



Mains Practice Question

Q. Compare and contrast the British and Indian approaches to Parliamentary sovereignty. (150 Words, UPSC Mains 2023)

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Approach

- Discuss the concept of Parliamentary Sovereignty.
- Draw a comparison between British and Indian Parliament with respect to Parliamentary Sovereignty.
- Conclude with the statement that even if the Indian parliament is considered a replica of the British parliament, it has several differences also.

Introduction

Parliamentary sovereignty is a concept that believes in absolute supremacy of the parliament or legislative body of the country, above all government institutions including the judiciary.

Body

British vs Indian parliament

- While Britain follows the concept of parliamentary supremacy, with its legislative body exercising absolute sovereignty over the nation, India follows a system of constitutional sovereignty with the Constitution being over and above, even the Parliament.
- Upon passing of a bill by the UK's parliament, the monarch's approval is taken only as a formality. While in the case of India, the President has powers to return a bill for reconsideration or withhold assent.
- UK allows the PM to be elected only from the House of Commons, thereby ensuring a proper representation of the people's choice. Whereas in India, the PM can be selected from either house which, in the case of the Rajya Sabha, would not mean a true representation of the country's electoral choice.
- A lack in parliamentary sovereignty is evident in the existence of a separate parliament of Scotland within the UK. As opposed to this, in India, even when the special status of Jammu & Kashmir was present, there is a single Parliament.

Conclusion

While India is often believed to have a system congruent to the Westminster model, a closer look reveals stark differences between the two, as seen in the case of parliamentary sovereignty.

