

# POLITICAL PARTIES

## POLITICAL PARTY

A political party consists of an organized group of people (citizens), who act as a political unit and who, profess to share the same political view and try to control the government. A political party carries out its general policy during and after the elections. The members of political party agree on fundamental economic and political principles. The aim of a political party is to control the government by peaceful and constitutional means.

## FUNCTION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties are very important in a democracy. Without them, it is not possible to make democracy functional. The importance of political parties is great because these parties perform a number of important functions. The functions of political parties are:-

- i. Political parties educate the people about the problems of the country.
- ii. Political parties help to express and form public opinion.
- iii. Political parties take part in elections, and then party which gets the majority forms the govt. Thus they help in formation of government.
- iv. Political parties form the opposition, which checks the wrong policies of the government.
- v. Political parties serve as a link between the govt. and the people.
- vi. Political parties help in making laws.

## PARTY SYSTEM

All the different parties that work and the way they operate and interact with each other are together called a party system. There are different kinds of party – systems under representative government. Many types of parties function in a party system. Party system can be of various types.

1. **Single Party system :-** Single party system is a system wherein a country there exists only one political party. The constitution of some countries like Russia and China, Poland etc, does not allow the formation of other political parties. In this system of governance, the single party is all – powerful and autocratic. Nobody can oppose the policies of the government.
2. **Bi – party system :-** Bi – party system is a system, where, in a country, there exist two political parties. The two most important states having the bi-party system are England and the United States. The formation of government in this form of government is easy. The govt. is strong and stable and thus more efficient. The govt. mostly represents real absolute majorities. The opposition party is strong and keeps an effective check on the ruling party. It becomes possible to implement long term policy and planning.
3. **Multi party system:-** Multi party system is a system wherein a country, there exist more than two political parties. This system exists in India, France and Italy. In this system, the cabinet cannot become dictatorial, as no single party is able to get an absolute majority. Under this system, there is a much wider choice before the voters to choose whom to vote for.

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## MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES OF INDIA

There are two types of political parties in India. These are :-

1. **National Parties:-** National parties are those parties, which generally have influence all over the country . These parties work over the whole country and contest election from all the regions. These parties are concerned with national problems. The major national political parties of India are:-
  - a) **Congress (I) :-** The India National Congress was founded in 1885. Congress led India to independence in 1947. This party has won many elections in India and been in power for nearly 3 decades. Congress (I) believes in providing political stability to the country on the basis of democracy, secularism and socialism. It believes in the protection of minorities; expansion of industrial sector; exploring new sources of energy; developments of villages and promotion of the interests of the workers. Congress has encouraged family planning. In the international field, it supports the policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence. The election symbol of congress (I) is a Hand. Some of the prominent leaders of congress were /are J.L. Nehru; M.K. Gandhi; Maulana Azad; Sardar Patel; Indira Gandhi; Rajeev Gandhi; Sonia Gandhi; Man Mohan Singh; G. N. Azad etc.
  - b) **Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) :-** It is a relatively young party formed in 1980. The party came into prominence after the demolition of the Babri masjid. This party believes in making India a Hindu State and has won many elections in the recent past. BJP has been in power at the center for some time. The party believes in having a uniform civil code for all. During their tenure at the center, the party has come up with new proposals of disinvestment, empowerment of the private sector and globalization of business in India. The budget of the defense has gone up.  
  
The election symbol of BJP is “Lotus”. The important leaders of BJP are Atal Bihari Vajpayee; L. K. Advani; Sushma Swaraj; M.M Joshi; Jaswant Singh; Shatrughan Sinha etc.
  - c) **Communist Parties of India:-** The C .P.I was established in 1925. The party made great progress after India’s independence. However, the party was split in 1964. The other party was called communist party of India (Marxist). C. Parties are opposed to imperialism and capitalist. It believes in introducing proportional representation in place of the present electoral system, removal of the provisions relating to internal emergency; transferring resources to the states; promotion and protection of the interests of the weaker sections of society including workers and farmers; bringing judiciary in line with the social and economic reforms; to end draconian laws like TADA, POTA etc. The election symbol of the C. P. I is sickle and a sheaf of paddy and that of C. P. I (M) is a ‘sickle and a star’
2. **Regional parties :-** are those parties , which work in particular regions. These parties are quite powerful in their regions. Some important regional parties are DMK, AIADMK. Akali Dal, National Conference; Telugu Desam. Regional parties are organized on the basis of regional problems and demands, so their influence is confined to particular regions or states. They are in a better position to solve the problems of their region more effectively and successfully.

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## VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

The voluntary organizations are organizations of various occupation workers, students, peasants, businessmen etc, which influence politics indirectly. The voluntary organizations work as subsidiaries of the political parties. They have special interests. Businessman may want the government to fix lower wages for their workers. Workers want higher wages. The Important voluntary organizations work as subsidiaries to other political parties. They have special interests. The important voluntary organizations in India are AITUC, AITU, The Kisan Sabha; ABVP, AIBU etc.

## OPPOSITIONS PARTIES

The parties, which are not in government, are called parties of the opposition. The opposition in a democracy has an important role to play. The function of the opposition are:

- i) ***To strengthen the democratic tendencies:-*** Opposition plays an important role in strengthening democracy. Strong opposition makes democracy strong.
- ii) ***To check the despotic rule of the ruling party:-*** Democracy in a sense means rule of the majority with the support of the majority. The govt. sometimes tends to become despotic, the opposition parties criticize the government and prevents it from becoming autocratic.
- iii) ***To express public opinion:-*** The opposition parties serve as a link between the government and the people. They create public opinion against the wrong policies of the government by organizing public meetings, demonstrations and by taking out processions.
- iv) ***To provide alternative govt.:-*** Political parties are always ready to provide an alternative government to the country. If sometimes, the govt. resigns suddenly or is defeated in the parliament, the opposition parties form the govt.
- v) Opposition members take advantage of the question hour to criticize the government in general terms.

