

## What Makes India a Democracy?

India became independent on 15 August 1947 after a long freedom struggle involving people from all backgrounds. During colonial rule, people were afraid of questioning the British government. But during the national movement, leaders began demanding the right to elect representatives and participate in decision-making.


 **Universal Adult Franchise** – The right of every adult citizen to vote, regardless of caste, class, gender, or religion.

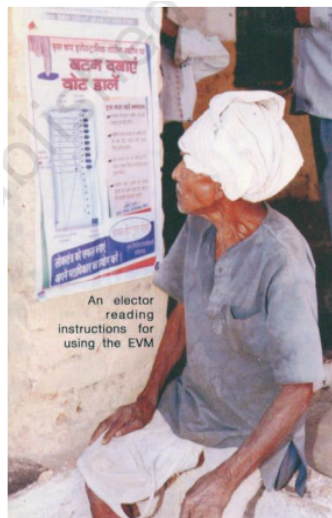
The Indian Constitution turned these democratic dreams into reality. It gave the people of India the power to elect representatives and make the government answerable to them.

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## Why Should People Decide?

In a democracy, government works with the approval of the people. The best way to show approval is through elections. People vote to choose their representatives, who then form the government. These representatives sit in the Parliament.

 **Parliament** – The national law-making body of India, made up of elected representatives.



 *Fig. – People using Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)*



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## People and Their Representatives

In India, citizens do not make laws directly — they elect representatives who do this on their behalf. This is called a representative democracy.

 **Representative Democracy** – A system where people elect leaders to make decisions on their behalf.

 **Constituency** – A specific area from which a candidate is elected to the Parliament or State Assembly.

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## The Role of Parliament

The Indian Parliament has three main functions:

### 1 To Select the National Government

After elections, the party (or alliance) with a majority (272+ seats out of 543 in Lok Sabha) forms the government.

 **Lok Sabha** – House of the People, elected by citizens

 **Rajya Sabha** – Council of States, elected by MLAs

The President, Rajya Sabha, and Lok Sabha together form the Parliament.

The Prime Minister is the leader of the majority party in the Lok Sabha.

The Prime Minister selects ministers to handle areas like health, education, and finance.

 **Coalition Government** – When no single party gets a majority, several parties join together to form the government.



Fig. – Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha structure

## 2 To Control, Guide and Inform the Government

Parliament controls the government by:

- Asking questions during Question Hour
- Approving the budget and laws
- Reviewing government performance
- Raising public concerns

**Question Hour** – A time in Parliament when MPs can question ministers about government work.

The Opposition plays a key role by pointing out issues and suggesting improvements.


**Opposition** – The largest party or parties in Parliament not part of the ruling coalition.

## 3 To Make Laws

One of Parliament's most important roles is to create new laws. This happens through debates, discussions, and drafts.

**Example: The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005)**



 Fig. – Press conference, public meetings, online petitions

### Steps in making a law:

- Raise the need for a law
- Draft a bill
- Debate and revise in committees
- Pass in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha
- Get approval from the President

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## How New Laws Are Made – A Real Story

- ◆ In the 1990s, many women shared their stories of abuse.
- ◆ Women's groups proposed a new law to protect women at home.
- ◆ Lawyers and activists drafted a bill.
- ◆ Parliament discussed, revised, and passed the bill.
- ◆ In 2006, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act became law.

 Domestic Violence – Physical, emotional, verbal, or financial abuse within a home.

 Civil Law – A law that offers protection and rights, not criminal punishment.

This law allows women to:

- Stay in the shared household
- Get protection from further abuse
- Seek temporary custody of children
- Get monetary support for medical and living costs

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## Unpopular and Controversial Laws

Sometimes, Parliament passes laws that are legal but not accepted by the people.

📖 **Example – Municipal laws that ban hawking make street vendors’ jobs illegal. But vendors provide affordable services, so such laws are often protested.**



📷 *Fig. – Posters, campaigns, public rallies*

📖 **People can protest through:**

- Public meetings
- Media coverage
- Legal petitions
- Online campaigns

📖 **Repressive Law – A law that limits people’s freedom or treats them unfairly.**

📖 **Sedition – A colonial-era law used to arrest people for criticizing the government. Seen as arbitrary and unjust.**

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## 🧠 **Our Role as Citizens**

**Democracy doesn’t end with voting. Citizens must:**

- Stay informed
- Question their representatives
- Join campaigns
- Support just laws and oppose unfair ones

📖 **Approval – Citizens’ trust and support are needed for laws to work. Parliament must continue to earn that trust.**

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## 📖 **Important Terms**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Parliament</b>	<b>Elected body that makes laws</b>
<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Area from which a representative is elected</b>
<b>Lok Sabha</b>	<b>House of the People (lower house)</b>
<b>Rajya Sabha</b>	<b>Council of States (upper house)</b>
<b>Coalition</b>	<b>Alliance of parties to form government</b>
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	<b>Harm caused to women in homes</b>
<b>Repressive Law</b>	<b>A law that controls or limits rights</b>
<b>Sedition</b>	<b>Law against anti-government speech (from colonial times)</b>
<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Parties not in power that question the government</b>