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Mains Practice Questions

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Q. The legitimacy of the government in a democracy is derived from constant scrutiny by elected representatives. Comment. (250 words)

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Approach

- Briefly describe body of elected representative as base of democracy.
- Describe various means available for constant scrutiny of government by elected representatives.
- Give conclusion.

Introduction

- In representative democracy, people through periodic elections elect their representative to form legislature. Legislature in a democracy is centre of all democratic political process.
- Indeed, a genuine democracy is inconceivable without a representative, efficient and effective legislature. It is through legislatures the elected representatives hold government of the day accountable through various mechanisms like question hour, debates, discussions etc.

Body

Constant scrutiny is possible by representative legislatures through following mechanisms:

- **Question Hour:** The first hour of every parliamentary sitting is allotted for this. Elected representatives through Questions keeps constant check on government holding it accountable for its policies.
- **Zero Hour:** Unlike the question hour, the zero hour is not mentioned in the Rules of Procedure. Thus it is an informal device available to the members of the Parliament to raise matters without any prior notice.
- **Motions:** The House expresses its decisions or opinions on various issues through the adoption or rejection of motions moved by either ministers or other elected representatives.
- **Calling Attention Motion:** It is introduced in the Parliament by a member to call the attention of a minister to a matter of urgent public importance, and to seek an authoritative statement from him on that matter.
- **Adjournment Motion:** It is introduced in the Parliament to draw attention of the House to a definite matter of urgent public importance, and needs the support of 50 members to be admitted. As it interrupts the normal business of the House, it is regarded as an extraordinary device.
- **No-Confidence Motion:** the Lok Sabha or the assembly of elected representatives can remove the ministry from office by passing a no-confidence motion.

- **Short Duration Discussion:** It is also known as two-hour discussion as the time allotted for such a discussion should not exceed two hours. The members of the Parliament can raise such discussions on a matter of urgent public importance
- **Resolutions:** The elected representatives can move resolutions to draw the attention of the House or the government to matters of general public interest. The discussion on a resolution is strictly relevant to and within the scope of the resolution.

Conclusion

Thus legitimacy of the government in a democracy is derived from constant scrutiny by elected representatives. This legitimacy is a constant process in representative democracy secured through various formal and informal means by elected representatives.