**Political Parties**

1. **What is meant by a political party?**

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.

1. **Describe the three components of a political party.**   
   Components of a political party are:
2. The leaders,
3. active members and
4. 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.
5. **Why do political parties involve partisanship?**

Parties reflect fundamental political divisions in society. Parties are about a part of the society and thus involve PARTISANSHIP. Thus, a party is known by which part it stands for, which policies it supports and whose interests it upholds.

1. **How do political parties shape public opinion? Explain with three examples.**

Political parties shape public opinion in the following ways.

 They highlight and raise issues.

 Parties have lakhs of members spread all over the country. Often pressure groups are an extension of political parties, among different sections of the society. They help in taking up issues and forming public opinion.

 Sometimes, parties launch movements for solving the problems faced by people. Often the public opinion develops on the same lines that the parties take

1. **Name the national political party which gets inspiration from India’s ancient culture and values. Mention four features of that party.**

Bharatiya Janata Party gets its inspiration from India’s ancient culture and values. Four features of Bharatiya Janata Party are as follows.

 It wants full territorial and political integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India.

 It wants a uniform civil code for all people living in the country, irrespective of religion.

 It wants a ban on religious conversions.

 Hindutva or cultural nationalism is an important element in its conception of politics.

1. **Name the national centrist party (neither rightist nor leftist) in its ideological orientation, the party espouses secularism and welfare of weaker sections and minorities. Mention four features of that party.**
   * Popularly known as the Congress Party.
   * The Indian National Congress sought to build a modem 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
   * One of the oldest parties of the world.
2. **National Congress Party**

Espouses democracy, Gandhian secularism, equity, social justice and federalism.

 It wants high offices in the government to be confined to natural-born citizens of the country.

 It stands for social justice, federalism and equity.

 It is a major party in Maharashtra with a significant presence in Meghalaya, Manipur and Assam.

 In Maharashtra, it is a coalition partner in alliance with the Congress.

 It is a member of the United Progressive Alliance since 2004.

1. **Name the national political party which draws inspiration from the ideas and teachings of Sahu Maharaj. Mention any four features of that party.**

The national political party which draws inspiration from the ideas and teachings of Sahu Maharaj is Bahujan Samaj Party.Four features of this party are as follows.

 It wants to secure the interest and welfare of the dalits and oppressed classes.

 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 Mahatma Phule, Periyar, Ramaswami Naicker and Dr Ambedkar.

 Its main base is in Uttar Pradesh

1. **State the conditions laid down by the Election Commission to recognise a state party and a national 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

1. **Name the six national political parties of India in chronological order of their establishment**

The following are the six national political parties of India in chronological order.

 Indian National Congress (1885) .

 Communist Party of India (1925)

 Communist Party of India-Marxist (1964)

 Bhartiya Janata Party (1980)

 Bahujan Samaj Party (1984)

 National Congress Party (1999)

1. **Name any three national political parties along with their symbols.**

 Indian National Congress—symbol: hand, palm facing the people

 Bhartiya Janata Party—symbol: a lotus

 Bahujan Samaj Party—symbol: an elephant

1. **Name any six regional political parties of the four southern states of India.**

 The four southern states with regional political parties are as follows.

 Kerala: Indian Federal Democratic Party and Kerala Congress (Mani)

 Tamil Nadu: All India Anna DMK and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

 Andhra Pradesh: Telugu Desam Party

 Karnataka: Janata Dal (Secular)

1. **Name the regional political parties predominant in Punjab, Haryana and Uttarakhand respectively with their symbols**

The regional political parties predominant in:

 Punjab—Shiromani Akali Dal, symbol: scales

 Haryana—Indian National Lok Dal, symbol: a pair of spectacles

 Uttarakhand—Uttarakhand Kranti Dal, symbol: chair

1. **Name the regional political parties predominant in Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Orissa, respectively with their symbols.**

 The regional political parties predominant in:

 Jharkhand—Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, symbol: bow and arrow

 Maharashtra—Shiv Sena, symbol: bow and arrow

 Orissa—Biju Janata Dal, symbol: conch

1. **Name the regional political parties predominant in Sikkim, Nagaland and Manipur,**

**respectively with their symbols.**

 The regional political parties predominant in:

 Sikkim—Sikkim Democratic Front, symbol: an umbrella

 Nagaland—Nagaland People’s Front, symbol: a cock

 Manipur—Manipur People’s Party, symbol: a cycle

1. **What is a multiparty system? Why has India adopted a multiparty system? Explain**

A multiparty system is a political system in which several parties contest the election to hold political power. In this system, there is a chance of two or more parties coming to power. This system also advocates coalition government and alliance politics. India adopted a multiparty system because of the following reasons.

 India is blessed with tremendous social and geographical diversity. This diversity cannot be easily accommodated in one or two political parties.

 Because of the multiparty system, a variety of interests and opinions enjoy political representation

1. **“No party system is ideal for all countries and in all situations.” Justify the statement with** five arguments.

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

1. **‘Political parties are a necessary condition for a democracy.’ Analyse the statement with examples.**

In a democratic set-up, political parties are required because without political parties:

 every candidate in the elections will be independent. No promises could be made and the utility of the government formed will remain uncertain.

 no one will be responsible for running the country. Elected representatives

will only be accountable to their constituency

 there will be no agency to gather and present different views on various issues to the Government.

 no one will be responsible for bringing various representatives together so as to form a responsible government.

 there will be no mechanism to support the government, make policies and justify or oppose them.

1. **Suggest and explain any five measures to reform political parties.**

The following reforms could be suggested in order to strengthen parties so that they perform their functions well.

 Regulation of party’s internal affairs: A law should be made to regulate the internal affairs of political parties. It should be made compulsory for political parties to maintain a register of their members, to follow their own constitution, to have an independent authority, etc.

 State funding: There should be state funding of elections. The government should give money to parties to support their election expenses to avoid corruption.

 Pressure of public opinion: Political parties can be reformed if people put pressure on them. This can be done through petitions, propaganda and agitations. Pressure groups and media play an important role in this.

Ban on political parties based on religion and caste: The Election Commission should ban the political parties which are formed on the basis of religion and caste.

 Ensure women participation: It should be made mandatory for all political parties to allot one third of the tickets to women to ensure their decisive voice in decision making.

If the above mentioned suggestions are taken into consideration, it can be ensured that these could lead to some improvement in the working of the political parties

1. **Examine any two institutional amendments made by different institutions to reform political parties and their leaders.**

The following are the two institutional amendments made by different institutions to reform political parties and their leaders.

 Anti-defection law: The anti-defection law was passed to prevent elected MLAs and MPs from changing their parties. It was seen that many MLAs and MPs were changing their parties for personal gains. Now, according to the law, if any MLA or MP changes his/her party, his/her seat in the legislature will be lost. Also, MLAs and MPs have to accept whatever the party leaders decide.

 Affidavit: To reduce the influence of money and muscle power (criminals), an order has been passed by the Supreme Court making it mandatory for every candidate contesting election to file an affidavit giving details of his/her property and criminal records. This system has helped in making a lot of information available to the public. But, we cannot say that this amendment has been successful as it cannot be said that information provided by the candidates is true.

 Mandatory organisational meeting and filing of ITR: An order has been passed by the Election Commission making it mandatory for political parties to hold their organisational elections and file their income tax returns. The parties have started doing this, but sometimes it is only a formality. It is not clear if this step has brought some reform or not

1. **Describe any five major functions of political parties**

The following are the various functions political parties perform in a democracy.

 Contest elections: Parties contest elections. In countries like India, top party leaders choose candidates for contesting elections.

 Put forward policies and programmes: Parties put forward different policies and programmes and voters choose from them. Political parties accommodate different views and opinions.

 Play an important role in making laws: Political 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.

 Form and run government: To run the government, political parties prepare a council of ministers by recruiting and training the leaders.

 Provide access to government machinery and welfare schemes: Political parties provide people access to government machinery and welfare schemes implemented by governments. For an ordinary citizen, it is easy to approach a local party leader than a government officer.

 Play the role of position: The party which loses election plays the role of opposition. Opposition party tries to put checks on the ruling party by constantly criticizing its policies.

 Shape public opinion: One of the most important functions of political parties is that they shape public opinion on relevant issues for the proper functioning of the government and to deepen the concept of democracy

1. **How is dynastic succession a major challenge for political parties in India? Explain.**

The challenge of dynastic succession is undoubtedly a major challenge for political parties in India. The following points explain this.

 Usually, an ordinary worker does not rise to the top positions in a party because the

functioning of most political parties is not transparent.

 Most of the top leaders favour and choose members of their families. This is unfair to other members.

 The top positions are always controlled by members of one family. This is unhealthy for democracy.

 People who are at top levels usually do no have adequate experience, education or popular support.

 The challenge of dynastic succession is related to the challenge of lack of internal democracy. Non-deserving leaders exercise paramount power and make decisions. Those who disagree with the leadership find it difficult to continue in the party

1. **How do state or regional political parties contribute in strengthening federalism and democracy in India? Explain with examples.**

State and regional political parties contribute in strengthening federalism and democracy in India in the following ways.

 They provide a variety of choice to people as each of them has different agendas and focus on different issues.

 They provide a platform for different pressure and social groups, and communities to put forward their demands.

 They help in power sharing by sharing power of government with the help of coalition government.

1. **What is meant by a ‘national political party’? State the conditions required to be a national political party. (2016 D)**  
   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.

1. **What is meant by regional political party? State the conditions required to be recognised as a ‘regional political party’**.   
   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.

1. “**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**.   
   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 have expanded. One national party was not 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. And Dravida Munnetta Kazhakam (DMK).