Polity & Governance · GS - II

Indian and USA are two large democracies. Examine the basic tenets on which the two political systems are based.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2018	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Constitutional democracy; federalism; separation of powers; parliamentary and presidential systems; fundamental rights; judicial review; representative government; checks and balances

Model Answer

Introduction

India and the United States are constitutional democracies founded on popular sovereignty, fundamental rights and limited government. However, their political institutions reflect different historical experiences and constitutional designs.

Basic Tenets of the Indian Political System

1. **Parliamentary democracy:** The executive is drawn from the legislature and remains collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha.
2. **Federalism with a strong Union:** Powers are divided between the Union and states, with significant constitutional authority vested in the Union.
3. **Constitutional supremacy:** Government institutions operate within the written Constitution.

4. **Fundamental rights and judicial review:** Courts protect constitutional rights and review governmental action.
5. **Secular and welfare-oriented state:** The Constitution supports religious freedom, equality and social justice.

Basic Tenets of the US Political System

1. **Presidential government:** The President is separately elected through the constitutional electoral process and serves as both head of state and head of government.
2. **Separation of powers:** Legislative, executive and judicial powers are institutionally separated.
3. **Federalism:** The Constitution divides authority between the federal government and states.
4. **Checks and balances:** Congress, the President and the judiciary constrain one another's powers.
5. **Bill of Rights:** Constitutional protections safeguard civil liberties and individual freedoms.

Commonalities and Differences

Both systems uphold representative government, constitutionalism and judicial review. India follows parliamentary government, while the US follows presidential government; their federal arrangements and constitutional rights frameworks also differ.

Conclusion

Both democracies seek to limit arbitrary power and protect citizens' rights. Their effectiveness depends on constitutional restraint, accountable institutions and active public participation.

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