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ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY

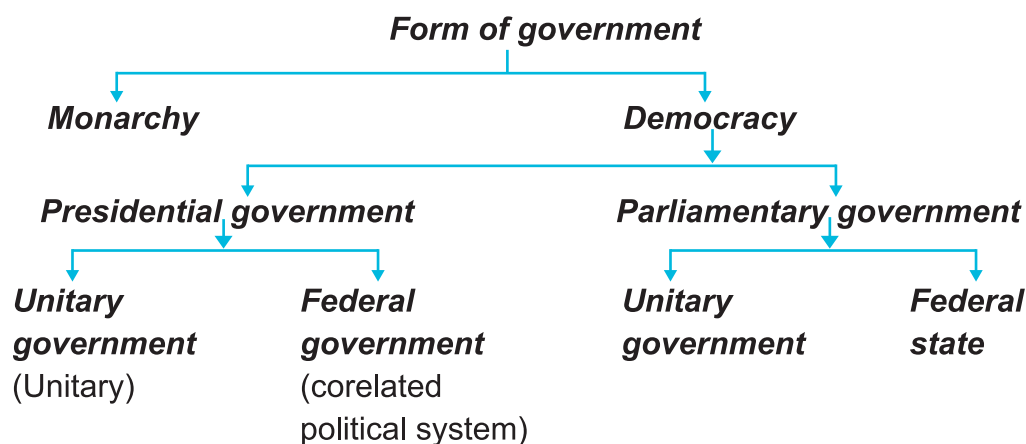
Who gives the power to the government to take decisions and implement laws? The answer to this question depends on what type of government is in that particular country. In democracy, Supreme power is vested in the people and is exercised directly by them or by their elected agents.

They elect their leaders by casting a vote. The elected leaders and representatives form the government. In a democracy, the government has to give clarifications and provide reasons for the decisions undertaken. The other form of government is the Monarchy'. In this type of government, the power to take decisions and run administration is in the hands of the king or queen. King discusses the matters with his group of advisors but the power to take the final decision lies with the King or Queen only.

The most important characteristic of democracy is that the sole power /power to rule is not in the hands of one person or a group of people. Every citizen is a member in the decision making process. People themselves are the creators of their destiny.

The word for democracy in Gujarati is 'Lokshahi'. Democratic government is for the people. It means the welfare of the people is the main aim of the government. Democracy is run by people as the representatives elected by the people run the administration.

Things to know



Your school must have been organizing elections for school Panchayat; similarly your class monitor also must have been elected. At times it happens that the monitor is not elected but selected directly. As a result, others who wanted to be the monitor feel discontented and express their disapproval.

Think

- *Would you prefer direct selection? Justify your answer.*

Activity

- *Organize election for School Panchayat. Make various departments and assign responsibilities.*
- 1. Who won the School Panchayat election? Make a list based on the votes received by the candidates.*
 - 2. What would you do to be the elected President of the school? How would you select the prefects of various committees to help in the administration of the school?*
 - 3. Prepare a list of duties to be assigned to the prefects.*
 - 4. What is the criteria to be considered while electing candidates? Write any three.*

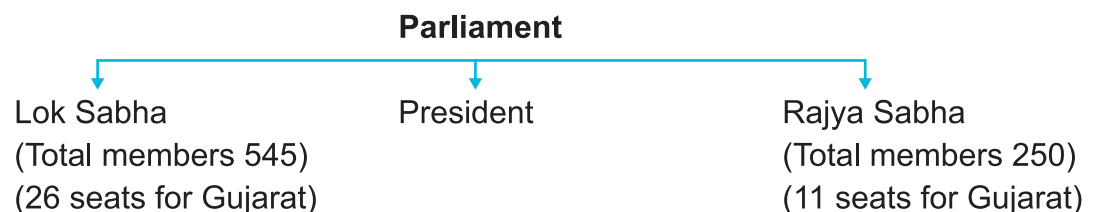
Like it is done in the School Panchayat, representatives are elected in a democratic government too. The leader of the party that wins the majority of seats becomes the Prime Minister and he selects members from the group of elected representatives to form the Council of Ministers. These ministers are assigned various departments and duties.

How is the Parliament formed?

Parliament

India has adopted 'Parliamentary form of Democracy.' The Parliament is the supreme institution in India. The Parliament of India consists of the President and the two houses - Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

The Lok Sabha is known as the 'Lower House' and the Rajya Sabha is known as the 'Upper House'.



The 'Indian Parliament' formed post-independence is the symbol of trust of the people of India. The main features of decision making in a Democracy are people's consent and their participation. In our system of governance, the parliament enjoys complete power since it comprises the elected representatives of the nation.

Parliament functions as stated below

1. To control the government and to provide information and guidance to it.
2. To make laws and make amendments in them.



8.1 The Parliament

Activity

- ***Make a list of the functions of the Parliament by collecting news related to the Parliament.***

How is Lok Sabha formed? (House of the People)

The election for the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha) are conducted in the same way. Lok Sabha elections are held every 5 years. Each constituency is represented by one elected member in the Parliament. The candidates who contest for the seat in Parliament are usually active in various political parties. The elected candidate is known as the Member of Parliament (M.P.). All these elected members collectively form the Lok Sabha.

Think

- ***What is the name of the Member of Parliament of your constituency?***
- ***What is the name of your parliamentary constituency?***

How is the Ruling Party formed?

After the elections of Lok Sabha, party-wise list of all the members of the Parliament is formed. From this list it becomes clear how many members from which political parties are there. If any party wants to form the government then there should be a majority of elected members from that party. After the elections, the leader of the party or a coalition of the parties which has a clear majority in the Parliament is appointed as the Prime Minister in the Lok Sabha. The Prime Minister of India is the head of the ruling party.

The Prime Minister selects ministers from the members of his party. In this way, the Council of Ministers is formed. The ministers with Prime Minister take all the decisions. These ministers take care of the responsibilities of the work related to their respective ministries such as health, education, finance, etc. Each minister is responsible for any question related to his ministry to the members of parliament.

Activity

- ***Make a list of the questions asked in the session of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha by watching the live telecast of its proceedings.***

Think

- ***Answer the questions given below after watching the live telecast***
 1. Who presides over the sessions of Lok Sabha / Rajya Sabha? Is there a need of a person to regulate and control the sessions? Why?
 2. To whom are the questions addressed?
 3. The questions are asked in which language?
 4. What is the facility provided to a Member of Parliament who does not understand the language of conversation in the session?
 5. What do you expect from the Member of Parliament of your area?

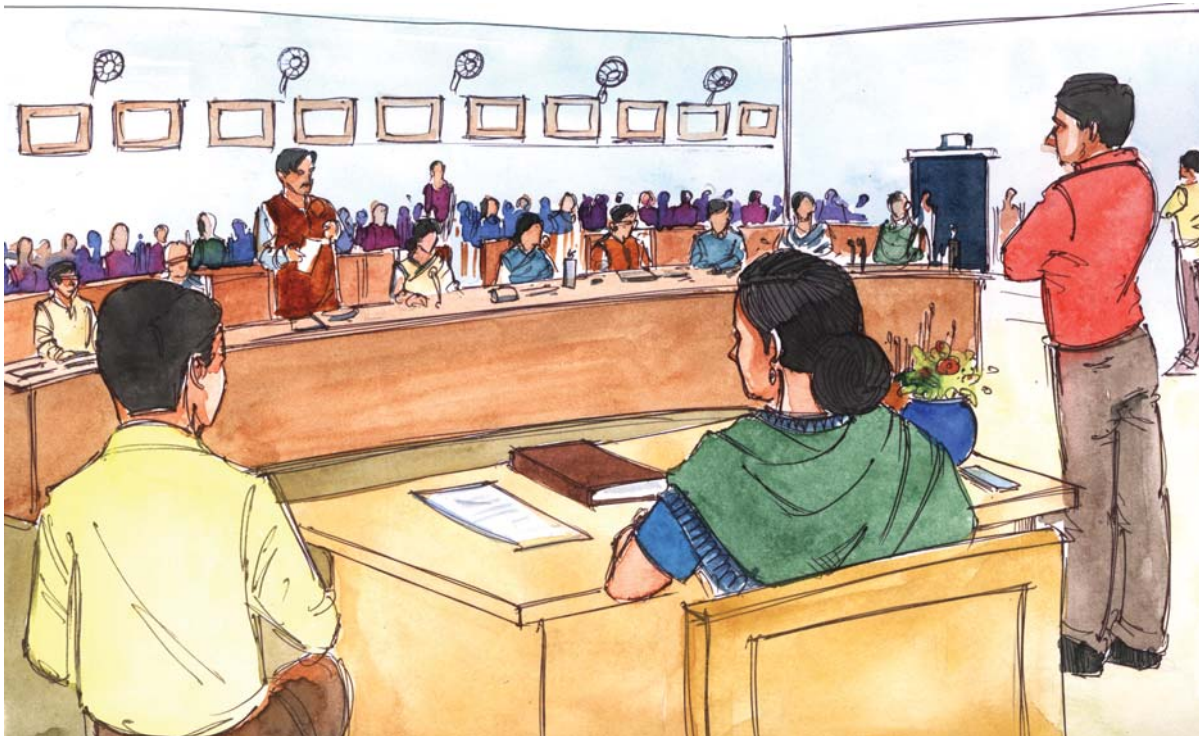
How is Rajya Sabha formed? (Upper House)

The elected Members of the Legislative Assembly of each state elect members for Rajya Sabha. There are 250 members in the Rajya Sabha. Out of them, 238 are elected. The remaining 12 members are nominated by the President of India. The Rajya Sabha is the Permanent House. It never gets dissolved completely. One-third of the members of Rajya Sabha retire every two years (after completing their six years term), and the new members are inducted.

The Rajya Sabha represents the states of our country. The Rajya Sabha also can propose a Bill. It is important to have the consent of the Rajya Sabha before passing any Bill. This house of Parliament reviews the Bill passed by the Lok Sabha. Thus, the role of Rajya Sabha is very important. The person who presides over the sessions of Rajya Sabha is known as the Chairman. The Vice-President of India acts as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

Think

1. Which are the two houses of the Parliament?
2. Mention the functions of the Lok Sabha.
3. What are the functions and powers of the Prime Minister?
4. Why is the Rajya Sabha never dissolved completely?
5. If you were a Member of the Parliament, what would you do for the people?
6. If you were the Prime Minister, what would you do for the welfare of people?



8.2 Question hour session in the Parliament

When the Parliament is in session, at the beginning of the day, the time for the Question Hour is decided upon. During the Question Hour, the members of Parliament ask questions to gather information on the working of the government. This is how the Parliament controls the Executive. Through the medium of questioning, members draw the attention of the government towards its loopholes. In this way the government comes to know about the views and opinions of the people through their representatives. It is an important responsibility of the members to question the government. The opposition party plays a major role in the effective administration of a democracy. It highlights the loopholes in the policies and the programmes of the government. The person who presides over the sessions in the Lok Sabha is known as the Speaker.

President is the most important and integral part of the Parliament. A Bill that is passed by both the houses can become a law only after his signature. He has the power to decide about the meetings of the Parliament and announces the completion of sessions too.

EXERCISES

Q.1 Answer the following questions

1. What do you mean by democracy? What is its main aim?
2. Which is the Lower House of the Parliament?
3. Mention the main functions of the Parliament.
4. What are the responsibilities of a Member of Parliament?
5. What does the government come to know during the question hour in the Parliament?
6. How does the opposition party play an important role in a democracy?
7. When does a bill become a Law?

Q.2 Fill in the blanks with appropriate words

- 1 Generally, the elections of Lok Sabha are held every years.
2. The Prime Minister is appointed by
3. works as the chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

Q.3 If you have any problems related to water, roads, electricity, etc. in your village, locality or Taluka, then whom would you approach with the matter and what would be your complaint?

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