

Representation and the electorate

Franchise · Proportional representation · Constituencies · J.S. Mill

Explanatory Lecture Slides

Political Science — Organisation & Institutions · Minor-I-2 · Semester II

POLITICAL SCIENCE — ORGANISATION & INSTITUTIONS

Topics covered in this unit

01

Define representation and its types

02

Explain proportional representation and the Hare system

03

Single v multi-member constituencies

04

State J.S. Mill on the electorate

05

Minority representation

06

Place the Indian franchise (Art. 326)

How this unit is organised

01

Types of
representation

02

Proportional (Hare)

03

Constituencies

04

J.S. Mill

05

Minority
representation

06

Indian franchise

Types of representation

Territorial, proportional, functional (occupational), minority, virtual (Burke: MP as trustee not delegate).

- PYQ: types of representation (2023).
- India: territorial single-member FPTP for Lok Sabha; some thought of PR for Rajya Sabha is misplaced — RS is elected by MLAs.
- Delegate v trustee: Burke's speech to the electors of Bristol — a 6-mark jewel.

Types of representation

TERRITORIAL FPTP

- Simple.
- Strong governments.
- Wastes votes.

PR

- Fair to minorities of opinion.
- Coalition maths.
- Weak governments sometimes.

Proportional representation and the Hare system

Seats in proportion to votes. Hare: single transferable vote (STV) with a quota.

- PYQ: proportional representation; Hare system merits/demerits (2021, 2023).
- Quota $\approx \text{votes} / (\text{seats} + 1) + 1$ (Droop). Surplus transferred; lowest eliminated.
- Used in India for Rajya Sabha / presidential election (STV), not for Lok Sabha.
- Merits: fairness. Demerits: complexity, weak local tie, party-list oligarchy in list-PR.

Proportional representation and the Hare system

WHERE IN INDIA

- RS.
- President.
- Vice-President.
- Not LS.

DEFECTS

- Hard to explain in a village.
- Delay.
- Coalitions.

Single and multi-member constituencies

PYQ 2023. Single-member: one winner, local face, FPTP. Multi-member: several winners, often with PR or cumulative vote.

- India's LS/VS: single-member after the abolition of double-member (including reserved) seats — reserved seats are now single-member reserved.
- Merits of single: responsibility. Demerits: winner-take-all.

Single and multi-member constituencies

SINGLE

- Clear local MP.
- FPTP.

MULTI

- Room for PR.
- Diluted local tie.

J.S. Mill on the electorate

PYQ: Mill on importance, qualifications and disqualifications of the electorate (2021).

- He wanted a wide but not ignorant franchise; plural votes for the educated (now indefensible).
- Keep: the electorate as a school of public spirit; against exclusion of women (he was early here).
- Drop: plural voting — it violates Art. 326's one-person-one-vote morality.
- Disqualifications he worried about: uninstructed voting, not caste.

J.S. Mill on the electorate

KEEP OF MILL

- Education of the citizen.
- Women's franchise.
- Hare's STV (he admired it).

DROP

- Plural votes for graduates as a moral ideal.

Minority representation

PYQ: importance of minority representation (2021).

- Devices: reserved seats (Arts. 330–334), PR, nominated members (Anglo-Indians — now lapsed), federal second chambers, personal laws (a different logic).
- India chose territorial reservation for SC/ST, not religion-based reservation in LS after the Constituent Assembly debate.
- A 16-mark should mention both the need (without minorities, democracy is majoritarian arithmetic) and the risk (frozen identities).

Minority representation

NEED

- Voice.
- Protection.
- Standing in the house.

INDIAN DEVICE

- Reserved territorial seats for SC/ST.
- Not separate electorates (that was 1909).

Universal adult franchise

PYQ: merits and demerits of universal adult franchise (2021 Unit V).

- Art. 326: 18+ (61st Amendment lowered from 21).
- Merits: equality, legitimacy, peaceful change, education by doing.
- Demerits (alleged): uninformed vote, money, populism — answer them with ECI, the Model Code, and the right-to-know cases.
- This is the working definition of political equality in India.

Universal adult franchise

MERITS

- Equality.
- Peaceful change.
- Legitimacy.

WORKING PROBLEMS

- Money.
- Booth capture (reduced).
- Fake news.

J.S. Mill on the electorate

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Cases a KSLU answer should name

CASE

Indira Nehru Gandhi v Raj Narain

(1975) Supp SCC 1

Free and fair election as basic structure.

CASE

PUCL v Union of India

(2003) 4 SCC 399

Voter's right to know the candidate.

CASE

Kuldip Nayar v Union of India

(2006) 7 SCC 1

Rajya Sabha elections and residence —
Parliament's leeway on the second chamber.

Provisions & materials to quote

Art. 326

Adult suffrage.

Arts. 330–334

Reserved seats.

Art. 324

ECI.

RPA 1950 / 1951

Who is on the roll; corrupt practices.

61st Amendment

Voting age 18.

10 / 16-mark frames from this unit

Q1

Describe the types of representation.

Q2

What is proportional representation? Explain the Hare system — merits and demerits.

Q3

Explain J.S. Mill's views on the electorate.

Q4

Write a note on minority representation and on universal adult franchise.

Unit recap

- 1 India's LS: territorial FPTP, not Hare.
- 2 STV is used for RS and President.
- 3 Mill: educate the voter; do not copy his plural vote.
- 4 SC/ST reservation is territorial, not a separate electorate.
- 5 Art. 326 + ECI = political equality in motion.