



NOTES

SOCIAL SCIENCE

(POLITICAL SCIENCE)

POLITICAL PARTIES



**REVISION NOTES
CHAPTERWISE &
TOPICWISE**

Chapter 6: Political Parties

Concepts Covered:

1. **Why do we need Political Parties**
 - Meaning and three components of Political Party
 - Functions of Political parties
 - Political parties
 - Necessity
 2. **How many parties should we have?**
 - Types of Party System
 - Conclusion
 3. **National Political Parties**
 - Meaning
 - Criteria to be a National Party by Election Commission
 - National parties in India
 - All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)
 - Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
 - Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)
 - Communist Party of India (CPI)
 - Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPI-M)
 - Indian National Congress (INC)
 - Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)
 4. **State Parties**
 5. **Challenges to Political Parties**
 - Four problem areas in the working of political parties
 - Lack of internal democracy
 - Challenge of dynastic succession
 - Growing role of money and muscle power
 - Parties do not seem to offer a meaningful choice to the voters
 6. **How can parties be reformed**
 - Recent efforts and suggestions into reform political parties
 - Some other suggestions often made to reform political parties
 - Two other important ways to reform political parties
 - Public pressure
 - Public participation
 7. **Mind Map**
(Colourful & Interactive/ Complete All Concept Covered)
- Practice Questions (All Topics Available)**

WHY DO WE NEED POLITICAL PARTIES

Meaning and three components of Political Party

Political Parties

Most visible institution in a democracy.

At the same time this visibility does not mean popularity. Most people tend to be very critical of political parties.

- Do we need political parties at all?
- Why did political parties become so omnipresent in democracies all over the world?

Introduction –

- Meaning and functions of political parties
- Necessity of political parties
- How many parties should we have?
- National parties

All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPI-M), Indian National Congress (INC) and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)

- State Parties
- Challenges to political parties
- How can parties be reformed?



Meaning and Functions –

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

Parties

- Persuade people by winning popular support through elections.
- parties reflect fundamental political divisions in a society.
- Parties are about a part of the society and thus involve Partisanship.

A political party has three components:

- The leaders

POLITICAL PARTIES

WHY DO WE NEED POLITICAL PARTIES

- The active members
- The followers

Functions of Political parties

Political parties

Fill political offices Exercise political power.

Parties do so by performing a series of functions:

1. Parties contest elections

- Candidate contest elections on behalf of party.
- Parties select their candidates in different ways.

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.
- A government is expected to base its policies on the line taken by the Ruling Party

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

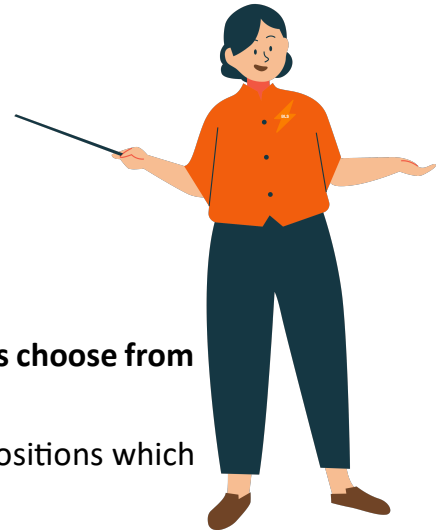
- Legislature Members Political parties
- They go by the direction of the party leadership, irrespective of their personal opinions.

4. Parties form and run governments.

- 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.
- Opposition parties also mobilise opposition to the government.



6. Parties shape public opinion.

POLITICAL PARTIES

WHY DO WE NEED POLITICAL PARTIES

- They raise and highlight issues.
- Parties have lakhs of members and activists spread all over the country.
- Many of the pressure groups are the extensions of political parties among different sections of society.
- Parties sometimes also launch movements for the resolution of problems faced by people.
- Often opinions in the society crystallise on the lines parties take.

7. Parties provide people access to government machinery and welfare schemes implemented by governments

- For an ordinary citizen it is easy to approach a local party leader than a government officer.
- Parties have to be responsive to people's needs and demands.
- Otherwise, people can reject those parties in the next elections.

Necessity

Because parties perform all those functions discussed before.

Why modern democracies cannot exist without political parties?

Imagine a situation without political Parties

- Every candidate in the elections will be independent.
- So, no one will be able to make any promises to the people about any major policy changes.
- The government may be formed, but its utility will remain ever uncertain.
- Elected representatives will be accountable to their constituency.
- But no one will be responsible for how the country will be run.

The non-party based elections to the panchayat

- Although, the parties do not contest formally, it is generally noticed that the village gets split into more than one faction.
- Each of which puts up a 'panel' of its candidates.



Necessity –

- The rise of political parties is directly linked to the emergence of representative democracies.
- As society became large and complex
- There is need of an agency which can perform certain function.

Political Parties fulfil these needs that every representative government has.

POLITICAL PARTIES**WHY DO WE NEED POLITICAL PARTIES**

- Gather different views on various issues and to present these to the government.
 - Bring various representatives together so that a responsible government could be formed.
 - 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.



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HOW MANY PARTIES SHOULD WE HAVE?

Types of Party System

One party system

- Only one party is allowed to control and run the government.
- In China, only the Communist Party is allowed to rule.
- This is not a democratic option.

Two party system

- Power usually changes between two main parties.
- Several other parties may exist, contest elections, and win a few seats in the national legislatures.
- The United States of America and the United Kingdom are examples of two-party system.



Multi-party system

- If several parties compete for power, and more than two parties have a reasonable chance of coming to power.
- Coalition government is observed.
- In India, we have a multiparty system.
- The multiparty system often appears very messy and leads to political instability. At the same time, this system allows a variety of interests and opinions to enjoy political representation.

Conclusion

- Party system evolves over a long time, depending on the nature of society, its social and regional divisions, its history of politics and its system of elections.
- Each country develops a party system that is conditioned by its special circumstances.

For example, if India has evolved a multiparty system, it is because the social and geographical diversity in such a large country is not easily absorbed by two or even three parties.

No system is ideal for all countries and all situations.



NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES

Meaning

National Parties

Countrywide parties, have their units in various states. But by and large, all these units follow the same policies, programmes and strategy that is decided at the national level.

Every party in the country has to register with the Election Commission.

While the Commission treats all parties equally, it offers some special facilities to large and established parties.

Explain:

- These parties are given a unique symbol.
 - Parties that get this privilege and some other special facilities are 'recognised' by the Election Commission for this purpose.
- Recognised political party.



Criteria to be a National Party by Election Commission

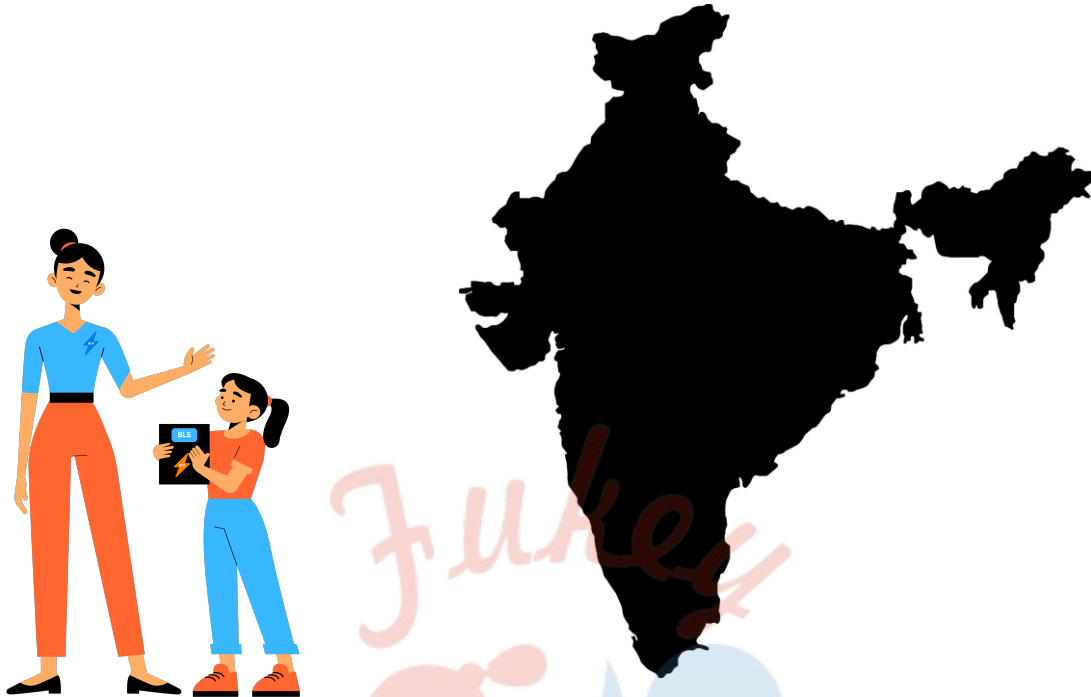
The Election Commission has laid down detailed criteria of the proportion of votes and seats that a party must get in order to be a recognised party.

- A party that secures at least six per cent of the total votes in Lok Sabha elections or Assembly elections in four States.
- Wins at least four seats in the Lok Sabha is recognised as a national party.

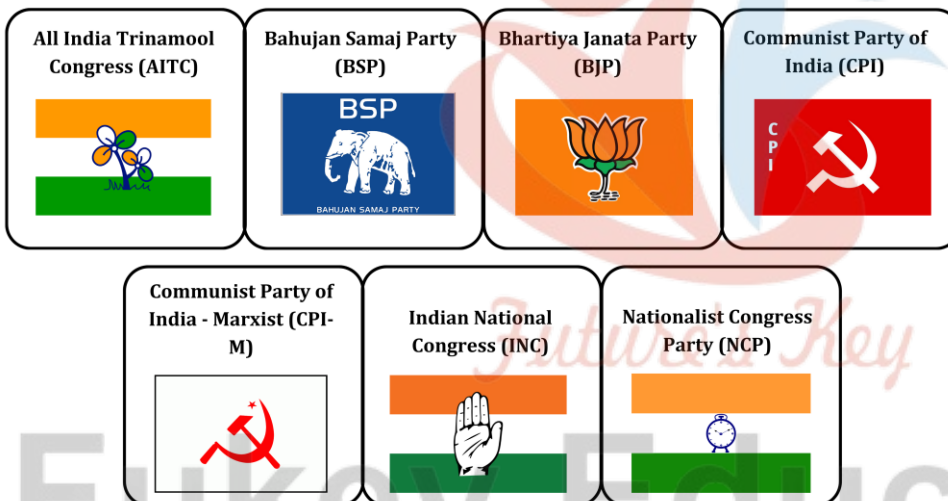
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POLITICAL PARTIES

NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES



According to this classification, there were seven recognised national parties in the country in 2019.

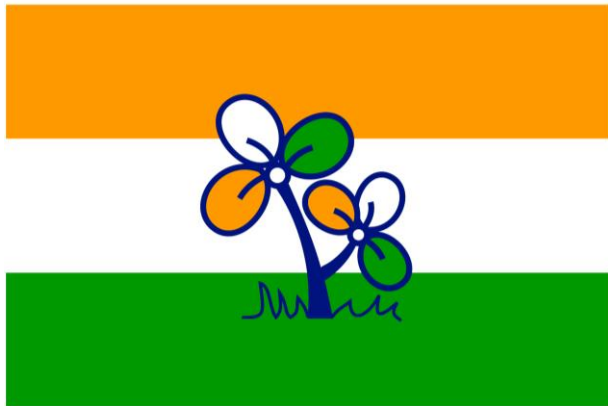


National parties in India

All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)

POLITICAL PARTIES

NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES



- Launched on 1 January 1998 under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee.
- Recognised 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.
- Also 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.



Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)



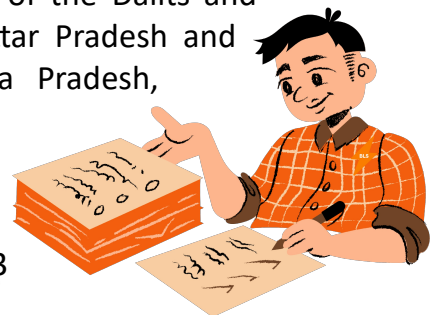
- Formed in 1984 under the leadership of Kanshi Ram.
- Seeks to represent and secure power for the Bahujan samaj which includes the Dalits, Adivasis, OBCs and religious minorities.
- Draws inspiration from the ideas and teachings of Shahu Maharaj, Mahatma Phule, Periyar Ramaswami Naicker and Babasaheb Ambedkar.

POLITICAL PARTIES

NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES



- Stands for the cause of securing the interests and welfare of the Dalits and oppressed people. It has its main base in the state of Uttar Pradesh and substantial presence in neighbouring states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, and Punjab.
- Formed government in Uttar Pradesh several times by taking the support of different parties at different times.
- In the Lok Sabha elections held in 2019, it polled about 3.63 per cent votes and secured 10 seats in the Lok Sabha.

Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)

POLITICAL PARTIES**NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES**

- 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 by drawing inspiration from India's ancient culture and values; and Deendayal Upadhyay's ideas of integral humanism and Antyodaya.
- Cultural nationalism (or 'Hindutva') is an important element in its conception of Indian nationhood and politics.

Objectives

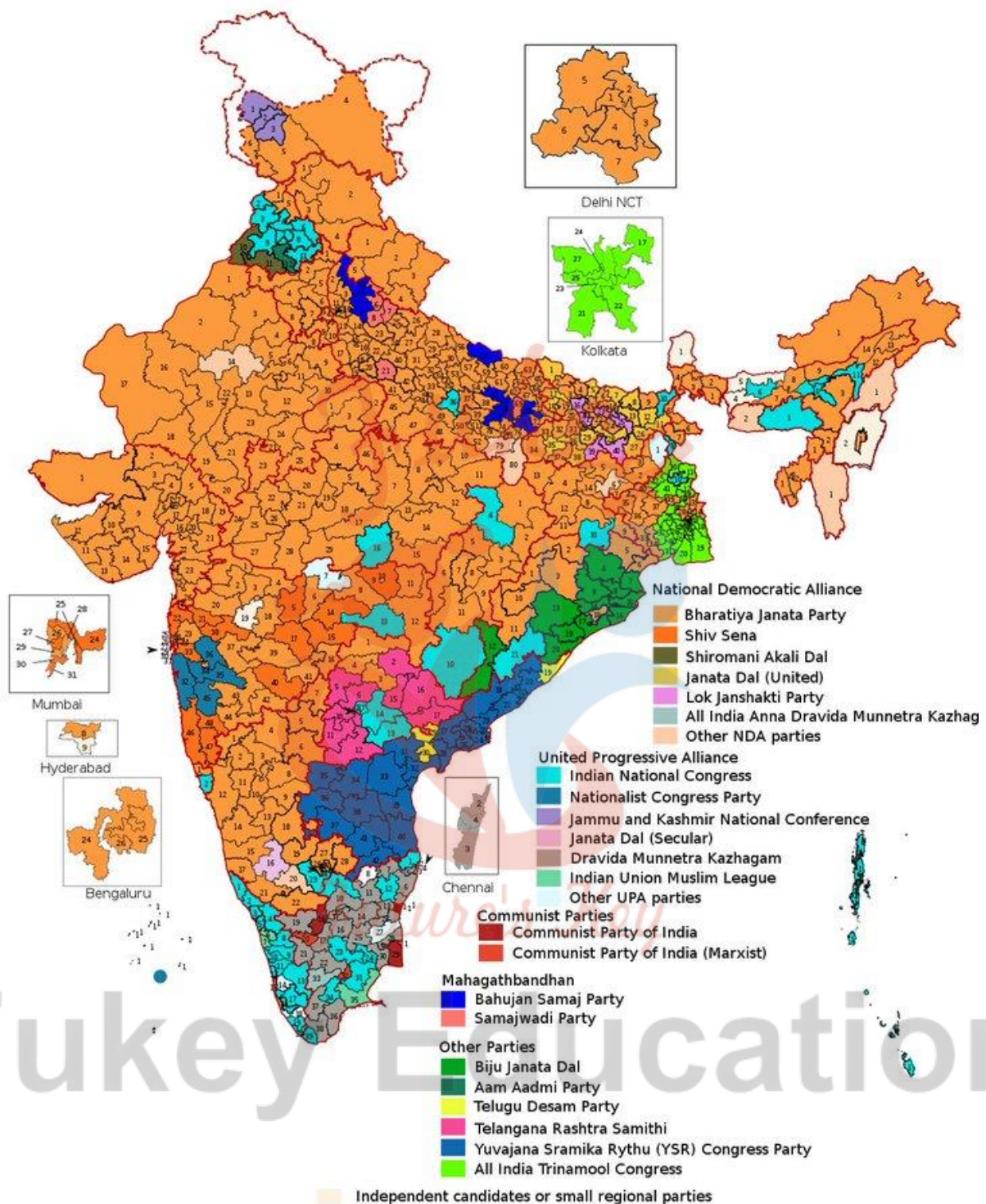
- Wants full territorial and political integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India, a uniform civil code for all people living in the country irrespective of religion and ban on religious conversions.
- Its support base increased substantially in the 1990s.
- Earlier limited to north and west and to 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 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.

*Future's Key*

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POLITICAL PARTIES

NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES

**Communist Party of India (CPI)**

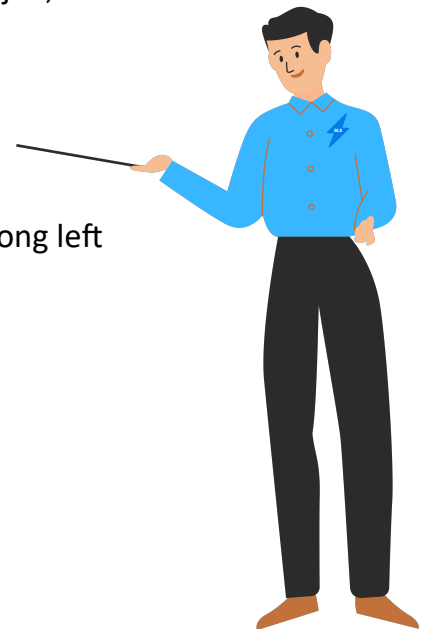
- Formed in 1925.
- Believes in Marxism-Leninism, secularism, and democracy.
- Opposed to the forces of secessionism and communalism.
- Accepts parliamentary democracy as a means of promoting the interests of the working class, farmers, and the poor.

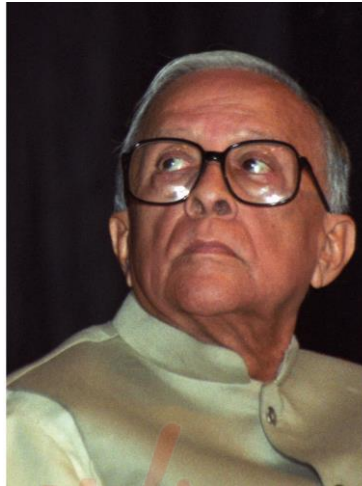
POLITICAL PARTIES**NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES**

- Became weak after the split in the party in 1964 that led to the formation of the CPI(M).
- 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.
- Advocates the coming together of all left parties to build a strong left front.

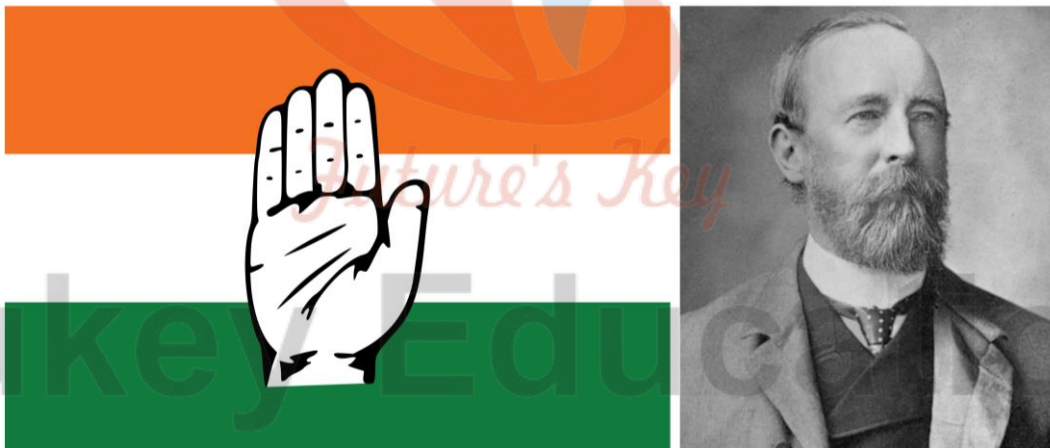
Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPI-M)

- 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.



POLITICAL PARTIES**NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES****Jyoti Basu**

- 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.

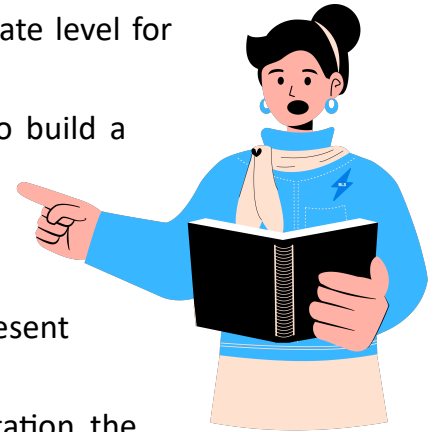
Indian National Congress (INC)

- Popularly known as the Congress Party.
- One of the oldest parties of the world. Founded in 1885 and has experienced many splits.

POLITICAL PARTIES

NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES

- 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, but it continues to be present throughout the country, cutting across social divisions.
- A centrist party (neither rightist nor leftist) 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 19.5% votes and 52 seats.



Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)



- Formed in 1999 following a split in the Congress party.
- Espouses democracy, Gandhian secularism, equity, social justice and federalism.
- Wants those high offices in government be confined to natural born citizens of the country.
- 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.

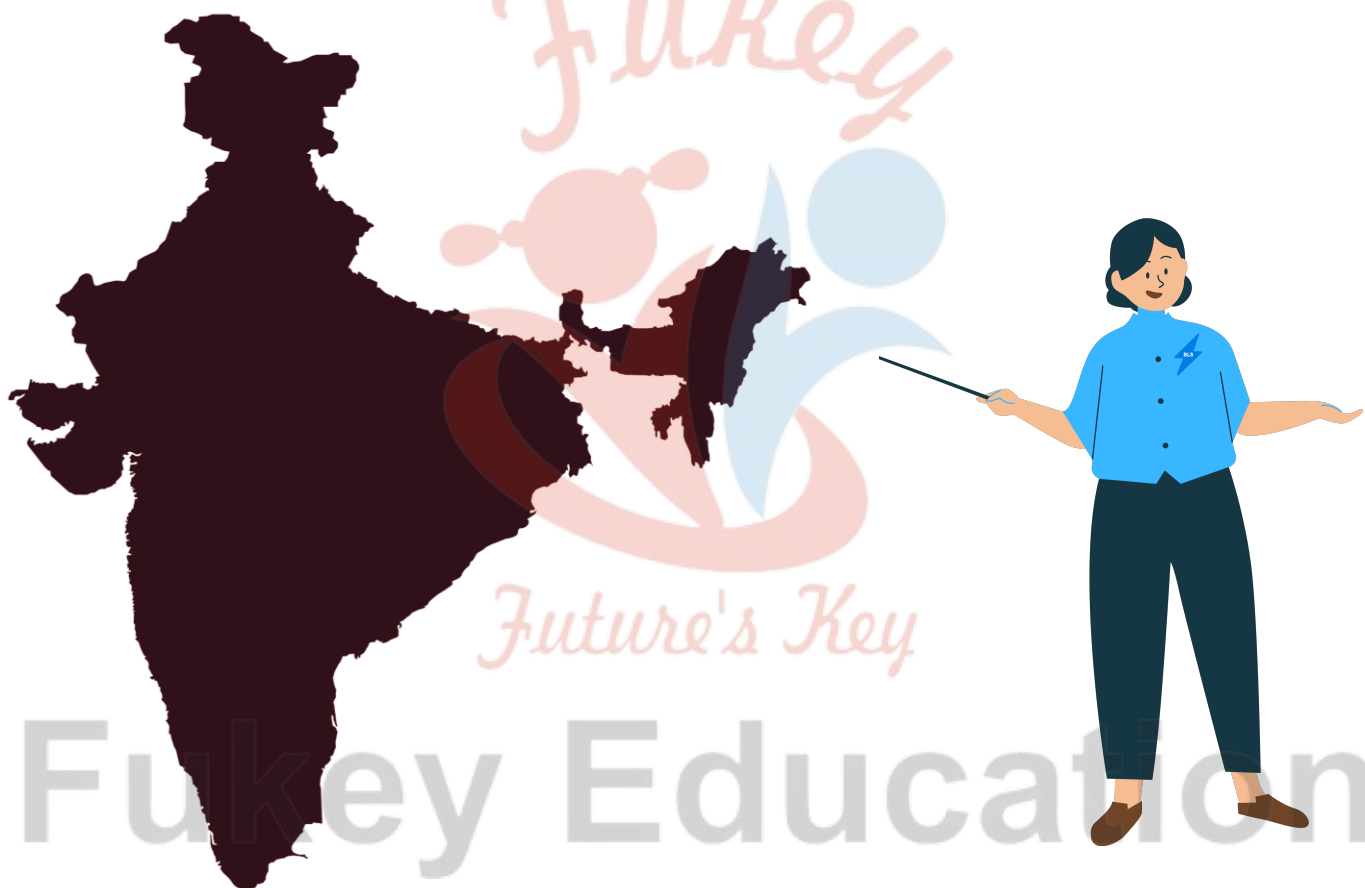


STATE PARTIES

Parties other than the national parties are classified as state parties. Also known as 'Regional parties.

- These parties need not be regional in their ideology or outlook and play very important role in national politics.
- The national parties are compelled to form alliances with State parties.
- Made the Parliament of India politically more and more diverse.
- Contributed to the strengthening of federalism and democracy in our country.

The proportion of votes and seats, a party must get to be reorganised as state party.



A party that secures at least six per cent of the total votes in an election to the Legislative Assembly of a State.

Wins at least two seats is recognised as a state party.

CHALLENGES TO POLITICAL PARTIES

Four problem areas in the working of political parties.

Lack of internal democracy

Tendency in political parties towards the concentration of power in one or few leaders at the top.

Impact

- Ordinary members of the party do not get sufficient information on what happens inside the party.
- The leaders assume greater power to make decisions in the name of the party.
- Those who disagree with the leadership find it difficult to continue in the party.

More than loyalty to party principles and policies, personal loyalty to the leader becomes more important.

Challenge of dynastic succession

Most political parties do not practice open and transparent procedures for their functioning.

- Less chances for an ordinary worker to rise to the top in a party.
- The top positions are always controlled by members of one family.
- This is unfair to other members of that party.
- This is also bad for democracy.

People who do not have adequate experience or popular support come to occupy positions of power.

Growing role of money and muscle power

Election Focus is on winning Focus is on winning.



Explain:

- Political parties tend to nominate those candidates who have or can raise lots of money.
- Rich people and companies who give funds to the parties tend to have influence on the policies and decisions of the party.
- Parties support criminals who can win elections.

Parties do not seem to offer a meaningful choice to the voters

- In order to offer meaningful choice, parties must be significantly different.
- There has been a decline in the ideological differences among parties in most parts of the world.

Example:

The difference between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party in Britain is very little.

In our country too, the differences among all the major parties on the economic policies have reduced.

Sometimes people cannot even elect very different leaders either, because the same set of leaders keep shifting from one party to another.



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HOW CAN PARTIES BE REFORMED

Recent efforts and suggestions into reform political parties

Challenges

Reform is required to overcome such challenges.

Reform vs Willingness to reform

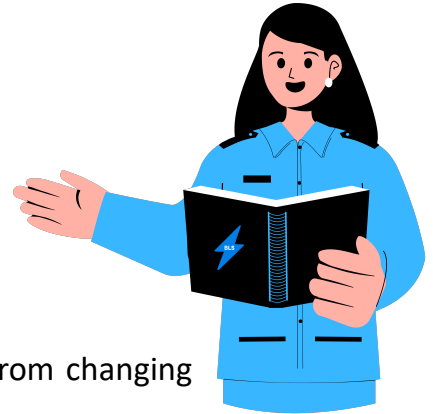
Some of the recent efforts and suggestions in our country to reform political parties and its leaders.

1. The Constitution was amended to prevent elected MLAs and MPs from changing parties.

To prevent defection

Anti defection law

- + This new law has helped bring defection down.
 - This has made any dissent even more difficult.
2. 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.



POLITICAL PARTIES**HOW CAN PARTIES BE REFORMED**

- The new system has made a lot of information available to the public.
 - But there is no system of check if the information given by the candidates is true.
3. The Election Commission passed an order making it necessary for political parties to hold their organisational elections and file their income tax returns.

Advantage

- The parties have started doing so but sometimes it is mere formality.
- It is not clear if this step has led to greater internal democracy in political parties.

Some other suggestions often made to reform political parties

1. A law should be made to regulate the internal affairs of political parties.
 - It should be made compulsory for political parties to maintain a register of its members.
 - To follow its own constitution.
 - To have an independent authority.
 - To act as a judge in case of party disputes, to hold open elections to the highest posts.
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.

**Suggestions**

Not yet been accepted by political parties Should be accepted.

But we must be very careful about legal solutions to political problems.

- Over-regulation of political parties can be counterproductive.
- This would force all parties to find ways to cheat the law.
- Besides, political parties will not agree to pass a law that they do not like.

Two other important ways to reform political parties**Public pressure**

People can put pressure on political parties, through petitions, publicity, and agitations.

If political parties feel that they would lose public support by not taking up reforms, they will become more serious about reforms.

Public participation

- Political parties can improve if those who want this 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.
- The problem of bad politics can be solved by more and better politics.



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