

THE STATE GOVERNMENT

There are two kinds of governments in our country - the central government and the state governments. Apart from the central government for the whole of India, we also have separate governments for each state. For instance, the Madhya Pradesh government also makes and executes laws. That means that the laws of the government of Madhya Pradesh as well as those of the central government of India apply on all those who live in Madhya Pradesh. In the same way the laws of both their state and central governments are applicable to anyone living in India.

The central government appoints a representative in every state and that person is called the Governor.

In this chapter we shall read about the state government and in the next class we shall read about the central government.

- Which government's laws are applicable to someone living in Madhya Pradesh?
- Would the laws of the Madhya Pradesh government also apply in the state of Himachal Pradesh?
- Would the laws made by the central government be applicable to the state of Himachal Pradesh?
- Would the laws of the central government be applicable in Bhopal?
- Who is the governor of Madhya Pradesh?

Vidhan Sabha Constituencies

The people who make the laws of a state government are called '*members of the legislative assembly*' (M.L.A.) or members of

the Vidhan Sabha. The word *legis* means law in Latin and so does the term *vidhi* in Sanskrit. It is from these roots that the words legislator, legislation, legislative and *vidhayak*, *vidheyak*, etc. come.

MLAs are chosen from different constituencies. You know that the members of a panchayat / municipality are chosen by the people. For this the panchayat's area is divided into different wards. For the election of MLAs the entire state is divided into different constituencies. These constituencies are called the legislative or Vidhan Sabha constituencies.

One ward of a panchayat has just 300-400 people. One Vidhan Sabha constituency may have one lakh or even more people. One lakh is a lot of people. They may live in many villages and towns. Big cities that stretch for many kilometers also have several lakhs of people. That is why one big city (like Bhopal, Indore, etc.) can have more than one Vidhan Sabha constituency. One legislator or MLA is chosen from each Vidhan Sabha constituency to represent that constituency in the Vidhan Sabha.

Candidates

Different political parties compete in the elections to the Vidhan Sabha. These parties put up their '*candidates*' from each constituency. The candidate, or aspiring MLA, is that person who stands for the election and asks people to vote for him or her. A person has to be at least 25 years old to stand for election to the Vidhan Sabha. One person can stand for election in more than one constituency at the same time. Even if a person does not belong to any political party, but wants to stand for an election then she or he can do so. Such a

candidate is called an '*independent*' candidate.

Symbols

Every party has its own election symbol. Its candidates fight the elections on this symbol. Independent candidates are also given their own election symbols.

Who can Vote?

Who is eligible to cast a vote? All those people residing in the area of a Vidhan Sabha constituency who are at least 18 years of age can cast a vote in the Vidhan Sabha elections. Before they can do this, however, they have to make sure that their name is on the electoral rolls. The electoral roll is the list of all the people who are eligible to cast a vote from a constituency.

- *If there are 80 Vidhan Sabha constituencies in a state then how many MLAs will it have?*
- *Why do we need election symbols?*
- *A person who stands for an election is called - minister / candidate / MLA.*
- *With the help of your teacher find out :*
 - *Which Vidhan Sabha constituency do you live in?*
 - *Who is the MLA from your constituency? Which party does she or he belong to?*
 - *In the last elections which political parties had put up candidates from your constituency?*

The State's Council of Ministers

The Chief Minister of a state is the person who is chosen as its leader by the party, which wins in more than half the total number of constituencies of that state. This means that if in any state there are two hundred Vidhan Sabha constituencies then the party with more than 100 winning candidates (MLA) is invited by the governor to form the Council of Ministers.

The Chief Minister (who also should be an MLA) chooses his ministers from the MLAs of his party. The Chief Ministers and his council of ministers are called the state government, so it is said that the winning party forms the government.

- *If there are 80 MLAs in a state then what is the minimum number of seats required for a party to form the government?*
- *In your state (Madhya Pradesh) which party formed the government?*
- *Which political parties have formed the government in the following states:*
Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chattisgarh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh.

THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT

After being elected to the Vidhan Sabha the MLAs are expected to regularly participate in its sittings. The Vidhan Sabha sits to meet 2 or 3 times in a year.

One of the main functions of the government is to make laws. The government is also supposed to execute its laws. If any person breaks the law or does not follow it then it is the job of the government to try such a person in a court and, if necessary, punish him or her. You will read more about courts and the processes of ensuring justice in the next chapter. So the government has three basic functions: making laws, executing laws and ensuring justice.

How Laws are Made

Several kinds of rules and laws have been made for all people of our country. For instance, there is a law that you cannot keep a gun without having a license for it. Or that women cannot marry before they are 18 years old and men cannot marry before the age of 21 years. These rules and laws have not been made just

like that. People elected their government which thought carefully before making such laws. A lot of such laws are made by the state and central governments of our country.

In the Vidhan Sabha meetings MLAs discuss a number of topics like agriculture, education, *panchayati raj* and various problems faced by the state. The MLAs can ask questions which the concerned ministers have to answer.

The Vidhan Sabha makes laws on certain issues. The process of law making is as follows: first, a 'bill' is presented on it in the Vidhan Sabha. A lot of debate and discussion usually take place on it. If necessary, certain changes can be made in the bill. When more than half the MLAs who are present and voting in the Vidhan Sabha are in favour of the bill, it is said to have been passed. After having been passed in the Vidhan Sabha the bill comes to the Governor for approval. Only after approval by the Governor is a bill said to be the law.

Executing Laws

It is the job of the state's council of ministers to execute the law. In common usage it is the council of ministers which is called the government. The Vidhan Sabha of Madhya Pradesh is located at Bhopal. The Governor and council of ministers, too, stay in Bhopal. The place where a state's Vidhan Sabha is located and where its council of ministers works is called the capital of that state.

The state government has several lakhs of government employees to execute the laws made by the Vidhan Sabha - collectors, *tehsildars*, block development officers, policemen, *patwaris*, teachers, doctors, etc. All of them are paid salaries by the state government. They have to follow the orders of the state government.

You saw what the state government is, how laws are made and how the council of ministers is formed. Come let us read the story of an MLA to understand all these better.

- *Write in your own words how a law is passed.*
- *Why is Bhopal called the capital of Madhya Pradesh?*
- *Look at the map of India and locate the cities in which the Vidhan Sabhas and councils of ministers of each state are located.*

Candidate, MLA, Chief Minister, Minister, Governor - have you understood all these terms? Read the above section again after reading the story which follows.

- *If you are still having difficulty ask your teacher to organise a skit on the election process with you to explain how the state government is formed.*

THE STORY OF AN MLA

Paschimgarh is the name of an imaginary state. It has 100 Vidhan Sabha constituencies. These days elections are being held throughout the state.

One of its constituencies is Kaushalpur. Kaushalpur, too, is an imaginary place. (In this story all the parties and people are imaginary. But the way in which MLAs are elected and how they make laws is all true.)

Five political parties were fighting the elections in Paschimgarh state. They had finalised their candidates from each constituency. The most powerful parties were the Bharat Dal and the Mahakaushal Party. Vilasbhai of Bharat Dal and Ramprasad of Mahakaushal Party were standing for election from Kaushalpur constituency. There were also some independent

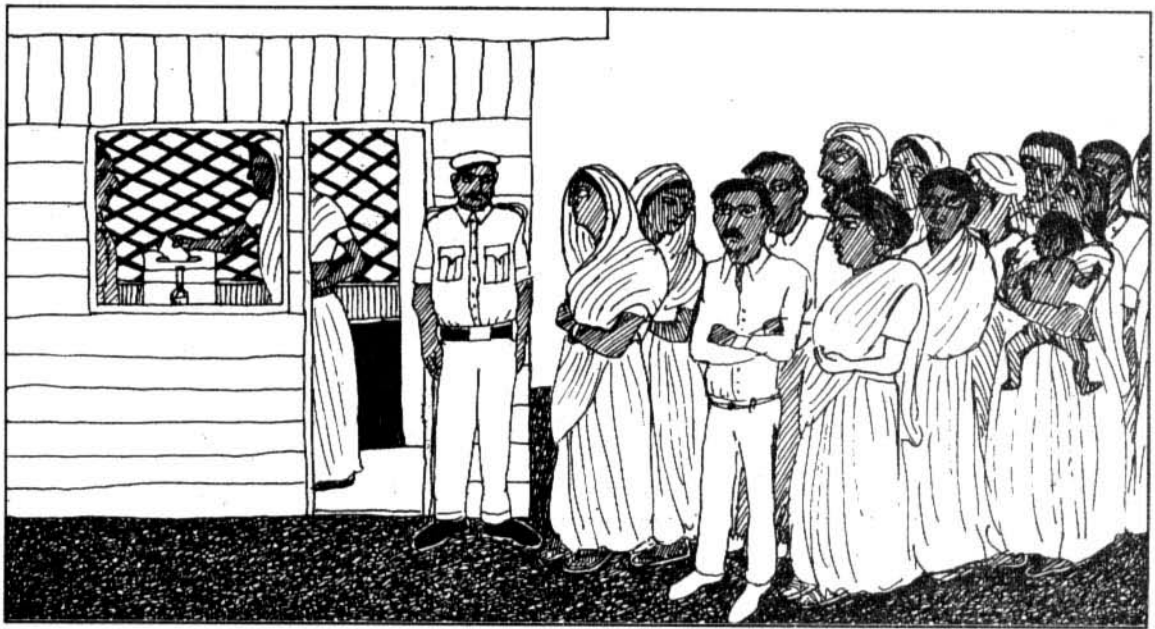


Fig. 1 Voting in Kaushalpur

candidates who were not members of any party. There were a total of 8 candidates in Kaushalpur constituency, 5 of whom belonged to different political parties and 3 were independents.

Campaigning

The elections were due to be held on 25 March. The campaigning for the elections started 15-20 days before that with loudspeakers, jeeps, tongas and public meetings. The candidates from every party made promises to the people.

One said, "We will bring down the prices" and another said, "We will get you land" and a third said, "We will increase the daily wages of laborers." The candidates also criticised the members of other parties. All this noise and activity continued till the evening of 23rd March.

- Which parties were contesting the elections in Paschingarh?
- Write four sentences about any election campaign that you may have seen.
- Discuss with your teacher -
Why is campaigning done?
Why is there a law that all campaigning

must stop one day before the day on which votes are cast?

Votes are Cast in Kaushalpur

Voting began in the morning of 25th March and continued till evening. There were long queues outside the polling centres. Everybody was there - old and young, men and women. One person sat at the entrance of each polling centre with a long list before her or him. Every voter first went to this person. Anybody whose name was not in the list would be sent back. A mark was made with indelible ink on the nail of every person whose name was in the list. She or he would then sign a register and take a ballot paper and go behind a curtain. The voter would stamp a sign on the symbol of the candidate she or he supported. Then the ballot paper was carefully folded and put into a ballot box.

At one point a great argument took place between a man and an official. The official was saying, "You have already cast your vote, why have you come again?" The man kept pointing to his nails and saying, "When there is no mark on my nails then how can you stop me? You have either struck off my name by mistake or somebody has come and cast a fake vote in my name." In the end the

official told him to take another ballot paper, mark his choice on it and seal it in an envelope. The official kept that envelope with himself.

- **Discuss with your teacher -**
What happens to the votes in these sealed envelopes?
How can you recognise which person has cast a vote?
What precautions are taken to see that fake votes are not cast?

This is how voting took place in all the Vidhan Sabha constituencies of Paschimgarh. After two days the counting of votes began at all the places. The counting of votes also began in Kaushalpur constituency. By evening the results of the election began to come in. When all the ballot boxes of Kaushalpur had been emptied out and the votes counted, it was found that Ramprasad had received 42,803 votes and Vilasbhai had got 28,156 votes. The other 6 candidates had received less than 4041 votes.

Results were also coming in from the other Vidhan Sabha constituencies of Paschimgarh. One candidate was declared elected from each constituency. Most of them belonged to one party or another. Ramprasad who was declared elected in Kaushalpur was from the Mahakaushal party.

When the results had been declared from all the constituencies then 100 people had become MLAs. You would remember that Paschimgarh state had 100 Vidhan Sabha constituencies. Most MLAs were from different parties. From two places independent MLAs had been elected.

- **If the total number of votes in Kaushalpur was 1 lakh what percentage of people cast their votes in this election?**
- **Why is a low percentage of votes not desirable?**
- **Find out how many MLAs are there in your state Vidhan Sabha?**

The parties to which the 100 MLAs belonged are as follows:

Party	Number of MLAs
Bharat Dal	60
Mahakaushal Party	25
Other parties	13
Independents	2
Total	100

Who Formed the Council of Ministers

Read the section under the subtitle "The state's council of ministers" once again.

- **To have more than half the total number of legislators in Paschimgarh, a party had to have or more legislators.**
- **Which party in Paschimgarh had more than half the total number of MLAs?**

The party with more than half the total number of MLAs is said to be the majority party.

The Bharat Dal had more than half the total number of MLAs in Paschimgarh. So the Governor of Paschimgarh asked the leader of the Bharat Dal to form the government. The leader of the Bharat Dal became the Chief Minister. She was herself an MLA.

The Chief Minister selected 12 other MLAs from her party to be her ministers. This is how the council of ministers of Paschimgarh was formed.

Ramprasad was elected from the Kaushalpur constituency, but his party did not form the council of ministers. He was a member of the opposition party.

All the MLAs who are not part of the ruling party are said to be part of the opposition. The Bharat Dal formed the government in Paschimgarh and the Mahakaushal Party and other parties and independents were the opposition.

- *How many MLAs were in the opposition in Paschimgarh?*
- *In another Vidhan Sabha constituency in Paschimgarh the results of the elections were thus - Vikalp 25,000 votes, Vimla 48,000 votes, Kamla 32,000 votes. Who would be the MLA from this constituency?*
- *In another state a total of 80 MLAs were elected. 30 of these MLAs were from one party. Could this party have formed the government? Explain.*

then the education minister would reply. Some MLAs would be satisfied by the answers while others would not.

The 'speaker' would coordinate these discussions. The speaker's job was to ensure that everybody got time to present their opinion and that the MLAs listened to each other peacefully. He or she had to decide according to the rules as to which issues could be discussed and in what order they should be taken up.

A Law on Minimum Wages is Passed

Read the section under the subtitle "How laws are made" again because we are going to read about a bill being presented in the Paschimgarh Vidhan Sabha.

The minister of labour presented a bill on minimum wages in a sitting of the Vidhan Sabha. First copies of the proposed bill were distributed to all the MLAs. Summarising the bill, the labour minister said, "Production has risen substantially over the last few years. Prices have also gone up. But the daily wages of labourers have not risen as much as the income of other people. Several labourers' organisations have raised this issue with their employers. Strikes have also been held. The strikes have had a bad effect on production. But, to an extent, the demands of the workers are justified. The government should think about the welfare of the people. Keeping all these things in mind we are proposing this bill. It raises the minimum

The MLAs Meet in the Vidhan Sabha

Several meetings of the Vidhan Sabha took place over the next five years. At every sitting many matters concerning the state were discussed and debated and many decisions were taken. These included - how much sales tax should be paid on various items; whether it should be more on matchboxes or on oil; whether a concession should be given for fertilizers or not; how panchayats should be formed; and other such topics.

In these meetings the MLAs would often put questions to the government and the concerned minister would reply. Somebody would ask, "Prices are rising sharply. What are you doing about this?" To which the finance minister would have to give a reply. If it were asked, "In how many primary schools of the state is there a shortage of teachers? What are you doing about this?"

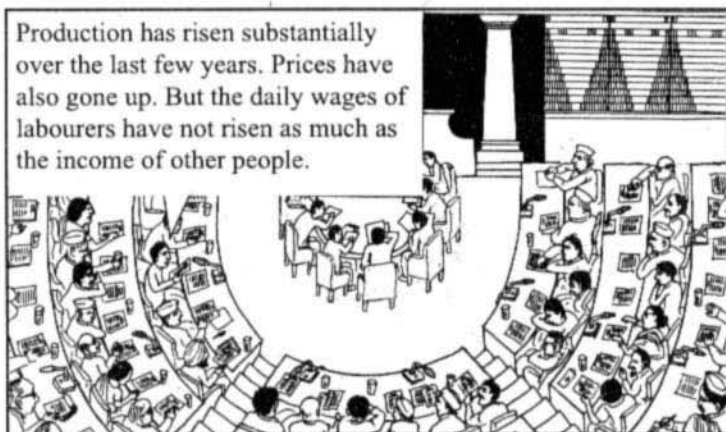
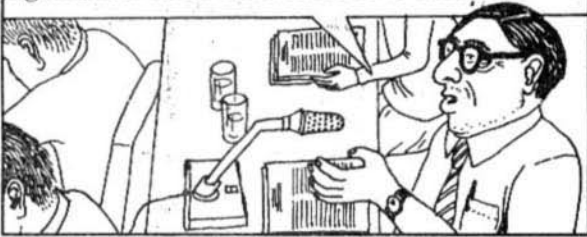


Fig. 2 Identify the labour minister in this picture. What are the papers kept on the table before everybody? What else is on the table? What is the need for that?

wages of an industrial worker from Rs 60 to Rs 70 per day and that of an agricultural worker from Rs 55 to Rs 65 per day. There will be a point by point discussion of it later." Every MLA had a copy of the bill. Most of the MLAs read through it. Then the debate began. Some spoke in favour of the bill and some against it. An MLA from the Bharat Dal supported the bill saying:

The majority of people in our country depend upon agriculture and agricultural labourers are the poorest of the lot. Our country cannot prosper till their condition improves. They have to face the rising prices of grain, etc. The daily wages of agricultural labourers should be increased.



But the MLAs from the Mahakaushal Party were opposed to the bill. Ramprasad of that party said:

If the wages of agricultural labourers are increased then the prices of grain, dal, oil, will all go up.



An MLA from the Bharat Dal disagreed :

If so many agricultural labourers get more money then they will also buy things like clothes, radios and bicycles. So the demand for things made by factories will increase.



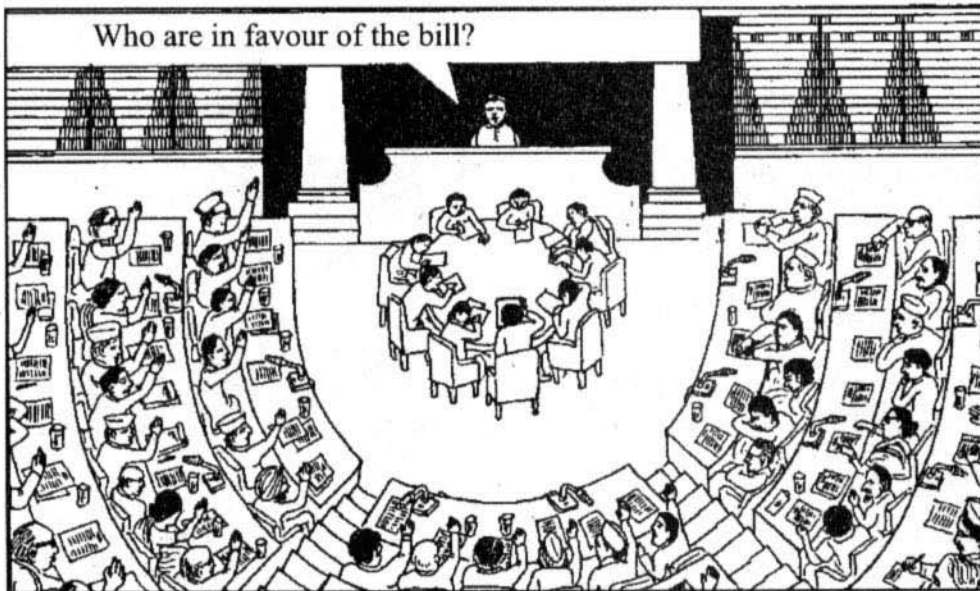
A lady legislator from the Mahakaushal Party said, "I do not support this bill because such announcements are not implemented. Even today women labourers are paid less than the men. We should not talk about increasing the wages, but about strictly implementing the old laws. Making laws without implementing them serves no purpose."

A woman legislator from the Bharat Dal said, "Special provisions have been made in this bill to ensure that men and women receive the same wages. This government will take care that workers actually get the wages due to them."

This is how discussions take place about any bill in the Vidhan Sabha. Some parties speak in favour of the bill and some against. The bill is discussed threadbare and some changes are also made. Several sittings are required for all this. In the end the legislators' approval is sought for passing the bill.

Finally one day voting on this bill was done in the Paschimgarh Vidhan Sabha. That day all the 100 MLAs were present. 60 MLAs from the Bharat Dal and 4 MLAs from other parties supported the bill. But the Mahakaushal Party and some other parties opposed it. 64 votes were cast in favour of the bill and 36 against it.

The bill was thus passed in the Vidhan Sabha. Then the bill was sent to the Governor for his signature. It would be considered the law after it had been signed.



HOW IS A LAW IMPLEMENTED?

The law was published in a book called a gazette and was sent to government officials like the collector. Now it was the collector's responsibility to see to it that every labourer got what the Vidhan Sabha had decided.

EXERCISE

1. Who makes the laws which you follow: Madhya Pradesh government, Uttar Pradesh government, the central government?
2. Write two sentences about each of the following:
 - a) The opposition
 - b) A candidate
 - c) A party
 - d) An MLA
 - e) A bill
3. Can all those who vote in the panchayat elections also vote in the elections for an MLA?
4. What are the differences in the elections for a panch and an MLA?
5. Write three main points about the election of an MLA.
6. What is the work of an MLA?
7. How is the Chief Minister appointed?
8. How is the council of ministers formed?
9. What is the difference between a minister and an MLA?
10. A bill was proposed to stop charging any tax on agricultural land in Paschimgarh. When a vote was taken after discussions then the hands of 30 MLAs rose. Was this bill passed? Answer with reasons.
11. What should your MLA do if there is a drought in your area?
12. What is the difference between a government employee and a minister?
13. How was the minimum wage law passed in the story? Describe the main points that were raised in the debate on it.