

Indian Constitution (1)

Class 8th

Sub Civics

Question 1: Why does a democratic country need a Constitution?

Answer: A Constitution tells us what the fundamental nature of our society is. A country is usually made up of different communities of people who share certain beliefs but may not necessarily agree on all issues. A Constitution helps serve as a set of rules and principles that all persons in a country can agree upon as the basis of the way in which they want the country to be governed. This includes not only the type of government but also an agreement on certain ideals that they all believe the country should uphold. Hence, a democratic country needs a Constitution.

Question 2: Look at the wordings of the two documents given below. The first column is from the 1990 Nepal Constitution. The second column is from the more recent Interim Constitution of Nepal.

1990 Constitution of Nepal Part 7: Executive	2007 Interim Constitution Part 5: Executive
<i>Article 35: Executive Power: The executive power of the Kingdom of Nepal shall be vested in His Majesty and the Council of Ministers.</i>	<i>Article 37: Executive Power: The executive power of Nepal shall be vested in the Council of Ministers.</i>

What is the difference in who exercises 'Executive Power' in the above two Constitutions of Nepal? Keeping this in mind, why do you think Nepal needs a new Constitution today?

Answer: In the first example; the executive power is shared by the King and the Council of Ministers. But in second example; the executive power has become the sole right of the Council of Ministers. Nepal has been undergoing transition from a monarchy to a democracy. Many changes in the government system need to be incorporated to ensure successful transition of Nepal. For this, the country needs a basic framework of rules and regulations in the form of a Constitution.

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Question 3: What would happen if there were no restrictions on the power of elected representatives?

Answer: Nobody in the ruling dispensation should be given absolute power. Absolute power results in tyranny and authoritarian rule. Hence, there should always be some restrictions on the power of elected representatives.

Question 4: In each of the following situations, identify the minority. Write one reason why you think it is important to report the views of the minority in each of these situations.

a. **In a school with 30 teachers, 20 of them are male.**

Answer: In this case, the female teachers are in minority. Views of female teachers should be given due importance in order to prevent male dominance and patriarchy in the school.

b. **In a city, 5 per cent of the population is Buddhists.**

Answer: In this case, the Buddhists are in minority. The minority community is at risk of being exposed to majority tyranny. They may be forced to alter their eating habit, or to stop practicing their religious beliefs.

c. **In a factory mess for all employees, 80 per cent are vegetarians.**

Answer: In this case, the non-vegetarians are in minority. They may be forced to eat vegetarian food on all days of the month. They may not get a food of their choice in the mess.

d. **In a class of 50 students, 40 belong to more well off families.**

Answer: In this case, students from poor families are in minority. They may suffer from inferiority complex, and may be subject of rebuke by the students from affluent families.

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Question 5: The column on the left lists some of the key features of the Indian Constitution. In the other column, write two sentences, in your own words, on why you think this feature is important.

Answer:

Key Feature	Significance
<i>Federalism</i>	<i>Federalism is important for giving certain liberties and some degree of autonomy to the states.</i>
<i>Separation of powers</i>	<i>Separation of powers among different organs of government prevents concentration of power in any one constitutional body. This helps in preventing authoritarian rule.</i>
<i>Fundamental rights</i>	<i>Fundamental rights give certain guarantees to the citizens.</i>
<i>Parliamentary form of government</i>	<i>Parliamentary form of government means there is adequate representation of all the stakeholders in the government. This also ensures that major decisions are taken with consensus of the majority members.</i>
