

Political Parties

These notes are your ultimate revision weapon to revise Political Parties. We've distilled years of previous exam questions (PYQs) into one powerful, concise resource. Everything you need to know, nothing you don't.

- **PYQs, Decoded:** All key concepts from past exams, organized and simplified.
- **Revise in Record Time:** Short, precise, and designed for last-minute review.
- **Focus on What Matters:** Master high-probability topics and boost your confidence.

Recognition and Classification of Political Parties

Authority and Legal Framework

- **Authority:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) is the sole authority for recognizing political parties.
- **Classification:** The ECI grants the status of either a **National Party** or a **State Party**.
- **Legal Basis:**
 - The **Representation of the People Act, 1951** provides the framework for party registration.
 - Specific criteria are detailed in the **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**.
- **Constitutional Recognition:** Political parties were formally recognized in the Constitution for the first time in **1985** with the addition of the **10th Schedule** (Anti-Defection Law).

Criteria for National Party Status

A party is recognized as a National Party if it meets **any one** of the following conditions:

- It is recognized as a **State Party in at least four states**.
- It secures **6% of the valid votes** in any four or more states in a Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly election **and wins 4 Lok Sabha seats**.
- It wins **2% of the seats in the Lok Sabha** (i.e., 11 seats) from at least three different states.

Criteria for State Party Status

A party is recognized as a State Party if it meets **any one** of the following conditions:

- It secures **6% of the valid votes** in the state in a Legislative Assembly election **and wins at least 2 Assembly seats**.
- It secures **6% of the valid votes** in the state in a Lok Sabha election **and wins at least 1 Lok Sabha seat** from that state.
- It wins a minimum of **3% of the total seats** in the Legislative Assembly or **3 seats**, whichever is more.

Examples of National Parties



- **Indian National Congress (INC)**: Formed in **1885**; 'National' in its name was influenced by European precedents.
- **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)**: Formed in **1980**; its first President was A.B. Vajpayee.
- **Communist Party of India (CPI)**: Formed in **1925**.
- **Communist Party of India (Marxist) - CPI(M)**: Formed in **1964** after a split from the CPI.
- **Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)**: Formed in **1999** after a split in the Congress Party.
- **All India Trinamool Congress (TMC)**: Recognized as a National Party in **2016**.
- **Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)**: Initially a State Party in Delhi; later gained National Party status.
- *Other examples include: BSP, NPP.*

Examples of State/Regional Parties

- Shiromani Akali Dal (Punjab)
- All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK): Formed in **1972**.
- Telugu Desam Party (TDP): Formed in **1982**.
- Asom Gana Parishad (AGP)
- *Parties that are **not** National Parties:* Muslim League, Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), All India Forward Bloc, Peasants and Workers Party of India, Samajwadi Party.

Historical Parties and Founders

Parties Founded by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

- The Independent Labour Party (1936)
- All India Scheduled Castes Federation (1942)

Other Notable Historical Parties

- **Bharatiya Jana Sangh:** Formed in **1951**; precursor to the BJP.

The Anti-Defection Law (52nd Amendment Act, 1985)

Introduction & Key Dates

- Passed by Parliament on **15 February 1985**; came into effect on **1 March 1985**.
- The first state to enact an Anti-Defection Law was **Jammu and Kashmir** in **1979**.

Constitutional Provisions

- Implemented through the **52nd Amendment Act**.
- Added the **10th Schedule** to the Constitution.
- Altered Articles **101, 102, 190, and 191**.

Grounds for Disqualification

A member can be disqualified if they:

- **Voluntarily give up the membership** of their political party.
- **Vote or abstain from voting** in the House contrary to their party's direction without prior permission.
- The law covers **single-bloc defections** and **smaller defections in a single spell**.

Exceptions (No Disqualification)

- In case of a **merger**, if **not less than two-thirds** of the members of a legislature party agree to it.
- If a member, after being elected as the **Speaker/Chairman** of the House, voluntarily gives up party membership or rejoins after their term.
- The law does **not** cover large defections that occur in **various spells** over time.



Authority

- The **presiding officer of the House** (e.g., the Speaker) decides on disqualification matters.

Electoral System and Process

Principles of Elections

- **Adult Suffrage:** Elections are based on universal adult franchise.
- **Single Electoral Roll:** One electoral roll for every territorial constituency.
- **Non-Discrimination:** No exclusion based on religion, race, caste, sex, etc.

Electoral System

- India follows the **First-Past-The-Post (FPTP)** system (a type of majority vote system).
- The candidate with the **most votes (relative majority)** wins, which can lead to a distortion between vote share and seats won.
- Governments are formed by parties that win a majority of **seats**, not necessarily a majority of **votes**.

Electoral Bonds Scheme (2018)

- **Purpose:** Announced to bring transparency in political funding.
- **Eligibility:** Parties must be registered under the RPA, 1951, and have secured at least **1%** of votes in the last general election.
- **Validity:** Bonds are valid for **15 calendar days** from the date of issue.
- **Deposit:** Deposited bonds are credited to the party's account **on the same day**.

Opposition Party Recognition



- To be officially recognized as the **Opposition Group** in the Lok Sabha, a party/coalition must have a minimum of **54 members** (based on a total strength of 543).

Party System and Political Dynamics

Nature of the System

- Described by Rajni Kothari as a "**one-party dominant system**" in the early years of independence (referring to the Congress).
- There is **no fixed party system** due to the influence of casteism and regionalism.
- The party system is part of the larger **political system**.

Coalition Governments

- Formed by multiple parties and must accommodate the interests of all partners.
- Their policy agendas (e.g., National Agenda) contain **broad guidance and principles** rather than detailed plans on every issue.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

Reservations

- The Constitution provides reservations for SCs and STs in Parliament and State Legislatures.
- There is **no constitutional reservation for women**.
- Legislating **33% reservation for women** would require a **Constitutional Amendment**.
- However, parties can **voluntarily allocate** 33% of the seats they contest to women candidates without an amendment.

Inner-Party Democracy



- Refers to the practice of holding **periodical elections within a party** to elect its office-bearers.

Specific Parties, Movements, and Facts

Communist Parties

- **Social Base:** Includes the agricultural/industrial working class, the educated, and the youth. It **does not** include the **business class**.
- **Bhu-Paratam Movement:** A land struggle launched in **Andhra Pradesh** to secure land and houses for landless agricultural workers.

Indian National Congress

- **Kamaraj Plan (1963):** Proposed by Congress President K. Kamaraj with the principal objective of **making the Indian National Congress vibrant**.

Regional Parties

- The growth of strong regional parties is an indicator of **regional aspirations**.
- In Kerala (as of 1997), governments have typically been formed by **national parties** (INC or CPI(M)), not by a regional party.

Government Formations (Historical Context)

- **United Front Government (1996-1997):**
 - **Parties that were part of it:** Asom Gana Parishad (AGP).
 - **Parties that were NOT part of it:** Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Samata Party, Haryana Vikas Party.

Electoral Performance

- **BJP:** Saw a significant increase in national vote share: 7.4% (1984) → 11.4% (1989) → 22.4% (1991).

Constitutional Fact



- India has a **written constitution**.

Note on Jammu & Kashmir

- The state of Jammu and Kashmir was reorganized into two Union Territories in 2019 and is therefore no longer a state.

Know More About Political Parties:

- [Political Parties – Old Year Questions](#)
- [Political Parties One Liner Questions & Answers](#)