Polity & Governance · GS - II

Individual Parliamentarian’s role as the national lawmaker is on a decline, which in turn, has adversely impacted the quality of debates and their outcome. Discuss.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2019	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Parliamentary deliberation; party discipline; anti-defection law; executive dominance; disruptions; committee scrutiny; legislative expertise; constituency pressures; declining debate quality; parliamentary reforms

Model Answer

Introduction

Parliament is the central institution for lawmaking, executive accountability and national deliberation. However, concerns have grown that individual parliamentarians have limited opportunities to influence legislation meaningfully, weakening debate and scrutiny.

Reasons for the Decline

- **Executive dominance:** Government business often determines the legislative agenda, limiting independent parliamentary initiative.
- **Party discipline:** Strong party control and the anti-defection framework can discourage members from expressing independent positions, particularly on confidence-related votes.
- **Frequent disruptions:** Repeated adjournments reduce time available for substantive discussion.

- **Limited committee scrutiny:** Bills that receive inadequate examination by parliamentary committees may suffer from insufficient technical and stakeholder consultation.
- **Partisan polarisation:** Political competition can prioritise confrontation over deliberation.
- **Complex legislation:** Members may lack adequate research support and time to assess technical bills.
- **Reduced private members' influence:** Limited legislative time makes it difficult for individual members to advance proposals independently.

Consequences

Weak deliberation can produce poorly scrutinised laws, inadequate assessment of implementation costs and limited public accountability. It can also reduce Parliament's capacity to represent diverse regional and social interests.

Reforms Required

Parliament should provide adequate time for legislative debate, strengthen committee examination, improve research support for members and enforce rules against disruptions. Greater transparency in legislative consultation and appropriate space for private members' business would improve deliberative quality.

Conclusion

Parliamentary effectiveness depends not merely on the number of laws passed but on their quality and democratic legitimacy. Strengthening individual members' deliberative role can improve legislative scrutiny, accountability and public trust.

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