

Chapter – 03 Civic

Why Do We Need a Parliament

- Parliament enables citizens of India to participate in decision making and control the government, thus making it the most important symbol of Indian democracy and a key feature of the Constitution.
- **Why Should People Decide:**
 - (i) Under the colonial rule, the people did not criticise British government but the freedom movement changed this situation.
 - (ii) The Constitution in independent India laid down the principle of universal adult franchise i.e., that all adult citizens of the country have the right to vote.
- **People and their Representatives:**
 - (i) A democracy is the idea of consent, i.e., the desire, approval and participation of people.
 - (ii) The basic idea in democracy is that the individual or the citizen is the most important person and that in principle the government as well as other public institutions need to have the trust of these citizens.
 - (iii) The Parliament, which is made up of all representatives together, controls and guides the government.
- **The Role of the Parliament:**
 - (i) The Indian Parliament is an expression of the faith that the people in India have in the principles of democracy.
 - (ii) The Parliament in our system has immense powers because it is the representative of the people.
 - (iii) The Lok Sabha is elected once every five years. The country is divided into a number of these constituencies. Each of these constituencies elect one person to the parliament.
 - (iv) Once elected, the candidates become members of parliament or MPs. These MPs together make up the Parliament.
- **Parliament Performs the Following Functions:**
 - (i) The Parliament in India consists of the President, the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha.

- (ii) There are 543 elected plus 2 nominated members in Lok Sabha.
- (iii) The Prime Minister of India is the leader of the ruling party in the Lok Sabha.
- (iv) Coalition government is formed when one political party does not get simple majority. In such a condition, a group of different political parties come together to form a government.
- (v) The Rajya Sabha functions primarily as the representation of the states of India in the Parliament.
- (vi) It has an important role of reviewing and altering the laws initiated by the Lok Sabha.
- (vii) The members of the Rajya Sabha are elected by the elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of various states.
- (viii) In the Rajya Sabha there are 233 elected members plus 12 members nominated by the President.

- **To Control, Guide and Inform the Government:**

- (i) The Parliament, while in session, begins with a question hour.
- (ii) The question hour is an important mechanism through which an MP can elicit information about the working of the government.
- (iii) The Opposition parties play a crucial role in the healthy functioning of the democracy.
- (iv) The highlight drawbacks in various policies and programmes of the government and mobilise popular support for their own policies.
- (v) The government gets valuable feedback and is kept on its toes by the questions asked by the MPs.
- (vi) Law-making is a significant function of the parliament.

- **Who are the People in Parliament:**

- (i) The Parliament has more and more people from different backgrounds.
- (ii) There has been an increase in political participation from the Dalit and backward castes and the minorities.
- (iii) Some seats are reserved in the Parliament for SCs and STs.
- (iv) It has recently been suggested that there should be reservation of seats for women.