

POLITICAL PARTIES

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS [3 MARKS]

1. **How do political parties shape public opinion? Explain with three examples.**

Answer:

Political parties shape public opinion in the following ways.

- They highlight and raise issues.
- Parties have lakhs of members spread all over the country. Often pressure groups are an extension of political parties, among different sections of the society. They help in taking up issues and forming public opinion.
- Sometimes, parties launch movements for solving the problems faced by people. Often the public opinion develops on the same lines that the parties take.

2. **Name the national political party which gets inspiration from India's ancient culture and values. Mention four features of that party.**

Answer:

Bharatiya Janata Party gets its inspiration from India's ancient culture and values. Four features of Bharatiya Janata Party are as follows.

- It wants full territorial and political integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India.
- It wants a uniform civil code for all people living in the country, irrespective of religion.
- It wants a ban on religious conversions.
- Hindutva or cultural nationalism is an important element in its conception of politics.

3. **Name the national political party which espouses secularism and welfare of weaker sections and minorities. Mention any four features of that party.**

Answer:

National Congress Party, formed in 1999, espouses secularism and welfare of weaker sections and minorities. Four features of this party are as follows:

- It wants high offices in the government to be confined to natural-born citizens of the country.
- It stands for social justice, federalism and equity.
- It is a major party in Maharashtra with a significant presence in Meghalaya, Manipur and Assam.
- In Maharashtra, it is a coalition partner in alliance with the Congress.
- It is a member of the United Progressive Alliance since 2004.

4. **Name the national political party which draws inspiration from the ideas and teachings of Sahu Maharaj. Mention any four features of that party.**

Answer:

The national political party which draws inspiration from the ideas and teachings of Sahu Maharaj is Bahujan Samaj Party. Four features of this party are as follows.

- It wants to secure the interest and welfare of the dalits and oppressed classes.
- It seeks to represent and secure power for the bahujan samaj which includes dalits, adivasis, OBCs and religious minorities.
- It draws inspiration from the ideas and teachings of Mahatma Phule, Periyar, Ramaswami Naicker and Dr Ambedkar.
- Its main base is in Uttar Pradesh.

5. **What is meant by a political party? Describe the three components of a political party.**

Answer:

A political party is a political association or a voluntary group of people who come together to contest elections and hold political power in the government. They agree on some policies and

programmes. Political parties are necessary for democracy. They provide an important two-way link between the government and the people. They also unite and aggregate like-minded people from diverse backgrounds and religions to form a wide coalition of people and provide unity in diversity.

For the three components of a political party, refer to answer 8.

6. State the conditions laid down by the Election Commission to recognise a state party and a national party.

Answer:

- A party that secures at least six per cent 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.
- 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 as a national party.

7. Name the six national political parties of India in chronological order.

Answer:

The following are the six national political parties of India in chronological order.

- Indian National Congress (1885) .
- Communist Party of India (1925)
- Communist Party of India-Marxist (1964)
- Bhartiya Janata Party (1980)
- Bahujan Samaj Party (1984)
- National Congress Party (1999)

8. Name any three national political parties along with their symbols.

Answer:

- Indian National Congress—symbol: hand, palm facing the people
- Bhartiya Janata Party—symbol: a lotus
- Bahujan Samaj Party—symbol: an elephant

9. Name any six regional political parties of the four southern states of India.

Answer:

- The four southern states with regional political parties are as follows.
- Kerala: Indian Federal Democratic Party and Kerala Congress (Mani)
- Tamil Nadu: All India Anna DMK and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
- Andhra Pradesh: Telugu Desam Party
- Karnataka: Janata Dal (Secular)

10. Name the regional political parties predominant in Punjab, Haryana and Uttarakhand respectively with their symbols

Answer:

The regional political parties predominant in:

- Punjab—Shiromani Akali Dal, symbol: scales
- Haryana—Indian National Lok Dal, symbol: a pair of spectacles
- Uttarakhand—Uttarakhand Kranti Dal, symbol: chair

11. Name the regional political parties predominant in Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Orissa, respectively with their symbols.

Answer:

- The regional political parties predominant in:
- Jharkhand—Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, symbol: bow and arrow
- Maharashtra—Shiv Sena, symbol: bow and arrow
- Orissa—Biju Janata Dal, symbol: conch

12. Name the regional political parties predominant in Sikkim, Nagaland and Manipur, respectively with their symbols.

Answer:

- The regional political parties predominant in:
- Sikkim—Sikkim Democratic Front, symbol: an umbrella
- Nagaland—Nagaland People's Front, symbol: a cock
- Manipur—Manipur People's Party, symbol: a cycle

13. What is a multiparty system? Why has India adopted a multiparty system? Explain

Answer:

A multiparty system is a political system in which several parties contest the election to hold political power. In this system, there is a chance of two or more parties coming to power. This system also advocates coalition government and alliance politics. India adopted a multiparty system because of the following reasons.

- India is blessed with tremendous social and geographical diversity. This diversity cannot be easily accommodated in one or two political parties.
- Because of multiparty system, variety of interests and opinions enjoy political representation.

14. 'Lack of internal democracy within parties is the major challenge to political parties all over the world.' Analyse the statement,

Answer:

Lack of internal democracy within political parties is a major challenge to political parties all over the world. This statement can be analysed giving the following reasons.

- It is a tendency among political parties to concentrate power in the hands of one or few top leaders.
- Parties do not often keep membership registers and do not hold organizational meetings and do not conduct internal elections regularly.
- Sufficient information on what happens inside the party is not provided to the ordinary members of the party.
- In such a situation, personal loyalty to the leader becomes more important.

15. 'Dynastic succession is one of the most serious challenges before the political parties.' Analyse the statement.

Answer:

The challenge of dynastic succession is undoubtedly one of the most serious challenges before the political parties. The statement can be analysed giving the following arguments.

- Most parties do not practice open and transparent procedures, hence, there are very few opportunities for an ordinary worker to rise to the top in a party.
- Top leaders favour people close to them or even their family members. In many parties, the top positions are always controlled by members of one family.
- This is bad for democracy because people without sufficient experience or popular support are able to enjoy positions of power.

16. How do money and muscle power play an important role in elections? Explain.

Answer:

Ans. Nowadays elections are focused mainly on winning at any cost so parties try to use short-cuts like money and muscle power.

- They try to select or nominate those candidates who can raise money or provide muscle power.
- Sometimes, wealthy people and big companies also get involved in the democratic politics for their own interest and influence decision-making process.
- In many cases, candidates with criminal records, who can win elections, are supported.

17. “Serious efforts were made by the legal organisations to reform political parties in India.”

Support the statement.

Answer:

Serious efforts were made by the legal organisations to reform political parties in India. The following points support the statement.

- The Supreme Court has made it mandatory for the candidates contesting elections to produce an affidavit giving details of property and cases pending against them. It is hoped that this will reduce the influence of money and muscle power in elections.
- Anti-defection law has been passed by amending the constitution to prevent elected MLAs and MPs from changing their parties.
- The Election Commission has made it mandatory for the political parties to hold organisational elections and file their income tax returns.

18. Describe any three main features of a two-party system

Answer:

Three main features of a two-party system are as follows.

- Power usually changes between two parties, while other political parties may exist.
- The party that wins the majority forms the government, while the other forms the major opposition.
- Decision-making and implementation is prompt and quick.
- Such a system gives a strong and good opposition.

19. What is meant by a national political party? State the conditions required to be a national political party.

Answer:

A national political party is a party that is present in several or all units of the federation. In other words, it is a country-wide party. It has its units in various states. By and large, all these units follow the same policies. The following are the conditions required for a party to become a national party.

- A party has to secure at least six per cent of total votes polled in the Lok Sabha elections or Assembly elections in four states.
- It has to win at least four seats in the Lok Sabha to be recognised as a national party

20. ‘Nearly every one of the state parties wants to get an opportunity to be part of one or the other national-level coalition.’ Support the statement with arguments

Answer:

Nearly every one of the state parties wants to get an opportunity to be part of one or the other national level coalition because:

- the members of the state party get a chance of being included in the cabinet or the council of ministers.
- state parties get an opportunity and a platform to express their views and ideology at the national level.
- it helps in strengthening of federalism and democracy, and thus bringing diversity in the parliament.

21. What is meant by a regional party? State the conditions required to be recognised as a regional political party.

Answer:

A regional party, also called a state party, is a political party which takes care of regional concerns and state’s interests only. It happens to have succeeded only in some states units of the federation.

The following are the conditions required for a party to be recognised as a regional party.

- A party has to secure at least six per cent of the total votes polled in the election to the legislative assembly of a state.
- It has to win at least two seats in the election to the legislative assembly of a state to be recognised as a state or regional party.

22. Which three challenges do you feel are being faced by political parties in India? Give your opinion.

Answer:

As political parties are the essence of democracy, it is natural that they are often blamed for the failure of any policy or the working of democracy. Mostly, political parties face the following challenges in their working area.

- Lack of internal democracy: Political parties face the problem of internal democracy, which implies that:
 - parties do not hold organisational meetings.
 - they do not conduct regular internal elections.
 - membership of the party members is not fairly registered.
 - all the members, except top leaders, are not included in the decision-making process.
- Dynastic succession:
 - Another challenge is that in most of the political parties, the top posts are always controlled by the members of one family, which is very unfair to other members.
- Since open and transparent functioning is lacking, there are very few chances for an ordinary worker to rise to the top.
- Money and muscle power: The third challenge is the growing role of money and muscle power.
 - Nowadays, elections are focussed mainly on winning at any cost, so parties try to use short-cuts like using money and muscle power.
 - They try to select or nominate those candidates who can raise money or provide muscle power.
- Sometimes, wealthy people and big companies also get involved in the democratic politics for their own interest and try to influence the decision-making process.
- In some cases, parties support criminals who can win elections.
- Absence of a meaningful choice:
 - In the present political scenario, there is no ideological difference among the political parties, so they do not provide a meaningful choice to voters.
 - Those voters, who really want a change in the government and its policies, never get any positive option. For instance, in India, where we have multi-party system, the differences between the parties over the economic matters have reduced.
- Also, people cannot even elect different leaders because the same set of leaders keep shifting from one party to another. (any three)

23. Analyse the three components of a political party.

Answer:

The following are the three elements of a political party.

- The leaders: The leaders contest elections and, if they win, perform the administrative jobs.
- The active members: The active members attend party meetings and are close to the party leaders. They can be called the assistants of the leaders.
- The followers: The followers are the dedicated workers of the party. They work under the able guidance of the active members.

24. What is a political party? State any two points of ideology of Bhartiya Janata Party.

Answer:

A political party is an association or a voluntary group of people who come together to contest

election and hold power in the government. They agree on some policies and programmes. The ideology of Bhartiya Janata Party is as follows.

- It wants full territorial and political integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India.
- It wants to build a strong and modern India by drawing inspiration from India's ancient culture and values.
- It wants a uniform civil code for all people living in the country, irrespective of religion.
- It wants religious conversions to be banned in India. (any three)

25. 'No party system is ideal for all countries and all situations.' Justify the statement with arguments.

Answer:

No party system is ideal for all countries and all situations. This statement can be justified giving the following arguments.

- A one-party system cannot be considered a good option because the voters do not have any choice and it is not a democratic option.
- A two-party system cannot be considered ideal for a country because in this system, power usually shifts from one party to the other. Several other parties with better programmes and policies may exist, contest elections and win a few seats, but only the two party have serious chance of forming government.
- A multiparty system also cannot be considered a good option because it often appears messy and leads to political instability. In this system the government is formed by various parties and ideologies coming together which may further raise issues and conflicts.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS [5 MARKS]

26. 'Political parties are a necessary condition for a democracy.' Analyse the statement with examples.

Answer:

In a democratic set-up, political parties are required because without political parties:

- every candidate in the elections will be independent. No promises could be made and the utility of the government formed will remain uncertain.
- no one will be responsible for running the country. Elected representatives will only be accountable to their constituency
- there will be no agency to gather and present different views on various issues to the government.
- no one will be responsible for bringing various representatives together so as to form a responsible government.
- there will be no mechanism to support the government, make policies and justify or oppose them.

27. Suggest and explain any five measures to reform political parties.

Answer:

The following reforms could be suggested in order to strengthen parties so that they perform their functions well.

- Regulation of party's internal affairs: 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 their members, to follow their own constitution, to have an independent authority, etc.
- State funding: There should be state funding of elections. The government should give money to parties to support their election expenses to avoid corruption.
- Pressure of public opinion: Political parties can be reformed if people put pressure on them. This can be done through petitions, propaganda and agitations. Pressure groups and media play an important role in this.

- Ban on political parties based on religion and caste: The Election Commission should ban the political parties which are formed on the basis of religion and caste.
- Ensure women participation: It should be made mandatory for all political parties to allot one-third of the tickets to women to ensure their decisive voice in decision making. If the above-mentioned suggestions are taken into consideration, it can be ensured that these could lead to some improvement in the working of the political parties.

28. Examine any two institutional amendments made by different institutions to reform political parties and their leaders.

Answer:

The following are the two institutional amendments made by different institutions to reform political parties and their leaders.

- Anti-defection law: The anti-defection law was passed to prevent elected MLAs and MPs from changing their parties. It was seen that many MLAs and MPs were changing their parties for personal gains. Now, according to the law, if any MLA or MP changes his/her party, his/her seat in the legislature will be lost. Also, MLAs and MPs have to accept whatever the party leaders decide.
- Affidavit: To reduce the influence of money and muscle power (criminals), an order has been passed by the Supreme Court making it mandatory for every candidate contesting election to file an affidavit giving details of his/her property and criminal records. This system has helped in making a lot of information available to the public. But, we cannot say that this amendment has been successful as it cannot be said that information provided by the candidates is true.
- Mandatory organisational meeting and filing of ITR: An order has been passed by the Election Commission making it mandatory for political parties to hold their organisational elections and file their income tax returns. The parties have started doing this, but sometimes it is only a formality. It is not clear if this step has brought some reform or not. {any two}

29. Describe any five major functions of political parties

Answer:

The following are the various functions political parties perform in a democracy.

- Contest elections: Parties contest elections. In countries like India, top party leaders choose candidates for contesting elections.
- Put forward policies and programmes: Parties put forward different policies and programmes and voters choose from them. Political parties accommodate different views and opinions.
- Play an important role in making laws: Political parties play a decisive role in making laws for a country. Formally, laws are debated and passed in the legislature, but since most of the members belong to a party, they go by the direction of the party leadership, irrespective of their personal opinions.
- Form and run government: To run the government, political parties prepare a council of ministers by recruiting and training the leaders.
- Provide access to government machinery and welfare schemes: Political 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.
- Play the role of opposition: The party which loses election plays the role of opposition. Opposition party tries to put checks on the ruling party by constantly criticizing its policies.
- Shape public opinion: One of the most important functions of political parties is that they shape public opinion on relevant issues for the proper functioning of the government and to deepen the concept of democracy

30. 'About hundred years ago there were few countries that had hardly any political party. Now there are few countries that do not have political parties.' Examine the statement.

Answer:

The statement has two parts.

- About a hundred years ago, there were few countries that had hardly any political party. It shows that very few countries were democratic countries and if they were not democracies, there was no need for political parties.
- Now there are few countries that do not have political parties. In the last hundred years many countries became independent from colonial control. After independence, they adopted democratic governments. So there was an increasing necessity for political parties.
The political parties have become very important in a democratic country because of the following reasons.
- Not having political parties will lead to chaos and turmoil in the society. It will be against democratic principles.
- Without parties, candidates elected will be independent and will not be able to make policies. They will not be responsible and accountable to the people.
- The existence of parties in a democracy ensures that a country runs as per its policies and ideologies and have a government which is answerable to the people.

31. How is dynastic succession a major challenge for political parties in India? Explain.

Answer:

The challenge of dynastic succession is undoubtedly a major challenge for political parties in India. The following points explain this.

- Usually, an ordinary worker does not rise to the top positions in a party because the functioning of most political parties is not transparent.
- Most of the top leaders favour and choose members of their families. This is unfair to other members.
- The top positions are always controlled by members of one family. This is unhealthy for democracy.
- People who are at top levels usually do not have adequate experience, education or popular support.
- The challenge of dynastic succession is related to the challenge of lack of internal democracy. Non-deserving leaders exercise paramount power and make decisions. Those who disagree with the leadership find it difficult to continue in the party.

32. How do state or regional political parties contribute in strengthening federalism and democracy in India? Explain with examples.

Answer:

State and regional political parties contribute in strengthening federalism and democracy in India in the following ways.

- They provide a variety of choice to people as each of them has different agendas and focus on different issues.
- They provide a platform for different pressure and social groups, and communities to put forward their demands.
- They help in power sharing by sharing power of government with the help of coalition government.

.....