

6. Political Parties

EXERCISE

Q.1. State the various functions that political parties perform in a democracy.

Ans. Functions performed by Political Parties in a Democracy: Nowadays no democratic country can think to work politically without political parties. They play a chief role in democracy.

Political parties performed several functions. We can discuss some of them in the following way:

(i) To contest elections: Political parties contest elections to win the majority and make the government at various levels like central, state and local levels. They select their candidates who contest the election as a party nominee in the elections. The candidates are selected either by the top leaders of the party or by a group of members holding top position in the party.

(ii) To form and run the government: The political party that wins majority in the elections makes the government. Such a party known as the ruling party. It forms and then runs the government.

(iii) Law making: All political parties whether ruling or playing the role of opposition parties in the parliament or in any legislative assembly or local government body play a very essential role in making the law for the country or a state or region.

(iv) Role of the Opposition: The political party which loses the elections forms the opposition group or party and plays the role of opposition. Opposition political party keeps check on the ruling party. It criticises the wrong policies as well as programmes of the government. They make the public opinion through criticising the wrong policies of the government on the floor of the house or even outside of the houses.

(v) As a Link Between Public and the Government: Nowadays most of the countries are having representative democracy. The political parties forms the essential link between the public and the government. In a democracy ultimately the power rest with the voters or with the public of the country. The political parties take the grievances of the public to the government official and also try to redress them.

Q.2. What are the various challenges faced by political parties?

Ans. In a democracy political parties face different types of challenges. We can briefly mention such challenges under the following headings:

(i) Meaningful Choice to the Voters: All political parties have to realise the pulse of the voters. Voters want a candidate that may prove himself or herself as a very good choice for them.

In fact all political parties know it that their opponents or rival political parties also try to give similar policy and programmes which are like by the majority of the voters. If we go deeply to get out the various types of policy and programmes and different political parties we get that there is no clear difference between them and during elections as such voters do not have a meaningful choice among the various political parties.

(ii) Lack of internal Democracy: Generally, most of the political parties lack of internal democracy. Some leaders of the top position decide every thing or every matter of the party. Even after thumping majority or good success, the ordinary members and even the public are entirely ignored.

(iii) Dynastic Succession: In India or even some other countries also real power in a political party is occupied through the members of a family. This dynastic rule sometimes proves a great hurdle in the functioning of political parties as well as true democracy.

(iv) Money power and Muscle power: Nowadays elections are quite costly. A lot of money is needed to contest and win the elections. After winning the elections, the political parties try to mass wealth for the next election or for their near and dear. Whereas we can say the role of money power promotes corruption before, during and even after elections.

Like money power, muscle power also play chief role in winning the elections. Criminals or even the law breakers get tickets from the political parties. They directly or indirectly threaten the voters. Poor or weaker sections of the society do not cast the votes freely.

Q.3. Suggest some reforms to strengthen parties so that they perform their functions well.

Ans. Reforms are as under: (i) Leaders need self-introspection and reflexivity. They should understand their liability to each individual (citizen) of the country in the perspective of their all-round development. They should know quint essence of historical events in which unruly leaders finally, met to gross extermination as well as annihilation.

(ii) They should abide by the anti-defection law with letter and spirit.

(iii) They should submit affidavit free from misrepresentation of facts and details provided by each candidate, should be vouched by the

authorities concerned.

(iv) Directions of the Election Commission to political parties regarding organisational elections and also filing income tax return, should be followed sincerely.

(v) A law should be made to regulate the internal affairs of political parties. It should oversee if register of members to political parties is maintained, laws and by-laws are followed and open elections to the greatest posts are held.

(vi) Women representation nearly one-third to be accepted by each political party. Quota for women in decision-making body is essential.

(vii) Funding of elections to parties from government coffer also a reform in this direction. Quantum of fund can be determined on the basis of the votes secured by the party in the last election.

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

Q.4. What is a political Party?

Ans. Meaning of Political Party:

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

(ii) Every political party contain three common components:

- (a) The leader
- (b) The active members
- (c) The followers and supporters.

Q.5. What are the characteristics of a political party?

Ans. Characteristics of a political party:

(i) A political party is a synonym to democracy all in the visible form.

(ii) A political party is a fundamental political division within a society.

(iii) A political party has three components:

- (a) The leaders
- (b) The active members and
- (c) The followers

(iv) A political party forms effort to promote collective good for the society through its policies and plans.

(v) A political party tries to persuade people why its policies are better than other parties.

(vi) Each political party is registered with Election Commission of India and drafts a manifesto containing list of works that she would perform if voted to power through people in respective elections.

(vii) Each party puts forward, several policies and programmes and these are the people who select, what is suitable to them.

Q.6. A group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government is called a...

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

Q.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)	2	1	3	4
(B)	2	3	1	3
(C)	2	1	3	3
(D)	3	2	1	3

Ans. (c) C A D B

Q.8. Who among the following is the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party?

- (a) Kanshi Ram (b) B.R. Ambedkar
(c) Sahu Maharaj (d) Jotibar Phule

Ans. (a) Kahshi Ram

Q.9. What is the guiding philosophy of the Bharatiya Janta Party?

- (a) Integral humanism
(b) Revolutionary democracy
(c) Bhujan Samaj
(d) Modernity

Ans. (b) Revolutionary democracy

Q.10. Consider the following statements on parties:

(A) Political parties do not enjoy much trust among the people.

(B) Parties are mostly rocked by scandals involving top party leaders.

(C) Parties are not essential 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

Ans. (b) A and B

Q.11. Read the following passage and answer the questions given below:

Ans. Muhammad Yunus is a famous economist of Bangladesh. He received some international honour for his efforts to promote economic and social development for the benefit of the poor. He and the Grameen Bank began jointly received the Nobel Peace Prize for the year, 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 decomocratic from the grassroot level.

The launching of the new party, called Nagarik Shakti (Citizens' power), has caused a stir among the Bangladeshis. While many his decision welcomed, 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, 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.

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

(b) Do you agree with the statements and fears expressed by various people?

(c) How do you want this new party organised to make it different from other parties?

(d) If you were the one to begin this political party how would you defend it?

Ans. (a) Yes, it is a right decision of Muhammad Yunus to floating Nagrik Shakti (Citizens' power) party in Bangladesh to fight corruption in Bangladesh.

(b) No. I do not agree with statements and fears expressed by different people as these are baseless. It is usual that people have always different opinions due to their taking things for direct benefit or advantages. Corruption – free people like the first government officials, praise such steps while – the bureaucrats and representatives profiteering through corrupt practices, will naturally criticise likewise efforts.

(c) It will make it different due to being its leader, eminent scholar (awardee of Nobel peace Prize, 2006) and the fund, he has from Grameen Bank set up by him. He can launch policies and

programmes for the common good of people in Bangladesh without any impediments that usually bring in dead lock to implementation of policies.

(d) I would have defended likewise political party by opening branch offices in each nook as well as corner of the country. It would develop direct interaction with people in the country side and towns. Time-to-time surveys, meetings, seminars, workshops etc., would have won the confidence of people. I would have also set up a study cell to mention articles on contemporary events their consequences and a suitable course of action that might have cured flaws and defects. My Grameen Bank would have launched certain plans, schemes to give credit facilities at reasonable rate of interest with all needy people. These all efforts would have definitely made my party's stronghold in Bangladesh.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Choose the correct options:

1. Partisan means:

- (a) Party that runs the government
- (b) Affair of the state or the science of government
- (c) A person who is strongly committed to a party
- (d) A group of the people who come together to promote common beliefs

2. Multi-party system advocates:

- (a) The political parties that govern the country
- (b) The government is formed by different parties coming together
- (c) Does not permit free competition for power
- (d) This system allows a variety of interests as well as opinions to enjoy political representation

3. Which one of the following is not a characteristic feature of any political party?

- (a) It has a certain organisation
- (b) It has a unity of purpose
- (c) It adheres to constitutional means
- (d) It does not meet its politics when voted to power

4. Which of the following is the most visible institution in a democracy?

- (a) Pressure groups
- (b) Public interest group
- (c) Sectional interest group
- (d) Political parties

5. The law that says if any MLA or MP changes parties, he or she will lose the seat in the legislature, is:

- (a) Anti defection law
- (b) Anti criminal law
- (c) Anti movement law
- (d) None of them

6. A group of people who came close to each other to achieve their common aim of power is called

- (a) Political party
- (b) Interest group
- (c) Political leadership
- (d) Factional group

7. Which of the following pairs is incorrect?

- (a) Role of money and muscle power challenge to political parties
- (b) Anti-defection law-reformation of the political parties
- (c) Multi-party system-the USA and the UK
- (d) Indian National Congress-United Progressive Alliance

8. A political party has three components. Which of the following is not a component of the political party?

- (a) The leader
- (b) The founder of the party
- (c) The active members
- (d) The followers

9. Which one of the following political parties grew out of a movement?

- (a) Communist party of India
- (b) Assam Gana Parishad
- (c) All India Congress
- (d) Bahujan Samaj Party

10. In India, the candidates for contesting elections are selected by the:

- (a) Voters
- (b) Top party leaders
- (c) Respective communities
- (d) Ruling Party

11. Which one of the following is not a function of the political parties?

- (a) Parties contest elections
- (b) Parties do not shape public opinion
- (c) Parties put forward several policies and programmes
- (d) Parties play a decisive role in making laws for the country

12. How do parties form and also run government?

- (a) They recruit leaders
- (b) They give training to the workers and leaders
- (c) They make them ministers to run the government in the way they want
- (d) All of them

13. Which one of the following is the major challenge before the political parties which are steadily turning them into an ineffective instrument of democracy?

- (a) Lack of fund
- (b) Lack of security of its leaders
- (c) Lack of discipline
- (d) Lack of the internal democracy

14. Coalition government is a:

- (a) Government of more than two political parties in case no single party finds the majority.
- (b) Government of two political parties
- (c) Government of two or more regional parties

- (d) Government of two or more than two national parties

15. Which one of the following is a significant effort made in recent years in our country to reform political parties as well as its leaders?

- (a) Increase in the salary and allowances of parliamentarians
- (b) Implementation of anti-defection rule
- (c) Prevention of criminalisation in politics
- (d) Sharp decline in the use of money and muscle power

16. What is Bi-election?

- (a) Election held to fill a vacancy caused due to the death or any other reasons.
- (b) Elections held after a specific period
- (c) Elections held to make the new government
- (d) Elections held in between the fixed term of the house

17. Which of these is a National Party?

- (a) INC
- (b) BSP
- (c) BJP
- (d) All of them

18. What are mid-term elections?

- (a) Elections held to fill a vacancy caused through any reason
- (b) Elections held before the expiry of the full term of any House
- (c) Elections held after the expiry of the full term of any House
- (d) None of them

19. Which of these is not a National Party?

- (a) INC
- (b) SAD
- (c) BJP
- (d) CPI (M)

20. On what basis, state parties cannot be recognised as national parties? Choose the option:

- (a) If state parties do not get success in at least 4 states
- (b) If state parties do not obtain 4 per cent of vote
- (c) If state parties do not get 6 per cent of vote
- (d) If state parties do not get success at least two states