

# How a State Government Works



## WHO IS AN MLA?

India has twenty eight states and each state has a Legislative Assembly. On August 5, 2019, the government bifurcated the state of J & K into 2 Union Territories, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. Thus now, there are 28 states and 9 Union Territories. Three union territories now have Legislative Assemblies – Delhi, Puducherry and J & K. Each state is divided into different territorial

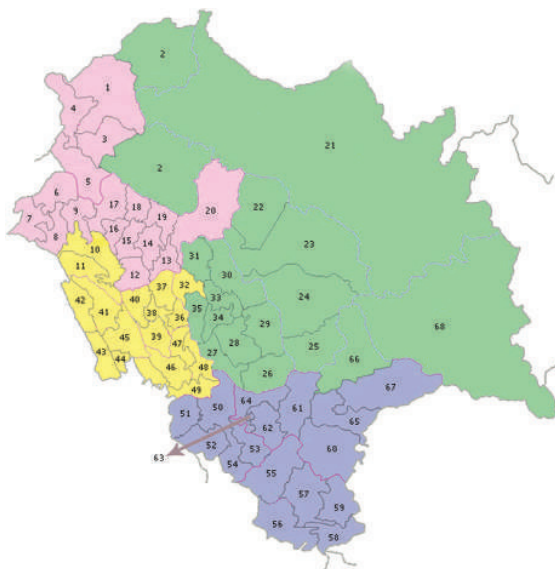
units or constituencies. One representative is elected from each constituency and becomes a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Candidates who stand and get elected in an Assembly election are from different political parties.

How is a government formed in a state? Elected MLAs belong to different political parties. If more than half of the elected MLAs belong to a single party, the party is said to be in majority. The leader of the majority party is appointed by the Governor as the Chief Minister of the state. He submits a list of Council of Ministers to the Governor. The ministers are also appointed by the Governor. Except the majority party which forms the government, other parties are called opposition parties.

Let us study the case of Himachal Pradesh in the Assembly election of 2007. Himachal Pradesh (H.P.) had 68 constituencies in the Assembly elections of 2007.

From each of these constituencies many candidates stood for the elections, out of which only one candidate who secured the maximum number of votes won.

Let's view the results of the elections to the



Assembly Constituencies of Himachal Pradesh

Legislative Assembly of Himachal Pradesh in 2007.

Political Party	No. of MLAs elected
Indian National Congress (INC)	23
Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	42
Other Political Parties	01
Independents (Who do not belong to any party)	02
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>

In order to gain majority in the elections a political party needed to win more than 34 seats. So from the electoral results we find that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was the only political party which had won more than 34 seats. It had 42 MLAs elected by the public. Hence, it formed the ruling party. As the Indian National Congress (INC) was the next largest party with 23 MLAs, it was the main opposition party. There were other parties in the opposition including those who had been elected as independent candidates. The MLAs of the majority party, the BJP, elected Mr. Prem Kumar Dhumal as their leader. He was appointed Chief Minister by the Governor. He gave a list of those MLAs to the Governor whom he wanted to become ministers. The Governor appointed those MLAs as ministers.

Sometimes, none of the political parties is able to win a majority of seats. In such a case, it obtains support of one or more than one party. They combine to form the majority in the House. A government thus formed is called a **coalition** government.

Let us now follow the sequence of how a party forms a government at the state level.

Candidates belonging to different political parties are issued tickets to represent their party and they file nominations from different constituencies. During the election campaign these candidates convince the people living in their respective constituencies to vote for them

so that they may be able to represent them in the state assembly. Once the results are declared, the party that gets the majority of MLAs, elects the leader who is appointed the Chief Minister of that particular state. The leader of the majority party only is invited to form the government.

The Chief Minister then prepares a list of experienced and capable MLAs to be appointed as ministers. On the suggestion and advice of the Chief Minister, the Governor appoints ministers. The Governor administers the oath of office to the Chief Minister and his council of ministers.

It is the duty of the Chief Minister and his ministers to run the state in the most efficient manner. They sit in the Legislative Assembly. A Legislative Assembly is a place where all the MLAs, whether from the ruling party or in the opposition, discuss various matters. The MLAs who also hold the position of ministers have to look after both their constituency as well as the state as a whole. A minister heads a department of government called Ministry. For example, education minister looks after education department; finance minister looks after the financial affairs of the state. The health minister looks after hospitals and health of the people. Sometimes, when the results of the Assembly elections are declared, no party attains an absolute majority, that is more than half of the total number of MLAs. In that case, a group of parties combine together to form the government. This is called a **coalition** government.

Just as we have the President, the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers at the Centre, a state has a **Governor, the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers**.

The head of the state is the Governor. She/he is appointed by the President to ensure that the state government works according to the provisions of the Constitution.

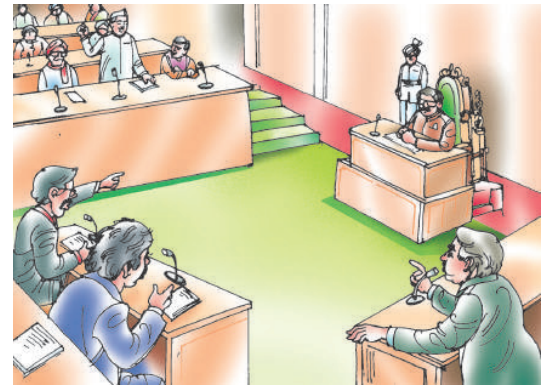
## WORKING OF THE LEGISLATURE

The Governor summons the Assembly and addresses its first meeting every year. During a session, the MLAs discuss various issues and



States of India

In order to understand the working of the government at the state level, let us visualise a session in the Legislative Assembly. There are six MLAs who are taking active part in the discussion. The others are just listeners to the whole conversation.



A debate in progress inside an Assembly

**MLA 1.** There have been as many as 15 deaths in my constituency of Shastri Nagar. These deaths have been due to diarrhoea. I draw the attention of the minister in charge of health as to what is being done to control the situation.

**MLA 2.** I ask the health minister why the situation in government hospitals is so bad. Why is the government not appointing medical staff? I would also like to know what the government is planning to control this epidemic?

problems of the state. An MLA raises concerns about his own constituency. When a bill is passed by the Assembly it is sent to the Governor for his assent. No bill can become an act or a law without the Governor's assent.

## INFOBITS

- ▶ A State Legislature has two houses known as State Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha or Lower House) and State Legislative Council (Vidhan Parishad or Upper House).
- ▶ The Sarkaria Commission was set up to review balance of power between the state governments and the union government.
- ▶ The union government can dissolve a state government in favour of President's rule if required.
- ▶ State executive consists of the Governor, Chief Minister and his council of ministers.



Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly), Karnataka

**MLA 3.** In my constituency of Civil Lines, there is extreme shortage of water supply. What measures have been taken?

**MLA 4.** In my opinion, my member friends are blowing up the problems out of proportion. The government has pressed water tankers into service to supply water twice. As for the case of diarrhoea, ORS packets have been distributed in the affected areas and several teams of doctors have also been sent. A mobile clinic has also been pressed into service.

**MLA 5.** We have not been able to assess the situation properly. I think the condition is going from bad to worse. Most doctors and staff are on leave. It is difficult to get the ORS packets delivered to the families in the area.

**MLA 6.** I think the members of the opposition are unnecessarily blaming the government. The



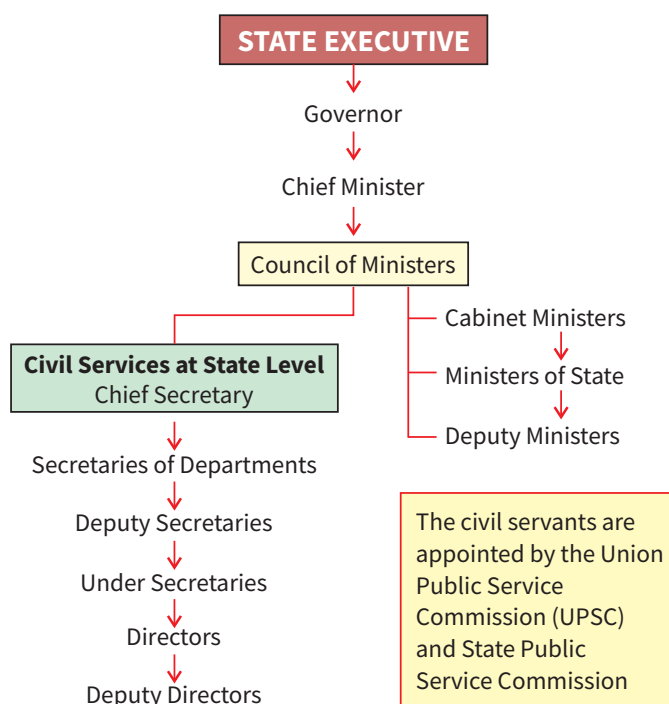
People organise meetings to voice their opinions and protest against policies of government.

previous government, it is sad to say, did not give enough attention to health and sanitation. We are now cleaning up the garbage that was left by the previous government.

Thus we find that the opposition MLAs are blaming the health minister. He is blaming the previous government for the outbreak of diarrhoea.

### WORKING OF THE GOVERNMENT

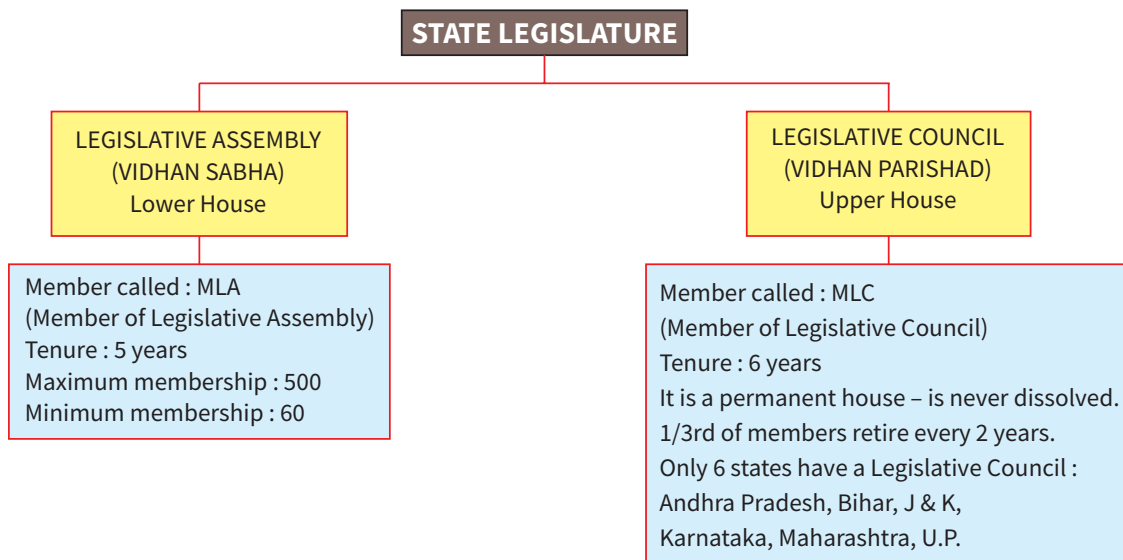
The media are an important section of the society and play a crucial part in the functioning of



a government. During press conferences, reporters ask the responsible minister as to what is being done about certain problems. The media play an important role in the formation of public opinion.

After the heated debate in the Assembly, the Health Minister called a press conference. Large numbers of reporters and editors from newspapers and T.V. channels were present. The minister explained the reason for the outbreak of the disease and steps being taken by the government. He also explained the measures being taken to augment the water supply. The reporters asked several questions one-by-one to clarify certain points. The minister tried to put the blame on the previous government. He was supported by his secretary who also explained certain points. Next day, all prominent dailies and T.V. channels reported the press conference.

After a few days the Chief Minister, along with the Health Minister and the local MLA, visited the affected area. He promised to soon set up a committee to examine the problem. The committee would report within a month. The government would take necessary steps as per the recommendations of the committee.



The Chief Minister is answerable to the public. It is his duty to keep people happy and healthy in his state. The Chief Minister monitors the functioning through various departments like the Public Works Department, Health Department,

Agriculture Department, Education Department, etc.

The minister in-charge of the department is answerable to the Chief Minister for all activities related to his department.

### POINTS TO REMEMBER

- In a democracy, actually the people indirectly govern themselves. It is the people who elect their representatives (MLAs), who go on to form a government and elect a Chief Minister. The Chief Minister then appoints ministers for various departments like health, education, agriculture, etc. Laws are made in the Legislative Assembly with the consent of a majority of members.
- The party which wins a majority of seats in the Legislative Assembly forms the government. The MLAs elect their leader who is appointed Chief Minister by the Governor.
- The Governor of a state is appointed by the President. He is the nominal head of the state.
- The media play a vital role in making or breaking the image of a ruling party. The media are very strong and can influence the people of a state one way or the other.

### GLOSSARY

- CONSTITUENCY** : A particular area in which all the voters choose their representatives. The representative can be an M.P., an M.L.A. or a Ward Councillor.
- LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY** : A place where MLAs gather to deal with the problems of the state and make laws for the state.
- MAJORITY** : This is a situation when more than half the total members of a group or party supports an idea or a decision or a policy.
- OPPOSITION** : The elected representatives who are not members of the ruling party. They question the government's decision and actions.
- PRESS CONFERENCE** : A gathering of journalists from the media who are invited to hear and raise questions related to an issue or policy or an act of great public interest.
- RULING PARTY** : The party that is ruling at the centre or in a state. It is a party that has been voted to power.

## TIME TO LEARN

### A. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

- Who appoints the Chief Minister of a state?
  - The MLAs of the majority party after an election to the Legislative Assembly.
  - The Governor.
  - The President of India.
  - The Chief Justice of the concerned High Court.
- Who is appointed the Chief Minister of a state?
  - Leader of opposition
  - Senior most leader of the majority party
  - Leader of the majority party
  - State president of the majority party
- Who appoints the ministers of a state in India?
  - Governor
  - Chief Justice of the High Court
  - Chief Minister
  - All the elected MLAs collectively
- Who is regarded as the head of the state?
  - Chief Minister
  - Governor
  - Chief Secretary
  - Chief Justice of the particular High Court
- No bill passed by a state legislature can become an Act or a law without the signature of the  
  - Chief Minister
  - Governor
  - Speaker of the Vidhan Sabha
  - Chief Justice of the concerned High Court
- In which of the following cases a coalition government is formed?
  - When no single party is able to muster a majority in the Legislative Assembly.
  - When there is no opposition party in a Legislative Assembly.
  - Whenever the Governor desires to form a coalition government.
  - None of the above

### B. Write 'true' or 'false' against each of the following sentences

- All executive powers of a state are vested in the Governor. \_\_\_\_\_
- The Chief Minister is the leader of the house. \_\_\_\_\_
- The ministers are appointed by the Chief Minister. \_\_\_\_\_
- All states of India have Legislative Councils. \_\_\_\_\_
- A debate in the Assembly is totally unnecessary. \_\_\_\_\_
- A Governor is elected by the people of the state. \_\_\_\_\_

### C. Very short answer type questions

- Who is an MLA?
- How is an MLA elected?
- What is the tenure of a Legislative Assembly?
- Who appoints MLAs as ministers?

### D. Short answer type questions

- How do some MLAs become ministers?
- Is the Chief Minister also an MLA?
- Why should decisions taken by the ministers be debated in the Assembly?
- How is a state government formed?
- What is a coalition government?

6. What were the arguments by the MLAs who thought the Government was not dealing efficiently with the health problems? [HOTS]

**E. Long answer type questions**

1. How is a coalition government formed?
2. Describe the working of a Legislative Assembly.
3. Describe the functions of a Chief Minister.

**F. Project**

Prepare a project report on the Legislative Assembly of your state.

- Mention the date of establishment, total number of MLAs, Speakers, tenures, Chief Ministers, various ruling parties.
- Mention important bills passed by the Legislative Assembly.
- Paste pictures of all Chief Ministers, Speakers, etc.

**G. Activity**

- Visit three government departments with the help of your teacher and parents, find out the kind of work done by the departments you have chosen.

You can choose from the following :

- |                                 |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Public Works Department      | 2. School Education |
| 3. Traffic Police (Road Safety) | 4. Sports           |

- Organise a mock parliament session in your class. The topic for discussion is 'Ban on social media'. One group should speak in favour and other group should oppose it.

**LIFE SKILLS**

**Being creative**

All of us face problems in life. Many of us fear them and become worried. Some of us take them up as challenge and overcome them. Creative people see problems as interesting challenges and solve them in right earnest.

Characteristics of a creative person :

- Enjoys challenges
- Seeks solutions
- Optimistic and curious
- Sees problems as opportunities
- Sees problems as interesting
- Doesn't give up easily, rather perseveres and works hard

Keeping the above traits in mind, narrate an incident where you have shown creativity.



**MIND MAP**

