



CLASS IX
POLITICAL SCIENCE
CHAPTER 3
PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

NOTES

A Parliamentary Democracy is a system of government in which citizens elect representatives to a legislative body to make the necessary laws and decisions for the country. This legislative body directly represents the people.

Overview of Central Government Structures:

The rulers in a democracy have to work with and within institutions. There are mainly three institutions that play a key in making major decisions. They are – **the Legislature, the Executives, and the Judiciary**. These institutions are known as Organs of the Government. By Government, we mean the working of National Level Government called Central Government, Union Government or just Government of India.

A Government Order:

The Government of India issued an order on 13th August, 1990 in the form of an Office Memorandum signed by a Joint Secretary of the Central Government. The order was related to a major policy decision of the government stating that **27 percent** of the vacancies in civil post and services under the Government of India are **reserved** for the **Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SEBC)**.

The Decision Makers:

The person who signed the document could not be the maker of such a major decision. He was just following an instruction issued by the relevant

- The President of India is the Head of the State and is the Highest Authority in the country.
- The Prime Minister is the Head of the Government and actually exercises all government powers. He takes most of the decisions in the Cabinet Meetings.
- Indian Parliament has two houses - **Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha**. The Prime Minister must have the support of majority members of Lok Sabha.

Origin of the order:

This Office Memorandum was the result of a long chain of events. The Government of India appointed the Second Backward Classes Commission in 1979. B.P. Mandal headed it and hence it is known as **Mandal Commission**. It recommended **27 percent government job reservation** for the socially and economically backward classes along with others. The report was submitted in 1980.

This order was hotly debated and filled newspapers and magazines in the country. By a majority judgement of the Supreme Court in 1992, it was declared valid. The dispute came to an end and ever since the policy has been followed.



Meaning of institutions in democracy:

Several arrangements are made in all modern democracies to make decisions, implement and settling disputes. Such arrangements are called institutions. A democracy works well when these institutions perform functions assigned to them.

Basic rules on the powers and functions of various institutions in India:

- In India, the Constitution lays down basic rules on the powers and functions of each institution.
- The Prime Minister and his cabinet are to take all important policy decisions.
- The civil servants are to implement the minister's decision.
- If disputes arise between the citizens and the government the Supreme Court has to settle.

Powers and functions of the parliament:

Or

Why do we need a parliament?

- **Parliament** is the **final authority for making laws**.
- It has control over those who run the government.
- Parliament controls all the money that a government has.
- It is the highest forum of debate and discussion on public issues and national policy.

Meaning of Parliament:

- In all democracies, an assembly of elected representatives exercises supreme power of the government on behalf of the people. In India, such a National Assembly of elected representatives is called **Parliament**.
- **The President of India** is a part of the Parliament although he is **not a member of either house**. That is why all laws made in the Houses come into force only after they receive the assent of the President.

Two Houses of Parliament:

- In our country, the Parliament consists of the President and the two Houses. The two Houses are known as **the Council of States (Rajya Sabha)** and **the House of the People (Lok Sabha)**.
- **Rajya Sabha (The Council of States):** The Rajya Sabha represents the States of India. It consists of **250 members** out of which **12 are nominated by the President**. The members are elected indirectly by the members of the State Assembly. The Council of States is a permanent chamber **not subject to dissolution**. The term of its members is **six years. One third of its members retire on the expiration of every second year**.
- **Lok Sabha (The House of the People):** The Lok Sabha represents the people of India. It has **545 members** including **2 nominated members** and are elected directly by the people. The term of the House of the People is **five years**. But it **can be dissolved** earlier by the President.



Which one is more powerful?

- The Lok Sabha controls the Council of Ministers.
- The Indian Constitution gives Rajya Sabha special power over the state. But on most matters, the Lok Sabha exercises supreme power.
- Any ordinary law is passed by both the Houses. But if there is a difference of opinion between the two Houses, the final decision is taken in a joint session.
- All the money bills start from Lok Sabha only and when it is passed, the Rajya Sabha cannot delay it. The Rajya Sabha can only delay it by 14 days or suggest changes in it.

Meaning of Executive:

All those functionaries of the government are collectively known as the Executive. They are called executive because they are in charge of the execution of the policies of the government.

Political and Permanent Executive:

- The elected executive members of the legislature are called Political Executive. They are appointed for a specific period and are leaders who take major decisions.
- The officials who are appointed on a long term basis are called civil servants or Permanent Executive. They remain in office even when the ruling party changes. These officers work under political executives.

Which one is more powerful:

- Definitely ministers are more powerful than the civil servants.
- In a democracy, the will of the people is supreme and ministers are elected by the people.
- The civil servant is usually more educated and has more professional knowledge of the subject.
- The experts (civil servants) can tell the route, but the minister decides the destination.

Prime Minister and Council of Ministers:

The Prime Minister of India holds the most important position and in fact he is more powerful than the President of India.

Appointment:

Constitutionally the Prime Minister is appointed by the President. The President appoints the leader of the majority party or the coalition of parties that commands a majority in the Lok Sabha, as Prime Minister. In case no single party or alliance gets a majority, the President appoints the person most likely to secure a majority support.

Tenure:

The Prime Minister does not have fixed tenure. He continues in power so long as he remains the leader of the majority party or coalition.



The Council of Ministers: They are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. It consists three different categories of ministers. They are as follows:

- i) **Cabinet Ministers** - Cabinet Ministers are top level leaders of the ruling party or parties who are in charge of the major ministries.
- ii) **Minister of State with Independent Charge** - They are in charge of smaller ministries.
- iii) **Ministers of State** - They are attached to and required to assist cabinet ministers.

Cabinet (Why is parliamentary democracy also called as cabinet form of government?):

Cabinet is the inner ring of the Council of Ministers. All ministers cannot meet regularly and discuss everything. That is why discussions are taken in cabinet meetings. For this reason, parliamentary democracy is also known as cabinet form of government. Since the cabinet is wholly responsible to the parliament it is also known as responsible government.

The powers of the Prime Minister:

- He chairs cabinet meetings.
- He co-ordinates the work of different departments.
- His decisions are final in case disagreements arise between departments.
- All ministers work under his leadership and supervision.
- The Prime Minister distributes and redistributes portfolios to the ministers.
- He also has the power to dismiss ministers.
- He is leader of the Parliament, leader of cabinet and leader of the Nation.

The President:

Under the parliamentary democratic system in India, the President is the only head of the state. Like the Queen of England, the President's functions are to a large extent ceremonial.

- **Election:** The President is elected by all the Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of State Legislative Assemblies (MLAs). So the President is not directly elected.
- **Removal:** He can be removed from office by means of **impeachment** only which requires a special procedure.

Powers of the President:

- Outwardly there is nothing that President cannot do. But, it is to be noted that the President exercises powers only on the advice of the Council of Ministers.
- The President supervises the overall functioning of all the political institutions in the country.
- All governmental activities take place in the name of the President.
- All laws and major policy decisions of the government are issued in his/ her name.
- All major appointments such as the Chief Justice of India, the Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts of States, the Governors, the Election Commissioners, Ambassadors to other countries etc., are made in the name of the President.
- All international treaties and agreements are made in the name of the President.
- The President is the supreme commander of the Defence Forces of India.



Discretionary power of the President:

The President can exercise his discretionary power at the time of appointment of the Prime Minister when a party or a coalition of parties cannot enjoy clear majority in the election.

The Presidential System:

- The President is the head of the state and the head of the government.
- The United States of America has the presidential system of government.
- This model is followed in most countries of Latin America.

The Presidential system in the United States:

- **The President of US is directly elected by the people.**
- He personally chooses and appoints all secretaries (ministers). He also has the power to dismiss them.
- The President can veto (reject) any law passed by the Congress (US legislature).
- The President does not require the support of the majority of members of the Congress.
- He has fixed tenure of **4 years**.
- He is not answerable to the Congress.

