



Class 10th

POLITICAL SCIENCE
CHAPTER-04
POLITICAL PARTIES

WHY DO WE NEED POLITICAL PARTIES?

- Political parties are easily one of the most visible institutions in a democracy. For most ordinary citizens → democracy is equal to political parties.

Meaning of Political Parties

- 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.
- They agree on some policies and programs for the society with a view to promoting the collective good.
- **PARTISANSHIP:-** Parties reflect fundamental political divisions in a society. Parties are a part of the society and thus involve partisanship. Thus, a party is known by which part it stands for, which policies it supports and whose interests it upholds.
- A political party has three components: The leaders, The active members and The followers

Functions

- **Parties contest elections.** In India, top party leaders choose candidates for contesting elections.
- Parties put forward **different policies and programmes** and the voters choose from them.
- Parties play a decisive role **in making laws for a country** who debate and get the bills passed through the legislature to make the laws.
- **Parties form and run governments.** Parties recruit leaders, train them and then make them ministers to run the government in the way they want.
- Those parties that lose in the elections play the **role of opposition** to the parties in power, by voicing different views and criticising government for its failures or wrong policies.
- **Parties shape public opinion.** They raise and highlight issues.
- Parties provide people access to **government machinery and welfare schemes** implemented by governments

Necessity

- They help in representing different views on various issues to the government.
- They bring various representatives together so that a responsible government could be formed.
- They work as a mechanism to support or restrain the government, make policies, justify or oppose them.
- Political parties fulfil the needs that every representative government has.

HOW MANY PARTIES SHOULD WE HAVE?

- In a democracy, any group of citizens is free to form the political party.
- More than 750 parties are registered with the Election Commission of India.
- In some countries, only one party is allowed to control and run the government. These are called one-party system. e.g. – China
- We cannot consider one party system as a good option because this is not a democratic option.
- In some countries:- Power usually changes between the two main parties. Such a party system is called a two-party system. e.g.: The USA and the UK.
- When more than two parties are allowed to come in power on their strength or in an alliance with other parties, it is called The Multi-Party System. Ex- India.
- 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. e.g., in India, 3 major alliances in 2004 parliamentary elections– the National Democratic Alliance, the United Progressive Alliance and the Left Front.
- No system is ideal for all countries and all situations. Therefore, a Party System has to be chosen as per own needs and circumstances.



NATIONAL PARTIES

- A party that secures at least 6 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'.
- According to this classification, there were seven recognised national parties in the country in 2019

1. All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)

- Launched on 1 January 1998 under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee. Received recognition as a national party in 2016.
- The party's symbol is flowers and grass. Committed to secularism and federalism.
- Has been in power in West Bengal since 2011 and has a presence in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura.
- In the General Elections held in 2019, it got 4.07 per cent Votes and won 22 seats, making it the Fourth largest party in the Lok Sabha.

2. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)

- Formed in 1984 under the leadership of Kanshi Ram.
- Seeks to represent and secure power for the Bahujan samaj which includes the Dalits, Adivasis, OBCs and religious minorities.
- Stands for the cause of securing the interests and welfare of the Dalits and oppressed people.
- Main Base in Uttar Pradesh's state and substantial presence in neighbouring states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Punjab.

3. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

- Founded in 1980 by reviving the erstwhile Bharatiya Jana Sangh, formed by Syama Prasad Mukherjee in 1951.
- Follow the footsteps of Deendayal Upadhyaya and his ideas of integral humanism and Antyodaya.
- Cultural nationalism (or 'Hindutva') is an important element in its conception of Indian nationhood and politics.
- Earlier limited to north and west and to urban areas, the party expanded its support in the south, east, the north-east and to rural areas.
- Came to power in 1998 as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) including several regional parties.
- Came as the largest Party with 303 members in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.
- Currently acting as the ruling Party, i.e., NDA government at the Centre.

4. Communist Party of India (CPI)

- Formed in 1925. Believes in Marxism-Leninism, secularism and democracy.
- They are opposing the forces of secessionism and communalism.
- Accepts parliamentary democracy as a means of promoting the interests of the working class, farmers and the poor.
- Significant presence in the states of Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- Its support base had gradually declined over the years. It secured less than 1 per cent votes and 2 Seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

5. Communist Party of India – Marxist (CPI-M)

- Founded in 1964. Believes in Marxism-Leninism. Supports socialism, secularism and democracy and opposes imperialism and communalism.
- Accepts democratic elections as a useful and helpful means for securing the objective of socio-economic justice in India.
- Enjoys strong support in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, especially Among the poor, factory workers, farmers, Agricultural labourers and the intelligentsia.
- The party was in power in West Bengal without a break for 34 years.
- In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, it won about 1.75 per cent of votes and 3 seats



6. **Indian National Congress (INC)**

- Popularly known as the Congress Party. One of the oldest parties of the world. Founded in 1885 and has experienced many splits.
- Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the party sought to build a modern secular democratic republic in India.
- The ruling party at the centre till 1977 and then from 1980 to 1989. After 1989, its support declined, but it continues to be present throughout the country.
- A centrist Party (neither rightist nor leftist) the party's main idea is to promote secularism and welfare of weaker sections and minorities.
- Leader of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government from 2004 to 2019. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election it won 19.5% votes and 52 seats.

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

- Formed in 1999 following a split in the Congress party.
- Supports democracy, Gandhian secularism, equity, social justice and federalism.
- A major party in Maharashtra and has a significant presence in Meghalaya, Manipur and Assam.
- A coalition partner in the state of Maharashtra in alliance with the Congress. Since 2004, a member of the United Progressive Alliance.
- In 2019 Lok Sabha election it won 1.4% votes and 5 seats.

STATE PARTIES

- The Election Commission has classified some of the major parties of the country as “State parties”.
- Over the last three decades, the Number and strength of these parties has Expanded.
- Since 1996, nearly every one Of the State parties has got an Opportunity to be a part of one or the other national level coalition government.

Challenges to Political Parties

- **Lack of internal democracy** within parties:- Parties do not keep membership registers, do not hold organisational meetings, and do not conduct internal elections regularly.
- **Dynastic succession**:- most political parties do not practice open and transparent procedures for their functioning, in many parties, the top positions are always controlled by members of one family.
- **Growing role of money and muscle power** in parties, especially during elections. Since parties are focused only on winning elections, they tend to use short-cuts to win elections. In some cases, parties support criminals who can win elections.
- People do not find parties to be a **meaningful choice** for their votes. Sometimes people cannot even elect very different leaders either, because the same set of leaders keep shifting from one party to another.

CHALLENGES TO POLITICAL PARTIES

1. 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
2. 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. Those who happen to be the leaders are in a position of unfair advantage to favour people close to them or even their family members.
3. The third challenge is about the growing role of money and muscle power in parties, especially during elections.
4. The fourth challenge is that very often parties do not seem to offer a meaningful choice to the voters. In order to offer meaningful choice, parties must be significantly different. In recent years, there has been a decline in the ideological differences among parties in most parts of the world. For example, the difference between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party in Britain is very little. They agree on more fundamental aspects but differ only in details on how policies are to be framed and implemented.



HOW CAN PARTIES BE REFORMED?

- In a democracy final decision is made by political leaders who represent their Political Parties. People can replace them only using elections with another set of political leaders.
- The Constitution was amended to prevent elected MLAs and MPs from changing parties. This was done because many elected representatives were indulging in Defection
- **Defection:** Changing Party allegiance from The party on which a Person got elected (to a Legislative body) to a Different party
- The Supreme Court passed an order to reduce the influence of money and criminals. It is mandatory for every candidate who contests elections to file an Affidavit giving details of his property and criminal cases pending against him.
- The Election Commission passed an order making it necessary for political parties to hold their organisational elections and file their income tax returns.

Other suggestions to reform political parties

- A law should be made to regulate the internal affairs of political parties, Open Elections to higher Posts in Political Parties.
- It should be made mandatory for political parties to give a minimum number of tickets, about one-third, to women candidates.
- There should be state funding of elections. The government should give parties money to support their election expenses like paper, petrol, vehicles, telephone, etc.

There are also two other ways to reform such political parties:

- People can put pressure on political parties by way of filing petitions, publicity and agitations.
- Political parties can improve if the quality of democracy depends on the degree of public participation. It is difficult to reform politics if ordinary citizens do not take part in it