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NCERT NOTES FOR POLITY

10th Standard

Democratic Politics II

CONTENTS

1 POWER-SHARING

In a democracy **all power does not rest with any one organ of the government**. An intelligent **sharing of power among legislature, executive and judiciary** is very important.

Case Study of Majoritarianism in Sri Lanka:
- Sri Lanka is an island nation, just a few kilometers off the southern coast of Tamil Nadu.
- **Diverse population:** The major social groups are:
  - ➤ **Sinhala-speakers (74 per cent)**
  - ➤ **Tamil-speakers (18 per cent)**: Among Tamils there are two sub-groups.
    - o Tamil natives of the country are called **'Sri Lankan Tamils'** (**13 per cent**).
      - ▸ They are **concentrated** in the **north and east** part of the country.
    - o The rest, whose forefathers came from India as plantation workers during colonial period, are called **'Indian Tamils'**.
- **Religion:** Most of the **Sinhala speaking people are Buddhists**, while **most of the Tamils are Hindus or Muslims**.
- **Feeling of Alienation among Sri Lankan Tamils:**
  - ➤ Sri Lanka emerged as an independent country in 1948 and **adopted a series of Majoritarian measures** to establish Sinhala supremacy.
  - ➤ The Sri Lankan Tamils launched parties and struggles for the **recognition of Tamil as an official language**, for regional autonomy and equality of opportunity in securing education and jobs but their demand for more autonomy to provinces populated by the Tamils was repeatedly denied.
  - ➤ By 1980s, several political organisations were formed demanding an independent **Tamil Eelam (state)** in northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka.
  - ➤ The distrust between the two communities turned into widespread conflict. It soon turned into a Civil war which ended in 2009.

Case Study of Accommodation of various Ethnic communities in Belgium:
- Belgium is a small country in Europe. It has **borders** with **France, the Netherlands, Germany,** and **Luxembourg**.
- **Complex Ethnic Composition:**
  - ➤ **59 per cent** people: live in the Flemish region and speaks Dutch language.
  - ➤ **40 per cent** people: live in the Wallonia region and speak French.
  - ➤ **In the Capital city Brussels**:
    - o **80 per cent**: French speakers
    - o **20 per cent**: Dutch speakers
- **Tensions between the Dutch-speaking and French Speaking:**
  - ➤ The minority French-speaking community was relatively rich and powerful which was resented by the Dutch-speaking community who got the benefit of economic development and education much later.
- **Accommodative path used by Belgium:** They recognised the existence of regional differences

and cultural diversities. Some of the **elements of the Belgian model** are:

➢ **No decisions by one community unilaterally:** Some special laws require the support of majority of members from each linguistic group.

➢ The state governments are not subordinate to the Central Government.

➢ There is a **third kind of government** called **'community government'** which is elected by people belonging to one language community – Dutch, French and German-speaking – no matter where they live. This government has the power regarding cultural, educational, and language-related issues.

The arrangement in **Belgian model have worked well and helped to avoid civic strife** between the two major communities and a possible division of the country on linguistic lines.

Need of Power Sharing:

- **Reduce the possibility of Conflict between Social Groups:**
  - ➢ It helps in **ensuring Political order** as social conflict often leads to violence and political instability.
  - ➢ **Imposing the will of majority** community undermines the unity of the nation.
- **Uphold the spirit of Democracy**:
  - ➢ A **democratic rule involves sharing power** with those affected by its exercise and who have to live with its effects.
  - ➢ A legitimate government is one where **citizens**, through participation, **acquire a stake in the system.**

Forms of Power-Sharing:

- **Among different Organs of the Government:** Such as the legislature, executive and judiciary.
  - ➢ **Horizontal Distribution of Power:** It allows different organs of government **placed at the same level** to exercise different powers.
  - ➢ **Checks and Balances of power:** None of the organs can **exercise unlimited power**.
  - ➢ **For example**: Although, judges are appointed by the executive, they can check the functioning of executive or laws made by the legislatures.
- **Among the Governments at different levels:**
  - ➢ **Vertical Division of power:** It involves **higher and lower levels of Government**.
    - ○ **Federal government:** A general Government for the entire country. In India, they are known as the **Central or Union Government**.
    - ○ **Government at Provincial or Regional level:** In India, they are known as **State Governments.**
  - ➢ **No specific model:** There are many countries where there are no provincial or state governments. But in countries like India, the Constitution clearly lays down the powers of different levels of government.
- **Among different Social Groups**: Such as the **religious and linguistic** groups.
  - ➢ In some countries, there are constitutional and legal arrangements whereby **socially weaker sections and women are represented** in the legislatures and administration.

➢ This method is used to **give minority communities a fair share** in power.
- **By way of Political Parties, Pressure Groups and Movements:** These control or influence those in power.
  ➢ Power is shared among different political parties that represent different ideologies and social groups in a democracy. Sometimes this kind of sharing can be direct, when two or more parties form an alliance to contest elections and forms government.
  ➢ In a democracy, **Interest groups** such as those of traders, businessmen, industrialists, farmers and industrial workers also have a share in governmental power, either **through participation** in **governmental committees** or **bringing influence** on the **decision-making process**.

💡 Interesting points

- **Brussels** is the **Headquarter** of **European Union**.
- **Beirut** is the **capital** of **Lebanon**.
- **Lebanon arrangement of Power:**
  ➢ The **President** must belong to the Maronite sect of Catholic Christians.
  ➢ The **Prime Minister** must be from the Sunni Muslim community.
  ➢ The post of **Deputy Prime Minister** is fixed for Orthodox Christian sect.
  ➢ The post of **Speaker** is fixed for Shi'a Muslims.

2 FEDERALISM

Vertical division of power among different levels of government is one of the major forms of power sharing in modern democracies.

Federalism:

It is a system of government in which the **power is divided** between **a central authority and various constituent units** of the country.

Table 2.1: Difference between Unitary and Federal Form of Government

Unitary Form of Government	Federal Form of Government
Either there is **only one level** of government or the **sub-units are subordinate** to the central government.	There are **multiple levels** of government.
The **central government can pass on orders** to the provincial or the local government.	**State government has powers of its own** for which it is not answerable to the central government.

Features of Federalism:

- Usually, a federation has **two levels** of **government:**
  - ➤ **Government for the entire country:** It is usually **responsible for a few subjects** of common national interest.
  - ➤ **Governments at the level of Provinces or States:** It looks after much of the **day-to-day administration** of their state.
- Different tiers of government govern the same citizens, but **each tier has its own jurisdiction** in specific matters of legislation, taxation, and administration.
- The **jurisdictions of the respective levels** are **specified in the Constitution**. So, the existence and authority of each tier of government is constitutionally guaranteed.
- The **fundamental provisions of the Constitution cannot be unilaterally changed** by one level of government. Such changes **require the consent of both the levels of government**.
- **Courts have the power to interpret the constitution** and the powers of different levels of government. The **highest court acts as an umpire** if disputes arise between different levels of government in the exercise of their respective powers.
- **Sources of Revenue** for each level of government are **clearly specified to ensure its financial autonomy.**
- **Dual Objectives of Federalism:**
  - ➤ To **safeguard and promote unity of the country**.
  - ➤ To **Accommodate the regional diversity**.

Balance of Power in Federalism:

It **varies from one federation to another**. This variation depends mainly on the historical context in which the federation was formed. **Two kinds of routes** through which federations have been formed:

- **Coming together Federation:**
  - ➢ It involves **Independent States coming together on their own to form a bigger unit,** so that by **pooling sovereignty and retaining identity** they can increase their security. For example- the USA, Switzerland, and Australia.
  - ➢ All the constituent States usually have **equal power** and are **strong vis-à-vis the federal government**.
- **Holding together Federation:**
  - ➢ A large country decides to **divide its power between the constituent States and the National Government**. For example- India, Spain, and Belgium.
  - ➢ The **central government tends to be more powerful** vis-à-vis the States.
    - o Sometimes different constituent units of the federation have **unequal powers**.
    - o Some units are **granted special powers**.

Federalism in India:

- The **Constitution declared India as a Union of States**. Although it **did not** use the **word federation**, the Indian Union is based on the **principles of federalism**.
- The Constitution originally provided for a **two-tier system of government**, the **Central** Government representing the Union of India and the **State** governments. Later, a **third tier of federalism** was added in the form of **Panchayats and Municipalities**.
- **Separate Jurisdiction**: The Constitution clearly provided a **threefold distribution of legislative powers** between the Union Government and the State Governments. It contains **three lists:**
  - ➢ **Union List:** It includes **subjects of National importance** such as defence of the country, foreign affairs, banking, communications, and currency.
    - o Subjects need a **uniform policy** on these matters throughout the country.
    - o The **Union Government alone can make laws** relating to the subjects mentioned in the Union List.
  - ➢ **State List:** It contains subjects of State and **local importance** such as police, trade, commerce, agriculture, and irrigation.
  - ➢ **Concurrent List: Both the Union as well as the State Governments can make laws** on the subjects mentioned in this list.
    - o If their **laws conflict** with each other, **the law made by the Union Government will prevail**.
    - o **Examples:** Forest, trade unions, marriage, adoption, and succession.
  - ➢ **Residuary subjects** are legislated by the **Union Government.**
- **Unequal Power to States:** Some States like Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram enjoy a **special status** under certain provisions of the Constitution **(Article 371)** due to their peculiar social and historical circumstances. These special powers are especially enjoyed in relation to the **protection of land rights and culture of the indigenous peoples**.
- **Little power to Union Territories:** These areas are too small to become an independent State and

could not be merged with any of the existing States. For example, Chandigarh, Lakshadweep, or Delhi.
- ➤ They **do not have the same powers as the States**.
- ➤ The **Central Government has special powers** in running these areas.
- **Procedure of Constitutional Changes:** The sharing of power between the Union Government and the State governments constitutes the **basic to the structure of the Constitution**.
  - ➤ It is **not easy to make changes** to this power sharing arrangement.
  - ➤ Any change to it must be **first passed by both the Houses of Parliament** with at least two-thirds majority.
  - ➤ Then, it must **be ratified by the legislatures of at least half of the total States**.
- **Role of Judiciary:** It plays an important role in **overseeing the implementation of the Constitutional provisions and procedures**.

Practice of Federalism in India:

The real success of federalism in India can be attributed to its nature of democratic politics. This ensured that the spirit of federalism, respect for diversity and desire for living together became shared ideals in our country.
- **Linguistic States:**
  - ➤ **Creation of Linguistic States:** It was the **first major test** for democratic politics in India.
  - ➤ After Independence, the **boundaries of several old States of India were changed** to create new States to ensure that **people who spoke the same language lived in the same State.**
  - ➤ Some States were also **created to recognise differences based on culture, ethnicity, or geography** such as Nagaland, Uttarakhand etc.
  - ➤ The experience has shown that the **formation of linguistic States has actually made the country more united**. It has also **made administration easier**.
- **Language Policy:**
  - ➤ The Constitution **did not give the status of National language to any one language**.
  - ➤ **Hindi was identified as the official language,** but Hindi is the **mother tongue of only about 40 per cent** of Indians.
  - ➤ Besides Hindi, **there are 21 other languages recognised as Scheduled Languages** by the Constitution.
  - ➤ A candidate in an examination conducted for the Central Government positions may opt to take the examination in any of these languages.
  - ➤ **States too have their own official languages**. Much of the government work takes place in the official language of the concerned State.
  - ➤ **Cautious attitude in spreading the use of Hindi**:
    - ○ According to the Constitution, **the use of English for official purposes was to stop in 1965**.
    - ○ But many non-**Hindi speaking States demanded that the use of English continue**.
    - ○ **Promotion of Hindi continues to be the official policy of the Government of India**.
    - ○ Promotion **does not** mean that the **Central Government can impose Hindi on States** where people speak a different language.
- **Centre-State Relations:**

- For a long time, the same party ruled both at the Centre and in most of the States. So, the State governments did not exercise their rights as autonomous federal units.
- As and when the ruling party at the State level was different, the parties that ruled at the Centre tried to undermine the power of the States.
- After 1990, there was rise of regional political parties in many States of the country. This was also the **beginning of the era of coalition governments at the centre**.
- It led to a **new culture of power sharing** and respect for the autonomy of State Governments.
- It was supported by a major judgement of the Supreme Court that made it **difficult for the Central Government to dismiss state governments** in an arbitrary manner.

Linguistic Diversity of India

- The **2011 Census of India held** recorded more than **1300 distinct languages** which people mentioned as their **mother tongues.**
  - These languages were grouped together under some major languages.
  - Languages like Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Bundelkhandi, Chhattisgarhi, Rajasthani etc. were grouped together under 'Hindi'.
- The Census found **121 major languages** and **of these 22 languages** are now included in the **Eighth Schedule** of the Indian Constitution and are therefore called **'Scheduled Languages'.** Others are called 'non-Scheduled Languages'.
- **Hindi** is the **mother tongue** of only **about 44** per cent Indians. If all those who knew Hindi are added as their second or third language, the total number was still less than 50 per cent in 2011.
- As for **English**, **only 0.02 per cent Indians** recorded it as their mother tongue.

Table 2.2: Scheduled Languages in India

Scheduled Languages of India	
Language	Proportion of speakers (%)
Assamese	1.26
Bengali	8.03
Bodo	0.12
Dogri	0.21
Gujarati	4.58
Hindi	43.63
Kannada	3.61
Kashmiri	0.56
Konkani	0.19
Maithili	1.12
Malayalam	2.88
Mampun	0.15
Marathi	6.86
Nepali	0.24
Odia	3.10
Punjabi	2.74
Sanskrit	N
Santali	0.61
Sindhi	0.23
Tamil	5.70
Telugu	6.70
Urdu	4.19

N-Stands for Negligible

FEDERALISM

When power is taken away from Central and State governments and given to local government, it is called **Decentralisation**.

Need of Decentralization:
- There are large number of problems and issues which are best settled at the local level as people have better knowledge of problems in their localities.
- **Democratic participation:** At the local level it is possible for the people to **directly participate** in decision making.
- A **vast country** like India cannot be run only through two-tiers. States in India are as large as independent countries of Europe.
- Federal power sharing in India needed another tier of government, below that of the State governments which resulted a third tier of government.
- The need for decentralisation was recognised in our Constitution.

Weakness of Decentralisation before 1992:
- Local governments were **directly under the control** of state governments.
- **No regular elections** to local governments.
- Local governments did not have any powers or resources of their own.

Major step towards Decentralisation in 1992:
The Constitution was amended to make the third tier of democracy more powerful and effective.
- It is **constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections** to local government bodies.
- **Seats are reserved** in the elected bodies and the executive heads of these institutions for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.
- At least **one-third of all positions** are **reserved for women**.
- An **independent institution** called the **State Election Commission** has been created **in each State to conduct panchayat and municipal elections**.
- The State governments are required to **share some powers and revenue with local government** bodies. The nature of sharing varies from State to State.

Rural Local Government (Panchayati Raj)
- **Gram Panchayat:**
  ➤ It is there in each village, or a group of villages in some States.
  ➤ This is a **Council** consisting of **several ward members**, often called *Panch*, and **a President** or *Sarpanch*.
  ➤ They are **directly elected** by all the adult population living in that ward or village.
  ➤ It is the **decision-making body** for the entire village.
  ➤ It works **under the overall supervision of the Gram Sabha** which have **all the voters** in the village **are its members**.
  ➤ It has to **meet at least twice or thrice in a year** to approve the annual budget of the gram panchayat and to review the performance of the gram panchayat.

- **Block level:**
  - A **few gram panchayats are grouped together** to form what is usually called a **Panchayat Samiti or Block or** *Mandal***.**
  - Its members are **elected by all the Panchyat members in that area**.
- **District level**:
  - All the Panchayat samitis or Mandals in a district **together constitute the Zilla (district) Parishad.**
  - **Most members** of the Zilla parishad **are elected**.
  - Members of the Lok Sabha and MLAs of that district and some other officials of other district level bodies are also its members.
  - **Chairperson** of Zilla parishad is the **Political Head of the Zilla parishad.**

Urban Local Government:
- **Municipalities** are set up in **Towns**.
- **Big cities** are constituted into **Municipal Corporations**.
- Both are **controlled by elected bodies** consisting of people's representatives.
- **Municipal Chairperson** is the **Political Head of the municipality** while in a **Municipal Corporation such an officer** is called the **Mayor.**

Major issues with Local Governments:
- Though elections are held regularly, **Gram Sabhas** are **not held regularly**.
- Most state governments have **not transferred significant powers** to the local governments.
- State governments has also **not given adequate resources** to them.

> **Case study of Brazil about combining Decentralization with Participative Democracy:**
> - A city called **Porto Alegre in Brazil** has set up a **parallel organisation operating alongside the Municipal Council**, enabling local inhabitants to take real decisions for their city.
> - The city is divided into many sectors and each sector has a meeting, like that of the Gram Sabha, in which anyone living in that area can participate.
> - There are some meetings to discuss issues that affect the entire city. **Any citizen of the city can participate in those meetings.**

Interesting points

- About **25 of the world's 193 countries have federal political** systems whose citizens make up 40 per cent of the world's population.
- India has **about 36 lakh elected representatives** in the **Panchayats and Municipalities.**

3 DEMOCRACY AND DIVERSITY

People identify themselves and relate with others on the basis of their physical appearance, class, language, religion, gender, caste, tribe, etc. Democracy responds to social differences, divisions and inequalities.

Differences, Similarities and Divisions:

Social diversity takes various forms in terms of religion, caste, language etc. in different societies.

Origins of Social differences

- **Kinds of Social differences:**
  - ➤ **Based on birth**: Person belong to his community as one is born in it.
  - ➤ **Based on Physical traits**: People differ in terms of heights, complexions, etc.
  - ➤ **Based on our Choices:** For instance, some people are atheists, etc.
- Social differences **divide similar people from one another**, but they **also unite very different people.**
- People belonging to different social groups share differences and similarities cutting across the boundaries of their groups.
- It is fairly common for people belonging to the same religion to feel that they do not belong to the same community, because their caste or sect is very different.

Overlapping and cross-cutting differences:

- **Social division** takes place when **some social difference overlaps with other differences**. For example, the difference between **Blacks and Whites becomes a social division in the US** because the Blacks tend to be poor, homeless, and discriminated.
- It is difficult to pit one group of people against the other if social differences crosscut one another.
- Social divisions of one kind or another exist in most countries.
  - ➤ It does not matter whether the country is small or big.
  - ➤ For example, India is a vast country with many communities. Belgium is a small country with many communities.

Politics of Social Divisions:

- Normally it appears that the combination of politics and social divisions is very dangerous.
- Democracy involves competition among various political parties which tends to divide any society.
- If political parties start competing in terms of some existing social divisions, it can **make social divisions into political divisions and lead to conflict, violence or even disintegration** of a country.

Range of outcomes:

- **Case of Northern Ireland** (region of the United Kingdom):
  - ➤ It is a site of a violent and bitter ethno-political conflict.
  - ➤ **Division of Population:** The population is divided into **two major sects of Christianity**.
    - o **53 per cent are Protestants:** They were **represented by Unionists** who wanted to remain with the UK, which is predominantly protestant.

- - **44 per cent are Roman Catholics:** They were **represented by Nationalist parties** who demanded that Northern Ireland be unified with the Republic of Ireland, a predominantly Catholic country.
  - ➤ Hundreds of civilians, militants and security forces were killed in their fight.
  - ➤ It was only in 1998, that the UK government and the Nationalists reached a peace treaty after which the latter suspended their armed struggle.
- **Case of Yugoslavia:**
  - ➤ Political competition along religious ending and ethnic lines led to the **disintegration** of **Yugoslavia** into **six independent countries**.

Factors deciding the outcome of Politics of Social Divisions:

- **People perception about their identities**: If people see their identities in singular and exclusive terms, it becomes very difficult to accommodate.
- **Raise of demands for any community by Political leaders:**
  - ➤ It is easier to accommodate demands that are within the constitutional framework and are not at the cost of another community.
  - ➤ For example, In Sri Lanka, the civil war occurred because the demand for 'only Sinhala' was at the cost of the interest and identity of the Tamil community.
- **Reaction of the Government towards the demands of different groups**:
  - ➤ **Social divisions become less threatening,** if the **rulers are willing to share power** and **accommodate the reasonable demands of minority community**.
  - ➤ Attempts at forced integration often sow the seeds of disintegration.

💡 Interesting points

- **Civil Rights Movement in the USA (1954-1968)**:
  - ➤ It refers to a set of events and reform movements **aimed at abolishing legal racial discrimination** against African-Americans.
  - ➤ It was led by **Martin Luther King Jr**. and practiced **non-violent methods of civil disobedience** against racially discriminatory laws and practices.
- **The Black Power movement** emerged in 1966 and lasted till 1975, which was a more **militant anti-racist movement in the US.**

The existence of social diversity does not threaten democracy. Political expression of social differences is possible and sometimes quite desirable in a democratic system. Social differences can take the form of social divisions and inequalities.

Gender and Politics:

- **Gender division is a form of hierarchical social division** seen everywhere but is **rarely recognised** in the study of politics.
- The gender division tends to be understood as natural and unchangeable.
- It is **not based on biology** but on **social expectations and stereotypes**.

Public/Private Division:

- **Sexual Division of labour:** Boys and girls are brought up to believe that the main responsibility of women is housework and bringing up children.
- **Low value for Women's work:**
  ➤ Women's work is not valued to equal to the work of men.
  ➤ **Double jeopardy**: Majority of women do some sort of paid work in addition to domestic labour.
- **Result of Division of labour:**
  ➤ Although women constitute half of the humanity, their role in public life, especially politics, is minimal in most societies.
  ➤ Earlier, only men were allowed to participate in public affairs, vote and contest for public offices.
  ➤ **Feminist movements:** Women in different parts of the world organised and agitated for equal rights. These agitations demanded enhancing the political and legal status of women and improving their educational and career opportunities.

Improvement in Women's role in Public life:

- Women are now found in working as scientists, doctors, engineers, etc. which were earlier not considered suitable for women.
- In some parts of the world, for example **in Scandinavian countries** such as Sweden, Norway and Finland, the participation of women in public life is very high.

Condition of Women in India

Disadvantage, Discrimination and Oppression faced by Women:

- **In education:**
  ➤ The **literacy rate among women** is **only 54 per cent** as compared to **76 per cent among men**.
  ➤ **High dropout rates:** Parents prefer to spend their resources for their boys' education.
- **In jobs:**
  ➤ The proportion of women is low in highly paid and valued jobs.
  ➤ Their work is not valued even though, on an average an Indian woman works one hour more than an average man every day.
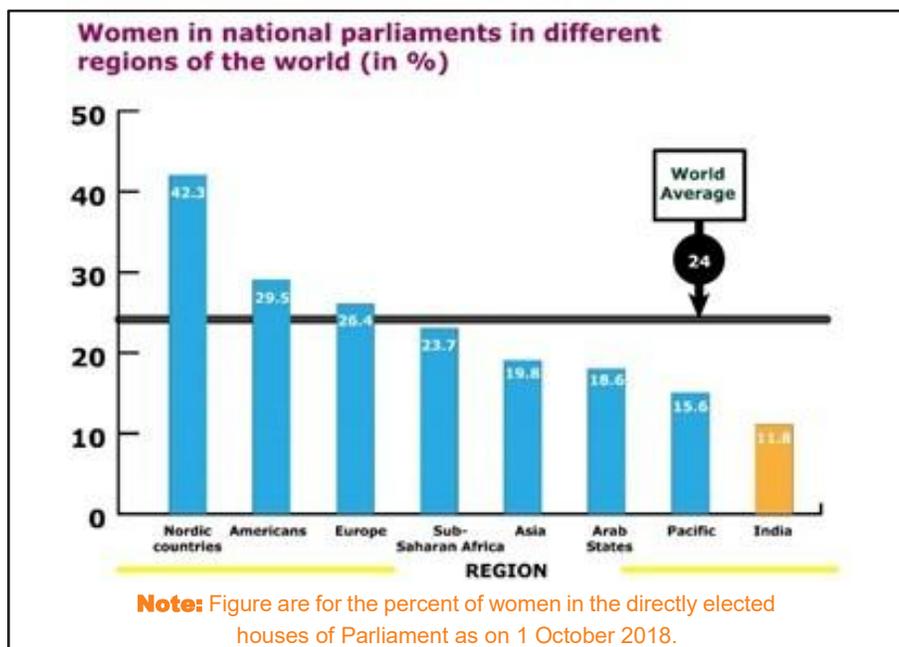- **Unequal wages:**

- They do not get equal wages for doing same work as that of men.
- The **Equal Remuneration Act, 1976** provides that **equal wages should be paid to equal work** but in almost all areas of work women are paid less than men.
- **Crime against Women:**
  - There are reports of various kinds of harassment, exploitation, and violence against women.
  - **Domestic violence:** They are not safe even within their own home from beating and harassment.
- **Preference for boys:**
  - **Sex-selective abortion:** In many parts of India, parents prefer to have sons and find ways to have the girl child aborted before she is born. This led to a **decline in child sex ratio** to merely 919.

Women's Political Representation:

Issues related to women's well-being or otherwise are not given adequate attention. Unless women control power, their problems will not get adequate attention.

Women as Elected Representatives:

- **Less participation of women in Legislature of India:**
  - The percentage of **elected women members in Lok Sabha** has touched **14.36 per cent of its total strength for the first time in 2019**.
  - Their share in the **State assemblies is less than 5 per cent**.
- India is among the bottom group of nations in the world. **India is behind the averages** for several developing countries of Africa and Latin America.
- In the Government, **Cabinets are largely all-male** even when a woman becomes the Chief Minister or the Prime Minister.

Women in national parliaments in different regions of the world (in %)

World Average: 24

Nordic countries 42.3, Americans 29.5, Europe 26.4, Sub-Saharan Africa 23.7, Asia 19.8, Arab States 18.6, Pacific 15.6, India 11.8

Note: Figure are for the percent of women in the directly elected houses of Parliament as on 1 October 2018.

Measures to improve Women participation in Legislatures:

- To make it **legally binding** to have a fair proportion of women in the elected bodies. For instance, in **Local Bodies, one-third of seats in local government bodies** are now reserved for women.
- There has been demand for similar of at least one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women. A bill with this proposal has been pending before the Parliament for more than a decade.

Social and Religious Diversity of India:

The **Census of India** records the religion of every Indian **after every ten years.** Since Independence, the total population of each community has increased substantially but their proportion in the country's population has not changed much.

- **Composition of Religious communities:**
  - ➢ The population of the **Hindus, Jains and Christians has declined** marginally since 1961.
  - ➢ **Common but mistaken impression about the Muslims:** It is believed that the proportion of the Muslims in the country's population is going to overtake other religious communities.
- However, in actual, the balance in composition of different religions is **expected to not change** in big way.
- Expert estimates done for **Sachar Committee** show that the proportion of the Muslims is expected to go up a little, by about 3 to 4 per cent, in the next 50 years.

  - ➢ The proportion of **Muslim, Sikh and Buddhist population has increased** slightly.
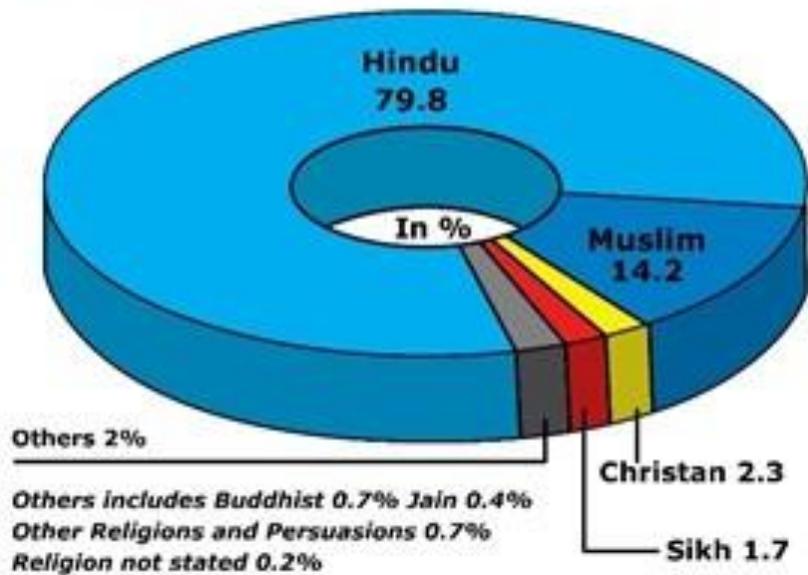
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- **Major Caste groups**:

  - ➢ In 2011, **the Scheduled Castes were 16.6 per cent** and the **Scheduled Tribes were 8.6 per cent** of the country's population.
  - ➢ The **Census does not** yet count **the Other Backward Classes**. The **National Sample Survey of 2004-05 estimates their population** to be **around 41 per cent**.
  - ➢ The **SC, ST and the OBC together** account for **about two-thirds of the country's population** and about **three-fourths of the Hindu population**.

Population of different religious communites in India, 2011

Hindu 79.8

In %

Muslim 14.2

Others 2%

Others includes Buddhist 0.7% Jain 0.4%
Other Religions and Persuasions 0.7%
Religion not stated 0.2%

Christan 2.3

Sikh 1.7

Source: Census of India, 2011

Religion, Communalism and Politics:

Religious differences-based divisions are not as Universal as the Gender, but **religious diversity is widespread in the world today**. Even when most of the people belong to the same religion, there can be serious differences about the way people practice that religion. Unlike Gender differences, the Religious differences are often expressed in the field of politics.

Relationship between Religion and Politics:

- **Gandhiji** used to say that **Religion can never be separated from Politics** where the religion was not any particular religion but moral values that inform all religions. He believed that Politics must be guided by ethics drawn from Religion.
- **Human Rights groups** in India have argued that most of the victims of communal riots in our country are people from Religious minorities.
- **Women's movement** has argued that family laws of all religions discriminate against women.
- It is notable that the **political acts are not wrong if they treat every religion equally**. Ideas, ideals and values drawn from different religions can and perhaps should play a role in politics.

Communalism and Religion:

Communalism becomes a problem when **religion is seen as the basis of the nation**.

- **Communal Politics:** When beliefs of **one religion are presented as superior** to those of other religions and the State power is used to establish domination of one religious-group over others.
- **Idea behind Communal Politics:** The **Religion is the principal basis of social community**.
  - The followers of a particular religion belong to one community and their fundamental interests are the same.
  - Also, **People who follow different religions** cannot belong to the same social community. Their **interests** are bound to be **different** and **involve a conflict.**
- **Extreme form of Communalism:** It leads to the belief that people belonging to different religions cannot live as equal citizens within one nation. Either one of them has to dominate the rest or they have to form different nations.

Flaws in the Idea of Communalism:

People of one religion do not have the same interests and aspirations in every context. Everyone has several other roles, positions, and identities. Any **attempt to bring all followers** of one religion together in context of other than religion is bound to **suppress many voices** within that community.

Various forms of Communalism in Politics:

- In everyday beliefs, it involves religious prejudices, stereotypes of religious communities and belief in the superiority of one's religion over other religions.
- **Quest for Political domination of one's own religious community**:
  - For those belonging to **majority community**, this takes the **form of majoritarian dominance.**
  - For those belonging to the **minority community**, it can take the form of a desire to **form a separate political unit.**
- **Political Mobilisation on Religious lines**: It involves the **use of sacred symbols, religious leaders, emotional appeal and plain fear** in order to bring the followers of one religion together in the political arena.
- **Communal violence, riots and massacre**: India and Pakistan suffered some of the worst communal riots at the time of the **Partition**.

Secular State:

A Secular State is one which is **officially neutral in matters of religion**, supporting neither religion nor irreligion.

Reflection of Secular State in our Constitutional provisions in India: Unlike Sri Lanka where Buddhism is the official religion of the country, **India has no official religion.** This could be expanded as:

- It provides to all individuals and communities freedom to profess, practice, and propagate any religion.
- It prohibits discrimination on grounds of the Religion.
- It allows the State to intervene in the matters of religion in order to **ensure equality within religious**

communities.

Secularism is not just an ideology of some parties or persons but constitutes one of the foundations of our country. Communalism threatens the very idea of India.

Prevailing   Caste   inequality:

National Sample Survey shows that the Caste continues to be very strongly **linked to economic status** in many important ways:

- The **average economic status** (measured by criteria like monthly consumption expenditure) of **caste groups still follows the old hierarchy.** For example, the 'upper' castes are best off and the Dalits and Adivasis are worst off.
- Although every caste has some poor members, the **proportion living in extreme poverty** (below the official 'poverty line') is **much higher for the lowest castes** and much lower for the upper castes.
- The **upper castes are heavily over-represented among the rich** while the lower castes are severely under-represented.

Table 4.1: Percentage of Population living below the Poverty line, 1999-2000

Percentage of poulation living below the poverty line, 1999-2000

Caste and Community groups	Rural	Urban
Scheduled Tribes	45.8	35.6
Scheduled Castes	35.9	38.3
Other Backward Classes	27.0	29.5
Muslim Upper Castes	26.8	34.2
Hindu Upper Castes	11.7	9.9
Christian Upper Castes	9.6	5.4
Sikh Upper Castes	0.0	4.9
Other Upper Castes	16.0	2.7
All Groups	27.0	23.4

Note: 'Upper caste' here means those who are not from SC, ST, or OBC. Below the poverty line means those who spent Rs. 327 or less per person per month in rural and Rs. 454 or less per person per month in urban areas.
Source: National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), Government of India, 55th Round, 1999-2000

Caste and politics:

Basis of Caste System: Caste System is rooted in the belief that **caste is the sole basis of social community** and people belonging to the same caste belong to a natural social community and **have the same interests** which they **do not share with anyone from another caste.**

Caste Inequalities: Unlike Gender and Religion, Caste division is special to India.

- All societies have some kind of social inequality and **some form of Division of labour**.
  - ➤ In most societies, **occupations are passed on from one generation to another.** Its **extreme form is Caste system.**
  - ➤ In Caste system, Hereditary occupational division was **sanctioned by rituals.**
- Members of the same caste group were supposed to form a social community that practiced the same or similar occupation, married within the caste group etc.
- **Caste system** was **based on exclusion of and discrimination** against the 'outcaste' groups. They were subjected to the inhuman practice of untouchability.

Changes in Caste System in Modern India:

- There is **breakdown of caste hierarchy** due to economic development, large scale urbanization, growth of education, occupational mobility and the weakening of the position of landlords in the villages.
- The Constitution of India prohibited any caste-based discrimination and laid the foundations of **policies to reverse the injustices of the caste system.**

Non- disappearance of castes in the contemporary India:

- Some of the **older aspects of caste have persisted** like even now most people **marry** within their own caste or tribe.
- **Untouchability** has not ended completely, despite the Constitutional prohibition.
- The Caste groups that had access to education under the old system have done very well in acquiring modern education.
- Caste continues to be closely linked to **economic status**.

Caste in Politics
Manifestation of Caste in Politics:

- **Selection of candidates in Elections:** Parties keep in mind the caste composition of the electorate and nominate candidates from different castes to muster necessary support to **win elections**.
- **Raising caste sentiments:** Political parties and Candidates in elections make appeals based on caste sentiment to **muster support.**
- **Political mobilization:** Universal Adult Franchise and the Principle of 'one-person-one-vote' have compelled political leaders to gear up to the task of mobilising and securing political support of particular communities.

Elections and Caste:

- **Parties need support of more than one caste:** No parliamentary constituency in the country has a clear majority of one single caste.
- No party wins the votes of all the voters of a caste or community.
- Some voters have more than one candidate from their caste while many voters have no candidate from their caste.
- The ruling party and the sitting MP or MLA frequently lose elections in our country. This signify that **all castes and communities were not frozen in their political preferences.**

Flaws in the Idea of Caste Politics:

- People within the same caste or community have **different interests** depending on their economic condition. Rich and poor or men and women from the same caste often vote very differently.
- People's assessment of the performance of the government and the popularity rating of the leaders matters and are often decisive in elections.

Politics in Caste:

Politics also influences the caste system and caste identities by bringing them into the political arena. Thus, it is not politics that gets caste-ridden, it is **the caste that gets politicised.**

Manifestation of Politics in Caste:

- Each caste group tries to become bigger by **incorporating the neighbouring castes or sub-castes** which were earlier excluded from it.
- Various caste groups are required to enter into a coalition with other castes or communities and thus enter into a **dialogue and negotiation**.
- **New kinds of caste groups** have come up in the political arena like **'backward' and 'forward' caste groups.**
- In some situations, expression of caste differences in politics **gives many disadvantaged communities the space to demand their share of power.**

> 💡 ## Interesting points
>
> - **Child Sex Ratio** is the number of **girl children per thousand boys**.
> - A '**Time use survey**' conducted by the Government of India in six Indian states shows that an average **woman works every day for a little over seven and half hours** while **an average man works for six and a half hours**.

5 POPULAR STRUGGLES AND MOVEMENTS

Democracy almost invariably involves **conflict of interests and viewpoints**. These differences are often **expressed in organised ways**. Those who are in power are **required to balance** these conflicting demands and pressures. Struggles around conflicting demands and pressures **shape the Democracy.** The indirect ways of influencing politics are **through pressure groups and movements** such as Movement of Democracy in April 2006 restored democracy in Nepal.

Democracy and Popular Struggles

- **Evolution of the Democracy through Popular Struggles**:
  - ➤ Defining moments of Democracy usually involve conflict between those groups who have exercised power and those who aspire for a share in power.
  - ➤ These moments come when the country is going through **transition to democracy, expansion of democracy or deepening of democracy.**
- **Conflict resolution through Mass Mobilization**:
  - ➤ Sometimes it is possible that the conflict is resolved by **using the existing institutions** like the Parliament or the Judiciary.
  - ➤ But when there is a **deep dispute**, very often these institutions themselves get involved in the dispute. The **resolution has to come from outside, from the people.**
- **Effective Public Participation**:
  - ➤ The spontaneous public participation becomes effective with the help of organised politics.
  - ➤ There can be many agencies of organised politics which include **political parties, pressure groups and movement groups.**

Mobilisation and Organisations

In a democracy several different kinds of organisations work behind any big struggle.

Roles of Organisations:

- **Direct Participation in competitive Politics**: This is done by **creating parties, contesting elections and forming governments.**
- **Indirect Ways:** Every citizen does not participate directly. They could do so by **forming an organisation** and undertaking activities to promote their interests or their viewpoints. These are called **interest groups or pressure groups**.

Pressure Groups and Movements

- **Pressure Groups:**
  - ➤ They are organisations that attempt to **influence government policies** but unlike political parties, they **do not** aim to **directly control** or share political power.
  - ➤ They are formed when people with common occupation, interest, aspirations or opinions come together in order to achieve a common objective.
- **People's Movements:**
  - ➤ It also attempts to **influence politics** rather than directly take part in **electoral competition** but unlike the interest groups, they have a **loose organisation**. They are not quite an organisation.

- Their decision making is more **informal and flexible**. They depend much more on **spontaneous mass participation** than an interest group.
- People's movement is used to describe many forms of collective action. For example, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Anti-liquor Movement, Women's Movement, etc.

Types of Interest Groups:

- **Sectional Interest Groups:** They are sectional because they **represent a section of society** such as workers, employees, businesspersons, industrialists, followers of a religion, caste group, etc. Their principal **concern is betterment and well-being of their members**, not society in general.
- **Public Interest Groups:** Sometimes these organisations are not about representing the interest of one section of society. Their principal concern is that they **represent some common** or **general interest** that needs to be defended. They are called **Promotional groups or Public Interest Groups** as they **promote collective rather than selective good**.
  - They aim to **help groups other than their own members**. For example, a group fighting against bonded labour fights not for itself but for those who are suffering under such bondage.
  - In some instances, the members of a Public Interest Group may undertake activity that **benefits them as well as others too.**

Forms of Movement Groups:

- Most of the movements are **issue-specific movements** that **seek to achieve a single objective** within a limited time frame. For example, Narmada Bachao Andolan started with the specific issue of the people displaced by the creation of Sardar Sarovar dam on the Narmada river.
- Others are more **general or generic movements** that seek to achieve a **broad goal in the very long term.**
- The **single-issue movements** can be contrasted with **movements that are long term** and involve more than one issue.
- There is **no single organisation** that controls or guides movements such as the Environmental movement and the Women's movement.
- Sometimes the broad movements have a loose umbrella organisation also. For example, the National Alliance for Peoples' Movements (NAPM) is an organisation of organisations.

Influence of Pressure Groups and Movements on Politics:

- They try to **gain public support and sympathy** for their goals and their activities by carrying out information campaigns, organising meetings, filing petitions, etc.
- They often **organise protest activity** like strikes or disrupting government programmes.
- **Business groups** often **employ professional lobbyists** or **sponsor expensive advertisements.**
- Some persons from Pressure groups or Movement groups may **participate in official bodies and committees** that offer **advice to the government**.
- While Interest groups and Movements do not directly engage in party politics, they seek to **exert influence on political parties.**

Various forms of relationship between Political parties and Pressure groups: They may take some direct and others very indirect ways.

- Sometimes the **Pressure groups** are **either formed or led by the leaders of political parties** or act as extended arms of political parties. For example, most **students' organization** in India are either established by or affiliated to one or the other major political party.
- Sometimes **Political parties grow out of movements.** For example, **Asom Gana Parishad (AGP)** formed after the **Assam movement** led by students against the 'foreigners' came to an end.
- They often take positions that are opposed to each other. Yet they are in dialogue and negotiation.
- Movement groups have raised new issues that have been taken up by political parties.

Influence of Interest groups on Politics

Negatives Influences:

- It may initially appear that it is not healthy for groups that **promote interest of one section** to have influence in democracy. **A Democracy must look after the interests of all**, not just one section.
- It may seem that these groups wield power **without any responsibility**.
- Political parties have to face the people in elections, but these groups are **not accountable** to the people.
- Sometimes, Pressure groups with small public support but lots of money can **hijack public discussion** in favour of their narrow agenda.

Positives Influences:

- It **deepens the Democracy** as putting pressure on the rulers is not an unhealthy activity in a Democracy as long as everyone gets this opportunity.
- Public Interest groups and Movements perform a useful role of **countering the undue influence of powerful** and reminding the government of the needs and concerns of ordinary citizens.
- Where different groups function actively, **no one single group can achieve dominance** over society. If one group brings pressure on government to make policies in its favour, another will bring counter pressure not to make policies in the way the first group desires. This leads to a rough **balance of power** and **accommodation of conflicting interests**.

💡 Interesting points

- **Bolivia's Water War: Bolivia** is a poor country in **Latin America, where People** successfully **struggled against Privatisation of water** in Bolivia.
- In 1987, a movement called **Kittiko-Hachchiko (meaning, pluck and plant)** started a **non-violent protest in Karnataka**, where people plucked the eucalyptus plants and planted saplings of trees that were useful to the people.
- **Green Belt Movement:** Its leader is **Wangari Maathai,** and it has **planted 30 million trees across Kenya.**

6 POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties act as **vehicles of federal sharing** of political power and as negotiators of social divisions in the arena of Democratic politics. They are easily one of the **most visible institutions** in a Democracy.

Political Party:

- It is a **group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power** in the Government.
- They agree on **some policies and programmes** for the society with a view to **promote the collective good.**
- They try to **persuade people** that their policies are better than others. They seek to implement these policies by **winning popular support through elections.**
- They **reflect fundamental political divisions in a society**. Parties are about a part of the society and thus involve partisanship.
- **Components of a Political Party**: Leaders, Active members and Followers.

Functions of Political Parties:

It fills political offices and exercise political power by performing a series of functions such as:

- **To contest Elections:** In most Democracies, elections are fought mainly among the candidates put up by political parties.
- **To put forward different Policies and Programme:** A party reduces a vast multitude of opinions into a few basic positions which it supports. A Government is expected to base its policies on the line taken by the Ruling party.
- **To play a decisive role in law-making**: Formally, Laws are debated and passed in the Legislature but since most of the members belong to a party and go by the direction of their party leadership.
- **To form and run the Government:** The big policy decisions are taken by political executive that comes from the political parties. Parties recruit leaders, train them and then make them ministers to run the government in their own way.
- **To provide voice for different opinions:** Those parties that lose in the elections play the **role of opposition** by voicing different views and **criticizing government** for its failures or wrong policies.
- **To shape Public opinion:** They raise and **highlight issues**. Many of the Pressure groups are the extensions of political parties among different sections of society. They also **launch movements** for the resolution of problems faced by people.
- **To enable easy access to the Public:** For an ordinary citizen, it is **easy to approach a local party** leader than a Government officer. Parties have to be responsive to people's needs and demands.

Necessity of Political Parties:
Situation without Political Parties:

- Every candidate in the elections will be independent and **no one will be able to make any promises** to the people about any major policy changes. The **Government** may be formed, but its **utility will remain ever uncertain.**

- Elected representatives will be accountable to their constituency for what they do in the locality. But **no one will be responsible for how the country will be run.**

Emergence of the Representative Democracies:

- **Large societies need representative democracy:** As societies became large and complex, they also needed some agency to gather different views on various issues and to present these to the Government.
- They needed a mechanism to support or restrain the government, make policies, justify, or oppose them.

Party System

A party system is a concept concerning the system of government by political parties in a democratic country. It could vary from country to country.

Evolution of the Party system: A Party system evolves over a long period of time. It depends **on the nature of society**, **social and regional divisions**, **history of politics** and **system of elections**.

- Each country develops a party system that is conditioned by its special circumstances.
- **Example**: India has evolved a multiparty system because the social and geographical diversity in such a vast country is not easily absorbed by two or even three parties.

Types of Part System

One-Party system:

- When **only one party is allowed to control and run the Government**. For example, In China, only the Communist Party is allowed to rule.
- Though legally people are free to form political parties, but it does not happen because **the electoral system does not permit free competition for power**.
- **Drawback:** This is **not a democratic option** as any Democratic system must allow at least two parties to compete in elections and provide a fair chance for the competing parties to come to power.

Two-Party system:

- In some countries, the **power usually changes between two main political parties**.
- Several other parties may exist, contest elections and win a few seats in the national legislatures. But only the two main parties have a serious chance of winning majority of seats to form the Government. For example, USA, United Kingdom.

Multi-Party system:

- If **several parties compete for power**, and **more than two parties have a reasonable chance of coming to power** either on their own strength or in alliance with others. For example, India.

- **Advantage:** It **allows a variety of interests and opinions** to enjoy political representation.
- **Disadvantage:** It often appears very messy and leads to **political instability.**

Kinds of Political Parties in Federal System:
- Parties that are present in only one of the federal units.
- Parties that are present in several or all units of the federation.

National Parties:
In India, there are some **countrywide parties** known as **'National Parties'.** These parties have their units in various states but by and large, all these units follow the same policies, programmes and strategy that is decided at the National level. Following are some procedures regarding Political parties in India:
- **Every party** has to **register with the Election Commission of India (ECI).**
- While the ECI treats all parties equally, it **offers some special facilities** to large and established parties:
  - They are given a **Unique symbol** and **only the Official candidates** of that party can use that election symbol.
  - Parties that get this privilege and some other special facilities are **'recognised' by the Election Commission** for this purpose. That is why these parties are called, **'Recognised Political Parties'.**
- **Conditions laid down by the ECI to be as a recognized 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.**
  - According to this classification, there were seven recognised national parties in the country in 2018:

Table: 6.1: Recognised National Parties in India (in 2018)

National Party	Details
All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)	- Launched **on 1 January 1998** under the **leadership of Mamata Banerjee.** **Recognised as a National party in 2016**. - The **party's symbol is flowers** and **grass**.
Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)	**Formed in 1984** under the **leadership of Kanshi Ram**. - The **party's symbol is Elephant.** - Seeks to represent and secure power for the **Bahujan Samaj** which **includes the dalits, adivasis, OBCs and religious minorities**. - Draws **inspiration** from the ideas and teachings of **Sahu Maharaj, Mahatma Phule, Periyar Ramaswami Naicker and Babasaheb Ambedkar**.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	• **Founded in 1980** by **reviving the erstwhile Bharatiya Jana Sangh, formed by Syama Prasad Mukherjee in 1951.** • Wants to build a strong and modern India by drawing inspiration from India's ancient culture and values, and **Deendayal Upadhyaya's ideas of integral humanism and Antyodaya**.
Communist Party of India (CPI)	• **Formed in 1925**. • Believes in **Marxism-Leninism, secularism, and democracy.** • Accepts parliamentary democracy as a means of **promoting the interests of the working class, farmers, and the poor**.
Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPI-M)	• **Founded in 1964**. • **Believes in Marxism-Leninism.** • Accepts democratic elections as a useful and helpful means for securing the objective of socioeconomic justice in India. • Enjoys strong support among the poor, factory workers, farmers, agricultural labourers and the intelligentsia.
Indian National Congress (INC)	• **Founded in 1885** and popularly known as **the Congress Party**. • One of the **oldest parties of the world**. • A **centrist party** (neither rightist nor leftist) in its ideological orientation.
Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)	• **Formed in 1999** following a split in the Congress party.

State Parties:
- Other than these seven national parties, most of the **major parties of the country** are **classified** by the **Election Commission as 'State Parties'**. These are commonly referred to as **Regional Parties**.
- These parties **need not be regional in their ideology or outlook**. Some of these parties are all India parties that happen to have succeeded only in some states.

Journey of Regional parties:
- As over the last three decades, the number and strength of regional parties has expanded. It has led to bring **more diversity in the Parliament**.
- Since 1996, nearly every one of the State parties has got an opportunity to be a part of one or the other **National level coalition government**.

Issues with Political Parties

- **Lack of Internal democracy within parties:**
  - All over the world, there is a tendency in political parties **towards the concentration of power** in one or few leaders at the top.
  - Parties do not keep membership registers, do not hold organisational meetings, and **do not conduct internal elections** regularly.
  - Ordinary members of the party do not get sufficient information on what happens inside the party.
- **Dynastic succession:**
  - Since most political parties **do not practice open and transparent procedures** for their functioning, there are very few ways for an ordinary worker to rise to the top in a party.
  - In many parties, the **top positions are always controlled by members of one family.**
  - People who do not have adequate experience or popular support come to occupy positions of power.
- **Role of Money and Muscle power:**
  - Parties tend to use short-cuts to win elections. They 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.
  - In some cases, parties support criminals who can win elections.
- **Lack of meaningful choices to the voters**: In recent years there has been a **decline in the ideological differences** among parties in most parts of the world. For example, In India, the differences among all the major parties on the economic policies have reduced. Those who want really different policies have no option available to them.

Steps undertaken to reform Political Parties:
- **Constitution amendment:**
  - The Constitution was amended to **prevent elected MLAs and MPs from changing parties** as many elected representatives were indulging in **defection** in order to become ministers or for cash rewards.
  - Now, the Law says that **if any MLA or MP changes parties, he or she will lose the seat in the legislature.** But this **has made any dissent even more difficult** as MPs and MLAs have to accept whatever the party leaders decide.
- **Supreme Court (SC) orders**: SC passed an order to reduce the influence of money and criminals. It is made **mandatory for every candidate who contests elections to file an affidavit** giving details of his **property and criminal cases** pending against him. But there is no system of check if the information given by the candidates is true.
- **Election Commission orders**: It passed an order making it **necessary for political parties to hold their organisational elections and file their income tax returns**. Though the parties have started doing so but sometimes it is mere formality.

Measures to reform Political Parties:

- 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 its members, to follow its own constitution, to hold open elections to the highest posts etc.
- It should be made mandatory for political parties to give a **minimum number of tickets, about one-third, to women candidates.**
- There should be **state funding of elections** in the forms of kind such as petrol, paper, telephone etc. or in cash on the basis of the votes secured by the party in the last election.
- People can put pressure on political parties through **petitions, publicity and agitations.** If political parties feel that they would lose public support by not taking up reforms, they will become more serious about the reforms.
- Political parties can improve if those who want to improve the situation join political parties. The quality of Democracy depends on the degree of **public participation.**

Interesting points

- **Election Commission of India** has **officially banned wall-writing** by parties **during election times**.
- **More than 750 parties are registered** with the Election Commission of India.

7 OUTCOMES OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy has some expected and actual outcomes of democracy in various respects such as quality of government, economic well-being, inequality, social differences and conflict and finally freedom and dignity.

Democracy: A better form of Government

Following characteristics of the Democracy makes it a better form of a Government:

- It promotes **equality** among citizens.
- It enhances the **dignity** of the individuals.
- It improves the **quality of decision making**.
- It provides a **method to resolve conflicts**.
- It allows **room to correct mistakes**.

Ideals of the Democracy

Accountable, Responsive, and Legitimate Government:

Democracy should produce a government that is accountable to the citizens, and responsive to the needs and expectations of the citizens.

- Democracy is concerned with ensuring that **People will have the right to choose and control their rulers.**
- Whenever possible and necessary, **Citizens should be able to participate in decision making**, that affects them all.
- It **follows the laid procedures**.
- A **Citizen can know** if a decision was taken through the correct procedures. One has **the right and the means to examine** the process of decision making.
- It develops mechanisms for citizens to **hold the government accountable** and mechanisms for citizens to take part in decision making whenever they think fit.
- Democracies have had greater success in setting up regular and free elections and in setting up conditions for **open public debate**.

Economic growth and development:

If democracies are expected to produce Good Governments, then is it fair to expect that they would also **produce development.**

- **Factors affecting economic development:** Country's population size, global situation, cooperation from other countries, economic priorities adopted by the country, etc.
- The difference in the rates of economic development between less developed countries with dictatorships and democracies is negligible. Democracy is expected **not to lag behind dictatorships** in this respect.

Reduction of inequality and poverty:

Perhaps more than development, it is reasonable to expect democracies to **reduce economic disparities**.

- **Political equality**: All individuals have **equal weight in electing representatives**.
- **Reducing Economic inequalities:** The poor constitute a large proportion of voters and no party would

like to lose their votes. Yet democratically elected governments do not appear to be as keen to address the question of poverty. However, a good Democracy must deal with such issues.

Accommodation of Social diversity:

Democracy should produce a harmonious social life.

- **Accommodate Social divisions**: Democracies usually develop a procedure to conduct their competition. This reduces the possibility of these tensions becoming explosive or violent.
- **Handle Conflicts**: Democracy has ability to handle social differences, divisions and conflicts. Non-democratic regimes often turn a blind eye to or suppress internal social differences. A democracy must fulfil two conditions in order to achieve this outcome:
  - ➢ The majority always needs to work with the minority so that Government functions to represent the general view.
  - ➢ In terms of religion or race or linguistic group, Rule by majority means that in case of every decision or in case of every election, different persons and groups may and can form a majority.

Dignity and Freedom of the Individuals:

Democracy stands much superior to any other form of government in promoting the Dignity and Freedom of the Individuals.

- The passion for respect and freedom are the basis of democracy. Democracies throughout the world have recognised this, at least in principle, and it has been achieved in various degrees in various democracies.
- For Societies which have been built for long on the basis of subordination and domination, it is not a simple matter to recognize that all individuals are equal. For instance, the Democracy in India has strengthened the claims of the disadvantaged and discriminated castes for equal status and equal opportunity.

Success of the Democracy:

People have developed awareness and the ability to expect and to look critically at Power holders. A Public expression of dissatisfaction with democracy shows the success of the democratic project. It **transforms people from the status of a Subject into that of a Citizen**.

💡 ## Interesting points

- **Economic outcomes of Dictatorial regimes and Democracy:**
  - ➢ **Dictatorial regimes**: On an average, the dictatorial regimes have had a slightly better record of economic growth.

Rates of economic growth for different countries, 1950-2000	
Type of regimes and countries	**Growth Rate**
All democratic regimes	3.95
All dictatorial regimes	4.42
Poor countries under dictatorship	4.34
Poor countries under democracy	4.28

Table 7.1: Rates of economic growth for different countries

➢ **Democratic regimes**: Within democracies there can be very high degree of inequalities. In Democratic countries like South Africa and Brazil, **the top 20 per cent people take away more than 60 per cent of the national income**, leaving less than 3 per cent for the bottom 20 per cent population.

Inequality of income in selected countries		
Name of the Countries	**% share of national income**	
	Top 20 %	**Bottom 20 %**
South Africa	64.8	2.9
Brazil	63.0	2.6
Russia	53.7	4.4
USA	50.0	4.0
United Kingdom	45.0	6.0
Denmark	34.5	9.6
Hungary	34.4	10.0

Table 7.2: Inequality of income in selected countries

8 CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY

Democracy is the better form of Government, but it has some challenges that are faced in India and worldwide.

Challenges faced by different countries:

- **Foundational challenge:**
  - At least one fourth of the globe is still **not under Democratic government**. These countries face the **challenge of making the transition to the Democracy** and then instituting a Democratic Government.
  - This involves bringing down the existing non-democratic regime, keeping military away from controlling Government and **establishing a Sovereign and Functional state**.

- **Challenge of Expansion:**
  - It is faced by the most of established democracies and involves **applying the basic principle of Democratic Government** across all the regions, different social groups and various institutions.
  - These principles include ensuring greater **power to Local Governments**, extension of **Federal principle** to all the units of the Federation, **inclusion of Women and Minority groups, etc.**
  - This also means that less and less decisions should remain outside the arena of Democratic control. Most countries including India and other democracies like the US face such a challenge.

- **Deepening of Democracy:**
  - It is faced by every Democracy in one form or another and involves **strengthening of the Institutions and practices of Democracy.** This should happen in such a way that people can realise their expectations of democracy.
  - It usually means strengthening those institutions that help **people's participation and control.**
  - This requires an attempt to **bring down the control and influence of the rich and powerful** people in making Governmental decision.

Political Reforms:

Generally, all the suggestions or proposals about overcoming various challenges to democracy are called **'Democracy reform' or 'Political reform'.**

Guidelines to devise ways and means for Political Reforms in India:

- **Overcoming resistance in bringing Legal changes:**
  - Law has an important role to play in political reform and carefully devised changes in law can help to discourage wrong political practices and encourage good ones. But legal-constitutional changes by themselves cannot overcome challenges to Democracy.
  - Democratic reforms are to be carried out mainly by political activists, parties, movements, and politically conscious citizens.

- **Carefully analysing results from any legal change:**
  - Results of legal change may be counterproductive. For example, many states have banned people who have more than two children from contesting Panchayat elections which has resulted in **denial of Democratic opportunity** to many poor and women.
  - Laws that give political actors incentives to do good things have more chances of working.

- The **best laws are those which empower people** to carry out Democratic reforms. For example, **RTI Act** empowers the people to find out what is happening in Government and act as **watchdogs of democracy.**
- **Increase Political Participation**:
  - The main focus of Political reforms should be on ways to strengthen Democratic practice.
  - The most important concern should be to increase and improve the **quality of political participation by ordinary citizens.**
- **Promotion of Democratic movements, Citizens' organisations and Media:** It is not very wise to think that the legislatures will pass legislations that go against the interest of all the Political parties and Members of Parliament. But measures that rely on Democratic movements, Citizens' organisations and Media are likely to succeed.

Interesting points

- **Challenge:** A challenge is not just any problem but only those difficulties become a 'challenge' which are significant, and which can be overcome. A **challenge is a difficulty that carries within it an opportunity for progress.** Once a challenge is overcome, one goes up to a higher level than before.