



Teacher's Guide

Our Government

Part 1

Based on the Kerala State Board Curriculum for
Standard VIII



JANAAGRAHA CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP & DEMOCRACY

Janaagraha's initiative to improve citizen engagement in India's democracy through their civic learning program

Developed in collaboration with Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC)

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Part 1

Class VIII
 Board – Kerala State Board
 Subject – Social Science
 Textbook – Social Science-I text book for class VIII (Kerala state board)
 Chapter 4 – Our Government
 Number of parts – 03
 Length – 70-90 minutes (estimated, for a class of 40-45 students)
Note: Teachers may divide the lesson plan into as many periods as they see fit

Section I – What are we going to learn and why is it important?

Learning objectives

Students will:

- Understand the need for the three wings of government.
- Get introduced to the Indian legislature.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Appreciate the importance of division of power among the three wings of the government.

Key Terms

Government	Legislature	Executive	Judiciary	Bicameral Legislature
Unicameral Legislature	Lok Sabha	Rajya Sabha		

Materials needed

Blackboard, chalks

Section II – How are we going to learn?

1. Building a hook: Understanding the need for division of powers

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials needed: None

Facilitation notes:

- Good morning class. How many of you are sleepy? And is the thought of studying political science and all those details of government making you feel even more sleepy.
- (with a little bit of humor) Trust me. When I was in school, I was not a fan of political science as well. Mostly because I would just read textbooks and then mug up answers. But think about this. There is a system of governance everywhere we go. In our homes, our parents have made a system. Someone oversees payment of bills. Someone oversees food and groceries, and someone is in-charge of disciplining you when you fight with your siblings!
- In your parents' offices, they have managers, people working under them and above them. They get salaries at a time, are expected to finish their work on time, and there is a system to take leaves. Governance systems exist all around us.
- Understanding the system of our government is important because this system impacts us the most. Our water, electricity, government schools, railways, security- all of these are dependent on this system. If we do not understand this system, how are we expected to work with it.
- Before we jump start the government system, let's take another system we interact with on a daily basis- our school system!
- Let's do a simple and fun activity. I am going to write a few players from this system on the board. I want you to arrange these players in a flow chart, based on authority, from top to bottom.
- (write the following names of the board): Principal, board of trustees, teachers, lab and library in-charge, school cleaning staff, students, gate keepers and security, and office PA.
- With the help of your partner arrange all of them in a sort of system that you think represents your school. After that, write down each of their functions. Think of as many functions as possible. (Give the students 5-7 minutes to do this activity)
- Okay, now let's have a few functions that you think the following people do in school:
 - Principal (making discipline policies of the school, co-ordinating with the board of trustees, assigning teachers to classes, making sure everyone is working well etc)

- Lab and library in charge (Taking care of the lab, issuing books to students, managing fines for late returns, disciplining the students in the lab/library)
- Gatekeepers (making sure no-one enters the school late, keeping a record of all outsiders coming in school, informing the management of any strangers who wish to enter without any notice/ permissions)
- So, we understand that the school needs different people for different functions.
- Now, what if I remove the teachers and ask the principal to do all the teaching as well? That's obviously not possible.
- But what if, I make everyone the principal- all the teachers the principal and ask them to teach and also to take care of the school. (There will be chaos, everyone will want their rules to be followed, students will not know who to listen to etc)
- What will happen if I ask all the gatekeepers to go to the principal and the teacher whenever there is a problem at the gate? (Different people will give different orders, the gate keeper will get confused, the principal and the teacher may give different orders leading to conflict between them).
- Let's recap what we did in this activity. We first built a system of our school and then we understood that it is important for different people to be in-charge of different functions. What will happen if this separation doesn't exist?
- This is just the case of a school. Imagine a country of 1.3 billion people! Imagine the sheer complexity of a system that is expected to take care of all these people.
- Functions need to be divided, made more specific and given to people who will be best at performing them.
- Let's understand in a simpler version how our government system is structured.

2. The three wings of the government

Time: 15 minutes

Materials needed: Prints of the pictures of the three wings of the government /projector and screen

Note to the teacher: Through this activity, students will be introduced to the three levels of government.

Facilitation Notes:

- The Indian governance system is massive. Think about where all the laws come from. Who makes sure our country is safe? There is law and order in the cities? How do our farmers get adequate money for their produce?

- There are so many tasks involved in governance that any one wing cannot do all of them. Let's look at the following pictures. Tell me what all you know about these and I will add to your knowledge of these. (printable versions in the appendix)
- (along with showing them the pictures, ask students to share information that they know about these buildings. What are the functions performed by the officials inside these buildings? What part of the government are they a part of etc.?)



Source: [Rashtrapati Sachivalaya](#)

**President's house
Or the Rashtrapati Bhavan**

- The President lives here. He is the head of the country.
- The President along with the prime minister and his council of ministers ensures that the country is run properly, all laws and policies are implemented.



Source: [Free press](#)

Parliament

- It consists of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.
- The parliament is the place where all the MPs meet.
- All laws are passed here.



Source: [DNA India](#)

Supreme court of India

- The supreme court is the ultimate law-enforcement body in India.
- It is also the apex legal body above all other courts.
- The supreme court makes sure all laws are followed and punishes people who don't follow them.
- It also solves disputes

Debrief:

- The Indian government is divided into three wings: the legislature, the executive and the judiciary.
- The legislature: The legislature is in-charge of passing bills that become laws in India. It oversees the administration of the government by holding the ministers accountable and passes a budget for distribution of money among various subjects. The parliament of India is supreme.
- The executive: the executive is responsible for the day to day functioning of the government. It ensures that all government services, systems, schemes run smoothly and the country is safe and protected.
- The judiciary: the judiciary is responsible for enforcing the laws. The court system interprets the laws and punishes those who break them.
- We will be studying about these in more detail in some time. But for now, let's just understand this:
 - The legislature: makes the laws.
 - The executive: implements laws- runs the government and maintains law and order.
 - The judiciary: enforces the laws and punishes those to violate them.
- To understand this better, let's do this activity.

3. The great Indian Democracy: Who's responsible?

Time: 10- 15 minutes

Materials needed: Chits of paper with the cases written on each.

Facilitation Notes:

- This activity is fairly simple. I will call 6 students to come one at a time, pick up a chit. Each chit has a problem that has either occurred in the past or very similar to a problem that could have occurred in the past.
- After the student reads it out, you have 30 seconds to think about the problem, which wing of the government was responsible to fix the problem and how can it be fixed. Raise your hands and the student will select who should answer.
- So, who wants to come and ask the first question? (get 8 students to come and ask the 8 cases)

Situation	The wing of the government responsible for it	How can this situation be fixed
1. In 1968, a woman was burnt alive by her family in the name of Sati after her husband passed away.	Legislature	The law to ban sati was only introduced in 1987. If the legislature had introduced a law much before, many women would not have to go through this unfair practice and lose their lives.
2. A man named Ram Vilas was sentenced to death. After his hanging it was found out that he was innocent.	Judiciary	The judiciary should have been more cautious and followed the due process of law before passing a death sentence.
3. There is widespread shortage of food in the country this year.	Executive	The Executive branch of the country is responsible for administering a country. Maintaining food security is an administrative task and hence they are the responsibility of the Executive.
4. Many manual scavengers die during their job due to bad working conditions.	Executive	Till 2013, there was no law in India prohibiting manual scavenging. In 2013, The Prohibition of Employment as

		Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act was passed. However, now the deaths are occurring due to non-implementation of the law prohibiting manual scavenging.
5. There was an armed robbery in Bangalore. The robbers killed 3 members of the family and took 50 lakh rupees with them.	Executive	Robberies take place because of inefficient administration of the country. Reducing the crime rate is the responsibility of the Executive branch of the government.
6. There is no reservation for women in the Parliament. The Bill proposing 33% reservation for women in the Parliament is still pending.	Legislature	The legislature makes the law. Only Parliament can pass such a law which reserves certain seats. (Ask students :Can you think of why this law has not been passed till now?)

Debrief:

- Well done class! I think you will all make for excellent civil servants and politicians one day.
- While you all came up with very smart answers, it is rarely as easy in real life as this activity. There are so many problems and variables that solving a seemingly small issue can also be a major task. While this is the case, let's end today's lesson by understanding in detail how the first wing of the government- the legislature functions in India.

4. Closing discussion

Time: 15 minutes

Facilitation notes:

- The Indian government is a three-tier system- the centre, state and local. For the purpose of making our understanding clear, we will be studying only about the central governance system. It is very similar to the system followed at the state level. The legislature in India is known as the parliament.

- The parliament is the apex law making body in the country and consists of the president and the two houses- Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The Indian parliament has two houses and is also known as Bicameral Legislature.
- Let's now understand the composition of the parliament (ask students to note the table down in their textbooks):

Parliament of India		
The President	Upper House- The Rajya Sabha <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 238 elected members indirectly elected • 12 nominated members- nominated by the president. The members nominated by the President are people having a distinctive knowledge or practical experience in fields such as literature, science, art and social service. • They are known as the council of ministers. • Permanent house of the parliament- Rajya Sabha cannot be subject to dissolution. There is no fixed tenure of Rajya Sabha. However, one-third members of Rajya Sabha retire after every two years and those vacancies are filled by conducting elections. • The Vice President presides over the Rajya Sabha sessions. 	Lower House: The Lok Sabha <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 543 members directly elected by the people through elections • 2 nominated members • Known as the house of representatives. • These members of the parliament (MPs) are elected for a term of 5 years. • Presided over by the speaker of the Lok Sabha.

- All the states in India have their own state legislatures, which make laws on subjects that come under the state government. Some of the subjects that come under the purview of the state legislature include

- Public order (excluding use of armed forces)
- Police
- Local Government (like municipal corporations, district boards, etc.)
- Prisons
- Public health & sanitation, and more
- In majority of the states, the state legislature has only one house. Such legislatures are called Unicameral Legislatures. A few states, on other hand, have Bicameral Legislature.
- While there are many functions that a parliament performs, its most important function is legislation. We will study about this more in the following lesson.

Section III: Assessment

Time: 5 minutes

1. What are the three bodies of government in India? (*Executive, judiciary, legislature*)
2. Who makes the laws in India? (*Legislature*)
3. Why is Indian legislature called Bicameral? (*Indian legislature has two houses – Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha*)
4. Judiciary is the most important branch of the Indian government. True/False? (*False, all three are important*)
5. Lok Sabha is known as the permanent house of the Parliament. True/False? (*False, that is Rajya Sabha*)

Section IV: Closure

Recap by the teacher and students

Time: 5 minutes

1. Indian government is divided into three wings; Executive, Legislature and Judiciary.
2. We have a horizontal system of governance. All three wings of the government share the same amount of power. No wing of the government can overpower the other.

3. The legislature: The legislature is in-charge of passing bills that are become laws in India. It oversees the administration of the government by holding the ministers accountable and passes a budget for distribution of money among various subjects. The parliament of India is the supreme.
4. The executive: the executive is responsible for the day to day functioning of the government. It ensures that all government services, systems, schemes run smoothly and the country is safe and protected.
5. The judiciary: the judiciary is responsible for enforcing the laws. The court system interprets the laws and punishes those who break them.

Section V: Homework:

1. Which states in India have bicameral legislatures?
2. List the current Ministers sitting in either Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha from your state.

Section V: Additional resources

Resources for teachers:

1. Ordinance making powers of the Executive in India
The blog examines the Ordinance making powers of the Executive in India. It provides information about the number of ordinances promulgated in India since 1990.
Link: [PRS Legislative research](#)
2. Parliamentary Procedures- A Primer, Rajya Sabha
This primer highlights the opportunities for participation in Rajya Sabha on a typical day. Each section provides an overview of the Rules and explains the procedural requirements that need to be followed.
Link: [PRS Legislative Research](#)

Resources for students:



1. Article: Parliament's 60th anniversary: Most interesting facts and factoids

The article lays down interesting facts about the parliament of India

Link: [Times of India](#)

2. Here's How the Youth are going to change governance In India

This article discusses the role of Young people in India to bring change in governance. The article talks about participatory democracy wherein the citizens are collaborating with the government to bring change.

Link: [Youth ki awaaz](#)

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