

CIVICS

Chapter 5: Working of Institutions



Important Questions

Multiple Choice questions-

Question 1. Who is guardian of Fundamental Rights?

- (a) President
- (b) Parliament
- (c) Council of Ministers
- (d) Judiciary

Question 2. Who among the following is part of the political executive?

- (a) District Collector
- (b) Secretary of the ministry of Home Affairs
- (c) Home Minister
- (d) Director General of Police

Question 3. Which of the following statements about the judiciary is false?

- (a) Every law passed by the Parliament needs approval of the Supreme Court
- (b) Judiciary can strike down a law if it goes against the spirit of the Constitution
- (c) Judiciary is independent of the Executive
- (d) Any citizen can approach the court if his rights are violated.

Question 4. What is the tenure of Lok Sabha?

- (a) Four years
- (b) Five years
- (c) Six years
- (d) None of these

Question 5. How many members can President nominate for Lok Sabha?

- (a) 2 members
- (b) 12 members
- (c) 14 members
- (d) None of these

Question 6. How many members of Rajya Sabha are nominated by President?

- (a) 2 members
- (b) 12 members

- (c) 14 members
- (d) None of these

Question 7. Whose assent is required for a passed bill to become law?

- (a) Prime Minister
- (b) President
- (c) Vice-President
- (d) None of these

Question 8. Who appoints Prime Minister?

- (a) President
- (b) Ministers
- (c) Chief Justice of Supreme Court
- (d) None of these

Question 9. Who acts as President if office of the President falls vacant?

- (a) Prime Minister
- (b) Chief Justice
- (c) Vice President
- (d) None of these

Question 10. Who has the power to issue ordinance in India?

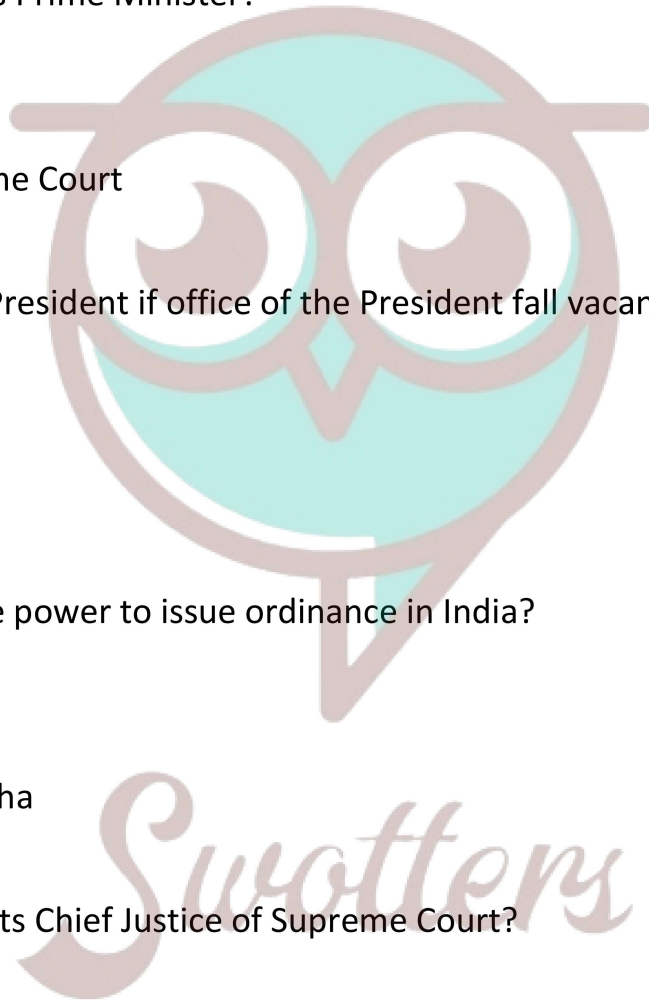
- (a) President
- (b) Vice President
- (c) Chairman of Rajya Sabha
- (d) None of these

Question 11. Who appoints Chief Justice of Supreme Court?

- (a) Prime Minister
- (b) President
- (c) Vice President
- (d) None of these

Question 12. Who is the interpreter of the constitution?

- (a) Parliament
- (b) President
- (c) Supreme Court



(d) None of these

Question 13. How many houses are there in Indian Parliament?

(a) One

(b) Two

(c) Three

(d) Four

Question 14. What is the term tenure of Lok Sabha?

(a) Three years

(b) Four years

(c) Five years

(d) Six years

Question 15. Which is the permanent house of the Indian Parliament?

(a) Rajya Sabha

(b) Lok Sabha

(c) Both

(d) None of these

Very Short:

1. What percentage of civil posts and services under the Government of India have been reserved for the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC)?
2. With what name was the Second Backward Classes Commission known as?
3. Which Office Order was supposed to affect thousands of jobs every year?
4. When was the Mandal Commission constituted?
5. Write the sentence each about the role played by the following people with reference to Office Memorandum No 36012/31/90.
 1. Joint Secretary
 2. B. P. Mandal
 3. V.P. Singh
 4. Indira Sawhney
6. How does a democracy work?
7. What is the function of the Department of Personnel and Training?
8. What does the Cabinet do?

9. What does the Supreme Court do?
10. What is the job of the Parliament in India?

Short Questions:

1. What are the powers and functions of the Prime, Minister of India?
2. Write a note on the Vice-President of India.
3. Write a short note on the Council of Ministers.
4. How is the Speaker of the Lok Sabha elected? Mention some of his functions.
5. What do you know about the state legislature?
6. What is meant by Financial Emergency?
7. Write a few lines on the emergency arising out of the failure of constitutional machinery in States.

Long Questions:

1. Describe the functions of the government briefly.
2. Discuss some of the major functions of the Parliament in a democracy.
3. In what respects does the Lok Sabha appear more powerful than the Rajya Sabha?
4. What do you mean by 'Political Executive'? Briefly state functions/powers.
5. Why is the Prime Minister the most important political office in the country?

Answer Key:

MCQ:

1. (d) Judiciary
2. (c) Home Minister
3. (a) Every law passed by the Parliament needs approval of the Supreme Court
4. (b) Five years
5. (a) 2 members
6. (b) 12 members
7. (a) President
8. (a) President
9. (c) Vice President
- 10.(a) President
- 11.(b) President

12.(c) Supreme Court

13.(b) Two

14.(c) Five years

15.(a) Rajya Sabha

Very Short Answer:

1. 27% the vacancies.

2. Mandal Commission.

3. OM No. 36012/31/90-Est (SCT) dated 13.8.1990.

4. 1978.

5.

1. Joint Secretary: The officer who signed OM No. 36012/31/90.

2. BP Mandal: The person who had headed the Second Backward Classes Commission.

3. V. P. Singh: The Prime Minister when OM 36012/31/90 was issued.

4. Indira Sawhney: One who filed a case against the Union of India in the Supreme Court relating to the Mandal Commission recommendations.

6. A democracy works through certain political institutions.

7. The Department of Personnel and Training decides about how and on what terms should the government employees be recruited.

8. The Cabinet meeting decides the major decisions about the country.

9. The Supreme Court is an institution where disputes about any policy or its implementation are resolved.

10. The Parliament makes laws for the country.

Short Answer:

Ans: 1. The Prime Minister is the head of the central government. All the powers vested in the President are actually exercised by the Council of Ministers under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

As a matter of fact, the most powerful office in the central government is that of the Prime Minister.

Powers and Functions of the Prime Minister-

- He selects the members of the Council of Ministers.
- He allocates portfolios among the ministers.
- He can drop any minister.
- He presides over the meetings of the Council of Ministers.
- He decides about the policies of the government.
- He coordinates the work of different ministers.
- He is also the chairman of the planning commission.
- The entire government is associated with the name of the Prime Minister.

Ans: 2. The Vice-President performs the duties and the functions of a President in his absence or illness. If the President resigns or dies in office, the Vice-President officiates till a new President is elected.

The Vice-President is also the ex-officio chairman of the Rajya Sabha. The Vice-President in our country is elected for 5 years by an electoral college.

A candidate for the office of the Vice-President must be a citizen of India and must be of 35 years of age or above as well as he must be eligible to be a member of the Rajya Sabha.

Ans: 3. The Council of Ministers in our country is headed by the Prime Minister. In the council, there are three categories of ministers:

- The cabinet ministers,
- The ministers of state,
- deputy ministers. It is essential for the members of the Council of Ministers to be members of either house of the parliaments.

If a minister is not a member of the Parliament, he has to acquire its membership within six months of his appointment. The ministers are individually responsible for their ministries and departments. This responsibility is enforced through the Prime Minister. The Council of Ministers remains in power as long as it enjoys the support of the majority in the Lok Sabha.

Ans: 4. The Speaker is elected by the members of Lok Sabha among themselves. The Speaker presides over the sessions and conducts its business. The Speaker may be a member of any political party. However once elected, he has to conduct, the business of the house impartially. It is the Speaker who keeps the house in order. Though he does not vote during the voting in the house, yet he can use his casting vote in case of a tie.

Ans: 5. India is a federal country. Each of its states has a legislature. Some of the state legislatures have two houses while the maximum number of the states have only one house, the lower one. The upper house in a state legislature is known as Vidhan Parishad while the lower house is known as Vidhan Sabha. According to the provisions of our constitution, no legislative assembly is allowed to have more than 500 or less than 60 members.

The members of the Vidhan Sabha are elected by the people. A citizen of India of 25 years or more is eligible to be elected as its member. The Legislative Assembly is generally elected for 5 years. However it may be dissolved before its term. Just like the Parliament, in a state legislature, the lower house that is the Legislative Assembly is more powerful than the Legislative Council.

Ans: 6. Financial Emergency is a situation in which the President of India feels that the financial stability or the credit of India is threatened. And to cope with this situation he declares financial emergency. In financial emergency, the President can reduce the salaries of all government officials including the Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts.

Ans: 7. When the President of our country is satisfied on the basis of the report of the governor of a state or even from other sources that the government in the state cannot be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. In such a situation, he can declare emergency in that state. In this situation, the President can take over the entire work of the executive and dissolve or suspend the State Assembly. The governor rules in the name of the President. The budget is passed by the Parliament.

Long Answer:

Ans: 1. Administration involves a lot of governmental activities. For example, the government is responsible for ensuring the security of the citizens and providing facilities for education and health to all. It collects taxes and spends money thus raised on army, police and development programmes. It formulates several welfare schemes and elements, them.

Some persons have to take decisions on how to go about these activities. Some have to

implement these decisions. If disputes arise on these decisions or in their implementation, there should be someone to determine what is right and what is wrong.

It is important that everyone should know who is responsible for doing what. It is also important that these activities are not influenced too much by the personal likes and dislikes of someone who happens to be doing that. So, to attend all these tasks several arrangements are made in all democracies. Such arrangements are called institutions. A democracy works through political institutions. It works well when these institutions do what, people expect of them, do it efficiently and are answerable to the people.

Ans: 2. Legislature exists in every democracy. It exercises political authority on behalf of the people in many ways :

- (a) The parliament is the final authority for making the laws in any country. This task of lawmaking or legislation is so crucial that these assemblies are called legislatures. Parliaments all over the world can make new laws, change the existing laws, or abolish the existing laws and make new ones in their place. In most countries, the parliaments can also amend the Constitution in some situations.
- (b) The parliaments all over the world can criticise and exercise some control over those who run the government. In some countries like India, this control is direct and full. Those who run the government can do so only as long as the parliament wants them to.
- (c) Parliaments control public finances. In most countries, any money raised from the people can be spent only when the parliament sanctions it.
- (d) The parliaments are the highest forum of discussion and debate about public issues and national policy in any country. Parliament can seek information about any matter related to government.
- (e) Parliament chooses the real chief executive called also the Prime Minister, and it can also force him to resign if he loses its confidence.

It is because of these functions and powers that the Parliament is described as supreme.

Ans: 3. Our Constitution clearly gives more powers to the directly elected house, the Lok Sabha as compared to the Rajya Sabha. This is clear from the following. 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 by a joint session in which members of both the houses meet together. Because of the larger number of members, the view of the Lok Sabha is likely to prevail in such a meeting.

- (i) Lok Sabha exercises more powers in financial matters. Once the Lok Sabha passes the budget of the government or any other finance-related law, the Rajya Sabha cannot reject it. The Rajya Sabha can only delay it by 14 days or suggest changes in it. The Lok Sabha may or may not accept these changes.
- (ii) Most importantly, the Lok Sabha controls the government. The government continues in

power only as long as it enjoys the support of the majority of the members in the Lok Sabha. If the majority of the Lok Sabha members say they have 'no confidence' in the Council of Ministers, all of them including the Prime Minister have to quit. This the Rajya Sabha cannot do.

Ans: 4. 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. They are called executives because they are in charge of the 'execution' of the policies of the government. Thus, when we refer to 'the government' we usually mean the executive. The executive in a democratic country consists of two parts.

Those who are elected by the people for a specific period are called the political executives. These are political leaders who take the big decisions. Those who are appointed on a long-term basis are called the permanent executive or civil services. Those working in civil services are called civil servants. These are officers who work under political executives and assist them in carrying out the day-to-day administration.

In both the parliamentary and presidential systems, the political executive does a lot more than we think it does; The role of the executive is not limited to implementing laws made by the parliament, it also includes: The political executive actively participates in lawmaking. It is the cabinet that proposes a draft legislation that is passed by the parliament as the National Commission on Backward Classes Act 1993.

In fact, it is mandatory that all legislation; that has to do with financial; matters should be proposed by the government, The executive frames policies and rules that are as important as the law itself. Let us recall that O.M. No. 36012/30/90 was an executive order, not a law. Subsequent decisions about who could benefit from these reservations were also made by the executive.

Ans: 5. In a parliamentary system like ours, the head of the government is different from the head of the state. Both of them are part of the executive. But the head of the government exercises most of the real powers. This position is called the Prime Minister in most countries with parliamentary system. In our country too the Prime Minister is the head of the government. That is why the Prime Minister is the most important political office in the country.

In a parliamentary system, the head of the state appoints the head of the government. In our country the President appoints the Prime Minister. But this is only a formal description. What it means in real life is that the President appoints leader of the majority party or the coalition of parties that command majority in the Lok Sabha as the Prime Minister.

As the head of the government, the Prime Minister has wide-ranging powers. He chairs cabinet meetings. He coordinates the work of different departments. His decisions are final in case disagreements arise between departments; He exercises general supervision of different ministries. All ministers work under his leadership. The Prime Minister distributes and redistributes work to the ministers. He also has the power to dismiss ministers. When he

quits, the entire ministry quits.

The extent of power that Prime Minister really wields varies a lot. It depends upon, the personality of the holder of the office, his or her authority in the ruling party and the image and following among the people. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, exercised enormous authority because he was the supreme leader to the ruling Congress party at that time. He also had great influence on the public. But this was not true of all other Prime Ministers.



Swotters