



SOURCE NOTES FOR PAPER II TEST ON 26.12.2021 POLITICAL PARTIES

Meaning and Types

- ✓ Political parties are voluntary associations or organised groups of individuals who share the same political views and who try to gain political power through constitutional means and who desire to work for promoting the national interest.
- ✓ There are four types of political parties in the modern democratic states, viz., (i) reactionary parties which cling to the old socio-economic and political institutions; (ii) conservative parties which believe in the status-quo; (iii) liberal parties which aim at reforming the existing institutions; and (iv) radical parties which aim at establishing a new order by overthrowing the existing institutions.
- ✓ The political scientists have placed the radical parties on the left and the liberal parties in the centre and reactionary and conservative parties on the right. In other words, they are described as the leftist parties, centrist parties and the rightist parties.
- ✓ In India, the CPI and CPM are the examples of leftist parties, the Congress as centrist parties and the BJP is an example of rightist parties.

Party System in India

The Indian party system has the following characteristic features:

Multi Party System

- ✓ The continental size of the country, the diversified character of Indian society-, the adoption of universal adult franchise, the peculiar type of political process, and other factors have given rise to a large number of political parties. In fact, India has the largest number of political parties in the world. On the eve of seventeenth Lok Sabha general elections (2019), there were 7 national parties, 52 state parties and 2354 registered - unrecognised parties in the country². Further, India has all categories of parties – left parties, centrist parties, right parties, communal parties, non-communal parties
- ✓ Consequently, the hung Parliaments, hung assemblies and coalition governments have become a common phenomena.

One-Dominant Party System

- ✓ The political scene in India was dominated for a long period by the Congress. Hence, Rajni Kothari, an eminent political analyst, preferred to call the Indian party system as 'one party dominance system' or the 'Congress system'. The dominant position enjoyed by the Congress has been declining since 1967 with the rise of regional parties and other national parties like Janata (1977), Janata Dal (1989) and the BJP (1991) leading to the development of a competitive multi-party system.

Lack of Clear Ideology

- ✓ Except the BJP and the two communist parties (CPI and CPM), all other parties do not have a clear-cut ideology.
- ✓ Almost every party advocates democracy, secularism, socialism and Gandhism. More than this, every party, including the so-called ideological parties, is guided by only one consideration – power capture

Personality Cult

- ✓ Parties are known by their leaders rather than by their manifesto. It is a fact that the popularity of the Congress was mainly due to the leadership of Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.
- ✓ Similarly, the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu and TDP in Andhra Pradesh got identified with MG Ramachandran and NT Rama Rao respectively.

Based on Traditional Factors

- ✓ In the western countries, the political parties are formed on the basis of socio-economic and political programme. On the other hand, a large number of parties in India are formed on the basis of religion, caste, language, culture, race and so on.
- ✓ For example, Shiv Sena, Muslim League, Hindu Maha Sabha, Akali Dal, Muslim Majlis, Bahujan Samaj Party, Republican Party of India, Gorkha League and so on. These parties work for the promotion of communal and sectional interests and thereby undermine the general public interest.

Emergence of Regional Parties

- ✓ Another significant feature of the Indian party system is the emergence of a large number of regional parties and their growing role. They have become the ruling parties in various states like BJD in Orissa DMK or AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, Dal in Punjab, AGP in Assam, National Conference in J&K, JD(U) in Bihar and so on.

Factions and Defections

- ✓ Factionalism, defections, splits, mergers, fragmentation, polarisation and so on have been important aspect of the functioning of political parties in India.

Lack of Effective Opposition

- ✓ In Effective Opposition is very essential for the successful operation of the parliamentary democracy prevalent in India. It checks the autocratic tendencies of the ruling party and provides an alternative government. However in the last 50 years, an effective, strong, organised and viable national Opposition could never emerge except in flashes.



Recognition of National and State Parties

- ✓ The Election Commission registers political parties for the purpose of elections and grants them recognition as national or state parties on the basis of their poll performance.
- ✓ The recognition granted by the Commission to the parties determines their right to certain privileges like allocation of the party symbols, provision of time for political broadcasts on the state-owned television and radio stations and access to electoral rolls.
- ✓ The recognized parties need only one proposer for filing the nomination. Also, these parties are allowed to have forty "star campaigners" during the time of elections
- ✓ Every national party is allotted a symbol exclusively reserved for its use throughout the country. Similarly, every state party is allotted a symbol exclusively reserved for its use in the state or states in which it is so recognised.
- ✓ A registered-unrecognised party, on the other hand, can select a symbol from a list of free symbols.

Conditions for Recognition as a National Party

At present (2019), a party is recognised as a national party if any of the following conditions is fulfilled.

1. If it secures six per cent of valid votes polled in any four or more states at a general election to the Lok Sabha or to the legislative assembly; and, in addition, if it wins four seats in the Lok Sabha from any state or states; or
2. If it wins two per cent of seats in the Lok Sabha at a general election; and these candidates are elected from three states; or
3. If it is recognised as a state party in four states

Conditions for Recognition as a State Party

At present (2019), a party is recognized as a state party in a state if any of the following conditions is fulfilled :

1. If it secures six per cent of the valid votes polled in the state at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned; and, in addition, it wins 2 seats in the assembly of the state concerned; or
2. If it secures six per cent of the valid votes polled in the state at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; and, in addition, it wins 1 seat in the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; or
3. If it wins three per cent of seats in the legislative assembly at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned or 3 seats in the assembly, whichever is more; or
4. If it wins 1 seat in the Lok Sabha for every 25 seats or any fraction thereof allotted to the state at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; or
5. If it secures eight per cent of the total valid votes polled in the state at a General Election to the Lok Sabha from the state or to the legislative assembly of the state. This condition was added in 2011.

ROLE OF REGIONAL PARTIES

The feature of a regional party

1. It generally operates within a particular state or specific region. Its electoral base is limited to a single region.
2. It articulates regional interests and identifies itself with a particular cultural, religious, linguistic or ethnic group
3. It is primarily concerned with exploiting the local resources of discontent or preserving a variety of primordial demands based on language, caste or community or region
4. It focuses on local or regional issues and aims to capture political power at the state level.
5. It has a political desire for greater regional autonomy of states in the Indian Union.

Classification of Regional Parties

1. Those regional parties which are based on the regional culture or ethnicity. These include Shiromani Akali Dal, National Conference, DMK, AIADMK, Telugu Desam, Shiv Sena, Asom Gana Parishad, Mizo National Front, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and so on
2. Those regional parties which have an all-India outlook but lack a national electoral base. The examples are Indian National Lok Dal, All-India Forward Bloc, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Samajwadi Party, Nationalist Congress Party and so on
3. Those regional parties which have been formed by a split in national parties. For example, Bangla Congress, Bharatiya Kranti Dal, Utkal Congress, Kerala Congress, Telangana Praja Samithi, Biju Janata Dal, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Janata Party, Samajwadi Janata Party, Samata Party, Trinamool Congress, YSR Congress and so on
4. Those regional parties which have been formed by individual leaders on the basis of their charismatic personality). The examples are Lok Janshakti Party, Haryana Vikas Party, Himachal Vikas Congress, Congress (J) and so on

Rise of Regional Parties

There are multiple reasons for the emergence of regional parties in India.

These are as follows:

1. Cultural and ethnic pluralism of the Indian society.
2. Desire of certain sections or areas to maintain separate identity due to historical factors.
3. Self-interest of the deposed Maharajas and dispossessed Zamindars.
4. Failure of national politics to meet the regional aspirations.
5. Reorganisation of states on the basis of language.
6. Charismatic personality of the regional leaders.
7. Factional fights within the larger parties.
8. Centralising tendencies of the congress / party.
9. Absence of a strong opposition party at the central level.
10. Role of caste and religion in the political process.
11. Alienation and discontentment among the tribal groups.

Role of Regional Parties

1. They have provided better governance and a stable government at the regional level.
2. They have posed a challenge to the one-party dominant system in the country and led to a decline in the domination of the Congress party.
3. They have made a strong impact on the nature and course of centre-state relations
4. They have widened the choice for voters in both the parliamentary and assembly elections. The voters can vote for that party which aims to promote the interest of their state region.
5. They have increased the political consciousness of the people and also their interest in politics.

6. They provided a check against the dictatorial tendencies of the central government.
7. They have made a significant contribution for the successful functioning of parliamentary democracy.
8. They have succeeded in exposing the partisan role of the Governors in the appointment and dismissal of the Chief Minister, in issuing ordinances and reservation of bills for the consideration of the President.
9. After the dawn of the 'era of coalition politics, the regional parties have assumed an important role in national politics

Dysfunctions of Regional Parties

1. They have given more importance to regional interests rather than national interests. They have neglected the implications and consequences of their narrow approach to the resolution of national issues.
2. They have encouraged regionalism, casteism, linguism, communalism and tribalism which have become hurdles to national integration
3. They are responsible for the unresolution of the inter-state water disputes, inter-state border disputes and other inter-state issues
4. They have also indulged in corruption, nepotism, favouritism and other forms of misutilization of power in order to promote their self-interest.
5. They have focused more on the populist schemes and measures to expand and strengthen their electoral base.
6. They bring in regional factor in the decision-making and the policy-making by the coalition government at the centre. They force the central leadership to yield to their demands

ELECTION LAWS

1. Allocation of seats in the House of People, the State Legislative Assemblies and the State Legislative Councils.
2. Delimitation of Parliamentary, Assembly and council Constituencies.
3. Election officers like chief electoral officers, district election officers, electoral registration officers and so on.
4. Electoral rolls for Parliamentary, Assembly and Council Constituencies.
5. Manner of filling seats in the Council of States to the filled by representatives of union territories.
6. Local authorities for purposes of elections to the State Legislative Councils.
7. Barring the jurisdiction of civil courts.

The provisions for the actual conduct of elections to the Houses of Parliament and to the House or Houses of the Legislature of each State, the qualifications and disqualifications for the membership of these Houses, the corrupt practices and other election offences, and the decision of election disputes were all left to be made in a subsequent measure. In order to provide for these provisions, the Representation of the People Act, 1951 was enacted.

This Act contains provisions relating to the following electoral matters:

1. Qualifications and disqualifications for membership of Parliament and State Legislatures.
2. Notification of general elections
3. Administrative machinery for the conduct of elections
4. Registration of political parties
5. Conduct of elections
6. Free supply of certain material to candidates of recognised political parties

The conduct of elections include the following matters:

- a. Nomination of candidates
- b. Candidates and their agents

- c. General procedure at elections
- d. The poll
- e. Counting of votes
- f. Multiple elections
- g. Publication of election results and nominations
- h. Declaration of assets and liabilities
- i. Election expenses

Delimitation Act, 2002

Articles 82 and 170 of the Constitution of India provide for readjustment and the division of each State into territorial constituencies (Parliamentary constituencies and Assembly constituencies) on the basis of the 2001 census by such authority and in such manner as Parliament may, by law, determine.

The present delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies is based on the 1971 census.

The Delimitation Act, 2002, was enacted to set up a Delimitation Commission for the purpose of effecting delimitation on the basis of the 2002 census so as to correct the aforesaid distortion in the sizes of electoral constituencies. The proposed Delimitation Commission would also re-fix the number of seats for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes on the basis of the 2001 census, without affecting total number of seats based on the 1971 census.

In the Act, the new Delimitation Commission was given the task of carrying out delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies. It had been specifically provided that the Delimitation Commission shall endeavour to complete the work within a period not later than July 31, 2008.

Election Machinery

1. Election commission of India (ECI)
2. Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)
3. District Election Officer (DEO)
4. Returning Officer (RO)
5. Electoral Registration Officer (ERO)
6. Presiding Officer
7. Observers
 - i. General Observers
 - ii. Expenditure Observers
 - iii. Police Observers
 - iv. Awareness Observers
 - v. Micro Observers
 - vi. Assistant Expenditure Observers

