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Shakti utthan Ashram Lakhisarai

Class:9th Subject political science

Study Material

Ch:4 Working Institutions

How is a Major Policy Decision Taken?

A Government Order

On August 13, 1990, the Government of India issued an Order which was called an Office Memorandum. The order says that other than SC and ST the 27% job reservation benefit will be given to a new third category called Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC). Only persons who belong to backward classes were eligible for this quota.

The Decision Makers

Who decided to issue this Memorandum? Such a major decision would have involved other major functionaries in India, which involves the following points:

The President is the head of the state and is the highest formal authority in India.

The Prime Minister is the head of the government and takes most of the decisions in the Cabinet meetings.

Parliament consists of the President and two Houses, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The Prime Minister must have the support of a majority of Lok Sabha members to pass a memorandum.

When the Office Memorandum was passed in India, it was a hot debate issue. Some felt that this was unfair as it would deny equality of opportunity to those who did not belong to backward communities. While others felt that this would give a fair opportunity to those communities

who so far had not adequately been represented in government employment. This dispute was finally resolved by the Supreme Court of India by hearing all the cases. This case was known as the 'Indira Sawhney and others Vs Union of India case'. The Supreme Court judges in 1992 declared that this order of the Government of India was valid. Thus, the dispute came to an end and this policy has been followed since then.

Need for Political Institutions

Several arrangements are made in modern democracies which are called Institutions. Democracy works well when these institutions perform functions assigned to them.

Institutions involve meetings, committees and routines. This often leads to delays and complications.

Some of the delays and complications introduced by institutions are very useful as they provide an

opportunity for a wider set of people to be consulted.

Institutions make it difficult to have a good decision taken very quickly. But, they also make it equally difficult to rush through a bad decision.

Parliament

Decisions are not directly taken in Parliament. But Parliamentary discussions on the Report influence and shape the decision of the government. These discussions bring pressure on the government to act. If Parliament is not in favour of the decision, then the Government can not go ahead and can not implement the decision.

Why Do We Need Parliament

An assembly of elected representatives is called Parliament which exercises supreme political authority on behalf of the people. At the state level, this is called the Legislature or Legislative Assembly. The name may vary in different countries, but such an assembly exists in every democracy.

Parliament exercises political authority on behalf of the people in many ways as listed below:

Parliament is the final authority for making laws in any country.

Those who run the government can take decisions only when they get the support of Parliament.

Parliaments control all the money that governments have.

Parliament is the highest forum of discussion and debate on public issues and national policy in any country.

Two Houses of Parliament

Most large countries divide the role and powers of Parliament into two parts which are called Chambers or Houses.

One House is usually directly elected by the people and exercises the real power on behalf of the people.

The Second House is usually elected indirectly and performs some special functions. The most common work for the second House is to look after the interests of various states, regions or federal units.

In India, Parliament consists of 2 Houses. The two Houses are known as:

The Council of States (Rajya Sabha)

The House of the People (Lok Sabha)

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