



In India government works at three levels- local, state and national. The state government also consists of three branches-the legislature, the executive and the judiciary.

State legislature: To make laws we need a body empowered to make them. This body is called legislature.

- The state legislature consists of either one or two houses. If there is only one house it is called **unicameral legislature** and that house is known as the **legislative Assembly**. It is the lower house of the state legislature.

- There are some states having the second house also. This house is known as the **legislative council**. It is the upper house of the state. States having two houses in the state legislature are called **Bicameral legislature**.

Vidhan parishad: The vidhan parishad or the legislative council is the upper house of the assembly. The strength of the legislative council should not be more than one-third the size of the legislative assembly of that state .Its members are elected by the state assembly. Some members are nominated by the governor.

Qualifications for membership: The qualifications remain the same as those of the legislative council except that the age limit here is 30 years.

- The person should be not a government employ.
- The person should not be bankrupt.
- The person should be citizen of India.

Term: The legislative council is a permanent body and cannot be dissolved. One-third of its members retires every two years and are replaced by newly elected members. Every member has a term of six years.

Officers: The legislative council elects a chairman and a deputy chairman from among them to preside over the working of the council.

Powers and functions of the legislative council: The legislative council cannot introduce the money bill. Even for the ordinary bill, it is the will of the legislative assembly that prevails. The council can, however, put questions to the ministers and initiate discussion on various issues.

Vidhan Sabha: It is the lower house of the assembly consists of the elected representatives of the people. They are elected directly by the people. They are called the members of the legislative assembly (MLA).

Who is an MLA: Members of the legislative assembly (MLAs) are elected by the people. They then become members of the legislative assembly and also form the government. Every state in India has a legislative assembly each state is divided into different areas of constituencies. A political party who's MLAs has won more than half the number of constituencies in a state can be said to be in a majority. The political party that has the majority is called the ruling party and all other members are called the opposition. The MLAs belonging to the ruling party will elect their leader who will become the chief minister. The chief minister then selects other people as minister. After the elections, it is the governor of the state who appoints the chief minister and other ministers. The chief minister and other minister have the responsibility of running various government departments of ministries. They have separate offices. A legislative Assembly is a place where all the MLAs, whether from the ruling party or from the opposition meet to discuss various things. Hence, some MLAs have dual responsibilities: one as an MLA and the other as a minister.



Qualification for becoming an MLA:

- She/he should be a citizen of India.
- She/he should not be less than 25 years of age.
- She/he should not hold any office of profit under the Government of India or any state Government.
- She/he should be of sound mental health.

Term: The term of the legislative assembly is five years. However, the governor may dissolve the Assembly before it completes its term.

Officers: The members of the legislative assembly elect a speaker and a deputy speaker from among them. The speaker conducts the proceedings of the assembly. In his/her absence, it is the deputy speaker who performs the functions of the speaker.

Powers and functions of the legislative assembly: The legislative assembly has mainly two types of functions:

Legislative powers: The assembly is empowered to make laws pertaining to the subjects mentioned in the state list and the concurrent list of the constitution.

Financial powers: All money bills are introduced by the legislative assembly.

Control over the council of ministers: The members of the assembly may ask questions to the ministers. They point out the problems in the administration. They may pass a 'no confidence motion' against the council of ministers and thus, ask the entire ministry to resign.

How does a bill become a law? A proposal for a law is termed as a bill. There are two types of bills—money bill and non money bill. While the money bill can be introduced only in the legislative assembly, the non-money bill can be introduced in either the legislative council.

A minister or an MLA introduces the bill in either house of the assembly.

Once the bill is discussed and approved by the house, it is sent to the governor for her/his signature. After the governor's signature the bill becomes a law.

A debate in the legislative Assembly: The members debate for the action to be taken or not to be taken by the government. The MLAs are together responsible for the work of the government. In common usage the word 'government' refers to government departments and various ministers who head them. The overall head is the chief minister more correctly; this is called the executive part of the government. All the MLAs who gather together (assemble) in the legislative assembly are called the legislature. They are the ones who authorize and supervise their work.

Working the government: The legislative assembly is not the only place where opinions are expressed about the work of the government and action is demanded. You will find newspaper, TV channels and other organizations regularly talking about the government. In a democracy, there are various ways through which people express their views and also take action. Let us look at one such way. The people in power like the chief minister and the minister have to take action. They do so through various departments like the public works department, the agriculture department, the health department, the education department and so on. They also have to answer questions that are asked in the legislative assembly and convince people asking the questions that proper steps are being taken. The government can also decide to make new laws for the state regarding sanitation



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and health facilities. The act making laws on certain issues is done in the legislative assembly of each state. The various government departments then implement these laws. Laws for the entire country are made in the parliament. In a democracy, it is the people who elect their representatives as members of the legislative assembly (MLAs) and, thus, it is the people who have the main authority. The ruling party members then form the government and some members are appointed minister. These ministers are in charge of various departments of the government such as health. Whatever work is done by these department has to be approved by the members of the legislative assembly.

