

The role of political parties in the rise of democracies, in the formation of constitutional designs, and in electoral politics is very significant. This chapter focuses on political parties as vehicles of federal sharing of political power and as negotiators of social divisions in the arena of democratic politics. The chapter studies the need for political parties, an ideal political party system for countries and how a political party functions. The chapter introduces the national and regional political parties in India, the issues associated with political party functioning and working and the reforms required for it.

TOPIC 1

THE NEED FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties can be considered as one of the most visible institutions in a democracy. Common citizens look at them as synonyms of democracy. They are even more popular than the concept of democracy and the Indian Constitution in areas with less literacy. They are also considered as the representatives of democracy in the remotest parts of the nations.

However, they also invite a lot of criticism. Most people tend to be very critical of political parties. Political parties are blamed for the inefficient functioning of democracy and political life. Parties are identified with social and political divisions today. This raises a huge question about their relevance, efficiency and significance.



Frequently Asked

➤ A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government. They have similar visions, policies and programmes for the development and welfare of the society and the country collectively.

Different parties have different ideas, goals and visions regarding the development of the country and society. To attain power to rule the nation, parties try to persuade people to agree with their ideologies and support them by voting. Popular support makes them victorious in the elections. This however means that parties reflect fundamental political divisions in a society. Political parties involve division and partisanship. A party is recognised by the policies it supports, the sections of societies it identifies with and the interests it upholds.



Frequently Asked

➤ A political party has three components:
(1) the leaders,
(2) the active members and
(3) the followers

Functions of a Political Party

Political parties are very necessary because of the following reasons.

Political parties fill political offices and exercise political power by performing these functions:

- (1) Parties contest elections. They nominate their candidates who then fight for popular support.
- (2) Parties put forward different policies and programmes. The voters support the party they identify with the most.
- (3) Despite the fact that democracy gives recognition and attached significance to each opinion, a large number of similar opinions have to be grouped together to provide a general vision and aspiration based on which governments have to run the nation and formulate policies. A party reduces a vast multitude of opinions into a comprehensive vision and goal. The ruling party decides the course on which the country moves for the duration they are in power.
- (4) Parties play a decisive role in formulation of laws for a country. Laws might be debated and passed in the legislature. Most of the members belong to a political party, they go by the direction of the party leadership, irrespective of their personal opinions about the laws being formulated.
- (5) Parties form and run governments. Big policy decisions are taken by political executives which is also a product of political parties.
- (6) Parties recruit leaders, train them and then make them ministers to run the government in the way they want.
- (7) Parties which lose in the elections play the role of opposition to ruling parties. They give a contradicting yet important perspective to the government's ideology by voicing different views and criticising the government (ruling party) for its failures or wrong policies. Opposition parties also mobilise opposition to the government.
- (8) Parties shape public opinion. They raise and highlight important events, ideas, approaches and issues which plague the functioning and development of the country. Parties have members and activists spread all over the country.
- (9) Most pressure groups are the extensions of political parties across different sections of society. Parties launch movements for the resolution of problems faced by various sections

of the society. Opinions of the parties essentially affect the opinion of the public.

- (10) Parties facilitate people, the access to government machinery and welfare schemes.
- (11) Despite the distrust, it is easier for a citizen to approach a party member than an office or Bureaucrat.
- (12) Parties have to be responsive to people's needs and demands.



Important

- There are different ways of choosing these candidates.
- In the USA, members and supporters of a party choose its candidates.
- In India, top party leaders choose candidates for contesting elections.

Significance of Political Parties

The necessity of political parties can be understood by imagining a political system without them. If there were no parties, every candidate in the elections would be independent. There would be no aggregation of interest and consensus on one model of development of the society. The government may be formed, but its stability will be questionable.

Elected representatives will only be accountable to their constituency for what they do for development. No one will be responsible for how the country will be run - just like the non-party based elections to the panchayat in many states. Despite the contestants not contesting formally, the village gets split into

more than one faction, each of which puts up a 'panel' of its candidates.

To prevent this, political parties are found in every political system.

The rise of political parties is directly linked to the emergence of representative democracies. Large societies require representative democracy because there is a requirement of an agency to gather different views on various issues and to present these to the government. A mechanism and ways are needed to integrate and gather views on representative governments to support or restrain the government, make policies, justify or oppose them. Political parties fulfil these requirements that every representative government has.

We can say that parties are a necessary condition for a democracy.



Important

- Political parties are one of the least trusted institutions all over the world.
- Yet the level of participation in the activities of political parties was fairly high. The proportion of those who said they were members of some political party was higher in India than many advanced countries like Canada, Japan, Spain and South Korea.
- Over the last three decades the proportion of those who report to be members of political parties in India has gone up steadily.
- The proportion of those who say they feel 'close to a political party' has also gone up in India in this period.

MOST LIKELY Questions

Very Short Answer Type Questions

[2 marks]

1. Why do political parties involve partisanship?

Ans. Political parties involve partisanship because:
The parties are a part of the society and thus they involve partisanship.

Short Answer Type Questions (SA)

[3 marks]

2. Describe the role of Political Parties in India.

Ans. Role of Political Parties

- (1) Parties contest election
- (2) Parties put forward different policies and programmes
- (3) Parties form and run the govt.
- (4) Parties that lose in the election play the role of opposition
- (5) Parties shape public opinion
- (6) Parties provide people access to govt. Machinery and welfare schemes.
- (7) Any other relevant point
(Any three points to be explained.)

3. Describe the three major components of a political party.

Ans. The three components of a political party are as follows:

- (1) **Leaders:** Leaders are the ones who hold positions of power at various levels in the sphere of politics.
- (2) **Active members:** Political parties comprise of lakhs of members and political activists across the entire nation. They play an important role in promoting the agenda of the party.
- (3) **Followers:** They are general citizens of the country who strongly believe in the ideas and approaches of the party and extend their support to the party, especially during elections.



Related Theory

- A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government. They agree on some policies and programmes for the society with a view to promote the collective good and welfare.

4. Describe the role of opposition party in a democracy?

Ans. Role of opposition party in democracy:

- (1) The opposition party criticizes the government for its failure and wrong policies on important issues.
- (2) The party in opposition opposes the government by voicing different views and make public opinion in the country.
- (3) The opposition party always ready to form an alternative government.

Long Answer Type Questions (LA)

[4 & 5 marks]

5. What is a political party? Explain any four characteristics of a political party.

Ans. A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government.

Characteristics of a political party are:

- (1) Political parties contest elections regularly.
- (2) They play a decisive role in making laws.
- (3) They form and run the government, if elected.
- (4) They have their own policies, ideologies and manifesto.
- (5) They shape public opinion and act as the face of democracy and government.
- (6) The parties which lose the elections play the important role of opposition.

(Any 4 of 6 points can be written to get full marks)

6. 'The rise of political parties is directly linked to the emergence of representative democracies.' Justify the statement.

Ans. Statement is true because:

- (1) Large societies need representative democracy. As societies become large and complex, they also needed some agency to gather different views on various issues and to present these to the government.
- (2) They needed some ways, to bring various representatives together so that a responsible government could be formed.
- (3) They needed a mechanism to support or restrain the government, make policies, justify or oppose them.
- (4) Political parties fulfill these needs that every representative government has. We can say that parties are a necessary condition for a democracy.

Case Based Questions (VSA Type)

[4 & 5 marks]

7. Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:

Political parties are easily one of the most visible institutions in a democracy. For most ordinary citizens, democracy is equal to political parties. If you travel to remote parts of our country and speak to the less educated citizens, you could come across people who may not know anything about our Constitution or about the nature of our government. But chances are that they would know something about our political parties. At the same time this visibility does not mean popularity. Most people tend to be very critical of political parties. They tend to blame parties for all that is wrong with our democracy and our political life.

Parties have become identified with social and political divisions.

(A) Define Political Parties.

(B) Why do people blame parties?

(C) What are the two main objectives of a political party?

Ans. (A) A political party is a group of people who are of different ideologies and contest elections for authority and power.

(B) People blame political parties because they are the most visible democratic institutions.

Explanation: They are the true representatives of democracy across the country. They are blamed due to that connection.

(C) Following are few objectives :

(a) To shape public opinion

(b) To increase political participation

Explanation: Political parties incorporate more people through adding them as members, activists etc.

8. Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:

We have seen how crucial political parties are for the working of democracy. Since parties are the most visible face of democracy, it is natural that people blame parties for whatever is wrong with the working of democracy. All over the world, people express strong dissatisfaction with the failure of political parties to perform their functions well. This is the case in our country too. Popular dissatisfaction and criticism has focussed on four problem areas in the working of political parties. Political parties need to face and overcome these challenges in order to remain effective instruments of democracy.

(A) Which challenge affects the internal working of a political party?

(B) Mishra Ji, a political party head is not ready to leave his position as the head of a party for any other leader except his son. Which challenge does this situation represent?

(C) Berlusconi was the Prime Minister of Italy. He is also one of the top businessmen in Italy. He is the leader of the Forza Italia founded in 1993. His company owns TV channels, the most important publishing company, a football club (AC Milan) and a bank. Identify the challenge posed to his party based on the given situation.

Ans. (A) The challenge of lack of internal democracy within parties affects the internal working of a political parties.

Explanation: Parties do not keep membership registers, do not hold organisational meetings, and do not conduct internal elections regularly. Ordinary members of the party do not get sufficient information on what happens inside the party. This affects internal working of a party.

(B) The challenge of dynastic succession.

(C) The challenge of growing role of money and muscle power in parties has been posed in the given example.

Explanation: He controlled the economic market and could make decisions which forfeited him keeping aside all the interests of the people in his country.

9. Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:

He had argued that people's movement should embrace politics openly. His argument was simple yet powerful. Movements focused on a single issue are suitable as long as we wish to achieve limited changes in a particular aspect of life. But if we wish to bring about a fundamental social transformation, or basic change even in one aspect of life, we would need a political organisation. People's movement must establish a new political formation to act as a moral force in politics. This was an urgent task, he said, because all the existing political parties had become irrelevant for social transformation.

"But Kishenji never clarified what that organisation will be. He talked of an alternative political formation or a third force in politics. But did he mean a political party?" said Gracy. She felt that an old style political party was not the right instrument for social change.

Sudha agreed with her. "I have thought about it several times. I agree that all the struggles that we are involved with - the struggle against displacement, against globalisation, against caste and gender oppression and for an alternative kind of development - all this is political. But the moment we form a party, all the goodwill we have earned all these years will be lost.

People will think of us as no different from other politicians." "Besides", added Karuna, "we have seen that a lot can be achieved by putting pressure on the existing political parties. We tried putting up candidates in panchayat elections, but the results were not very encouraging. People respect our work, they even adore us, but when it comes to voting they go for the established political parties." Shaheen did not agree with them: "Let us be very clear. Kishenji wanted all the people's movements to forge a new political party. Of course he wanted this party to be a different kind of a party. He was not for political alternatives, but for an alternative kind of politics."

(A) Why are single issue movements not effective?

(B) Which issues have been highlighted by Karuna?

(C) Which institution could put pressure upon political parties?

Ans. (A) Single issue movements cannot be used for bigger reformation or change in the society.

Explanation: Single issue based movements do not highlight greater or more fundamental issues in the system and cannot be used to cure these infirmities.

(B) People do not trust new political parties despite their hard work

Explanation: Karuna says that people do not trust new political parties. They trust the established ones.

(C) Pressure Groups or Interest Groups

TOPIC 2

PARTY SYSTEMS ACROSS THE WORLD

Any citizen can form a party in a democracy. Due to this, there are multiple political parties in each country. More than 750 parties are registered with the Election Commission of India.

Despite the large number, only some parties effectively contest elections.

Not all countries have the same number of political parties. In some, only one party is allowed to control and run the government. These are called one-party systems. For example in China, only the Communist Party is allowed to rule. Even though people are free to form political parties, the electoral system does not permit free competition for power. This is not a democratic approach.

For a functioning democratic system, at least two parties must be allowed to compete in elections. This provides a fair chance for the competing parties to come to power. These are called two-party systems or the Bi-Party systems.

Several other parties may exist, contest elections and win a few seats in the national legislatures. The two main parties have a serious chance of winning a majority of seats to form government. For example, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Systems where multiple parties exist and where more than two parties have a reasonable chance of coming to power either on their own strength or in alliance with others, is called as a Multi-party system. For

example, India has a multi-party system.



Frequently Asked

↳ When several parties in a multi-party system join hands for the purpose of contesting elections and winning power, it is called an alliance or a front. When such parties win the elections, they form Coalition governments.



Important

↳ India had three such major alliances in 2004 parliamentary elections – the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and the Left Front (LF).

The multiparty system has been criticised to be very messy and politically unstable. This system allows a variety of interests and opinions to enjoy political representation.

Party system evolves over a long period of time and depends on the nature of society, its social and regional divisions, its history of politics and its system of elections. Each country develops a party system moulded by its unique social and economic circumstances. Indian multi-party system evolved to accommodate the large social and geographical diversity which could not have been absorbed otherwise.

No one system can prove to be ideal for all countries and all situations. It depends on the country's history, social and cultural structure.

MOST LIKELY Questions

Very Short Answer Type Questions

[2 marks]

10. Examine the reason to accept a multi-party system in India.

Ans. India is a diverse country and needs to accommodate its diversity to help in better administration. This is possible only through Multi-party system.

11. Why is one party political system not considered a good democratic system?

Ans. One party political system is not considered a good democratic system because it doesn't offer a meaningful choice to the citizens of the country as they have no options to choose from.



Related Theory

↳ Because of this, the right to vote given to the citizens of a democracy having one party political system

is useless as there is only one party which wins the elections every time.

Short Answer Type Questions (SA)

[3 marks]

12. "No party system is ideal for all countries and all situations." Justify the statement with arguments.

Ans. No party system is ideal for all countries and all situations. This can be asserted by:

(1) Party system evolves over time depending on each country's history. Indian history encouraged it to choose a more open democracy.

(2) Social and regional divisions play a major role in the evolution of a party system. The diversity gets reflected in the system. For example, China is mono-cultural hence does not need multiple parties for representation.

(3) Party systems don't change easily because it depends on the society of a country and its political history.

(4) India adopted a multi-party system because of its social and geographical diversity and the colonial history.

Long Answer Type Questions (LA)

[4 & 5 marks]

13. Define the two-party system. Explain its advantages and disadvantages.

Ans. Two party system: In a democratic system power usually changes between two main parties, several other parties may exist but only the two main parties have a serious

chance of winning majority of seats to form government is known as Two Party System.

Advantages:

- (1) Several other parties contest election.
- (2) Clarity of manifestoes and programs.
- (3) Political stabilities.
- (4) Fair chance of competition among parties.
- (5) Representation of various ideologies.

(Any two points to be explained)

Disadvantages:

- (1) Limited choice to the voters.
- (2) Limited representation.
- (3) Limited scope for plural society.

(Any two points to be explained)

TOPIC 3

NATIONAL PARTIES

Democracies with federal systems have two types of parties—parties that participate in only one of the federal units and parties that are present in few or all units of the federation. India has some pan-India parties, which are called 'National parties'. These parties have their units in various states. All the units follow almost similar policies, programmes and strategies that are decided at the national level.

Every party in the country has to register with the Election Commission.

The Commission offers some special facilities to large and established parties. These parties are given a unique symbol – only the official candidates of that party can use that election symbol. These parties are 'recognised' by the Election Commission. They are called recognised political parties.

The Election Commission has laid down detailed criteria of the proportion of votes and seats that a party must get in order to be a recognised party.

- (1) A party that secures at least six per cent of the total votes in an election to the Legislative Assembly of a State and wins at least two seats is recognised as a State party.
- (2) A party that secures at least six per cent of the total votes in Lok Sabha elections or Assembly elections in four States and wins at least four seats in the Lok Sabha is recognised as a national party.
- (3) In 2018, about 7 National Parties were registered with the Election Commission.

All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)

- (1) Mamata Banerjee launched the AITC on 1st January 1998 which was recognised as a national party in 2016. The party's symbol is flowers and grass.

- (2) It is committed to secularism and federalism.
- (3) It has a strong presence in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura and has been ruling Bengal since 2011. It received a total of 4.07 per cent votes and won 22 seats, making it the fourth largest party in the Lok Sabha in 2019 General Elections.

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)

- (1) Kanshi Ram formulated the party in 1984.
- (2) It represents the interests of Bahujan Samaj (the dalits, adivasis, OBCs and religious minorities) and aims to secure their welfare and development.
- (3) It continues to draw inspiration from the teachings of Sahu Maharaj, Mahatma Phule, Periyar Ramaswami Naicker and Babasaheb Ambedkar.
- (4) Mainly based in Uttar Pradesh, it has a significant presence in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Punjab.
- (5) In General Elections 2019, it polled about 3.63 per cent votes and secured 10 seats in the Lok Sabha.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

- (1) BJP was founded in 1980 by reviving the erstwhile Bharatiya Jana Sangh which in turn was formed by Syama Prasad Mukherjee in 1951.
- (2) BJP finds its inspiration to resurrect the glory and prominence of India in the world from India's ancient culture and values; and Deendayal Upadhyaya's ideas of integral humanism and Antyodaya. Cultural nationalism (or 'Hindutva') is one of its most important philosophical thoughts

15. Which organisation recognise 'political parties' in India?

Ans. The Election Commission of India is responsible for recognising and registering 'political parties' in India.



Related Theory

The Election Commission of India is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for organising and administering election processes in India at national, state and district levels.

16. Name any one political party that is a national level political organisation but is not recognised as a national political party.

Ans. Samajwadi Party is a political party that has a national level political organisation but is not recognised as a national political party.



Related Theory

Other examples of such political parties are Rashtriya Janata Dal and Samata Party. Such parties have their units in several states.

Short Answer Type Questions (SA)

[3 marks]

17. Name the national political party which espouses secularism and welfare of weaker sections and minorities. mention any four features of that party.

Ans. Indian National Congress (INC) espouses secularism and welfare of weaker sections and minorities. Four features of the party are as follows:

- (1) It was found in 1885 and is one of the oldest parties in the world.
- (2) It was the major party post-Independence which ruled both states and the centre.
- (3) It is a centrist party.
- (4) Its national support has declined after 1989 but it remains to be present throughout the country.

18. What is a political party? State any two points of the ideology of Bharatiya Janata Party.

Ans. A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government. They agree on some policies and programmes for the society with a view to promote collective good.

The ideologies of Bharatiya Janata Party are as follows:

- (1) It wants full territorial and political integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India.
 - (2) A uniform civil code for all people living in the country irrespective of religion.
 - (3) It promotes cultural nationalism.
- (Any 2 of 3 points can be written to get full marks)

19. What is meant by a national political party? State the conditions required to be a national political party.

Ans. A national political party is a party that works at the national level. It has units in various states and they follow the same policies, programmes and strategy that is decided at the national level.

The conditions required to become a national political party is securing at least 6% of the total votes in Lok Sabha elections or Assembly elections in four States and wins at least four seats in the Lok Sabha.



Related Theory

Some examples of national political parties are:

- (1) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
- (2) Indian National Congress (INC)
- (3) Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
- (4) All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)

Long Answer Type Questions (LA)

[4 & 5 marks]

20. Highlight the main features of a political party in India which believes in India's ancient culture and values.

Ans. Bharatiya Janata Party in India believes in India's ancient culture and values. Its main features are as follows:

- (1) This party wants to build a strong and modern India by drawing inspiration from India's ancient culture and values.
- (2) This party wants a uniform civil code for all the citizens living in the country
- (3) This party wants to put a ban on religious conversions in the country
- (4) This party wants a full territorial and political integration of the country including POK.

in its conception of Indian nationhood and politics.

- (3) It advocates for a uniform civil code for all people living in the country irrespective of religion and ban on forced religious conversions. Its support base has multiplied exponentially since the 1990s.
- (4) The party has expanded its base in the entire country today. It rose to power in 1998 as the leader of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) including several regional parties.
- (5) It has emerged as the largest party with 303 members in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. It currently leads the ruling NDA government at the centre.

Communist Party of India (CPI)

- (1) It was formed in 1925. Its approach is heavily inclined towards Marxism-Leninism, secularism and advocates democracy.
- (2) It opposes the forces of secessionism and communalism. Despite following Marxism, it has accepted parliamentary democracy as a means of promoting the interests of the working class, farmers and the poor.
- (3) It went through a nasty split in the party in 1964 post which CPI(M) was formed.
- (4) It shows a significant presence in the states of Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- (5) It secured less than 1 per cent votes and 2 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections showcasing its loss of popularity.
- (6) It advocates building an alliance involving all left parties as a strong left front.

Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M)

- (1) It was founded in 1964 and has a firm belief in Marxism-Leninism. Like CPI, it supports socialism, secularism and democracy and opposes imperialism and communalism.
- (2) It has accepted democratic elections as a useful and helpful means for securing the objective of socio-economic justice in India.

- (3) It shows a promising presence in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, especially among the poor, factory workers, farmers, agricultural labourers and the intelligentsia.
- (4) The party is critical of the free market policy and free flow of foreign capital and goods into the country. It ruled West Bengal for 34 years without a break. It won about 1.75 per cent of votes and 3 seats in the 2019 General Elections.

Indian National Congress (INC)

- (1) It is popularly known as the Congress Party and was founded in 1885. It is one of the oldest parties of the world.
- (2) It has undergone multiple splits. It has been one of the most dominant players in Indian politics at the national and state level for several decades before and after India's Independence.
- (3) The Party aspires to build a modern secular democratic republic in India. The party ruled at the centre till 1977 and then from 1980 to 1989. Post that period, it has lost popularity but continues to maintain a strong presence, cutting across social divisions.
- (4) Congress in its ideological orientation is centrist. It espouses secularism and welfare of weaker sections and minorities.
- (5) The INC supports new economic reforms keeping in mind the welfare of all sections of the society. It led the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government from 2004 to 2019.

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)

- (1) It was formed in 1999 following a split in the Congress party.
- (2) It espouses democracy, Gandhian secularism, equity, social justice and federalism. It advocates that offices in government be confined to natural born citizens of the country.
- (3) It has a major significance in Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Manipur and Assam. It is a coalition partner of Congress in the state of Maharashtra. Since 2004, it has been a member of the United Progressive Alliance.

MOST LIKELY Questions

Very Short Answer Type Questions

[2 marks]

14. Name any two Indian national political parties.

Ans. Indian national political parties are:

- (1) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
- (2) Indian National Congress (INC)
- (3) Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)

(4) All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)

(Any 2 of 4 points can be written to get full marks)



Related Theory

A national political party is a party that secures at least 6% of the total votes in Lok Sabha elections or Assembly elections in four States and wins at least four seats in the Lok Sabha.

TOPIC 4

STATE PARTIES

State parties are also referred to as regional parties. However, they need not be regional in their ideology or outlook. They can also be all India parties which happen to have succeeded only in some states. Parties like the Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal have national level political organisations with units in several states. Biju Janata Dal, Sikkim Democratic Front, Mizo National Front and Telangana Rashtra Samithi are conscious about their state identity. State Parties have risen in numbers from the past few years

making Indian Parliament representative and more diverse.

No party could achieve an absolute majority between 1990s-2014. To form governments, national parties had to form alliances with state parties. Since 1996, nearly every State party has had an opportunity to be a part of a national level coalition government.

It strengthens federalism and democracy in our country.

MOST LIKELY Questions

Short Answer Type Questions (SA)

[3 marks]

21. "Nearly every one of the state parties want to get an opportunity to be a part of one or the other national level coalition." Support the statement with arguments.

Ans. The said statement is supported by the following arguments:

- (1) The state parties commonly referred to as regional parties need support of the national parties to succeed in more than one state. Hence they enjoy being in coalition at the centre.
- (2) Since no one party is able to secure a majority on its own in Lok Sabha, the national parties are compelled to form alliances with state parties. This helps state parties to establish a national presence and its interests are secure easily.
- (3) Nearly every state party has got the opportunity to be a part of one or the other national level coalition government since 1996.

22. How do state regional political parties contribute in strengthening federalism or democracy in India? Explain with examples.

Ans. State or regional political parties contribute in strengthening federalism and democracy in India in the following ways:

- (1) They make Indian politics more diverse, giving the voters the option to pick and choose.
- (2) They represent a multitude of regions and problems coming from all over the country, providing a platform for different social groups.

- (3) Regional parties form coalitions with the national party and help make the central government more representative.

Long Answer Type Questions (LA)

[4 & 5 marks]

23. Identify and list the following political parties as national or regional political parties:

- (1) National Conference
- (2) Shiromani Akali Dal
- (3) D.M.K. or Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
- (4) Nationalist Congress Party
- (5) Bharatiya Janata Party
- (6) Shiv Sena
- (7) Forward Bloc
- (8) Janata Dal (U)
- (9) Rashtriya Janata Dal
- (10) Samajwadi Party

- Ans.**
- (1) National Conference - Regional party
 - (2) Shiromani Akali Dal - Regional party
 - (3) D.M.K. - Regional party
 - (4) Nationalist Congress Party - National party
 - (5) Bharatiya Janata Party - National party
 - (6) Shiv Sena - Regional party
 - (7) Forward Bloc - Regional party
 - (8) Janata Dal (U) - Regional party
 - (9) Rashtriya Janata Dal - Regional party
 - (10) Samajwadi Party - Regional party.

TOPIC 5

CHALLENGES TO POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties are crucial for the working of democracy. People blame parties for improper functioning of administration and political set up because they are the visible faces of democracy. People express strong dissatisfaction with the failure of political parties to perform their functions well. Popular dissatisfaction in working of political parties has been basically over 4 different problems areas. To maintain their image as an effective instrument of democracy, they have to work upon these infirmities.

- (1) The first challenge is lack of internal democracy within parties. In most political parties, power tends to concentrate in the hands of the topmost leaders. Proper registers of membership are not maintained and internal elections and organisational meetings are not conducted regularly.

Flow of information within the party is not fluid or regular. Members do not have the means or the connections needed to influence the decisions. Leaders automatically assume greater power to make decisions on behalf of the party. Due to accumulation of paramount power in the hands of few leaders, dissenters find themselves out of the party, if they try to raise their voices. Personal loyalty to the leader becomes a significant criterion for continuing the membership of the society.

- (2) The second challenge of dynastic succession is closely related to the first challenge. Ordinary workers find it almost impossible to rise to the top in a party due to the lack of transparency in working or functioning of the party. Leaders favour their families and

friends and often appoint them at topmost and important positions in the party. This is unfair to the members without influence- also bad for democracy because inefficient members are appointed without any adequate experience or support at influential positions. Even in the oldest democracy, this challenge can be seen.

- (3) The growing role of money and muscle power in parties, especially during elections is another challenge. Parties tend to use dishonest methods to win elections including nomination of those candidates who have or can raise lots of money. Rich industrialists and companies funding the parties have an undue influence on the policies and decisions of the party. Parties even support criminals who can win elections. This is concerning for advocates of democracy.
- (4) The fourth challenge is that parties do not seem to offer a meaningful choice to the voters. Parties must be significantly different in terms of ideology and approaches.

Recent years have seen a steep decline in the ideological differences among parties in most parts of the world. For example, Labour Party and Conservative Party of Britain are not different ideologically. They differ very minutely only in details on how policies are to be framed and implemented.



Important

↳ In India, the differences among all the main parties on the economic policies have declined. Dissenters do not have many options to choose from. At times, even leaders keep shifting from one party to another, thereby reducing choice among candidates too. Shifting from one party to another is called defection.

MOST LIKELY Questions

Very Short Answer Type Questions

[2 marks]

24. What is defection?

Ans. To reflect fundamental political divisions in a society is known as defection.

Explanation: Political Parties exercise political power by contesting elections. They are created to expand democracy to the grass root level. They don't reflect any political divisions in a society.

Short Answer Type Questions (SA)

[3 marks]

25. How can the growing role of money and muscle power in political parties be controlled? Suggest any three measures.

Ans. The growing role of money and muscle power in political parties can be controlled in the following ways:

- (1) There should be state funding of elections.
- (2) *Rath yatras*, rallies and processions should be banned.

- (3) All types of elections should be held at the same time.
- (4) It should be mandatory for every candidate contesting elections to file an affidavit giving details of his/her property and criminal cases pending against him/her if any.
- (5) Political parties should hold their organisational elections and file their income tax returns.
- (6) One-third seats should be reserved for women candidates.

(Any 3 of 6 points can be written to get full marks)



Related Theory

Money and muscle power play an important role in elections. Political parties mainly nominate those candidates who can raise money for contesting elections and muscle power so that they can get votes forcefully.

26. "Dynastic succession is one of the most serious challenges before the political parties." Analyse the statement.

Ans. Dynastic succession is one of the most serious challenges before the political parties because:

- (1) Most political parties do not practice open and transparent procedures for their functioning.
 - (2) There are few ways for an ordinary worker to rise to the top in a party.
 - (3) In many parties the top positions are always controlled by members of one family.
 - (4) This practice is unfair to other members of that party and is also bad for a democracy.
 - (5) People who do not have adequate experience or popular support come to occupy position of power.
 - (6) Any other relevant point.
- (Any three points to be analysed)

Long Answer Type Questions (LA)

[4 & 5 marks]

27. "Political parties need to face certain challenges in order to remain effective instruments of democracy." Explain the statement with examples.

Ans. Political parties are the most visible representation of democracies and face various blames for improper functioning of the same.

- (1) Lack of internal democracy is one challenge that parties have to face. Absence of transparency and efficiency in the appointment of workers, concentration of power among a few leaders at the top and less organisational meetings, obstruct the proper functioning of parties.
- (2) Dynastic succession is another such challenge where most of the power remains accumulated in hands of particular families instead of being distributed among promising workers.
- (3) Common activists find it hard to rise to positions of influence. This affects democracy negatively because less talented and less popular people find it difficult to compete for top positions in country.
- (4) Role of money and muscle power in parties makes it support unimportant issues at times, which is also a challenge parties have to face and resolve to rise to power.
- (5) No meaningful choices is another challenge. There is a decline in the ideological difference among parties in the country. Thus, votes get divided.

Case Based Questions (VSA Type)

[4 & 5 marks]

28. Read the source and answer the questions that follow:

The first challenge is lack of internal democracy within parties. All over the world there is a tendency in political parties towards the concentration of power in one or few leaders at the top. Parties do not keep membership registers, do not hold organisational meetings, and do not conduct internal elections regularly. Ordinary members of the party do not get sufficient information on what happens inside the party. They do not have the means or the connections needed to influence the decisions. As a result the leaders assume greater power to make decisions in the name of the party.

The second challenge of dynastic succession is related to the first one. Since most political parties do not practice open and transparent procedures for their functioning, there are very few ways for an ordinary worker to rise to the top in a party. Questions:

- (A) Name one state and one national political party in India?
- (B) What is the challenge of dynastic succession faced by a party?

- (C) Suggest reforms which can help political parties to face the lack of internal democracy.

Ans. (A) National Party: Indian National Congress
State Party: Janata Dal(U) of Jharkhand

- (B) The challenge of Dynastic Succession in parties is a result of favouritism and nepotism practiced openly. It becomes difficult for an outsider/common man to rise to influential positions in a party regardless of his talent. Most powerful positions are reserved for relatives or friends.

TOPIC 6

WAYS TO REFORM PARTIES

Political parties require reformation. The leaders who represent political parties are the final decision makers in a democracy. To reform them, the entire party has to agree and decide to reform.

Some recent developments and suggestions for reformation are:

- (1) The Constitution was amended to prevent elected MLAs and MPs from frequently changing parties. Defection had become a common practice for political leaders- either in hunger of political influence or cash rewards. If any MLA or MP changes parties, he or she is suspended and their seat in the legislature is lost. This amendment has helped to bring down the cases of defection. On the negative side, it has made dissent against the leaders even more difficult. MPs and MLAs have to accept whatever the party leaders decide.
- (2) The Supreme Court passed several orders and laws to reduce the influence of money and criminals making it mandatory for every candidate who contests elections to file an affidavit declaring his assets- details of his property and criminal cases pending against him. This system has made several details regarding the candidate's public stature. A mechanism to scrutinise this declaration and verify the details is yet to be developed. The trends and consequences of this law have not yet been released.
- (3) The Election Commission passed an order making it necessary for political parties to hold their organisational elections and file their income tax returns. The implementation has not been rigid though. Thus it is unclear if this has made the situation good or worse.

To reform political parties, following changes can also be suggested:

- (1) A law should be made to regulate the internal affairs of political parties.

- (C) To face lack of internal democracy, a party should make its functioning more transparent. Regular meetings should be held, communication should be made stronger, favouritism should be removed and everybody should be given an equal chance to contribute to party affairs. Apart from this, selection process or utilisation of funds should be made transparent by setting up a committee-properly represented by all areas of members present in the country.

- (2) Registration of each member and proper regulation of membership, stringency to follow its own constitution, to have an independent authority and act as judges in case of party disputes, to hold open elections to the highest posts should all be ensured.
- (3) Reservation of one-third seats in political parties and decision making bodies for women candidates should be ensured.
- (4) State funding of elections should be ensured. The government should give parties support in cash or kind for their election expenses. Cash could also be given on the basis of votes gained during the elections.

These suggestions have not yet been accepted by political parties. Legal solutions to political problems should be carefully drafted. Over-regulation of political parties can be counterproductive. This could force parties to use the loopholes in these laws. Political parties might not agree at all to pass such stringent laws.

Some More Ways to Reform Parties

Political parties are after all representatives of people at large scale. To reform them, citizens of a country can play the following roles.

- (1) Pressure from the people: People can put pressure on political parties. This can be done through petitions, publicity and agitations.
- (2) Ordinary citizens, pressure groups and movements and the media can play an important role in this. The fear of losing support from the public can encourage political parties to reform themselves.
- (3) Political parties can improve if future participants make it a point to reform these parties.

The quality of democracy depends on the degree of public participation. Political participation alone can lead parties on a path of reformation. The problem of bad politics can be solved by better politics.

MOST LIKELY Questions

Very Short Answer Type Questions

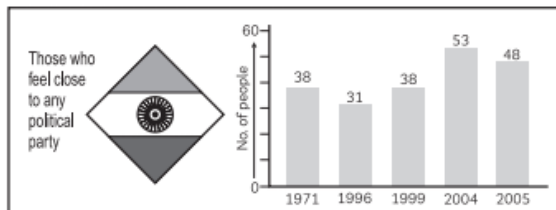
[2 marks]

29. Suggest ways to make political parties more responsive to people's needs and demands.

Ans. Political parties can be made more responsive through organised petitions, agitations and publicity by various groups.

Explanation: This shall make political parties pay more attention to people's needs to secure their support.

31. Study the data about political participation in India and answer the following questions.



- (A) Interpret the trend of political participation among Indian citizens in the recent past.

- (B) If hypothetically, elections were held in all the mentioned years, which year according to the given data is most likely to see the highest voter turnout in elections?

Ans. (A) The trend of political participation in India has been going stronger and upwards in the recent past. More and more people have been saying they feel closer to political parties than before according to the given table.



Related Theory

Over the last three decades the proportion of those who report to be members of political parties in India has gone up steadily. The proportion of those who say they feel 'close to a political party' has also gone up in India in this period.

- (B) 2004 is most likely to see the highest voter turnout because it had the highest people voting that they felt close to political parties.



Related Theory

Voter turnout is the percentage of people who actually vote in the elections out of those who are eligible to vote in them.

30. Suggest any one way to promote public participation in political parties for enhancing the quality of democracy.

Ans. Following are the ways in which public participation in political parties can be promoted:

- (1) Parties should make their election process more transparent and elect more candidates from among the common people.
- (2) Various platforms like social media can be used to allocate them small responsibilities to maintain their interest in party activities.

Short Answer Type Questions (SA)

[3 marks]

32. Explain any three recent efforts made to reform political parties in India.

OR

[Ⓐ]Suggest any three reforms to make political parties more democratic.

Ans. Recent efforts made to reform political parties in India are:

- (1) Anti-defection law has been introduced, under which a member can be disqualified if he/she goes against the instructions issued by the party for monetary benefits.
- (2) To reduce the influence of money and muscle power in the parties, funding of political parties has been made transparent and democratic. Funds can only be accepted if complete documentation has been attached and miscreants are likely to be punished.
- (3) It is mandatory for any candidate to file an affidavit giving details of his property and cases pending against him/her before nomination.
- (4) The election commission has made it mandatory for political parties to hold their organisational elections regularly and file their income tax returns.

[Ⓐ] Same answer, different question style.

- (5) Making it mandatory for political parties to reserve a significant number of tickets, about one third, for women candidates.

(Any 3 of 5 points can be written to get full marks)



Related Theory

A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government. All political parties have a manifesto and propaganda which they follow. They agree on a coherent ideology and programmes for the society with a view to promote collective good and welfare.



Glossary

- (1) **Omnipresent:** Present everywhere, widespread.
- (2) **Collective good:** Interest of the society, community or a big group.
- (3) **Partisan:** Strong supporter of a party, prejudiced against something.
- (4) **Political Executive:** Executive at the head of the government or ministers.
- (5) **Panchayat:** Local self-governing bodies at the village.
- (6) **Factions:** Groups.
- (7) **Antyodaya:** Rise of the last man, development of the most vulnerable.
- (8) **Humanism:** A rationalist outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters.
- (9) **Secessionism:** The policy of those advocating secession.
- (10) **Socialism:** A political or economic theory of social organisation which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community.
- (11) **Leftist:** Relating to left wing, left wing generally supports socialist tendencies- upliftment of the worker and labour class.
- (12) **Rightist:** Relating to right wing, right wing generally supports liberalism, free trade and free economy.
- (13) **Centrist:** Relating to central attitude- balance of two wings.
- (14) **Paramount:** Ultimate.
- (15) **Dissenters:** One who debates and disagrees.
- (16) **Counterproductive:** Harmful.



Chronology

1885: Indian National Congress was formed

1925: CPI was founded

1951: Bharatiya Jana Sangh was formed

1964: Split in CPI, CPI M was formed

1980: BJP was formed

1984: BSP was formed

1998: AITC was formed

1999: Nationalist Congress Party was formed