

10th Standard

Social Science-Civics

Political Parties

A party that secures atleast 6 per cent of the total votes in Lok Sabha elections or Assembly Elections in four States and wins atleast four seats in the Lok Sabha, is recognised as a 'National party'.

A party, that secures atleast 6 per cent of the total votes in an election to the Legislative Assembly of a State and wins atleast two seats, is recognized as a 'State party'.

Tabulate four national parties and four regional parties of India.

National Parties:

Indian National Congress; BJP (Bharatiya Janta Party); CPI (Communist Party of India); CPI (M) (Communist Party of India —Marxist).

Regional Parties:

Akali Dal (Punjab); DMK (Tamil Nadu); RJD (Rashtriya Janta Dal) (Bihar); Shiv Sena (Maharashtra).

Components of a political party are:

- The leaders,
- active members and
- the followers.

Partisanship:

A partisan is a person who is strongly committed to a party, group or faction. As parties (political) are about a part of the society, they involve 'partisanship'.

Role of an opposition party:

Opposition parties mobilize opposition to the government. It puts forward its own views in Parliament and criticizes the government for its failures. By doing this, it keeps a check on the ruling party.

Source of inspiration of Bharatiya Janata Party:

The source of inspiration of Bharatiya Janata Party is the ancient Indian culture and values. Cultural nationalism (Hindutva) is an important element in its conception of Indian nationhood and politics.

Source of inspiration of Bahujan Samaj Party:

The Bahujan Samaj Party draws inspiration from the ideas and teachings of Sahu Maharaj, Mahatma Phule, Periyar Ramaswami Naicker and Babasaheb Ambedkar. It stands for the interest and welfare of the dalits and other oppressed people.

Ideology of Indian National Congress:

Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian National Congress sought to build a modern secular democratic republic in India. The party propagates secularism and welfare of the weaker sections and minorities of society. It supports new economic reforms but with a human face.

There are three kinds of party systems as given below:

1. **One-party system.** In some countries only one party is allowed to control and run the government. For example, in China only the Communist Party is allowed to rule.
2. **Two-party system.** In this system, several parties may exist, contest the elections and win a few seats in the national legislatures. But only two main parties have a serious chance of winning majority of seats to form government. For example, The USA and the UK.
3. **Multi-party system.** In this system, 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 winning power, it is called an alliance or a front.
For example, in India there were three major alliances in 2004 parliamentary elections—the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and the Left Front. This system on one hand leads to political instability but at the same time, allows for a variety of interests and opinions to enjoy political representation.

Efforts to reform political parties are:

1. The Constitution has been amended to prevent elected MLAs and MPs from changing parties. Now if any elected MLA or MP changes his party, he/she will lose his/her seat in the Legislative Assembly or Parliament. This amended law has helped to bring down the number of defections.
2. The Supreme Court has passed an order to reduce the influence of money and criminals.

3. Now it has become mandatory for every candidate, who contests election, to file an affidavit giving details of his assets and criminal cases pending against him. This has helped in making this information available to the public.
4. The Election Commission has passed an order making it necessary for political parties to hold their organisational elections and file their Income-tax Returns.

Role of money and muscle power grows during elections:

Since focus of the parties is on winning elections, they use short-cuts to win the elections. They nominate candidates who have or can raise lot of money. In some cases, parties support criminals who can win elections. Thus the role of rich people and big companies in the democratic process has been a cause of worry.

Dynastic succession:

Most political parties do not practice open and transparent procedures for their functioning. So there are very few ways for an ordinary worker to rise to the top in a party. Those who happen to be the leaders are in a position of unfair advantage as they favor people close to them or even their family members.

In many parties, the top positions are always controlled by members of a particular family, which is unfair to other members of the party, and bad for democracy.

Functions of Political Party:

- Contesting Elections. Political parties contest elections.
- Policies. Political parties put forward different policies and programmes so that the voters can choose from them. The policies and programmes of the Ruling Party are expected to be followed by . the government.
- Making Law. Political parties play a decisive role in making laws for the country.
- Formation of Government. Political parties form and run governments. The executive body is formed by people from the ruling party.
- Playing Opposition. A party which does not get majority or come under the majority coalition, needs to play the role of opposition.
- Shaping Public Opinion. Political parties shape public opinion. They do so by raising and highlighting issues in the legislature and in the media.
- Providing Access to Government Machinery. Political parties provide people access to government machinery and welfare schemes implemented by governments.