

CBSE Class–VIII Social Science
NCERT SOLUTION
Political Science Chapter 1
The Indian Constitution

1. Why does a democratic country need a Constitution?

Ans. A democratic country needs a Constitution because:

- (i) It serves as an asset of rules and principles as the basis by which the country has to be governed.
- (ii) It defines the nature of a country's political system.
- (iii) It lays out the important guidelines that govern decision making within various societies of the country.
- (iv) It lays down the ideals that form the basis of the kind of country that its citizens aspire to live in.
- (v) It provides rules to safeguard the interests of less powerful people or groups by any dominant group. It protects minorities against wrongful decisions of majorities.
- (vi) It lays down rules that guard against the misuse of power by any political leader.
- (vii) It also protects citizens against any decisions that may not be in their interests in future.

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
Article 35: Executive Power: The executive power of the Kingdom of Nepal shall be exercised exclusively by His Majesty.	Article 37: Executive Power: The executive power of Nepal shall, pursuant to this Constitution and other laws, be vested in the Council of Ministers. The executive functions of Nepal shall be taken in the name of the Prime Minister.

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?

Ans. The difference in who exercises "Executive Power" in the given two Constitutions of Nepal is that in the 1990 Constitution, this power was vested in the King, while in the 2007 Interim Constitution of Nepal, "Executive Power" changed hands to being vested only in the Council of Ministers, thereby making Nepal a democracy from being a monarchy. Nepal needs a new Constitution today because it is no longer a monarchy. The older Constitution vested power in the King, but when the country is now a democracy, a new Constitution is needed to reflect the "democratic" ideals of Nepal that the people's movement desired and fought for. In order to achieve this, all its constitutive rules must be changed to smoothly transition towards a democratic environment.

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

Ans. If there are no restrictions on the power of the elected representatives, the leaders might misuse the powers given to them, leading to gross injustice. The Constitution provides safeguards against this misuse of power by our political leaders. Many of the safeguards are contained in the Section on Fundamental Rights. The Indian Constitution guarantees the right to equality to all persons and says that no citizen can be discriminated against on grounds of religion, race, caste, gender, and place of birth.

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

- (a) In a school with 30 teachers, 20 of them are male.**
- (b) In a city, 5 per cent of the population are Buddhists.**
- (c) In a factory mess for all employees, 80 per cent are vegetarians.**
- (d) In a class of 50 students, 40 belong to more well-off families.**

Ans. (a) Female teachers are in minority. The female teachers must be allowed space to voice their opinion so that their efforts at teaching are not hindered by their minority status.

(b) Buddhists are in minority. Every individual has the right to follow the religion of his/her choice. People of other faith must respect the religion other than their own.

(c) Non-vegetarians are in minority. Food choice is a personal wish, so each individual should have the freedom to eat what he/she wants.

(d) Under privileged are in minority. Citizens can not be discriminated on the basis of their birth so their views have to be respected.

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:

Key Feature	Significance
Federalism	
Separation of Powers	
Fundamental Rights	
Parliamentary Form of Government.	

Ans. Key features

1. Federalism: It ensures national unity and at the same time allows individual progress. A federal government allows the Centre to hold supreme power but its constituent states have some power as well so that the states can make decisions for their territories.

2. Separation of Powers: According to the Constitution, the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary are the three separate powers. This serves two purposes: firstly, tyrannical use of power is avoided since power is not vested in any single authority. Secondly, the three organs of power also work as a check on each other, thereby maintaining a good balance of power.

3. Fundamental Rights: These rights are important because they conform to a humane society. They also protect citizens against arbitrary and absolute use of power by the State. They protect minorities against misuse of power. Every citizen must be in a position to claim those rights. These rights must be binding upon every authority that has got the power to make laws.

4. Parliamentary Form of Government: It upholds universal adult franchise. This entails the fact that the people of a country play a direct role in electing their representatives to run the state as well as the nation. Every citizen can contest in elections irrespective of caste, religion, gender, or social background.