



# Introduction

This is a learning as well as an exam preparation video.

At the end of the video are practice assignments for you to attempt.

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# Chapter 6: Political Parties

# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## Introduction

### Meaning and Functions of a Political Party

A political party is a group of individuals who come together on a common platform. They largely have similar ideas and a common goal. Members of a political party contest elections in order to form the government at the state or at the centre. Political parties try to win the support of people by convincing them on why their policies are better than other parties. A political party has three components—leaders, active members and followers.

# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## Introduction

**A political party performs many functions in a democracy.**

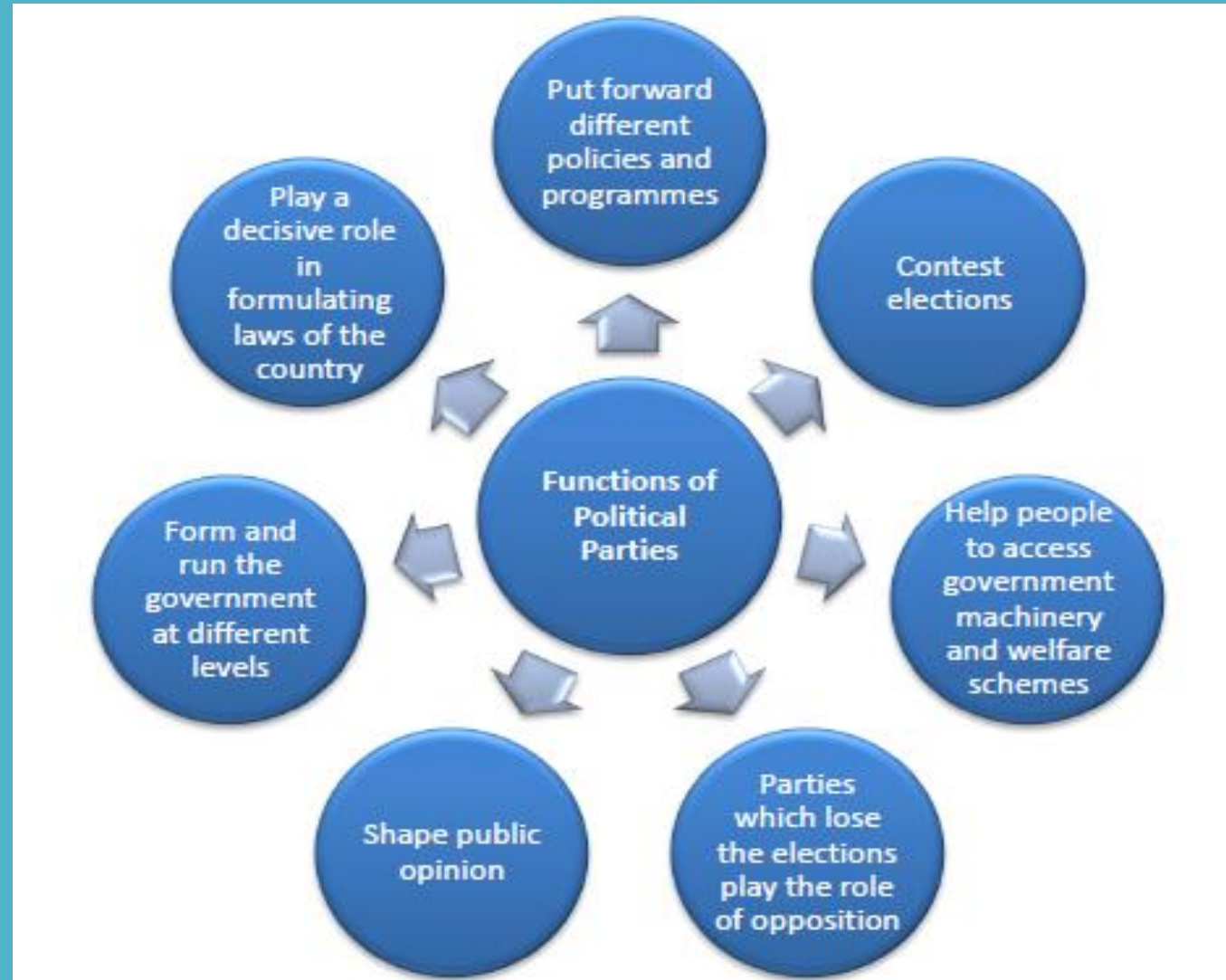
- Political parties are required. If there are no political parties, then independent candidates would win the elections. Independent candidates may be able to manage their constituencies, but they would not be able to govern the entire country effectively because each candidate will have his/her own interests and set of beliefs.**

# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## Introduction

- Each section of society chooses its representatives to represent its interests.
- Political parties also play the same role. Thus, democratic countries have political parties. The rise of political parties may be traced back to the emergence of representative democracy. As societies are large, they elect their own representatives to represent their interests. Representatives of the parties come together to form the government.

# Chapter 6: Political Parties



# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## How Many Parties Should We Have?

In a democracy, any group of citizens is free to form a political party. More than 750 parties are registered with the Election Commission of India. But not all these parties are serious contenders in the elections.



# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## Party System:

The number of political parties differs from country to country.

**One-party system:** The formation of political parties is generally banned in countries which are ruled by dictators. Only the party to which the dictator belongs is allowed to exist. Such countries have a one-party system. For example, in China, only the Communist Party of China is allowed to contest the elections.

# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## Party System:

**Two-party system:** In many countries, though many parties exist, only two parties have serious chances of winning the majority of seats in the Parliament. Other parties win only a handful of seats in the national legislatures. Thus, countries with two main parties contesting the elections have a bi-party system; for example, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## Party System:

**Multi-party system:** When several parties exist in a country and each has the capability of forming the government either on its own or in alliance with other parties, the country has a multi-party system. India has a multi-party system. In such a system, if many political parties come together and join hands for contesting the elections and forming a government, they are known as an alliance or a front. While on one hand, the multi-party system may lead to political instability in the country, on the other, the system allows the representation of a variety of interests and public opinions.

# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## Political Parties in India:

In India, every party has to get itself registered with the Election Commission. The latter gives a symbol to the political party. A political party which has a nationwide presence and which secures at least six percent of the total votes in the Lok Sabha elections or Assembly elections in at least four states and wins at least four seats in the Lok Sabha is recognised as a national party.

# Chapter 6: Political Parties


## Political Parties in India:

A political party which secures at least six percent 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.

# Chapter 6: Political Parties


## Political Parties in India:

### National Parties in India

Name of the Party	Year of Foundation	Basic Ideologies	Symbol
Indian National Congress	1885 (the party has split many times)	Endorses secular principles Aims at the welfare of weaker sections and minority communities	

# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## National Parties in India

Name of the Party	Year of Foundation	Basic Ideologies	Symbol
Bharatiya Janata Party	1980	Seeks complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India Believes in cultural nationalism (Hindutva) and uniform civil code for all people	

# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## National Parties in India

Name of the Party	Year of Foundation	Basic Ideologies	Symbol
Bahujan Samaj Party	1984	Champions the cause of the dalits, adivasis and OBCs	
Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M)	1964	Believes in the principles of socialism, Marxism, Leninism, secularism and democracy	



# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## National Parties in India

Name of the Party	Year of Foundation	Basic Ideologies	Symbol
Communist Party of India (CPI)	1925	Believes in Marxism–Leninism, secularism and democracy	
Nationalist Congress Party	1999	Believes in democracy, equity, social justice and federalism	

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## State Parties in India:

### List of major state parties in India:

- **Samajwadi Party (largely present in Uttar Pradesh)**
- **Rashtriya Janata Dal (Bihar)**
- **Trinamool Congress (West Bengal)**
- **Biju Janata Dal (Odisha)**
- **Sikkim Democratic Front (Sikkim)**
- **National Conference (Jammu and Kashmir)**

# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## State Parties in India:

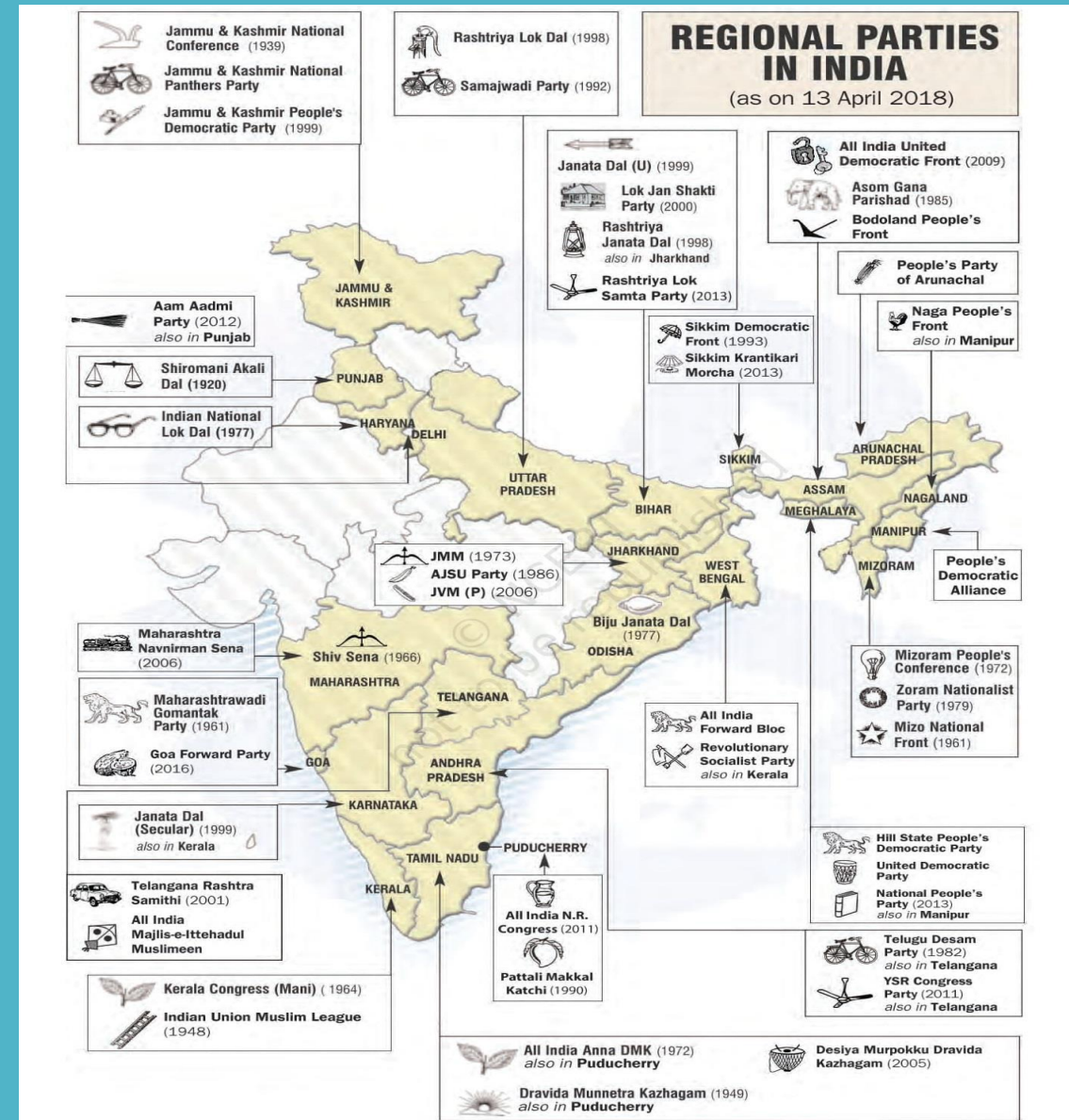
- Peoples Democratic Party (Jammu and Kashmir)
- DMK (Tamil Nadu)
- AIADMK (Tamil Nadu)

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## Challenges to Political Parties:

Main challenges faced by political parties in India are

- Lack of internal democracy: There is a lack of internal democracy within the political parties. Most of the parties do not keep membership registers and do not conduct elections regularly. Dynastic succession does not allow a deserving candidate to rise to a position of leadership.



# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## Challenges to Political Parties:

- **Money and muscle power:** Because the main aim of the political party is to win an election, many candidates who could raise a lot of money are nominated. Influential and wealthy party members exercise greater control over party politics. Parties have also become corrupt.
- **Lack of meaningful choice:** Most of the parties do not offer meaningful choices to the people. Fundamental differences among the parties have reduced.

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## How Can Parties be Reformed?

Political parties can be reformed in the following ways:

- A law to prevent the defection of a party member in hope of money and power was passed in the Parliament. It is necessary to strictly follow this law.
- An order has been passed requiring candidates contesting the elections to declare their assets and criminal charges pending against them. This was done to reduce the influence of money and criminals in parties. This law also needs to be strictly followed.

# Chapter 6: Political Parties

## How Can Parties be Reformed?

- Every political party should regularly hold organisational elections and file income tax returns.
- It should be made mandatory for political parties to give at least one-third of the party's tickets to women candidates.
- Elections should be funded by the state.

Many suggestions have not been accepted by political parties; thus, it is important for the public to organise protests and rallies to demand the passing of laws to this effect. The functioning of political parties can be further improved if the people who support these changes join the parties.

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