



The Union Parliament

The Union Parliament consists of the President and two houses: the **Lok Sabha (House of the People)** and the **Rajya Sabha (Council of States)**. It is the supreme legislative body representing the people in a democratic government.

Federal Government of India

India has a **federal form of government** with powers divided between the **central and state governments**, both of which derive their authority from the Constitution.

Importance of the Federal System

- **Preservation of Unity:** Ensures national integrity; states cannot secede from the Union.
- **Cultural and Linguistic Autonomy:** Citizens can maintain their cultural and linguistic identities.
- **Division of Powers:** Administrative and legislative powers are distributed between the Union and the states.
- **State Representation:** The Rajya Sabha represents the states at the national level.
- **Financial Provisions:** Both the central and state governments are allocated adequate financial resources.

Unitary Features (Non-Federal Characteristics)

Despite being federal, India has several **unitary features**:

- **Strong Central Government:** The central government holds significant authority.
 - **Legislative Lists:**
 - **Union List:** 97 subjects (e.g., defense, finance) for the central government.
 - **State List:** 67 subjects (e.g., education, health) for state governments.
 - **Concurrent List:** 47 subjects (e.g., criminal law) where both governments can legislate; the Union's decision prevails in case of conflict.
 - **Single Constitution:** Both governments derive power from a single Constitution.
 - **Single Citizenship:** Indian citizens have one national identity.
 - **Union Territories:** Directly governed by the central government.
-

The Lok Sabha (House of the People)

The Lok Sabha is directly elected by the people and represents their interests.

Term and Composition

- **Term:** Five years, but it can be dissolved earlier by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.
- **Maximum Strength:** 552 members.
 - **State Representatives:** Up to 530.
 - **Union Territories:** Up to 20.
 - **Nominated Members:** The President may appoint two members from the Anglo-Indian community.
- **Seat Allocation:** Based on state population. For example, Uttar Pradesh sends 80 members, while Sikkim sends one.

Qualifications for Membership

A candidate must:

- Be a **citizen of India** and at least **25 years old**.
- Be listed on the electoral roll.
- Be financially solvent.
- Not hold an office of profit under the government.
- Be of sound mind and not a proclaimed criminal.

Disqualification and Vacation of Seats

A member may be disqualified if they:

- Hold an office of profit.
- Are declared of unsound mind.
- Become insolvent.
- Renounce Indian citizenship.
- Violate parliamentary laws.

Seats become vacant if a member:

- Resigns.
- Is absent for 60 consecutive days without permission.
- Is elected to a state legislature.

The Rajya Sabha (Council of States)

The Rajya Sabha represents the states and is a **permanent body** that cannot be dissolved.

Term and Composition

- **Term:** Six years; one-third of its members retire every two years.
- **Maximum Strength:** 250 members.
 - **Nominated Members:** 12 (distinguished in fields like education, sports, arts, and social service).
 - **Elected Members:** 238, chosen by state legislative assemblies.
- **Seat Allocation:** Based on state population (e.g., Uttar Pradesh has 31 seats, Mizoram has one).

Qualifications for Membership

A candidate must:

- Be a **citizen of India** and at least **30 years old**.
- Be listed on the electoral roll.
- Be financially solvent.
- Not hold an office of profit under the government.
- Be of sound mind and not a proclaimed criminal.

The **Vice President of India** serves as the **ex-officio Chairman** of the Rajya Sabha and votes only in the case of a tie. A **Deputy Chairman**, elected from among its members, performs the Chairman's duties in their absence.

Powers and Functions of the Parliament

Legislative Powers

- **Law-making Authority:** Both Houses can make laws on subjects listed in the Union List (e.g., defense, foreign affairs) and Concurrent List (e.g., criminal law). Union laws take precedence over state laws in case of conflict.
- **Residuary Powers:** Parliament can legislate on matters not included in any list.
- **Emergency Powers:** Parliament can legislate on subjects in the State List during emergencies or when the Rajya Sabha declares a subject of national importance.

Financial Powers

- **Budget Approval:** Both Houses must approve the Union Budget. The Rajya Sabha can only recommend amendments.
- **Money Bills:** Originate exclusively in the Lok Sabha; the Rajya Sabha has no power to amend or reject them.
- **Taxation and Expenditure:** No taxes can be levied or funds disbursed without Parliament's approval.

Executive Oversight

- **Question Hour:** Members question ministers on government policies and public issues.
- **No-Confidence Motion:** Exclusive to the Lok Sabha. If passed, the government must resign.
- **Adjournment Motion:** Used to discuss urgent public matters like natural disasters or riots.
- **Cut Motion:** Allows the Lok Sabha to reduce the proposed government expenditure.

Judicial Powers

- **Impeachment:** Parliament can impeach the President and remove judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts for misconduct.
- **Punitive Powers:** Can punish for contempt of Parliament.

Electoral Functions

- **Electing the President and Vice President:** Members of both Houses participate.
- **Speaker and Deputy Chairman:** Lok Sabha elects its Speaker, and the Rajya Sabha elects its Deputy Chairman.

Constitutional Amendments

- **Amendment Power:** Both Houses must pass constitutional amendments with a two-thirds majority.

Special Powers

- **Rajya Sabha:** Can enable Parliament to legislate on State List subjects and create new all-India services.
- **Lok Sabha:** Can introduce Money Bills and pass No-Confidence Motions.

Anti-Defection Law

The **Anti-Defection Law (1985)** prevents members from switching parties after elections. A member may be disqualified if they:

- Resign from their party or vote against party directives.
- Join a party after being elected as an independent.
- A nominated member is disqualified if they join a party after six months.

Differences between Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha

Lok Sabha

Rajya Sabha



House of the People	Council of States
Members elected directly	Members elected by state legislatures
Money bills originate here	Cannot introduce money bills
Speaker presides	Vice President presides
Represents the people	Represents the states
Holds greater powers	Limited powers compared to Lok Sabha