

Political Parties

Case Study Based Questions

Source 1

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

Basically political parties fill political offices and exercise political power. Parties do so by performing a series of functions: Parties contest elections: In most democracies, elections are fought mainly among the candidates put up by political parties. Parties select their candidates in different ways. In some countries, such as the USA, members and supporters of a party choose its candidates. Now more and more countries are following this method. In other countries like India, top party leaders choose candidates for contesting elections. Parties put forward different policies and programmes and the voters choose from them. Each of us may have different opinions and views on what policies are suitable for the society. But no government can handle such a large variety of views. In a democracy, a large number of similar opinions have to be grouped together to provide a direction in which policies can be formulated. A party reduces a vast multitude of opinions into a few basic positions which it supports. A government is expected to base its policies on the line taken by the ruling party. 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. Parties form and run governments as we noted last year, the big policy decisions are taken by political executive that comes from the political parties. Parties recruit leaders, train them and then make them ministers to run the government in the way they want. Those parties that lose in the elections play the role of opposition to the parties in power, by voicing different views and criticising government for its failures or wrong policies. Opposition parties also mobilise opposition to the government. Parties shape public opinion. They raise and Parties provide people access to government machinery and welfare schemes implemented by governments.

Q1. Which method is more popular in USA to choose a candidate for a political party?

a. Members and supporter of a party choose candidates.

- b. Party leaders choose candidates.
- c. Members of important business organisations choose candidates.
- d. None of the above

Q2. In democracy how the policies can be formulated by the governments?

- a. From a large number of opinions, best are selected.
- b. Party reduces a large number of opinions into some basic principles.
- c. Prime Minister selects the policies.
- d. President suggests which are to be accepted as policies.

Q3. For making a law, members of the legislature go by the:

- a. direction of the party leadership
- b. their personal choice
- c. direction of the President
- d. Both a. and c.

Q4. Opposition parties can play their role:

- a. by voicing different views from the ruling party.
- b. by criticising governments for its failures or wrong policies.
- c. by mobilising opposition to the government.
- d. All of the above

Q5. Parties shape public opinion and launch movements for:

- a. recruitment of leaders
- b. resolution of problems faced by people
- c. making changes in policies of government
- d. providing direction to policy formulation

Q6. Two statements are given in the question below as

Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the appropriate option:

Assertion (A): Parties play a decisive role in making laws for a country.

Reason (R): Party members follow the direction of party leaders instead of their personal opinions.

- a. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).

- b. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- c. Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
- d. Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

Answers

- 1. (a)
- 2. (b)
- 3. (a)
- 4. (d)
- 5. (b)
- 6. (b)

Source 2

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:

Popular dissatisfaction and criticism has focused on four problem areas in the working of political parties. Political parties need to face and overcome these challenges in order to remain effective instruments of democracy. The first challenge is lack of internal democracy within parties. All over the world there is a tendency in political parties towards the concentration of power in one or few leaders at the top. Parties do not keep membership registers, do not hold organisational meetings, and do not conduct internal elections regularly. Ordinary members of the party do not get sufficient information on what happens inside the party. They do not have the means or the connections needed to influence the decisions. As a result the leaders assume greater power to make decisions in the name of the party. The second challenge of dynastic succession is related to the first one. Since most political parties do not practice open and transparent procedures for their functioning, there are very few ways for an ordinary worker to rise to the top in a party. Those who happen to be the leaders are in a position of unfair advantage to favour people close to them or even their family members. The third challenge is about the growing role of money and muscle power in parties, especially during elections. Since parties are focused only on winning elections, they tend to use short-cuts to win elections. The fourth challenge is that very often parties do not seem to offer a meaningful choice to the voters. In order to offer meaningful choice, parties must

be significantly different. In recent years there has been a decline in the ideological differences among parties in most parts of the world.

Q1. What should a political party do to remain an indispensable instrument of democracy?

Ans. A political party needs to face and overcome the challenges in order to remain an indispensable instrument of democracy.

Q2. Why is there lack of internal democracy in political party?

Ans. There is lack of internal democracy in political party due to:

- (i) concentration of power in one or few leaders.
- (ii) not holding organisational meetings and internal elections.
- (ii) not keeping membership register. (Any two)

Q3. Why do political parties not seem to offer a meaningful choice to the voters?

Ans. Political parties do not seem to offer a meaningful choice to the voters as there is a decline in the ideological differences among parties.

Source 3

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:

Democracies that follow a federal system all over the world tend to have two kinds of political parties: parties that are present in only one of the federal units and parties that are present in several or all units of the federation. This is the case in India as well. There are some countrywide parties, which are called 'national parties'. These parties have their units in various states. But by and large, all these units follow the same policies, programmes and strategy that is decided at the national level. Every party in the country has to register with the Election Commission. While the Commission treats all parties equally, it offers some special facilities to large and established parties. These parties are given a unique symbol only the official candidates of that party can use that election symbol. Parties that get this privilege and some other special facilities are 'recognised' by the Election Commission for this purpose. That is why, these parties are called 'recognised political parties'. The Election Commission has laid down detailed criteria of the proportion of votes and seats that a party must get in order to be a recognised party. 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.

Q1. Who issues symbols to the political parties?

Ans. The Election Commission of India issues symbols to the political parties.

Q2. What is the criteria laid down by the Election Commission to be recognised as a state party?

Ans. The criteria laid down by the Election Commission to be recognised as a state party are:

- (i) It must secure at least 6 per cent of the total votes in an election to the Legislative Assembly of a state.
- (ii) It should win at least two seats.

Q3. Which parties are called as recognised political parties?

Ans. The parties which are given a unique symbol i.e., only the official candidates of that party can use that election symbol are called recognised political parties.