

Very Short Answer Questions

Q.1. What is SEBC?

Ans. SEBC is Socially and Economically Backward Classes. SEBC is another name for all those people who belong to castes that are considered backward by the government.

Q.2. What is the role of the President in India?

Ans. President is the Executive head of the state and is the highest formal authority in the country.

Q.3. What are the Prime Minister's powers in India?

Ans. Prime Minister is the head of the government and actually exercises all governmental powers. He takes most of the decisions in the cabinet meetings.

Q.4. What do you know about Mandal Commission?

Ans. Mandal Commission was asked to determine the criteria to identify the socially and educationally backward classes in India and recommend steps to be taken for their advancement.

Q.5. What is the role of government in a citizen's life?

Ans. The government is responsible for ensuring security to the citizens and providing facilities for education and health to all. It collects taxes and spends the money on administration, defence and development programmes.

Q.6. What is an assembly of elected representatives called in India?

Ans. In India, such a national assembly of elected representatives is called Parliament.

At the state level this is called Legislature or Legislative Assembly.

Q.7. Which two houses form the parliament of our country?

Ans. Council of States or Rajya Sabha and the House of People or Lok Sabha.

Q.8. What is the length of the term of a government in India?

Ans. It is of 5 years.

Q.9. Can the houses be dissolved or is it permanent?

Ans. The Lok Sabha can be dissolved if no-confidence motion is passed against it but, Rajya Sabha cannot be dissolved as it is a permanent house.

Q.10. What is an executive?

Ans. At different levels of any government, we find functionaries, who take day-to-day decisions but do not exercise supreme power on behalf of the people. All those functionaries are collectively known as the executive.

Q.11. Why are government functionaries called as the Executive?

Ans. They are called the executive because they are in-charge of the execution of the policies of the government.

Q.12. How is the Prime Minister appointed?

Ans. The President appoints the Prime Minister. The President appoints the leader of the majority party or the coalitions of parties that commands a majority in the Lok Sabha as Prime Minister.

Q.13. How are ministers chosen by the Prime Minister?

Ans. The ministers are usually from the party or the coalition that has the majority in the Lok Sabha.

Q.14. What is a Council of Ministers?

Ans. Council of Ministers is the official name for the body that includes all the ministers. It wholly has 60 to 80 ministers of different ranks.

Q.15. Who are the Cabinet Ministers?

Ans. Cabinet Ministers are usually top level leaders of the ruling party or parties who are in-charge of the major ministries.

Q.16. Who are Ministers of State with independent charge?

Ans. Ministers of State with independent charge are usually in-charge of smaller ministries. They participate in the cabinet meetings only when specially invited.

Q.17. Why is parliamentary democracy in most countries often known as the cabinet form of government?

Ans. The cabinet works as a team. The ministers may have different views and opinions but everyone has to own upto every decision of the cabinet.

Q.18. What is called as 'the judiciary'?

Ans. All the courts at different levels in a country put together are called the judiciary.

Q.19. Which courts are covered under Indian Judiciary?

Ans. The Indian Judiciary consists of a supreme court for the entire nation, high courts in the states and district courts and the courts at the local level.

Q.20. How can a judge be removed?

Ans. A judge can be removed only by an impeachment motion passed by two-thirds members of the two houses of the parliament. It has never happened so far in the history of Indian democracy.

Q.21. How does judiciary act as a guardian of the fundamental rights?

Ans. The citizens have the right to approach the courts to seek remedy in case of any violation of their rights.

Short Answer Questions

Q.1. Why do democratic governments insist on political institutions?

Ans. (i) Government insists on political institutions so that welfare schemes can be developed and various activities for the betterment of country and citizens can be thought of and carried out properly.

(ii) The monitoring aspect can be taken care of too.

(iii) A democracy works well when these political institutions perform functions assigned to them.

Q.2. What is the role of Parliament in law making?

Ans. (i) Parliament is the final authority for making laws in any country.

(ii) Parliaments all over the world can make new laws, change existing laws or abolish existing laws and make new ones in their place.

Q.3. How does Lok Sabha exercise money powers?

Ans. (i) Lok Sabha exercises more powers than Rajya Sabha in money matters.

(ii) Once the Lok Sabha passes the budget of the government or any other money related law, the Rajya Sabha cannot reject it.

(iii) The Rajya Sabha can delay it by 14 days or suggest changes in it. The Lok Sabha may or may not accept these changes.

Q.4. How does Lok Sabha exercise control over the Council of Ministers?

Ans. (i) Lok Sabha controls the council of ministers.

(ii) If the majority of the Lok Sabha members say they have 'no confidence' in the Council of Ministers, all ministers including the Prime Minister, have to quit.

(iii) The Rajya Sabha does not have this power.

Q.5. Who is called 'Permanent Executive'?

Ans. (i) Permanent Executive members are appointed on a long-term basis. They are called permanent executive or civil services.

(ii) They remain in office even when the ruling party changes.

(iii) These officers work under political executive and assist them in carrying out day-to-day administration.

Q.6. How does the President act as an Executive Head?

Ans. (i) The President is the head of the state. In our political system, the head of the state exercises only nominal powers.

(ii) His functions are to a large extent ceremonial.

(iii) The President supervises the overall functioning of all the political institutions in the country so that they operate in harmony to achieve the objectives of the state.

Q.7. How does President give his assent to a bill?

Ans. (i) A bill passed by the parliament becomes a law only after the President gives assent to it.

(ii) If the president wants, he/she can delay this for some time and send the bill back to the parliament for reconsideration.

(iii) But if the parliament passes the bill again, she/he has to sign it.

Q.8. How is the Chief Justice of India appointed?

Ans. (i) The senior most judge of the supreme court is usually appointed the chief justice.

(ii) Once a person is appointed as the judge of the Supreme Court or the high courts, it is nearly impossible to remove him or her from that position.

Q.9. What is judicial review?

Ans. It refers to the power of judiciary to interpret the constitution and to declare any lower order of the legislature and executive void, if it doesn't find them in accordance with the constitution of India.

Q.10. Who are the major functionaries in India?

Ans. The major functionaries of our country are:

(i) The President who is the head of the state and is the highest formal authority in the country.

(ii) The Prime Minister who is the head of the government and one who actually exercises all the government powers. He takes most of the decisions in the cabinet meetings.

(iii) The Parliament which consists of two Houses—Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The Prime Minister must have the support of a majority of the Lok Sabha members.

Q.11. Why had the Mandal Commission become a debatable issue in India?

Ans.

- The newspapers and magazines were full of different views and opinions on this issue.
- It led to widespread protests and counter-protests, some of which were violent.
- People reacted strongly because this decision affected thousands of job opportunities.
- Some felt that the existence of inequalities among people of different castes in India necessitated job reservations.
- Others were of the view that this was unfair as it would deny equality of opportunity to those who did not belong to a backward community.
- Some felt that this would hamper national unity.

Q.12. What is the need for political institutions?

Ans.

- The government is responsible for ensuring security to the citizens and providing facilities for education and health to all.
- It collects taxes and spends the money thus raised on administration, defence and development programmes.
- It formulates and implements several welfare schemes.
- To attend to all these tasks, several arrangements are made in all modern democracies. Such arrangements are called Political Institutions.

Q.13. What are the basic powers and functions of each institution in India?

Ans. (i) The Prime Minister and the Cabinet are institutions that take all important policy decisions.

(ii) The Civil Servants, who work together with the ministers, are responsible for taking steps to implement the ministers' decisions.

(iii) The Supreme Court is an institution where disputes: (a) between citizens of the country, (b) between citizens and the government, (c) between two or more state governments and (d) between union and state governments are finally settled.

Q.14. State how working with institutions is not an easy task.

Ans. (i) Institutions involve rules and regulations. This can bind the hands of the leaders.

(ii) Institutions involve meetings, committees and routines. This often leads to delays and complications. Therefore, dealing with institutions can be frustrating.

(iii) Some of the delays and complications introduced by the institutions are very useful. They provide an opportunity for a wider set of people to be consulted in any decision-making.

(iv) Institutions make it difficult to take good decisions very quickly, but they also make it equally difficult to rush through a bad decision.

Q.15. What is the role of the Parliament?

Ans. (i) Parliament is the final authority for making laws in any country. The Parliament can change the existing laws, make new laws or abolish the existing laws.

(ii) The government can take a decision only so long as they enjoy support of the parliament.

(iii) It is the highest forum of debate and discussion on public issues and national policy in any country.

Q.16. In what ways does the Lok Sabha exercise more powers than the Rajya Sabha?

Ans. (i) Any ordinary law needs to be passed by both the Houses. But if there is a difference between the two Houses, the final decision is taken in a joint session. However, since the number of members in the Lok Sabha are more; their view or decision is more likely to prevail.

(ii) The Lok Sabha exercises more powers in money matters. Once the Lok Sabha passes the budget of the government or any other money related law, the Rajya Sabha cannot reject it. The Rajya Sabha can delay it only by 14 days or can suggest changes in it. The Lok Sabha may or may not accept the change.

(iii) The Lok Sabha controls the Council of Ministers. If the majority of the Lok Sabha members say that they have 'no confidence' in the Council of Ministers; all the ministers including the Prime Minister, have to quit. The Rajya Sabha does not have this power.

Q.17. Which two categories constitute the executive in a democratic country?

Ans. (i) Political Executive: One that is elected by the people for a specific period is called the 'political executive'. Political leaders who take big decisions fall in this category.

(ii) Permanent Executive: In this category, people are appointed on a long-term basis. This is called the 'permanent executive or civil services'. They are the civil servants. They remain in office even when the ruling party changes. These officers work under ministers and assist them in carrying out the day-to-day administration.

Q.18. What is the importance of civil servants in running the government?

Ans. (i) The civil servants are usually more educated and have more expert knowledge of the subject.

(ii) Sometimes, ministers may know very little about the technical matters that come under their ministry, but they are supported in all these matters by the civil servants.

This could easily happen in ministries like the Defence, Industry, Health, Science and Technology, Mining, etc.

Q.19. How are the Council of Ministers categorised?

Ans. The Council of Ministers are classified as follows:

(i) Cabinet Ministers: They are usually top-level leaders of the ruling party or parties who are in charge of the major ministries. Usually, the Cabinet Ministers meet to take decisions in the name of the Council of Ministers.

(ii) Ministers of State with Independent Charge: They are usually in charge of smaller ministries. They participate in the cabinet meeting only when they are specially invited.

(iii) Ministers of State: They are attached to and are required to assist the Cabinet Ministers.

Q.20. What powers rest with the Prime Minister of India?

Ans. As a head of the government, the Prime Minister has wide-ranging powers:

(i) He chairs the Cabinet meetings.

(ii) He coordinates the work of different departments.

(iii) He supervises different ministries.

(iv) His decisions are final in case disagreements arise between departments.

(v) He distributes and redistributes work to the ministers.

(vi) He also has the power to dismiss ministers.

When the Prime Minister quits, the entire ministry quits.

Q.21. How is the President of India elected?

Ans. (i) The President is not elected directly by the people.

(ii) All the Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of State Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) elect the President.

(iii) A candidate contesting for the President's post has to get a majority of votes to win the elections.

This ensures that the President can be seen to represent the entire nation.

Q.22. Does the President exercise his powers on the advice of the Council of Ministers?

Ans. (i) The President can ask the Council of Ministers to reconsider their advice. But if the same advice is given again, he or she is bound to act according to it.

(ii) A Bill passed by the Parliament becomes a law only after the President gives assent to it. If the President wants, he or she can send back the Bill to the Parliament for reconsideration. But if the Parliament passes the Bill again, he or she has to sign it.

Q.23. What are the discretionary powers of the President?

OR

How is the Prime Minister elected?

OR

In one political system, the head of the state exercises only nominal powers. Evaluate the statement and mention any three situations in which President only uses his discretion.

Ans. (i) The President appoints the Prime Minister. When a party or coalition of parties secures a clear majority in the elections, the President has to appoint the leader of the majority party or the coalition that enjoys majority support in the Lok Sabha.

(ii) When no party or coalition gets a majority in the Lok Sabha, the President exercises his or her discretion. The President appoints a leader who, in her opinion, can muster majority support in the Lok Sabha. In such a case, the President can ask the newly appointed Prime Minister to prove a majority support in the Lok Sabha within a specified time.

(iii) The Prime Minister does not have a fixed tenure. He continues in power so long as he remains the leader of the majority party or coalition.

Q.24. What does ‘independence of judiciary’ mean?

Ans. (i) The Judiciary is not under the control of the Legislature or the Executive.

(ii) The judges do not act on the directions of the government or according to the wishes of the party in power.

(iii) That is why, all modern democracies have units that are independent of the Legislature and the Executive.

Q.25. What does ‘integration of judiciary’ mean?

Ans. It means that the Supreme Court controls the judicial administration in the country. Its decisions are binding on all the other courts of the country. It can take up any dispute:

(i) between the citizens of the country;

(ii) between citizens and the government;

(iii) between two or more state governments; and

(iv) between the union and state governments.

It is the highest court of appeal in civil and criminal cases. It can hear appeals against the decisions of the high courts.

Q.26. What do you understand by Public Interest Litigation?

Ans. (i) In recent years, the courts have given several judgements and directives to protect public interest and human rights.

(ii) Anyone can approach the courts, if public interest is hurt by the actions of the government. This is called Public Interest Litigation.

(iii) The courts intervene to prevent the misuse of the government’s power to make decisions. They check malpractices on the part of the public officials.

Q.27. What does executive mean?

Ans. (i) At different levels of any government, we find functionaries who take day-to-day decisions but do not exercise supreme powers on behalf of the people.

(ii) All those functionaries are collectively known as executive.

(iii) They are called executive because they are incharge of the 'execution' of the policies of the government.

Thus, when we talk about 'the government' we usually mean 'executive'.

Q.28. How are ministers appointed?

Ans. (i) The ministers are usually from the party or the coalition that has the majority in the Lok Sabha.

(ii) The Prime Minister is free to choose ministers as long as they are members of Parliament.

(iii) Sometimes, a person who is not a member of Parliament can also become a minister. But such a person has to get elected to one of the Houses of Parliament within six months of appointment as minister.

Q.29. Who forms the cabinet?

Ans. (i) Cabinet is formed by the top-level leaders of the ruling party or parties who are in charge of the major ministries.

(ii) Usually the cabinet meets to take decisions in the name of the Council of Ministers.

(iii) Cabinet is thus the inner ring of the Council of Ministers. It comprises about twenty ministers.

Q.30. What is Impeachment Motion?

Ans. (i) A judge can be removed only by an impeachment motion passed separately by two-third members of the two Houses of the Parliament.

(ii) Similarly, with impeachment, even President of India can be removed. It is passed by both the Houses of Parliament by two-third members of majority.

Q.31. Suppose you are MLA of your area. What values would you follow to become popular in your area?

Ans. (i) Take up community service.

(ii) Ensure hygiene.

(iii) Solve water and electricity problems.

(iv) Interact with people on a regular basis.

(v) Try to solve grievances of people.

Q.32. You are elected as a civil servant, who is a permanent executive. What values would you idolise to serve as a public servant?

Ans. (i) Follow integrity.

(ii) Be neutral.

(iii) Make policies oriented in public interest.

(iv) Serve people impartially.

(v) Not to be iron-hearted. Implement policies with full zeal and endeavour.

Q.33. A teacher has to organise a mock parliament. She can either hold a mock parliament of Rajya Sabha or Lok Sabha. Which one should the teacher choose and why?

Ans. The teacher should choose to hold a session of Lok Sabha as it is the House of People. It represents people's interests directly. The government enjoys majority in Lok Sabha and is responsible to it. The government can be removed by passing a no-confidence motion. These are rational grounds for conducting a mock session of Lok Sabha instead of Rajya Sabha.

Long Answer Questions

Q.1. Why was the Mandal Commission appointed by the Indian government?

Ans. (i) The government of India had appointed the Second Backward Classes Commission in 1979. It was headed by B.P. Mandal.

(ii) Hence, it was popularly called the Mandal Commission.

(iii) It was asked to determine the criteria to identify the socially and educationally backward classes in India and recommend steps to be taken for their advancement.

(iv) The Commission gave a report in 1980 and made many recommendations. One of these was that 27 per cent of the government jobs to be reserved for the socially and economically backward classes.

Q.2. What developments took place after the recommendations of the Mandal Commission?

Ans. (i) The President of India in his address to the Parliament announced the intention of the government to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission.

(ii) On 6 August 1990, the Union Cabinet took a formal decision to implement the recommendations.

(iii) Next day, the then Prime Minister V.P. Singh informed the Parliament about this decision through a statement in both the Houses of Parliament.

(iv) The decision of the Cabinet was sent to the Department of Personnel and Training. The senior officers of the department drafted an order in line with the Cabinet decision and took the minister's approval. An officer signed the order on behalf of the Union government called the 'Office Memorandum'.

Q.3. Who resolved the dispute of the Mandal Commission? How did it materialise later on?

Ans. (i) Some persons and associations opposed this order and filed a number of cases in the courts.

(ii) They appealed to the court's to declare the order invalid and stop its implementation.

(iii) The Supreme Court of India bunched all these cases together. This case was known as 'Indira Sawhney and others Vs Union of India case'.

(iv) Eleven judges of the Supreme Court heard the arguments of both sides.

(v) By a majority, the Supreme Court judges in 1992 declared that this order of the Government of India was valid.

(vi) At the same time, the Supreme Court asked the government to modify its original order.

(vii) It said that well-to-do persons among the backward classes should be excluded from getting the benefit of reservation.

(viii) Accordingly, the Department of Personnel and Training issued another Memorandum on September 8, 1993. The dispute thus came to an end and this policy has been followed since then.

Q.4. Describe the functions and powers of the Parliament.

Ans. Functions and powers of the Parliament:

(i) Final Authority for making laws.

(ii) Power to amend the Constitution.

(iii) Controls and checks the Council of Ministers.

(iv) Can remove the President from office through the process of impeachment.

(v) Controls all the money that governments have.

Q.5. Why should ministers have the final say in technical matters?

Ans. (i) In a democracy, the will of the people is supreme.

(ii) The minister is elected by the people and is thus, empowered to exercise the will of the people on their behalf.

(iii) The minister is finally answerable to the people for all the consequences of the decision taken by him or her. That is why, the minister takes all the final decisions.

(iv) The minister decides the overall framework and objectives in which decisions on a policy should be made.

(v) The minister takes the advice of experts on all the technical matters. But very often, experts hold different opinions or place before the minister more than one option. Depending on what the overall objective is, the minister decides.

Q.6. What is the role of the Cabinet Ministers in a democracy?

Ans. (i) Parliamentary democracy in most countries is often known as the Cabinet form of government.

(ii) The Cabinet works as a team.

(iii) The ministers may have different views and opinions, but everyone has to own up to every decision of the Cabinet.

(iv) No minister can openly criticise any decision of the government even if it is about another ministry or department.

(v) Every ministry has secretaries who are civil servants. The secretaries provide the necessary background information to the ministers to take decisions.

(vi) The Cabinet as a team is assisted by the Cabinet Secretariat. This includes many senior civil servants who try to coordinate the working of different ministries.

**Q.7. 'The Prime Minister is the real executive head of our country.'
Elucidate.**

Ans. (i) As political parties have come to play a major role in politics, the Prime Minister controls the Cabinet and the Parliament through the party.

(ii) In India, we have a tendency towards the concentration of powers in the hands of the Prime Minister.

(iii) The President, who is the executive head of India, also takes decision as per the advice of the Prime Minister.

The extent of power wielded by a PM also depends on the personality of the person holding that position. For example, Indira Gandhi was a very powerful leader compared to her colleagues in the Cabinet.

Q.8. State the powers of the President.

Ans. (i) All government activities take place in the name of the President.

(ii) All laws and major policy decisions of the government are issued in his/her name.

(iii) All major appointments are made in the name of the President. These include the appointment of the Chief Justice of India, the judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts of the states, the governors of the states, the Election Commissioners, and ambassadors to other countries, etc.

(iv) All international treaties and agreements are made in the name of the President.

(v) The President is the supreme commander of the defence forces of India.

Q.9. How are the judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts appointed and how can a judge be removed?

Ans. Appointment:

(i) The judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister and in consultation with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

(ii) The seniormost judge of the Supreme Court is usually appointed by the Chief Justice.

Removal:

(i) Once a person is appointed as 'judge' of the Supreme Court or the High Court, it is nearly impossible to remove him or her from that position. It is as difficult as removing the President of India.

(ii) A judge can be removed only by an impeachment motion passed separately by two-third members of the two Houses of the Parliament.

Q.10. Explain any five powers of the Supreme Court of India.

Ans. (i) The Supreme Court can take up disputes between governments, citizens and government, governments at the union and state level.

(ii) Highest Court of justice hears appeals against High Court decisions, civil and criminal cases.

(iii) Guardian of our constitution and fundamental rights.

(iv) It can declare any law of the legislature or executive invalid.

(v) People can approach Supreme Court if their rights are violated.

HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills)

Q.1. Describe the role played by the contemporary Prime Minister of India in the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report.

Ans. (i) Mandal Commission submitted its report in 1980. It was awaited for many years by parliamentarians.

(ii) The Commission gave its report and made many recommendations.

(iii) One of these was that 27 per cent of government jobs be reserved for the socially and economically backward classes.

(iv) For several years, many parliamentarians and parties kept demanding the implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

(v) Then came Lok Sabha elections in which Janta Dal promised that if voted to power, it would implement the Mandal Commission report.

(vi) Janta Dal did form the government and V. P. Singh became the Prime Minister. Union Cabinet took a formal decision to implement the recommendations.

(vii) Prime Minister informed the Parliament about this decision.

(viii) Finally Mandal Commission report got implemented by the Prime Minister of India.

Q.2. Write any three constraints on the powers of the Prime Minister of a coalition government.

OR

What is the role of the Prime Minister in a coalition government?

Ans. (i) The Prime Minister of a coalition government cannot take decisions as he likes.

(ii) He has to accommodate different groups and factions in his party as well as among alliance partners.

(iii) He also has to heed to the view and positions of the coalition partners and other parties, on whose support the survival of the government depends.