



TOPICS to be covered

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Political Parties



POLITICAL PARTIES





Why Do We Need Political Parties?



- Political parties are easily one of the most visible institutions in a democracy.
- At the same time this visibility does not mean popularity.
- Parties have become identified with social and political divisions.





Meaning



- A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government.
- Agree on some policies and programmes for the society with a view to promote the collective good.
- Try to persuade people why their policies are better than others
- Seek to implement these policies by winning popular support through elections.





Meaning

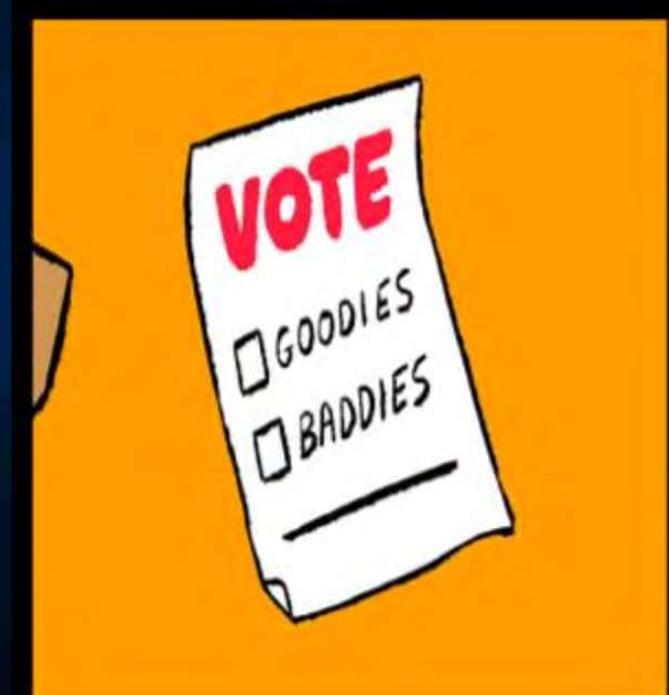
Pol Parties involve

Partisanship

- ❖ A party is Parties reflect fundamental political divisions in a society. Parties are about a part of the society and thus involve 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.
- The Followers.





Partnership



Functions



Job Party leadership → Candidates

- (1) Parties **contest elections**. In most democracies, elections are fought mainly among the candidates put up by political parties.

- (2) Parties put forward different **policies and programmes** and the voters choose from them. A party reduces a vast multitude of opinions into a few basic positions which it supports.



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



(4) Parties form and run governments.

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



- (5) 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. Also mobilise opposition to the government.
- (6) Parties shape public opinion. They raise and highlight issues. Parties sometimes also launch movements for the resolution of problems faced by people.



- (7) Parties provide people access to government machinery and welfare schemes implemented by governments. Parties have to be responsive to people's needs and demands. Otherwise people can reject those parties in the next elections.



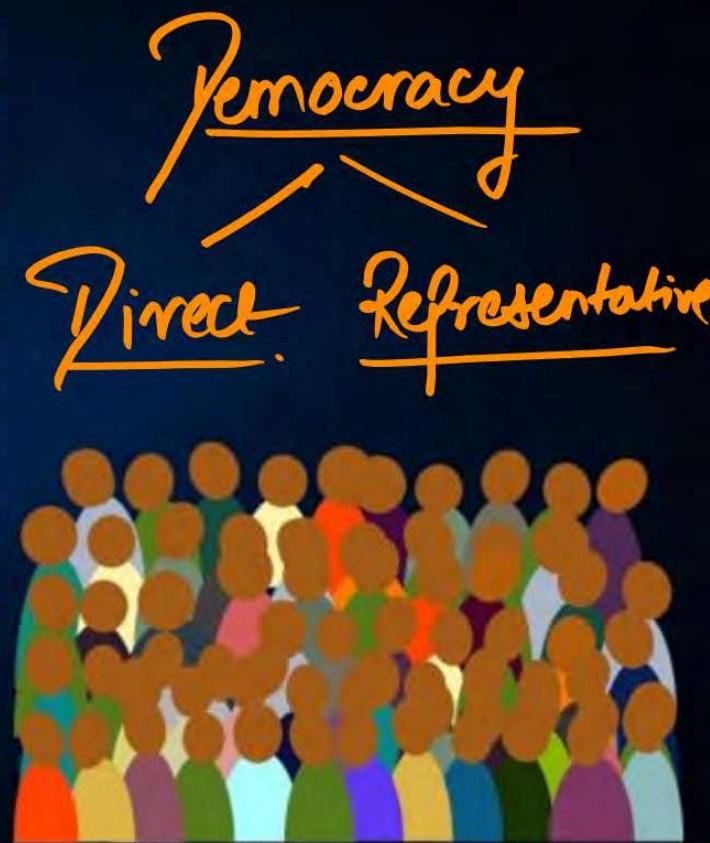


Necessity

- Why modern democracies cannot exist without political parties?
- Imagine a situation without parties:
- Independent candidates.
- No uniform decision.
- No major decision.
- Accountability limited to constituency.
- No one responsible to run the country.



- Representative democracy – Large societies.
- Political parties bring various representatives together so that a responsible government could be formed.
- They needed a mechanism to support or restrain the government make policies, justify or oppose them.
- We can say that parties are a necessary condition for a democracy.





Old Parties

Meaning

Functions

Necessity



How Many Parties Should We Have?



- More than 750 parties are registered with the Election Commission of India.
- Handful- effective in the race to win elections and form the government.
- How many major or effective parties are good for a democracy?

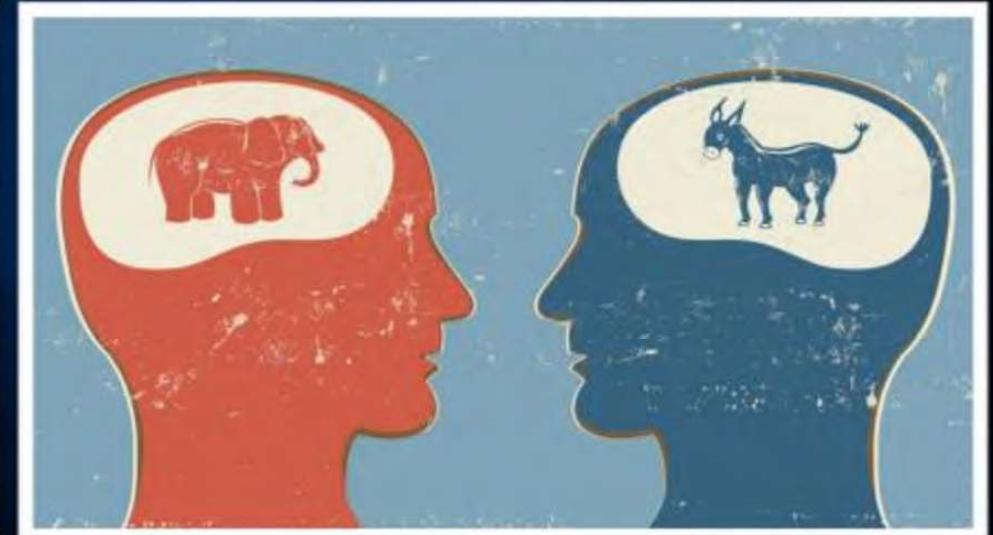


- One-Party System
- Two-Party System
- Multiparty System

China.

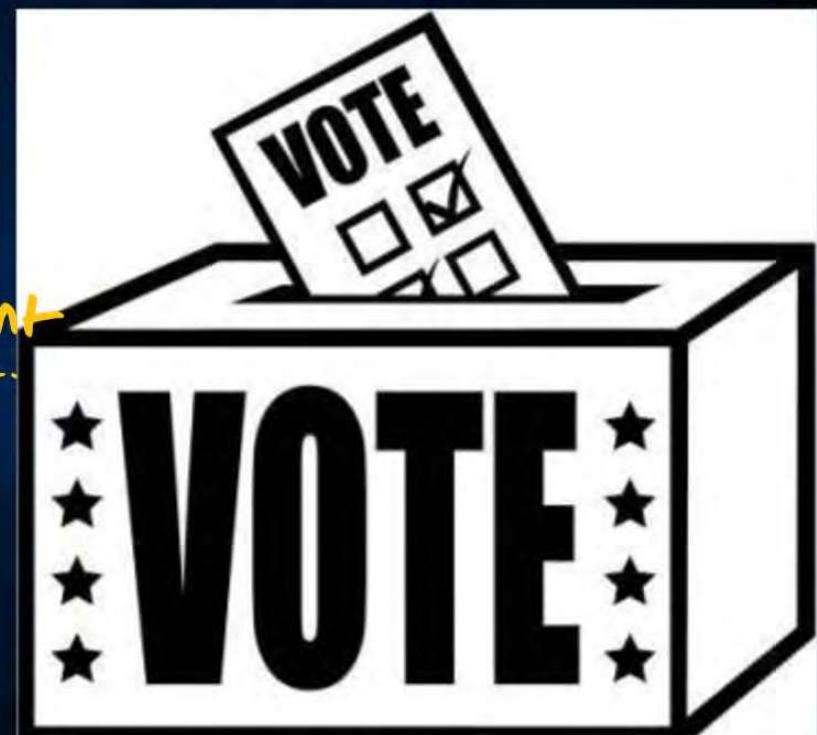
USA

UK



- Which of these is better?
- Best answer - not a very good question.
- Not chosen but evolves over a period of time.

Election Commission → Independent
Unique symbol {
 ↓
 Recognised Pol.
 Parties }





National Political Parties



- A party that secures at least six 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.

6%
Lok Sabha
Elections OR
Assembly
Elections
& 4
States
AND

At least 4
seats in Lok
Sabha



Indian National Congress (INC)



- Founded in 1885 and has experienced many splits.
- Played a dominant role in Indian politics at the national and state level for several decades after India's Independence.
- Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the party sought to build a modern secular democratic republic in India.



- Ruling party at the centre till 1977 and then from 1980 to 1989. After 1989, its support declined. ✓
- A centrist party in its ideological orientation, the party espouses secularism and welfare of weaker sections and minorities. ✓
- The INC supports new economic reforms but with a human face. ✓
- Leader of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government from 2004 to 2019. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election it won 52 seats. ✓





Bhartiya Janata Party

- Founded in 1980 by reviving the erstwhile Bhartiya Jana Sangh, formed by Syama Prasad Mukherjee in 1951.
- Wants to build a strong and modern India.
- Inspired- India's ancient culture and values.
- Cultural nationalism (or 'Hindutva')
- Full territorial and political integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India.

BJP



- A uniform civil code for all people living in the country irrespective of religion.
- Ban on religious conversions.
- Support base increased substantially in the 1990s.
- Came to power in 1998 as the leader of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) including several regional parties.
- Emerged as the largest party with 303 members in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Currently leads the ruling NDA government at the Centre.





Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPI-M)



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- 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. Critical of the new economic policies that allow free flow of foreign capital and goods into the country.
- 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

Against
↓
New Economic
Reforms.

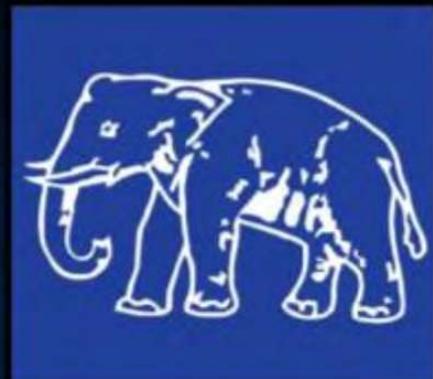




Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)



- Formed in 1984 under the leadership of Kanshi Ram
- Secure power for the bahujan samaj which includes the dalits, adivasis, ORCs and religious minorities.
- Draws inspiration from the ideas and teachings of Sahu Maharaj, Mahatma Phule, Periyar Ramaswami Naicker and Babasaheb Ambedkar
- Main base in the state of Uttar Pradesh and substantial presence in neighbouring states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Punjab.
- In the Lok Sabha elections held in 2019, it polled about 3.63 per cent votes and secured 10 seats in the Lok Sabha.



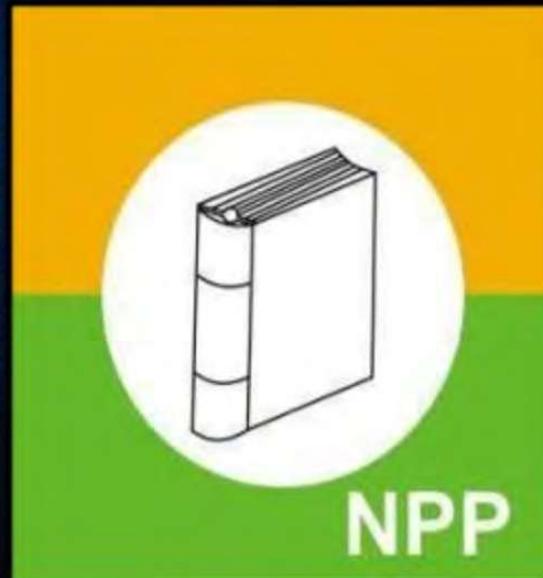


National People's Party

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- The National People's Party is a national-level political party in India, though its influence is mostly concentrated in the state of Meghalaya.
- The party was founded by P. A. Sangma after his expulsion from the NCP in July 2012.
- It was accorded national party status on 7 June 2019.
- It is the first political party from Northeastern India to have attained this status.



- On 10th April 2023, the Election Commission of India (ECI) revoked the national party status of three former national parties- the Trinamool Congress (TMC), the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), and the Communist Party of India (CPI).
- Subsequently, the ECI recognised Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as a national party.

6



State Parties



- A party that secures at least 6 % of the total votes in an election to the Legislative Assembly of a State and wins at least two seats is recognised as a State party.





State Parties



- Most of the major parties of the country are classified by the Election Commission as 'State parties'. These are commonly referred to as regional parties.
- Yet these parties need not be regional in their ideology or outlook. Some of these parties are all India parties that happen to have succeeded only in some states.



- Parties like the Samajwadi Party , Samata Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal have national level political organisation with units in several states
- Some of these parties like Biju Janata Dal, Sikkim Democratic Front and Mizo National Front are conscious about their State identity.





Challenges to Political Parties



- The first challenge is lack of internal democracy within parties.
- The second challenge of dynastic succession is related to the first one.
- The third challenge is about the growing role of money and muscle power.
- The fourth challenge is that very often parties do not seem to offer a meaningful choice to the voters.



How Can Parties Be Reformed?



- (1) The Constitution was amended to prevent elected MLAs and MPs from changing parties. This was done because many elected representatives were indulging in **defection** in order to become ministers or for cash rewards.
Anti Defection Law
- (2) 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 and criminal cases pending against him.
- (3) The Election Commission passed an order making it necessary for political parties to hold their organisational elections and file their income tax returns.

steps that have been taken.





Many suggestions are often made to reform political parties:

- (1) A law should be made to regulate the internal affairs of political parties.
- (2) It should be made mandatory for political parties to give a minimum number of tickets, about one-third, to women candidates. Similarly, there should be a quota for women in the decision-making bodies of the party.
- (3) There should be state funding of elections. The government should give parties money to support their election expenses.

- There are two other ways **in which political parties can be reformed:**

- (1) People can put pressure on political parties. This can be done **through petitions, publicity and agitations.**
- (2) Political parties can improve if people who want **change** can join political parties. It is difficult to reform politics if ordinary citizens do not take part in it and simply criticise it from the outside.

