**Lok Sabha: Functions and Position of the Lok Sabha**

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The House of the People is popularly known as the Lok Sabha. It is the lower and powerful house of the Union Parliament. It represents the people of India. It is directly elected by all the people. It is fully democratic, representative and national House.

**I. Composition:**

The present membership of the Lok Sabha is 545, out of these 523 are elected by the people of all Indian States and 20 by the people of the Union Territories. The President nominates two members of the Anglo-Indian Community to the Lok Sabha. The maximum membership of the Lok Sabha stands fixed at 552 till the year 2010. Odisha has 21 seats in Lok Sabha, out of which some seats stand reserved for SCs and STs.

**III. Qualifications for Membership of the Lok Sabha:**

(1) He must be a citizen of India.

(2) He must not be less than 25 years of age.

(3) He must not hold any office of profit in the Government.

(4) He should not have an unsound mind or be a bankrupt.

(5) He should not be a declared offender of a grave crime by any court.

(6) He should possess all such qualifications prescribed by the Parliament.

**IV. Tenure:**

The normal term of the Lok Sabha is five years. This term can be extended for one year during an emergency. But fresh elections to the Lok Sabha must be held within six months of the end of emergency.

**Powers and Functions of the Lok Sabha:**

**1. Legislative Powers:**

An ordinary bill can become law only after it has been passed by both the Houses of Parliament. It can be introduced either in the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. When a bill is introduced and passed by the Lok Sabha, it is sent to the Rajya Sabha. After it has secured the approval of Rajya Sabha, it goes to the President for his signature.

After this it becomes a law. Although ordinary bills can be introduced in either of the two houses of Parliament, almost 90% of the bills are actually introduced in the Lok Sabha. In case the Rajya Sabha rejects a bill passed by the Lok Sabha and returns it with or without some amendments, the Lok Sabha reconsiders the bill.

If the Lok Sabha re-passes it and the Rajya Sabha is still not prepared to pass it, a deadlock occurs. If this deadlock remains unresolved for six months, the President summons a joint sitting of the two Houses. The decision of the joint sitting is accepted by both the Houses.

**2. Executive Powers:**

For all its work, the Council of Ministers is collectively responsible before the Lok Sabha. The leader of the majority in the Lok Sabha becomes the Prime Minister. Most of the ministers are from the Lok Sabha. The ministers remain in office so long as they enjoy the confidence of majority in the Lok Sabha.

The Lok Sabha can remove the ministry from office by passing a vote of no- confidence against it. Thus, the life and death of the Ministry depends upon the Lok Sabha. The Lok Sabha maintains a continuous control over the Council of Ministers.

MPs can ask questions from ministers about their policies and activities of administration. They can criticise their policies. They can move and adopt several types of resolutions and motions (adjournment motion, call attention motion, censure motion and no-confidence motion) and can reject any bill of the government.

**If the Lok Sabha:**

(i) Rejects any policy or decision of the Cabinet,

(ii) Or disapproves the budget or a bill of the government, or

(iii) Passes a vote of no- confidence against the Prime Minister, it is. Taken to be a vote of no-confidence against the entire Council of Ministers and it resigns en masse.

**3. Financial Powers:**

The Lok Sabha has vast financial powers. A money bill can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha. After having been passed by it, the money bill goes to the Rajya Sabha. Such a bill can be delayed by the Rajya Sabha for a maximum period of 14 days.

If the Rajya Sabha fails to pass a money bill and 14 days elapse from the date of the submission of the bill to it, the money bill is deemed to have been passed by both the houses of Parliament. It is sent to the President for his signature.

In case of any dispute as to whether a particular bill is a money bill or not, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha gives the decision. His decision is final and it cannot be challenged in any court or even in the Rajya Sabha or the Lok Sabha. Thus, we can any that the Lok Sabha has the final control over the finances of state. No tax can be levied or collected or changed or abolished without the approval of the Lok Sabha. The fiscal policies of the government cannot be implemented without the consent of the Lok Sabha.

**4. Judicial Powers:**

The Lok Sabha also performs some judicial functions. The impeachment proceedings can be taken up against the President either in the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. The President can be removed from office only when an impeachment resolution is adopted by each of the two Houses with a 2/3 majority of its members.

The Lok Sabha also investigates the charges prepared by the Rajya Sabha against the Vice-President of India. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha can together pass a resolution for the removal of any judge of the Supreme Court or of a State High Court.

Both the Houses can jointly pass a special address and present it to the President for the removal of some high officers of the state like the Attorney General, the Chief Election Commissioner and the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. Lok Sabha can also take action against any member or any citizen who is held to be guilty of committing contempt of the House.

**5. Electoral Functions:**

The Lok Sabha also performs some electoral functions. The elected members of the Lok Sabha take part in the election of the President. Members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha together elect the Vice-President of India. The members of the Lok Sabha also elect a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker from amongst themselves.

**6. Some Other Powers of Lok Sabha:**

**The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha jointly perform the following functions:**

(a) Approval of the ordinances issued by the President

(b) Change of the boundaries of the states. State, creation of new states and change in the name of any state.

(c) Changes in the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

(d) Changes the qualifications of the members of the Parliament and State Legislatures.

(e) Revising the salary and allowances of the members of Parliament,

(f) The setting up of Joint Public Service Commission for two or more states.

(g) Passing of a resolution for abolishing or creating the upper chamber of a state legislature,

(h) Approval of a Declaration of Emergency.

**Position of the Lok Sabha:**

After studying the powers and functions of the Lok Sabha, we can say that the Lok Sabha is a very powerful House. The Council of Ministers is responsible to the Lok Sabha and not to the Rajya Sabha. It remains in office so long as it enjoys the confidence of majority in the Lok Sabha.

The Lok Sabha has full control over the finances of the State. It dominates ordinary law-making bills as nearly 90% of the bills are introduced in it. The joint sitting method of resolving the deadlocks between the two Houses tends to favour the Lok Sabha. It also controls the executive.

The leader of majority in the Lok Sabha becomes the Prime Minister. Lok Sabha can cause the dismissal of the Council of Ministers by passing a vote of no-confidence or by rejecting a policy or law of the government. Hence, the Lok Sabha is a very powerful house of the Union Parliament.

# Speaker of the Lok Sabha: Functions and Position of the Speaker

The Speaker is the most powerful man in the Lok Sabha. He enjoys supreme authority in the House. He enjoys a status equal to that of the Chief Justice of India.

**(I) Method of Election of the Speaker:**

After a new Lok Sabha is constituted, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker are elected by the House in its first meeting. Normally they are elected unanimously. The leader of the majority party proposes their names, after consulting the leaders of the opposition parties. The leader of the opposition party seconds the names so proposed.

The election takes place only when there is disagreement between the majority party and the opposition parties. In May 2009 Smt. Meira Kumar and Sh. Karia Munda got unanimously as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the 15th Lok Sabha, respectively.

**(II) Qualifications:**

There are no formal qualifications for the office of the Speaker. Any sitting member of the Lok Sabha can be elected as Speaker by the House. As such qualifications essential for the membership of the Lok Sabha are also the essential qualifications for the office of the Speaker.

**(III) Tenure:**

The tenure of the Speaker is equal to the tenure of Lok Sabha, i.e., 5 years. However, the Speaker continues to be in office even after the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. He holds office till the new Lok Sabha elects a new Speaker. The Speaker can resign his office at any time before the completion of his full tenure.

**(IV) Method of Removal:**

The Speaker ceases to hold office if he ceases to be a member of the House. He can also be removed from office by the Lok Sabha by passing a resolution supported by majority of its members. However to initiate such a no-confidence move against the Speaker, a prior notice of 14 days has to be given by the movers.

#### Functions of the Speaker:

**1. To preside over the meetings of the House:**

The Speaker presides over the meetings of the Lok Sabha and conducts its proceedings. He also presides over the joint sittings of the two Houses of the Parliament.

**2. To maintain discipline in the Lok Sabha:**

The Speaker maintains discipline in the House. If any member disrupts or tries to disrupt the proceedings of the House, the Speaker can warn him or can ask him to leave the House. He can suspend a member from the House whom he finds guilty of violating the discipline and decorum.

**3. To fix the Agenda of the House:**

The Speaker, in consultation with other members of the business committee of the House and the Prime Minister, Fixes the agenda of the meetings of the House.

**4. Permission to ask questions:**

Each member of the House can put questions to the ministers; the permission of the Speaker is required purpose.

**5. To conduct the business of the House:**

The Speaker conducts the business of the House. He allows the members to introduce the bills or to move motions. He recognises the members on the floor of the House and gives them time for speaking in the House. He fixes time limit for the debates in the House, puts matters to vote, and announces the results. He can warn the members against the use of un-parliamentary language and can order the same to be expunged from the records.

**6. Interpretation of Rules of Procedure:**

The business of the House is conducted according to definite and settled rules of procedure. In case of any dispute regarding the rules of the House, the Speaker interprets and applies these rules. The interpretation of rules made by the Speaker is final and cannot be challenged.

**7. Power to adjourn the House:**

The Speaker can adjourn the meetings of the House if the quorum of the House is not complete or if the conducting the business of the House is not possible due to a disorderly behaviour of its members.

**8. Decision about a Money Bill:**

If a dispute arises over the question as to whether a bill is a Money Bill or not, the decision is made by the Speaker. Such a decision is final and cannot be challenged inside or outside the House.

**9. To exercise a Casting Vote:**

The Speaker does not participate in the debates and discussions of the House. He even does not take part in the voting on bills. Although as a member he has the right to vote. In case of a tie over any bill, he can exercise his casting vote.

**10. Protection of the Privileges of the Members of the House:**

The members of the House enjoy several privileges which are protected by the Speaker. All cases of disputes relating to the privileges of the members are referred by the Speaker to the committee on privileges. In accordance with the wishes of this committee, the Speaker then decides these matters. The Speaker acts as the guardian of the privileges of the MPS and the House.

**11. Role regarding the Committees of the House:**

A major part of the business of the House is conducted by the committees of the House. The Speaker plays an important role in the composition of the Committees. He is the ex-officio Chairman of some of the important committees such as Business Advisory Committee, Committee on Rules and few others.

**12. Administrative Functions:**

The Speaker has several administrative responsibilities. He has control over the Lok Sabha Secretariat. He appoints the employees of the Secretariat, determines the service rules for them and supervises their work. He has the responsibility for the upkeep of the records of the proceedings of the House.

#### Position of the Speaker:

The Speaker of the Lok Sabha enjoys a position of great respect and dignity. He has the supreme responsibility to conduct the proceedings of the House. He acts as the representative of the House, and as its impartial chairman. His authority is supreme in the House and no one can challenge his decisions and rulings. The office of the Speaker is of great dignity and respect.