

OTHER FUNCTIONS OF RAJYA SABHA

MODULE 4

METHOD OF ELECTION

- **II. Method of Election:**
- The members of the Rajya Sabha are elected indirectly by the people. The people of each state elect the members of their state legislative assembly who then elect the members of Rajya Sabha by a method of proportional representation—single transferable vote system. Each State Legislative Assembly elects as many representatives as have been allocated to it by the Constitution. Odisha Legislative Assembly has 147 MLAs who together elect 12 members of Rajya Sabha.

TENURE AND SESSIONS

- **IV. Tenure:**
- The Rajya Sabha is a quasi-permanent House. It is not subject to dissolution as a whole. One third of its members retire after every two years and elections are held only for the vacant seats. The tenure of each member of the Rajya Sabha is six years.
- **V. Sessions:**
- The President convenes the sessions of the Rajya Sabha usually along with the sessions of the Lok Sabha or whenever he feels it necessary. However, there cannot be a gap of more than six months within the two sessions of the Rajya Sabha. The President can call a special session of Rajya Sabha for getting approved an emergency declaration at a time when Lok Sabha stands dissolved.
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- **VI. Quorum for the Meetings of Rajya Sabha:**
- The quorum for the meetings of Rajya Sabha is 1/10th of its members. It means that at least 1/10th of the members of the Rajya Sabha must be present for carrying out the work of the House.
- **VII. Privileges of Members:**
- The members of the Rajya Sabha enjoy several privileges. They enjoy unrestricted freedom to express their views in the House. No action can be taken against them for anything said by them in the House. They cannot be arrested for any civil offence during, and 40 days before and after the session of the Rajya Sabha. For protecting the privileges of the members of the House, the Committee on Privileges has been in existence since the inception of the Rajya Sabha.

CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

- **VIII. Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha:**
- The Vice-President of India is the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. He is not a member of the House. However, he presides over its meetings and conducts its proceedings. During the absence of the Vice-President, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha presides over the meetings. The Deputy Chairman is elected by the Rajya Sabha MPs from amongst themselves.
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POSITION

- **Position of the Rajya Sabha:**
- A study of the powers of the Rajya Sabha leads us to the conclusion that it is neither a very weak house like the British House of Lords nor a very powerful house as the American Senate. Its position is somewhat mid-way between the two. It has been less powerful than Lok Sabha but it has been not a very weak or insignificant House. Since 1950, the Rajya Sabha has been using its powers and functions in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and performing its due role as the second House of Union Parliament.
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