

Chapter : 1

Political Parties in India

PART (III): POLITICAL SCIENCE AND ECONOMICS

Give very short answer :

Q.1: Give the name of a country having one party rule.

Ans: China.

Q.2: What is the party system that is found in the United States of America ?

Ans: Bi-party system.

Q.3: Mention the two characteristics of political party.

Ans: (i) It has organisation.

(ii) It has certain clear-cut ideals and programme of action.

Q.4: Mention a chief function of political party.

Ans: The chief function of a political party is to secure political power through election and thereafter form a government either alone or with the help of like-minded parties.

Q.5: Mention the name of a regional party of Assam .

Ans: Asom Gana Parishad (AGP)

Q.6: What is the name of the chief regional party of Jharkhand ?

Ans: Jharkhand Mukhi Morcha.

Q.7: Give the full term of UPA.

Ans: United Progressive Alliance.

Q.8: Which is the first political party of India ?

Ans: The Indian National Congress.

Q.9: Under whose leadership was the Indian association formed ?

Ans: Surendranath Banerjee.

Q.10: Who was the first president of the Indian National Congress ?

Ans: Woomesh Chandra Banerjee.

GIVE SHORT ANSWER :

Q.1: What is the chief characteristics of the Indian political system ?

Ans: The chief characteristics of the Indian political system are :

- (i) Existence of numerous political in India .
- (ii) Domination of single party up to the late 1970s.
- (iii) Active presence of regional parties.
- (iv) Peaceful election process and formation of government.
- (v) Emergence of coalition government both at the centre and in the States.

Q.2 : Which party system is particularly useful for a democratic state ?

Ans: There are several types of party systems in the world such as one party or single party system, bi-party system and multi-party system. Each of those systems has its own merits and demerits. But for a democratic state, bi-party system is more stable and useful than multi-party system because it is not affected by frequent political crisis and chaos like multi-party system. England and USA, two noted democratic of the world, practice bi-party system. However, multi-party system has its own advantages.

Q.3: Mention four chief characteristics of political party.

Ans: Four chief characteristics of political party are :

(i) It has certain organisation.

(ii) It agrees to abide by its own set of principles and ideals and follows a definite planning and programme of action.

(iii) It aspires to capture power through democratic ways.

(iv) It gives priority to issues related to national interest.

Q.4: Give the name of five regional political parties of India.

Ans: Five important regional political parties of India are:

(i) Dravida Munnetra Kajhagam (DMK)-Tamil Nadu

(ii) Alkali Dal-Punjab.

(iii) National Conference-Jammu and Kashmir.

(iv) Shiv Sena-Maharashtra

Q.5: What is meant by the term alliance government ?

Ans: The term 'alliance government' means the government formed by several like-minded political parties as no single political party gets absolute majority of seats in a general election to form a government and administer the country.

GIVE LONG ANSWER :

Q.1: What is meant by alliance government ?

Ans: When no single political party gets absolute majority of seats in a general or state election, the party with the highest number of candidates generally forms an alliance with like-minded political parties to form a government. This form of government is known as alliance or coalition government. The political parties forming the alliance have different principles, ideals and course of action. But for the sake of remaining in power, they make some compromise on their principles and ideals and agree upon a common programme of action. The leader of the majority party of the alliance generally becomes the prime minister or the chief minister.

Today in a country like India where numerous parties are emerging, led by prominent leaders, it is difficult for a single party to get absolute majority. Therefore coalition government has become a necessity as well as a regular feature of Indian political system. In India, the first coalition government was formed in 1977 under the leadership of Late Morarji Desai. Since then coalition government has become an integral part of the Indian political system both at the centre and in the States. The following factors have led to the emergence of coalition government in our country.

(i) Increase in the number of political parties.

(ii) Disillusionment with the rule of single national political party.

(iii) Emergence of powerful and charismatic regional leaders.

(iv) Difficulty in conducting frequent general elections.

Q.2: Discuss two merits and two demerits of the coalition or the alliance government.

Ans: Today we find alliance or coalition government functioning in many countries of the world. This form of government has certain advantages as well as disadvantages. Two important merits of coalition government are :

(i) Prevents the ruling government from becoming autocratic : Since the government led by a single party has absolute majority in the legislature, it often turns to be autocratic. On many occasions, such a government may enact anti-people laws and policies which may go against the interests of the people. But such anti-people activities are not possible under a coalition government system. The major policy decisions are discussed among coalition partners and therefore there is very little chance to pass anti-people laws and policies. In other words, this system prevents the government from becoming despotic, autocratic and too authoritarian.

(ii) Regional representation : Another notable merit of coalition government is that it is able to provide a wider representation of people. When a huge country is ruled by a single party, it may not concern itself with representation from all regions, groups and communities

of the country. But a coalition government is often formed with the help of regional and smaller parties and therefore their concerns are taken into consideration and they are given adequate representation in the cabinet. This leads to better national integration, fair distribution of resources and developmental projects. Two demerits of coalition government are :

(i) Instability : One major defect of alliance or coalition government is its instability. Since it consists of several parties with divergent principles and ideals, it is difficult to sail together smoothly. Often such a government collapses due to in-fighting and sometime one or two alliance partners may withdraw their support leading to the collapse of the government. This results in political crisis, frequent elections and political horse-trading, i.e. trying to get elected candidates from one party to another so as to form a government or pull down a government.

(ii) Weak government : Another major defect of coalition government is that it is a weak government. Due to the pressure of coalition system, the government has to consult the coalition partners on every major decision. As a result, in times of crisis and national emergencies, the government cannot take quick decisions as all the major coalition partners have to be consulted on such issues. Therefore, such government tend to be weak and incapable of taking strong executive decisions.

Q.3: Discuss the role the opposition in democracy.

Ans: It is an undeniable fact that opposition parties in a democratic set-up have a significant role to play. Without a strong opposition, democracy cannot function properly nor can it protect the interests of the people. When we analyse the political system of India from 1947 to 1977, we see that there existed hardly any opposition. During this period, Indian politics was characterised by one-party rule with absolute majority. But in the late 1970s, some of the opposition parties joined hands and formed an alliance, threatening the domination of a single party. Since then India has been witnessing a vibrant opposition both in the central and state legislatures. Today opposition plays a vital role in a democratic set up in the following ways :

- (i) Safeguards the interests of the people and state.
- (ii) Keeps a check on the work of the government and its ministers.
- (iii) Scrutinises government actions and suggests remedies through discussion and debates in the legislature.
- (iv) Brings to the notice of the government the various needs and aspirations of the people.
- (v) Ready to form alternative government in times of crisis.
- (vi) Greatly influences public opinion.

(vii) Removes the existing differences between the government and the masses, if any and prevents the passing of anti-people laws and policies.

(viii) Educates the public about the various issues affecting the nation by giving political education.

(ix) Makes the government alert, responsible and accountable to the people.

(x) Prevents the ruling government from becoming autocratic and dictatorial.

(xi) Helps the government in bringing out good laws and policies so as to speed up the government functioning or stand as an obstacle through constructive criticism to the government.

Q.4: Discuss the reasons for the birth of the regional parties.

Ans: One of the significant features that emerged in the recent past in the political system of our country is the emergence of regional parties. The first regional party formed in India was Dravida Munnetra Kajhagam(DMK) in Tamil Nadu in the 1960s. Since then India witnessed the emergence of several regional parties under the leadership of certain charismatic leaders. Some of the major regional parties that came up during this period include parties such as DMK and AIDMK (Tamil Nadu), Alkali Dal (Punjab), Telegu Desam (Andhra Pradesh), National Conference (Jammu and

Kashmir), Asom Gana Parishad (Assam), Shiv Sena (Maharashtra), Nagaland People's Conference (Nagaland), Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (Jharkhand), etc. The main reasons for the emergence of these regional parties include :

(i) The discriminatory views, attitude and policies of all India national parties.

(ii) Linguistic and religious diversity of the people residing in various parts of the country.

(iii) Feeling of insecurity among the minorities.

(iv) Union government attempt at over-centralizing power and partiality of the central government in allocating funds and resources between the centre and the states.

(v) Unsympathetic attitude of the centre towards the needs of the regions.

(vi) Weaknesses of the regional leaders belonging to the national parties or the union government, etc.

Q.5: Write about the necessity of political parties in a democratic state.

Ans: Democracy is defined as a 'government of the people, by the people and for the people'. It is a form of government where in the people participate in the administration of the country through their elected

representatives. It cannot happen without the help of political parties. In fact, political parties constitute one of the essential pillars of democracy. They form an indispensable element of democratic-set up. The necessity of political parties can be understood from the following aspects :

- (i) Helps the formation of the government after an election.
- (ii) Provides political education and awareness among the people.
- (iii) Enables people to take part in the administration of the country by acting as a link between the ruler and the public.
- (iv) The opposition parties keep a strong vigil on the functioning of the government.
- (v) Works for the welfare of the nation.
- (vi) Makes democracy functional and people-based.
- (vii) Political parties are needed for election which is an integral part of democracy.
- (viii) Prevents the ruling government from becoming autocratic and despotic.

Q.6: Mention the characteristics and the functions of the political party.

Ans: When a group of individuals inspired by a common ideology organise themselves and attempt to form a government, that organized group of individuals is known as a political party. Political parties are characterised by the following features :

(i) Organisation

(ii) Certain clear-cut principles and ideals

(iii) Aspires to capture power

(iv) Has a definite programme of action Functions : The political parties undertake the following functions in a democratic setup :

(i) Create political consciousness: Political parties educate the masses politically by their speeches, leaflets, demonstrations, hartals, debates, discussions, etc. They create political awareness and political consciousness among the masses.

(ii) Attempt to form government : In a democracy, a government cannot be formed without political parties. For this purpose, political parties contest elections to come to power. The party that gets the majority of the seats forms the government.

(iii) Mould public opinion: One of the major functions of the political parties is to help to form correct public opinion. Political parties through their party propaganda, leaflets, discussion and debates within and

outside the legislature influence the public mind. They enlighten the public about the various issues that affect their country. Their views and opinions influence the opinion of the general public.

(iv) Form the link between the executive and the legislature: In a country having a parliamentary form of government, political parties establish a link between the legislature and the executive. Generally, the executives are from the majority party in the legislature and this creates a close relationship between the two organs of the government.

(v) Help the election process : Nowadays, it is difficult to stand as independent candidates in an election without political support. Besides, electioneering is an expensive affair. Without a party's support, it is difficult to win an election as people in general vote for a particular party's candidates.

(vi) Run the government : One of the key functions of the political party is to form the government and run the administration of the country. Only elected representatives can take major decisions affecting the nation. Hence, political parties are a must in a modern democracy.

Q.7: Discuss the reasons for getting special significance by the system of the alliance government at present.

Ans: If we analyse the political history of the world and in particular India we come to notice that alliance or

coalition government had become a regular feature of the present-day political system of the world. Today many countries of the world including India, Pakistan, Israel, Sri Lanka, France, Italy, etc. have or have had coalition governments. In fact, this form of political system is becoming a notable feature of modern democracies due to the changing nature of democracy, attitudes and perceptions of people. Some of the main factors that have been responsible for the emergence of this new trend in the political system of the world are :

(i) Dissatisfaction with single-party domination and rule.

(ii) Emergence of many political parties around certain powerful leaders .

(iii) Emergence of new ambitious leaders.

(iv) Different regions, groups and communities want representation in the government.

(v) Many countries with single party domination have turned out to be autocratic and authoritarian.

(vi) People today have a wide spectrum of ideas as how the country should be managed.

(vii) People in general want a wider representation in the government so that their problems get adequate consideration.