What is a Political Party?

- A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government.
- It mobilises voters to support common sets of interests, concerns and goals.
- A political party fixes the political agenda and policies and tries to persuade people by claiming their policies are better than those of other parties.
- A political party is the means through which people can speak to the government and have a say in the governance of any country.
- A political party has three components: (i) the leaders (ii) the active members (iii) the followers.

FUNCTIONS

- Parties contest elections by putting up candidates.
- In some countries, candidates are selected by members and supporters of a party (e.g., USA).
- In other countries, candidates are chosen by top party leaders — e.g., India.
- Parties have different policies and programmes, voters choose from them. In a democracy, a large number of people with similar opinions group together and form a party and then give a direction to the policies followed by the government.
- The parties that lose elections form the opposition and voice different views and criticise government for their failures. They mobilise opposition to the government.
- They shape public opinion. Parties with the help of pressure groups launch movements for solving problems faced by the people.
- They provide people access to government machinery and welfare schemes. The local party leader acts as a link between the citizen and the government officer.

Need for Political Parties

That democracies cannot exist without political parties is clear from the functions they perform. If there were no political parties then:

(i) All candidates in an election would become independent candidates. They cannot promise any major policy change to the people. No one will be responsible for how the country is run.

(ii) In large societies, only representative democracy can work. Political parties become an agency to gather different views on various issues and present them to the government.
PARTY SYSTEM

There are three types of party systems:

(i) One-Party System (ii) Two-Party System and (iii) Multi-Party System.

(i) One-Party System: There is no competition in this system. The lone party nominates the candidates and the voters have only two choices — (i) Not to vote at all or (ii) write ‘yes’ or ‘no’ against the name of the candidates nominated by the party. This system has been popular in Communist countries and other authoritarian regimes e.g., China, North Korea and Cuba. This system was also prevalent in USSR till Communism collapsed.

(ii) In a Two-party system power shifts between two major, dominant parties. In this system, to win elections, the winner has to get maximum number of votes, but not necessarily a majority of votes. The smaller parties usually merge with the bigger parties or they drop out of elections. This parliamentary system prevails in Great Britain and Canada, in which only two parties hold significant numbers of seats. Supporters of this system believe that this prevents dangers of fragmentation (too many parties winning seats from different constituencies) and the government can run smoothly.

(iii) Multi-Party System is the most common type of party system.

- In this system, three or more parties have the capacity to gain control of the government separately or in coalition.
- When no party gains a majority of the legislative seats in multi-party parliamentary system, then several parties join forces and form a coalition government. Supporters of this system point out that it allows more points of views to be represented in the government. Critics of this system point out that multi-party system sometimes leads to political instability.

An Alliance

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. India, in 2004 and 2009, had three such Alliances for parliamentary elections: (i) National Democratic Alliance (ii) The United Progressive Alliance and (iii) Left Front.

Proportion Of Participation

- Level of participation in the activities of the parties — very high in India.
- Advanced countries like Canada, Japan, Spain and South Korea much less.
- People in India who feel close to a political party — membership of political parties has also gone up.

Political Parties in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Parties</th>
<th>State Parties or Federalists Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If a political party fulfils the criteria under Election Symbols (Reservation) Order 1968 in more than four states, it is deemed to be a National Party.</td>
<td>A political party recognised in less than four states is a State Party in the state or states in which it is recognised.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Difference between a National Party and a Regional Party

- A national party has influence all over the country or in many states of India. The influence of a state party is in a state or a few regions.
- National parties care for national interests, whereas regional parties promote mainly regional interests. For example, the DMK or AIDMK.
- Regional parties stand for greater autonomy for the states. The national parties, on the other hand, have to harmonise various conflicting regional interests.
- An exclusive symbol such as (lotus or hand) is reserved for a national party throughout India. But in case of a regional party, a symbol for it is reserved for it in the state which it is recognised.

Election Commission

Every party in India has to register with the Election Commission. The Commission treats every party as equal to the others, but it offers special facilities to large and established parties. They are given a unique symbol and are called, “recognised political parties.”

Introduction to Major Political Parties in India

1. Indian National Congress (INC)
   Founded in 1885, it led the movement for independence. After independence it became free India’s premier political party. In the first five General Elections held, the Congress virtually controlled the politics of the country. It lost the elections in 1977 following the Emergency rule. It made a comeback in 1980 under Indira Gandhi with a massive victory and reached its peak in the election of 1984. After 1991, the Congress was on the decline and BJP rose in power. In the elections held in May 2004, the Congress emerged as the winner with the help of its allies. It formed a coalition government called the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). In its manifestos, it projected a vision of a politically united, economically prosperous, socially just and culturally harmonious India.

2. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
   Created in 1980, it champions the socio-religious values of the Hindu majority of India, conservative social policies, and strong national defence. Since its formation, the BJP has been a strong rival of the Indian National Congress. It has allied itself with regional parties to challenge the Congress Party, which dominated Indian politics for 40 years. The BJP’s rallying cry is “Hindutva”. It wants full territorial integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India and a uniform civil code. The BJP, in alliance with several other parties, led the Government of India between 1998 and 2004. It is now the recognised Opposition, and the leading party within the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

3. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
   The Bahujan Samaj Party is a party formed to represent the OBC, SC, ST and religious minorities, those at the bottom of India’s caste system. The BSP was formed in 1984 by two leaders, Kanshiram and Mayawati. The main base of the party is in Uttar Pradesh. It also has a substantial following in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Punjab. It draws inspiration from the teachings of Sahu Maharaj, Mahatma Phule, Periyar Ramaswami Naicker. The BSP also draws inspiration from the teachings of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

4. Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI–M)
   The Communist Party of India (Marxist), usually known as CPI (M), split from the Communist Party of India in 1964. It is strongest in the states of Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura as of 2006, and led the government in all these states till 2011 when it lost power in the first two.
It believes in **Marxism-Leninism** and supports socialism, secularism and democracy. It opposes imperialism and communalism. Its supporters are farmers, agricultural labourers and intelligentsia. In West Bengal CPI(M) has enjoyed power without a break, for 30 years.

5. **Communist Party of India (CPI)**

It was formed in 1925, believes in Marxism-Leninism, secularism and democracy. It is opposed to the forces of communalism and secessionism. It believes that parliamentary democracy helps the interests of farmers, the working class, and the poor. The split in the party in 1964, and the formation of CPI (M) made its position weak. It has following in the states of Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. It aims and propagates unity and coming together of all left parties to form a United Left Front.

6. **Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)**

It was formed on May 25, 1999, by Sharad Pawar, P.A. Sangama, and Tariq Anwar after they were thrown out of the Congress Party. They had objected to a person of foreign origin becoming the Prime Minister of India. NCP have a major support in Maharashtra state. The NCP claims that it supports democracy, Gandhian secularism, equity, social justice and federalism.

**STATE PARTIES**

— All parties, other than the six national parties, are classified as state parties by the Election Commission of India. They are also called regional parties.

— They can be all-India parties but have been successful only in some states. Examples; Samajwadi Party, Samata Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal. They have national level political organisations.

— Some like the Biju Janata Dal, Sikkim Democratic Front, Mizo National Front have state identities. In the last years, no national party has been able to secure majority on its own in the Lok Sabha. The national parties have been compelled to form alliances with state parties. This has led to coalition governments in the Centre since 1966.

— This has strengthened federalism and democracy in our country.

---

**Challenges Faced By Political Parties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of internal democracy within parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Power concentrated in the hands of few.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No organisational meetings. No keeping of membership register.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No internal, regular elections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ordinary members do not have access to information, cannot influence decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Disagreement with the leader leads to ouster from the party.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynastic succession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Leaders on top have unfair advantage to favour people close to them or family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Top positions controlled by family members in most parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bad for democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tendency seen all over the world, even in the older democracies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Money and muscle power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- During elections this power is very visible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Candidates who can raise money are nominated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rich people and companies who give funds have influence on policies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties do not offer a meaningful choice to the voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- There is not much difference in ideology among parties. Example: Labour Party and Conservative Party of Britain. They only differ on details of implementation rather than fundamental principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In India also there is not much difference among parties on economic issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW CAN PARTIES BE REFORMED?

Efforts Made to Reform the Political Parties

- The Constitution was amended to prevent defection. Now the MPs and MLAs will lose their seat in the Parliament or a State Assembly if they defect.
- The Supreme Court passed certain orders to reduce the power of money and criminals. A candidate has to file an affidavit giving details of his property and criminal cases pending against him.
- The Election Commission — Political parties are asked to file their income tax returns. They have to hold organisational elections.

Suggestions Given to Parties for Reform

Compulsory to regulate internal democracy, hold open elections, maintain registers, follow its own constitution. Have an independent judge in party disputes.

Mandatory to give minimum party tickets, (about 1/3) to women, should be a quota for women in decision-making bodies of the party.

There should be state funding, government should give a grant to political parties to support election expenses, e.g. petrol, paper, telephones.

Two other ways

People can put pressure on political parties through petitions, publicity and agitations. Media pressure groups and ordinary people can play their part.

Political parties can reform if people who want reforms join them. The more the people participate, the better parties will function. Criticism from outside is not enough, bad politics can be solved by good politics.

Suggestions Given to Parties for Reform

| Compulsory to regulate internal democracy, hold open elections, maintain registers, follow its own constitution. Have an independent judge in party disputes. |
| Mandatory to give minimum party tickets, (about 1/3) to women, should be a quota for women in decision-making bodies of the party. |
| There should be state funding, government should give a grant to political parties to support election expenses, e.g. petrol, paper, telephones. |
| People can put pressure on political parties through petitions, publicity and agitations. Media pressure groups and ordinary people can play their part. |
| Political parties can reform if people who want reforms join them. The more the people participate, the better parties will function. Criticism from outside is not enough, bad politics can be solved by good politics. |

I. SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

A. NCERT TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS

Q.1. State the various functions political parties perform in a democracy.

Ans. (i) Political parties contest elections to win the majority and form the government. They choose candidates who are popular personalities known to their voters. In India, they are chosen by the top leaders, in most countries by members of the party.

(ii) Political parties prepare their policies and programmes and make them known to the public. They make every attempt to convince the public that their programme is the best. They organise public meetings, speeches, demonstrations to gain public support. They even announce policy changes if once they are elected.

(iii) Political parties mobilise public opinion on major issues through pressure groups. They not only inform the public, they also seek its support involving problems facing the country.
(iv) Political parties play a major role in making laws for the country. No law can become a bill unless all parties support it. Parties follow the direction given by their party leaders.

(v) Political parties form an important link between the government and the people. It is easy for the public to approach their local leader than a government official. The local leader has to listen to the public demand, otherwise he will lose the next election.

Q.2. What are the various challenges faced by political parties. [2011 (T-2)]

OR

Explain how political parties are still in the grip of some serious challenges. [2011 (T-2)]

Ans. 1. Lack of Internal Democracy : (i) Every member of the party does not have a chance to take part in decision making process. (ii) Every member is not consulted before taking a decision. (iii) There is no proper organisation or registration of members. (iv) Power remains in the hands of a few top leaders, who do not consult ordinary members. (v) Ordinary members have no information about the internal working of the party.

2. Dynastic succession : With power in the hands of a few top leaders, all party positions go to their family members. These members may not be qualified or have the ability to hold their positions. People who come from weaker sections, or have no contact with the top leaders, cannot rise to the top positions.

3. Money and Muscle Power : Various political parties contest elections, there is competition and a lot of money is needed. Money is needed to organise demonstrations, public meetings and speeches to publicise the image of the party. Parties choose those candidates who can raise money for the party and win elections with their money. Money power is felt in older democracies like USA also.

4. Meaningful choice to others : In India, like many other countries, the fundamental issues raised by parties are the same. On the economic front, all parties have the same agenda — help the weaker sections, equity and jobs for all, etc. The only difference is the priority they will give to any problem. Voters do not have a meaningful choice. Even leaders keep changing parties, thus confusing the voter.

Q.3. Suggest some reforms to strengthen parties so that they perform their functions well. [2011 (T-2)]

OR

“The elimination of flows of political parties seem difficult but not impossible.”

Justify the statement with suggestions. [2011 (T-2)]

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

(ii) It should be mandatory for political parties to give a minimum number of tickets, about 1/3rd to the women candidates.

(iii) There should be state funding of elections. The government should give parties money to support the election expenses.

Q.4. What is a political party?

Ans. A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and form the government. Its members are people who have common interests, concerns and goals. They
agree on a political agenda and policies and try to convince people that their policies are best suited to the country. They put up candidates to fight elections and try to win popular support for their policies. They work for the collective interest of the society and not for a particular section of society.

Q.5. What are the characteristics of a political party?
Ans. (i) A political party has members who agree on some policies and programmes for the society with a view to promote common good.
(ii) It seeks to implement the policies by winning popular support through elections.
(iii) A political party has three components: the leaders, the active members and the followers.
(iv) A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government.

Q.6. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List I</th>
<th>List II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Congress Party</td>
<td>A National Democratic Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bharatiya Janata Party</td>
<td>B State Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Communist Party of India (Marxist)</td>
<td>C United Progressive Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Telugu Desam Party</td>
<td>D Left Front</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ans. (C)

Q.7. Who among the following is the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party?
A. Kanshi Ram  
B. Sahu Maharaj
C. B.R. Ambedkar  
D. Jotiba Phule

Ans. (A)

Q.8. What is the guiding philosophy of the Bhartiya Janata Party?
A. Dalit welfare  
B. Revolutionary democracy
C. Integral humanism  
D. Modernity

Ans. (C)

Q.9. Consider the following statements on parties:
A. Political parties do not enjoy much trust among the people.
B. Parties are often rocked by scandals involving top party leaders.
C. Parties are not necessary to run governments.

Ans. (A)
Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) A, B, and C   (b) A and B   (c) B and C   (d) A and C
Ans. (b)

OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS (AS PER CCE PATTERN)

B. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (1 MARK)

Q.1. Which of these statements is incorrect?
(a) Parties reflect fundamental political unity in a society
(b) Parties try to persuade people why their policies are better than others
(c) They seek to implement these policies by winning popular support through elections
(d) All the above
Ans. (d)

Q.2. Parties put forward their _____ and _____ and the voters choose from them.
(a) policies, programmes
(b) rules, regulations
(c) views, opinions
(d) all the above
Ans. (a)

Q.3. Political parties exercise power through which of these functions?
(a) Parties contest elections
(b) They play a decisive role in making laws for a country
(c) They form and run governments
(d) All the above
Ans. (d)

Q.4. Who chooses the candidates for contesting elections in India?
(a) Members and supporters of the party
(b) Top party leadership
(c) The existing government
(d) None of these
Ans. (b)

Q.5. When was the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) formed?
(a) 1952    (b) 1954
(c) 1962    (d) 1964
Ans. (d)

Q.6. Which of these statements is incorrect about CPI (M)?
(a) Supports socialism, secularism and democracy
(b) Opposes imperialism and communalism
(c) Wants to secure socio-economic justice in India
(d) All the above
Ans. (d)

Q.7. In which of these states does the CPI (M) enjoy strong support?
(a) Uttar Pradesh    (b) Andhra Pradesh
(c) West Bengal     (d) Chhattisgarh
Ans. (c)

Q.8. Fill in the blank.
An ______ is a signed document submitted to an officer, where a person makes a sworn statement regarding her personal information.
(a) affidavit    (b) declaration
(c) agreement    (d) appeal
Ans. (a)

Q.9. Which of these statements is correct?
(a) Every party in the country has to register with the Election Commission
(b) The Commission treats all the parties equally
(c) It offers some special facilities to large and established parties

Q.10. How many parties are registered with the Election Commission of India?
   (a) 250  (b) 300  (c) 500  (d) more than 750
   Ans. (d)

Q.11. Which of these countries has a one-party system?
   (a) India  (b) China  (c) USA  (d) UK
   Ans. (b)

Q.12. Which of these is not a good option for a democratic state?
   (a) One-party system  (b) Two-party system  (c) Multi-party system  (d) None of the above
   Ans. (a)

Q.13. Which of the following countries is the example of two-party system?
   (a) USA  (b) UK  (c) India  (d) Both (a) and (b)
   Ans. (d)

Q.14. Which of these alliances were there in 2004 parliamentary elections in India?
   (a) National Democratic Alliance  (b) The United Progressive Alliance  (c) Left Front  (d) All the above
   Ans. (d)

Q.15. Which of these is true regarding the party system of any country?
   (a) The Constitution lays down party system  (b) No country can choose its party system  
   (c) People choose their party system  (d) Important leaders choose their party system
   Ans. (b)

Q.16. Those parties which are given the special privilege of ‘election symbol’ and other facilities are said to be:
   (a) ‘identified’ by the Election Commission  (b) ‘recognised’ by the Election Commission
   (c) ‘patronised’ by the Election Commission  (d) ‘attached’ by the Election Commission
   Ans. (b)

Q.17. Which party is recognised as a ‘State party’?
   (a) A party that secures 6% of total votes in the Assembly election
   (b) A party that secures at least 6% of the total votes in an election to the State Assembly and wins at least 2 seats
   (c) A party that wins 4 seats in the Assembly election
   (d) None of the above
   Ans. (b)

Q.18. How many recognised national parties were there in 2006?
   (a) 5  (b) 6  (c) 7  (d) 8
   Ans. (b)

Q.19. In which of these categories can the Indian National Congress be put?
   (a) Centrist party (b) Rightist party (c) Leftist party (d) None of these
   Ans. (a)

Q.20. When was the BJP founded?
   (a) 1960  (b) 1970  (c) 1980  (d) 1990
   Ans. (c)

Q.21. The BJP formed the government in 1998 as the leader of an alliance. Name the alliance.
   (a) National Democratic Alliance  (b) United Progressive Alliance
   Ans. (b)
Q.22. When and under whose leadership was Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) formed?
(a) 1982, Mayawati
(b) 1984, Kanshi Ram
(c) 1985, Mulayam Singh Yadav
(d) 1986, Bhajanlal
Ans. (b)

Q.23. From the ideas and teaching of which of these leaders does BSP draw inspiration?
(a) Sahu Maharaj
(b) Mahatma Phule and Ramaswami Naicker
(c) Babasaheb Ambedkar
(d) All the above
Ans. (d)

Q.24. In which state does NCP have a major support?
(a) Maharashtra
(b) Meghalaya
(c) Manipur
(d) Assam
Ans. (a)

Q.25. Which of these parties has national level political organisations?
(a) Samajwadi Party
(b) Telugu Desam Party
(c) Rashtriya Janta Dal
(d) None of the above
Ans. (d)

Q.1. Which one of the following is not a component of a political party? [2011 (T-2)]
(a) The leaders
(b) The followers
(c) The active members
(d) Women
Ans. (d)

Q.2. Which one of the following is true regarding a coalition government? [2011 (T-2)]
(a) Only two parties form an alliance and contest elections.
(b) Several parties compete for power.
(c) The government is formed by two or more parties coming together.
(d) Several parties form an alliance and compete for power.
Ans. (c)

Q.3. Which one of the following is not true regarding the government order that makes it mandatory for an election candidate to declare his details in an affidavit? [2011 (T-2)]
(a) It aims at reducing the influence of criminals in politics.
(b) It gives details of existing property and criminal cases pending against a candidate.
(c) It aims at reducing the influence of money in politics.
(d) The Election Commission checks these details and cancels the nomination papers of suspected criminals or if the information is false.
Ans. (d)

Q.4. Which one of the following is a better way of carrying out political reforms in a democratic country? [2011 (T-2)]
(a) The legal changes
(b) The constitutional changes
(c) The empowerment of people
(d) The legislation for reforms
Ans. (c)

Q.5. Which one of the following is the guiding philosophy of the Bharatiya Janata Party? [2011 (T-2)]
Q.6. The condition for a political party to be recognized as a national party is:

(a) It must secure at least 6 percent of total votes in Lok Sabha elections or Assembly elections in four states.
(b) It must win at least 4 seats in the Lok Sabha.
(c) Both of these
(d) None of these

Ans. (c)

Q.7. An alliance is formed when:

(a) two parties together form the government.
(b) the state parties and national parties together form the government.
(c) some parties join for the purpose of contesting elections and winning power in hands.
(d) left and right parties join hands to form the government.

Ans. (c)

Q.8. Who is the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party?

(a) Kansi Ram  
(b) Mayawati  
(c) Bal Thakeray  
(d) Jayalalita

Ans. (a)

Q.9. Which one of the following is not a political party?

(a) BJP  
(b) INC  
(c) BSP  
(d) BAMCEF

Ans. (d)

Q.10. Which of the following countries has a single-party system?

(a) Pakistan  
(b) Nepal

Ans. (a)

Q.11. Who among the following gives recognition to political parties in India?

(a) Speaker of Lok Sabha  
(b) President of India  
(c) Supreme Court  
(d) Election Commission

Ans. (d)

Q.12. Which one of the following countries has multi-party system?

(a) India  
(b) China  
(c) The United States of America  
(d) The United Kingdom

Ans. (b)

Q.13. The USA and UK are examples of:

(a) One-party system  
(b) Two-party system  
(c) Three-party system  
(d) Multi-party system

Ans. (b)

Q.14. Partisan means:

(a) Party which runs the government  
(b) Affair of the state or the science of government  
(c) A person who is strongly committed to a party  
(d) A group of people who come together to promote common beliefs

Ans. (c)

Q.15. Which one of the following is not a national political party?

(a) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).  
(b) Communist Party of India (CPI).  
(c) Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).  
(d) Samajwadi Party (SP).

Ans. (d)

Q.16. What is the guiding philosophy of the Bharatiya Janata Party?

(a) Bahujan Samaj  
(b) Revolutionary democracy  
(c) Cultural nationalism  
(d) Modernity

Ans. (c)
Q.17. Which one of the following political parties exposed secularism and welfare of weaker sections and minorities ?

(a) Communist Party of India (Marxist)  
(b) Bahujan Samaj Party  
(c) Bharatiya Janata Party  
(d) Indian National Congress

Ans. (b)

Q.18. The Bahujan Samaj Party stands for the cause of:

(a) securing the interest of the oppressed people.
(b) securing the interest of the elite class.
(c) securing the interest of the capitalist class.
(d) securing the interest of the educated classes.

Ans. (a)

Q.19. A country which has a democratic form of government since its independence:

(a) Pakistan  
(b) India  
(c) Bhutan  
(d) Nepal

Ans. (b)

C. SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS (3 MARKS)

Q.1. What is the role of Opposition?

OR

What is the function of the Opposition party?

Ans. Opposition party is a party which does not win elections in sufficient numbers to form a government. But it keeps an eye on the working of the ruling party and acts as a check on their activities. It prevents the ruling party from misusing its powers. It keeps a check on their expenditures, brings their failure before the public. If also protects the rights and liberties of the people by not allowing any law to be passed which threatens their fundamental rights.

Q.2. Write short notes on one-party system.

Ans. One-party system is followed in China, North Korea and Cuba. This system was also prevalent in USSR till its breakup into 15 independent states. They are mostly communist countries. There is no competition in this system. The lone party nominates candidates and the voters have to say “yes” or “no” only against the name of the candidates. They have another choice of not voting at all.

One-party system is popular in communist or authoritarian countries. Supporters of one-party system claim that this system helps the government in mobilising the talents of all citizens towards a common goal.

But this system limits the choices and freedom of the citizens, hence it is not a good system for a democracy. In democracy people must have at least two parties to choose from. The one-party system is like a dictatorship, where people have to follow government policies.

Q.3. Are political parties no longer popular? Discuss with examples.

Ans. It is believed that in most of the countries in the world, political parties are no longer popular. People have lost their trust in them and become indifferent towards them. According to a recent survey in South Asia, majority says that they do not at all trust the parties. A number of people belong to the “Not much” category. In India, there is growing indifference towards parties.
They have failed to reduce poverty, prices and this led to indifference and unpopularity. In the rest of the world, which contains many democracies, political parties are one of the least trusted institutions. But there is another side of the story. Strangely enough, participation and membership of the parties has increased in great numbers. In India, it is higher than many advanced countries like Canada, Japan, Spain and South Korea. Party membership is higher in South Asia than the rest of the world. Though parties may have become unpopular, but at least in India, the participation is becoming lighter every year.

Q.4. What is the first thing the Election Commission does after recognising a party? Does it treat every party as equal?
Ans. It allots a ‘symbol’ to the parties. It has to treat every party as equal, but it offers some special facilities to large and established parties. These parties are given a unique symbol and only the official candidates of that party can use that symbol. For example, the Hand is the symbol of only the Congress Party and the Lotus of the BJP. Parties which have these benefits are called recognised national political parties.

Q.5. What is the criteria laid down by the Election Commission for the proportion of votes in order to be a recognised party?
Ans. A party that secures 6% all of the total votes cast in an election to the Legislative Assembly of a state and wins at least two seats in the state is called a state party.
A party that wins 6% of total votes cast in the elections for Lok Sabha or Assembly Elections in four states and wins at least four seats in the Lok Sabha is called a national party.

Q.6. Why is there a need to quickly solve the challenges faced by the political parties?
Ans. Political parties cannot remain in power if they lose the trust of the people. They have to face the criticism levelled at them by the others and try to quickly overcome the challenge. The voters or the people can lose trust in the party which does not try to meet the challenge and lose election.

Q.7. Name the four problem areas in the working of political parties. Why is dynastic succession bad for a democratic country?
Ans. The four challenges are:
   (i) Lack of internal democracy within parties
   (ii) Challenge of dynastic succession
   (iii) Money and muscle power
   (iv) A meaningful choice
Dynastic succession means that the power remains in the hands of a few. They pass on this power to their family members, who may not have popular support or enough experience in politics and governance. In many parties, the top positions are always controlled by members of one family and this tendency is present to some extent all over the world even in older democracies. Examples: USA, India.

Q.8. Explain the terms DEFECTION and AFFIDAVIT.
Ans. (i) When an elected MP or MLA changes his party, it is called Defection.
   (ii) An affidavit is a signed document submitted to an officer, where a person makes a sworn
statement regarding her/his personal information. In the case of politics, a candidate has to file an affidavit giving details of his property and criminal cases pending against him.

Q.9. What role has the Election Commission played in reforming political parties?

Ans. (i) Made it compulsory for parties to hold organisational elections.
(ii) Political parties are to file their income-tax returns.

Q.10. Do you think reforms can be forced on political parties by legal actions?

Ans. No, people would stop participating in the work of political parties if there are too many legal hassles. Parties will find various illegal ways to break the law. Reforms cannot be imposed from outside. They have to come from within. Political parties will never allow a law to be passed which they do not like.

Q.11. ‘No system is ideal for all countries and all situations’. Explain. [HOTS]

Ans. No system is ideal for all countries and in all situations because party system is not something any country can choose. It evolves over a long time, depending 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 that is conditioned by its special circumstances.

Q.12. ‘The rise of regional parties has led to strengthening of federation and democracy in our country.’ Do you agree with the option? Why/why not? [HOTS]

Ans. Over the last few decades, the number and strength of regional parties has expanded. This made the Parliament of India politically more and more diverse, since no one national party is able to secure majority on its own in the Lok Sabha, the national parties are compelled to form alliances with state parties. This has contributed to the strengthening of federalism and democracy in our country.

PREVIOUS YEARS’ QUESTIONS

Q.1. How has multi-party system strengthened democracy in India? Explain. [2008]

Ans. In India, the multi-party system has allowed various parties to come together in a coalition. Several parties have joined hands in elections to contest and win power. For example, in India, there have been three such major alliances in 2004 parliamentary elections – the National Democratic Alliance, the United Progressive Alliance and the Left Front. These alliances may appear messy or unstable but they have allowed a variety of interests and opinions to enjoy political representation.

D. LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS (4 MARKS)

Q.1. Discuss the merits and demerits of two-party system and multi-party system.

Ans. In some countries, there are only two main parties and power changes hands between them only. They are the only ones who can win seats in elections. There may be other parties and they may win a small number of seats, but never enough to form a government. The United States of America and United Kingdom are examples of two-party system. In a multi-party system, three or more parties have a chance to win elections and gain control of the government. In this system, there are more than two distinct, officially recognised groups called, political parties. In a multi-party system, groups come to power on their own strength or in alliance with others. In India various parties have come together in a coalition. In India, there have been three major alliances in the 2004 parliamentary elections as no single party
got an absolute majority. This system is followed in India, France and Denmark. This system gives a chance to various interests and concerns, to gain representation. This system can sometimes lead to instability, as many parties cannot pull together.

Q.2. How has increase in the number of state or regional parties strengthened democracy in India?

Ans. Democracy means more and more representation of people in the running of the government and opportunity to influence the government. As India is a federal state, more regional parties mean, more influence of state parties in national politics. The regional parties have a say in national policies as they win elections in their states. No single national party (from among the six in India) has been able to form a government on its own strength since 1996. They had to form alliances with the regional parties to form a coalition government at the Centre. This has strengthened federalism and democracy in our country.

Q.3. Mention some of the suggestions made to reform political parties.

Ans. • Laws made to regulate internal politics:
  — It should be compulsory to maintain a register of its members.
  — hold independent inquiry in case of a party dispute.
  — hold open elections to top party posts.
• It should be mandatory to give 1/3 party tickets to women candidates. There should be a quota for women in decision making bodies.
• The government or the state should help parties during elections by funding them.
  — Expenses for petrol, paper, telephone etc. given.
  — Cash can be given on the basis of votes secured by the party in the last elections.

Q.4. Which two other ways can help in reforming political parties?

OR

How can an ordinary citizen help in reforming political parties?

Ans. (i) Pressure should be put on the political parties. This can be done through petitions and agitations. Ordinary citizens, pressure groups and movements can bring about reforms if they join hands. If political parties feel that they would lose popular support, they will have to reform.

(ii) Political parties can improve if they allow more and more people to join their organisation. The quality of democracy improves if there is maximum participation by the public. If the public only criticises from outside, it has no effect. To improve bad politics, goods politics has to take charge.

Q.5. Write short notes on:

(i) Ideology of the Indian National Congress (INC)

(ii) States in which Bahujan Samaj Party has its main base.

Ans. (i) The Indian National Congress is one of the oldest political parties in the world, and is India’s oldest political party. It is a party which is neither leftist nor rightist in its ideology. Its main aim is secularism, welfare of the weaker sections and minorities. It projects a vision of a politically united, economically prosperous, socially just and culturally harmonious India. Its six basic policies are social harmony, employment for the youth, rural development, economic resurgence, women’s employment, and equal opportunity.

(ii) The Bahujan Samaj Party has its base in the state of Uttar Pradesh and substantial presence
in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Punjab. It has formed government in Uttar Pradesh several times.

Q.6. In what ways is the Nationalist Congress Party different from the Indian National Congress?

Ans. The NCP was formed in 1999, when a split took place in the Congress Party. Its aims are almost the same as those of the parent body. They also support the cause of democracy, Gandhian secularism, equality, social justice and federalism. But they want that high offices in government should be held only by natural born citizens of India. Sharad Pawar, P.A. Sangma and Tariq Anwar, members of the Congress Party, objected to a person of foreign origin becoming the Prime Minister of India and formed this new party. It has the biggest support in Maharashtra and important presence in Meghalaya, Manipur and Assam. It is a coalition partner in Maharashtra, in alliance with the Congress. Since 2004, it remained a member of the United Progressive Alliance. (UPA).

Q.7. Political parties play a major role in democracy. Give four points to justify this statement.

OR
Describe any four functions of political parties in India. [2011 (T-2)]

OR
What is a political party? Highlight any three functions of parties in a democracy. [2011(T-2)]

OR
“Political parties are necessary in a democracy.” In the light of this statement explain any four functions of political parties in India. [2011 (T-2)]

Ans. (i) Parties contest elections. In most democracies, elections are fought mainly among the candidates put up by political parties. In some countries, such as the USA, members and supporters of a party choose its candidates.

(ii) Parties put forward different policies and programmes and the voters choose from them. In a democracy, a large number of similar views have to be grouped together to provide a direction in which policies can be formulated by the governments.

(iii) Parties play a decisive role in making laws for a country.

(iv) Parties form and run governments. The big policy decisions are taken by political executive that comes from the political parties. Parties recruit leaders, trains them and then make them ministers to run the government in the way they want.

Q.8. Describe various challenges faced by political parties.

Ans. (i) There is lack of internal democracy within parties. There is generally concentration of powers in one or few leaders at the top. Parties do not keep membership registers, do not keep hold organisational meeting, and do not conduct internal elections regularly.

(ii) Dynastic succession does not allow ordinary workers to rise to the top in the party. Where top positions are controlled by the members of one family, it is bad for democracy since people who do not have adequate experience or popular support come to occupy positions of power.

(iii) The growing role of money and muscle power in parties pose another challenge, specially during the time of elections. Rich people and companies who give funds to the parties tend to have influence on the policies and decisions of the party.
(iv) Parties, very often, do not offer a meaningful choice to the voters. In recent years, there has been a decline in the ideological differences among parties. Those who want really different policies have no option available to them.

**PREVIOUS YEARS’ QUESTIONS**

**Q.1. Why is there lack of internal democracy within the political parties in India? Explain with examples.** [2008]

**Ans.** There is lack of democracy within the political parties due to the following reasons:

(i) There is a tendency in political parties towards the concentration of power in one or a few leaders at the top.

(ii) Parties do not hold organisational meetings and do not conduct internal elections regularly.

(iii) Parties do not have the means or the connections needed to influence the decisions.

(iv) Parties do not keep membership register.

All these features can be found in India’s parties like Indian National Congress, BJP, BSP, SP, etc.

**Q.2. Mention different types of party system. Write one merit of each? Which party systems do we have in India.** [2011 (T-2)]

**Ans.** There are three types of party system existed all over the world.

(i) One-party system – There is no choice or competition in this system. The party nominate the candidate and the voters have two choices – Either not to vote or write Yes or No to the candidate. This kind of system existed in communist countries or in authoritarian regimes. Example – China, North Korea and Cuba. Supporters of one-party system claim that this system helps the government in mobilising the talents of all citizens towards a common goal.

(ii) Two-party system – In this case, two parties are dominated in the system. The winner required maximum number of vote. The smaller party usually merge with bigger one or drop out from the competition. Example – Great Britain and Canada. Supporters of this system believe that this system help the Government to go smooth, it also prevents danger of fragmentation.

(iii) Multi-party system – In this system, three or more parties are in the competition to gain control of the government separately or in coalition. When not any single party gain majority votes then several parties join and form a coalition government. Example-India. Supporters of this system point out that it allows more points of view to be presented in the government.

**Q.3. State any two advantages of the multi-party system. In what way is an alliance different from a coalition Government?** [2011 (T-2)]

**Ans.**

(i) If several parties complete for power, more them two parties have a reasonable chance of coming to power either on their own strength or in alliance with others.

(ii) This system allows a variety of interests and opinions to enjoy political representation. In a coalition government, the government is formed by various parties coming together
in a coalition. When several parties in a multi-party system join hands for the purpose of contesting elections and arising power, it is called an alliance or a front.

Q.4. **Explain any two reforms implemented in our country to improve the political parties.**

**Ans.** (i) The constitution was amended (Anti-Defection Act) to prevent elected MLAs and MPs from changing parties. This was done because many elected representatives were indulging in defection to become ministers or for cash rewards.

(ii) The supreme court passed an order to reduce the influence of money and criminals. Now, it is mandatory for every candidate who contests elections to file an affidavit giving details of his property.

### II. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

#### A. PROJECT

**Topic covered** : Indian National Congress (INC) (after Independence)

**Objective** : To understand the evolution of Indian National Congress as a centrist party; how it has played a dominant role in Indian politics after India’s independence.

**Skills developed** : To gain an insight into the functioning of national parties in Indian political setup.

**Time required** : 2-3 days

**Method** :

(a) Trace the evolution and rise of INC from 1947 onwards under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi.

(b) Describe the general elections to the Lok Sabha, the INC’s victories and defeats—the causes and consequences.

(c) Explain how its ideological orientation as a centrist party has enabled it to rule our country for so many decades; how and why other political parties like the CPI, CPI(M) and BJP failed to win elections consistently at national and state level.

(d) Describe briefly the ‘rise’ and ‘fall’ of regional parties in India.

(e) In conclusion, give your views regarding the future of INC in India.

#### B. ACTIVITY

It is often said that political parties are facing a crisis because they are very unpopular and the citizens are indifferent to them. Do you agree? Collect data and evidences to support or disapprove this view. Talk to your parents, a bureaucrat, and a prominent politician to ascertain their views.
C. ASSIGNMENTS

(1) As you have read in the textbook, there are four major challenges that are faced by political parties. Out of these four challenges, two are illustrated in the cartoons given below. Identify these challenges and write a few lines about them.

(2) As you might have read in newspapers, Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank he started jointly, received the Nobel Peace Prize for 2006, for their pioneering efforts at grassroot level. Later on, he decided to launch a political party. Do you think he was right in making such a decision? Do you think leaders of pressure groups and movements should seek political power? How do you want the party (Nagarik Shakti) launched by Mr. Yunus, organised to make it different? Do you want to join a political party? Why/why not? Explain your views.

(3) How can political parties be reformed? This is a million dollar question! Make two lists – one mentioning recent efforts and measures taken in our country to reform political parties and its leaders; and second mentioning suggestions often made to reform political parties. Mention your opinion regarding reforming our political system.

D. DEBATE

Organise a debate on the topic ‘Reforming our political parties and leaders’. Each student should be given only five minutes to speak on the topic. [Note: The class teacher should help participants to prepare the speech on political reforms by discussing the topic in detail in the classroom.]

E. MAKING A POSTER / COLLAGE

Make two posters – one containing pictures of symbols of national parties and another containing pictures of symbols of regional parties of India. Below each symbol, mention the name of the party, date of founding, its ideological orientation, its leaders and its current status (in which states are these in government/whether they are a part of the union government at present).