

NTSE

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CIVICS – Working of Institutions



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1. State an important promise in the election manifesto of the Janata Dal (party) in 1989.

Ans. In its election manifesto, the Janata Dal promised that if voted to power, it would implement the Mandal Commission report. The Janata Dal did form the government after this election. Its leader V. P. Singh became the Prime Minister.

2. What do institutions involve?

Ans. (1) Institutions involve rules and regulations. This can bind the hands of leaders.
(2) Institutions involve meetings, committees and routines. This often leads to delays and complications.

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

Ans. The citizens have a right to approach the courts to seek remedy in case of any violation of their rights. In recent years the Courts have given several judgments and directives to protect the public interest and human rights.

4. What is public interest litigation?

Ans. Anyone can approach the courts if the public interest is hurt by the actions of the government. This is called public interest litigation.

5. Expand and explain 'SEBC'.

Ans. Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SEBC). SEBC is another name for all those people who belong to castes that are considered backward by the government. The benefit of job reservation was till then available only to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Now a new third category called SEBC was introduced. Only persons who belong to backward castes were eligible for this quota of 27 per cent jobs. Others could not compete for these jobs

6. Who are the important functionaries in the government of India?

Ans. The important functionaries in the government of India are as follows:

1. The President is the head of the state and is the highest formal authority in the country.

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

3. Parliament consists of two Houses, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The Prime Minister must have the support of a majority of Lok Sabha members.

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7. What was the Mandal commission? Why was it appointed? What was the major recommendation of this Commission?

Ans. (1) The Government of India had appointed the Second Backward Classes Commission in 1979. It was headed by B.P. Mandal. Hence it was popularly called the Mandal Commission.
(2) It was asked to determine the criteria to identify the socially and economically backward classes in India and recommend steps to be taken for their advancement.
(3) The Commission gave its Report in 1980 and made many recommendations. One of these was that 27 per cent of government jobs be reserved for the socially and economically backward classes.

8. What was the reaction of the people when the government decided to reserve 27% of the seats for backward classes?

Ans. (1) Some felt that the existence of inequalities among people of different castes in India necessitated job reservations. They felt this would give a fair opportunity to those communities who so far had not adequately been represented in government employment.
(2) Others felt that this was unfair as it would deny equality of opportunity to those who did not belong to backward communities. They would be denied jobs even though they could be more qualified.
(3) Some felt that this would perpetuate caste feelings among people and hamper national unity.

9. What is the need for political institutions in a country?

Ans. (1) Some people have to make decisions on how to go about governmental activities. Others 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.
(2) To attend to all these tasks, several arrangements are made in all modern democracies. Such arrangements are called institutions.
(3) Governing a country involves various such activities. For example, 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, defense and development programmes. It formulates and implements several welfare schemes.

10. What was the 'Indira Sawhney and others Vs union case' and how was it settled?

Ans. Some persons and associations opposed (27% reservation) and filed a number of cases in the courts regarding the reservation of jobs for backward classes. They appealed to the courts to declare the order invalid and stop its implementation.

- The Supreme Court of India bunched all these cases together. This case was known as the 'Indira Sawhney and others Vs Union of India case'.
- Eleven judges of the Supreme Court heard arguments of both sides. By a majority, the Supreme Court judges in 1992 declared that this order of the Government of India was valid.
- At the same time the Supreme Court asked the government to modify its original order. It said that well-to-do persons among the backward classes should be excluded from getting the benefit of reservation.
- Accordingly, the Department of Personnel and Training issued another Office Memorandum on September 8, 1993. The dispute thus came to an end and this policy has been followed since then.

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