

## **Mixed Representation**

Mixed electoral systems attempt to combine the positive attributes of both plurality/majority (or other) and Proportional Representation electoral systems. In a mixed system, there are two electoral systems using different formulae running alongside each other. There are two types of Mixed representation systems. Their name with detailed description as follows -

1. **Mixed Member Proportional Representation**-Mixed-member proportional representation (MMP) is mixed or “hybrid” because it combines elements of proportional and single-member plurality systems. Voters have two votes: one for a candidate contesting the election from their constituency, and a second for a party or a candidate on a party list. Voters have two ballot papers. On the first is a list of candidates who want to be the local Member of Parliament (MP). On the second ballot paper is a list of parties who want seats in parliament. Each party will publish a list of candidates in advance. A vote for a party is a vote to make more of their list of candidates into MPs. Hence, MMP provides constituencies with individual representatives for part of the seats in the House. The rest of the candidates are elected from a list that each party prepares before the election.
- ❖ Case Study of Germany which uses Mixed Member Proportional Representation- Currently, the German parliament (Bundestag) has 656 seats, not including possible surplus seats. Each voter has two votes. The first vote (Erststimme) is a personal vote, given to a particular (party) candidate in one of the 328 single-member constituencies. The second vote (Zweitstimme) is a party vote, given to a party list at the federal state level (Landesliste). Candidates are allowed to compete in single-member districts as well as simultaneously for the party list. The candidates who achieve a plurality in the single-member districts are elected (Direktmandate). However, the second vote determines how many representatives will be sent from each party to the Bundestag.

On the national level, all the second (Zweitstimme) votes for the parties are totalled. Only parties obtaining more than five percent of the votes at the national level or, alternatively, having three members elected directly in the single-member constituencies, are considered in the national allocation of list PR seats. The number of representatives from each party that

has passed the legal threshold is calculated according to the Hare formula. Seats are then allocated within the 16 federal states (Länder).

The number of seats won directly by a party in the single-member districts of a particular federal state are then subtracted from the total number of seats allocated to that party's list. The remaining seats are assigned to the closed party list. Should a party win more Direktmandate seats in a particular federal state than the number of seats allocated to it by the second votes, these surplus seats (berhangmandate) are kept by that party. In such a case, the total number of seats in the Bundestag temporarily increases.

*Critical Evaluation of MPP-* While MMP retains the proportionality benefits of PR systems, it also ensures that elected representatives are linked to geographical districts. However, where voters have two votes—one for the party and one for their local representative—it is not always understood that the vote for the local representative is less important than the party vote in determining the overall allocation of seats in the legislature. Furthermore, MMP can create two classes of legislators—one group primarily responsible and beholden to a constituency, and another from the national party list without geographical ties and beholden to the party. This may have implications for the cohesiveness of groups of elected party representatives.

**2. Parallel systems-** Parallel systems also use both Proportional Representation (PR) and plurality/majority components, but unlike Mixed Member Proportional Representation systems, the PR component of a parallel system does not compensate for any disproportionality within the plurality/majority districts. In a Parallel system, as in MMP, two separate ballot papers, one for the plurality/majority seat and one for the PR seats, as is done for example in Japan, Lithuania, and Thailand. Parallel systems have been a product of electoral system design over the last decade and a half—perhaps because they appear to combine the benefits of PR lists with those of plurality/majority representation.

❖ **Case Study of Japan which uses Parallel System-** Japan uses Parallel system to elect members of the House of Representatives. General elections take place every four years. Just over 60% of members (289) are elected from single-seat constituencies. These MPs are elected by first

past the post – voters in a constituency have one vote and the candidate who receives the most votes wins and becomes the MP. The remaining 176 members are elected by the Party List system of proportional representation in 11 regional blocs that return between six and 30 members depending on the region's size and population. In this case, electors vote not for an individual candidate, but for a party, and the number of seats a party receives is based on the percentage of votes received. Each party gives its seats to the candidates at the top of its list, who are ranked from highest to lowest prior to the election. Unlike in the Additional Member System used in Scotland, Wales and London, the party-list seats don't compensate for the disproportionality of the first past the post seats.

*Critical Evaluation of Parallel systems* - In terms of disproportionality, Parallel systems usually give results which fall somewhere between pure plurality/majority and pure PR systems. One advantage is that, when there are enough PR seats, small minority parties which have been unsuccessful in the plurality/majority elections can still be rewarded for their votes by winning seats in the proportional allocation. In addition, a Parallel system should, in theory, fragment the party system less than a pure PR electoral system. However, as with MMP, it is likely that two classes of representatives will be created. Also, Parallel systems do not guarantee overall proportionality, and some parties may still be shut out of representation despite winning substantial numbers of votes. Parallel systems are also relatively complex and can leave voters confused as to the nature and operation of the electoral system.