

Question # 1

The French political system has been described as a hybrid combining features of presidential and parliamentary models. Evaluate this assertion with reference to the powers of French president and the phenomena of cohabitation.

Introduction

The fifth constitution of France was prepared under the leadership of Charles de Gaulle and ratified by popular referendum in September 1958. It is a written constitution. It only outlines the basic principles and this is the reason for its small size. The constitution of France provides for unitary form of government. It

Combines the features of presidential and parliamentary form of government.

Hybrid nature of French constitution

The French Constitution is hybrid in nature. It provides for a president who is elected by the masses. He appoints the prime minister and ministers of Council. The term of president was ~~five~~ years. However, after a Constitutional amendment his term was reduced to five years.

The Constitution also provides for the prime minister, who is the head of government. He enjoys the support on majority in the parliament. The duration of president depends upon two factors

- a) Majority of support in Parliament
- b) Will of the president.

The president can remove the prime minister.

Attempt in detail by giving subheadings

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Powers of president

The fifth constitution of France grants vast powers to the president. Following are the powers of president:

- 1) He can appoint prime minister and ministers of council
- 2) He has the power to remove the prime minister
- 3) He has the powers to make war or peace with other nations
- 4) He is the supreme commander of armed forces
- 5) According to article 10, the president has to promulgate the laws passed by parliament within 15 days.
- 6) He can dissolve parliament after consultation from the prime minister

Attempt these by giving subheadings; not points

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b) The president has the powers to veto or sign the bills passed by the parliament.

Is the president of France a dictator

The president of France enjoys vast powers. Some even consider him as a dictator. However it is not true. Although the president of France enjoys vast power, there are certain checks and balances on him. Following are the checks and balances of the

a) president of France.

a) Constitutional limitations

The prime minister of France enjoys all these powers due to the Constitution. Therefore he cannot act against the constitution.

b) Judiciary impose limits on President

The judiciary of France also impose some limitations on the acts of president. The judiciary can nullify his orders if they are against the Constitution.

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c) Parliament can also impose checks on president

The president of France can be impeached if he acts against the Constitution. He can be impeached by $\frac{3}{4}$ majority.

From all this it can be deduced that the president of France is not a dictator. He only occupies an important position in French political system.

Powers of prime minister

In the political system of France the powers of prime minister are overshadowed by the president. The prime minister enjoys nominal powers as compared to the president. Following are the powers of prime minister.

- ① He is the head of government
- ② He can make certain appointments

on official level

- ③ The president cannot use his discretionary powers without the assent of prime minister.

Cohabitation in French political system

The phenomena of cohabitation is greatly observed in French political system. Due to which the political system of France is hybrid in nature.

Diverging political interests

In the French politics the president and prime minister both belong to different parties. They both may have different political interests, yet they often work together for the smooth running of government.

Constitutional limits

The constitution has clearly defined the powers of

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of president and prime minister.
It has also defined the
powers shared by both of
them. Cohabitation has been
supported by the constitution of
France

Conclusion

The political system of
France is presidential cum
parliamentary in nature. It provides
vast powers for president but
also impose checks and balances
on him. The prime minister also
enjoys powers as head of the
government. The French constitution
also observes the phenomenon of
cohabitation successfully.

Work on the structure of the
answer