

Chapter 6 – Political Parties

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Question 1:

State the various functions political parties perform in a democracy.

Answer:

Functions performed by political parties in a democracy:

Group together a large number of similar opinions, thereby providing a direction in which policies can be formulated

Contest elections, providing the voters a choice between different policies

Winning party forms and runs the government

Losing parties form the opposition, and keep a check on the working of the government

Play a decisive role in making laws, especially by debating them in the legislature.

Shape public opinion by raising and highlighting issues

Provide people a way to access government machinery and welfare schemes

Question 2:

What are the various challenges faced by political parties?

Answer:

Various challenges faced by political parties:

Lack of internal democracy

This is caused by the concentration of power in the hands of a few leaders. As a result, positions at the top are reserved for the leaders' relatives (dynastic succession) or people close to them.

Increased dependence on money and muscle power

This causes the party policies to be moulded by groups which supply these to the party.

Failure to provide a meaningful choice to the voters

This is because of the decline in fundamental, ideological differences among parties in most parts of the world.

Question 3:

Suggest some reforms to strengthen parties so that they perform their functions well?

Answer:

Some reforms which could strengthen political parties are:

A law should be established to regulate the internal affairs of parties, thereby making them more transparent.

Women should be given at least one-third tickets.

The state should fund election campaigns, thereby eliminating lobbying groups and unfair competition.

Question 4:

What is a political party?

Answer:

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

Question 5:

What are the characteristics of a political party?

Answer:

Characteristics of a political party are:

The presence of a central ideology which defines what it stands for.

Policies arising from this ideology; the party promises to implement these if it is voted to power.

The presence of a leader, the party workers and supporters.

Question 6:

A group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government is called a _____.

Answer:

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

Question 7:

Match List I (organisations and struggles) with List II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists:

	List I		List II
1.	Congress Party	A.	National Democratic Alliance
2.	Bharatiya Janata Party	B.	State party

3.	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	C.	United Progressive Alliance
4.	Telugu Desam party	D.	Left Front

	1	2	3	4
(a)	C	A	B	D
(b)	C	D	A	B
(c)	C	A	D	B
(d)	D	C	A	B

Answer:

	1	2	3	4
(c)	C	A	D	B

Question 8:

Who among the following is the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party?

- A. Kanshi Ram
- B. Sahu Maharaj
- C. B.R. Ambedker
- D. Jotiba Phule

Answer:

- A. Kanshi Ram

Question 9:

What is the guiding philosophy of the Bharatiya Janata Party?

- A. Bahujan Samaj
- B. Revolutionary democracy
- C. Integral humanism
- D. Modernity

Answer:

- D. Modernity

Question 10:

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.

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

Answer:

- (b) A and B

Question 11:

Read the following passage and answer the questions given below:

Muhammad Yunus is a famous economist of Bangladesh. He received several international honours for his efforts to promote economic and social development for the benefit of the poor. He and the Grameen Bank he started, jointly received the Noble Peace Prize for 2006. In February 2007, he decided to launch a political party and contest in the parliamentary elections. His objective was to foster proper leadership, good governance and build a new Bangladesh. He felt that only a political party different from the traditional ones would bring about new political culture. His party would be democratic from the grassroots level.

The launching of the new party, called Nagarik Shakti (Citizens' Power), has caused a stir among the Bangladeshis. While many welcomed his decisions, some did not like it. "Now I think Bangladesh will have a chance to choose between good and bad and eventually have a good government," said Shahedul Islam, a government official. "That government, we hope, would not only keep itself away from corruption but also make fighting corruption and black money a top priority."

But leaders of traditional political parties who dominated the country's politics for decades were apprehensive. "There was no debate (over him) winning the Nobel, but politics is different – very challenging and often controversial," said a senior leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Some others were highly critical. They asked why he was rushing into politics. "Is he being planted in politics by mentors from outside the country," asked one political observer.

Do you think Yunus made a right decision to float a new political party?

Do you agree with the statements and fears expressed by various people? How do you want this new party organised to make it different from other parties? If you were the one to begin this political party how would you defend it?

Answer:

Attempt this question on your own.

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