

Structure of the Union Government of India

The Union Government, also known as the Central Government, is the highest governing authority in India. The structure is established by the **Constitution of India**, which divides the government into three branches: the **Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary**. Each branch has distinct functions and powers to ensure a balance of power within the federal framework.

1. Executive Branch

The Executive branch is responsible for implementing and enforcing laws. In India, it comprises the President, the Vice President, the Prime Minister, the Council of Ministers, and various government agencies.

- **The President:**
 - The ceremonial head of the state and the highest constitutional authority.
 - Holds powers in defense, administration, foreign affairs, and emergency situations.
 - Appoints the Prime Minister, other ministers, and key officials like judges and governors.
 - Can issue ordinances when Parliament is not in session.
- **The Vice President:**
 - Serves as the ex officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha (Council of States).
 - Assumes the role of the President in their absence or in case of vacancy.
- **The Prime Minister:**
 - The head of the government and leader of the majority party in the Lok Sabha (House of the People).
 - Advises the President and plays a pivotal role in policy-making and administration.
 - Heads the Council of Ministers and ensures effective functioning of the government.
- **The Council of Ministers:**
 - Assists the Prime Minister in executive duties and comprises various ministers:
 - **Cabinet Ministers:** Senior ministers who handle key portfolios (e.g., Finance, Defense).
 - **Ministers of State:** Junior ministers assisting Cabinet Ministers, with or without independent charge.
 - **Deputy Ministers:** Assist Cabinet and State Ministers in their duties.

2. Legislative Branch

The Legislature, or **Parliament of India**, is the law-making body. It is bicameral, meaning it has two houses: the Lok Sabha (Lower House) and the Rajya Sabha (Upper House).

- **Lok Sabha (House of the People):**
 - Composed of representatives directly elected by citizens, serving five-year terms.
 - Initiates and passes most legislation, especially financial bills.
 - Members of the Lok Sabha can hold the government accountable through discussions, debates, and the no-confidence motion.
- **Rajya Sabha (Council of States):**
 - Composed of representatives elected by state legislatures, with some members nominated by the President.
 - Serves as a permanent body that is never fully dissolved; one-third of members retire every two years.
 - Acts as a reviewing chamber for bills passed by the Lok Sabha and provides representation for the states in the union.
- **Law-making Process:**
 - Bills can be introduced in either house, except money bills, which originate in the Lok Sabha.
 - Once both houses approve a bill, it goes to the President for assent and then becomes law.

3. Judicial Branch

The Judiciary interprets and protects the Constitution and laws. It is independent of the Executive and Legislature to ensure unbiased administration of justice.

- **Supreme Court:**
 - The highest judicial authority and the apex court of India.
 - Handles appeals from lower courts, cases of constitutional interpretation, and cases between the Union and States.
 - Has the power of **judicial review** to invalidate laws that violate the Constitution.
- **High Courts:**
 - Exist at the state level, with jurisdiction over civil and criminal matters within the state.
 - Can issue writs to enforce fundamental rights, similar to the Supreme Court.

- **Subordinate Courts:**
 - Includes District Courts and various lower courts handling local cases.
 - Operates under the jurisdiction of the High Courts in each state.

4. Federal Structure and Union-State Relations

India's government follows a **federal structure** with a clear division of powers between the Union and the States, outlined in the **Seventh Schedule** of the Constitution, which divides subjects into three lists:

- **Union List:** Subjects under exclusive control of the Union Government (e.g., defense, foreign affairs).
- **State List:** Subjects under state jurisdiction (e.g., police, health).
- **Concurrent List:** Subjects on which both the Union and State governments can legislate (e.g., education, marriage).

5. Key Features of the Union Government

- **Separation of Powers:** Distinct roles for the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary.
- **Checks and Balances:** Each branch holds power to ensure that no one branch becomes too powerful.
- **Parliamentary System:** The Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers are accountable to the Parliament.
- **Federalism with a Strong Center:** Powers are shared between the Union and States, but the Union has more authority in cases of conflict.