

parliamentary system

parliamentary system, democratic form of government in which the party (or a coalition of parties) with the greatest representation in the parliament (legislature) forms the government, its leader becoming prime minister or chancellor. Executive functions are exercised by members of the parliament appointed by the prime minister to the cabinet. The parties in the minority serve in opposition to the majority and have the duty to challenge it regularly. Prime ministers may be removed from power whenever they lose the confidence of a majority of the ruling party or of the parliament. The parliamentary system originated in Britain (*see* Parliament) and was adopted in several of its former colonies.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica This article was most recently revised and updated by Adam Augustyn.

Citation Information

Article Title: parliamentary system

Website Name: Encyclopaedia Britannica

Publisher: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

Date Published: 01 April 2019

URL: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/parliamentary-system>

Access Date: April 28, 2022

Features and Advantages of Parliamentary System in India

India has a parliamentary system of Government. Article 74 and Article 75 deal with the parliamentary system at the centre and Articles 163 and 164 deals with the states. There are multiple features of the Parliamentary system and various advantages over the Presidential system.

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CREATED ON: MAR 30, 2019 13:25 IST
MODIFIED ON: MAR 30, 2019 13:33 IST



Parliamentary System in India

The democratic system of government can be divided into the parliamentary and the presidential system based on the relationship between the executive and the legislature. In a parliamentary system, executive is a part of legislature, which implements the law and plays an active role in framing it as well.

In a parliamentary system, the head of the state may be a monarch or a president, but both of these positions are ceremonial. The head of the government, who is generally called as the Prime Minister, is the real head. Thus, all the real executive powers are vested in the Prime Minister.

The parliamentary government is also called as the Cabinet government due to concentration of executive powers in the cabinet. **Articles 74 and 75 deals with the parliamentary system at the centre and Article 163 and article 164 deals with the Parliamentary system at the states.**

Elements and Features of Parliamentary System are;

- 1. Nominal and Real Head:** The head of the state holds a ceremonial position and is the nominal executive. For example, the President.
- 2.** In India, the head of government is the Prime Minister who is the real executive. Article 75 of the Indian constitution provides for a Prime Minister to be appointed by the president. According to Article 74, the Prime Minister headed council of ministers would aid and advise the President in the exercise of his functions.

3.Executive is a Part of Legislature: The Executive forms a part of the legislature. In India, the person should be a member of parliament to become a member of the executive. However, the constitution provides that a person can be appointed as a minister for a period of not more than six consecutive months if he is not a member of the parliament, after which the person ceases to be a minister.

4. Majority Party Rule: The party which wins majority seats in the elections of the Lower House forms the government. In India, the President invites the leader of the majority party in Lok Sabha to form the government. The President appoints the leader as the Prime Minister and the other ministers are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. The President may invite a coalition of parties to form the government, in case, no party has got majority.

5. Collective Responsibility: The council of ministers are collectively responsible to the parliament. The lower house of parliament has an ability to dismiss a government by getting the no confidence motion passed in the house. In India, the government survives till the time it enjoys support of the majority of members in the Lok Sabha. Thus, Lok Sabha is empowered to introduce no-confidence motion against the government.

6.Prime Minister as the Centre of Power: In India, the Prime Minister is the real government, the council of ministers and the ruling government. Thus, he has to play a central role in the working of the government.

7. A Parliamentary Opposition: No government in the parliament can get hundred per cent support. A strong opposition plays an important role in checking the arbitrary use of authority by the government.

8. Independent Civil Service: The civil servants advise and implement decisions of the government. Civil servants hold permanent appointments based on merit-based selection process. They ensure continuity of employment even when the government changes. The civil service also ensures efficiency in execution of duties and responsibilities.

9. Bicameral Legislature: Most of the countries following parliamentary system, including India, have bicameral legislature. The members of the Lower House of all these countries are elected by the people. The Lower House can be dissolved, in case, the term of the government is over or there is no scope of government formation due to lack of majority in house. In India, the President can dissolve the Lok Sabha on recommendation of the Prime Minister.

10. Secrecy: The members of the executive in this system have to follow the principle of secrecy in matters such as proceedings, executive meetings, policymaking etc. In India, the ministers take oath of secrecy before entering their office.

Advantages of Parliamentary System

The parliamentary system has the following advantages over the presidential system:

1. Represents Diverse Group: The parliamentary form of government provides opportunity to various ethnically, racially, linguistically and ideologically diverse groups to share their views in framing of laws and policymaking. Countries, such as India, which have high level of diversity enables accommodation by providing political space to various diverse sections of the society.

2. Better Co-Ordination Between Legislature and Executive: The executive is a part of the legislature. As the government enjoys the support of majority of members in the lower house, the tendency of disputes and conflicts decreases. It makes easy for the government to pass the legislation in the parliament and implement them.

3. Prevents Authoritarianism: In a parliamentary system, the tendency of authoritarianism decreases as the power is vested in the council of minister rather than a single individual. The parliament can remove the government through no-confidence motion.

4. Responsible Government: The parliament can check the activities of the executive as the latter is responsible to the former. In a presidential system, the president is not responsible to the legislature. The members of the parliament can ask question, move resolutions, and discuss matters of public importance to pressurize the government. Such provisions are not available in Presidential system.

5. Availability of Alternate Government: The lower house of the parliament can introduce and pass a no-confidence motion. In such a situation, the head of the state invites the leader of the opposition party to form the government. In the United Kingdom, the opposition forms a shadow cabinet for the cabinet of the government, so that they can become ready for the role.