

APPROACH PAPER



C2C 2019: PHASE I, TEST I
PAPER II
INDIAN CONSTITUTION &
POLITY



SYLLABUS

- Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.
- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.
- Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.
- Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.
- Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.
- Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary, Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.
- Salient features of the Representation of People's Act
- Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies, Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies

APPROACH

Questions asked on Indian Constitution and Polity are application based and need different approach than your prelims preparation. Here, you should be able to relate the contemporary themes in Indian polity with the fundamentals of Indian Constitution and also the law of the land. You must be capable of establishing a two way relationship between what you see and what you have read.

The contents of this test have an application orientation. Various public institutions have evolved and taken their shape in the post-independence era, creating issues, controversies and debates. Your job is to capture these elements while you study the content from various sources with special focus on current affairs. In Government policies and interventions portion, your focus has to be on theoretical understanding with some attention on examples.

INTERRELATION OF STATIC THEMES AND CURRENT AFFAIRS ACCORDING TO SYLLABUS:

You will realize that most of the topics are part of day to day current affairs and UPSC questions will be easier to handle if you utilize your basic understanding of the subject with a mix of contemporary developments.



FOCUS AREAS

Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Fundamental Rights vs DPSP vs Fundamental Duties

Philosophical basis of the Constitution

Basic Structure and its importance

Recent Articles in news- Article 377, Article 35-A, Article 497

etc. and their assessment.

Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Emergency Provisions

Power of President

Local Governance Issues

Governor and issues between Center and State

Federalism and issues

Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.

CBI vs Government

Judiciary vs Executive

Assessment of separation of power in Indian context

Scenario of Indian Dispute Redressal Mechanism and its effectiveness.

FOCUS AREAS

Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.

India and UK

India and USA

India and Japan

India and Canada

India and Germany

India and China

India and France

Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Anti-Defection

Parliamentary Processes- Bills

Parliamentary Committees and their roles/mandate.

Efficacy of Indian Parliament

Parliament vs Presidential form of Governance

Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Assessment of relation between NGO's and Indian Political System

Role of Trade Unions in Democracy

Supreme Court and its importance

Role of Specific Pressure Groups and its effect on Indian Polity

Role of Supreme Court in guaranteeing rights.

Recent Supreme Court judgments and its assessment

FOCUS AREAS

Salient features of the Representation of People's Act

Simultaneous Elections

Criminalization of Politics

Electoral Reforms

NOTA

Should Political Parties come into RTI's ambit?

Recent SC's judgments and directives regarding Electoral Reforms

Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies, Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)- Role and issues involved

National Commission for Minorities and its assessment in safeguarding rights of minorities in India.

UPSC-Union Public Service Commission

CVC- Central Vigilance Commission

CCI-Competition Commission of India

Previous years Questions from the Syllabus

1. ‘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.
2. Critically examine the Supreme Court’s judgement on ‘National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014’ with reference to the appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India.
3. “The local self-government system in India has not proved to be an effective instrument of governance”. Critically examine the statement and give your views to improve the situation.
4. 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?
5. Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine
6. Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force?
7. Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee
8. “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.

9. 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?
10. Discuss the role of Public Accounts Committee in establishing accountability of the government to the people
11. 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?
12. 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
13. “The Indian party system is passing through a phase of transition which looks to be full of contradictions and paradoxes.” Discuss.
14. Discuss each adjective attached to the word ‘Republic’ in the ‘Preamble’. Are they defensible in the present circumstances?

Sample Questions for Practice

1. The Constitution of India was an outcome of accommodation and consensus. Do you agree? Elaborate your response.
2. Many experts opine that the Tenth Schedule is in violation of the fundamental tenets of the Constitution. What do you think? Elucidate.
3. Devolution of powers to the local governing bodies means little in the absence of meaningful financial devolution. Elucidate. What steps have been taken to address this issue? Discuss.
4. The recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission and the implementation of GST have transformed centre-state relations in India. Do you agree? Examine.
5. Do you agree with the view that secularism is a mere top-dressing for the Constitution of India? Elaborate your views.
6. How do you assess the argument for and against the Uniform Civil Code? Elaborate your response.
7. Is it fair to argue that the basic structure doctrine contributes to a hyperactive judiciary in India? Substantiate your response.
8. The provisions for alternate dispute resolution in India follow from the Constitution. Discuss. Also assess the performance of National Lok Adalats conducted so far in the country. Can they be an effective tool for dispute resolution? Critically examine.
9. Is Indian federalism a 'diluted form of federalism'? Critically examine.
10. How do you conceptualise reservation as a constitutional design for empowerment? Critically examine.
11. Emergency provisions are an easy option for establishing constitutional authoritarianism. Do you agree? Critically comment.

12. Article 370 inculcates healthy political practices in a federal India. Do you agree with this view? Elaborate.
13. Why is the Election Commission an important instrument for democratic governance in India? Discuss
14. The CAG has become the most reliable instrument to establish integrity in administration. Critically comment.
15. Is it possible for a democracy to function if the constitutional provisions for amendments are completely removed? Substantiate your viewpoint.
16. In what ways the office of the governor has become a blotch to India's federalism? Examine.
17. Localising governance is an offshoot of democratic decentralisation. Explain. How far local governance has succeeded in India? Critically evaluate.
18. Is political bitterness responsible for a dysfunctional Parliament? Examine the issue in light of the recent stalemate in the Parliament. Is our national interest the first casualty of the prevailing stalemate? Elucidate.
19. Politics is so deeply embedded in the national discourse that frequent elections in states may derail the reform agenda of the incumbent government at the centre. In light of the statement, do you think important decisions are held up during elections in order to avoid electoral backlash? Can holding elections simultaneously address this issue? Critically examine
20. Civil society and voluntary sector occupy a prominent place in the democratic landscape of India. However, rule of law must govern their functioning in matters of financing and objectives. In light of the controversy and debates surrounding the voluntary sector, analyse the statements given above.

21. "Constitution is not a mere lawyer's document, it is a vehicle of Life, and its spirit is always the spirit of Age." Comment.
22. The basic structure doctrine forms the bulwark of the Indian Constitution. Do you agree? Critically examine.
23. The 42nd amendment is considered a watershed in India's constitutional history. Why? Analyse. How did the amendment shape India's polity in the coming years? Examine.
24. Most of the DPSPs reflect the ideology of socialism and welfare state. Elucidate. In your opinion, which non-justifiable rights should be incorporated as fundamental rights? Examine.
25. The moral value of fundamental duties is not to smoothen rights but to establish a democratic balance by making the people conscious of their duties equally as they are conscious of their rights. Discuss.
26. The doctrine of judicial review is a unique harmonisation between parliamentary sovereignty and judicial supremacy. Comment.



All the Best