

Polity Previous Year Questions for UPSC Mains GS Paper 2 (Polity & Constitution)

2025

1. Discuss the 'corrupt practices' for the purpose of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. Analyze whether the increase in the assets of the legislators and/or their associates, disproportionate to their known sources of income, would constitute 'undue influence' and consequently a corrupt practice. (Answer in 150 words)
2. Comment on the need of administrative tribunals as compared to the court system. Assess the impact of the recent tribunal reforms through rationalization of tribunals made in 2021. (Answer in 150 words)
3. Compare and contrast the President's power to pardon in India and in the USA. Are there any limits to it in both the countries? What are 'preemptive pardons'? (Answer in 150 words)
4. Discuss the nature of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly after the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019. Briefly describe the powers and functions of the Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. (Answer in 150 words)
5. The Attorney General of India plays a crucial role in guiding the legal framework of the Union Government and ensuring sound governance through legal counsel." Discuss his responsibilities, rights and limitations in this regard. (Answer in 150 words)
6. "Constitutional morality is the fulcrum which acts as an essential check upon the high functionaries and citizens alike..." In view of the above observation of the Supreme Court, explain the concept of constitutional morality and its application to ensure balance between judicial independence and judicial accountability in India. (250 words)
7. Indian Constitution has conferred the amending power on the ordinary legislative institutions with a few procedural hurdles. In view of this statement, examine the procedural and substantive limitations on the amending power of the Parliament to change the Constitution. (250 words)
8. Discuss the evolution of the collegium system in India. Critically examine the advantages and disadvantages of the system of appointment of the Judges of the Supreme Court of India and that of the USA.(250 words)
9. Examine the evolving pattern of Centre-State financial relations in the context of planned development in India. How far have the recent reforms impacted the fiscal federalism in India? (250 words)

2024

1. Examine the need for electoral reforms as suggested by various committees with particular reference to “one nation – one election” principle.
2. Explain and distinguish between Lok Adalats And Arbitration Tribunals. Whether they entertain civil as well as criminal cases?
3. “The growth of cabinet system has practically resulted in the marginalisation of the parliamentary supremacy:” Elucidate.
4. “The duty of the Comptroller and Auditor General is not merely to ensure the legality of expenditure but also its propriety.” Comment.
5. Analyse the role of local bodies in providing good governance at local level and bring out the pros and cons merging the rural local bodies with the urban local bodies.
6. What are the aims and objects of recently passed and enforced, The Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024? Whether University/State Education Board examinations, too, are covered under the Act?.
7. Right to privacy is intrinsic to life and personal liberty and is inherently protected under Article 21 of the constitution. Explain. In this reference discuss the law relating to D.N.A. testing of child in the womb to establish its paternity.
8. What changes has the Union Government recently introduced in the domain of Centre-State relations? Suggest measures to be adopted to build the trust between the Centre and the States and for strengthening federalism.
9. Explain the reasons for the growth of public interest litigation in India. As a result of it, has the Indian Supreme Court emerged as the world’s most powerful judiciary?.
10. Discuss India as a secular state and compare with the secular principles of the US constitution.

2023

1. “Constitutionally guaranteed judicial independence is a prerequisite of democracy.” Comment.
2. Who are entitled to receive free legal aid? Assess the role of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) in rendering free legal aid in India.
3. “The states in India seem reluctant to empower urban local bodies both functionally as well as financially.” Comment.
4. Compare and contrast the British and Indian approaches to Parliamentary sovereignty.
5. Discuss the role of Presiding Officers of state legislatures in maintaining order and impartiality in conducting legislative work and in facilitating best democratic practices.

6. "The Constitution of India is a living instrument with capabilities of enormous dynamism. It is a constitution made for a progressive society." Illustrate with special reference to the expanding horizons of the right to life and personal liberty.
7. Explain the constitutional perspectives of Gender Justice with the help of relevant Constitutional Provisions and case laws.
8. Account for the legal and political factors responsible for the reduced frequency of using Article 356 by the Union Governments since mid 1990s.
9. Explain the significance of the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act. To what extent does it reflect the accommodative spirit of federalism?
10. Explain the structure of the Parliamentary Committee system. How far have the financial committees helped in the institutionalisation of Indian Parliament?

2022

1. The most significant achievement of modern law in India is the constitutionalization of environmental problems by the Supreme Court. Discuss this statement with the help of relevant case laws.
2. Right of movement and residence throughout the territory of India are freely available to Indian citizens, but these rights are not absolute.
3. Discuss the role of the Vice President of India as the chairman of Rajya Sabha.
4. Discuss the role of the National Commission for Backward Classes in the wake of its transformation from a statutory body to a constitutional body.
5. 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.
6. Discuss the essential conditions for the exercise of the legislative powers by the Governor. Discuss the legality of the re-promulgation of ordinances by the Governor without placing them before the Legislature.
7. While the national political parties in India favour centralisation, the regional parties are in favour of State autonomy." Comment.
8. Critically examine the procedures through which the Presidents of India and France are elected.
9. Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct.

2021

1. How have the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission of India enabled the States to improve their fiscal position?
2. “Besides being a moral imperative of a Welfare State, primary health structure is a necessary precondition for sustainable development.”
3. “‘Earn while you learn’ scheme needs to be strengthened to make vocational education and skill training meaningful”
4. 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. Analysing their structural and practical limitations, suggest remedial measures.
5. Has digital literacy, particularly in rural areas, coupled with lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) accessibility hindered socio-economic development? Examine with justification.
6. ‘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.
7. Analyse the distinguishing features of the notion of the Right to Equality in the Constitutions of the USA and India.
8. Explain the constitutional provisions under which Legislative Councils are established. Review the working and current status of Legislative Councils with suitable illustrations.

2020

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. **(10m, 150words)**
2. “Recent amendments to the Right to Information Act will have profound impact on the autonomy and independence of the Information Commission”. Discuss. **(10m, 150words)**
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. **(10m, 150words)**
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. **(10m, 150words)**
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? **(10m, 150words)**

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. **(15m, 250words)**
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. **(15m, 250words)**
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. **(15m, 250words)**
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. **(15m, 250words)**
10. Which steps are required for constitutionalization 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. **(15m, 250words)**

2019

1. 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.
2. "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?
3. "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.
4. "The Attorney-General is the chief legal adviser and lawyer of the Government of India." Discuss
5. 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'?
6. From the resolution of contentious issues regarding distribution of legislative powers by the courts, 'Principle of Federal Supremacy' and 'Harmonious Construction' have emerged. Explain.
7. What can France learn from the Indian Constitution's approach to secularism?

2018

1. 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?
2. India and USA are the two large democracies. Examine the basic tenets on which the two political systems are based.
3. How is the Finance Commission of India constituted? What do you know about the terms of reference of the recently constituted Finance Commission? Discuss.
4. Assess the importance of the Panchayat system in India as a part of local government. Apart from government grants, what sources the Panchayats can look out for financing development projects?
5. Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections of the society leads to problems of overlapping jurisdiction & duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella human rights commission? Argue your case.
6. In the light of recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India?
7. Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine.
8. Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remain in force?
9. Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee.
10. "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.
11. Whether the Supreme Court Judgment (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt. Governor and elected government of Delhi? Examine.

2017

1. 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'?
2. Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in the light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on Right to Privacy.

3. The Indian Constitution has provisions for holding a 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
4. 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?
5. "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.
6. 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
7. '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.
8. How do pressure groups influence Indian political process? Do you agree with this view that informal pressure groups have emerged as powerful as formal pressure groups in recent years?

2016

1. 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
2. Discuss each adjective attached to the word 'Republic' in the 'Preamble'. Are they defensible in the present circumstances?
3. 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
4. Did the Government of India Act, 1935 lay down a federal constitution? Discuss.
5. What is quasi judicial body? Explain with the help of concrete examples.
6. 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 institution of 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?
7. 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.
8. "The Indian party system is passing through a phase of transition which looks to be full of contradictions and paradoxes." Discuss.

2015

1. 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.
2. 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, analyse whether the decisions of the Supreme Court on the issue have further facilitated resorting to this power. Should the power to promulgate the ordinances be repealed?
3. 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.
4. Does the right to clean environment entail legal regulation on burning crackers during Diwali? Discuss in the light of Article 21 of Indian Constitution and Judgement(s) of the Apex court in this regard
5. Discuss the possible factors that inhibit India from enacting for its citizen a uniform civil code as provided for in the Directive Principles of State Policy.
6. The concept of cooperative federalism has been increasingly emphasised in recent years. Highlight the drawbacks in the existing structure and the extent to which cooperative federalism would answer the shortcomings.
7. In absence of well–educated and organised local level government system, 'Panchayats' and 'Samitis' have remained mainly political institutions and not effective instruments of governance. Critically discuss.

2014

1. 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
2. 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.
3. 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.

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 un-codified 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?

2013

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?
2. Discuss Section 66A of IT Act, with reference to its alleged violation of Article 19 of the Constitution
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
4. 'The Supreme Court of India keeps a check on arbitrary power of the Parliament in amending the Constitution.' Discuss critically.
5. 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.
6. 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.