



Teacher's Guide

Our Government

Part 2

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)

Our Government | Teacher’s Guide (2/3) Part 2

Class VIII
 Board – Kerala State Board
 Subject – Social Science
 Textbook – Social Science-I 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 process of passing bills to make laws.
- Get introduced to the Indian executive.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Critique a bill

Key Terms

Bill	Money Bill	Summon	Consolidate	Recommend
Amendment	Provisions			



Section II – How are we going to learn?

1. Introduction to functions of the parliament

Time: 10 minutes

Facilitation notes:

- In the previous lesson, we understood how the Indian government is a massive machinery. It cannot be run by any one person or even a small group of people. It is divided into the legislature, executive and judiciary.
- In this lesson, we will be focusing on the legislature and its functions.
- We understand that the legislature has many functions. It is essentially the wing of the government that makes all the laws. Apart from making these laws it also: (ask the students to note these down in their notebooks)
 - Oversees the working of the prime minister and his council of ministers and questions them whenever needed. The parliament can also pass a no-confidence motion. This implies that a majority of the members of the parliament believe that the prime minister and the council of ministers cannot run the government.
 - Carefully considers and discusses various bills and passes resolutions.
 - Elects the president and the vice-president.
 - Passes amendments to the constitution as and when needed.
- Now that we have understood that the parliament has a variety of functions, let's deep dive into its most important function- passing bills to make laws.

2. Understanding the passing of a bill: theory and model parliamentary committee

Time: 30- 40 minutes

Materials Required: Print out of the first draft of the bill (printable version in the appendix), 4 sheets of paper with the following written on each: research team, parliament, president, cabinet minister.

Note to the teacher: In this section, students will act out and participate in a very simplified process of law making in India. Before starting this section, select a cabinet minister, Mr. Mohan Juneja, and the president, Mr R. K. Narayan. Apart from this, divide the class into two halves: the parliament and the research team.

Mr. Mohan Juneja, a Cabinet Minister
(1 student)

Mr. R. K. Narayan, the President (1 student)

The Parliament
(half of the rest of the class)

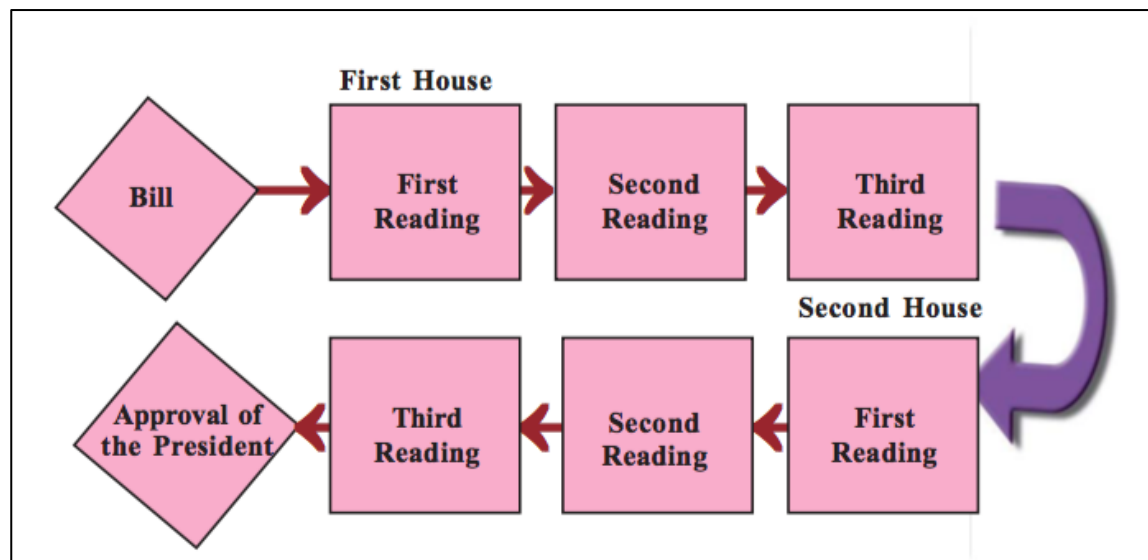
The Research Team
(half of the rest of the class)

The class will now take part in the bill making in the following manner:

1. The teacher will tell the class how a bill is passed into a law in the parliament. Then she will inform the students of the simulation and who all are the members of the simulation. (The teacher will introduce Mr. Juneja and Mr. R.K. Narayan to the students and divide the rest of the class into the research team and the parliament)
2. Mr. Juneja will talk about the concerns of the people and what should be included in the bill to safeguard the people with his research team. This team will discuss the bill, suggest changes and improvements in the bill.
3. They will finalise the bill and Mr. Juneja will introduce the bill in the parliament.
4. The parliament which consists of all the MPs will then suggest changes, and improvements in the bill.
5. Along with the teacher the entire class will suggest changes and finalise the bill.
6. The whole class will do a short voting on whether they agree with the bill or not.
7. The final bill will then be signed by the president (already selected by the teacher)
8. The teacher will then emphasise how this was a very simplified process and the process is much longer in reality.

Facilitation Notes:

1. We have been repeatedly talking about how the Indian parliament makes laws. Imagine- once a law is passed by the parliament, it becomes a law which is implemented throughout the country. Now if a law is passed in a hurry, the entire country will suffer from its consequences. The cost of passing an ill thought out law is way too high to do this in a hurry. Which is why everyone keeps complaining that it takes so much time to bring new laws in India.
2. Before we do an interesting activity to understand how bills are passed in India. Let's understand a few key concepts:
3. What is a bill? When a law is first introduced in the parliament in the form of a draft it is known as a **bill**. A bill can be of two types. An ordinary bill or a **money bill**.
4. Any bill in the parliament that relates to collection of revenue or expenditure of government funds is known as a government bill.
5. A bill can be introduced in the parliament in either of the houses. Whichever house the bill is introduced in first is known as the first house and the other house the second house.
6. A money bill can only be introduced in Lok Sabha while an ordinary bill can be first introduced in either of the houses.
7. When a bill is introduced, it goes through a first reading.
8. In the second reading, every section of the bill is discussed by the parliament. Changes are made, edits or rejections are made.
9. After this, the bill is changed as per the discussions in the parliament and sent for a third reading. In this reading, the entire bill is either passed or rejected.
10. Once this bill is passed by the first house, it is sent to the second house along with a certifying note of the presiding officer.
11. In the second house of the parliament, the bill passes through this entire process again.
12. Once the bill is passed in the second house of the parliament, it is sent to the president. Once the president signs the bill, it becomes a law.
13. I will now draw this diagram on the board. I want everyone to discuss this entire process with your partner once again to make sure you have understood this.
14. The teacher to draw this diagram on the board:



Model Parliament:

Facilitation Notes:

1. (before starting the class, the teacher to divide the students into two groups) Now coming to the fun part. We keep complaining about how our politicians are not working well enough, how there are so many problems. Poverty, lack of employment, poor education- the list goes on and on.
2. Let's now put ourselves in their shoes and see how we can make a difference- literally!
3. I have divided the class into 2 sections. We will try and pass a very simplified law in this class. Apart from a sitting member of the parliament and the honourable president, our class has the research committee of the MP and the parliament.
4. I will now ask our MP, Mr. Juneja to come and introduce the bill to his research committee. His personal committee will review his bill and suggest changes. He has to present the draft to the parliament, which means he cannot present an ill-thought bill right!
5. Over to you Mr. Juneja! (the student now comes and reads out the bill- printable version of the bill in the appendix).

The Bill to be debated upon in the class:

- The Constitution (One Hundred and Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2008 seeks to reserve half of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. The allocation of reserved seats shall be determined by such authority as prescribed by Parliament.
- Reservation of seats for women whose fathers or brothers are Members of the Indian parliament.
- One third of the total number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be reserved for women of those groups in the Lok Sabha and the legislative assemblies.
- Reservation of seats for women shall cease to exist 15 years after the commencement of this Act.

6. Now for the next ten minutes, I want the research committee to think critically and answer the following questions: Suggested answers are also provided below:

<p>What are the obvious problems with the bill? How can they be fixed?</p>	<p>The obvious problem with the bill is that it asks for separate reservation in the parliament for daughters and sisters of already sitting members of the Parliament. This would only help benefit the male MPs who will keep power in a constituency even if the seat is reserved for a woman.</p>
<p>What issues have been left unaddressed?</p>	<p>How is this reservation system going to work? Will all constituencies have the same number of reserved seats every elections for women? How will the issue of reservation for women belonging to SC/ST, OBC be tackled by this bill. Implementation is complex as constituencies may have to be rotated and/or we may need dual member constituencies.</p>
<p>Who is likely to raise an objection to the bill? How can they be convinced?</p>	<p>Both men and women are likely to raise an objection to the bill. However, they can be spoken to about the benefits of reserving seats in the parliament.</p> <p>1. India has had a long-serving woman prime minister and several women chief ministers and speakers of the House. Yet its record of women parliamentarians has been poor. For a balanced future for the</p>

	<p>country, it is imperative to increase women’s participation in Indian politics.</p> <p>2. A fully representative Parliament allows the different experiences of genders to craft priorities and shape the economic and social future of a democratic society.</p> <p>3. Second, there is documented evidence both at the international level and at the gram panchayat (village) level to suggest that a greater representation of women in elected office balances the process and prioritizations that elected bodies focus on.</p>
Should any clause be deleted entirely?	2 nd clause of the bill should be entirely deleted.

7. (the students then discuss this bill and come up with a revised draft of the bill)
8. Mr. Juneja, you will now present this bill to the rest of the class (which is the parliament). (Ask the student to then come and recite the revised bill to the class)
9. While the parliament debates over the bill, I want you to think on the following lines:
 - a. Does the bill benefit a significant amount of people without causing too much disadvantage to other sections of society?
 - b. Why is the bill important?
 - c. What are the likely problems in this bill?
 - d. Who are the people/ groups of people who are most likely to raise objection? How will you justify the bill?
 - e. Is there any clause that needs to be deleted completely?
10. After the bill is revised, the teacher asks the students to vote a yes or a no on the bill by raising their hands.
11. (The bill is likely to get passed) Mr. RK Narayan, our honourable Mr. President, will now read out the final bill and we will formalise the first law of this class!
12. Fantastic, class! You passed your first ever bill. Brilliant!

Debrief:

1. What we did was a very simplified version of passing of bill. This process is much longer and way more complicated in real life.
2. Remember that a bill will become a law which will then impact an entire nation. There is a lot of pressure to get it right.
3. At the same time, every minister comes with certain interests that they want to promote and certain sections of society that they are loyal to.

Keeping everyone's interest in mind and making a bill is quite a task!

4. The next time you feel that the parliament is not making efficient laws, think about how difficult it is to pass a bill for a country as big and diverse as India and make everyone happy.
5. In addition to passing bills, the Parliament also takes care to amend bills from time to time, as required. Take for example the Right To Education Act, 2009. RTE act mandates free and compulsory education for children between six and 14 years.
6. The bill for this was approved by the Cabinet on 2 July 2009, Rajya Sabha passed the bill on 20 July 2009 and Lok Sabha on 4 August 2009. It received Presidential assent and became a law on 26 August, 2009. The law came into effect from 1 April, 2010.
7. One of the recent amendments that have been made to RTE is to abolish the "no-detention" policy in schools. Under the earlier provisions, no student can be detained up to class VIII. As per the amendment, it would be left to the states to decide whether they want to continue the no-detention policy.
8. With this, we wrap up the Indian Legislature. Let us know study about the Indian executive through this activity.

4. Information sharing: the Indian executive

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials Needed: Prints of the handouts on president, vice president, and prime minister. Every student in the group assigned for the president gets one handout for president, every student in the group allotted to vice president gets one handout on the vice president and so on.

Note to the teacher:

- The section on Indian executive has a lot of information that will otherwise be given to students in the form of a lecture. To make this section more fun, divide the class into 3 groups: the President, vice-president and prime minister. Students are given handouts with information on each of these people (printable versions in the appendix).
- After reading through their own handout in detail, students are asked to form groups of three in a way that every group has one member from the group studying president, vice-president, and prime minister respectively.
- The students share all the information that they have got to each of the other members for the next 5 minutes.
- The teacher ends the section with a short pop-quiz to make sure that all students have understood about the Indian executive.

Facilitation notes:

- Before we start our activity, I would like to introduce the Indian executive. The executive is that wing of the government that manages the day to day working of the country. It is the wing of the government that implements the laws and schemes, runs all government services and makes sure law and order is maintained. It is not wrong to say that the executive impacts the day to day lives of ordinary citizens the most.
- The Indian executive is at two levels the centre and the state.
- The Central executive consists of the President, Vice President, Prime Minister and the bureaucracy. While the previous three are elected directly or indirectly, the Indian bureaucracy selects civil servants on the basis of exams and qualifications. As opposed to the elected officials, the bureaucrats are employed with the government on a permanent basis.
- The State executive consists of the Governor, the Council of Ministers with Chief Minister as its head. The Governor is appointed for a period of 5 years by the President and holds office at the President’s pleasure.
- You have all been divided into three groups. I want group A to sit together, group B to sit together, and group C to sit together.
- The task is fairly easy. Group A will get a handout on the president, group B will get a handout on the vice president and group C will get a handout on the prime minister.
- For the next 5 minutes, each of you will sit and silently read the handout. You can discuss the information with other members of your group if needed. But not with the other group. (The teacher to distribute handouts to the students).
- (After 5 minutes) Now, I want all students to get into groups of three such that every group has one member of A, B and C. In case there are a few extra people, make groups of 4. But make sure that every group has at least one member from A,B, and C. (give students 2 minutes to arrange themselves)
- For the next 5-7 minutes, I want you all to tell your friends what you learnt in your respective handouts. Make sure to cover all the points.
- (After this is over, the teacher to do a pop quiz in class to make sure that all students have understood the Indian executive:

How is the president elected?	He is elected by an electoral college for a term of five years. The electoral college consists of; Elected members of Lok sabha, elected members of Rajya sabha, elected members of state legislative assemblies
What are the main functions of the president?	Appoint Prime Minister and other ministers, Appoint Chief Justice and judges of the Supreme Court, Act as the Supreme Commander of

	armed forces, give assent to bills passed by the parliament, declare emergency in the country if needed are some of the main functions of the president.
What role does the vice president play in the parliament?	Performs the functions of the President in his absence, presides over the sessions of Rajya Sabha, the Vice-President is the ex-officio Chairman of the Council of States, he protects the rights and privileges of the members of the Council of States.
What are the main functions of the Prime Minister	Acts as the leader of the Lok Sabha, Prime Minister is the chief advisor of the President, presides over the meetings of the Cabinet and is the leader of the cabinet, co-ordinates the functions of the Council of Ministers, Informs the President of the decisions taken by the Cabinet.

Conclusion:

- The Indian executive is responsible for running the entire country.
- This mammoth task cannot be achieved by a small group of people. While they have a lot of civil servants and resources to help them, we need to remember that running a country is not an easy task.

Section III: Assessment

Time: 5 minutes

1. President of India has more powers than the Prime Minister. T/F? (*False, the Prime Minister has more powers*)
2. How does a bill become a law?
3. All members of the Indian Executive are elected. T/F? (*False, bureaucracy, which is a part of the Indian Executive is selected through exams*)

4. The only function of the Indian Parliament is making laws. T/F? (*False, they also have to represent the interests of the people; form and examine the government*)

Section IV: Closure

Recap by the teacher and students

Time: 5 minutes

1. We understand that the legislature has many functions. It is essentially the wing of the government that makes all the laws. Apart from making these laws it also:
 - a. Oversees the working of the prime minister and his council of ministers and questions them whenever needed.
 - b. Deliberates and discusses various bills and passes resolutions.
 - c. Elects the president and the vice-president.
 - d. Passes amendments to the constitution as and when needed.
2. When a law is first introduced in the parliament in the form of a draft it is known as a bill. A bill can be of two types. An ordinary bill or a money bill. Any bill in the parliament that relates to collection of revenue or expenditure of government funds is known as a government bill.
3. When a bill is introduced, it goes through a first reading. In the second reading, every section of the bill is discussed by the parliament. Changes are made, edits or rejections are made. After this, the bill is changed as per the discussions in the parliament and sent for a third reading. In this reading, the entire bill is either passed or rejected. Once this bill is passed by the first house, it is sent to the second house.
4. In the second house of the parliament, the bill passes through this entire process again.
5. Once the bill is passed in the second house of the parliament, it is sent to the president. Once the president signs the bill, it becomes a law.
6. The Indian executive is at two levels the centre and the state.
7. The central executive consists of the president, vice president, prime minister and the bureaucracy. While the previous three are elected directly or indirectly, the Indian bureaucracy selects civil servants on the basis of exams and qualifications.
8. As opposed to the elected officials, the bureaucrats are employed with the government on a permanent basis.

Section V: Homework:

Write a letter to a member of the Executive Branch of the Government addressing an administrative issue you have been facing in and around your locality. Request the member to take an action to resolve the issue.

Section V: Additional resources

Resources for teachers:

1. Parliament as a law-making body
This article discusses in detail how a bill becomes a law in India.
Link: [PRS Legislative Research](#)
2. Opinion | India needs more women parliamentarians
This article discusses in detail the need for women parliamentarians in India.
Link: [Live Mint](#)

Resources for students:

1. Youth participation in politics is still dependent on wealth, legacy and connections
This article discusses how a political career in India is inaccessible to most young people in the country. There is a need to increase the participation of youth in Indian politics.
Link: [The Economic Times](#)
2. Needed for India: Transparency and Accountability, 'Through and With' Democracy



This article discusses the need to make decision making process of the government more transparent and for the government to be more accountable to its citizen to strengthen democracy in India.

Link: [Asia Society](#)

Appendix

Printable version of the handouts for the activity information sharing

The bill to be debated upon in the class:

- The Constitution (One Hundred and Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2008 seeks to reserve half of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. The allocation of reserved seats shall be determined by such authority as prescribed by Parliament.
- Reservation of seats for women whose fathers or brothers are Members of the Indian parliament.
- One third of the total number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be reserved for women of those groups in the Lok Sabha and the legislative assemblies.
- Reservation of seats for women shall cease to exist 15 years after the commencement of this Act.

The President

The President is the head of the Indian Republic. He is elected by an electoral college for a term of five years.

The electoral college consists of:

- Elected members of Lok Sabha
- Elected members of Rajya Sabha
- Elected members of state legislative assemblies

All the executive powers of the central government are vested with the President of India. But he performs all these functions with the support and advice given by the council of ministers.

Functions of the President

- Appoint Prime Minister and other ministers.
- Appoint Chief Justice and judges of the Supreme Court.
- Nominate 12 members of Rajya Sabha and 2 members of Lok Sabha.
- Act as the Supreme Commander of armed forces. The President can declare war or conclude peace,[20] on the advice of the Union Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister.
- Give assent to bills passed by the parliament.
- The President of India also exercises financial powers. No money bill can be introduced in Parliament without the recommendations of the President.
- Declare emergency in the country if needed. Take decision on mercy petitions
- As head of the executive, the President appoints the Governors of States, the Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts, the Auditor General of India and many other high officials, such as the members of Finance Commission, Election commission, Union Public commission etc.

The Vice President

Besides the President, India has a Vice President as well. The Vice President is also elected by an electoral college. The members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha are members of this electoral college. He is elected for a term of five years.

Functions of the vice president

- Performs the functions of the President in his absence.
- Presides over the sessions of Rajya Sabha
- The Vice-President is the ex-officio Chairman of the Council of States. He may cast his vote when there is a tie.
- He protects the rights and privileges of the members of the Council of States.

Prime Minister and his council of ministers

The leader of the majority party or coalition in the Lok Sabha is appointed as the Prime Minister. He has extensive powers and functions. He can influence all the important decisions of the central government. Some important functions of the Prime Minister are given below.

- Acts as the leader of the Lok Sabha.
- Prime Minister is the chief advisor of the President.
- Presides over the meetings of the Cabinet and is the leader of the cabinet.
- Co-ordinates the functions of the Council of Ministers.
- Informs the President of the decisions taken by the Cabinet.
- The Minister remains in the office according to the pleasure of The Prime Minister.
- The Prime Minister can demand resignation from any Ministers at any time and the Minister is duty bound to accept it.

The Union Council of Ministers work under the leadership of the Prime Minister. All the functions vested with the President are really exercised by the Council of Ministers, which consists of cabinet ministers, ministers of state, and deputy ministers.

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