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PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

Parliament

- The parliament is the legislative organ of the Union government.
- The Parliament of India is **bicameral** (i.e. consists of two houses) namely **Rajya Sabha** (the Council of States) and **Lok Sabha** (the House of the People).

Rajya Sabha

- The maximum **strength of the Rajya Sabha is fixed at 250**, out of which, 238 are to be the representatives of the states and union territories and 12 are nominated by the president.
- Presently the Rajya Sabha has 245 members. Of these, 229 members represent the states, 4 members represent the union territories and **12 members are nominated by the president**.
- Members of Rajya Sabha are elected by the elected members of the **'State Legislative Assemblies'** in accordance with the system of **proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote**. This process of election is called **"indirect election"** as they are not elected by the people directly.
- The Constitution lays down the following qualifications for a person to be chosen a member of the Rajya Sabha:
 - o He should be a citizen of India.
 - o He should not be less than **30 years of age**.
 - o He should not hold any office of profit under any Government.
- The **Fourth Schedule** of the Constitution of India deals with the allocation of seats in the Rajya Sabha to the states and union territories.
- The **Rajya Sabha (first constituted in 1952) is a continuing chamber**. It is a permanent body and not subject to dissolution. However, one-third of its members retire every second year.
- Representation of the People Act (1951) provided that the term of office of a member of the Rajya Sabha is six years.
- Rajya Sabha cannot reject or amend a money bill.
- The **vice-president** of India is the **ex-officio Chairman** of the Rajya Sabha.
- The Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha is elected by the members of the Rajya Sabha.
- Rajya Sabha authorize the Parliament to create new All-India Services common to both the Centre and states.

Lok Sabha

- The maximum strength of the Lok Sabha is fixed at 552. Out of this, 530 members are to be the representatives of the states, 20 members are to be the representatives of the union territories and 2 members are to be nominated by the president from the Anglo-Indian community.
- Presently the Lok Sabha has **545 members**. Of these, **530 members** represent the states, **13 members** represent the union territories and **2 Anglo-Indian members** are nominated by the President.
- Lok Shaba **normal term is five years** from the date of its first meeting after the general elections, after which it automatically dissolves.
- The Constitution lays down the following qualifications for a person to be chosen a member

of the Lok Sabha:

- o He should be a citizen of India.
- o He should not be less than 25 years of age.
- o He should not hold any office of profit under the Union or State Government.
- The **Speaker and deputy speaker of the Lok Sabha** is the presiding officer of the Lok Sabha.
- Lok Sabha speaker does not vote in the first instance. But he can exercise a casting vote in the case of a tie. In other words, only when the House is divided equally on any question, the Speaker is entitled to vote. Such vote is called **casting vote**, and its purpose is to resolve a deadlock.
- **Lok Sabha speaker presides over a joint sitting** of the two Houses of Parliament. Such a sitting is summoned by the President to settle a deadlock between the two Houses on a bill.
- **Lok Sabha speaker appoints the chairman of all the parliamentary committees** of the Lok Sabha and supervises their functioning.
- When Lok Sabha is dissolved, the Speaker does not vacate his office and continues till the newly-elected Lok Sabha meets.
- In the following cases, a member of Parliament vacates his seat:
 - o House can declare the seat of a member vacant if he is absent from all its meetings for a period of **sixty days without its permission**;
 - o Person cannot be a member of both the Parliament and the state legislature at the same time. If a person is so elected, his seat in Parliament becomes vacant if he does not resign his seat in the state legislature within 14 days;
 - o If a person is elected to both the Houses of Parliament, he must intimate within 10 days in which House he desires to serve. In default of such intimation, his seat in the Rajya Sabha becomes vacant.

Zero Hour

- The **zero hour starts immediately after the question hour** and lasts until the agenda for the day.
- It is an **Indian innovation** in the field of parliamentary procedures and has been in existence since **1962**.

Important Points About Parliament

- The **Non confidence motion** needs the support of **50 members** to be admitted.
- **Ordinary Bill** can be **introduced either in the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha**. It can be introduced either by a minister or by a private member.
- **Money bill** can be introduced **only in the Lok Sabha and not in the Rajya Sabha**. It can be introduced only by a **minister**.
- Rajya Sabha cannot amend or reject a Money Bill. It should return the bill to the **Lok Sabha within 14 days**, either with recommendations or without recommendations.
- The **Speaker of Lok Sabha** presides over a **joint sitting of the two Houses**.
- The final power to decide whether a particular bill is a Money Bill or not is vested in the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
- The maximum gap between **two sessions of Parliament cannot be more than six months**. In

other words, the Parliament should meet at least twice a year.

- **Parliament Sessions:**
 - Budget Session - February to May
 - Monsoon Session - July to September
 - Winter Session - November to December
- Ganesh Vasudev Mavalankar is first speaker of Lok sabha.
- Parliament is also vested with **powers to impeach** the President and to remove Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, Chief Election Commissioner and Comptroller and Auditor General of India in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Constitution.

Committees of the Parliament

Broadly, parliamentary Committees are of two kinds - **Standing Committee** and **Ad Hoc Committees**. The former is permanent (constituted every year or periodically) and work on a continuous basis, while the latter is temporary and ceases to exist on completion of the task assigned to them.

Standing Committees

On the basis of the nature of functions performed by them, standing Committees can be classified into the following six categories:

1. Financial Committees

- a) Public Accounts Committee
- b) Estimates Committee
- c) Committee on Public Undertakings

2. Departmental Standing Committees (24)

3. Committees to Inquire

- a) Committee on Petitions
- b) Committee of Privileges
- c) Ethics Committee

4. Committees to Scrutinize and Control

- a) Committee on Government Assurances
- b) Committee on Subordinate Legislation
- c) Committee on Papers Laid on the Table
- d) Committee on Welfare of SC's and ST's
- e) Committee on Empowerment of Women
- f) Joint Committee on Offices of Profit

5. Committees Relating to the Day-to-Day Business of the House

- a) Business Advisory Committee

- b) Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions
- c) Rules Committee
- d) Committee on Absence of Members from Sitzings of the House

6. House-Keeping Committees or Service Committees

- a) General Purposes Committee
- b) House Committee
- c) Library Committee
- d) Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of Members.

Ad Hoc Committee

Ad Hoc Committees can be divided into two categories, that is, Inquiry Committees and Advisory Committees.

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