

# The Parliament of India

The **Parliament of India** is the supreme legislative body of the country, responsible for making laws, debating national issues, and representing the citizens' interests. It operates under a bicameral system, meaning it has two houses: the **Lok Sabha** (House of the People) and the **Rajya Sabha** (Council of States), as established by the **Constitution of India**.

## 1. Structure of the Indian Parliament

The Indian Parliament consists of:

- **Lok Sabha (House of the People):** The lower house, where members are directly elected by the people of India. It represents the people of India.
- **Rajya Sabha (Council of States):** The upper house, where members are elected by state legislative assemblies and appointed by the President. It represents the states of India.
- **The President of India:** The President is an integral part of Parliament and has certain legislative powers, including the ability to summon and dissolve the Lok Sabha and give assent to bills passed by both houses.

## 2. Lok Sabha (House of the People)

The **Lok Sabha** is the more powerful of the two houses, with the power to control finances and introduce money bills.

- **Composition:** The Lok Sabha has a maximum of **552 members**:
  - Up to **530 members** representing states.
  - Up to **20 members** representing Union Territories.
  - **2 members** may be nominated by the President from the Anglo-Indian community (a provision now repealed).
- **Term:** The Lok Sabha members are elected for a **five-year term** but can be dissolved earlier by the President based on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.
- **Election:** Members are directly elected by the people of India through a **first-past-the-post voting system**.
- **Speaker:** The **Speaker of the Lok Sabha** is responsible for maintaining order and conducting proceedings. The Speaker is elected by the members of the Lok Sabha.

## 3. Rajya Sabha (Council of States)

The **Rajya Sabha** represents the states and Union Territories of India and acts as a reviewing chamber for laws proposed by the Lok Sabha.

- **Composition:** The Rajya Sabha has a maximum of **250 members**:
  - **238 members** represent states and Union Territories.
  - **12 members** are nominated by the President for their expertise in fields such as literature, science, art, and social service.
- **Term:** Rajya Sabha is a **permanent house** and cannot be dissolved. Each member has a **six-year term**, with one-third of its members retiring every two years.
- **Chairperson:** The **Vice President of India** serves as the ex-officio **Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha**.

#### 4. Powers and Functions of Parliament

The Indian Parliament holds legislative, financial, executive, judicial, and electoral powers.

##### a) Legislative Functions

- **Making Laws:** Both houses discuss, draft, and pass bills. For a bill to become law, it must be approved by both houses and receive the President's assent.
- **Types of Bills:**
  - **Ordinary Bills:** Can be introduced in either house and require approval from both houses.
  - **Money Bills:** Related to finances and taxation, introduced only in the Lok Sabha. The Rajya Sabha cannot amend or reject a Money Bill but can suggest recommendations.
  - **Constitutional Amendment Bills:** Propose changes to the Constitution. They require approval from both houses with a special majority.

##### b) Financial Powers

- **Budget Approval:** The Lok Sabha reviews and approves the annual budget presented by the Finance Minister, determining the government's revenue and expenditure.
- **Control over Public Expenditure:** Parliament exercises control over government spending through committees such as the Public Accounts Committee.

##### c) Executive Control

- **Accountability of the Executive:** The government (executive branch) is accountable to the Parliament. Ministers answer questions, participate in debates, and explain government policies.
- **No-confidence Motion:** The Lok Sabha can express a lack of confidence in the government through a no-confidence motion. If passed, the government must resign.

#### d) Judicial Functions

- **Impeachment of the President:** Parliament has the power to impeach the President if they violate the Constitution.
- **Removal of Judges:** Parliament can remove judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts on grounds of misbehavior or incapacity.

#### e) Electoral Functions

- **Election of the President and Vice President:** Members of Parliament (along with members of state legislatures for the President) participate in electing the President and Vice President of India.

### 5. Types of Parliamentary Sessions

The President of India summons Parliament for three sessions each year:

- **Budget Session** (February - May): The most important session, where the Union Budget is presented and discussed.
- **Monsoon Session** (July - September): Primarily discusses the country's socio-economic issues.
- **Winter Session** (November - December): A shorter session that addresses urgent legislative matters.

Each session includes various debates, discussions, question hours, and the passing of bills.

### 6. Procedure of Lawmaking

1. **Introduction of Bill:** A bill is introduced in either the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha.
2. **Discussion and Debate:** Members debate the bill, propose amendments, and discuss its merits and implications.
3. **Voting:** The bill is put to vote. If passed, it moves to the other house for similar procedures.
4. **Approval by the Other House:** The second house discusses, debates, and votes on the bill.

5. **President's Assent:** Once both houses pass the bill, it is sent to the President for assent. Upon receiving the President's approval, it becomes a law.

## 7. Roles of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in Lawmaking

- **Lok Sabha:** Controls the budget and financial matters and has a stronger role in passing bills, especially Money Bills.
- **Rajya Sabha:** Serves as a reviewing chamber, suggesting changes and additions to bills passed by the Lok Sabha, except for Money Bills.

## 8. Important Parliamentary Committees

Parliament has several committees to streamline legislative work, improve efficiency, and ensure thorough scrutiny of policies.

- **Public Accounts Committee:** Examines the expenditure of the government and ensures public money is used responsibly.
- **Estimates Committee:** Reviews government expenditure proposals and ensures funds are allocated appropriately.
- **Committee on Public Undertakings:** Examines the functioning of public sector enterprises.
- **Standing Committees:** Provide specialized oversight on various ministries, such as Finance, Health, and Defense.

## 9. Significance of the Parliament of India

- **Representation:** Parliament represents the voice and interests of India's citizens.
- **Check on the Executive:** Ensures accountability of the government through debates, question hours, and motions.
- **Public Policy and Legislation:** Parliament formulates laws, thereby addressing the nation's needs and aspirations.
- **Financial Oversight:** Manages public funds and ensures transparency and accountability in government spending.