

THE UNION LEGISLATURE

Parliament and Its Two Houses

The Parliament is a national assembly of elected representatives of the people. The assembly of elected representatives of the people at the state level is called the legislature or the legislative assembly. The Parliament has the authority of enacting laws. It can add new laws, and change or abolish existing laws. National policy and important public issues are discussed and debated in the Parliament.

The Parliament consists of the Office of the President of India and two houses the Rajya Sabha or the Council of States, and the Lok Sabha or the House of the People. The Parliament can have 802 members.

The Rajya Sabha is the Upper House of the Parliament of India. It consists of 250 members of which 12 are nominated by the President of India. The remainder of the Rajya Sabha is elected by state and territorial legislatures. The term of office is 6 years, and $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of the members retire every two years. The Vice President is the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

The Lok Sabha is directly elected by the people of India. The Lok Sabha can have a maximum of 552 members, including 20 members from the Union Territories and 2 from the Anglo Indian community. The Speaker presides over the sessions.

Though the Rajya Sabha has some special powers, the Lok Sabha has supreme powers. The Lok Sabha can be dissolved

by the President. Due to a large number of members, the view of the Lok Sabha matters a lot. Once the Lok Sabha passes the budget or a law related to money, the Rajya Sabha cannot reject it.

The Parliament of India

The Parliament is the supreme legislative body of our country. It includes the President and the two Houses of the parliament. The two Houses of Parliament are known as the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

The Lok Sabha

It is the lower house of the parliament. The members of the Lok Sabha are directly elected by the people. There are 545

members in the Lok Sabha, of which 530 represent the different states, 13 represent the union territories and 2 members represent the Anglo-Indians. The 2 Anglo-Indians are nominated by the President.

Qualifications – Lok Sabha

should be Indian citizens who do not hold an office of profit under the central or the state governments.

should also be mentally sound and should not have any criminal cases against them.

Term of Lok Sabha

The members of Lok Sabha are elected for a five year term. The term can be extended by the president during emergency after the emergency he can dissolve it with Prime minister's recommendation.

Sometimes, the House can be dissolved prematurely before completing the five years.

The Speaker

The members elect the Speaker of the Lok Sabha from among themselves. The Speaker presides over its sessions and conducts its business. The Speaker is normally a member of the majority party after the elections he resigns from the party.

The Deputy Speaker

In Speaker's absence the deputy speaker acts as the presiding officer. The Deputy Speaker is generally a member of the Opposition party.

The Rajya Sabha

The Rajya Sabha can have a maximum of 250 members. Of this 238 represent the states and union territories and 12 are proposed by the president from the fields of literature, art, science and social service. These members need to meet the same qualifications as those of the members of the Lok Sabha, except that they should not be less than 30 years of age.

Term of Rajya Sabha

The term of the Rajya Sabha, or the upper house of the Parliament, is always fixed. It lasts for six years, and cannot be dissolved prematurely. The member the Rajya Sabha

are elected by the members of the legislative assemblies from the different states and union territories, who are in turn elected by the people.

The President

The President is the constitutional head of the country. He or she is elected by the electoral college which consists of the members of the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and State. The term of the President is 5 years. The Constitution of India grants him or her many executive, legislative, judicial, financial and emergency powers.

The Vice-President

The vice-president functions as the chairman of the Rajya Sabha and heads its meetings and takes care of its proceedings.

The House also elects one of its members as the Vice-Chairman, who carries out the duties of the Chairman in his absence.

Powers of Parliament

The Indian Constitution has granted the Parliament many executive, financial, judicial and legislative powers.

The Executive Powers

The Prime minister, the other ministers and the members of the Legislative Assemblies are all answerable to the Lok Sabha.

The Financial Powers

The Parliament has the complete control on the annual budget and other financial

matters of the government.

The Judicial Powers

It is authorized to assess the conduct of the judges in the Supreme Court and High Courts. The legislative powers allow the Parliament to make the laws required for the administration of the nation. The proposal for a law is known as a bill. A bill can be introduced in either of the houses of the Parliament.

What Makes India A Federal Country?

The Indian Union is based on the ideology of 'Holding Together Federation' i.e. the union to the unit and not the units to the union. India is a federal system with

striking unitary features called a Quasifederal country.

This Quasifederal nature of federalism is due to the power sharing ways in our country. The Constitution provides three fold distribution of legislative power between the central and the state government. Three folds are the Union List, State List and the Concurrent List.

Union List includes subjects of national importance having 97 subjects. Defence, atomic energy, foreign affairs, railways, banking, posts and telegraphs are some of the major Union List subjects. State List consists of subjects of state and local importance and has 66 subjects. Concurrent List includes subjects of common interest to Union and State government and are forests, trade unions,

marriage, adoption and succession.

There are some subjects that do not fall under any of the lists or came up after the Constitution was made. These are known as the Residuary.

Indian federation is 'Holding together federation. It does not give equal powers to its constituent units. It is very difficult to make changes in India's power sharing arrangement as any change has to be approved by one third majority in both the Houses of the Parliament. Then it has to be approved by the legislatures of half of the total states. The Judiciary administers both Union and State laws.

Success of Federalism in India

The most important tests for the success of Federalism were the creation of Linguistic States, Language Policy and Centre- State Relations.

Under the State Reorganization Commission in 1956, the states were created on the basis of language. Out of these 114 major languages, our Constitution recognizes 22 languages including Hindi as scheduled languages. Official Language Act provides that English would remain the official language of the country so long as non – Hindi speaking states desire.

The Constitution of India made provisions for division of powers between Centre and

States. After 1990 when coalition government was formed at the Centre, Regional parties became more powerful in the states. Since no single party was able to secure majority, different parties formed alliance. Under this arrangement the culture of power sharing and respect for autonomy of state governments spread in India.