

Competitive Exams: Political Science Study Material Rajya Sabha

The Rajya Sabha or the Council of States

The Rajya Sabha consists of two categories of members elected and nominated who are members for a period of six years. They are indirectly elected by the members of the State legislatures.

The election is scheduled in such a way that one-third of its members retire every two years. The Rajya Sabha represents the federal character of the Constitution in the Parliament.

Article 80

The Council of States shall consist of-

1. twelve members to be nominated by the President in accordance with the provisions
2. Not more than two hundred and thirty-eight representatives of the States and of the Union Territories (only Union Territories of Delhi and Pondicherry have representation in the Rajya Sabha).
3. At present, the strength of the Rajya Sabha is 245, of which 233 are elected and 12 are nominated.

Criteria for Nomination

The members to be nominated by the President are persons having special knowledge or practical experience in respect of such matters as the following: Literature, Science, Arts and Social Service.

Federal Features of the Rajya Sabha

- Under Art. 249. The Council of States or the Rajya Sabha is empowered to declare by a
- The members of the Rajya Sabha participate in the election of the President. For the impeachment of the President, a resolution to this effect must have the approval of not less than two-third members of the Rajya Sabha separately.
- In cases of declaration of emergencies under Article 352 and Article 356 by the President (who, in fact, proclaims them on the advice of the Council of Ministers), such declarations must be approved by the Rajya Sabha within a period of one month and two months respectively after such declarations.

Qualifications for the Membership of Rajya Sabha

Following are the qualifications needed to be elected to the Rajya Sabha:

- the person must be a citizen of India
- the person must not be below the age of 30 years
- he must be an ordinary citizen registered voter in the State or Union Territory from where he is intended to be chosen.
- he should not hold any office of profit.

Utility of the Rajya Sabha

It is said that in a Federal Constitution the second chamber is a necessity. It plays an important role in the matters of legislation and therefore it should be retained. The Rajya Sabha is desirable because it fulfils the following purposes:

1. It is considered useful because the senior politicians and the easy access to it without undergoing the ordeal of contesting general elections. So, the experience and the talent are not lost to the country and their services are utilised.
2. The Rajya Sabha acts as a revising House over the Lok Sabha which, being a popular House may be tempted to act rather hastily keeping in view the public opinion.
3. The Rajya Sabha is a House where the States are represented, keeping with the federal principles.

Officers of the Rajya Sabha

- **Chairman:** The Vice-President of India is the ex-officio chairman of the Rajya Sabha. He presides over the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha as long as he does not act as the President of India during a vacancy in the office of the President.
- **Deputy Chairman:** The Deputy Chairman is elected by the Rajya Sabha from amongst its members. In the absence of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman presides over the functions and proceedings of the House.

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