

1. State the various functions political parties perform in a democracy.

**Ans.** A political party is a group of people who have the same ideology and who comes closer to each other so that they could contest the elections and win over the majority to make the government. All the members of a political party agree on some policies for the welfare of the society. Political parties in democracy do a lot of functions which are given below :

- (i) **Political parties contest elections :** Political parties, in most of the democracies, contest the elections by putting up their candidates in political arena. They select their candidates one way or the other but in our country central leadership selects them on one basis or the other.
- (ii) **Put forward policies and programmes :** Political parties make some policies and programmes for the welfare of the people and voters choose those parties whose policies they like the most. In democracy people have different opinions but they are grouped together to provide one direction in which policies could be formulated by the government.
- (iii) **Making laws :** Political parties, who are in power, make laws for the country. Actually laws are made by legislature but the party which is in power gets directions on that issue from central leadership to make any particular law.
- (iv) **Political parties make and run the government :** Party which won the majority gets the chance to make the government. It makes the government and runs the government according to the policies and ideology of political party.
- (v) **Does role of opposition :** All parties can not make the government. Those parties who are unable to make the government perform the role of opposition and try to raise and highlight the issues. They often highlight those issues on which government seems to have failed.
- (vi) **Making public opinion :** Political parties raise those issues in public which government is unable to handle. Thus they make a public opinion in their favour and against the government. Parties even launch movements to highlight the problems of the people.
- (vii) **Provides access to government machinery :** Public in general don't have access to government machinery but parties provide access to government machinery to general public. General public can easily approach any leader instead of an officer. They also are responsive to the needs of the people. These parties cannot ignore the demands of the public and that is why they are more responsive.

2. What are the various challenges faced by political parties ?

**Ans.** In any democracy, political parties are very much necessary because they are working for democracy political parties are actual face of democracy that what is going on in democracy. They are very much necessary for democracy but these days there is a dissatisfaction among the people regarding the functioning of political parties. People have to face a lot of criticism from various quarters of society. That is why political parties need to face many challenges to remain effective and these challenges are :

- (i) **Lack of internal democracy** : It is right that democracy goes on with the help of political parties but there is lack of internal democracy within the party. Generally the power within the party is concentrated within the hands of one or two leaders. Even they do not conduct regular elections of office bearers and they even do not keep membership registers. Ordinary members are unable to get any information of inside of the party and members are generally dissatisfied with central leadership.
- (ii) **Dynastic succession** : The biggest challenge which political parties are facing these days is the issue of dynastic succession. These parties do not have the transparent functioning and that is why the leaders always try to give unfair advantage to their family members especially wife or son. Political party then is controlled by one family. We can take the examples of congress, SAD, RLD, INLD, National conference, DMK etc.
- (iii) **Money and Muscle Power** : Another challenge which political parties are facing is the increased role of money and muscle power especially at the time of elections. Parties, these days, try to nominate those person as their candidate who is either rich or have sufficient muscle power behind him. That is why in some cases, criminals are being given tickets of national party. Parties try to win majority in elections and that is why they use this type of way to win majority.
- (iv) **Lack of meaningful choice** : Political parties generally discuss that problem which the country is facing and their policy to resolve that problem. They always try to convince the general masses that their policies are better than the other parties. But most of the parties agree on the fact that problems are being faced by the citizen. Difference is only of priority of issue and its way out to solve it. All the political parties are some in one way or the other are same and that is why people don't have any meaningful choice among them.

3. Suggest some reforms to strengthen parties so that they perform their functions well.

**Ans.** In today's modern age of democracy, political parties need to be reformed. These days they are facing many challenges like dynastic succession, lack of internal democracy, lack of meaningful choice, increasing role of money and muscle power, etc. That is why these political parties and their leaders should be reformed and some of these reforms are given below :

- (i) These days no one can defect any party. Amendment was made in constitution so that MP's and MLA's could be prevented from changing parties. It was done to stop the practice of changing parties, after winning election, for the sake of ministership or for money. Now no one can change his party unless he will have to lose his seat. This has bringing down defection.
- (ii) Supreme court has given a rule to reduce the influence of criminals and money in elections. Now it is necessary for every person, who is contesting election , to give an affidavit regarding his wealth and criminal cases pending against him with this people come to know a lot about their leaders and it also led to decline in criminalization of politics.
- (iii) Election commission has also ordered all political parties to hold their organizational elections and to file their income tax returns. Parties started to do so formally. This will atleast show some internal democracy in the party.

**Except these some other suggestions are also there to reform the political parties :**

- (i) It should be made necessary for political parties to regulate their internal affairs. A law can be made regarding this. They should make registers of their members, they should have an independent authority, they should follow their constitution and regular elections should be held for the higher post of the party.
- (ii) Parties should be asked to give atleast one third of the seats to women candidates. In the same way, women should have their share in the party's decision making bodies so that something could be done for the betterment of women.
- (iii) State should provide funds to contest elections. State should give money to meet the need of expenses of elections. It can be either given in the form of cash or in the form of petrol, paper, telephone. It will reduce the influence of growing money power in the elections.

Yet all these suggestions are not accepted by parties but if they would be accepted then it can lead to some improvement in our political system.

4. What is a political party ?

**Ans.** A political party is a group of people who have the some ideology and who come closer to each other so that they could contest the elections and win over the majority to make the government. All the members of a political party agree on some policies for the welfare of the society. Every political party has its own ideology on different issues and has own policies to resolve those issues. All the political parties work for the interests of general masses.

5. What are the characteristics of political party ?

**Ans.** Every political party consists of persons who have common programme on political issues to which they have agreed and are prepared to implement that on common line of action. Each political party tries to seek political power either on its own or in cooperation with any other political party. Political party has certain characteristics which are given below :

- (i) **Well organized** : A good political party should be well organised and its members be well-disciplined. They should be willing to accept gladly the code of conduct of the party and while doing so they should forget their own conveyance. They should keep party discipline above everything else.
- (ii) **Common programme** : Another characteristic of a political party is that its members believe in common programme to which they have already agreed. They uphold the soundness of that at every stage.
- (iii) **Common aim of getting power** : Every party has one common aim and that is to attain power in one way or the other. For this they contest the elections and try to win over the majority. If alone they are unable to win over the majority then make an alliance with other parties to form a government.
- (iv) **Broad base** : A good political party is expected to have good broad base for taking decisions. If the decisions are taken by a limited number of persons who are accepted as leaders or consider themselves so, then that party will not last long.

6. Match List I (Organisations and struggles) with List II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists.

**List I**

1. Congress party
2. Bharatiya Janata Party

**List II**

- A. National Democratic Alliance
- B. State party

3. Communist party of India (Marxist)      C. United progressive Alliance
4. Telugu Desam Party      D. Left Front
- |     |   |   |   |   |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
|     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| (a) | C | A | B | D |
| (b) | C | D | A | B |
| (c) | C | A | D | B |
| (d) | D | C | A | B |

**Ans.** Answer to this questions is option (C).

7. Who among the following is the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party ?
- (a) Kanshi Ram      (b) Sahil Maharaj
- (c) B.R. Ambedkar      (c) Jotiba Phule

**Ans.** Answer is option (a) that Kanshi Ram is the founder of Bahujan Samaj Party.

8. What is the guiding philosophy of the Bharatiya Janta party ?
- (a) Bahujan Samaj      (b) Revolutionary democracy
- (c) Integral humanism      (d) Hindutva

**Ans.** Answer is option (d) that guiding philosophy of the Bharatiya Janta party is Integral Humanism.

9. Consider the following statements on parties.
- (a) Political parties do not enjoy much trust among the people.
- (b) Parties are often rocked by scandals involving top party leaders.
- (c) Parties are not necessary to run governments.
- (i) (a), (b) and (c)      (ii) (a) and (b)
- (iii) (b) and (c)      (iv) (a) and (c)

**Ans.** Answer to this question is option (ii) that only a and b are correct.

**10. Read the following passage and answer the questions given below:**

Mohammad Yunus is a famous economist of Bangladesh. He received several international honours for his efforts to promote economic and social development for the benefit of the poor. He and the Grameen Bank have jointly, received the Nobel peace prize of the 2006. In February, 2007, he decided to launch a political party and contest in the parliamentary elections. His objective was to foster proper leadership, good governance and build a new Bangladesh. He felt that only a political party different from the traditional ones would bring about new political culture. His party would be democratic from the grassroots level.

The launching of the new party, called Nagarik shakti (citizens power), has caused a stir among the Bangladeshis while many welcomed his decision, some did not like it, “Now I think Bangladesh will have a chance to choose between good and bad and eventually have a good government”, said shahedul Islam, a government official. “That government, we hope, would not only keep itself away from corruption but also make fighting corruption and black money a top priority”.

But leaders of traditional political parties who dominated the country is politics for decades were apprehensive. “ There was no debate (over him) winning the Nobel, but politics is different - very challenging and often controversial”, said a senior leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist party. Some others were highly critical. They asked why he was rushing into politics. “ Is he being planted, in politics by mentors from outside the country,” asked one political observer.

Do you think Yunus made a right decision to float a new political party?

Do you agree with the statements and fears expressed by various people? How do you want this new party organised to make it different from other parties? If you were the one to begin this political party how would you defend it?

**Ans.** Mohammad Yunus is a famous economist of Bangladesh and he has done right to float a political party because he wants to prosper Bangladesh with his policies.

I also agree with the fears expressed by various people about his political party that winning Noble prize is a different thing and working in an active politics is very difficult thing. (Politics is the work of clever people and an educationist not necessarily become a clever one.)

It is right that Mohammad Yunus has started a political party but his party should have certain characteristics. It should not work under the influence of money and muscle power and should be out of the concept of dynastic succession. It should hold fair internal elections all the times which is good for the democracy.