

QUESTION SET III

UPSC Questions on Indian Polity (General Studies—Mains 2013–2022)

2013 TEST PAPER

1. The role of individual MPs (Members of Parliament) has diminished over the years and as a result healthy constructive debates on policy issues are not usually witnessed. How far can this be attributed to the anti-defection law which was legislated but with a different intention? [200 words] 10
2. Discuss Section 66A of IT Act, with reference to its alleged violation of Article 19 of the Constitution. [200 words] 10
3. Recent directives from Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas are perceived by the 'Nagas' as a threat to override the exceptional status enjoyed by the State. Discuss in light of Article 371A of the Indian Constitution. [200 words] 10
4. 'The Supreme Court of India keeps a check on arbitrary power of the Parliament in amending the Constitution.' Discuss critically. [200 words] 10
5. Many State Governments further bifurcate geographical administrative areas like Districts and Talukas for better governance. In light of the above, can it also be justified that more number of smaller States would bring in effective governance at State level? Discuss. [200 words] 10
6. Constitutional mechanisms to resolve the inter-state water disputes have failed to address and solve the problems. Is the failure due to structural or process inadequacy or both? Discuss. [200 words] 10
7. Discuss the recommendations of the 13th Finance Commission which have been a departure from the previous commissions for strengthening the local government finances. [200 words] 10
8. Pressure group politics is sometimes seen as the informal face of politics. With regards to the above, assess the structure and functioning of pressure groups in India. [200 words] 10
9. 'A national Lokpal, however strong it may be, cannot resolve the problems of immorality in public affairs.' Discuss. [200 words] 10
10. What is meant by Gujral doctrine? Does it have any relevance today? Discuss. [200 words] 10

2014 TEST PAPER

1. Starting from inventing the 'basic structure' doctrine, the judiciary has played a highly proactive role in ensuring that India develops into a thriving democracy. In light of the statement, evaluate the role played by judicial activism in achieving the ideals of democracy. [200 words] 12½
2. Though the federal principle is dominant in our Constitution and that principle is one of its basic features, but it is equally true that federalism under the

Indian Constitution leans in favour of a strong Centre, a feature that militates against the concept of strong federalism. Discuss.

[200 words] 12½

3. The 'Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and its Members' as envisaged in Article 105 of the Constitution leave room for a large number of uncodified and un-enumerated privileges to continue. Assess the reasons for the absence of legal codification of the 'parliamentary privileges'. How can this problem be addressed?

[200 words] 12½

4. What do you understand by the concept 'freedom of speech and expression'? Does it cover hate speech also? Why do the films in India stand on a slightly different plane from other forms of expression? Discuss. [200 words] 12½

5. Instances of President's delay in commuting death sentences has come under public debate as denial of justice. Should there be a time limit specified for the President to accept/reject such petitions? Analyse. [200 words] 12½

6. The size of the cabinet should be as big as governmental work justifies and as big as the Prime Minister can manage as a team. How far is the efficacy of a government then inversely related to the size of the cabinet? Discuss.

[200 words] 12½

7. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in India can be most effective when its tasks are adequately supported by other mechanisms that ensure the accountability of a government. In light of the above observation assess the role of NHRC as an effective complement to the judiciary and other institutions in promoting and protecting human rights standards. [200 words] 12½

uniform civil code as provided for in the Directive Principles of State Policy.

[200 words] 12½

2. The concept of cooperative federalism has been increasingly emphasized in recent years. Highlight the drawbacks in the existing structure and the extent to which cooperative federalism would answer the shortcomings.

[200 words] 12½

3. In absence of a well-educated and organized local level government-system, 'Panchayats' and 'Samitis' have remained mainly political institutions and not effective instruments of governance. Critically discuss. [200 words] 12½

4. Khap Panchayats have been in the news for functioning as extra-constitutional authorities, often delivering pronouncements amounting to human rights violations. Discuss critically the actions taken by the legislative, executive and the judiciary to set the things right in this regard. [200 words] 12½

5. Resorting to ordinances has always raised concern on violation of the spirit of separation of powers doctrine. While noting the rationales justifying the power to promulgate ordinances, analyze whether the decisions of the Supreme Court on the issue have further facilitated resorting to this power. Should the power to promulgate ordinances be repealed?

[200 words] 12½

6. What are the major changes brought in the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 through the recent Ordinance promulgated by the President? How far will it improve India's dispute resolution mechanism? Discuss.

[200 words] 12½

7. Does the right to clean environment entail legal regulations on burning crackers during Diwali? Discuss in the light of Article 21 of the Indian Constitution and Judgement(s) of the Apex Court in this regard.

[200 words] 12½

2015 TEST PAPER

1. Discuss the possible factors that inhibit India from enacting for its citizens a



8. "If amendment bill to the Whistleblowers Act, 2011 tabled in the Parliament is passed, there may be no one left to protect." Critically evaluate.

[200 words] 12½

2016 TEST PAPER

1. Discuss the essentials of the 69th Constitutional Amendment Act and anomalies, if any, that have led to recent reported conflicts between the elected representatives and the institution of the Lieutenant Governor in the administration of Delhi. Do you think that this will give rise to a new trend in the functioning of the Indian federal politics?

[200 words] 12½

2. To what extent is Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, bearing marginal note "temporary provision with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir", temporary? Discuss the future prospects of this provision in the context of Indian polity.

[200 words] 12½

3. "The Indian party system is passing through a phase of transition which looks to be full of contradictions and paradoxes." Discuss.

[200 words] 12½

4. Exercise of CAG's powers in relation to the accounts of the Union and the States is derived from Article 149 of the Indian Constitution. Discuss whether audit of the Government's policy implementation could amount to overstepping its own (CAG) jurisdiction.

[200 words] 12½

5. Discuss each adjective attached to the word 'Republic' in the 'Preamble'. Are they defendable in the present circumstances?

[200 words] 12½

6. What was held in the Coelho case? In this context, can you say that judicial review is of key importance amongst the basic features of the Constitution?

[200 words] 12½

7. Did the Government of India Act, 1935 lay down a federal constitution? Discuss.

[200 words] 12½

8. What is quasi-judicial body? Explain with the help of concrete examples.

[200 words] 12½

9. Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look East policy in the context of the post Cold War international scenario.

[200 words] 12½

2017 TEST PAPER

1. "The local self-government system in India has not proved to be effective instrument of governance". Critically examine the statement and give your views to improve the situation.

[150 words] 10

2. Critically examine the Supreme Court's judgement on 'National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014' with reference to appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India.

[150 words] 10

3. 'Simultaneous election to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering but it will reduce the government's accountability to the people' Discuss.

[150 words] 10

4. How do pressure groups influence Indian political process? Do you agree with this view that informal pressure groups have emerged as powerful than formal pressure groups in recent years?

[150 words] 10

5. Discuss the role of Public Accounts Committee in establishing accountability of the government to the people.

[150 words] 10

6. Explain the salient features of the Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016. Do you think it is efficacious enough 'to remove cascading effect of taxes and provide for common national market for goods and services'?

[250 words] 15

7. Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in the light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on Right to Privacy.

[250 words] 15

8. The Indian Constitution has provisions for holding joint session of the two houses of the Parliament. Enumerate the occasions when this would normally happen and also the occasions when it cannot, with reasons thereof.
[250 words] 15
9. To enhance the quality of democracy in India the Election Commission of India has proposed electoral reforms in 2016. What are the suggested reforms and how far are they significant to make democracy successful?
[250 words] 15

2018 TEST PAPER

1. In the light of recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India?
[150 words] 10
2. Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSCJ) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine.
[150 words] 10
3. Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force?
[150 words] 10
4. Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee.
[150 words] 10
5. "The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has a very vital role to play." Explain how this is reflected in the method and terms of his appointment as well as the range of powers he can exercise.
[150 words] 10
6. Whether the Supreme Court Judgement (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt. Governor and

- elected government of Delhi? Examine.
[250 words] 15
7. How far do you agree with the view that tribunals curtail the jurisdiction of ordinary courts? In view of the above, discuss the constitutional validity and competency of the tribunals in India.
[250 words] 15
8. How is the Finance Commission of India constituted? What do you about the terms of reference of the recently constituted Finance Commission? Discuss.
[250 words] 15
9. Assess the importance of Panchayat system in India as a part of local government. Apart from government grants, what sources the Panchayats can look out for financing developmental projects.
[250 words] 15
10. India and USA are two large democracies. Examine the basic tenets on which the two political systems are based.
[250 words] 15

2019 TEST PAPER

1. Do you think that constitution of India does not accept principle of strict separation of powers rather it is based on the principle of 'checks and balance'? Explain.
[150 words] 10
2. "The Central Administration Tribunal which was established for redressal of grievances and complaints by or against central government employees, nowadays is exercising its powers as an independent judicial authority." Explain.
[150 words] 10
3. What are the methods used by the Farmers organizations to influence the policy-makers in India and how effective are these methods?
[150 words] 10
4. From the resolution of contentious issues regarding distribution of legislative powers by the courts, 'Principle of Federal Supremacy' and 'Harmonious Construction' have emerged. Explain.
[150 words] 10

5. What can France learn from the Indian Constitution's approach to secularism? [150 words] 10
6. On what grounds a people's representative can be disqualified under the Representation of People Act, 1951? Also mention the remedies available to such person against his disqualification. [250 words] 15
7. "Parliament's power to amend the Constitution is a limited power and it cannot be enlarged into absolute power." In the light of this statement explain whether Parliament under Article 368 of the Constitution can destroy the Basic Structure of the Constitution by expanding its amending power? [250 words] 15
8. "The reservation of seats for women in the institutions of local self-government has had a limited impact on the patriarchal character of the Indian Political Process." Comment. [250 words] 15
9. "The Attorney-General is the chief legal adviser and lawyer of the Government of India." Discuss. [250 words] 15
10. Individual Parliamentarian's role as the national lawmaker is on a decline, which in turn, has adversely impacted the quality of debates and their outcome. Discuss. [250 words] 15
4. The judicial systems in India and UK seem to be converging as well as diverging in recent times. Highlight the key points of convergence and divergence between the two nations in terms of their judicial practices. [150 words] 10
5. 'Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker!' Do you think this practice should be adopted to impart objectivity to the office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha? What could be its implications for the robust functioning of parliamentary business in India? [150 words] 10
6. Indian Constitution exhibits centralising tendencies to maintain unity and integrity of the nation. Elucidate in the perspective of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897; The Disaster Management Act, 2005 and recently passed Farm Acts. [250 words] 15
7. Judicial Legislation is antithetical to the doctrine of separation of powers as envisaged in the Indian Constitution. In this context justify the filing of large number of public interest petitions praying for issuing guidelines to executive authorities. [250 words] 15
8. The strength and sustenance of local institutions in India has shifted from their formative phase of 'Functions, Functionaries and Funds' to the contemporary stage of 'Functionality'. Highlight the critical challenges faced by local institutions in terms of their functionality in recent times. [250 words] 15

2020 TEST PAPER

1. "There is a need for simplification of procedure for disqualification of persons found guilty of corrupt practices under the Representation of Peoples Act". Comment. [150 words] 10
2. "Recent amendments to the Right to Information Act will have profound impact on the autonomy and independence of the Information Commission". Discuss. [150 words] 10
3. How far do you think cooperation, competition and confrontation have shaped the nature of federation in India? Cite some recent examples to validate your answer. [150 words] 10
9. Rajya Sabha has been transformed from a 'useless stepney tyre' to the most useful supporting organ in past few decades. Highlight the factors as well as the areas in which this transformation could be visible. [250 words] 15
10. Which steps are required for constitution-alization of a Commission? Do you think imparting constitutionality to the National Commission for Women would ensure greater gender justice and empowerment in India? Give reasons. [250 words] 15

2021 TEST PAPER

1. 'Constitutional Morality' is rooted in the Constitution itself and is founded on its essential facets. Explain the doctrine of 'Constitutional Morality' with the help of relevant judicial decisions. [150 words] 10
2. Discuss the desirability of greater representation to women in the higher judiciary to ensure diversity, equity and inclusiveness. [150 words] 10
3. How have the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission of India enabled the States to improve their fiscal position? [150 words] 10
4. To what extent, in your view, the Parliament is able to ensure accountability of the executive in India? [150 words] 10
5. "Pressure groups play a vital role in influencing public policy making in India." Explain how the business associations contribute to public policies. [150 words] 10
6. The jurisdiction of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) regarding lodging an FIR and conducting probe within a particular State is being questioned by various States. However, the power of the States to withhold consent to the CBI is not absolute. Explain with special reference to the federal character of India. [250 words] 15
7. Though the Human Rights Commissions have contributed immensely to the protection of human rights in India, yet they have failed to assert themselves against the mighty and powerful. Analyzing their structural and practical limitations, suggest remedial measures. [250 words] 15
8. Analyze the distinguishing features of the notion of Right to Equality in the Constitutions of the USA and India. [250 words] 15
9. Explain the constitutional provisions under which Legislative Councils are

established. Review the working and current status of Legislative Councils with suitable illustrations. [250 words] 15

10. Do Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees keep the administration on its toes and inspire reverence for parliamentary control? Evaluate the working of such committees with suitable examples. [250 words] 15

2022 TEST PAPER

1. "The most significant achievement of modern law in India is the constitution-alization of environmental problems by the Supreme Court." Discuss this statement with the help of relevant case laws. [150 words] 10
2. "Right of movement and residence throughout the territory of India are freely available to the Indian citizens, but these rights are not absolute." Comment. [150 words] 10
3. To what extent, in your opinion, has the decentralisation of power in India changed the governance landscape at the grassroots? [150 words] 10
4. Discuss the role of the Vice-President of India as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. [150 words] 10
5. Discuss the role of the National Commission for Backward Classes in the wake of its transformation from a statutory body to a constitutional body. [150 words] 10
6. Discuss the procedures to decide the disputes arising out of the election of a Member of the Parliament or State Legislature under The Representation of the People Act, 1951. What are the grounds on which the election of any returned candidate may be declared void? What remedy is available to the aggrieved party against the decision? Refer to the case laws. [250 words] 15
7. Discuss the essential conditions for exercise of the legislative powers by the Governor. Discuss the legality of



- re-promulgation of ordinances by the Governor without placing them before the Legislature. [250 words] 15
- 8.** "While the national political parties in India favour centralisation, the regional parties are in favour of State autonomy." Comment. [250 words] 15

- 9.** Critically examine the procedures through which the Presidents of India and France are elected. [250 words] 15
- 10.** Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in the light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct. [250 words] 15

Ques. 7 **ESSAY TYPE**

Explain the concept of party system and its relationship with the centralization and decentralization of power. Do you think that the centralization of power is compatible with the federal structure? Explain your answer with reference to the Indian Constitution.

Discuss the reasons why the centralization of power has been adopted in India. Do you think that the centralization of power has been successful? Explain your answer with reference to the Indian Constitution.

What are the merits and demerits of the centralization of power? Do you think that the centralization of power is compatible with the federal structure? Explain your answer with reference to the Indian Constitution.

What are the merits and demerits of the centralization of power? Do you think that the centralization of power is compatible with the federal structure? Explain your answer with reference to the Indian Constitution.

What are the merits and demerits of the centralization of power? Do you think that the centralization of power is compatible with the federal structure? Explain your answer with reference to the Indian Constitution.

What are the merits and demerits of the centralization of power? Do you think that the centralization of power is compatible with the federal structure? Explain your answer with reference to the Indian Constitution.

What are the merits and demerits of the centralization of power? Do you think that the centralization of power is compatible with the federal structure? Explain your answer with reference to the Indian Constitution.

What are the merits and demerits of the centralization of power? Do you think that the centralization of power is compatible with the federal structure? Explain your answer with reference to the Indian Constitution.

What are the merits and demerits of the centralization of power? Do you think that the centralization of power is compatible with the federal structure? Explain your answer with reference to the Indian Constitution.

What are the merits and demerits of the centralization of power? Do you think that the centralization of power is compatible with the federal structure? Explain your answer with reference to the Indian Constitution.

What are the merits and demerits of the centralization of power? Do you think that the centralization of power is compatible with the federal structure? Explain your answer with reference to the Indian Constitution.

QUESTION SET IV

Practice Questions on Indian Polity (General Studies—Mains)

I. LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Instructions: Answer the following questions. Answer to each question should be in about 250 words. Each question carries 15 Marks.

1. How does the parliament exercise control over the Union Executive? How can it be made more effective?
2. Explain the ways of acquiring and losing Indian Citizenship.
3. Explain the right to freedom of religion as envisaged in the Indian Constitution.
4. Evaluate the position of the President of India.
5. Discuss the features of the party system in India.
6. Describe the procedure for the amendment of the Indian Constitution. What are the criticisms levelled against it?
7. Critically examine the extent to which the Directive Principles of State Policy have been implemented. What measures do you suggest for their better implementation?
8. Explain the principles of Indian foreign policy.
9. Critically examine the emergency powers of the Indian President.
10. Describe the relative roles of the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha in the Indian Political System.

11. Explain the jurisdiction and powers of the Supreme Court.
12. Explain the role played by the NITI Aayog in promoting the Cooperative Federalism in India.
13. "The Indian Constitution is federal in form but unitary in spirit". Discuss.
14. What is the need for promoting National Integration in India? What measures do you suggest in this regard?
15. Describe the various constitutional provisions for the protection and development of women and children in India.
16. What has been the controversy regarding the amendability of Fundamental Rights? What constitutes the 'basic structure' of the Constitution?
17. What are the changes introduced in the constitutional provisions with respect to the centre-state financial relations by the 101st Amendment Act? Explain.
18. Describe the various changes made in the Constitution by the 42nd and 44th Amendment Acts.
19. What are the anti-defection provisions under the Constitution? What are the recommendations of the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution in this regard?
20. What is a coalition government? What has been its experience in India at the central level?

II. SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Instructions: Answer the following questions. Answer to each question should be in about 150 words. Each question carries 10 Marks.

1. Describe the composition of the Constituent Assembly of India.
2. What are the constitutional provisions with respect to the reorganization of states?
3. How does the writ jurisdiction of the Supreme Court differ from that of a High Court?
4. How the Directive Principles differ from the Fundamental Rights?
5. Explain the role of regional parties in Indian Politics.
6. Describe the composition and functions of a State Public Service Commission.
7. Explain the ideals contained in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution.
8. Examine the functioning of Judicial Review in the Indian Political System.
9. "India is a secular state". Explain.
10. Explain the six freedoms guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution.
11. What is meant by President's Rule? Explain.
12. Critically examine the discretionary powers of a State Governor.
13. Describe the composition and functions of the National Commission for Women.
14. What are the unitary features of the Indian Constitution?
15. Explain the procedure for the impeachment of the President.
16. What are the functions of the Vice-President of India? How does he differ from the American Vice-President?
17. What are the special powers enjoyed by the Rajya Sabha? What is its utility?
18. Describe the powers and functions of the Speaker of Lok Sabha.
19. What is a 'cut motion'? What are its different kinds? What is its significance?
20. How is the State Legislative Assembly supreme over the State Legislative Council?
21. What is the composition of the Finance Commission? What are its functions?
22. Describe the features of the new Panchayati Raj System as introduced by the 73rd Amendment Act.
23. What is voting behaviour? Explain the determinants of voting behaviour in India.
24. What is meant by 'Martial Law'? What are the constitutional provisions in this regard?
25. What are the circumstances under which the Parliament can legislate on the State List subjects?
26. What is 'Sovereignty of Parliament'? Is Indian Parliament a sovereign body?
27. What are the constitutional provisions with respect to the joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament?
28. Describe the ordinance-making power of the President of India.
29. Who are linguistic minorities? What are the constitutional safeguards for them?
30. Describe the composition and functions of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights.
31. What is meant by 'Gujral Doctrine'? Explain.
32. Distinguish between 'Judicial Review' and 'Judicial Activism'.
33. Discuss the benefits of the Lok Adalats.
34. What is meant by the 'Doctrine of Pith and Substance'? What are its principles?
35. What is the present position of the Right to Property? Elaborate.
36. How is the Vice-President of India elected? How is it different from the election of the President of India?
37. What are the changes made in the constitution by the 42nd and 44th Amendment Acts with respect to the powers of the President in relation to the Central Council of Ministers?
38. Distinguish between Public Bill and Private Bill.
39. What are the functions of the Zonal Councils?
40. What is meant by the Doctrine of 'Colourable Legislation'? What are its propositions?