



BYJU'S
EXAM PREP | **IAS**



POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Webinar Handout

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1. National Commission for Minorities (NCM)



National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

- National Commission for Minorities is a statutory body established under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.
- The National Commission for Minorities was established to provide an institutional arrangement for evaluating the safeguards provided in the Constitution for protecting minorities,

The genesis of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

- The establishment of a Minorities Commission was envisioned in a Ministry of Home Affairs Resolution dated 12.01.1978, which specifically stated that "despite the safeguards provided in the Constitution and the laws in force, there persists among the minorities a sense of inequality and discrimination."
- To preserve secular traditions and promote national integration, the Government of India places utmost importance on enforcing safeguards for minorities in the Constitution, Central and State Laws, and government policies and administrative procedures.
- In 1984, the Minorities Commission was detached from the Ministry of Home Affairs and placed under the newly created Ministry of Welfare.
- In 1988, Linguistic minorities were excluded from the Minorities Commission's jurisdiction by the Ministry of Welfare.
- In 1992, the National Commission for Minorities Act was enacted, through which the Minorities Commission became a statutory body and was renamed as National Commission for Minorities (NCM).
- In 1993, The First Statutory National Commission was set up under which five religious communities viz; the Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians (Parsis) were notified as minority communities.
- In 2014, Jains were also notified as a minority community.

Constitutional Provisions to Minorities

- The Constitution of India does not define the word 'Minority' and only refers to 'Minorities' and speaks of those 'based on religion or language; the rights of the minorities have been spelt out in the Constitution in detail.
- The Constitution provides two sets of rights for minorities which can be placed in the 'common domain' and 'separate domain'.
 - Common Domain Rights: These are applicable to all the citizens of our country.
 - Separate Domain Rights: These are applicable to minorities only and are reserved to protect their identity.
- Common Domain Rights:
 - Part III of the Constitution - Fundamental Rights -
 - Article 14 - people's right to 'equality before the law' and 'equal protection of the laws'.
 - Article 15 (1) & (2) - prohibition of discrimination against citizens on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
 - Article 15 (4) - the authority of the State to make 'any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens (besides the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes).

- Article 16(1) & (2) - citizens' right to 'equality of opportunity' in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State – and prohibition in this regard of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
- Article 16(4) - Authority of State to make 'any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State.
- Article 25(1) - people's freedom of conscience and right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion – subject to public order, morality and other Fundamental Rights.
- Article 26 - the right of 'every religious denomination or any section thereof – subject to public order, morality and health – to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes, 'manage its own affairs in matters of religion, and own and acquire movable, immovable property and administer it 'in accordance with the law.
- Article 27 - a prohibition against compelling any person to pay taxes to promote any particular religion.
- Article 28 - people's 'freedom to attend religious instruction or religious worship in educational institutions wholly maintained, recognised, or aided by the State.
- Part IV of the Constitution - Directive Principles of State Policy
 - Article 38 (2) - the obligation of the State 'to endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities' amongst individuals and groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.
 - Article 46 - the obligation of the State 'to promote with special care' the educational and economic interests of 'the weaker sections of the people' (besides Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes).
- Separate Domain Rights
 - Article 29(1) - the right of 'any section of the citizens' to 'conserve' its 'distinct language, script or culture'.
 - Article 29(2) - restriction on denial of admission to any citizen, to any educational institution maintained or aided by the State, 'on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them'.
 - Article 30(1) - right of all Religious and Linguistic Minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
 - Article 30(2) - freedom of Minority-managed educational institutions from discrimination in the matter of receiving aid from the State.
 - Article 347 - special provision relating to the language spoken by a section of the population of any State.
 - Article 350 A - provision for facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at the primary stage.
 - Article 350 B - provision for a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities and his duties; and
 - Sikh community's right to 'wearing and carrying of kirpans (Article 25(1)).

Ministry of Minority Affairs

- The Ministry of Minority Affairs was established in January 2006.
- The Ministry is mandated to formulate policies, schemes and programmes for the welfare and socio-economic development of 6 (six) notified minority communities, namely, Jains, Parsis, Buddhists, Sikhs, Christians and Muslims, which constitute around 20% of India's population.

Religion	Number(In crores)	%
Muslims	17.22	14.2
Christians	2.78	2.3
Sikhs	2.08	1.7
Buddhists	.84	0.7
Jains	.45	0.4
Total	23.37	19.30

Source : Census 2011

- The Ministry has adopted a multi-pronged strategy for developing minority communities with a focus on educational empowerment; infrastructure development; economic empowerment; fulfilling special needs, and strengthening minority institutions.
- The welfare and development schemes of the Ministry focus on poor and deprived sections of the minorities.
 - Seekho aur Kamao.
 - Nai Manzil.
 - Jiyo Parsi.
 - Hamari Dharohar.
 - Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram.
 - Padho Pardesh.
 - Naya Savera - Free Coaching and Allied Scheme.
 - Nai Udaan.
 - Scheme for Providing Education to Madrasas/Minorities (SPEMM).
 - Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development (USTTAD).

Functions of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

- Section 2 (c) of NCM Act, 1992 stipulates that 'Minority' for the purposes of the Act means a community notified as such by the Central Government.
- Therefore, all the functions of the Commission, as laid down in Section 9(1) of the Act, are related to the six notified communities.
 - Evaluation of the progress of the development of minorities under the Union and States;
 - Monitoring of the working of the safeguards for minorities provided in the Constitution and in laws enacted by Parliament and the State Legislatures;
 - Making recommendations for the effective implementation of safeguards for the protection of the interests of minorities by the Central Government or the State Governments;
 - Looking into specific complaints regarding deprivation of rights and safeguards of minorities and taking up such matters with the appropriate authorities;
 - Getting studies to be undertaken into the problems arising out of any discrimination against minorities and recommending measures for their removal;
 - Conducting studies, research and analysis on the issues relating to the socio-economic and educational development of minorities;
 - Suggesting appropriate measures in respect of any minority to be undertaken by the Central Government or the State Governments;
 - Making periodical or special reports to the Central Government or any matter pertaining to minorities and, in particular, the difficulties confronted by them; and
 - Any other matter which may be referred to by the Central Government.

Composition of National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

- As per Section 3(2) of the NCM Act 1992, the Commission consists of:
 - A Chairperson
 - A Vice- Chairperson
 - Five Members
- A total of 7 persons to be nominated by the Central Government from amongst persons of eminence, ability and integrity.
- Each Member holds office for a period of three years from the date of assumption of office.

Powers of National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

The Commission shall have all the powers of a civil court trying a suit and, in particular, in respect of the following matters, namely:

- Summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of India and examining him on oath.
- Requiring the discovery and production of any document.
- Receiving evidence on affidavit.
- Requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court or office.

- Issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses and documents.
- Any other matter which may be prescribed.

Responsibility of the Central/ State Governments

- The Central/ State Government shall cause the recommendations to be laid before each House of Parliament/ Legislature respectively, along with a memorandum explaining the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations relating to the Union/ State and the reasons for the non-acceptance, if any, of any of such recommendations or part.

Issues faced by the National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

Minorities Commission 1978-2015: Minor Role in Major Affairs, written by former NCM chairman Tahir Mahmood, refers to the NCM as a toothless tiger, white elephant, and Sarkari puppet. It has also been dubbed the "National Commission for Tokenism."

- **No constitutional status:** NCM lacks constitutional authority (it is a statutory body), which would give it the authority and power it requires to carry out its functions effectively.
- **Absence of any constitutional power:** Its lack of constitutional authority to undertake independent inquiries or investigations into violations of minorities' rights, particularly in cases of communal violence, renders the Commission legally unable to perform its duties.
 - Bill, according to constitutional status to the NCM, was prepared way back in 2013, and it was still pending before the government.
- **Toothless tiger:** It has no "teeth" in terms of legal power to carry out its constitutional task. The Commission's decision may be reversed by the district and high courts.
 - The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2017-18), in its 53rd report, also noted that the NCM is "almost ineffective" in its current state in dealing with cases of atrocities against minority communities.
- **No reports tabled:**
 - Section 13 of the NCM Act requires that the yearly report, "together with the memoranda of action taken on the recommendations contained therein," as well as the reasons for not accepting the proposals, be submitted before Parliament on an annual basis.
 - According to sources, these reports have not been tabled in Parliament since 2010. Furthermore, its recommendations are frequently rejected or stored away and forgotten.
- **Partisan representation:** There has been a shift in the composition of the body's membership. Unlike previous selections, which included former chief justices, government employees, academicians, and others, the most recent appointees were largely "social activists" with ties to the ruling party.
- **Capacity-related challenges:** These include human resource deficit, as is the case currently. The Commission is unable to adequately implement its purpose when the key positions of Commission members remain vacant. For example, the Commission tasked with holding hearings is overwhelmed by the volume of cases it receives.
- **Underutilization of technology:** There is no real-time communication of hearing schedules and appointments with complainants, resulting in time and money waste.
 - In 2021, The Delhi High Court directed the Centre to fill up the vacant posts of chairperson and five other members of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM).
- **Only a few State minority commissions:**
 - The Annual Conference of State Minorities Commissions (2008) made a strong proposal that "the State Governments should likewise establish State Minorities Commissions along similar lines (as that of the NCM)."
 - Only 16 states, however, have established such commissions.
 - These, too, are understaffed and mainly dysfunctional due to a lack of human resource capacity and the absence of a regular monitoring system of the State Commissions' operations.
- **Pressure on NCM:** With weak State Finance Commissions, the NCM bears the brunt of the burden, further reducing its efficiency.
- **Inadequate powers to State Minority Commissions:** Under the Prime Minister's 15-Point Program for Minorities, state Minority Commissions are not granted appropriate authorities to execute, monitor, and review developmental programmes and welfare systems.

- **Lack of research:** Even though one of the critical responsibilities of the NCM is to conduct "studies, research, and analysis on issues relevant to the socio-economic and educational development of minorities," only a tiny percentage of the Commission's budgeted budget is spent on research activities.

Prime Minister's New 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities

(A) Enhancing opportunities for Education

1. Equitable availability of ICDS Services.
2. Improving access to School Education.
3. Greater resources for teaching Urdu.
4. Modernising Madarsa Education.
5. Scholarships for meritorious students from minority communities.
6. Improving educational infrastructure through the Maulana Azad Education Foundation.

(B) Equitable Share in Economic Activities and Employment

7. Self-Employment and Wage Employment for the poor.
8. Upgradation of skills through technical training.
9. Enhanced credit support for economic activities.
10. Recruitment to State and Central Services.

(C) Improving the conditions of living of minorities

11. Equitable share in rural housing scheme.
12. Improvement in the condition of slums inhabited by minority communities.

(D) Prevention & Control of Communal Riots

13. Prevention of communal incidents.
14. Prosecution for communal offences.
15. Rehabilitation of victims of communal riots.

Way Forward

- The Central Government should address the issues faced by the NCM to make it a more powerful organisation for protecting minorities' interests.
- The Central Government should also consider the recommendations given by the parliamentary committee to provide constitutional status 'without any delay'.

Previous Year/ Prospective Questions

1. Examine the role of the National Commission for Minorities in preserving, promoting and protecting the rights of Minorities in India. (2017, 15 Marks)

2. Regionalisation of World Politics – APEC & NAFTA

Regionalisation of World Politics – APEC



Introduction

- Political thinkers have kept scepticism in building the regional institution in the Indo-Pacific region.
- With East Asian economic success, the end of the Cold War, and shifts in power among Asian states.
- To build a cooperation forum that facilitates economic cooperation in the region and provides for a continuing special post-Cold War association between East Asia and North America, APEC started in 1989 in response to the growing interdependence of Asia-Pacific economies and the advent of regional trade blocs in other parts of the world.
- APEC aimed to establish new markets for agricultural products and raw materials beyond Europe.
- APEC influences significant global policy on trade-related matters.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

- The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional economic forum established in 1989 to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific.
- APEC's 21 members aim to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration.
- APEC has 21 members. The word 'economies' is used to describe APEC members because the APEC cooperative process is predominantly concerned with trade and economic issues, with members engaging with one another as economic entities.
- APEC's permanent secretariat based in Singapore.

Objectives of APEC

APEC works on the three pillars of areas according to the Bogor Declaration 2010. These objectives enable APEC Member Economies to strengthen their economies by pooling resources within the region and achieving efficiencies:

- **Trade and Investment Liberalization:** Trade and investment liberalisation reduces and eventually eliminates tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and investment. It is against the Protectionism policies of member countries. Thus, Trade and Investment Liberation focuses on opening markets to increase trade and investment among economies, resulting in economic growth for APEC Member Economies and an increased standard of living for all.
- **Business Facilitation:** It focuses on reducing the costs of business transactions, improving access to trade information, and aligning policy and business strategies to facilitate growth and free and open trade. Its main aim is to reduce the cost of business transactions both for the public and private system and fight inflation and increase employment in the region.
- **Economic and Technical Cooperation (ECOTECH):** ECOTECH is dedicated to providing training and cooperation to build capacities in all APEC Member Economies to take advantage of global trade. It primarily focuses on capacity building and skill enhancement in the member countries.

What Does APEC Do?

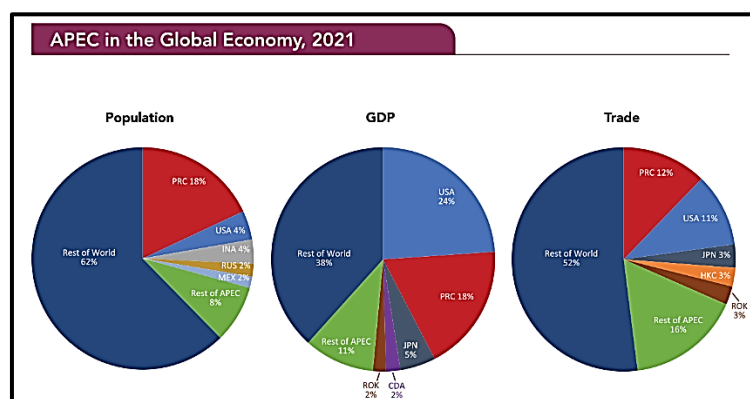
- APEC ensures that goods, services, investments and people move easily across borders. Members facilitate this trade through faster customs procedures at borders;
- Creating more favorable business climates behind the border; and aligning regulations and standards across the region.

- For example, APEC's initiatives to synchronise regulatory systems is a key step to integrating the Asia-Pacific economy. A product can be more easily exported with just one set of common standards across all economies.

APEC - Members

- APEC's 21 member economies are Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; The Philippines; The Russian Federation; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; United States of America; Viet Nam.

APEC at Global Level



Features of the APEC

APEC is a unique grouping among the other trade and regional blocs, it has some important features:

- Open Regionalism:** APEC is considered an informal forum due to the absence of institutional procedures and legality of the decision-making. Member states can have the option to participate in particular policy decisions. Private and Business persons can easily participate in the decision-making process.
- Non-Discrimination:** It means that members offer any reductions in their trade barriers to all other countries in a non-discriminatory way, whether members of APEC or not.
- The principle of concerted unilateralism is an APECs primary **mechanism for liberalising trade**. This process means that proposals are not formally negotiated. Each member brings to the annual APEC summit an internally generated offer of trade and investment liberalisation measures, known as an Individual Action Plan (IAP), which is not subject to any serious bargaining. All members must agree to one another's plans for lowering trade barriers.
- Soft Regionalism:** APEC differs from other institutions like WTO as it has targets that are non-legally binding, having voluntary compliance with no retaliatory features.
- Consensus-based decision-making:** APEC did not reflect any regional identity. Policies agreed to at APEC meetings are adopted voluntarily, and information sharing between member economies and the public is an important feature.

Sustainable and Inclusive Asia-Pacific

- APEC works to help all residents of the Asia-Pacific participate in the growing economy.
 - For example, APEC projects provide digital skills training for rural communities and help indigenous women export their products abroad.
- Recognizing the impacts of climate change, APEC members also implement initiatives to increase energy efficiency and promote sustainable management of forest and marine resources.
- The forum adapts to allow members to deal with important new challenges to the region's economic well-being, which includes ensuring disaster resilience, planning for pandemics, and addressing terrorism.

How does APEC work?

- APEC operates as a cooperative, multilateral economic and trade forum. Member economies participate on the basis of open dialogue and respect for the views of all participants.
- In APEC, all economies have an equal say, and decision-making is reached by consensus. There are no binding commitments or treaty obligations.
- Commitments are undertaken on a voluntary basis, and capacity-building projects help members implement APEC initiatives.
- APEC's structure is based on both a "bottom-up" and "top-down" approach.
- Four core committees and their respective working groups provide strategic policy recommendations to APEC Leaders and Ministers who annually set the vision for overarching goals and initiatives.
- The working groups are then tasked with implementing these initiatives through various APEC-funded projects.
- Members also take individual and collective actions to carry out APEC initiatives in their individual economies with the assistance of APEC capacity-building projects.

Structure of APEC

From the beginning, a substantial portion of APEC's members were reluctant to support the institutionalisation of APEC, but Over the past decade, however, APEC has become an institution, and institutional machinery has developed accordingly.

- **APEC leaders and Ministerial meetings-** Most important meetings annually, key policy decisions taken during the meet. There are regular meetings of APEC Ministers of education, energy, environment and sustainable development, finance, fisheries, human resources development, science and technology, small and medium enterprises, telecommunications, trade, tourism, and transportation.
- APEC Business advisory meetings and Sectoral meetings.
- **APEC Secretariat:** Established in 1993 in Singapore. The secretariat is managed by an Executive Director, chosen annually by the incoming host economy, and is responsible to APEC Senior Officials.

Achievements of APEC

- Since its inception, APEC has substantially reduced tariffs and improved the ease and speed of trade in the Asia-Pacific.
- As a result of APEC's work, growth has soared in the region, with real GDP increasing from USD 19 trillion in 1989 to USD 46.9 trillion in 2018.
- Average tariffs fell from 17 per cent in 1989 to 5.3 per cent in 2018. During that same time period, the APEC region's total trade increased over seven times – outpacing the rest of the world, with two-thirds of this trade occurring between member economies.
- In 1994, APEC Leaders committed to achieving the **Bogor Goals** of free and open trade and investment by 2020 by reducing trade barriers in the region and promoting the free flow of goods, services and capital among APEC economies. Since then, members have made measurable progress in achieving these goals.
- The APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) allows pre-approved business travellers and senior government officials to enter 19 Apec economies without a visa.
- ABTC holders are given fast-track entry and exit through special APEC lanes at participating airports.
- APEC is encouraging the development of clean technologies and greener growth across the region by lowering tariffs on environmental goods.
- The APEC Digital Opportunity Center was established in 2004 to provide computer skills training to vulnerable rural and urban communities.

Criticism of APEC

- The 21 economies of APEC together constitute more than half of the world's annual output and almost half of the world's total merchandise trade (60% of the World's GDP). This is seen by many critics and economists as a threat to non-FTA members.
- It is also said that APEC may undermine global economic institutions, leading to regional-based competition and conflict.
- The non-conditional nature of reducing trade barriers often harms the growth of economic integration in other countries of economic groupings. Critics argue that APEC's agenda at summit meetings have become broader and less relevant to its core goals of reducing barriers to trade and investment.
- New competitors, such as ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan, and South Korea) and the annual East Asia Summit, also call into question APEC's relevance in global governance. Recent policies like Neo-Protectionism, Tariff wars between the member states also call on the relevance of APEC.

India and APEC membership

With the rise of fragmenting multilateralism and strengthened geopolitics, showing that the international system is in flux, India has been trying to expand its trade relations with different blocs. With the failure to join the RCEP, some thinkers support the inclusion of India in APEC. With 47% of global trade and 60% of world GDP. APEC is a major opportunity for India to integrate into Indo-Pacific economic architecture.

India has long been interested in APEC but is not yet a member. India was invited to be an observer for the first time in November 2011.

- **Challenges to the Indian Membership:**
 - The main challenge for India is its extra-regional status, as India does not border the Pacific Ocean, which all current members do.
 - The main impediment has been the opposition of some participants who have held India's record on economic reforms and WTO engagement to be unsatisfactory and unworthy of meriting inclusion as a member in the grouping. Since 2012.
 - Some Countries view Indian policy and politics as insufficiently supportive of more open trade and greater regional integration. India's record in trade negotiations, bilaterally as well as in the World Trade Organization (WTO), has made some APEC economies concerned that including India would slow momentum for achieving the forum's objectives.
 - India's resistance to negotiating bilateral investment treaties (BITs) is another reason some APEC member economies remain wary of India joining.
 - Domestic politics and constraints within India have also made it difficult for the Indian government to take the kind of steps necessary to build support for its membership.
 - APEC's leaders have decided not to extend the moratorium on new membership (in force since 1997). APEC last considered new members in 1998.
- **Supporters for Indian Inclusion:**
 - Key APEC members, including the United States, Japan, China, and Russia, have all welcomed India's interest in joining APEC.
 - Supporters argue that India must be brought into the fold for it has shown progress in reforming and liberalising its economy.
 - Granting India membership status may also act as a catalyst for trade reform among emerging economies.
 - Moreover, India's maritime strength and strong strategic relations with the region's major powers, member states point out, could be used to bring strategic balance within the grouping.

Analysis of India's Membership to APEC

- The Indian government's expression of renewed interest in APEC membership in 2015 was a signal of an orientation toward foreign trade and investment.
- With India as a member, APEC would account for almost two-thirds of the global GDP. The global economy would benefit from a more integrated Asia-Pacific.
- India's accession to APEC would contribute to the greater economic integration of the Asia-Pacific region at a time when emerging trade regimes could create gaps between the standards and policies adopted by their members and those pursued by nonmembers. By including a key economy such as India, APEC can play a constructive role by helping bridge such gaps.
- As the world's fastest-growing major economy, India represents a significant long-term source of growth for the world economy. Including India in APEC would provide its members with a mechanism to deepen their economic engagement with India and more easily partner with India in its economic growth. APEC members would gain greater access to India's growing market, robust labour supply, and ample investment opportunities.
- Indian membership in APEC would also bolster India's economic growth and support its development agenda.
- Joining APEC would help India greater access to foreign markets, investment sources, and value chains to bolster manufacturing and create jobs at home.
- APEC membership would also help India prepare for potential inclusion in emerging trade agreements, such as TPP, if India considers joining these in the future.
- India's "Act East" policy, which calls for greater overall engagement with East and Southeast Asia, similarly provides a strategic logic for greater economic connectivity. APEC membership would be a clear way to move these policies forward.

According to Ritika Passi of ORF, Indian membership of APEC helps respond to the opportunities and challenges of increased protectionism and slowing growth in the West on the one hand and China's unchecked regional advance on the other. In India, APEC will find an alternate market for labour, consumers, and investments and an additional counterweight to help check unilateral economic ambitions in the region. It will also help APEC embrace some notion of 'Indo-Pacific' and give it a renewed purpose in the renewed 21st century.

Previous Year/ Prospective Questions

1. Substantiate APEC as a regional economic and trade arrangement. (2013, 15 Marks).
2. If Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is to remain relevant and move toward a new phase of Asia-Pacific economic integration, India must be a member. Comment.

Regionalisation of World Politics - NAFTA

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

- The North American Free Trade Agreement, known usually as NAFTA, is a free trade agreement among Canada, the United States, and Mexico.
- NAFTA went into effect on January 1, 1994.
- NAFTA is also used to refer to the tripartite trading bloc of North American countries.



Source: AgWeb



Source: Canada West Foundation

Overview of NAFTA

- NAFTA represents a significant departure from the traditional economic and institutional relationship between the United States and its smaller neighbors, Mexico and Canada.
- NAFTA was a three-country accord negotiated by the governments of Canada, Mexico, and the United States that entered into force in January 1994. NAFTA replaced the U.S.-Canada bilateral free trade agreement, which was signed in 1988.
- This is the most important example of regionalism in North America. It is not a regional integration, just an FTA agreement.

Nature of NAFTA

- NAFTA is considered as the biggest trade deal between developed and developing nations, it has very ambitious goals.
- NAFTA has a combined GDP of \$11.8 trillion and a population of 420 million.
- NAFTA formed in part as a response to the growing pace of economic integration.
- NAFTA was intended to provide the basis for a wider economic partnership covering the whole western hemisphere, expressed through the 1994 agreement to build a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).
- NAFTA created the largest single market in the world.
- NAFTA is a much looser body than the EU.

Aims of NAFTA

- The aims of NAFTA are modest by comparison with those of the EU.
- Its chief goals have been to phase out tariffs on agricultural and a variety of manufacturing goods, to allow banks and other financial institutions access to wider markets, and to allow lorry drivers to cross borders freely.
- Some of the key NAFTA provisions included tariff and non-tariff trade liberalization, rules of origin, services trade, foreign investment, intellectual property rights protection, government procurement, and dispute resolution. Labour and environmental provisions were included in separate NAFTA side agreements.

Impact of NAFTA**Positive Impacts:**

- NAFTA boosted trade by eliminating all tariffs between the three countries. It also created agreements on international rights for business investors. That reduced the cost of commerce.
- It spurs investment and growth, especially for small businesses. NAFTA's trade area has a higher GDP than the \$18.8 trillion produced by the 28 countries in the European Union.
- Between 1993 and 2019, trade between the three members quadrupled from \$290 billion to \$1.23 trillion.
- The USA has 33% of total exports and 27% of total imports from NAFTA in 2019.
- NAFTA had a positive impact on the Inflation in the countries. It had a positive impact on the employment generation in all countries.
- It has increased the foreign direct investment which especially benefited the Mexican economy.
- It has boosted the agriculture export from Canada.

Negative Impacts:

- America's View:
 - NAFTA has been a popular target for politicians in the USA. Trump called it the worst trade deal ever. They argue that the US trade deficit with Canada and Mexico has been on the rise.
 - There were factory closures due to increasing competition and Job loss due to free migration policies and diversion of industries to Mexico due to cheap labor costs.
 - The USA is particularly opposed to Article 19 of NAFTA about dispute settlement rules.
- NAFTA has deeper problems including large disparities in wealth, education and economic structure between the USA and Canada, on the one hand, and Mexico on the other, and significant gaps in mutual knowledge and understanding amongst the citizens of the three countries.

According to Robert Kaplan, due to inherent weakness in the trade deal, the USA is losing its backyard to the Chinese economy. NAFTA has been exploited by China to gain market access for its goods and services through Canada and Mexico.

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)

- The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) was signed in 2018, replacing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

- Originally dubbed NAFTA 2.0, the USMCA is meant to update its predecessor agreement and maintain substantially free trade between the parties.
- The USMCA was negotiated under the Trump Administration, but the idea of a replacement for NAFTA dates back to before President Trump's presidential term.
- In 2008, then-presidential candidate Obama had pledged to renegotiate NAFTA in the interests of American workers.
- The USMCA modernizes NAFTA by including new rules of origin, provisions on worker rights and the environment, and digital trade, while deleting certain investor-state dispute settlement provisions.
- Key changes from NAFTA also include increased environmental and working regulations, greater incentives for automobile production in the U.S., more access to Canada's dairy market, and an increased duty-free limit for Canadians who buy U.S. goods online.
- The IMF has criticized the agreement as it will have a very small impact on the respective economies. Lee and Scott's Economic Policy Institute also said that the benefits from USMCA are tiny and highly uncertain.

India and NAFTA

- India's total trade with NAFTA countries is valued at \$ 134000 Million (2020-21).
- Share of trade with NAFTA countries in India's total trade is 13.04 % (2020-21).
- Currently India does not have any Trade Agreement with any of the countries in the NAFTA region.

Previous Year/ Prospective Questions

1. The effort in restricting illegal migration from Mexico to the US and Canada has been one major gain for the United States through NAFTA. Comment. (15 Marks, 2012).
2. 'NAFTA is cited as a successful example of RTA'. Discuss.

3. Cooperative Federalism (In the view of Hindi imposition row on the states)

Context

Hindi Imposition: Another Attack on States' Autonomy

Adrija Bhadra | 12 Oct 2022

India

Politics

The imposition of Hindi is not only an insidious form of establishing cultural hegemony over non-Hindi-speaking states but also an attack on the federal nature of the Indian state.

Source: News CLICK

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Languages panel recommendations and a fresh 'Hindi imposition' row

A report submitted by the Official Language Committee headed by Home Minister Amit Shah to President Droupadi Murmu has triggered angry reactions. What is this panel, and what have they suggested?

Written by Liz Mathew

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New Delhi | October 13, 2022 8:05:11 am

Source: The Indian Express

What is Federalism?

- Federalism is a type of government in which the power is divided between the national/central government and other governmental units like states/provinces.
- It contrasts with a unitary government, in which central authority holds the dominant position and a confederation, in which states hold the majority of power.
- In a unitary form of government, all the powers are concentrated in the national government. Central government delegates some power to regional or provincial units. Whereas, in a federal system of government, the power is divided between central and federating units or states.

Indian Model of Federalism

- The Constitution of India establishes a federal system of Government.
- It contains all the usual features of a federation, viz., two governments, division of powers, written Constitution, the supremacy of Constitution, the rigidity of Constitution, independent judiciary and bicameralism.
- However, the Indian Constitution also contains a large number of unitary or non-federal features, viz., a strong Centre, single Constitution, single citizenship, the flexibility of the Constitution, integrated judiciary, the appointment of state governor by the Centre, all-India services, emergency provisions and so on.
- Moreover, the term 'Federation' has nowhere been used in the Constitution.
- Article 1, on the other hand, describes India as a 'Union of States' which implies two things:
 - Indian Federation is not the result of an agreement by the states, and
 - No state has the right to secede from the federation.

Views on Indian Federalism

- Indian Federalism is not that federal in comparison to the federalism of the US. It is called a federation of its own type (federation sui generis) by **Granville Austin**.
- **K.C. Wheare** has described Indian federalism as quasi-federal and observes that the "Indian Union is a unitary state with subsidiary federal features rather than a federal state with subsidiary unitary features.
- Features of a federal polity were included in the Government of India Act of 1935, but it never got actually implemented.

Cooperative Federalism

- Cooperative Federalism is the branch of Federalism which envisages that all the levels of governance, which are- central, state and local bodies, should cooperate with one another in order to achieve collective goals for the benefit of the country.
- All these bodies put their collaborative efforts towards a common goal and strive to achieve that for the growth of the country.
- Cooperative Federalism is also called Horizontal federalism, where each of these bodies is placed on equal footing with respect to each other.

Features of Cooperative federalism

Two key features of cooperative federalism are,

- A joint focus on the National Development Agenda by the Centre and States.
- Advocacy of concerns and issues of States and Union Territories with Central Ministries.

Working of Cooperative Federalism in India

Though India has been considered a Quasi-Federal country, the Indian constitution has incorporated instruments to ensure cooperation between the Centre and states to ensure that cooperation is necessary for the proper growth of the country. there are a number of provisions in the constitution itself, which provide for the cooperation between the Centre and states,

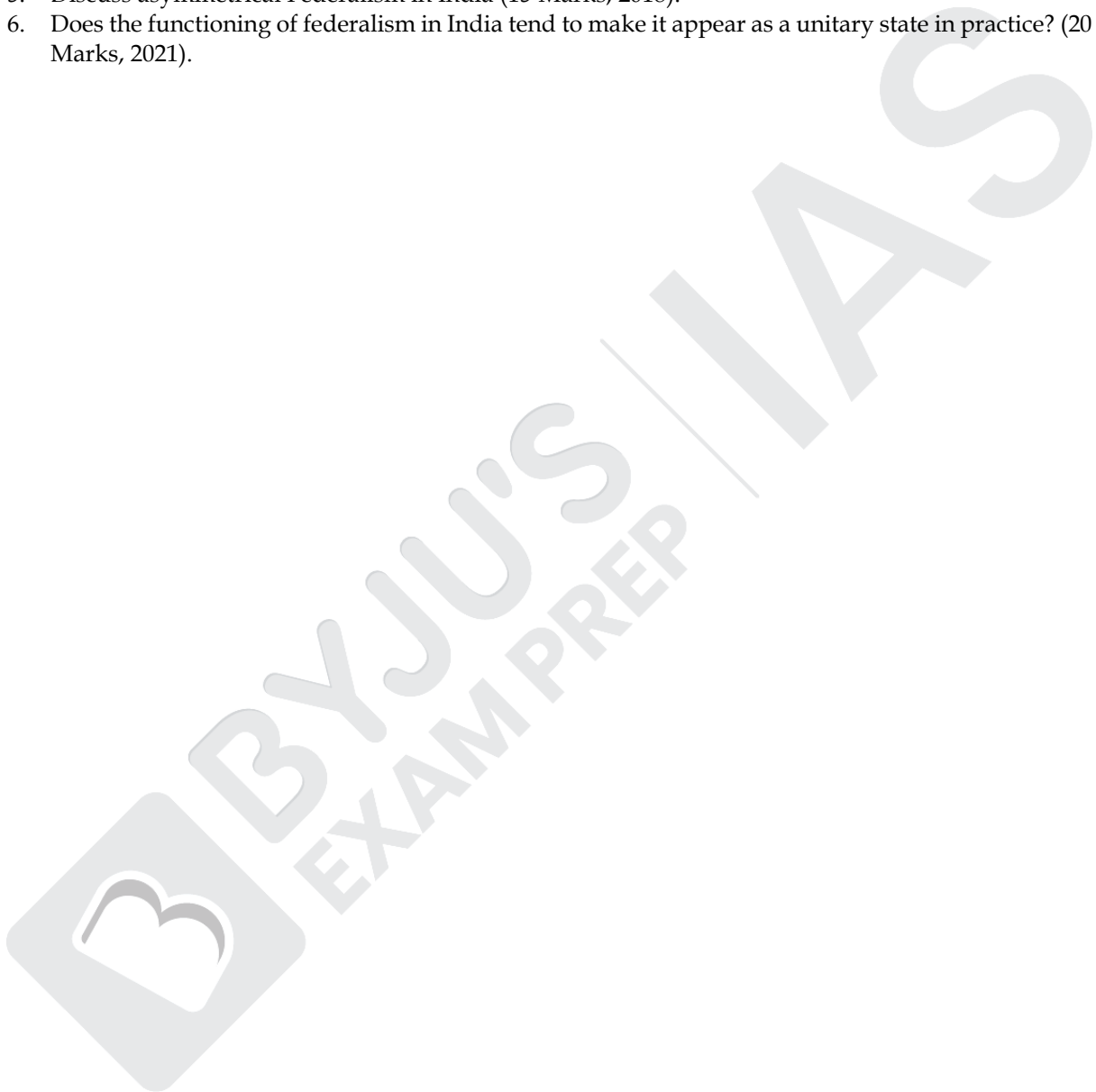
- **Seventh Schedule** - It demarcates central, state, and concurrent lists based on the principle of subsidiarity. Residuary power has been kept within the centre. Article 249[5] provides authority to the parliament to decide on those subjects which are under state jurisdiction if the resolution passes the in-state council with a two-thirds majority.
- **Inter-State Council (Article 263)** of the constitution provides for the establishment of an Inter-State Council by the President if he believes that such council is necessary to discuss and investigate subjects which have a larger public interest. The council is charged with the duty to make suggestions on any matter for the better implementation or coordination of policies. This council promotes cooperation and coordination among states.
- **Various Institutions** - Finance Commission, GST Council, and NITI Aayog can be considered as Institutions for cooperative federalism.

Conclusion

- India has not been able to incorporate Cooperative Federalism in its complete sense. Though states have been given due autonomy in their functions, their freedom is subject to the superiority of the Central Government, one has to understand that Federalism is a concept which needs to be adopted in practice and spirit rather than a letter.
- To make collaborative federalism work, more institutional reforms are required to eliminate the possibility of manipulation by political bargaining or anti-federal behaviour by the governments at different levels.

Previous Year/ Prospective Questions

1. "Cooperative federalism produces a strong central or general government, yet it does not necessarily result in weak provincial governments that are largely administrative agencies for central policies. Indian federation has demonstrated this" (20 Marks, 2013)
2. Comment in 150 words: Cooperative Federalism in India. (10 Marks, 2015).
3. The Indian Federation has moved from a cooperative federation to a competitive federation. Comment (10 Marks, 2016).
4. Comment in 150 words: Implementation of GST and NEET is a major Challenge to Indian Federalism (20 Marks, 2018).
5. Discuss asymmetrical Federalism in India (15 Marks, 2018).
6. Does the functioning of federalism in India tend to make it appear as a unitary state in practice? (20 Marks, 2021).



4. Pressure Groups (wrt, What is happening in China or Farmer Groups in India)

Context

- Ongoing protest in China against the government's Zero Covid Policy.



Source: The Wire

- Recently Pressure Groups in Meghalaya protested, alleging the Central Government has failed to resolve long pending border disputes and voiced against the CBI inquiry.

Pressure groups in Meghalaya on Saturday staged a protest outside the residence of chief minister, Conrad K. Sangma

By Bikash Singh, ET Bureau • Last Updated: Nov 26, 2022, 06:27 PM IST

Source: The Economic Times

Pressure Groups

- Pressure Groups or Interest Groups, who do not join the formal offices, remain outside but control a lot of power in their hands.
- In democratic politics, pressure groups are organisations which attempt to influence the government.

Meaning of Pressure Groups

- The term 'pressure group' originated in the USA.
- Pressure groups are organised associations, unions or organisations of people having a common interest.
- Pressure Groups aim to seek better conditions for their members through organised efforts.
- They try to influence the legislature, executive and other decision-makers to make decisions in their favour.
- It acts as a liaison between the government and its members.

Views on Pressure Groups

- According to **V.O.Key**, a striking feature of American politics is how political parties are supplemented by private associations formed to influence public policy. These organisations are commonly called pressure groups.
- **David B.Truman** defines an interest group as "a shared attitude group that makes certain claims upon the other groups in the society." One of the significant trends in the democratic political process is the increasing role of pressure groups.
- **Herman Finer** viewed that it is perhaps now an axiom of political science that where political parties are weak in principles and organisation, the pressure groups will flourish; where pressure groups are solid and political parties will be feeble; and where political parties are strong, pressure groups will be curbed.

Pressure Groups in Different Countries

- In the context of the USA, the rigid nature of its constitution, the doctrine of separation of powers, difficulties of conveying the grievances of the people to the government, etc., contribute to the growth of pressure groups in American politics. American pressure groups are not much influenced by political parties.
- In Britain, pressure groups implicitly or explicitly have an attachment to political parties.
- In India, political parties are weak in principles and organisation. Therefore, pressure groups are supposed to be very significant in the functioning of the India Political System. In a parliamentary system of government, pressure groups exert pressure mainly on the executive with the assumption that the legislature is under the control of the executive (both the political and permanent executive).

Role of Pressure Groups

- Influencing the Government - involves influencing the public policy decision-makers.
 - According to Harold D. Lasswell the slate of pressure groups in democratic countries constitutes an essential dimension of the study of politics because the primary objective of any pressure group is to influence the government on a specific public policy issue or problem.
- Pressure groups do not contest elections, and they may not have political programmes. Pressure groups informally attempt to influence the government on a specific public policy issue of a section of society.
- Pressure groups play a crucial role in interest formation and interest aggregation.
- Pressure groups play a mediatory role between the people and the government. Pressure groups contribute to giving concrete shape to the interests of people.
- Pressure groups provide inputs to public policy-making, thus contributing to democratising public policy-making and law-making.
- Pressure groups perform the representation function - political parties cannot adequately represent the aspirations of the people, and pressure groups become the devices for representing the aspirations of the people.
- Pressure groups help to make the political system respond to the aspirations of people and provide the details of a particular policy issue of public importance to the ruling political elites. This will contribute to working out development activities very effectively.

Techniques of Pressure Groups

- The pressure groups influence the policymaking and policy implementation in the government through legal and legitimate methods like
 - Lobbying
 - Correspondence
 - Publicity
 - Propagandising
 - Petitioning
 - Public debating
 - Maintaining contacts with their legislators, and so forth.

- However, sometimes Pressure Groups resort to illegitimate and illegal methods like
 - Strikes,
 - Violent activities and
 - corruption which damages public interest and administrative integrity.
- According to **Odegard**, pressure groups resort to three techniques to secure their purposes.
 - **Electioneering** - Try to place in public office persons who are favourably disposed towards the interests they seek to promote
 - **Lobbying** - persuade public officers.
 - **Propagandising** - Try to influence public opinion and thereby gain an indirect influence over the government.

Shortcomings of Pressure Groups

- Narrow selfish interests.
- Misuse of power.
- Instability.
- Propagating extremism.
- Using illegitimate and illegal methods.

Pressure Groups in India

The pressure groups in India can be broadly classified into the following categories:

1. Business Groups - FCCI, ASSOCHAM.
2. Trade Unions - AITUC, INTUC, HMS, CITU and BMS.
3. Agrarian Groups - Bhartiya Kisan Union and All India Kisan Sabha, etc.
4. Professional Associations - IMA, BCI
5. Student organisations - ABVP, AISF and NSUI, etc.
6. Religious Organizations - RSS and VHP, etc.
7. Caste Groups - Marwari Association and Harijan Sevak Sangh, etc.
8. Tribal Organisations - National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), etc.
9. Linguistic Groups - Tamil Sangh, etc.
10. Ideology-Based Groups - Environmental protection groups like Narmada Bachao Andolan, Chipko Movement, Democratic rights organisations and Women rights organisations, etc.
11. Anomic Groups - Naxalite Groups, etc.

Status of Pressure Groups in India

- According to **Prof. Anand Chakra Varti**, the Government has not given enough space to the pressure groups many such associations which have disagreed with the Government have been banned under UAPA.
- He also says that, If the Government had given more space and shown more accommodation, it would have been much easier to deal with the alienation and insurgencies.

Way Forward

- Pressure groups play a vital role in democratic politics in terms of representing and promoting the aspirations of the people.
- The significance of pressure groups is mainly determined by the political parties, the forms of government, and the attitudes of people towards politics. the nature of leadership etc.

Previous Year/ Prospective Questions

1. Explain how pressure groups have been influencing public policy-making with suitable illustrations. (20 Marks, 2014).
2. What are pressure groups? Do they represent a legitimate manner of challenging a democratically elected government?

5. National and Regional Political Parties. (Elections in Gujarat, AAP, now a National Party)

Context

Gujarat Election 2022: AAP set to become 'national party'. What does this mean?

Gujarat Assembly Election

Published on Dec 08, 2022 06:16 PM IST

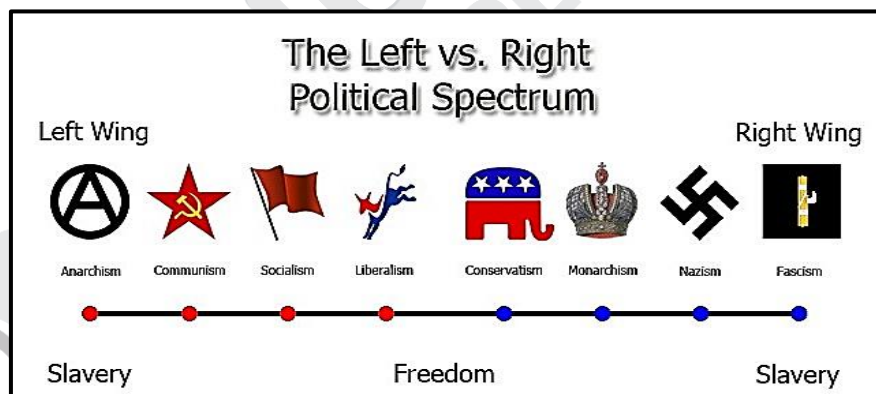
In addition to the 'big 2' – BJP and Congress – six other parties are recognised by the Election Commission as a 'national party': AITMC, BSP, CPI, CPI (M), NCP, and NPP.

Source: The Hindu

Political Party

- Political parties are voluntary associations or organized groups of individuals who share the same political views and who try to gain political power through constitutional means and who desire to work for promoting the national interest.
- There are four types of political parties in the modern democratic states, viz.,
 - Reactionary parties - cling to the old socioeconomic and political institutions;
 - Conservative parties - believe in the status-quo;
 - Liberal parties - aim at reforming the existing institutions; and
 - Radical parties - aim at establishing a new order by overthrowing the existing institutions.

Political Parties Based on Ideologies



Source: Quora

Party Systems

There are three kinds of party systems in the world:

- One-Party System:** Only one party exists
 - Example: People's Republic of China under the United Front, and the Democratic Front for the Reunification of Korea in North Korea.
- Two-Party System:** Only two significant parties exist.
 - Example: The United States of America and the United Kingdom.
- Multi-Party System:** Multiple parties exist.
 - Example: India, France, etc.

Party Systems in India

The Indian Party system has the following characteristic features:

1. Multi-Party System.
2. One-Dominant Party System.
3. Lack of Clear Ideology.
4. Personality Cult.
5. Based on Traditional Factors.
6. Emergence of Regional Parties.
7. Factions and Defections.
8. Lack of Effective Opposition.

Recognition of National and State Parties

- The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 gives ECI power to recognise parties as national and state parties.
- Election Commission of India registers political parties for the purpose of elections and grants them recognition as National or state parties on the basis of their poll performance.
- The parties other than recognised national and state parties are declared as registered unrecognized parties.

Criteria for Recognition as a National Party

A political party shall be eligible to be recognized as National party, if, and only if, any of the following conditions is fulfilled:

1. Votes polled $\geq 6\%$ from 4 or more states in Lok Sabha elections or assembly elections + wins four or more seats in the Lok Sabha from any state(s). **(or)**
2. If Party wins at least 2% of seats in the Lok Sabha, and these candidates are from three states **(or)**
3. If it is recognised as a state party in at least four states.

Criteria for Recognition of State Party

A political party shall be eligible for recognition as a State party in a State, if, and only if, any of the following conditions is fulfilled:

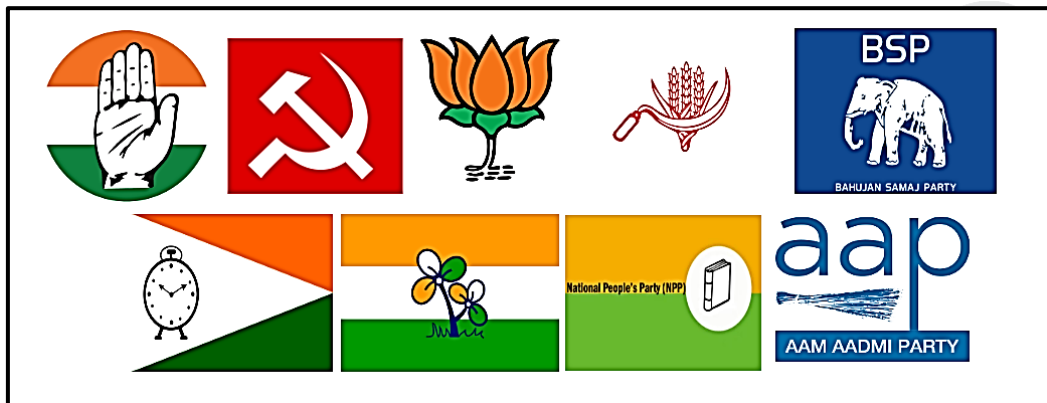
1. Votes polled $\geq 6\%$ in the state at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned; + it wins two seats in the assembly of the state concerned; **(or)**
2. Votes polled $\geq 6\%$ in the state at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; and, in addition, it wins one seat in the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; **(or)**
3. If Party wins three per cent of seats in the legislative assembly at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned or three seats in the assembly, whichever is more; **(or)**
4. If a party wins one seat in the Lok Sabha for every 25 seats or any fraction thereof allotted to the state at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; **(or)**
5. If Party secures eight per cent of the total valid votes polled in the state at a General Election to the Lok Sabha from the state or to the state's legislative assembly. (This condition was added in 2011).

Recognised Parties - Benefits

1. Entitled to exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol.
2. Only one proposer is required to file the nomination.
3. Entitled to 2 sets of electoral rolls free of cost.
4. Broadcast/telecast facilities over Akashvani and Doordarshan during general elections.
5. Can nominate up to 40-star campaigners.

Recognised National Parties in India

- As of now, the ECI has recognised eight parties as national parties – the BJP, Congress, Trinamool Congress, CPI(M), CPI, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and National People's Party (NPP).
- AAP will become the ninth party to be recognised as a national party by fulfilling the third criteria (If it is recognised as a state party in at least four states).
- AAP already fulfilled the criteria for recognition as a state party in three states - Delhi, Punjab and Goa and its almost 13% vote in Gujarat is more than double what it required to be recognised as a state party there. That made it four states.



Some of the Recognised State Parties in India



Note: The number of recognised parties keeps on changing on the basis of their performance in the general elections and assembly elections.

Previous Year/ Prospective Questions

- How far is it correct that the regional parties have strengthened Indian democracy and the federal system? Substantiate your answer with suitable examples. (15 marks, 2022).
- Explain the increasing role of regional political parties in national politics. (15 marks, 2018)
- India's multiparty political system is at the heart of the 'one nation, one election debate'. Elaborate.

Sources

- IGNOU.
- Official Websites - Ministry Websites, APEC, NAFTA, NCM, ECI.
- Indian Polity - Laxmikant.
- Newspaper Articles from The Hindu, The Indian Express and The Economic times, etc.

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1



Shruti Sharma

12

Ranks in TOP 25

3

Ranks in TOP 10

25

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AIR 12
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Incredible results year after year!

2013

62 out of
1228 vacancies

2014

82 out of
1364 vacancies

2015

162 out of
1164 vacancies

2016

215 out of
1209 vacancies

2017

236 out of
1058 vacancies

2018

183 out of
812 vacancies

2019

165 out of
829 vacancies

2020

281 out of
761 vacancies

2021

188 out of
685 vacancies

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