**POLITICAL PARTIES**

What is meant by a political party?   
Answer:  
Political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and to hold power in the government. They agree on some policies to promote collective good. They seek to implement those policies by winning popular support through elections. Thus political parties tend to fill political offices and exercise political power.

What is the guiding philosophy of Bhartiya Janata Party? (2015 OD)  
Answer:  
The source of inspiration of Bharatiya Janata Party is the ancient Indian culture and values. Cultural nationalism (Hindutva) is an important element in its conception of Indian nationhood and politics.

Question   
Name any one political party that has national level political organisation but not recognised as a national political party.   
Answer:  
State parties like the Samajwadi Party, Samata Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal have national level political organisations with units in several states but are not recognised as national parties.

Question  
Why did India adopt multi-party system? Give reasons.   
Answer:  
India adopted multi-party system because:

* India is a large country and has social and geographical diversities.
* It is easy to absorb different diversities in a multi-party system.

Question  
Why do political parties involve partisanship?   
Answer:  
Partisanship is marked by a tendency to take a side and inability to take a balanced view on an issue. Parties reflect fundamental political divisions in a society. Parties are a part of the society and they involve partisanship.

Question  
Mention the ideology of Indian National Congress.  
Answer:  
Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian National Congress sought to build a modern secular democratic republic in India. The party propagates secularism and welfare of the weaker sections and minorities of society. It supports new economic reforms but with a human face.

Short Answer Questions (SA) 3 Marks

Question 20.  
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 (BJP) founded in 1980 draws inspiration from India’s ancient culture and values.  
Features:

1. Cultural Nationalism (Hindutva) is an important element in its conception of Indian nationhood and politics.
2. Wants full territorial and political integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India.
3. A uniform civil code for all people living in the country irrespective of religion and ban on religious conversions.
4. Earlier limited to north and west and to urban areas, the party expanded support in the south, east, the north-east and rural areas.

Question  
“No party system is ideal for all countries and in all situations.” Justify the statement with five arguments.  
Answer:  
Parties are a necessary condition for a democracy. The rise of political parties is directly linked to the emergence of representative democracies. Party system is not something any country can choose. It evolves depending on the nature of society, its social and regional divisions, its history of politics and system of elections.

Each country develops a party system that is conditioned by its special circumstances.

For example, India has evolved a multi-party system, because of its social and geographical diversity which cannot be easily absorbed by two or three parties.  
Political parties make policies to promote collective good and there can be different views on what is good for all. Therefore no system is ideal for all countries and situations.

Question   
Describe the three components of a political party.   
Answer:  
Components of a political party are:

1. The leaders,
2. active members and
3. the followers.
   * The leaders are recruited and trained by parties. They are made ministers to run the government. The big policy decisions are taken by the political executives that come from the political parties.
   * Parties have lakhs of members and activists spread over the country. Many of the pressure groups are the extensions of political parties among different sections of society. But since most of the members belong to a party, they go by the direction of the party leadership, irrespective of their personal opinion.
   * The followers are the ordinary citizens, who believe in the policies of their respective party and give popular support through elections. Often the opinion of the followers crystallise on the lines parties take.

Question   
What is a multi-party system? Why has India adopted a multi-party system? Explain.   
Or  
How has multi-party system strengthened democracy in India?  
Answer:  
Multi-party system. In this system, the government is formed by various parties coming together in a coalition. When several parties in a multi-party system join hands for the purpose of contesting elections and winning power, it is called an alliance or a front.

For example, in India there were three major alliances in 2004 parliamentary elections—the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and the Left Front. This system on one hand leads to political instability but at the same time, allows for a variety of interests and opinions to enjoy political representation.

Each country develops a party system that is suitable for its special circumstances. India has evolved as a multi-party system because its social and geographical diversity cannot be absorbed by two or three parties. Thus, such representation strengthens democracy. Multi-party system facilitates representation of regional and geographical diversities. In India, several regional parties are in power at the State level such as the DMK in Tamil Nadu, Akali Dal in Punjab the BSP in Uttar Pradesh.

Question  
“Lack of internal democracy within parties is the major challenge to political parties all over the world”. Analyse the statement.  
Answer:

1. Most political parties do not practise open and transparent procedures for their functioning like maintaining membership registers, holding organisational meetings or conducting internal elections regularly. Thus, ordinary members of the party do not get sufficient information on the happenings in the party and have no means to influence the decisions.
2. Also, there are very few chances for an ordinary worker to rise to the top in a party. Since one or, at the most, a few leaders exercise paramount power in the party, those who disagree with the leadership, find it difficult to continue in the party.
3. Those who happen to be the leaders are in a position to take undue advantage and favour people close to them or even their family members. And, in many parties, the top positions are invariably controlled by members of one family which is bad for democracy.

Question  
“Dynastic succession is one of the most serious challenges before the political parties.” Analyse the statement.   
Answer:  
Most political parties do not practise open and transparent procedures for their functioning. So 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 as they favour people close to them or even their family members. In many parties in India, we see a trend of dynastic succession. The top positions are always controlled by members of a particular family, which is unfair to other members of the party, and bad for democracy. This is so because people who do not have adequate experience or popular support come to occupy positions of power.

More than loyalty to party principles and policies, personal loyalty to the leader becomes more important. This tendency is seen all over the world, even in older democracies.

Question  
What is meant by a ‘national political party’? State the conditions required to be a national political party.   
Answer:  
National political parties have their units in various states. By and large all these units follow the same policies, programmes and strategy that is decided at the national level.  
Conditions required to be a national political party:

* A party that secures at least 6% of the total votes in general elections of Lok Sabha or assembly elections in four states.
* A party that wins at least 4 seats in the Lok Sabha.

Question   
What is meant by regional political party? State the conditions required to be recognised as a ‘regional political party’.   
Answer:  
A regional party is a party that is present in only some states. Regional parties or State parties need not be regional in their ideology. They have state identity as they are present only in some states. Some of these parties are all India parties that happen to have succeeded only in states. Example, Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janta Dal.  
Conditions required for a party to be recognized as a regional political party:

* A party that secures atleast six percent of the total votes in an election to the legislative assembly of a state.
* Wins atleast two seats in the legislative assembly.

Question   
“Nearly every one of the state parties wants to get an opportunity to be a part of one or the other national level coalition.” Support the statement with arguments.   
Answer:  
The state parties also referred to as regional parties are not necessarily regional in ideology. Some of these parties are all India parties that happen to have succeeded only in some states. Over the last three decades, the number and strength of these parties has expanded. Before the general elections one national party was able to secure on its own a majority in the Lok Sabha.

As a result, the national parties were 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 contributed to the strengthening of federalism and democracy. Example of state parties having national level political organisation with units in several states are Samajwadi Party (SP), Rashtriya Janata Dal, Samata Party.

Question.  
Analyse the three components of a political party.  
Answer:  
The three components of a political party are as follows:

* The leaders. A political party consists of leaders, who contest elections and if they win the elections, they perform the administrative jobs.
* The active members. They are the ones who work actively for the party. They are the assistants of the leaders and implement the plans and ideologies of the political party.
* The followers. They are the ardent followers of the parties and their leaders and support them in the elections.

Long Answer Questions (LA)

Question  
Explain any five suggestions to reform political parties in India.  
Or  
Suggest and explain any five effective measures to reform political parties.   
Answer:  
Five suggestions made to reform the political parties:

1. Law to regulate the internal affairs of political parties like maintaining a register of its members, to follow its own constitution, to have independent authority, to act as judge in case of party dispute, to hold open elections to the highest post.
2. It should be mandatory for political parties to give one-third tickets to women candidates. Also there should be quota for women on the decision-making bodies of the party.
3. There should be state funding of elections. The government should give money to parties to support their election expenses in kind (petrol, paper, telephone, etc.) or in cash on the basis of votes secured by the party in the previous election.
4. The candidate should be educated, so that he can solve and understand people’s problems. His previous record should be cleared. He should be honest and there should be no criminal case against him.
5. Citizens can reform politics if they take part directly and join political parties. People can put pressure on political parties through petitions, publicity in media, agitations etc.

Question  
Explain the growing role of money and muscle power in political parties.   
Or  
How do money and muscle power play an important role in elections?  
Answer:  
Political parties need to face and overcome the growing challenge of Money and Muscle power during elections in order to remain effective instruments of democracy.

Since parties are focussed only on winning elections, they tend to use shortcuts to win elections, for example, like booth-rigging, distribution of food, money, alcohol, etc. to the poor voters to get their votes. Political parties tend to nominate those candidates who have or can raise lots of money. Rich people and companies who give funds to the parties tend to have influence on the policies and decisions of the party. These days, parties are supporting criminals who can win elections. This is a major cause of concern to the democrats all over the world who are worried about the increasing role of rich people and big companies in democratic politics.

Question  
Why do we need political parties? Explain.   
Or  
Describe any five major functions performed by political parties.   
Answer:  
To fill political offices and exercise political power, political parties are needed to perform a series of functions, which are the following:

1. Parties contest elections. Elections are fought mainly among candidates put up by political parties.  
   In India, top party leaders choose candidates for contesting elections.
2. Parties put forward different policies and programmes. Political parties in a democracy group together similar opinions, to provide a direction in which government policies can be formulated,
3. Parties make laws for a country. Laws are debated and passed in the legislature.
4. Parties that lose elections play the role of the opposition. Opposition parties voice their views by criticizing government for its failure or wrong policies.
5. Parties shape public opinion. They raise and highlight issues and resolve people’s problems. Many pressure groups are the extensions of political parties.
6. Parties provide people access to government machinery and welfare schemes. For an ordinary citizen it is easy to approach a local party leader than a government officer.

Question   
Examine the role of opposition parties in a Democracy.   
Answer:  
Opposition parties play an important role in democracies. They play both positive and negative role. Positive role,

1. They ensures political party in power does not misuse or abuse its power;
2. They expose the weaknesses of the ruling party;
3. They also keep a close vigil on the bills and expenditure of the government.

Negative role.

* They target the government and aim at dislodging and discrediting the government for all the ills and the troubles the people face;
* Through stalling the proceedings of the parliament, dhamas and gheravs, it curtails the progress of the country.  
  The opposition’s work is not to abstract the functioning of the administration but keep a close watch on the working of the party in power so that democracy becomes meaningful.

Question  
“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 this statement.   
Answer:  
We can understand the necessity of political parties by imagining a situation without parties. Every candidate in the election will be independent. Therefore, no major policy changes will be made. Elected representatives will be accountable to their constituency but no one will be responsible for the smooth running of the country. As societies become large and complex, they need an agency to gather views on various issues and to present them to the government. There is a need to bring various representatives together so that a responsible government can be formed.

A mechanism is needed to support or restrain the government to make policies, justify or oppose them. Political parties fulfil the needs of a representative government and are thus a necessary condition for a democracy.

Question   
“All over the world, people express their dissatisfaction with the failure of political parties to perform their functions well.” Analyse the statement with arguments.   
Or, Which three challenges do you feel are being faced by political parties in India? Give your opinion.   
Or, Identify and explain challenges which political parties need to face and over come in order to remain affective instruments of democracy.   
Answer:  
Since parties are the most visible face in a democracy, people blame them for whatever is wrong with the working of democracy.  
There are four major areas where the working of political parties faces challenge:  
(i) Lack of internal democracy. There is concentration of power in one or a few leaders at the top. Parties do not keep membership registers, do not hold organisational meetings and do not conduct internal elections regularly. More than loyalty to party principles and policies, it is personal loyalty which becomes more important. The leaders assume greater power to make decisions in the name of the party. Since one or few leaders exercise paramount power in the party, those who disagree with leadership find it difficult to continue in the party.

(ii) Dynastic succession. In many parties, top positions are always held by members of one family. Most political parties do not practice transparent and open procedures for their functioning and it is very difficult for an ordinary worker to rise to the top. This is bad for democracy, since people who do not have adequate experience or popular support come to occupy positions of power.

(iii) Money and muscle power. Since parties are focussed only on winning elections, they tend to use short-cuts to win elections. They nominate candidates who have or can raise money and thus are able to have influence on the policies and decisions of the party.

(iv) No meaningful choice. There has been a decline in the ideological differences among parties. They agree more on fundamental aspects, but differ only in details, on how policies are to be framed and implemented. Sometimes people cannot even elect different leaders as the same set of leaders keep shifting from one party to another.

Question   
“Political parties are a necessary condition for a democracy”. Analyse the statement with examples.  
Answer:  
“Political parties are a necessary condition for a democracy” in the following ways:

1. Without political parties democracies cannot exist. If we do not have political parties, every candidate in elections will be independent.
2. No one will be able to make any promises to the people about any major policy changes.
3. The government may be formed but its utility will remain uncertain.
4. Elected representatives will be accountable to their constituency, for what they do in their locality but no one will be responsible for how the country will run.
5. As societies become large and complex they also needed some agencies to gather different views on various issues and to present these to the government, that’s why political parties are needed.

Question   
Describe any five efforts made to reform political parties in India.  
Answer:  
Five efforts made to reform the political parties:

1. Law to regulate the internal affairs of political parties like maintaining a register of its members, to follow its own constitution, to have independent authority, to act as judge in case of party dispute, to hold open elections to the highest post.
2. It should be mandatory for political parties to give one-third tickets to women candidates. Also there should be quota for women on the decision-making bodies of the party.
3. There should be state funding of elections. The government should give money to parties to support their election expenses in kind (petrol, paper, telephone, etc.) or in cash on the basis of votes secured by the party in the previous election.
4. The candidate should be educated, so that he can solve and understand people’s problems. His previous record should be cleared. He should be honest and there should be no criminal case against him.
5. Citizens can reform politics if they take part directly and join political parties. People can put pressure on political parties through petitions, publicity in media, agitations etc.

 Question 1.  
Which of these parties has national level political organisations?  
(a) Samajwadi Party  
(b) Telugu Desam Party  
(c) Rashtriya Janta Dal  
(d) None of the above

Answer: (d) None of the above

Question 2.  
When and under whose leadership was Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) formed?  
(a) 1982, Mayawati  
(b) 1984, Kanshi Ram  
(c) 1985, Mulayam Singh Yadav  
(d) 1986, Bhajanlal

Answer: (b) 1984, Kanshi Ram

Question 3.  
Which one of the following is a better way of carrying out political reforms in a democratic country?  
(a) The legal changes  
(b) The constitutional changes  
(c) The empowerment of people  
(d) The legislation for reforms

Answer: (c) The empowerment of people

Question 4.  
From the ideas and teaching of which of these leaders does BSP drawinspiration?  
(a) Sahu Maharaj  
(b) Mahatma Phule and Ramaswami Naicker  
(c) Babasaheb Ambedkar  
(d) All the above

Answer: (d) All the above

Question 5.  
Which one of the following is true regarding a coalition government?  
(a) Only two parties form an alliance and contest elections.  
(b) Several parties compete for power.  
(c) The government is formed by two or more parties coming together.  
(d) Several parties form an alliance and compete for power.

Answer: (c) The government is formed by two or more parties coming together.

Question 6.  
Which one of the following is not a component of a political party?  
(a) The leaders  
(b) The followers  
(c) The active members  
(d) Women

Answer: (d) Women

Question 7.  
The condition for a political party to be recognized as a national party is:  
(a) It must secure at least 6 percent of total votes in Lok Sabha elections or Assembly elections in four states.  
(b) It must win at least 4 seats in the Lok Sabha  
(c) Both of these  
(d) None of these

Answer: (c) Both of these

Question 8.  
Which one of the following countries has multi-party system?  
(a) India  
(b) China  
(c) The United States of America  
(d) The United Kingdom

Answer: (a) India

Question 9.  
An alliance is formed when :  
(a) two parties together form the government  
(b) the state parties and national parties together form the government  
(c) some parties join for the purpose of contesting elections and winning power in hands  
(d) left and right parties join hands to form the government.

Answer: (c) some parties join for the purpose of contesting elections and winning power in hands

Question 10.  
Which one of the following is the guiding philosophy of the Bharatiya Janata Party?  
(a) Bahujan Samaj  
(b) Revolutionary democracy  
(c) Cultural nationalism  
(d) Modernity

Answer: (c) Cultural nationalism

Question 11.  
Which one of the following is not a national political party?  
(a) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).  
(b) Communist Party of India (CPI).  
(c) Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).  
(d) Samajwadi Party (SP).

Answer: (d) Samajwadi Party (SP).

Question 12.  
Who is the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party?  
(a) Kansi Ram  
(b) Mayawati  
(c) Bal Thakeray  
(d) Jayalalita

Answer: (a) Kansi Ra

Question 13.  
Which of the following countries has a single-party system?  
(a) Pakistan  
(b) Nepal  
(c) China  
(d) Bangladesh

Answer: (c) China

Question 14.  
What is the guiding philosophy of the Bharatiya Janata Party?  
(a) Wants to build a strong and modern India  
(b) Uniform Civil Code  
(c) Cultural nationalism  
(d) All the above

Answer: (d) All the above

Question 15.  
A country which has a democratic form of government since its independence :  
(a) Pakistan  
(b) India  
(c) Bhutan  
(d) Nepal

Answer: (b) India

Question 16.  
Which one of the following political parties exposed secularism and welfare of weaker sections and minorities?  
(a) Communist Party of India (Marxist)  
(b) Bahujan Samaj Party  
(c) Bharatiya Janata Party  
(d) Indian National Congress

Answer: (b) Bahujan Samaj Party

Question 17.  
Which one of the following is not a political party?  
(a) BJP  
(b) INC  
(c) BSP  
(d) BAMCEF

Answer: (d) BAMCEF

Question 18.  
The Bahujan Samaj Party stands for the cause of:  
(a) securing the interest of the oppressed people.  
(b) securing the interest of the elite class.  
(c) securing the interest of the capitalist class  
(d) securing the interest of the educated classes.

Answer: (a) securing the interest of the oppressed people

Question 19.  
The BJP formed the government in 1998 as the leader of an alliance. Name the alliance.  
(a) National Democratic Alliance  
(b) United Progressive Alliance  
(c) National Progressive Alliance  
(d) United Democratic Alliance

Answer: (a) National Democratic Alliance

Question 20.  
In which state does NCP have a major support?  
(a) Maharashtra  
(b) Meghalaya  
(c) Manipur  
(d) Assam

Answer: (a) Maharashtra

Question 21.  
Which of these is true regarding the party system of any country?  
(a) The Constitution lays down party system  
(b) No country can choose its party system  
(c) People choose their party system  
(d) Important leaders choose their party system

Answer: (b) No country can choose its party system

Question 22.  
In which of these categories can the Indian National Congress be put?  
(a) Centrist party  
(b) Rightist party  
(c) Leftist party  
(d) None of these

Answer: (a) Centrist party

Question 23.  
Which of these is not a good option for a democratic state?  
(a) One-party system  
(b) Two-party system  
(c) Multi-party system  
(d) None of the above

Answer: (a) One-party system

Question 24.  
When was the BJP founded?  
(a) 1960  
(b) 1970  
(c) 1980  
(d) 1990

Answer: (c) 1980

Question 25.  
How many recognised national parties were there in 2006?  
(a) 5  
(b) 6  
(c) 7  
(d) 8

Answer: (b) 6

Question 26.  
Which of the following countries is the example of two-party system?  
(a) USA  
(b) UK  
(c) India  
(d) Both (a) and (b)

Answer: (d) Both (a) and (b)

Question 27.  
In which of these categories can the Indian National Congress be put?  
(a) Centrist party  
(b) Rightist party  
(c) Leftist party  
(d) None of these

Answer: (a) Centrist party

Question 28.  
Which of these alliances were there in 2004 parliamentary elections in India?  
(a) National Democratic Alliance  
(b) The United Progressive Alliance  
(c) Left Front  
(d) All the above

Answer: (d) All the above

Question 29.  
Which of these countries has a one- party system?  
(a) India  
(b) China  
(c) USA  
(d) Uk

Answer: (b) China

Question 30.  
Those parties which are given the special privilege of ‘election symbol’ and other facilities are said to be :  
(a) ‘identified’ by the Election Commission  
(b) ‘recognised’ by the Election Commission  
(c) ‘patronised’ by the Election Commission  
(d) ‘attached’ by the Election Commission

Answer: (b) ‘recognised’ by the Election Commission

Question 31.  
Which of these statements is incorrect about CPI (M)?  
(a) Supports socialism, secularism and democracy  
(b) Opposes imperialism and communalism  
(c) Wants to secure socio-economic justice in India  
(d) None of the above

Answer: (d) None of the above

Question 32.  
Who chooses the candidates for contesting elections in India?  
(a) Members and supporters of the party  
(b) Top party leadership  
(c) The existing government  
(d) None of these

Answer: (b) Top party leadership

Question 33.  
Which of these statements is incorrect?  
(a) Parties reflect fundamental political unity in a society  
(b) Parties try to persuade people why their policies are better than others  
(c) They seek to implement these policies by winning popular support through elections  
(d) All the above

Answer: (d) All the above

Question 34.  
Which of these statements is correct?  
(a) Every party in the country has to register with the Election Commission  
(b) The Commission treats all the parties equally  
(c) It offers some special facilities to large and established parties  
(d) All the above

Answer: (d) All the above

Question 35.  
Parties put forward their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and the voters choose from them.  
(a) policies, programmes  
(b) rules, regulations  
(c) views, opinions  
(d) all the above

Answer: (a) policies, programmes

Question 36.  
In which of these states does the CPI (M) enjoy strong support?  
(a) Uttar Pradesh  
(b) Andhra Pradesh  
(c) West Bengal  
(d) Chhattisgarh

Answer: (c) West Bengal