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Ch: WORKING INSTITUTION

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.

1. Institutions involve meetings, committees and routines. This often leads to delays and complications.
2. 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.
3. 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:

1. Parliament is the final authority for making laws in any country.
2. Those who run the government can take decisions only when they get the support of Parliament.
3. Parliaments control all the money that governments have.
4. 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**.

1. One House is usually directly elected by the people and exercises the real power on behalf of the people.
2. 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:

1. The **Council of States (Rajya Sabha)**
2. The **House of the People (Lok Sabha)**

The **President** of India is a part of Parliament, although he/she is not a member of either House. All laws made in the Houses come into force only after receiving the assent of the President.

Indian Constitution does give the Rajya Sabha some special powers over the states. But on most matters, the Lok Sabha exercises supreme power. Here are some points that illustrate this:

1. Any ordinary law needs to be passed by both the Houses. But if there is a difference between the two Houses, the final decision is taken in a joint session in which members of both the Houses sit together. The view of the Lok Sabha is likely to prevail in such a meeting since there are a lot many members of the Lok Sabha.
2. Lok Sabha exercises more powers in money matters.
3. Lok Sabha controls the Council of Ministers.

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