aspects, the Centre is also involved through national policies, funding, and environmental regulations. Because both levels of government play a role, responsibility for delays or environmental impacts cannot rest entirely with the States.

Under the keywords Energy Transition and Fossil Fuel, the government brings up global climate commitments while explicitly maintaining a domestic status quo for coal. In the Rajya Sabha, the government stated that "no National Policy for Just Energy Transition is under consideration" because coal demand is projected to rise to 1.5 billion tonnes and only peak around 2040. This creates a sharp irony, where, despite the availability of 42,000 hectares of coal mine land for potential repurposing, as highlighted in the iFOREST (International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology) report, the Ministry of Coal has not taken steps in this direction, stating that it has neither commissioned a study on the Just Energy Transition Plan nor identified any such projects. Furthermore, while the government celebrates achieving 50% non-fossil installed capacity in June 2025, five years ahead of schedule, responses simultaneously reveal a stranded ground reality where 42.6 GW of renewable capacity is stuck because Power Sale Agreements (PSAs) have not been signed with state utilities.

Discussions on themes such as Smart Grid and Energy Efficiency highlight a conflict between the renewable energy ambitions and the revenue model of State Distribution Companies (DISCOMs). The union government set a target of achieving 40 GW of rooftop solar by 2022, yet achieved only 7.65 GW by late 2022, a failure largely attributed to DISCOMs being apprehensive about revenue loss. The response to this resistance is to provide incentives to DISCOMs to accept self-generation, essentially paying them to mitigate their own revenue fears while consumers face approval and net-metering delays.

In the context of Green Hydrogen, the government maintains high mission-mode optimism with a ₹19,744 crore outlay in 2023, while acknowledging that the technology is not commercially viable at present and that current hydrogen production in India remains almost entirely fossil-fuel based.

Whether there is a scheme in place to promote decarbonisation in carbon intensive and carbon specific heavy industries?

At present, Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) has no such scheme in place.
(Q. No. 392, Session 14 of 17th Lok Sabha)

Whether a national policy is being considered for a Just Energy Transition?

No such National Policy for Just Energy Transition is under consideration by the Government. (Q. No. 126, Session 256 of Rajya Sabha)

The pace of construction of new buildings in the country in the last five years and the details thereof (in terms of area of floor space) and the percentage increase every year; and (d) the predictions of the pace of new building construction in the next three years?

Land and Colonization' is a State subject. Data on the pace of construction of buildings is not maintained centrally by MoHUA. (Q. No. 850, Session 257 of Rajya Sabha)

Whether the Government has recently taken any decision of cancelling unviable renewable energy project contracts due to implementation issues?

Neither have any cancellations been made after issuance of Letters of Award, nor has any list for cancellation been prepared (Q. No. 153, Session 6 of 18th Lok Sabha)

As on 31.10.2025, there is 42,626 MW of renewable power capacity for which Letters of Award (LoAs) have been issued by REIs, but Power Sale Agreements (PSAs) with End-Procurees have not been signed. (Q. No. 685, Session 6 of 18th Lok Sabha)

Whether the Government is maintaining a record of the profits being made by firms in the renewable energy space by size of firm?

Renewable Energy projects in India are implemented largely through private investments. Hence, no such record are maintained in this Ministry. (Q. No. 623, Session 260 of Rajya Sabha)

Whether the Government is maintaining a record of the profits being made by firms in the renewable energy space by size of firm?

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THEME 2: FORESTS AND LAND USE



Statistical Analysis

During the selected ten-year period, the "Forests and Land Use" section accounted for a total of 1461 questions. This represents 16.8% of all environment-specific keywords raised in both houses but only 0.6% of the total parliamentary Questions and Answers.

The Parliament predominantly focused on 'Forest' and 'Tree,' taking up 917 and 251 questions, respectively. In this theme, while 'Afforestation' constituted around 10%, 'Deforestation' only received 3.1%, with 45 questions asked across both houses, despite reported concerns over the massive scale of forest loss and tree cover at stake in projects, such as the Great Nicobar Island Project (1 million trees), the Kanwar Corridor (1.1 lakh trees), and the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway (7,500+ trees). Parliamentary focus on Forestry (22.4%) often centres on Agroforestry to boost farmer income.

Temporal Analysis

Phase I: 2015 - 2017:

In the early years between 2015 and 2017, parliamentary discussions on forestry mainly focused on basic and foundational issues. Much of the discussion concerned the launch of the Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) in 2016 and the implementation of the National Agroforestry Policy, 2014. Members asked about the policy's objectives and the role of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) in developing high-yielding tree varieties. There were also questions about Social Forestry and ways to involve students and the general public in tree-planting and greening activities. Overall, the discussions remained relatively consistent during this period, with particular attention to the shift from the older National Afforestation Programme (NAP) towards newer, landscape-based approaches to forest and land management.

Phase II: 2018 - 2020:

During 2018-2020, with the notification of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) Rules, 2018, there was a significant rise in questions on Afforestation. This period saw a transition from discussing "draft rules" to discussing the ₹48,477.77 crore released to 31 States in 2019 following a Supreme Court-directed reconciliation. The notification of the CAF Rules, 2018 shifted the focus to procedural compliance and stakeholder consultations, including the role of Gram Sabhas in forest management. Following summer temperature records, questions on urban forestry spiked with the launch of the Nagar Van Yojana (2020), aimed at creating 1,000 urban forests to mitigate "heat island effects".

Phase III: 2021 - 2025

In 2021-2023, following India's COP 26 (2021) commitments to create a 2.5-3 billion tonne carbon sink, attention shifted toward the technical efficacy of reforestation. The discussions revolved around the merger of the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) with the Green India Mission (GIM) in 2021 to strengthen and unify greening efforts. Finances were questioned as the combined allocation rose from ₹160 crore to ₹250 crore. The release of the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021 had the government using the reported 2,261 sq. km net increase in forest/tree cover to defend its "diversion" policies. Notably, Reforestation (23 questions) remained a theme exclusively addressed in the Lok Sabha, often linked to river rejuvenation projects such as Namami Gange. Questions also featured the use of geo-tagging, satellite imagery (Resourcesat-2 LISS III), and the e-Green Watch portal to ensure transparency in plantation survival rates

In 2024-2025, attention was drawn to promotional campaigns and scrutiny of Deforestation (25 questions). The launch of the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign (June 2024) resulted in "status" questions, with the government reporting over one billion seedlings planted through voluntary participation. Scrutiny of Deforestation focused on felling in the Hasdeo forest for mining (94,460 trees) and the Great Nicobar Island Project. The Central Government repeatedly used the "State subject" defense to decline providing district-wise felling data for highways and mining, a point frequently questioned by members of the opposition.

Questions regarding the survival rates of plantations typically follow a post-monsoon cycle when State Forest Departments conduct physical verifications. Spikes in questions about the Forest Fire Prevention and Management (FFPM) scheme occur following summer fire seasons in the Himalayas. Increasing attention to the Miyawaki method and afforestation in landslide-prone areas correlates with real-world disasters like the Wayanad (2024) or Himachal (2023) landslides.

Political Engagement

Ruling party members, led primarily by the BJP and its NDA allies, pose status-oriented questions, allowing the government to highlight the success of its flagship schemes.

- For instance, BJP members such as Ashok Kumar Rawat and Eatala Rajender have questioned the benefits of the National Agroforestry Policy and the restructured PM-RKVY, with the Ministry stating that over one lakh farmers have benefited and 28.4 million hectares are under agroforestry.
- Similarly, Janardan Singh Sigriwal (BJP) and Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo (BJP) promote urban greening via the Nagar Van Yojana and align community-led models such as "Familial Forestry" with the government's Mission LiFE. These questions often garner responses that emphasize a net gain in forest cover (reporting an increase of 2,261 sq. km in ISFR 2021) and the massive scale of voluntary planting drives such as "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam," which reportedly saw over one billion seedlings planted.

- BJP members such as Ramkumar Verma and Dr. Ashok Bajpai have questioned the success of the "Har Medh Par Pedh" scheme, enabling the government to report the planting of over 401 lakh trees and the establishment of 899 nurseries for native species.
- Harnath Singh Yadav (BJP) and Narhari Amin (BJP) questioned the promotion of forestry to combat desertification and the factors contributing to the reported increase in forest cover from 24.16% to 25.17% in ISFR 2023. These questions effectively validate the government's "net gain" narrative.
- Ruling party members focus on the protective nature of mangroves as "bio-shields" and promote new missions like MISHTI. Members like Captain Brijesh Chowta (BJP) and Sulata Deo (BJP) have highlighted mangrove cover increases in Karnataka and restoration efforts in Odisha to emphasize coastal resilience.

Opposition members engage in "scrutiny-oriented" questioning of the government's narrative, legal violations, and implementation gaps.

- Members of the INC, such as Harish Chandra Meena and Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka and others, have questioned whether urban infrastructure projects are bypassing mandatory compensatory afforestation and have sought project-wise details on forest land diversion in Scheduled Areas. The government's response is often defensive, stating that district-specific data is not maintained at the central level because land is a "State subject".
- The opposition uses 'tree' felling as a metric for developmental scrutiny. Dr. Sasmit Patra (BJD) and Dr. Sandeep Kumar Pathak (AAP) have questioned the government to provide district-wise and forest-wise data on trees cut for mining and highways between 2019 and 2024. The opposition's engagement here is often met with the government's defensive "State subject" response, which limits central accountability for the felling of nearly 1.1 lakh trees in specific coal blocks like Hasdeo Arand.
- Opposition members, including the INC, DMK, and AITC, scrutinise the diversion of forest land. G.C. Chandrashekhar (INC) and Tiruchi Siva (DMK) have demanded activity-wise details on the 96,450 hectares of forest land diverted for non-forestry purposes, questioning whether compensatory investments truly offset the loss of primary forests. Furthermore, the INC has focused on regional ecological degradation, such as in the Western Ghats, to highlight the disconnect between national statistics and localised crises.
- DMK members, such as T.R. Baalu, have questioned the efficacy of the entire compensatory system, questioning whether the diversion of over one million hectares of forest land is truly being offset by artificial plantations, particularly in the context of India's 2070 Net Zero targets. Furthermore, BJD and SP members have focused on the localized human and ecological costs of development, such as mining-related deforestation in the Hasdeo forest, where 94,460 trees were felled, and the resulting increase in human-wildlife conflict.

- Opposition members, Samirul Islam (AITC) and Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla (YSRCP) have raised concerns about funding underutilization and shortfalls in targets. They have pointed out that despite the ecological urgency, there was a 30% shortfall in Green India Mission afforestation targets in 2020-21 and that significant funds released for mangrove restoration often lack timely implementation reports.

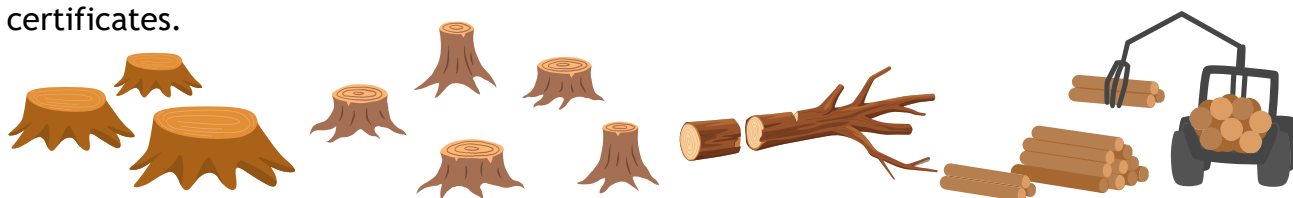
Overall, the political engagement of the ruling party serves as a promotional tool for policy continuity, while the opposition functions as a watchdog for ecological and social safeguards. The ruling party often relies on the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) to argue that "more trees are planted than removed". The opposition, however, functions as a watchdog for ecological integrity, consistently pressing for granular data on land diversion and the impact of plantations on tribal and customary rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA).

Similarly, while ruling party members celebrate the disbursement of ₹48,477.77 crore in Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) funds to States, opposition members note that these funds often fail to reach the ground due to administrative non-compliance, such as Maharashtra's failure to submit utilization certificates or Odisha's struggle with unspent balances.

Nature of Government Response

The government's response to afforestation is primarily driven by the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act (CAMPA), 2016 and the National Mission for a Green India (GIM). It is largely quantitative and compensatory. The government states that for every tree cut, multiple seedlings are planted; for instance, between 2016 and 2021, 20.81 crore seedlings were planted against 1.20 crore trees cut. Monitoring is increasingly technological, utilizing the e-Green Watch portal, geo-tagged documentation, and satellite imagery to ensure transparency. Despite the massive corpus (₹66,298 crore available as of 2018), execution often suffers from administrative friction, such as the non-submission of mandatory utilization certificates by States like Maharashtra.

Agroforestry is framed as a tool for livelihood diversification and climate resilience under the motto "Har Medh Par Ped". It is policy-centric, relying on the National Agroforestry Policy (2014). Since 2023-24, it has been integrated into the PM-RKVY to focus on quality planting material and nursery support. However, its implementation is uneven; for example, Andhra Pradesh did not receive funds for several years because it failed to submit Annual Action Plans. Similarly, Maharashtra was not considered for funds in 2020-22 due to the non-submission of mandatory documents such as utilization certificates.



The response to the keyword 'forest' is largely defensive and data-reliant, centered on the biennial India State of Forest Report (ISFR). The government consistently uses ISFR data to argue that forest cover is increasing nationally, citing a gain of 2,261 sq. km in the ISFR 2021. When addressed on loss, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change distinguishes illegal deforestation from authorized diversion, framing the latter as unavoidable for site-specific developmental needs under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. There is a significant accountability gap regarding granular data. The Central Government frequently declines to provide district-wise or project-specific felling details (such as in Scheduled Areas), stating that land is a "State subject" and such data is not compiled centrally. This narrative masks the qualitative loss of primary forests, as the government itself admits that artificial plantations "cannot immediately replace" the complex ecological functions of natural ecosystems.

Responses to the keyword 'tree' focus on quantitative compensation and livelihoods. The government states that 20.81 crore seedlings were planted to offset the 1.20 crore trees felled for infrastructure projects over five years. Furthermore, trees are framed as economic assets through agroforestry schemes like "Har Medh Par Ped," which reportedly planted over 401 lakh trees to boost farmer income and carbon sequestration. The reliance on seedling counts as a metric of success is a form of statistical optimism that ignores on-ground survival and ecological complexity. While the government promotes technological monitoring through the e-Green Watch portal and geo-tagging, the ground reality recorded in news of frequent landslides and flash floods suggests that these rapid plantation drives are not yet effectively mitigating the vulnerabilities caused by removing mature, slope-stabilizing tree cover.

The response to the keyword 'mangrove' is policy-centric and protective, framing these ecosystems as critical "bio-shields" for coastal resilience. Responses highlight specialized initiatives such as Mission MISHTI (aimed at restoring 540 sq. km) and the National Coastal Mission, showcasing coastal stabilization efforts in states such as Odisha and Gujarat. Despite the protective rhetoric, there is evidence of funding underutilization and implementation delays. The National Coastal Mission budget saw a drastic decrease (from ₹195 crore to ₹12.50 crore) due to the exclusion of externally aided components, and funds have been consistently underutilized. Furthermore, while the government reports mangrove growth, the 30% shortfall in Green India Mission targets in 2020-21 indicates that large-scale restoration projects often lag behind their ecological urgency.

The government's stance on deforestation is defensive, often replacing the term with "forest diversion" for unavoidable developmental needs. However, these so-called unavoidable needs frequently translate into ecological vulnerabilities with serious human costs. The Uttarakhand floods led to over 5,700 people being presumed dead or missing, with deforestation and unregulated construction in fragile Himalayan zones worsening landslides and flash floods.

Similarly, the Kerala floods caused around 483 deaths, where loss of forest cover and quarrying activity contributed to slope instability and flooding. In coastal regions, Cyclone Amphan resulted in over 100 deaths in India, with mangrove deforestation in the Sundarbans reducing natural protection against storm surges. While focusing on a net gain narrative using the India State of Forest Report (ISFR), the government consistently claims that forest cover is increasing (e.g., a gain of 1,540 sq km in ISFR 2021). This narrative masks the loss of primary, old-growth forests, which are diverted for mining and infrastructure (e.g., 78,135 hectares approved for diversion between 2021 and 2025).

The parliamentary discussions reveal implementation bottlenecks rooted in administrative non-compliance rather than a shortage of funds. Although a massive ₹48,477.77 crore was released to 31 States and Union Territories following a 2019 reconciliation, many States struggle to utilize these resources. For example, Maharashtra's afforestation proposals for 2020-22 were rejected due to the non-submission of mandatory utilization certificates. Similarly, Andhra Pradesh missed fund releases for three years for failing to submit Annual Action Plans, and West Bengal was denied Bamboo Mission funds for nearly a decade due to pending physical progress reports. The resulting inefficiency is noted in Odisha, holding an unspent balance of ₹304 crore, meaning available funds were not actually reaching the ground for afforestation work.



BOX 2:

The number of forest fires, the area affected in hectares and the loss in terms of money during the last three years, state-wise; This Ministry does not maintain details in respect of the number of forest fires, the area affected in hectares and the loss in terms of money.

(Q. No. 345, Session 242 of Rajya Sabha)

Whether the Government has assessed the impact of climate-driven wildfires on greenhouse gas emissions in India?

As per India's fourth BUR, CH₄ and N₂O emissions from forest fires contributed 1.055 million tonne CO₂e in the year 2020, which is only 0.03 % of the total GHG emissions in India.

(Q. No. 2296, Session 267 of Rajya Sabha)

The details of crop compensation released under various programmes to farmers in drought-affected areas of Haryana State during each of the last five years and the current year?

The financial assistance provided under SDRF and NDRF is by way of relief and not for compensation. No financial assistance under NDRF is released to the State of Haryana in the wake of drought during the last five years and the current year.

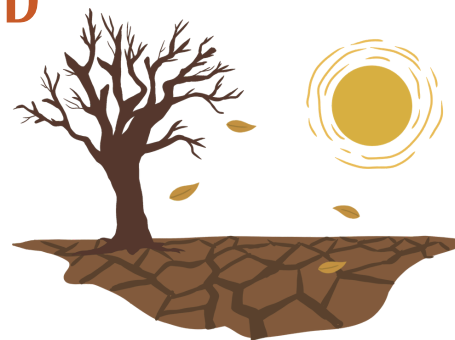
(Q. No. 2876, Session 4 of 18th of Lok Sabha)

Whether the Government has any plans to declare heatwave as a natural disaster; whether the Government has any data about the number of people who died in the recent heatwave especially informal and gig workers?

730 deaths; Currently, the notified list of disasters eligible for National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)/State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) assistance includes 12 disasters, not heatwaves.

(Q. No. 2071, Session 4 of 18th Lok Sabha)

THEME 3: EXTREME WEATHER AND NATURAL DISASTERS



Statistical Analysis

Between 2015 and 2025, there were a total of 1,385 questions in Parliament concerning Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters. This represents 15.9% of all environment-related questions in both Houses, but only 0.5% of the total parliamentary questions and answers. Questions on Cyclones and Floods together account for over 52% of the section.

Cyclones are a major focus of the Lok Sabha (388 vs. 79 in RS), likely reflecting the direct constituency pressures on MPs from coastal regions. Floods and Droughts see higher engagement in the Rajya Sabha (233 for Floods, 167 for Droughts) as the Council of States prioritises long-term statewide issues. The high frequency of questions on cyclones aligns with the significant economic stakes associated with weather forecasting and early warning systems. According to an NCAER (National Council of Applied Economic Research) assessment cited by the Ministry of Earth Sciences, agrometeorological advisory services generate annual economic benefits of ₹38,463 crore to ₹67,000 crore by enabling farmers to make better decisions on sowing, irrigation, pest management, and crop selection. Questions on Drought (12% of the theme) reflect its significance to the 68% of India's cultivable land that is vulnerable to it. In 2015-16, 246 districts across 10 states were declared drought-affected.

Heatwaves received the least attention, representing a massive parliamentary blind spot. While heatwaves account for only 3.5% of questions in the theme, they are one of India's deadliest hazards. Extreme heat exposure has caused over 22,000 deaths since 1992. Despite 2015 recording nearly 2,000 deaths in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana alone, the frequency of questions remains low because heatwaves are not on the "notified list" of disasters for central funding.

Temporal Analysis

The 2015-2017 period was driven by questions on Drought and agrarian distress, following the severe 2014-15 monsoon deficits. In the 2015 winter session of the parliament, 26 members simultaneously raised a single question, indicating a peak in collective anxiety over drought relief in 10 states.

2018-2020, there was an increase in questions on cyclones and extreme rainfall. The 2017 Cyclone Ockhi and the 2018 Kerala Floods triggered a multi-year spike in questions on Relief vs. Compensation and Dam Management.

During 2021-2025, parliamentary attention to extreme weather evolved in distinct phases, with an initial diversification into “scientific” disasters. The February 2021 Uttarakhand glacier burst triggered questions on glacier melt and cloudbursts, while the record-breaking heat of 2022 led to the first substantial parliamentary focus on heatwaves. In the more recent phase, this attention shifted towards forecasting technologies and long-term climate projections, particularly in relation to 2030 targets. Trends in the parliamentary discussion are also influenced by external socio-economic and political developments. The 2016 revision of the Drought Management Manual led to questions on the introduction of new triggers, particularly satellite-based indices, on the grounds that they could make drought declaration more restrictive for States. In 2019 and 2024, the first sessions of the new Lok Sabhas (17th and 18th) saw a “disaster backlog” spike. For example, the Monsoon Session of the 17th LS (June 2019) saw a flurry of questions on Cyclone Fani and the 2018-19 drought as new members sought to establish themselves as regional advocates. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, the volume of weather-related questions decreased. Questions correlated COVID-19 with a reduction in flood aid effectiveness and a double burden on NDRF personnel. The collapse of the Rishiganga and Tapovan projects (2021) and the Teesta-III dam (2023) led to immediate, intense spikes in questions addressing man-made vs. natural disasters and the safety of old dams.

Political Engagement

Members of the ruling party alliance tend to ask questions that prioritise offering the government an opportunity to celebrate its programmes and schemes, and provide technical updates.

- For instance, Kesridevsinh Jhala (BJP) sought details on the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP), effectively inviting the Ministry to detail the successful completion of cyclone shelters and underground cabling.
- Similarly, Bhagirath Choudhury (BJP) questioned the objectives and beneficiary criteria of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), with the government listing water conservation efforts in Rajasthan and Gujarat in response.

Other parties within the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) follow a strategy of regional advocacy and resource mobilization. While these parties generally support the Union Government’s technocratic framework, they pivot the discussions toward specific regional vulnerabilities, sectoral relief (like fisheries), and localized infrastructure needs.

- JD(U) members questioned the status of the Sapta Kosi Multipurpose Project and high dams in Nepal to mitigate recurring North Bihar floods. They pressed for permanent solutions through bilateral diplomacy with Nepal and also questioned the effectiveness of the existing infrastructure regarding embankment breaches in Gopalganj.
- The Asom Gana Parishad focused on specific protection for the Brahmaputra Valley and the mandate of the National Flood Commission, while seeking details on recommendations for a "permanent solution" to erosion in Assam.

The members of the opposition question the adequacy of Central funds, often contrasting the massive financial demands made by States with the significantly lower amounts approved by the Union.

- For example, a question sought details on crop compensation in Haryana, leading to the government stating that Central aid is for "relief" and "not compensation". This push for accountability is particularly sharp regarding the most vulnerable populations, such as the increase in heatwave deaths due to insufficient protective facilities for the poor, specifically urban labourers.
- A pattern of regional advocacy is observed in parties such as YSRCP, DMK, and BJD, which focus on the scientific and fiscal exclusion of their states. YSRCP and DMK members pushed for the use of advanced geospatial technology and locally defined temperature thresholds for heatwaves, highlighting the need for region-specific declarations that the current Central framework lacks. Similarly, BJD members questioned the disparities in cyclone relief, where the release of funds for Cyclones Fani and Amphan was scrutinised against the actual demands of the State.
- Parties such as the CPI(M)(L) and AIMIM have highlighted neglected human impacts, such as the lack of data or response on heatwave deaths among informal and gig workers, or the socio-economic impact of double disasters (heatwaves and floods) in urban local bodies.
- Meanwhile, the Shiv Sena (UBT), now in the opposition, adopts a more confrontational tone regarding urban drainage mismanagement and the man-made nature of infrastructure failures.
- TDP members, part of the ruling party between 2014 and 2018, have highlighted the neglected impact of extreme weather on the primary sector. Putta Mahesh Kumar (TDP) asked for the financial loss data of fisheries that shut down due to heatwaves in Andhra Pradesh. TDP also sought details on making coastal districts cyclone-resilient and progress in insuring coastal populations against property and life losses from recurring cyclones.

Nature of Government Response

The government's response to questions on extreme weather events shows technical strength but tends to remain detached when it comes to accountability, where the Union Government monitors effectively but shifts financial responsibility to the States. This is most evident in responses relating to heatwaves. Despite being recognised as an increasingly severe climate risk, heatwaves are not currently included in the national list of notified disasters, limiting access to routine relief assistance under the NDRF and SDRF, forcing the states to rely on a mere 10% discretionary window of their own funds. While the government promotes "Heat Action Plans" (HAPs) in 23 states, these often lack the structural funding required to protect the most vulnerable, such as informal and gig workers.

In addressing drought, the government's response is characterized by a strategic distinction between relief and compensation. By defining assistance by the Union government as a temporary measure for immediate relief rather than compensation for actual economic losses, the Centre effectively offloads the long-term financial burden of climate-induced agrarian failure onto State governments and individual citizens. For instance, Rajasthan during Kharif 2015 sought ₹10,537 crore for relief but was approved for only ₹1,193 crore, just 11% of the demand, due to strict adherence to "prescribed norms". Similarly, Andhra Pradesh requested ₹2,281.79 crore for the 2017 drought, and the Centre approved ₹518.93 crore. These disparities occur because the Centre applies rigid 'items and norms' that cap the amount provided per hectare (e.g., ₹6,800/ha for rainfed areas) when crop loss is 33% or above, regardless of the actual cost of production or depth of the crisis. While drought is a slow-onset disaster that often persists far beyond 90 days, the government notes a 90-day limit for relief activities such as gratuitous relief, medical care, and fodder supply, capped at 25% of the SDRF. While monitoring tools like the National Agricultural Drought Assessment and Monitoring System (NADAMS) are technically advanced, the resulting financial assistance is restricted by a norm-based shield, under which aid is calculated according to predefined eligibility criteria and fixed assistance rates rather than the actual economic losses suffered by farmers. As a result, compensation often falls short of the true scale of drought-related damage.

The government, in 2018, claimed that "The State Governments have not reported cases of starvation or farmer suicides due to drought," and that "the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs, which compiles and disseminates information on suicides in its publication titled 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' (ADSI), has also not provided any data on suicides committed by farmers and agricultural labourers due to starvation." However, subsequent research has identified a significant relationship between rainfall deficits and farmer suicides. A 2023 analysis by the International Institute for Economy and Development found that with a 5% rainfall deficit, around 810 farmer suicides occur annually, whereas with a 25% rainfall deficit, suicides rise to approximately 1,188 per year.

In the context of flood hazard, the government's response reveals a dependency on structural engineering while simultaneously denying human accountability for "man-made" disasters. The government insisted that the 2023 flooding in Bharuch was not man-made, despite it being caused by reservoir releases from the Sardar Sarovar Dam as it approached full capacity. The government promotes the "Flood Watch India App 2.0" and the "C-Flood" Unified Inundation Forecasting System for real-time, village-level mapping. Yet, the "Notified List" of disasters remains restricted. The government notes that the 15th Finance Commission refused to expand the notified list to include River Erosion, despite it displacing thousands. 367,000 people were displaced primarily due to riverbank erosion in 2014 (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre-IDMC, 2015) in Assam. The government, while tracking a citizen's house being washed away by river erosion in real-time with satellite precision, fails to provide citizens with National Disaster funds because the specific mechanism of their loss (erosion) is not on the "approved" list. Technical advancement, in this context, is used to monitor losses, while the notified-disaster framework serves as an alibi for withholding compensation.

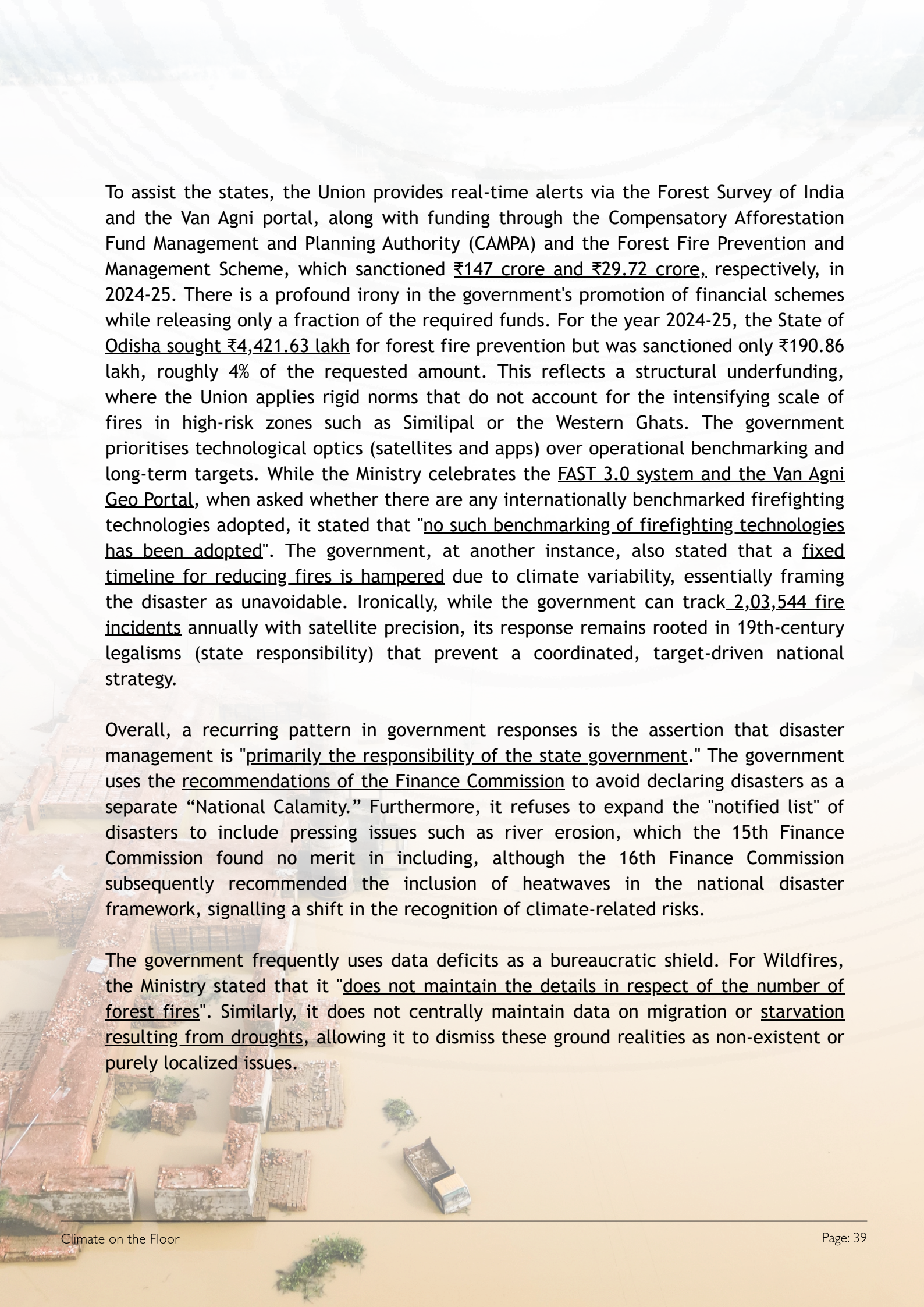
Regarding Cyclones, India's forecasting systems are compared to global standards, with accurate predictions for major storms such as Phailin (2013), Fani (2019), and Tauktae (2021), reducing deaths in the Indian subcontinent to single/double digits. However, this Technological victory masks a devastating ground reality for livelihoods. While the Indian Coast Guard (ICG), operating under the union government, "successfully shepherds" thousands of boats to safety, the economic impact remains unmitigated. For instance, in Maharashtra, after Cyclone Tauktae, although human loss was minimized, the community lost 1,215 boats and 21,836 nets. The government, in response, has largely confined itself to a "management of relief", providing financial assistance through the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), while reiterating that the primary responsibility for disaster management rests with State Governments. Similarly, for Cyclone Gaja, the government stated that assistance was provided as relief, not as compensation, leaving the long-term reconstruction of livelihoods, such as boats and nets for fishermen, entirely to the State's own resources. Cyclone Gaja killed 710 birds and 26 animals (including black bucks and spotted deer) in the Point Calimere Sanctuary.

Similarly, the Sunderbans (which covers 3,513 sq. km of forest) suffered significant ecological shocks during Amphan, yet the restoration fund for sanctuaries was a mere ₹149.44 lakh. In an interesting note on bio-resilience, the government observed that Palmyra trees (*Borassus flabellifer*) remained intact during Cyclones Aila and Gaja due to their "deep anchorage and radial symmetry," while thousands of other trees were uprooted. Despite this biological evidence, there is "No study conducted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change" on using the bio-shields of these trees as a cost-effective alternative to expensive embankments.

In the Himalayan region, 279 incidents of cloudbursts were reported between 2018 and 2023. However, there were only 7 questions asked about it between 2015 and 2025. The government's response to these questions is the consistent assertion that cloudbursts are beyond the reach of current global technology, as they are localized, unpredictable, and often unreportable. It states there is "no established study for India estimating the quantified contribution of climate change in triggering such cloudbursts." While the government acknowledges in the 2020 Assessment of Climate Change report that extreme rainfall events over central India increased by 75% due to rising atmospheric moisture, it refuses to draw the same parallel for cloudbursts. The increase in the frequency and intensity of cloudbursts worldwide is attributed to the Clausius-Clapeyron relationship, where a 1-degree Celsius rise in temperature may correspond to a 7-10% increase in moisture and rainfall.

For 'Glacier-Melt', the government admits that "the melting of glaciers is a natural process and cannot be controlled. The recession or melting of glaciers is mainly caused by global warming and climate change. Therefore, the rate of melting of glaciers can't be prevented or slowed down unless all the factors responsible for global warming and climate change can be controlled," yet it continues to support infrastructure like hydropower in these fragile zones. While the government identifies some areas in the Himalayan region as highly vulnerable, projects that intensify this vulnerability, such as the Rishiganga project, are often only reassessed after being destroyed by the very glacier bursts the government characterises as unavoidable.

Around 15 million people in India were affected by wildfires in 2024-25. Based on the forest inventory records, 54.40% of forests in India are exposed to occasional fires, 7.49% to moderately frequent fires, and 2.40% to high incidence levels. Parliamentary discussions on wildfires focused on identifying state-wise losses and occurrences, yet revealed that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change does not centrally maintain data on the exact forest area destroyed. Fire protection is framed as primarily a State responsibility for mostly man-made incidents, while downplaying the climate impact by noting that wildfire emissions account for only 0.03% of India's total GHG output. The government explicitly stated that prevention of forest fires and encroachment is primarily the responsibility of the concerned state government/UT Administration under laws like the Indian Forest Act, 1927, limiting the Centre's role to providing financial assistance and technical alerts. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change admitted that it "does not maintain State-wise data on the extent of forest area affected" and has conducted no specific national assessment on environmental loss due to wildfire in forest areas. Even recently, the government reiterated that no nationwide assessment of economic losses or wildlife mortality has been conducted. By framing wildfires as a "state subject," the Union government effectively deflects accountability for the increasing frequency of fires. This data blackout acts as a policy shield. Without official quantification of the damage to flora, fauna, and local livelihoods, the government avoids the necessity of creating a national compensation framework.

An aerial photograph showing a flooded area. In the foreground, there are several buildings with red-tiled roofs partially submerged in muddy water. A small blue and white truck is also in the water. The background shows more buildings and some greenery, all under a hazy sky.

To assist the states, the Union provides real-time alerts via the Forest Survey of India and the Van Agni portal, along with funding through the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) and the Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme, which sanctioned ₹147 crore and ₹29.72 crore, respectively, in 2024-25. There is a profound irony in the government's promotion of financial schemes while releasing only a fraction of the required funds. For the year 2024-25, the State of Odisha sought ₹4,421.63 lakh for forest fire prevention but was sanctioned only ₹190.86 lakh, roughly 4% of the requested amount. This reflects a structural underfunding, where the Union applies rigid norms that do not account for the intensifying scale of fires in high-risk zones such as Similipal or the Western Ghats. The government prioritises technological optics (satellites and apps) over operational benchmarking and long-term targets. While the Ministry celebrates the FAST 3.0 system and the Van Agni Geo Portal, when asked whether there are any internationally benchmarked firefighting technologies adopted, it stated that "no such benchmarking of firefighting technologies has been adopted". The government, at another instance, also stated that a fixed timeline for reducing fires is hampered due to climate variability, essentially framing the disaster as unavoidable. Ironically, while the government can track 2,03,544 fire incidents annually with satellite precision, its response remains rooted in 19th-century legalisms (state responsibility) that prevent a coordinated, target-driven national strategy.

Overall, a recurring pattern in government responses is the assertion that disaster management is "primarily the responsibility of the state government." The government uses the recommendations of the Finance Commission to avoid declaring disasters as a separate "National Calamity." Furthermore, it refuses to expand the "notified list" of disasters to include pressing issues such as river erosion, which the 15th Finance Commission found no merit in including, although the 16th Finance Commission subsequently recommended the inclusion of heatwaves in the national disaster framework, signalling a shift in the recognition of climate-related risks.

The government frequently uses data deficits as a bureaucratic shield. For Wildfires, the Ministry stated that it "does not maintain the details in respect of the number of forest fires". Similarly, it does not centrally maintain data on migration or starvation resulting from droughts, allowing it to dismiss these ground realities as non-existent or purely localized issues.

BOX 3:

Number of forests from which these trees were cut, the details thereof, State-wise, district-wise and forest-wise?

Further, the land is a state subject and the detail of the trees felled and the trees planted is not maintained at the level of the Ministry. (*Q. No. 3088, Session 267 of Rajya Sabha*)

The number of places identified and protected by the Ministry under the Environmental and Forest Protection Act, in Tamil Nadu?

There is no Act titled “Environment and Forest Protection Act”. In view of this fact, the question of identification and protection of places in Tamil Nadu along with allocation and utilisation of funds does not arise. (*Q. No. 3536, Session 7 of 17th Lok Sabha*)

Whether the Government is aware that artificial afforestation is not a long lasting measure and it cannot be compared with to the decreasing and extincting natural forest?

Artificial afforestation carried out under compensatory afforestation provisions of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 does not substitute natural forests and does not compensate the ecological loss instantly. Yet, keeping in view the imperatives of development, and the crucial role played by development projects including highways in the process of development, permission for diversion of forest land is granted under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 only in cases where diversion of forest land is inevitable. (*Q. No. 6541, Session 14 of 16th Lok Sabha*)

Reasons for a 30% shortfall of target by Green India Mission?

The allocation of afforestation targets under the Green India Mission (GIM) are subject to the availability of funds. During 2020-21, the targets under GIM were allocated to the States as per the available budget of Rs 160 Crore. (*Q. No. 1004, Session 258 of Rajya Sabha*)

Whether it is a fact that over the last three years, no money has been released to the State of West Bengal under the National Agro Forestry and Bamboo Mission?

Yes, Sir. No money has been released to West Bengal State under the National Bamboo Mission over the last three years due to non-submission of proper utilisation certificate and physical progress for Rs. 129.15 lakhs released in 2008-09. (*Q. No. 14, Session 245 of Rajya Sabha*)

Whether the Government has collected data on the rate of deforestation in the country over the last five years?

The information on deforestation due to various reasons is not maintained at Government of India level. (*Q. No. 4555, Session 1 of 17th Lok Sabha*)

THEME 4: CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBAL IMPACTS



Statistical Analysis

The theme, ‘Climate Change and Global Impact’ accounts for 1,140 questions, making up 13% of environment-specific queries in both Houses but only 0.4% of the total parliamentary questions and answers. Climate change, despite being widely recognised as a serious global issue, remains a lesser priority within the broader parliamentary agenda. The discussions focus mainly on commitments and targets, often referring to older studies such as the 2010 report, “Climate Change and India: A 4X4 Assessment”, with limited attention to domestic vulnerabilities and lived realities. This gap between scientific advances and political discourse indicates that while there is some recognition of the issue, the limited overall discussion shows that it is not always a sustained priority.

Even within these discussions, Parliament seems to be more inclined towards the commercial side of climate action, such as renewable energy expansion and investments, rather than the phenomenon itself or its deeper causes and impacts, such as biodiversity loss, climate migration, ocean acidification and urban climate vulnerability. The focus remains largely on immediate and visible outcomes, while several long-term challenges of climate change continue to receive far less attention.

Temporal Analysis

In the past decade, though parliamentary discussions on climate change remained steady, they were not shaped by major environmental disasters happening across the country. From January to November 2025, 331 of 334 days were marked by a near-continuous cascade of floods, heatwaves and storms – claiming 4,419 lives and damaging 17.4 million hectares of crops, signalling a dangerous new climate normal. Even as India experienced these catastrophic climate change-related incidents, discussions in both Houses were mostly focused on policies, schemes, research findings and existing climate missions.

Between 2015 and 2020, incidents of floods at the Coromandel Coast, the Uttarakhand forest fires, recurring drought conditions in central India, the Kerala floods and repeated

cyclones along the eastern coast exposed the increasing vulnerability of both urban and rural regions. Parliamentary questions during this period mostly centred on rainfall variability, agricultural impacts and national missions. Even as disasters became more frequent, the discussions were more technical and long-term, with less attention to structural issues such as urban planning, deforestation, or disaster preparedness.

From 2021 to 2025, however, as events such as the Chamoli glacier burst in Uttarakhand, repeated cyclones, urban flooding in metropolitan cities like Bengaluru and Chennai, rising heatwaves, and increasing coastal vulnerability became more visible, parliamentary discussions began to reflect a broader concern about climate impacts. There was increased reference to rising temperatures, sea-level changes, extreme rainfall patterns, and public health risks. Questions increasingly pointed toward monitoring systems, climate research networks, and adaptation strategies, showing a shift towards addressing and monitoring impacts more closely. At the same time, the emphasis continued to remain on evaluating the progress of existing programmes and improving preparedness rather than introducing new approaches. While these changing climate patterns were clearly acknowledged, the government continued to tread cautiously, often stating that it is not always possible to directly connect particular disasters to climate change.

Despite this gradual shift, some gaps remained constant across the decade. The movement of people due to climate change rarely entered the conversation. Repeated flooding in metropolitan cities such as Mumbai, Chennai, and Bengaluru did not lead to a strong, sustained discussion on making cities climate-resilient. Large-scale deforestation linked to infrastructure projects was not treated as part of the climate problem. Air pollution, though widely discussed, was often handled as a separate issue rather than being connected to the broader climate crisis.

Political Engagement

The members of the ruling party emphasize India's emerging role as a global climate leader, the success of technological interventions and the country's progress in fulfilling international targets.

- The questions focus on validating India's rankings in global indices and multilateral forums. For example, ruling party members often request details on India's improved ranking in the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) or the outcomes of G20 Summits and COP commitments such as the Panchamrit targets.
- There is a consistent pattern of members asking about "advanced technologies" for monitoring climate change and mitigation. For instance, questions on the Indigenous Earth System Model, high-performance computing at IITM (Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology), Pune, and polar research at the Himadri station in the Arctic.

- Several questions are frequently framed to highlight the implementation of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and its eight missions, such as the National Solar Mission and the promotion of clean energy targets to 500 GW by 2030.
- Some questions from ruling party MPs also refer to the idea of climate justice, emphasizing India's low per-capita emissions and arguing that the country is an active part of the solution despite contributing minimally to historical emissions.

The Opposition parties, on the other hand, tend to focus on the ground realities, the human and economic cost of climate change, and shortcomings in government implementation or funding.

- The majority of questions raise concerns about the health impacts of air pollution and rising temperatures. Opposition members frequently cite WHO or Lancet reports regarding premature deaths and respiratory diseases, pushing for accountability where the government maintains that data is inconclusive.
- The opposition consistently raises the issue of climate refugees and climate-induced migration, demanding to know if the government recognises these categories or has rehabilitation policies for displaced persons in areas like the Sundarbans or eroding coastlines.
- Another recurring concern raised by the opposition is the "underutilization" of funds. For instance, opposition members have questioned why the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) has not resulted in concrete improvement in specific cities or why National Adaptation Fund (NAFCC) disbursements to states like Kerala have been limited.
- Opposition MPs frequently raise issues affecting their constituencies, such as the severe soil erosion of Majuli Island, saltwater intrusion in Kerala's inland water bodies, or the impact of unplanned infrastructure on landslides in the Western Ghats.

Nature of Government Response

The government has repeatedly taken a careful position when it comes to linking environmental damage, especially air pollution, with rising death rates or specific illnesses. While it does acknowledge that pollution can act as a "triggering factor" that worsens health conditions, it stops short of accepting it as a direct cause of premature deaths. Studies by organisations such as The Lancet or the WHO that attempt to estimate the number of early deaths linked to pollution are often not fully accepted in official responses.

When questioned about claims that toxic air is responsible for millions of deaths, the usual explanation is that there is no clear and conclusive evidence proving that a person's death or disease can be attributed only to air pollution. The argument given is that health outcomes depend on many overlapping factors, including diet, lifestyle, and heredity, making it difficult to isolate pollution as the sole reason. The government frequently characterizes international reports such as the Environmental Performance Index or WHO data as using extrapolated data or biased methodology when they rank India poorly.

For questions on the impact of climate change, such as loss of crop yield or heatwaves, the response often follows a familiar pattern. Instead of describing what has improved on the ground, the response usually turns to existing schemes such as the NAPCC, NICRA, or NMSA (National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture), along with details about funds released or schemes and programmes in place. The focus tends to stay on what has been set up and how much has been allocated, rather than on whether temperatures have stabilised, crops have recovered, or conditions have improved for farmers.

In many cases, the answers list figures such as the number of monitoring stations installed, the amount of money spent, or the names of national missions such as the National Solar Mission or the Green India Mission, rather than painting a clear picture of how these efforts have translated into noticeable environmental change. For instance, when asked why air pollution continues to remain severe, the response refers to the ₹11,211 crore released under the NCAP and mentions the number of cities that have reported better PM10 levels. However, it does not fully address why pollution remains a serious concern in the capital despite these efforts.

Similarly, when the questions turn to agricultural distress linked to climate change, the replies almost always bring up the National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) project and the development of climate-resilient seed varieties. The solution is often framed in terms of research and technology, suggesting that innovation will help manage the problem, while deeper structural challenges affecting farmers receive less attention.

The government often softens the severity of local environmental crises by placing them within a broader natural or global context, thereby minimising domestic policy liability. When asked about floods, droughts, or glacier melts causing loss of life, the government argues that it is difficult to measure exactly how much climate change has contributed to a specific disaster, as "attribution science is complex".

When questioned about India being a top emitter, the answer shifts to "per capita emissions" and "historical cumulative emissions," emphasizing that India's contribution over time is relatively small, i.e., less than 4%, especially when compared to developed nations, thus shifting the moral burden to developed nations.

The government explicitly states there is no proposal for a separate "Climate Budget," asserting that climate action is integrated into various ministries' normal budgets. Proposals for a specific "Climate Change Act" or a high-power committee are rejected on the grounds that the current legal framework, particularly the Environment (Protection) Act, along with existing structures like the Apex Committee for Implementation of the Paris Agreement (AIPA), is considered sufficient to manage climate-related responsibilities.

The government denies the existence of climate refugees or migrations solely due to climate change, categorizing displacement under general disaster management, without establishing a distinct category for those displaced due to climate change. In 2019, Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen Institute for Human Sciences, Austria, reported that around 100,000 migrant workers were displaced due to prolonged droughts in parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu.

In general, the responses often portray a sense that environmental degradation is under control or improving due to technological interventions such as the BS-VI norms, bio-decomposers, monitoring apps, even when ground realities such as the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi suggest otherwise. Improvements are described by pointing to an increase in the number of "Good to Moderate" air quality days. While this is presented as a sign of progress, the same responses also note that pollution levels, especially PM levels, remain above national standards. Example: Claims that air quality in Delhi has improved in 2024 compared to 2016.

Another noticeable pattern is that most discussions around action taken focus on tracking and measuring the problem, including details about installing more monitoring stations, expanding data systems, or launching apps such as SAMEER. While these steps help in understanding pollution levels and tend to centre narratives on better measurement and management, there is less emphasis on long-term reduction at the source and directly tackling them in a sustained way.

Overall, the nature of the government's response is purely administrative, with frequent references to schemes, funding, committees and ongoing programmes. It systematically avoids accountability for outcomes related to environmental health, such as deaths, illnesses, or the limited success of certain measures, such as restrictions on stubble burning. The focus tends to remain on what has been introduced or implemented, rather than on what has not worked as expected. When international reports are quoted and standards are compared, the government takes a cautious and defensive tone, with emphasis on differences in context, development levels, and historical responsibility. Solutions are often framed around gradual technological change and long-term transitions, rather than immediate, strict enforcement or rapid regulatory action.

BOX 4:

Whether the Government has conducted any study to assess effect of Air Pollution on life expectancy in the country?

It is to state that air pollution is one of the factors affecting respiratory ailments and associated diseases. Further, there is no conclusive data available to establish a direct correlation of death exclusively due to air pollution. (Q. No. 1945, Session 11 of 17th Lok Sabha)

Whether the Government has conducted any assessment of the economic impact on tourism due to deteriorating air quality?

No such study has been instituted by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India to assess the impact of air pollution on tourism and revenue loss due to travel advisories and cancellations related to air pollution. (Q. No. 1669, Session 4 of 18th Lok Sabha)

Whether the Government has conducted any studies on the impact of water diversion projects on the biodiversity in the national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in the State of Goa?

The Ministry has not undertaken any studies on the potential impact of water-diversion projects on the biodiversity within the National Parks and wildlife sanctuaries situated in the State of Goa. (Q. No. 1796, Session 12 of 17th Lok Sabha)

Whether the Government has data on displacement due to climate change including climate risk such as floods, droughts, global warming, forest fire, cyclone, air pollution?

There is no established study for India providing a quantified contribution of climate change triggering displacement of people. (Q. No. 3506, Session 7 of 17th Lok Sabha)

Whether it is true that 11 out of 15 hottest places in world are in India?

Government of India does not authenticate nor agree to the findings of the report. (Q. No.108, Session 1 of 17th Lok Sabha)

THEME 5: ENVIRONMENT



Statistical Analysis

The theme 'Environment' accounts for 897 questions, making up 10.32% of environment-specific queries in both Houses but only 0.38% of the total parliamentary questions and answers. Environmental and ecological preservation, despite being widely recognised as the foundation of sustainable development, remains a lesser priority within the broader parliamentary agenda. The discussions focus mainly on bureaucratic compliance and regulatory clearances, often referring to administrative frameworks, with limited attention to the deep, localized ecological realities of environmental degradation. This gap between ecological dynamics and political discourse indicates that while there is some recognition of the issue, the holistic health of ecosystems is not always a sustained priority.

Unstarred questions account for 817 out of 897 questions, while Starred questions represent a highly selective 80 out of 897 questions. Starred questions, such as those regarding the LG Polymers gas leak in Visakhapatnam, the environmental damage from Vedanta's Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi, or the long-contested Athirappilly Hydroelectric project in Kerala, served as highly charged political barometers. These questions typically peaked during periods of public protest, major disasters, or controversial draft notifications, forcing the government to directly defend executive policies on the floor of the House.

Unstarred questions maintained a remarkably steady, transaction-oriented baseline across the decade. They functioned as a continuous audit mechanism, with members tracking local developmental clearances such as PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) rural road clearances in districts affected by Left Wing Extremism, the utilization of district-level CAMPA allocations and the execution of the National Clean Air Programme in individual cities like Gajraula.

Temporal Analysis

Phase I: 2015-2018

The initial phase of the decade was characterised by a legislative focus on administrative efficiency and digitisation of environmental governance. Following the launch of the Make in India campaign in 2014, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) faced intense pressure to reduce project clearance delays, which historically exceeded 600 days.

In response, the Parliament scrutinised the transition to online application tracking and the launch of the PARIVESH single-window portal in 2018, which reduced average environmental clearance (EC) processing times to 148 days.

During this period, parliamentary questions were highly transaction-oriented, focusing on project-specific clearance statuses, the definition of Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs) as "shock absorbers" around protected areas and the implementation of the Model Building Bye-Laws, which integrated green building modules such as rooftop solar and rainwater harvesting into urban local body sanctions. Following a 2014 Supreme Court directive to set up a regulator to appraise projects, enforce environmental conditions for approvals and to impose penalties on polluters, members of both Houses repeatedly pressed the Government on the establishment of a National Environmental Regulator. The central government maintained that the existing system of independent Expert Appraisal Committees (EAC) and State Pollution Control Boards was sufficient.

A major legislative turning point occurred in July 2017 with the rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), which officially repealed the Clean Environment Cess on coal production. This structural change diverted earlier direct funding from the National Clean Energy and Environment Fund (NCEF) into the general GST Compensation Fund, prompting intense questioning from coal-bearing states such as Odisha regarding the loss of dedicated rehabilitation funds.

Phase II: 2019-2022

This period was punctuated by severe ecological disasters that immediately prompted questions in Parliament. The February 2021 Tapovan-Ghar disaster and Chamoli flash floods, which destroyed hydroelectric structures in Uttarakhand, reignited debates about the fragility of the Himalayan cryosphere and the wisdom of placing mega-infrastructure in geohazard-prone valleys. Following the disaster, members demanded reviews of existing environmental clearances for projects in the Himalayan region. They sought cumulative carrying capacity studies and cumulative impact assessments for the upper reaches of the Ganga, questioning why old environmental approvals remained valid for projects in ecologically vulnerable zones.

Similarly, the coastal impacts of intensifying cyclones (such as Cyclone Vardah in Chennai) and severe regional droughts in the North-East (2021) forced parliamentarians to shift their focus toward long-term vulnerability profiling. This phase also witnessed the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent national lockdowns, which introduced dual dynamics into parliamentary business. On one hand, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) reported remarkable, albeit temporary, improvements in ambient air quality and river water standards due to the suspension of industrial and human activities. On the other hand, the pandemic forced the MoEFCC to transition to virtual appraisal meetings starting in April 2020, sparking controversy on the floor, with members questioning whether 433 Category 'A' environmental clearances and 75 wildlife clearances were rushed through without rigorous, physical site inspections.

The central policy battleground of this phase, however, was the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2020. The draft became one of the most contested environmental documents, drawing massive public outrage. Parliamentarians questioned the Ministry over highly controversial provisions, such as the reduction of public notice periods for hearings from 30 to 20 days, exemptions from public consultations for strategic linear projects within 100 km of national borders and the controversial provision of prospective ex-post facto clearances for violating industries that had commenced operations without prior green nods, to which the Ministry responded that the draft does not grant ex-post facto clearances, stating that clearances for violating units would only be granted prospectively, and that they remain liable for criminal prosecution and ecological damage remediation costs. However, this distinction remained legally contested as the 2017 Notification, issued as a one-time mechanism for projects already operating or under construction without prior environmental clearance, had created a process for assessing and granting clearance to such violation cases. The Supreme Court initially struck it down in May 2025, recalled that judgment in November 2025, and ultimately upheld the 2017 Notification in July 2026 as a limited mechanism for addressing past violations, while striking down the 2021 Office Memorandum, which laid down an administrative procedure for processing environmental-clearance applications from projects that had already commenced without prior clearance, as an impermissible continuing regime.

Simultaneously, questions in parliament shifted towards decriminalising environmental offences. Highlighting the low conviction rates under major acts (only 39 convictions out of 1,737 criminal cases registered over three years), the Government proposed amending the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to replace criminal liabilities with heavier financial penalties, arguing this would reduce judicial burdens and prevent entrepreneur harassment, while the government received 73 public comments and objections from civil society regarding the final bill, raising concerns over the weakening of deterrents.

Phase III: 2023-2025

This phase transitioned towards an audit-centric framework that prioritised simplification of compliance procedures, yet triggered parliamentary debate over implementation gaps and institutional conflict. It focused on the Jan Vishwas Act, 2023, which decriminalized environmental clearance violations under Section 15 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, replacing custodial sentences with civil monetary penalties. MPs questioned the policy integration of Consent to Establish (CTE) and Environmental Clearances (EC) introduced in February 2025, as well as systemic "regulatory capture" risks raised in late 2025 as both clearance-granting and compliance-monitoring agencies operate under the MoEFCC. While the Government defended this by pointing to the newly notified Environment Audit Rules, 2025 and its third-party Registered Environment Auditors, critical gaps persisted, such as remedial activities commencing at only 7 of the 103 contaminated sites identified under the newly enacted Contaminated Sites Rules, 2025.

Members questioned the Great Nicobar Island Development Project, confronting the proposed felling of trees and demanding specialized protection plans for leatherback turtles, coral translocation and the endemic Nicobar Megapode bird, and the Ken-Betwa River Link, while the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) returned the Polavaram-Banakacherla Link Project in December 2025 over unresolved inter-state water-sharing issues. Concurrently, there was concern over scientific realities, tracking a 14.9 meters per annum retreat rate of Himalayan glaciers and coastal mangrove restoration under the MISHTI scheme. However, a persistent implementation bottleneck was exposed under the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA), where several states failed to receive wetland restoration grants because State Wetland Authorities neglected to submit mandatory, site-specific Integrated Management Plans.

This phase also witnessed legal and financial auditing of market-based circular economy mechanisms and unutilized public environmental accounts. Parliament actively monitored Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) mandates under the Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022 and the End-of-Life Vehicles Rules, 2025, alongside the CCPA's (Central Consumer Protection Authority) Anti-Greenwashing Guidelines to penalize misleading corporate ecological claims. The most significant financial revelation of this phase was the complete paralysis of the Environment Relief Fund (ERF), which had accumulated a massive, unutilized balance of ₹1,062 crore as of March 2023, yet had failed to disburse a single rupee of compensation to hazardous substance disaster victims since 2019. This systemic failure necessitated the Environment Relief Fund(ERF) Amendment Scheme, 2024, which appointed the CPCB as the new Fund Manager starting January 1, 2025, to bypass administrative bottlenecks.

Political Engagement

The parliamentary questions mark a clear division in how ruling-party and opposition members deploy their legislative oversight. The members of the ruling party, through their line of questioning, showcase government achievements, facilitate local developmental clearances, and advocate for the simplification of regulatory hurdles.

- BJP members tabled questions that allowed the Ministry to read major environmental successes into the record. For example, Jugal Kishore (BJP) asked about the national campaigns launched on World Environment Day 2025, while Manoj Tiwari (BJP) questioned the draft Environmental Damage Cost Assessment (EDCA) methodology, giving the government an opportunity to present its proactive stance on environmental liability.
- A prominent pattern among members of the ruling party is the reduction of the compliance burden on industry. In December 2025, Dhairyashil Mohan Patil (BJP) asked a question proposing that MSME units in the Konkan region of Maharashtra be allowed to meet the mandatory 33% green area requirement collectively rather than individually. This line of questioning directly lobbied for easing compliance to provide additional land for commercial operations.

- Ruling-party MPs frequently question the status of pending environmental clearances for specific district-level infrastructure projects. Ravindra Shukla (BJP) repeatedly pressed the Ministry on pending road, pipeline and developmental clearances in Uttar Pradesh, while Gajendra Singh Patel (BJP) focused on expediting forest clearances for an electricity substation in Khargone, Madhya Pradesh.
- When questioning controversial national projects, ruling-party MPs frame their questions around progress and mitigative outlays. Anurag Sharma (BJP) raised a question on the Ken-Betwa River Link Project, focusing on the status of the EIA report and highlighting the massive ₹5,073 crore conservation outlay, which allowed the executive to mount a robust defence of the project's ecological viability.

Conversely, the members of the opposition question government accountability and represent affected communities.

- In late 2025, Shyamkumar Daulat Barve (INC) questioned the structural integrity of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). He directly asked whether the Government acknowledged “increased regulatory capture risks” because project clearance and monitoring agencies both function under the same Ministry, and pressed the executive to establish an independent National Environmental Regulator as recommended by the Supreme Court.
- Pratima Mondal (AITC) in December 2024 took a direct stance against the centralisation of environmental power. She demanded the Government respond to widespread public criticisms regarding the “weakening of institutions” such as the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the Central Empowered Committee (CEC), questioning whether major legislative amendments were being pushed through without democratic public consultation.
- Opposition MPs function as a watchdog for corporate ecological damage. In Chennai, Thiru Dayanidhi Maran (DMK) interrogated the Government over the severe environmental damage and oil spill in the Ennore wetlands caused by the Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL). In 2016, Neeraj Shekhar (SP) questioned the ecological damage caused by Adani Port and SEZ at Mundra, demanding to know why the recommended ₹200 crore Environment Restoration Fund had not been established and questioning the alleged withdrawal of government-imposed penalties.
- The opposition frequently questions the human cost of developmental projects. For instance, Hibi Eden (INC) questioned the coastal impact of the sinking of hazardous cargo (MSC Elsa 3) off the coast of Kochi, while Rachna Banerjee (AITC) raised the issue of environmental degradation and forest loss in tribal areas, demanding a greater role for indigenous communities in local forest governance.

Despite partisan divides, there have been clear instances where regional ecological threats forged cross-party consensus and unified legislative stances:

- Concerns over glacier degradation, flash floods and unsustainable mountain tourism transcend party lines. Ruling-party members such as Ganesh Singh (BJP) and Manoj Kishorbhai Kotak (BJP) asked nearly identical questions to those of opposition members regarding long-term plans to conserve the Himalayan ecology. Similarly, while scrutinising the massive infrastructure and river-linking initiatives, such as the ecological impact and clearance status of the Ken-Betwa River Link Project, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury (INC) raised alarms over the loss of 105 sq. km of tiger habitat in the Panna Tiger Reserve, while Geeta alias Chandraprabha (BJP) questioned the approval status of its various project phases.
- MPs representing states along the Western Ghats Mountain range maintain a unified focus on ecological preservation. In the Rajya Sabha, opposition members Ripun Bora (INC) and Vaiko (MDMK), as well as the ruling-coalition representative Narayan Rane (BJP), demanded the strict finalisation of the Kasturirangan Committee's Eco-Sensitive Area (ESA) notifications and the prohibition of destructive mining and red-category industries in fragile areas.

Nature of Government Response

Government responses are highly institutionalised, data-driven replies that frequently mask severe execution gaps. On one hand, the government has provided substantive and transparent oversight, such as the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) returning the Polavaram-Banakacherla Link Project over inter-state water-sharing issues, and conditioning the Mekedatu Dam on acceptance by the Cauvery Water Management Authority. On the other hand, the executive frequently deflects political accountability. Notable examples include the flat denial that a ₹200 crore environmental restoration penalty was ever imposed on Adani Port at Mundra, the defense that carbon dioxide does not cause ozone depletion, and the prospective-only claim for the draft EIA rules despite actively granting clearances to 49 violating projects under a 2017 amnesty notification.

The executive also systematically utilises jurisdictional boundaries and administrative exemptions to shift regulatory responsibility to State Governments and regional bodies. For instance, when questioned on the widespread ecological destruction of river basins from illegal sand mining, the MoEFCC consistently distanced itself from direct enforcement, stating that the control of illegal mining falls within the purview of State Governments. Similarly, because sectors such as heavy cement and steel are de-licensed, the Ministry of Heavy Industries does not centrally maintain unit-wise compliance records, transferring all monitoring and enforcement burdens to State Pollution Control Boards. Furthermore, major public transport systems such as railway and metro projects are completely exempt from prior environmental clearances under the EIA Notification, 2006. This bypasses comprehensive central environmental impact assessments, shifting the focus to state-level forest land diversion processes.

The most severe indicators of weak environmental governance are found in the financial auditing of dedicated environmental funds, which exposes profound institutional dysfunction. The Environment Relief Fund (ERF) accumulated a massive balance of ₹1,062 crore as of March 2023, yet failed to disburse a single rupee of compensation to victims of hazardous substance disasters since 2019. This systemic paralysis forced the ERF (Amendment) Scheme, 2024, which appointed the CPCB as the new Fund Manager starting January 1, 2025, to bypass administrative delays. Similarly, federal-state bottlenecks under the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA) stalled crucial wetland restoration grants because State Wetland Authorities systematically neglected to submit site-specific, mandatory Integrated Management Plans. Finally, while the Environment Protection (Management of Contaminated Sites) Rules, 2025 officially identified 103 chemically contaminated sites, remediation activities had been initiated at only 7, leaving 96 highly toxic landscapes completely unaddressed.

The Parliament seems to be more inclined towards the regulatory and transactional side of environmental management, such as expediting environmental clearances to boost the "Ease of Doing Business", bypassing clearances for infrastructure projects through strategic amendments and decriminalizing environmental offenses, rather than addressing the core ecological crises themselves or their deeper causes and long-term impacts, such as mass biodiversity loss, marine acidification, invasive alien species in river systems, or the vulnerability of fragile mountain ecosystems like the Himalayas and Western Ghats. The focus remains largely on immediate and visible outcomes, such as the number of days taken to grant approvals or tree-planting counts, while several long-term challenges of ecosystem collapse, institutional weakness, and the slow-onset degradation of vital ecological buffers continue to receive far less attention.



BOX 5:

How many families have been shifted versus those still awaiting resettlement under the Jharia Master Plan in Jharkhand?

A total of 7,909 families have been shifted, while 1,04,750 families are yet to be rehabilitated under the Jharia Master Plan. [\(Q. No. 840, Session 269 of Rajya Sabha\)](#).

What portion of India's total geographical area is currently undergoing land degradation?

Currently, 29.32% (96.4 million hectares) of India's geographical area is undergoing land degradation. [\(Q. No. 1309, Session 255 of Rajya Sabha\)](#).

What is the gap between India's daily sewage generation and its actual treatment capacity?

While the country generates approximately 72,368 million litres per day (MLD) of sewage, the actual treatment by installed plants is only around 26,869 MLD. [\(Q. No. 359, Session 267 of Rajya Sabha\)](#).

How much money is held in the Environment Relief Fund (ERF) and how much has been disbursed to victims of hazardous substance accidents since 2019?

The ERF held approximately ₹1,062 crore as of March 31, 2023, yet no amount has been disbursed as compensation from the fund since 2019. [\(Q. No. 2451, Session 260 of Rajya Sabha\)](#).

How many trees have been felled for highway construction in Karnataka, and what are the compensatory measures?

Approximately 7.35 lakh trees were felled for highway construction in Karnataka, with the Government releasing funds to the State Forest Department to plant 10 times the number of trees cut. [\(Q. No. 2677, Session 16 of Lok Sabha\)](#).

THEME 6: MITIGATION, ADAPTATION AND CARBON MANAGEMENT



Statistical Analysis

Between December 2015 and December 2025, 753 parliamentary questions focused specifically on mitigation, adaptation and carbon management. This amounts to just 8.6% of all environment-related questions, and an almost negligible 0.3% of total parliamentary questions during that period. While 44.2% of India's gross cropped area remains dependent on rainfall and highly vulnerable to climate extremes, the keyword "Adaptation" accounts for only 3.2% of the section. This indicates that the primary livelihood of nearly half the population receives less than 1/10th the attention given to "Emissions". The high focus on "Coast" (23.2%) correlates with real-world data showing that 33.6% of India's coastline is eroding. The sustained questioning on the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP) reflects a proportional response to the frequent cyclones hitting the eastern and western coasts. The focus on "Net Zero" (8.1%) and "Emissions" (41.8%) is driven more by international climate diplomacy (COP26/COP27) than domestic health. Despite a Lancet study identifying air pollution as a top risk factor in India, the Government consistently utilizes a "denial of causality" pattern, stating there is "no conclusive evidence" linking deaths solely to pollution. While climate change is acknowledged, governance challenges of managing risk, uncertainty, and social vulnerability remain insufficiently politicised. Mitigation and adaptation, rather than being treated as central pillars of climate policy, are at the periphery of parliamentary concern.

Temporal Analysis

Phase I: 2015-2018

The period following the signing of the Paris Agreement was characterised by high optimism regarding global commitments and the launch of dedicated climate adaptation funds. The Government launched the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC) in 2015-16 with an initial allocation of ₹350 crore to support vulnerable sectors such as agriculture and forestry. The National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP) was launched to build coastal resilience. The Government's responses were proactive, detailing specific, community-level adaptation projects funded directly by the Centre. Early attention focused on establishing norms, such as the direct leapfrog from BS-IV to BS-VI vehicular standards and the first notification of SO₂ emission standards for thermal power plants (TPPs) in 2015.

Phase II: 2019-2021

Questions increasingly highlighted urban survival. MPs questioned the Centre on severe air pollution and urban flooding. The Government launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in 2019 to reduce air pollution, particularly in 130 “non-attainment” cities - cities that consistently fail to meet national air-quality standards. Following the launch of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in 2019 and India’s Net Zero 2070 announcement at COP26 in 2021, the theme expanded to include the creation of regulatory bodies like the National Designated Authority for Implementation of Article 6 and the Panchamrit targets, India’s five key climate commitments, covering renewable energy, emissions reduction, non-fossil electricity capacity and reducing the carbon intensity of the economy. Political engagement shifted toward tracking India’s overachievement of its NDCs, specifically meeting the 40% non-fossil power capacity target nine years ahead of the 2030 schedule. The theme was centered on the CRZ Notification 2019, which reduced “No Development Zones” (NDZ) to 50 metres in certain rural areas to boost tourism. The Government used the federal shield when questioned about urban flooding. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, despite being the designated nodal ministry, explicitly stated that drainage and flood management rest with State Governments and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). The Centre reduced its role to issuing Standard Operating Procedures and guidelines.

Phase III: 2022-2025

This period marked a massive structural change. The Government institutionalised mitigation funding by creating the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) with an allocation of ₹13,693 crore and the State Disaster Mitigation Fund (SDMF) with ₹32,030.60 crore. While disaster infrastructure continued to receive funding, broader investments in disaster resilience and climate adaptation were quietly defunded. By 2023-24, while the country grappled with casualties from the Sikkim Glacial Lake Outburst Floods and the Wayanad landslides, the NAFCC was downgraded to a “non-scheme,” meaning it no longer functions as an active scheme with new funding approvals, with the Government admitting to making budgetary allocations for it as a non-scheme. Following the 15th Finance Commission recommendations, the focus shifted to shoreline erosion, with a surge in questions regarding the ₹1,500 crore earmarked under the NDMF for erosion mitigation. The 2023-24 period saw a rise in attention to nature-based solutions, such as the MISHTI scheme for mangrove restoration. Discussions became highly granular, focusing on sector-specific decarbonisation for Railways (Net Zero 2030), Steel (Green Steel Taxonomy), and Aviation (SAF blending targets). There was a rise in questions addressing the validity of data, such as the 7.93% GHG reduction recorded in 2020, which the government admitted was partially induced by COVID-19 shutdowns. In the last three years, there has been a sharp rise in attention to shoreline erosion data and climate-induced migration.

Political Engagement

Statistically, discussions on the theme, "Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management," represent 9.6% of all environmental keywords between 2015 and 2025. Within this niche, the Opposition (148 questions) significantly out-asks the Ruling Party (102 questions) across the analysed terms. However, the qualitative analysis shows that the ruling party's engagement is largely promotional and strategically framed to solicit "input-based" data, allowing the Ministry to document large-scale capital deployment, such as railway electrification and fund creation, as a form of environmental action, while the opposition's questions are vulnerability-oriented, focusing on pollution health impacts and the agrarian adaptation gap.

Members of the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and supported by allies such as the Janata Dal (United) (JD(U)), focus on showcasing the Union Government's financial commitments and infrastructure-led climate milestones.

- For instance, Vijaylakshmi Devi (JD(U)), and several members of the ruling party alliance raised questions on the disaster mitigation and recovery projects, enabling the Ministry of Home Affairs to place on record a comprehensive list of approved funds, including ₹3,075.65 crore for urban flood risk mitigation and ₹1,000 crore for landslide risk mitigation across 15 States. This technocratic focus is a recurring theme, particularly regarding the modernization of the Indian Railways as a proxy for environmental action.
- Questions on progress in Railways becoming a net-zero carbon emitter allowed the government to highlight that nearly 98% of the Broad Gauge network has been electrified as a major step toward its 2030 "Net Zero" target.
- Furthermore, ruling party members often use their platform to validate the creation of new institutional frameworks, where Ramesh Bidhuri (BJP) sought details on the creation of the National and State Disaster Mitigation Funds (NDMF/SDMF), allowing the government to announce the first-ever allocation of ₹13,693 crore for the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) and ₹32,030.60 crore for the State Disaster Mitigation Fund (SDMF).
- Even when asking about global targets, the ruling party focuses on domestic metrics that demonstrate resilience. Questions highlighted a 7.93% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in 2020, effectively using a pandemic-induced dip to showcase the efficacy of the government's Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS).

The ruling party prioritises Central Sector Schemes and national roadmaps (Steel, Aviation, Railways). The ruling party's framing often treats emission reduction as a byproduct of Viksit Bharat and efficiency upgrades. In contrast, Opposition members, comprising those from the Indian National Congress (INC), All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), Shiv Sena (UBT- Uddhav Thackeray), and other non-NDA parties, utilise the parliamentary platform to audit implementation gaps and demand accountability for public health risks and regional vulnerabilities.

- Vijay Kumar Hansdak (JMM) and Dr. M K Vishnu Prasad (INC) questioned the government on whether Indian cities are among the most polluted globally and highlighted the "serious health risks and economic costs" involved.
- Questions from the opposition frequently address the "adaptation deficit" in the agrarian sector; for example, Asaduddin Owaisi (AIMIM) sought a ministerial admission that 44.2% of India's gross cropped area remains dependent on rainfall, exposing a critical vulnerability to climate change. Similarly, Shashi Tharoor (INC) questioned the inadequacy of the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC) in Kerala, noting that a sanctioned project covered only two of the state's nine highly vulnerable districts.
- Regional accountability is another key concern raised by the opposition. Omprakash Bhupalsinh and Arvind Ganpat Sawant (SS (UBT)) demanded an impact evaluation of NDMF-funded projects specifically in the Dharashiv district. Maddila Gurumoorthy (YSRCP) asked why the government had "rolled back" the mandate for Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) units at coal plants despite known health risks, with the government admitting to exemptions based on "cost impacts".
- The opposition and regional parties, while prioritising federal accountability, asked about delays in state-level Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMP) and the lack of state-level GHG inventories. The opposition frequently frames these issues as environmental justice, focusing on displaced fisherfolk, the health burden on citizens in polluted cities, and the survival emissions of small farmers.

Political alignment fundamentally dictates the framing of environmental responsibility. When the ruling party discusses mitigation, it is framed as a centralized achievement of the Union Government (e.g., the creation of the NDMF/SDMF funds). The Ruling Party maintains a celebratory and facilitative approach, often using questions to request a "State-wise list" of successes. When the Opposition discusses the same theme, it is framed as a federal grievance, where the Centre is accused of either defunding critical schemes, such as the reclassification of the NAFCC as a "non-scheme", or shifting the burden of environmental management to cash-strapped local bodies. The Opposition uses a skeptical and investigative tone, such as asking for "reasons for the lack of movement" in urban flood mitigation or the "reasons for making no budgetary allocation" to the NAFCC. However, both sides exhibit a bipartisan blind spot toward "Climate Finance and Markets". While they debate "hardware" (shelters and trains), the technical economic architecture of the climate transition (e.g., CBAM or Carbon Markets) remains significantly under-scrutinised by all political groups.

Nature of Government Response

A common pattern in government responses is the shifting of responsibility to State Governments. When questioned about mitigation of incidents in a specific locality, be it flooding, water contamination, or disaster relief, the Centre frequently describes its role as supplementary or financial, distancing itself from accountability for ground-level implementation.

When asked about compensation for heatwave deaths or crop losses, the Centre consistently reiterates that "Disaster management is primarily the responsibility of State Governments." Example: Regarding extreme weather in Kerala/Madhya Pradesh and cyclone damage in Odisha. The Centre emphasizes that it only provides additional aid for severe natural disasters. When asked about specific infrastructure failures in hill cities such as Shimla, the response shifts the onus to local bodies. The Ministry states that urban flood management falls under the "responsibilities of Urban Local Bodies," limiting the Centre's role to issuing guidelines and advisories. In response to questions on the mitigation of arsenic and fluoride contamination, the government emphasizes that water is a State subject, limiting the Centre's role to merely providing technical and financial assistance.

For questions on the environment, the government often details inputs such as money allocated or schemes launched, rather than outcomes in the form of measurable environmental improvement. However, in infrastructure-heavy sectors such as the Railways, the responses are noticeably more concrete. For instance, on air pollution, the response lists funds released (₹13,415 crore) and plans made, but offers little data on actual air quality improvements in specific cities. Whereas, when asked about Net Zero progress, the Ministry of Railways provides precise data: "Nearly 98% of the Broad Gauge network is electrified". This suggests the government is more comfortable debating engineering metrics than ecological quality.

When asked why India's Net Zero target is set for 2070 instead of 2050, or why emissions are not being reduced more quickly, the government usually refers to the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR), stating that developed countries have contributed far more to climate change over time, and therefore it would not be fair to expect India to follow the same timeline. At the same time, this explanation often shifts attention away from present-day domestic choices.

The government states that, as per international treaties, "India is not obliged to completely stop carbon emissions" and emphasizes that India contributes only 4% of historical cumulative emissions. However, while development concerns are real, this perspective does not fully address how climate impacts, such as heatwaves, floods and crop losses, are already affecting India and may intensify if emissions are not reduced more rapidly, especially as its economy and energy demand continue to grow.

There is a major structural shift in how mitigation is funded, moving away from short-term central programmes toward a more formalised federal framework under the 15th Finance Commission. The Parliament actively debated the creation of dedicated mitigation funds. The Centre allocated ₹13,693 crore for the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) and ₹32,030.60 crore for the State Disaster Mitigation Fund (SDMF) for the 2021-2026 period. The SDMF is structured on a cost-sharing basis where the Centre contributes 75% for most states and 90% for the Himalayan and North-Eastern states. Within the NDMF, high-value mitigation projects have emerged, such as ₹3,075.65 crore for Urban Flood Risk Mitigation in seven major cities and ₹1,000 crore for the National Landslide Risk Mitigation Project across 15 States. While disaster mitigation funds (NDMF/SDMF) grew, purely ecological climate adaptation programs were systematically defunded, reflecting a shift from climate adaptation to disaster management.

The National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC) was initially a highly active topic, with the government boasting of sanctioning 30 projects worth ₹847.48 crore across 27 States and UTs. However, government responses in 2023 revealed that the NAFCC was silently downgraded. The government reportedly admitted that zero budgetary allocation was made for the NAFCC in 2023-24, reclassifying it as a "non-scheme" expense. The government also confirmed that, following a 2022 Expenditure Finance Committee decision, NAFCC was converted to a non-scheme, and "no new projects will be initiated under NAFCC". This highlights a massive statistical disconnect as climate threats intensify and dedicated domestic adaptation funding mechanisms are stopped.

When questioned on methane emissions (where India is a top emitter), the government distinguishes between "survival emissions" from small-scale agriculture and "luxury emissions" from developed nations. This rationale was used to justify India's decision not to sign the Global Methane Pledge. In the power sector, the government often adopts a phased approach to compliance, frequently extending deadlines for installing pollution control technologies such as Flue-Gas Desulphurization (FGD) due to "techno-economic constraints" and supply chain disruptions.

While the government mandates SO₂ standards for Category A thermal power plants (TPPs), located within 10 km of the NCR or million-plus cities, it has set standards on a case-by-case basis for Category B TPPs, located near critically polluted areas or non-attainment cities, and made them not applicable to Category C TPPs, located elsewhere, subject to prescribed stack-height requirements. This effectively exempts a vast number of plants from the most stringent pollution controls. Despite net-zero pledges, the government admits there is no legal framework mandating individual companies to reduce GHG emissions. Reductions are largely voluntary or driven by energy efficiency schemes such as Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT), which target intensity rather than absolute emission caps.

While national inventories are prepared for the UNFCCC, the government explicitly states that State-level GHG inventories are not prepared, nor are company-wise or unit-wise emission data centrally maintained for sectors like cement. This lacks the granular detail needed for regional accountability. There is evidence of standard relaxation; for example, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFandCC) gave in-principle approval to relax NOx emission standards for certain TPPs from 300 mg/Nm³ to 450 mg/Nm³ because units could not meet the stricter limit at partial loads.

Many initiatives, particularly in coastal management and urban air quality, rely heavily on State Action Plans (SAPCC). The government often notes that final implementation, such as the Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMP), has suffered inordinate delay at the state level, leaving central regulations partially unenforced. In several high-impact areas, such as Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS) or zero-emission aircraft, the government admits there is either no active proposal or that technologies are still only in the demonstration stage, with uncertain local impacts.



Whether the Ministry proposes to consider Odisha as a priority State for National Adaptation Fund, in view of recurrent cyclones, floods and rising sea levels?

In the meeting of the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) held on 23rd November 2022, NAFCC was converted from scheme (a Central Sector Scheme of Government of India) to non-scheme. As per the direction of the EFC, no new project will be initiated under the NAFCC. ([Q. No. 533, Session 269 of Rajya Sabha](#))

Whether Government has any data on the number of people who died in India, State wise, specifically in the National Capital Region (NCR) due to air pollution since 2014, year-wise?

There is no conclusive data available to establish a direct correlation of death/disease exclusively due to air pollution. ([Q. No. 2927, Session 253 of Rajya Sabha](#))

Whether the Government and private players are working upon first Zero Emission (ZEROe) aircraft to be ready by 2035 with India playing a significant role in its design, research and development?

Presently, there is no proposal under consideration of Ministry of Civil Aviation for developing zero-emission (ZEROe) aircraft. ([Q. No. 1312, Session 11 of 17th Lok Sabha](#))

Feasibility of deploying carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies in country's coalfired power plants, and Government's plans to incentivize such investments; and steps taken by Government to integrate CCS with existing coal-fired power plants to reduce the carbon emissions from the sector and meet country's climate targets under the Paris Agreement?

NTPC has taken up the following small-scale pilot/R&D projects for flue gas CO₂ capture and utilisation.

- A 10 tons per day flue gas CO₂-to-Methanol project at NTPC Vindhyachal, Madhya Pradesh.
- A 10 tons per day flue gas CO₂-to-Gen-4 Ethanol project at NTPC Lara, Chhattisgarh.

The projects are in demonstration stage. No dedicated study has been conducted to evaluate the impact of CCUS technology on local pollution and emission challenges. ([Q. No. 1148, Session 267 of Rajya Sabha](#))

Whether the Government has undertaken measures to address increased methane emissions from mines, considering the availability of cost-effective methods to substantially reduce emissions?

There is no mechanism in place at present to monitor and regulate methane emissions. ([Q. No. 58, Session 265 of Rajya Sabha](#))

THEME 7: GLOBAL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE



Statistical Analysis

Between December 2015 and December 2025, a total of 105 questions were raised specifically under the theme of Global Climate Governance. This represents only 1.2% of all environment-related keyword queries in both Houses and a marginal 0.04% of the total parliamentary questions and answers during this period.

A large portion of questions revolve around protecting India's "equitable carbon space" and the principle of CBDR-RC. While politically significant, it creates a repetitive rhetorical loop that often masks the lack of granular data. There is a lack of formal recognition for sub-national or local contributions. The government explicitly stated in the Rajya Sabha that "Regionally and Locally Determined Contributions" (RLDCs) have no legal standing and rejected providing state-wise targets for states like Bihar. While "Global Stocktake" was a central outcome of COP-28, and India submitted its "LT-LEDS" in November 2022, these terms have not been proactively used by Members of Parliament in their questions. Both houses record zero questions for COP 21, 22, 23, and 26, subsuming these summits under broader, prestige-heavy themes like the Paris Agreement (44 questions) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (24 questions), rather than treating the summits as independent subjects of inquiry. The focus is biased toward visible successes such as renewable energy capacity, while avoiding scrutiny of the Loss and Damage mechanisms or the actual deployment. The governance talks remain at the level of "Prime Ministerial Pledges" (Panchamrit) and "international status" rather than domestic implementation.

Temporal Analysis

The 2015-2017 period saw high activity centered on the Paris Agreement and the initial submission of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). The Parliament's focus was largely procedural, concerning the timeline for ratification (ratified Oct 2, 2016) and the impact of the US withdrawal announcement in June 2017.

Between 2018 and 2020, discussions were limited as the focus shifted to technical rulebook negotiations (COP-24/25). Domestically, this period was dominated by the creation of the Apex Committee for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement (AIPA) in November 2020.

During 2021-2025, parliamentary interest experienced a resurgence following COP-26 (Glasgow), with the announcement of the “Panchamrit” pledge and the 2070 Net-Zero target leading to a sustained volume of questions on sector-wise roadmaps and the updated NDCs submitted in August 2022, which increased the emissions intensity reduction target to 45%, meaning a 45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per unit of economic output. Interestingly, the 2020-2021 pandemic period did not lead to a significant rise in “Global Governance” questions despite the global talk of a “Green Recovery.” Instead, the focus remained on the formation of domestic oversight bodies such as ALPA. Over time, however, while general queries on the Paris Agreement declined, there was a noticeable shift towards climate finance, particularly after COP-29 and emerging institutional initiatives such as the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA).

Political Engagement

The questions of the ruling party sought details on progress, achievement of targets, and the benefits of new international alliances led by India. For instance, Dushyant Singh (BJP) and Manoj Rajoria (BJP) asked for specific functions of ALPA or progress reports on the Paris Agreement to highlight that India is “on track” or has overachieved its goals. Such questions are aimed at highlighting the government’s stance that India’s emerging role as a global knowledge hub is widely recognised, particularly through questions on the Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). This facilitative questioning is aimed at showcasing the claim that India’s climate targets are compatible with global targets and that domestic interests remain uncompromised.

The opposition parties questioned the government on potential policy failures or delays. Harish Chandra Meena (INC) questioned if the government “defaulted” on submitting updated NDCs; T.R. Baalu (DMK) and K. Subbarayan (CPI) pushed for increased scrutiny regarding the threats posed by climate change, the rapid growth of emissions, and the disappointment with global climate finance outcomes at COP-29. The opposition spoke for the rights of marginalized groups, with K.C. Venugopal (INC) questioning whether NDC targets have “bypassed compliance” with the Forest Rights Act. The opposition, skeptical of top-down approaches, sought transparency regarding the impact of international finance on industrial and power sectors.

Despite these differences, there is a shared blind spot across both the ruling and opposition benches regarding highly technical or emerging global frameworks. Neither side has raised questions on Planetary Boundaries, the Global Stocktake, the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), or most of the UNFCCC’s Conference of the Parties (COP). The discussion, thus, remains confined to established diplomatic rhetoric rather than exploring the scientific and financial structures that define the future of global climate governance.

Nature of Government Response

The government's response to questions on keywords related to climate governance, such as the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), etc., is a blend of protecting its own interests while trying to position India as an emerging leader. On one hand, national priorities such as development, poverty reduction, and energy needs are emphasized, often pushing back against pressure from developed countries. On the other hand, the government tries to show that India is actively shaping global climate discourse through alliances and initiatives, presenting itself as a responsible and forward-looking player on the world stage.

Central to this approach is the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). The government explicitly accused developed nations of shifting goalposts, delaying action, and consuming a disproportionate share of the global carbon budget. Similarly, it emphasized that India's per capita emissions are only one-third of the global average, justifying its demand for "equitable carbon space". By framing climate change as a historical legacy of the West, the government effectively deflects pressure for binding, sector-specific targets.

The Paris Agreement serves as a legally binding framework for climate governance in India. The discussions in Parliament focus on the Apex Committee for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement (AIPA), shifting towards an institutionalised inter-ministerial coordination to monitor and report climate goals. While the government claims to be the only G20 country compatible with the 2°C goal, it also admits that current global action plans are insufficient to limit warming to the 1.5°C threshold. India affirms its commitment to the Paris Agreement "in letter and spirit," while noting that India's per capita emissions remain significantly lower than the global average. The government's responses often contrast India's "on track" status with the historical responsibilities of developed nations, particularly following the United States' withdrawal from the accord, which was noted for its negative implications on international climate finance.

The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) show that India has gradually increased its level of ambition, while also managing to meet its earlier targets ahead of time. India achieved its original 2015 NDC targets, such as reducing emissions intensity by 33-35% and reaching 40% non-fossil fuel capacity, well ahead of the 2030 deadline. This led to the submission of updated NDCs in August 2022, raising targets to a 45% reduction in emissions intensity and 50% non-fossil fuel capacity. However, the government maintains that these targets are nationally determined and does not accept top-down sector-specific or state-wise binding obligations, ensuring that domestic priorities such as poverty eradication and energy security are not compromised.

India's role as a vocal advocate for the Global South is seen in its participation in the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC. There is a transition from the rule-making focus of COP-24 in Katowice to the implementation focus of COP-27 and COP-28, where the Loss and Damage Fund became a central achievement supported by India. However, recent discourse reflects deep dissatisfaction with climate finance outcomes. At COP-29 in Baku, India officially expressed disappointment with the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), rejecting the USD 300 billion mobilization target as insufficient compared to the actual needs of developing countries, which run into trillions, sharpening India's diplomatic position against "shifting goalposts" by developed nations.

Beyond traditional frameworks, India is institutionalising global cooperation through the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA). The CDRI has been upgraded to an international organisation, providing technical support to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) via the IRIS initiative, for which it provided a substantial financial commitment of ₹480 crore to signal its global intent. Similarly, the Global Biofuels Alliance, launched during India's G20 presidency, is being institutionalised with a Secretariat in New Delhi to position India as a global knowledge hub for clean energy. Conclusively, the government's response serves to project India as a high-achieving "Global South" leader while maintaining a rigid defensive posture against international top-down mandates that might constrain its domestic economic trajectory.



BOX 7:

Whether the Government has received commitment for financial assistance from developed countries to implement INDCs?

Under the Paris Agreement, the developed countries have committed to mobilise US \$ 100 billion per year and agreed to enhance it beyond US \$ 100 billion per year post 2020. Green Climate Fund (GCF) has been set up under the UNFCCC as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention. No specific assistance has been received by India so far from the GCF for implementing INDCs. (Q. No. 324, Session 9 of 16th Lok Sabha)

The reasons for not developing small nuclear reactors with 200-300 MW capacity which are cost-effective and could be better maintained?

So far there is no commercial working reactor of this category all across the globe (except with the exception of Russia). DAE is studying SMR development in other countries and yet to initiate activities for indigenous SMR development. (Q. No. 2321, Session 11 of 17th Lok Sabha)



THEME 8: CLIMATE FINANCE AND MARKETS



Statistical Analysis

Between December 2015 and December 2025, questions on Climate Finance and Markets comprised 23 questions, accounting for 0.26% of environment-related questions in both Houses and a mere 0.009% of total parliamentary questions over the past decade. Climate finance refers to funding provided by governments, financial institutions, and other sources to support climate mitigation and adaptation, while carbon markets allow the buying and selling of carbon credits or emission allowances to encourage reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. While Climate Finance is one of the most contentious and vital issues in India's international negotiations, it remains statistically marginalized within domestic legislative discourse. Although climate finance is essential for reducing emissions and supporting adaptation, with mechanisms such as carbon markets, green bonds, and climate funds promoted by institutions such as the World Bank, it has received limited attention in Parliament. Climate finance requires coordination across several ministries, yet the relatively small number of questions on fund allocation, market mechanisms, and international climate finance commitments indicates limited legislative oversight. Keywords such as “Carbon Markets” (6 questions in LS), “Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)” (1 question in LS), and “Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)” (4 questions total) show minimal legislative scrutiny compared to broad terms like “Renewable” (1,278 questions). The Parliament often focuses on the physical targets of the energy transition rather than the financial architecture required to fund them. When finance is discussed, it is typically through the lens of global grievance rather than domestic policy innovation.

Temporal Analysis

Despite India's estimated requirement of USD 2.5 trillion for climate action between 2015 and 2030 and the several initiatives discussed in parliamentary responses relating to the Indian Carbon Market (ICM), Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS), Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) frameworks, green bonds and international climate finance commitments, only 23 questions on Climate Finance and Markets were raised during the ten years. Of the limited questions, the main focus, particularly in the Rajya Sabha, was on whether developed countries had fulfilled their USD 100 billion annual commitment and demanded USD 1 trillion by 2030 to meet India's climate goals.

Political Engagement

- Members of the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), frequently table questions that act as platforms for the government to showcase domestic initiatives and highlight the non-compliance with responsibility by the developed nations. For instance, questions from BJP members such as Rajiv Pratap Rudy and Mahesh Kashyap, regarding achievements and the use of domestic and international finance, provide the government with opportunities to highlight its best-effort basis for climate actions and its reliance on domestic missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). These questions effectively reinforce the fact that developed countries have failed to meet their USD 100 billion annual commitment, thereby justifying India's demand for USD 2.5 trillion by 2030.
- Meanwhile, parties of the NDA, such as the Shiv Sena (Shinde faction), engage in joint questions with members of the BJP that allow the government to reiterate its climate policy framework and initiatives, including references to India's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement, allocations under the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change, and efforts to promote public-private partnerships and domestic carbon markets.

The opposition remains the primary driver of questions concerning financial sector preparedness for climate risks, as seen in the question by Partap Singh Bajwa (INC) regarding whether Indian banks were evolving climate-sensitive lending policies.

- The opposition parties scrutinise the economy and data that the government often avoids providing. The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which places a carbon-related cost on certain imports entering the European Union, is particularly significant for carbon-intensive Indian exports such as steel and chemicals and could affect their competitiveness in the EU market. With the issue also forming part of wider India-EU trade discussions, its potential impact on Indian industries has become a subject of parliamentary scrutiny.
- While ruling party members such as B Y Raghavendra (BJP) ask broad questions about helping exporters comply with the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), opposition members such as Asaduddin Owaisi (AIMIM) and Thiru Dayanidhi Maran (DMK) explicitly demand "estimated losses due to CBAM" and interrogation of the "trade impact of India opposing" the mechanism. While acknowledging concerns regarding CBAM, the government avoids providing any quantified estimate of potential CBAM-related losses to the steel sector, despite the question explicitly seeking such an assessment, stating that "steel is a deregulated sector, and the role of the Government is that of a facilitator" and dismissing its impacts on the chemical sector.

- Furthermore, opposition members, [Iqra Choudhary \(SP\)](#) and [Derek O'Brien \(AITC\)](#), questioned whether carbon markets place a "disproportionate burden on small and medium enterprises," and scrutinised the lack of a robust Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system for tracking international finance.

The political engagement, in all, reveals a parliamentary environment where the government promotes its macro-policy approach, while the opposition focuses the debates on ground-level economic issues and trade interests.

Nature of Government Response

The unfulfilled promises of developed nations remained the most prominent aspect of the government's responses, especially for questions on the timeline or availability of climate finance to meet India's COP26 commitments. When asked about strategies to secure the USD 100 billion climate finance goal, the government reiterated that developed countries have failed to deliver on this promise. The government noted that the global target remains unmet and that India depends mainly on its own resources. The government systematically counters questions by restating its demand for USD 1 trillion in climate finance by 2030.

When questioners demand precise quantitative data on emerging economic risks regarding the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), the government avoids providing concrete negative estimates. This is particularly significant given India's trade relationship with the EU and the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which was concluded in January 2026 after years of negotiations and promoted as the "mother of all deals." The FTA is expected to deepen access to the European market, making the potential impact of CBAM on Indian exports such as steel and aluminium even more consequential. When explicitly asked for "the estimated losses due to CBAM" on the Indian steel industry, the government evaded the question and instead listed measures to safeguard the interests of the Indian Steel Industry. Regarding the chemical sector's exposure to CBAM, the government downplayed the concern, stating that the sector is not covered by the EU's initial rollout phase. It failed to address the question of a specific impact assessment or mitigation strategy required for chemical exports so far. However, [Global Trade Research Initiative \(GTRI\)](#), an independent research group focused on trade, technology and investment issues, estimated that CBAM would force Indian steel and aluminium exporters to cut prices by 15-22 per cent to retain access to the EU market. It states that nearly 27% of India's iron, steel, and aluminium exports go to the EU, putting roughly \$8 billion to \$9 billion of Indian exports at immediate risk of becoming uncompetitive once the taxation phase begins in 2026.

BOX 8:

The quantum of financing required by India from developed nations to meet its climate Commitment?

During 2014 to 2019, while Global Environment Facility and Green Climate Fund have provided grants to a total of only US \$ 165.25 million, the corresponding domestic mobilization amounts to US\$ 1.374 billion. (Q. No. 507, [Session 255 of Rajya Sabha](#))

The specific timeline set to introduce the 'National Framework for Indian Carbon Market' (ICM) and the steps taken by the Government to ensure that there are no delays in its rollout?

Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS), which provides framework for Indian Carbon Market, has already been notified in June, 2023 and amended in December, 2023 under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001(as amended). The trading of carbon credits under compliance mechanism is expected to begin in 2026-27. (Q. No. 2401, [Session 4 of 18th Lok Sabha](#))

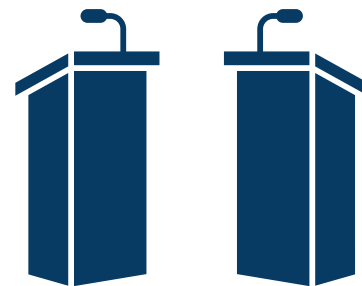
The key objectives of the MoU between the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) and the Carbon Market Association of India; whether the Government has any plans to integrate the outcomes of this partnership into national decarbonisation policies and the specific regulatory frameworks are being considered to strengthen carbon trading mechanisms in the country?

No such plan is under consideration. The key objectives of the MoU between the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) and the Carbon Markets Association of India(CMAI) are conducting academic research on carbon pricing, offset mechanisms, best practices in emission reduction, capacity building in carbon trading and regulatory compliance. (Q. No. 3864, [Session 4 of 18th Lok Sabha](#))

Whether the Government has estimated the climate financing needed for achieving pledges at COP26?

India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), submitted under the Paris Agreement in 2015, provides a preliminary estimate that at least USD 2.5 trillion (at 2014-15 prices) would be required for meeting India's climate actions from 2015 to 2030. (Q. No. 828, [Session 8 of 17th Lok Sabha](#))

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



Apart from questions and answers, parliamentary debates constitute a major part of deliberation and discussion in Parliament, providing MPs with a platform to examine issues, debate government actions, and place competing perspectives on record. Based on the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the two Houses, Parliament provides several formal avenues for substantive discussion. This analysis examines the environmental issues raised through Short Duration Discussions, Calling Attention, Government Bills, Private Members' Bills, Statutory Resolution and Government Bill, Private Members' Resolutions, Special Mention (Zero Hour), Matters under Rule-377, Matters raised with Permission, Statements by Ministers, References by the Chair, Messages from Lok Sabha and Announcement across the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

LOK SABHA

As the primary house for representing constituency-level grievances, the Lok Sabha serves as the frontline for articulating immediate ecological distress. Over the past decade, the focus of the house has shifted from general environmental rhetoric toward crisis-response mode. This evolution reflects the increasing frequency of localized climate shocks, ranging from devastating floods in the south to chronic drought in the heartland, which have forced Members of Parliament (MPs) to prioritise immediate relief and compensation.

The pattern of discussion in the Lok Sabha is dual-tracked, driven by proactive alignment with international milestones and reactive responses to domestic disasters. Discussions often spike in the wake of global climate summits. Following COP26, the house engaged in short-duration debates regarding India's net-zero roadmap, revealing sharp strategic clashes. Kanimozhi Karunanidhi (DMK) questioned the ruling government's roadmap for net-zero targets and advocated for the legal recognition of "climate refugees", a demand echoed by Pradyut Bordoloi (INC), who urged a uniform legal framework to rehabilitate populations displaced by severe river erosion in the Brahmaputra system. Kanimozhi Karunanidhi (DMK) subsequently introduced The Climate Change (Mitigation and Adaptation) Bill, 2025 to establish a National Climate Change Authority to achieve these targets.

Specific calamities trigger a sudden, massive volume of reactive discourse. Following the 2021 Nanda Devi glacier outburst, multiple Special Mentions were raised in the Lok Sabha by MPs such as Ram Shiromani Verma (SP) and Haji Fazlur Rehman (SP), demanding accelerated rescue operations in the Tapovan-Chamoli area and urgent central compensation of ₹25 lakh for victims' families. Recurring disasters, such as the Kerala floods and the catastrophic Wayanad landslides of 2024, have repeatedly stalled regular business to address failures in early warning systems and the need for immediate disaster relief.

The density of issues discussed in the House reveals an increased emphasis on economically destructive weather events, while systemic ecological health often remains under-represented. Regional floods, droughts and crop losses constitute the most prominent areas of discussion, reflected in continuous debates on Karnataka's successive drought cycles and the recurring flood havoc in Bihar and Assam. Urban air pollution and public health receive sustained attention, particularly in relation to Delhi-NCR's air quality. Ramesh Bidhuri (BJP) argued that the opposition-led local Delhi government avoids administrative responsibility for toxic air by blaming stubble burning, which he claimed contributed only 7% compared to industrial and vehicular emissions. In contrast, Dr. Shashi Tharoor (INC) reframed the crisis as a severe macro-economic and public health emergency, proposing a "mission-mode" national response because its economic burden far exceeds India's entire public health budget.

Despite this political friction, the severity of the urban smog has occasionally compelled the Lok Sabha to adopt a collaborative approach. In December 2025, Rahul Gandhi (INC) proposed a non-partisan, collaborative plan where the Government and Opposition work together on systematic city pollution solutions. This rare bipartisan gesture was welcomed by BJP members, including Jagdambika Pal and Kiren Rijiju, and the ruling NDA government formally agreed to structure a cooperative legislative discussion through the Business Advisory Committee. Meanwhile, biodiversity, genetic modification (GM) policy and marginal ecological impacts remain comparatively under-represented. These include concerns relating to the protection of the Tapovan forest, where Dr. Bachhav Shobha Dinesh (INC) and Rajabhau Parag Prakash Waje (Shiv Sena) strongly opposed cutting trees to preserve Nashik's ancient ecosystem, and the regulation of GM crops, where Dushyant Singh (BJP) called for a transparent national policy to protect agro-biodiversity and farmers' livelihoods over corporate control of genetic materials.

These environmental concerns, however, are also closely intertwined with broader questions of federal responsibility and resource allocation. Discussions on environment and climate change in the Lok Sabha are frequently a site of federal friction. Opposition members often accuse the central government of discrimination regarding the allocation of National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) support.

- **Karnataka:** MPs have repeatedly highlighted that despite six years of drought and losses exceeding ₹30,000 crore, the release of sanctioned central funds has faced significant delays. This prompted BJP MP Suresh Angadi (BJP) to defend the Centre by accusing the state government of utilizing a "political response" to address farmer suicides, though the government ultimately assured it remained with Karnataka's farmers.
- **Kerala:** Following back-to-back floods, the house witnessed heated debates over the Centre's refusal to allow the state to accept foreign aid, which members characterized as a "step-motherly" attitude. These tensions peaked during the 2024 Wayanad landslides Calling Attention debate, where opposition members demanded immediate relief and national disaster status, while Home Minister Amit Shah (BJP) defended the Centre by claiming that the state government failed to evacuate residents despite specific, timely early warnings.
- **West Bengal:** The exclusion of West Bengal from special flood funds in the Union Budget was criticised, with Sougata Ray (AITC) highlighting severe erosion caused by Bhutanese rivers and the Farakka Barrage. June Maliah (AITC) demanded the immediate release of ₹37,000 crore in pending compensation funds due to West Bengal for the devastation caused by Cyclones Amphan and Yaas.

Fiscal friction hampers ground-level implementation. When disaster relief is politicized, the speed of reconstruction is compromised, and states are left unable to implement permanent anti-erosion or drought-proofing infrastructure. While the Lok Sabha captures the immediate urgency of the crisis-led environmental narrative, the Rajya Sabha provides a more systemic and scientific oversight of India's ecological trajectory.

RAJYA SABHA

The Rajya Sabha serves as a platform for the executive to project India's global climate leadership, even as members have repeatedly highlighted significant gaps between its international commitments and domestic implementation.

In December 2015, immediately following the landmark COP21 summit, the Minister of Environment presented the Paris Agreement's success to the House, highlighting the inclusion of climate justice and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR). However, the opportunity for substantive parliamentary debate was instantly lost, as the session was entirely disrupted by political protests over the Arunachal Pradesh governance crisis, demonstrating how critical climate deliberations are routinely sacrificed to daily partisan warfare.

While the government frequently reiterates its "Net Zero 2070" targets and promotes massive projects such as the [Green Hydrogen Mission](#), members have highlighted the steady decline in actual environmental budgets. In [March 2021](#) and in [February 2022](#), members such as A.D. Singh (RJD) and Vandana Chavan (NCP) flagged that despite lofty international commitments, actual budgetary allocations for the environment and forest sectors had shrunk, leaving the country ill-equipped to meet its emissions reduction and carbon sink goals. Allocation of at least 1% of the Union and State Budgets be statutorily earmarked for environmental protection to prevent these commitments from remaining purely rhetorical, was demanded.

The Rajya Sabha's debates on pollution attempt to reframe ecological issues as structural economic and public health crises, though these warnings are frequently met with regulatory indifference. In July 2019, [Vandana Chavan](#) (NCP) argued that India's legal framework is fundamentally flawed because the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 does not explicitly identify the protection of public health as its central objective. She supported this by citing the Air Quality Life Index (AQLI), which estimates that the average Indian could live 4.3 years longer if air pollution met safe limits. This statutory omission has allowed Pollution Control Boards to prioritise the economic and licensing convenience of polluting industries over the physical health of citizens, even as air pollution strips years off Indian life expectancy.

Major implementation gaps within the flagship National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) were discussed as MPs stated that while NCAP targets particulate matter, it almost completely ignores sulphur dioxide (SO₂) emissions, allowing coal-fired power plants to flout directives requiring continuous emission monitoring systems. Furthermore, in [December 2025](#), Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla (YSRCP) raised concerns that several states, such as Andhra Pradesh, were heavily underutilizing their allocated NCAP funds, highlighting a severe breakdown in local monitoring, coordination and enforcement.

The severity of the winter smog in Delhi-NCR led to a proposal in December 2025 by [Manas Ranjan Mangaraj](#) (AITC), who demanded that the Winter and Budget Sessions of Parliament be shifted completely out of Delhi to Bhubaneswar or Bengaluru. The motion argued that forcing lawmakers and senior bureaucrats to work in AQI levels exceeding 400-500 was a public health hazard and that relocating the capital's central functions would finally force the political class to treat clean air as an absolute democratic right rather than a seasonal inconvenience.

The Rajya Sabha has mentioned ecological crises that rarely register in mainstream political discourse. These include:

- [Melting Himalayan Glaciers](#): Revati Raman Singh (SP) linked accelerating glacier melt and Rishi Ganga flash floods directly to unchecked human interventions, such as indiscriminate blasting, excessive dam construction on the Ganga's tributaries, and road-widening for the Char Dham project.

- **The Scavenger Crisis:** Brij Lal (BJP), in the zero-hour mention, raised the alarming ecological impact of the near-extinction of vultures (natural scavengers) due to the veterinary use of diclofenac, warning of the resultant public health risks and the spread of infectious diseases.
- **Soil Carbon Depletion:** Members critiqued the destructive path of intensive agriculture, noting that excessive use of nitrogenous fertilizers had decimated soil organic carbon, leading to groundwater contamination and pesticide resistance.
- **Invasive Species:** The widespread, colonial-era introduction of invasive Australian Acacia (*Vilayati Babool*) was flagged for altering soil structures, forming dense thickets, destroying native grasslands, and severely depleting water tables in catchment areas like the Western Ghats.

In February 2022, Neeraj Dangi (INC) discussed the destructive lack of geographical flexibility in the Drought Manual, 2016. Prepared by the Union Ministry of Agriculture, the manual strictly mandates October 31 as the cut-off date for declaring drought. Members argued this guideline fails to reflect the climatic reality of western states like Rajasthan, where peak water scarcity and severe agrarian distress rage from April to July, leaving states administratively paralyzed and unable to deploy central relief during their most vulnerable months.

Opposition-ruled states have repeatedly used the floor of the Rajya Sabha to mention delayed or withheld disaster funds, accusing the Centre of a highly politicized, paternalistic approach to cooperative federalism.

- **West Bengal:** Manas Ranjan (AITC) raised the sudden, abrupt stoppage of Central funds (under a 75:25 sharing ratio) for the Keleghai-Kapaleswari-Baghai River project, leaving vital flood management infrastructure incomplete for over two and a half years. Similarly, the long-approved Ghatal Master Plan remained entirely unfunded despite appeals by the State's Chief Minister to the Prime Minister.
- **Karnataka:** Debates in December 2023 highlighted a devastating drought affecting 223 out of 226 taluks. While the state government estimated crop losses at over ₹35,162 crore and formally sought ₹18,171 crore from the NDRF, G C Chandrashekhar (INC) stated that earlier flood relief allocations revealed that the Centre had released a mere ₹1,200 crore against a demand of ₹38,150 crore after massive bureaucratic delays.
- **Tamil Nadu:** In February 2022, members condemned the Centre's failure to release ₹6,230 crore in pending NDRF flood relief funds more than 70 days after an Inter-Ministerial Central Team had completed its field assessment, forcing a financially strained state government to exhaust its own SDRF reserves.

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- **Kerala:** Following the catastrophic 2018 floods, K.K. Ragesh (CPI(M)) criticized the Central Government for not only denying Kerala permission to accept foreign humanitarian aid but also actively restricting the state from mobilizing rehabilitation funds from the global diaspora.

The Rajya Sabha debates highlighted the systematic manner in which the executive bypasses parliamentary oversight to enact business-friendly deregulations. For instance, in March 2022, it was discussed that the executive had entirely bypassed Parliament to alter mining rules in ecologically fragile forested "no-go" areas. Rather than establishing a transparent debate, the Ministry of Environment increasingly regulates these sensitive zones through executive Office Memoranda. This lack of statutory binding allows private mining companies to lobby the bureaucracy directly, leading to the rapid, unchecked dilution of forest protections.

During the passage of the landmark Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAMPA) Bill, MPs led by Jairam Ramesh (INC) argued that the Bill disproportionately empowered forest bureaucracies while stripping power away from local Gram Sabhas, effectively ignoring the statutory protections of the Forest Rights Act, 2006. This centralized approach has led to the commercial exploitation of natural forests and the forceful displacement of tribal communities in favor of monoculture plantations. They also exposed the performativity of state-sponsored tree drives, noting that in Assam's highly publicized *Amrit Brikho* scheme, 90% of the planted saplings had died despite massive public expenditure, proving that commercial plantations cannot replace natural forest ecosystems. Meanwhile, the Global Forest Watch claims that in Assam from 2001 to 2025, 38% of tree cover loss occurred in areas where the dominant drivers of loss resulted in deforestation.

In March 2025, Jebi Mather Hisham(INC) raised a major alarm regarding the bidding process for deep-sea sand mining along the Kerala coast. She revealed that the tender process had been initiated without any independent Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The terms of the tender allowed the successful private mining company to conduct its own EIA after winning the bid, representing a complete surrender of regulatory oversight to private corporate interests.

V. Sivadasan (CPI(M)) highlighted the human cost of rigid, centralized environmental laws. Citing over 606 elephant-related deaths and 94 fatalities in Kerala alone within a single year, he argued that the *Wildlife Protection Act, 1972* completely hamstring state forest departments. Because the power to declare "vermin" or authorize population management is locked at the federal level, local conservators are left legally powerless to act, leaving forest-dwelling and tribal communities to bear the brunt of escalating human-wildlife conflicts. In this context, Vandana Chavan (NCP) expressed concern over the use of the term 'forest cover', arguing that its inclusion of monoculture plantations and other non-forest areas can obscure the loss of natural forests and incentivize their replacement with plantations, and called for a more qualitative approach to measuring forest cover, emphasizing the ecological functions of diverse natural forests.

Ultimately, India's climate response is caught in a painful double-bind: while local MPs in the Lok Sabha are constantly scrambling to react to the immediate heartbreak of floods and droughts, the Rajya Sabha is left fighting an uphill battle against shrinking green budgets, outdated laws, and political friction that keeps long-term, protective infrastructure from actually being built on the ground.



CONCLUSION

When the Paris Agreement was signed and adopted in 2015, it was presented as the beginning of a new phase in climate governance. One in which every country would progressively strengthen its climate ambition through nationally determined action. Ten years later, India has updated and notified its latest climate commitments, achieved several of its earlier commitments ahead of schedule, and continues to expand renewable energy. At the same time, the country's development priorities continue to shape the pace and direction of its climate transition, often creating tensions between economic growth, energy security and long-term decarbonisation, even at a time when India remains one of the countries most vulnerable to climate-related disasters.

Within this broader context, Parliament occupies a critical place in assessing India's legislative response to climate change. Parliamentary questions provide a unique window into how our elected representatives identify problems, seek information, demand accountability, and influence public debate. They reveal not only the issues that attract political attention, but also those that don't.

The analysis in this report shows that parliamentary engagement with climate change might have been somewhat extensive, but selective. Questions around certain themes such as clean energy and extreme weather events have been receiving sustained attention. On the other hand, questions around themes such as climate finance and international partnerships and agreements feature far less prominently. The analysis also highlights persistent gaps in data availability, preparedness, and policy coordination, as also reflected in some government responses to the parliamentary questions.

While these findings might not be an absolute measure of Parliament's overall commitment to climate action, they still offer an insight into how climate change has entered India's legislative discourse, particularly during the first decade since the Paris Agreement. They also point towards areas where parliamentary engagement needs to become broader, deeper, and more closely aligned with the scale and complexity of climate change.

As India enters its next phase of implementing its latest NDCs, strengthening parliamentary engagement will be essential. A more informed, consistent, and forward-looking legislative discourse can play an important role in improving accountability, shaping policy, and ensuring that climate action remains responsive to growing realities of the climate crisis.

GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Question Hour	The period of a sitting during which Members ask questions and Ministers give answers on matters of public importance and government activity.
Starred Question	A question for which a Member desires an oral answer. It is distinguished by an asterisk and may be followed by supplementary questions.
Unstarred Question	A question for which a written answer is given and no supplementary question is allowed.
Supplementary Question	A question asked by a Member, when called by the Chair, to further elucidate a matter of fact regarding which an answer has been given.
Zero Hour	The period after Question Hour and laying of papers, before listed business, during which Members may raise matters of public importance. The term is not formally recognised in the Rules of Procedure.
Special Mention	A procedure through which a Member may mention a matter of public importance in the House, subject to the prescribed notice and conditions.
Calling Attention	A procedure through which, with the prior permission of the Speaker/Chairman, a Member calls the attention of a Minister to a matter of urgent public importance, following which the Minister makes a statement.
Business Advisory Committee	A committee that recommends the time to be allotted for discussion of Government legislative and other business and may recommend subjects and allocation of time for discussion.
Motion	A proposal made to elicit a decision of the House. When agreed to, it expresses the will of the House.
Short Duration Discussion	A discussion on a matter of urgent and sufficient public importance, held without a formal motion or vote. In the Lok Sabha it is under Rule 193; in the Rajya Sabha, Rules 176-179.
Government Bills	Bills introduced by Ministers on behalf of the Government and considered by Parliament as legislative proposals.
Statutory Resolution and Government Bill	A proceeding involving consideration of a Statutory Resolution together with a Government Bill. A statutory resolution is moved in pursuance of a provision in the Constitution or an Act of Parliament.
Private Members' Bills	Bills introduced by Members of Parliament who are not Ministers.
Private Members' Resolution	A resolution on a matter of general public interest moved by a Member who is not a Minister. It may express the opinion or recommendation of the House.

Matters under Rule-377	A Lok Sabha procedure allowing Members to bring to the notice of the House matters of general public interest that are not Points of Order and cannot otherwise be raised under the Rules.
Matters raised with Permission	Matters raised by Members with the permission of the Chair, as permitted under the parliamentary procedure of the House.
Statements by Ministers	Statements made by Ministers to inform the House about matters of public importance or Government policy, including matters of topical national interest.
References by the Chair	Formal references or observations made by the Chair during proceedings of the House on matters considered appropriate for reference to the House.
Messages from Lok Sabha	Formal messages communicated by the Lok Sabha to the Rajya Sabha, including messages concerning Bills or other parliamentary business. The Parliamentary Digital Library classifies these separately among parliamentary proceedings.
Announcement	A formal announcement made by the Chair during proceedings to communicate information concerning the business or proceedings of the House.



Annexure 1: Comparison of Key Features of NDCs Across Three Stages

Component	NDC, 2015	Updated NDC, 2022	NDC 3.0 (2031-2035)
Emissions intensity of GDP	Reduce emissions intensity of GDP by 33-35% by 2030 from 2005 levels.	Target raised to 45% reduction by 2030.	Further reduction target extended to 2035 (reported at 47%)
Non-fossil fuel electricity capacity	Achieve 40% installed capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030, conditional on technology transfer and finance.	Target raised to 50% by 2030.	Target extended to 60% by 2035
Carbon sink (forests and trees)	Create an additional 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO ₂ -equivalent carbon sink by 2030.	No change.	Expanded range (reported 3.5 - 4 billion tonnes)
Sustainable lifestyle and behavioural change	Emphasis on promoting a healthy and sustainable way of living based on traditions and values of conservation and moderation.	No change, except expanded to include LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) as a central strategy.	Continues emphasis on lifestyle changes.

Annexure 2: List of Keywords used for Data Collection

Category	Keywords
Clean Energy and Decarbonisation	Decarbonisation; Smart Grid; Energy Efficiency; Green Hydrogen; Renewable; Solar; Wind; Hydropower; Fossil Fuel; Energy Transition; Electrification
Forests and Land Use	Forestry; Forest; Tree; Mangrove; Afforestation; Reforestation; Deforestation
Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters	Heatwaves; Wildfire; Forest Fire; Cloud Burst; Drought; Glacier; Floods; Natural Calamities; Cyclone
Climate Change and Global Impacts	Climate Change; Climate Emergency; Climate Crisis; Biodiversity; Global Warming; Green House; Rising Sea Level; Migration; Air Pollution; Acidification
Environment	Environment, Ecology, Ecosystem
Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management	Mitigation; Net Zero; Carbon Footprint; Adaptation; Emission; Coast
Global Climate Governance	Paris Agreement; UNFCCC; Conference of Parties (COP); COP 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 30; Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); Global Biofuels Alliance; Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI); Global Stocktake; Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy (LT-LEDS); Planetary Boundaries; Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP); Loss and Damage; Technology Transfer
Climate Finance and Markets	Climate Finance; Carbon Markets; Clean Development Mechanism (CDM); Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

Annexure 3: Thematic Keyword-wise Distribution of Questions

THEMES	NO. OF QUESTIONS (LOK SABHA)	NO. OF QUESTIONS (RAJYA SABHA)
Theme 1 - Clean Energy and Decarbonisation		
Decarbonisation	13	13
Electrification	19	4
Green Hydrogen	66	58
Energy Efficiency	26	14
Smart Grid	6	4
Renewable	430	347
Solar	931	549
Wind	174	83
Hydropower	87	56
Fossil Fuel	25	15
Energy Transition	5	13
Theme 2 - Forests and Land Use		
Forestry	38	19
Afforestation	91	59
Deforestation	23	22
Reforestation	3	0
Forest	511	406
Tree	153	98
Mangrove	22	16

Theme 4 - Climate Change and Global Impacts		
Climate Change	285	236
Global Warming	31	23
Climate Emergency	2	2
Climate Crisis	2	3
Greenhouse	16	28
Acidification	0	3
Sea-Level Rising	27	19
Biodiversity	34	27
Migration	7	2
Air Pollution	185	208
Theme 5 - Environment		
Environment	445	411
Ecology	6	5
Ecosystem	16	14
Theme 6 - Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management		
Mitigation	51	55
Adaptation	9	11
Carbon Emissions	44	42
Carbon Footprint	13	8
Net Zero	13	17
Emission	180	135
Coast	101	74

Theme 7 - Global Climate Governance		
Paris Agreement	26	18
UNFCCC	1	2
Conference of Parties (COP)	14	13
CoP 21, 22, 23, 30	0	0
Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)	12	12
Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)	3	1
Loss and Damage	0	1
Global Biofuels Alliance	2	0
Global Stocktake	0	0
Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy (LT-LEDS)	0	0
Planetary Boundaries	0	0
Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP)	0	0
Theme 8 - Climate Finance		
Climate Finance	4	8
Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)	3	1
Carbon Markets	6	0
Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)	1	0
Total	4908	3794

This report analyses parliamentary questions raised between 2015 and 2025 to examine how climate change is framed, prioritised, and debated in India's legislative space. It traces patterns across key themes - Clean Energy and Decarbonisation; Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters; Climate Change and Global Impacts; Global Climate Governance; Climate Finance; Forests and Land Use; Mitigation, Adaptation and Carbon Management - to understand where political attention is concentrated and where it remains limited.

A decade after the Paris Agreement, this moment offers an opportunity to assess how global climate commitments are being reflected in India's legislative processes. Parliamentary questions provide a window into how these commitments are interpreted, debated, and translated into domestic priorities.

The findings reveal an uneven pattern of engagement. Parliamentary discussions are often driven by visible, short-term concerns such as renewable energy expansion and disasters, while critical areas like climate finance, long-term adaptation, and structural vulnerabilities receive far less scrutiny. Across themes, government responses tend to emphasize schemes, technological solutions, and administrative frameworks, while questions of accountability, outcomes, and distributional impacts remain underexplored.

At a time marked by rising climate risks and shifting global commitments, this report offers insight into the role of parliamentary oversight in shaping India's climate trajectory - and highlights the gaps, silences, and tensions that define the current legislative discourse.

