



Government of Tamilnadu

Department of Employment and Training

Course : TNPSC Group I Mains Material
Subject : Indian Polity
Topic : Political Parties

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POLITICAL PARTIES

Introduction:

Political parties are indispensable instruments in a democratic system. They are formed with definite ideologies, and programme of action. They enlighten the general public on issues concerning the society and state and they also prescribe alternatives. Through propaganda they educate people on political issues and garner their support for their policies and programme.

- In legislative bodies they represent organized opinion of the voters.
- In parliamentary democracies the party or an alliance of parties can win a majority of seats in legislature and forms the ministry (executive) examples: UK, India.
- In presidential democracies, the chief executives (president) are elected on party basis (USA, France).

In any system political parties function as intermediaries between the government and people. There is consistent competition between the various political parties and this competition ensures the mature functioning of a democracy.

Role of Political Parties in a Democracy:

The existence of political parties is largely responsible for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of a democracy. In a federal multicultural and plural societies such as the United States of America and India, the maintenance of peace, unity and communal harmony are vital for social-economic progress.

While single party system may have greater flexibility towards quicker decisions making and cohesive action, these decisions may not represent mass opinion and thus it would create greater opposition and dissent for the government.

In the dual-party system due to the nature of the party structure and leadership, this usually result in public policies and decisions blocked in political polarization rather than collaboration.

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While in Multi party systems, the performance is on the basis of deliberation and negotiation between coalition members, and issues are mostly settled by reaching a mutually derived consensus after debate and discussion.

Thus, political parties are the drivers of a democracy that are necessary to safeguard the rights and freedoms of the people. Through effective Citizenship training and greater civic participation, youth in democratic nations can play a greater role in political parties thereby fostering more mature and wider democratization in countries.

National Parties and State Parties:

The Election Commission registers political parties for the purpose of elections and grants them recognition as national or state parties on the basis of their poll performance. The other parties are simply declared as registered unrecognized parties.

The recognition granted by the Commission to the parties determines their right to certain privileges like allocation of the party symbols, provision of time for political broadcasts on the state-owned television and radio stations and access to electoral rolls.

Further, the recognized parties need only one proposer for filing the nomination. Also, these parties are allowed to have forty “star campaigners” during the time of elections and the registered–unrecognized parties are allowed to have twenty “star campaigners”. The travel expenses of these star campaigners are not included in the election expenditure of the candidates of their parties.

Every national party is allotted a symbol exclusively reserved for its use throughout the country. Similarly, every state party is allotted a symbol exclusively reserved for its use in the state or states in which it is so recognised. A registered-unrecognised party, on the other hand, can select a symbol from a list of free symbols.

In other words, the Commission specifies certain symbols as ‘reserved symbols’ which are meant for the candidate’s setup by the recognised parties and others as ‘free symbols’ which are meant for other candidates.



Conditions for Recognition as a National Party:

At present, a party is recognised as a national party if any of the following conditions is fulfilled:

1. If it secures six per cent of valid votes polled in any four or more states at a general election to the Lok Sabha or to the legislative assembly; and, in addition, it wins four seats in the Lok Sabha from any state or states; or
2. If it wins two per cent of seats in the Lok Sabha at a general election; and these candidates are elected from three states; or
3. If it is recognised as a state party in four states.

Conditions for Recognition as a State Party:

At present, a party is recognised as a state party in a state if any of the following conditions is fulfilled:

1. If it secures six per cent of the valid votes polled in the state at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned; and, in addition, it wins 2 seats in the assembly of the state concerned; or
2. If it secures six per cent of the valid votes polled in the state at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; and, in addition, it wins 1 seat in the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; or
3. If it wins three per cent of seats in the legislative assembly at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned or 3 seats in the assembly, whichever is more; or
4. If it wins 1 seat in the Lok Sabha for every 25 seats or any fraction thereof allotted to the state at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; or
5. If it secures eight per cent of the total valid votes polled in the state at a General Election to the Lok Sabha from the state or to the legislative assembly of the state. This condition was added in 2011.

The number of recognised parties keeps on changing on the basis of their performance in the general elections. On the eve of the sixteenth Lok Sabha general elections (2014), there were 6 national parties, 47 state parties and 1593 registered-unrecognised parties in the country. The national parties and state parties are also known as all-India parties and regional parties respectively.

PRESSURE GROUPS

Introduction:

A pressure group is a group of people who are organised actively for promoting and defending their common interest. It is so called as it attempts to bring a change in the public policy by exerting pressure on the government. It acts as a liaison between the government and its members. The pressure groups influence the policy-making and policy implementation in the government through legal and legitimate methods like lobbying, correspondence, publicity, propagandising, petitioning, public debating, maintaining contacts with their legislators and so forth.

Pressure Groups in India

Business Groups:

The business groups include a large number of industrial and commercial bodies. They are the most sophisticated, the most powerful and the largest of all pressure groups in India.

Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), Federation of All India Food grain Dealers Association (FAIFDA).

Trade Unions:

The trade unions voice the demands of the industrial workers. They are also known as labour groups. A peculiar feature of trade unions in India is that they are associated either directly or indirectly with different political parties.

- (i) All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)—affiliated to CPI;
- (ii) Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC)—affiliated to the Congress (I);
- (iii) Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS)—affiliated to the Socialists;
- (iv) Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU)—affiliated to the CPM;
- (v) Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS)—affiliated to the BJP;
- (vi) All India Central Council of Trade Unions (Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation);
- (vii) All India United Trade Union Centre (Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist));

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- (viii) New Trade Union Initiative (Independent from political parties, but left);
 - (ix) Labour Progressive Federation (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) Agrarian Groups

The agrarian groups represent the farmers and the agricultural labour class.

They include:

- (i) Bhartiya Kisan Union (under the leadership of Mahendra Singh Tikait, in the wheat belt of North India)
- (ii) All India Kisan Sabha (the oldest and the largest agrarian group)
- (iii) Revolutionary Peasants Convention (organised by the CPM in 1967 which gave birth to the Naxalbari Movement)
- (iv) Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (Gujarat)
- (v) R V Sangham (led by C N Naidu in Tamil Nadu)

Professional Associations:

These are associations that raise the concerns and demands of doctors, lawyers, journalists and teachers. Despite various restrictions, these associations pressurize the government by various methods including agitations for the improvement of their service conditions.

They include:

- (i) Indian Medical Association (IMA)
- (ii) Bar Council of India (BCI)
- (iii) Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ)
- (iv) All India Federation of University and College Teachers (AIFUCT)

Student Organisations:

Various unions have been formed to represent the student community.

However, these unions, like the trade unions, are also affiliated to various political parties.

These are:

- (i) Akhila Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) (affiliated to BJP)
- (ii) All India Students Federation (AISF) (affiliated to CPI)

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- (iii) National Students Union of India (NSUI) (affiliated to Congress (I))
 - (iv) Progressive Students Union (PSU) (affiliated to CPM)

PUBLIC OPINION

Public opinion can be defined as a psychological and social process in which the behaviour of each member of the public is conditional to that of all others with similar beliefs. In short it is the collective views of the people, their attitudes and opinions. It is the people's collective preferences on matters relating to government and politics. It is based on the premise that collective individual opinions matters in a democracy and public opinion should carry more weight than individual opinion. Others opine that public opinion can be influenced and controlled by organized groups, government leaders, and media elite.

In fact, democracy derives its authority from the people. Public opinion is not the opinion of an individual, though he or she may be a highly respected person. It is not a private opinion. It is also not an expert opinion, irrespective of the wisdom of the expert. Public opinion is an organized and considered opinion of a section or many sections of the people on any public issue or concern.

Role of Public Opinion:

Public opinion is an essential element for successful working of a democracy where the views of all citizens are respected and no government can survive by ignoring it.

Hindrances to formation of a genuine public opinion:

Public opinion needs to be the true reflection of the peoples` ideas and opinion, however there are some hindrances to genuine public opinion;

Selfish interests (Me above nation): The interest of the people seeking personal advancement over the affairs of their own country. People need to be sensitized towards important issues related to unity, commitment, integrity and progress of the nation.

Illiteracy: It is expected that literate and responsible public make good citizens by exercising their franchise without fear or favour. Illiterate masses are often misled by

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party workers and guided by sentiments, favours and rhetoric. A sound public opinion can be formed only in the environment of free thought and knowledge.

Poverty: The poor in any country are easily influenced by the false promise of political leaders and cast their votes subjectively. Sound and objective public opinion is possible only by alleviating poverty.

Racist and Caste based Discrimination: Sentiments that provoke discrimination based on caste, creed and religion create a divide among the masses that are often manipulated by political parties for their advantage. Social disharmony in the country is detrimental to the effective working of a democracy.

Freedom of speech and the media: Unbiased, objective and independent media as well as respect for individual freedom of speech and assembly play a very significant role in the formation of healthy opinion. The vital importance of an independent and impartial media that respects people's freedom and exercises responsible news reporting are important criteria for formation of mature and responsive public opinion.

Non-Governmental Organisations

Numerous Non - Governmental Organisation were born day to day for the development of society for various reasons in saving the culture, Awareness. about various issues, informing the public about the government schemes Famous NGO's working for People's Welfare. Not for profit organisation that pursue activities to promote the interest of poor. Not the part of government have a legal status and they are registered under specific act. They enhance the efficiency of delivery of many services at the local level through involvement of residents.

Child Rights and you (CRY)	1979 Rippan-Ka-poor	Child labour, Poverty, Malnutrition, Illiteracy, Child Mirage, Child Trafficking
Give foundation	1999	Online donation Platform and provides funds to various NGOS
Help Age India	1960	Cause and care of disadvantaged older person

Pratham Education Foundation	Dr. Radha Krishnan	Improving the quality of education, to educate the children in the slums of Mumbai
Centre for Public Interest Litigation	1995	Conducts litigation on matters of Public Interest

They also improve policy monitoring and evaluation as comptroller and auditor general takes cognizance of reports and social audits.

Media

Every individual person is a medium of expression. An individual interacts through the media to reach other individual and institutions. Media is generally the agency for inter-personal communication. Media includes every broadcasting and narrowcasting medium. Media is the plural of the word medium. Such a medium or media allows to communicate messages, thoughts, ideas, views, etc.

Classification of Media

- Narrowcast Media Cable Television, Direct mail, Seminar
- Broadcast Media Films, Television, Radio
- Print Media Newspapers, Magazine, Journals, Books, Posters, Reports
- Web Media Google website and Blogs
- Social Media Twitter, Facebook, whatsapp and Instagram

This communication can be classified into: -

Personal communication – these are meant for personal use, like letters, telephone, cell phone, E-mail and fax.

Mass communication –these are used for communicating with the masses. Newspapers, Radio, TV, collectively they are termed as media.

Fourth Pillar of Democracy

The four pillars of democracy are Legislature, Executive, Judiciary, and Media. Media ensures the transparency in the working of all the above three systems. This fourth pillar of democracy ensures that all people living in far off areas of country are aware of what's happening in rest of the country.

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In fact, mass media is the most important vehicle for information, knowledge and communication in a democratic polity.

Importance of the Media

Media is very powerful entity on the earth. It is a mirror which shows various social, political and economic activities around us. People depend on the media for various needs including entertainment and information. Media keeps the people awakened and it has become one of the major instruments of social change. Media not only bring out the day to day happenings in the world, but also exposes the strength and weakness of the government. It also advertises the various products produced by the private companies. It creates the awareness.

All the TV channels broadcasts national and international news. Social problems are portrayed in many cinemas. Media provide a balanced report on any matters. It fights against the socio-political evils and injustice in our society while bringing empowerment to the masses and facilitating development.

Media and public opinion

The media plays a prominent role in the formation of public opinion (general opinion of the public on particular issue). It is the powerful tool in contemporary times. It has become a part of the everyday life of the people.

They play a significant role in shaping a person's understanding and perception about the events occurred in our daily lives. The mass media play a significant role in providing honest, intelligent and usually unbiased accounts of events.

The newspaper reflects the response of the people to the government policies. Thus, print media and electronic media helps the people to express their opinion on important social issues.

Ethic and Responsibility

Ethics is a code of values which govern our lives. So, they are very essential for moral and healthy life. In the context of media ethics may be described as a set of moral principles. The media is expected to follow a code of conduct which should be reflected in their reporting and writing. Sensational and distorted news should be avoided.

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The fundamental objectives of media are to serve the people with news, views, comments and information on matters of public interest in a fair, accurate, unbiased and decent manner and language.

An awakened and free media is very much essential for the function of the government. It has right to collect information from any primary authentic sources which are important to the society and then report the same with the aim to inform not to create sensation. The media has a massive responsibility in providing factual coverage.

Role of Media in Democracy

Media is the back bone of democracy. In our democratic society mass media is the driving force of public opinion. Media strengthens the democratic value. It enlightens and empowers the people. It can educate the voters and ensures that government is transparent and accountable.

Media carry every report of action of administration of the government. Based on the information, the citizen can learn about the functioning of the government and day to day happenings taking place around them.

It arranges the debate on current affairs so that we can get the different views for the same issue. Media reminds the government of its unfulfilled promises to the public. It educates masses in rural areas. Parliamentary democracy can flourish only under the watchful eyes of media.

Media not only reports but acts as a bridge between the state and public. Thus, the media acts as a watch day of the democratic government. A democracy without media is like vehicle without wheel.

Questions:

1. Discuss in detail about the Public Opinion in India.
2. What are the conditions for recognised as a National Party & State Party?