

# Parliamentary Vs Presidential system (Debate in India)



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# Parliamentary form of government



**Parliamentary government** is a democratic form of government in which the political party that wins the most seats in the legislature or **parliament** during the federal election forms the government. This majority party will choose a leader to be the **Prime Minister** or *Chancellor*, and other high-ranking members of the party make up the cabinet. The minority party forms the opposition, and its job is to challenge the majority party. If no party is able to win a majority in the election, a coalition government will be formed with a few political parties cooperating together.

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It's called 'parliamentary government' because all of the power is vested in the parliament. In a presidential system like the United States, the executive branch is separate, and the president is popularly elected by the citizens of the nation. In a parliamentary system, the head of the government is chosen from the parliament, and is often one of the most senior members or ministers in parliament, which is where we get the term 'Prime Minister'. Often in a parliamentary system, the country will have a *Head of State*, who is a ceremonial figure like the Queen, but does not engage in legislating or politics.

# Features of Parliamentary Government



## **Nominal or Titular Head:**

In a Parliamentary form of government, there two heads, namely, nominal and real. The nominal head is one who, though head of the state, is not head of government. His powers are more apparent than real. He may be hereditary or elected.

## **Collective Responsibility and Individual Responsibility:**

The C Ministers is collectively responsible to the lower house of the legislature. It policy decisions collectively and it collectively goes out of office when it loses thee of the lower house of the legislature

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**Political Homogeneity:**

The ministers, normally being members of political party, share the same ideology and approach. Even when there is a c government, the ministers are committed to a common minimum programs.

**Harmony between Executive and Legislature:**

In a Parliamentary government the ministers are drawn from the legislature. As ministers, they are part of the executive. They also remain members of the legislature. Thus the dual identity of ministers con to a harmonious relationship between the executive and the legislature.

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**Rigidity of Party Discipline:**

In a Parliamentary government, the party discipline is rigid. The members of a political party whether in power or in opposition are required to defend and support the stand of their party on any issue both in the legislature and outside.

# Usefulness of Parliamentary form of Government



The following are some of the advantages or merits of the

## **Parliamentary system of government:**

- The Parliamentary form of government is marked by cooperation between the legislature and the executive. Accordingly, the cabinet can get its measures passed promptly by the legislature.
- This form of government cannot become autocratic. Since ministers are responsible to the legislature, they are answerable to the legislature for their actions.
- It provides an alternative government. In case the majority party loses its majority in the legislature, the opposition party may form the government. But it must prove its majority in the legislature.

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- A Parliamentary form of government has the advantage of flexibility. People can easily change the government and sometimes they may choose a leader to meet a particular emergency. During the Second World War, Churchill replaced Chamberlain as Prime Minister in England without any difficulty.



# Problems of Parliamentary form of Government



- Some of the disadvantages or demerits of Parliamentary form of government are listed below:
- It violates the theory of separation of powers and leads to the concentration of legislative and executive powers in the hands of the cabinet. This may result in tyranny. Sometimes, it is described as cabinet dictatorship.
- In the Parliamentary form of government, the executive takes part in law-making and the legislature sometimes interferes excessively and unnecessarily in administrative matters. This may result in confusion as well as inefficiency of both the legislature and the executive.
- When no party is in a position to get clear majority, coalition government comes into being. Its existence generally is short and at the same time it may not be efficient.

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- Parliamentary government is criticized as a government by amateurs. The ministers' lack of knowledge of the portfolios they hold make them heavily dependent on the civil servants. Such a government becomes a bureaucratic government in practice.
- The Parliamentary form of government tends to become election centric. Each political party only aims at winning elections. They manipulate the voters which lead to what is popularly known as “vote bank politics.”

# Parliamentary form of governance in India



India, also known as Bharat, is a Union of States. It is a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic with a parliamentary system of government. The Republic is governed in terms of the Constitution of India which was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1949 and came into force on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1950. The Constitution provides for a Parliamentary form of government which is federal in structure with certain unitary features. The constitutional head of the Executive of the Union is the President. As per Article 79 of the Constitution of India, the council of the Parliament of the Union consists of the President and two Houses known as the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and the House of the People (Lok Sabha). Article 74(1) of the Constitution provides that there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister as its head to aid and advise the President, who shall exercise his/her functions in accordance to the advice. The real executive power is thus vested in the Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister as its head.<sup>5</sup>

# Presidential form of governance



## ***Meaning of Presidential Government:***

According to Dr. Garner, “Presidential Government is that system in which the executive(including both the Head of the State and his ministers) is constitutionally independent of the legislature in respect to the duration of his or their tenure and irresponsible to it for his or their political policies.

In such a system the chief of the state is not merely the titular executive but he is real executive and actually exercises the powers which the constitution and laws confer upon him”.

In this system the President enjoys real powers of the government. He is not responsible to the legislature for his administration and policies.

**Features or characteristics of Presidential type of government and its distinction from the parliamentary government**



- There is a separation of powers in the Presidential government. In this system the executive and legislature are separate from each other and they have equal status. But in a Parliamentary Government, there is no separation of powers. In this system the executive is under the legislature.
- In a Presidential government, the President is the Head of the State as well as of the government while in a Parliamentary government, the Head of the State is President, King or Governor-General and the Prime Minister is the Head of the government.

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- In a Presidential government, the President enjoys real powers of the administration and he exercises all those powers, which are given to him under the constitution and the law. In a Presidential government there is no Prime Minister. The secretaries help the president in the administration and they are appointed by him on the basis of ability. It depends upon the will of the president to accept or reject their advice. In a parliamentary government, though constitutionally the Head of the State (President, King or Governor-General) has many powers, yet in practice these powers are enjoyed by his ministers. Thus, in practice the President has only nominal powers and real powers lie with the Prime Minister or his ministers.

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- In a Presidential government the President and his secretaries are not responsible to the legislature. The legislature cannot remove them through a vote of no-confidence. Moreover, an adjournment motion or a censure motion cannot be brought against them. The President and his secretaries are not the members of legislature and they do not attend its sessions. Thus, they cannot be asked questions and supplementary questions. In a Parliamentary government the Prime Minister and other ministers are the members of either House of the Parliament and any-one who is not the member of the Parliament, he or she has to seek the membership within a specified period of time. They attend the sessions of the Parliament and answer the questions and supplementary questions. They place bills before the parliament and make statements relating to policies. A vote of no confidence, adjournment motion and censure motion can be brought against them.

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- In a Parliamentary government only the President, King, or Governor-General make a speech at the time of the inauguration of the Parliament. They are neither members of the House nor do they take part in its deliberation. The Head of the State is not responsible to the Parliament.
- In a Presidential government, the President is elected for a fixed tenure and except impeachment for the violation of the constitution; he cannot be removed from his office before the expiry of his term. In a parliamentary government, though similar is the position of the President, yet the Prime Minister can be removed only through a vote of no-confidence by the Parliament?



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## **Merits:**

- **Stability and Continuity**
- **People's President**
- **More Efficient**
- **Prompt and Bold Decisions**
- **Best suited to Deal with Emergencies**
- **More Suitable for Multi-Party System**
- **Symbol of National Unity and Integrity**

## **Demerits:**

- **Dictatorial**
- **Absence of Accountability**
- **Rigidity**

## Difference between presidential form of governance and parliamentary form of governance

The major difference between these two systems is that in a Presidential system, the executive leader, the President, is directly voted upon by the people (Or via a body elected specifically for the purpose of electing the president, and no other purpose), and the executive leader of the Parliamentary system, the Prime Minister, is elected from the legislative branch directly.

In the Presidential System, it is more difficult to enact legislation, especially in the event that the President has different views than the legislative body. The President only responds to the people, the legislative branch can't really do anything to threaten the President. As a result, he can make it more difficult for the legislative body to do anything.

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In the Parliamentary system, if the Parliament doesn't like the Prime Minister, they can cast a vote of no confidence and replace him. This tends to make the executive leader subservient to the Parliament. Bottom line is, if you believe that government should have more checks and balances, then a Presidential system will give you that. If you believe that it should have the power to enact laws quickly, then you should go for a Parliamentary system.

# Conclusion



- Constitution of India provides for a Parliamentary form of government. While doing so it follows the British model of government. In fact, the type of government that functioned in India before 1947 was very much similar to the British model of parliamentary government. Therefore, the members of the Constituent Assembly decided to adopt this form of government for independent India. The Constitution of India provides for the constitution of parliamentary government both at the center and the states. India as a nation is deeply divided into several groups with conflicting interests. In this situation switching to presidential form of government can be counter-productive. True, parliamentary form of government makes decision making process a lengthy one in India but it manages to keep the political integrity intact. At least, it doesn't curtail the freedom of people. In presidential form of government, the president can start behaving like an autocrat by imposing his decisions on masses. Moreover, the nation is in no mood for any new experiment which could pose any danger to its unity.

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India uses to the parliamentary system of government since British Raj. Switching to presidential form of government will add only confusion. At least all the varied groups are getting representation in parliamentary form of government. Therefore, India should continue with the parliamentary form of government.



**Thank you!!!**