

Long Answer Questions

Q. 1. Why does modern democracies could not exist without political parties?

Ans. (i) We can understand the necessity of political parties by imagining a situation without parties. Every candidate in the elections will be independent. So no one will be able to make any promises to the people about any major policy changes.

(ii) Elected representatives will be accountable to their constituencies for what they do in the locality. But no one will be responsible for how the country runs.

(iii) India also has non-party based elections to the panchayats in many states. Although parties do not contest formally, it is generally noticed that the village splits into more than one faction, each of which puts up a 'panel' of its candidates. This is exactly what the party does. That is why, we have political parties in almost all the countries in the world.

(iv) The rise of political parties is directly linked to the emergence of representative democracies. Large-scale societies need representative democracy. Large societies need some way to bring various representatives together so that a responsible government can be formed.

Thus we can say that parties are a necessary condition for a democracy.

Q. 2. Describe the various party systems existing in different countries.

Ans. Party systems:

(i) One-party system:

(a) In some countries, only one party is allowed to control and run the government. It is called one-party system.

(b) We cannot consider one-party system as a good option because this is not a democratic option.

(c) Any democratic system must allow at least two parties to compete in elections and provide a fair chance for the competing parties to come to power.

Example: Communist Party of China.

(ii) Two-party system:

(a) In some countries, power usually changes between two main parties.

(b) Here, only the two main parties have a serious chance of winning majority seats to form the government.

Example: USA and UK.

(iii) Multi-party system:

(a) If several parties compete for power and more than two parties have a reasonable chance of coming to power, either on their own or in alliance with others, it is called a multi-party system.

(b) The multi-party system often appears very messy and leads to political instability.

(c) At the same time, this system allows a variety of interests and opinions to enjoy political representation.

Example: India.

Major Coalitions—NDA, UPA, Left Front.

Q. 3. Describe the role of Political Parties in Indian Democracy. [CBSE (Comptt) 2017]

Ans. Role of Political Parties:

(i) The Political party or parties with majority seats form and run the government.

(ii) They contest elections and put forward different policies and programmes among which the voters opt.

(iii) They play a decisive role in law making for the country.

(iv) They also play an important role as opposition parties.

(v) They play an important role in shaping public opinion.

(vi) They provide people access to government machinery and welfare schemes.

Q. 4. What are recognised political parties?

Ans. (i) National parties are some countrywide parties and almost follow similar policies and programmes at the national level.

(ii) Every party in the country has to register with the Election Commission. The Commission offers some special facilities to the large and established parties. These parties are given a unique symbol—only the official candidates of that party can use that election symbol.

(iii) 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’.

(iv) 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.

Q. 5. What are the main policies of Indian National Congress?

Ans. (i) It was founded in 1885 and played a dominant role in Indian politics at the national and state level for several decades after India's independence.

(ii) A centrist party in its ideology, it favours secularism and welfare of weaker sections and minorities. It supports new economic reforms but with a human face.

(iii) It emerged as the largest party with 145 members in the Lok Sabha elections held in 2004. It led the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition government at the Centre.

(iv) It lost elections in 2014 and secured 44 seats. Currently, it is the principal opposition party in Lok Sabha.

Q. 6. What are the main features of BJP manifesto?

Ans. (i) It was founded in 1980 by reviving Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

(ii) It wants to build a strong and modern India by drawing inspiration from India's ancient culture and values. Cultural nationalism is an important element of its manifesto.

(iii) It wants full territorial and political integration of Jammu & Kashmir with India.

(iv) It also promotes a Uniform Civil Code for all people living in the country, irrespective of religion and ban on religious conversions.

Q. 7. Who formed BSP? What are its main policies?

Ans. BSP was formed in 1984 under the leadership of Shri Kanshi Ram.

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 Sahu Maharaj, Mahatma Phule, Periyar, Ramaswami Naiker and Babasaheb Ambedkar.

It stands for the cause of securing the interests and welfare of the dalits and oppressed people.

It has its main base in UP and substantial presence in neighbouring states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Punjab.

It formed government in UP several times by taking the support of different parties at different times.

Q. 8. What do you know about Communist Party of India (CPI)?

Ans. It was formed in 1925 and believes in Marxism, Leninism, secularism and democracy.

It opposed the forces of secessionism and communalism.

It accepts parliamentary democracy as a means of promoting the interests of working class, farmers and the poor.

It became independent after the split in the party in 1964 that led to the formation of CPI(M).

It has significant presence in Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

It advocates the coming together of all Left Front. Currently, it supports UPA government from outside.

Q. 9. Define Political Party. Describe any four challenges before the political parties in India. [CBSE (Comptt) 2017]

Ans. Definition of Political parties in India:

A political party is a group of people to contest election and hold power in the government.

Challenges before political parties in India:

(i) Lack of internal democracy.

(ii) Lack of transparency.

(iii) Dynastic succession

(iv) Money and muscle power

(v) Lack of meaningful choice.

Q. 10. What are the chief characteristics of Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M)?

Ans. It was founded in 1964 and believes in Marxism and Leninism.

It supports socialism, secularism and democracy and opposes imperialism and communalism.

It accepts democratic elections as a useful and helpful means for securing the objective of socio-economic justice in India.

Enjoys strong support in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, especially among the poor factory workers, farmers, agricultural labourers and intelligentsia.

Always critical of the new economic policies that allow free flow of foreign capital and goods into the country.

It had been in power in West Bengal without a break for 30 years and currently supports the UPA government from outside, without joining the government.

Q. 11. How was Nationalist Congress Party formed? What are its policies?

Ans. It was formed in 1999 following a split in the Congress Party.

It supports democracy, Gandhian secularism, equality, social justice and federalism.

It wants that high offices in government should be confined to natural born citizens of the country.

A major party in Maharashtra and has a significant presence in Meghalaya, Manipur and Assam.

It's a coalition partner in Maharashtra government with Congress.

Since 2004, it is also a member of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government.

Q. 12. What is the status of regional parties in India?

Ans. Some of the regional parties have succeeded only in some states. Parties like the Samajwadi Party, Samata Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal have national level political organisation with units in several states. Over the years, the number and strength of these parties have expanded. No single national party is able to secure majority on its own in Lok Sabha. As a result, the national parties are compelled to form alliances with state parties. Since 1996, nearly every one of the state parties got an opportunity to be a part of one or the other national level coalition government. This has contributed to the strengthening of federalism and democracy in our country.

Q. 13. Elucidate some of the recent efforts taken in our country to reform political parties and its leaders. [CBSE Delhi 2017, CBSE Sample Paper 2016]

OR

Examine any two institutional amendments made by different institutions to reform political parties and their leaders. [CBSE (F) 2016]

Ans. The Constitution was amended to prevent elected MLAs and MPs from changing parties. This was done because many elected representatives were indulging in DEFECTION in order to become ministers or for cash rewards. Now, if any MLA or MP changes parties, he or she will lose the seat in the legislature.

The Supreme Court passed an order to reduce the influence of money and criminals. Now, it is mandatory for every candidate who contests elections to file an AFFIDAVIT giving details of his property and criminal cases pending against him. The new system has made a lot of information available to the public. But there is no system of check if the information given by the candidates is true.

The Election Commission passed an order making it necessary for political parties to hold their organisational elections and file their income tax returns. The parties have started doing so but sometimes it is mere formality. It is not clear if this step has led to greater internal democracy in political parties.

Q. 14. “All over the world, people express their dissatisfaction with the failure of political parties to perform their functions well.” Analyse the statement with arguments. [CBSE Delhi 2016]

Ans. Popular dissatisfaction and criticism: It has focused on four areas in the working of political parties, need to face and overcome these challenges in order to remain effective instruments of democracy. Lack of internal democracy within parties. Dynastic succession. Growing role of money and muscle power in parties. There is not a meaningful choice to the voters.