

ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – II Issue-V (September-October) 2024

Frequency: Bimonthly



Role of the Political Parties in Indian Democracy

Dr. Bhageerathi Naik

M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., Ph.d Associate Professor of Political Science SKVMS.Govt. First Grade College
,Kundapura, Koteschwara. 576222

| **Received:** 29.08.2024 | **Accepted:** 02.09.2024 | **Published:** 04.09.2024

***Corresponding author:** Dr. Bhageerathi Naik

M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed., Ph.d Associate Professor of Political Science SKVMS.Govt. First Grade College
,Kundapura, Koteschwara. 576222

Abstract

Democracy has been celebrated as one of the best form of government globally. However, still in many countries this best form of government is not followed; and the struggle of the people is going on, in support of it. In case of our country (India), which is called as the largest democracy in the world, the story of nearly 70 years of our independence is a mixed bag. Of course, when we got independence there are many political pundits who predicted that we'll break up and cannot stay united (the reason being our diversity, in terms of languages, religion, castes etc). However, we prove them wrong and stand as a one of the good example for many countries, which are having more or less same characteristics like us. Here, it's very necessary to say that, still our democracy has to go long way.

As rightly said by historian Ramachandra Guha, as a "nation-state, India is 80 per cent successful but as a democracy, perhaps only 50 per cent." us, this paper was divided into two sections, the first one deal briefly with the global experience of democracy, while the last part deals with Indian democracy.

We are proud to be the largest democracy in the world. For more than sixtyfive years we have witnessed the conduct of successful elections, peaceful changes of government at the Centre and in the States, people exercising freedom of expression, movement and religion. India has also been developing and transforming economically and socially. At the same time we, quite often, listen complains about prevalent inequalities, injustice or non-fulfillment of expectations of certain sections of the society. These people do not feel themselves participative in the democratic process. You may ask why it is so. You have already read in earlier unit that democracy means 'government of the people, for the people, and by the people'. It means democracy is not limited to just a process of election, but also fulfilling social and economic aspirations of the people. In India we keep on debating these various aspects of democracy and its achievements and challenges

Keywords: Role, Political Parties, Democracies etc.

Introduction

Democracy means that political institutions with democratic processes and every Indian citizen is to be democratic, reflecting basic democratic values of equality, liberty, fraternity, secularism and justice in the social environment and individual behavior. Education, poverty, social exclusion and inclusion, corruption and criminalization of politics are the main challenges of democracy and most essential elements to be present in democratic government for implementation of constitutional provisions in India. Education is an important weapon to promote democracy and it remains as essential factor of social and economic rights. But it remains as a matter of grave concern for the successful functioning of democracy

We are proud to be the largest democracy in the world. For more than sixtyfive years we have witnessed the conduct of successful elections, peaceful changes of government at the Centre and in the States, people exercising freedom of expression, movement and religion. India has also been developing and transforming economically and socially. At the same time we, quite often, listen complains about prevalent inequalities, injustice or non-fulfilment of expectations of certain sections of the society. These people do not feel themselves participative in the democratic process. You may ask why it is so. You have already read in earlier unit that democracy means ‘government of the people, for the people, and by the people’. It means democracy is not limited to just a process of election, but also fulfilling social and economic aspirations of the people. In India we keep on debating these various aspects of democracy and its achievements and challenges.

This paper examines the Role of Political Parties in Democracies. Political parties are fundamental to the operation and stability of democratic systems. They serve as critical institutions that represent diverse societal interests, aggregate preferences into coherent platforms, and provide voters with clear choices during elections. The competitive nature of political parties ensures that governments are formed through a democratic process, reflecting the will of the people and thereby legitimizing governmental authority. Through mechanisms of accountability, political parties monitor the performance of elected officials, both within the party and through opposition, ensuring adherence to democratic principles and responsiveness to the electorate. Political parties also play a significant role in political education, informing citizens about key issues, policy options, and the implications of their electoral choices. This educational function fosters an informed and engaged electorate, essential for the healthy functioning of democracy. Additionally, political parties are instrumental in policy formulation, developing comprehensive proposals to address societal needs and challenges.

Moreover, political parties contribute to political stability and effective governance by providing structured competition and a framework for decision-making. They balance the need for continuity and change, maintaining order while driving reforms. By advocating for marginalized and minority groups, political parties promote inclusivity and social justice, ensuring that diverse voices are heard within the political process. Furthermore, political parties act as intermediaries between citizens and the government, facilitating communication and enhancing civic engagement. This intermediary role is crucial for ensuring that public preferences are reflected in policy decisions. Overall, political parties are indispensable to the functioning of democracies, underpinning their

structure, stability, and responsiveness, and enabling active citizen participation in governance.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Understand the meaning of democracy in its different aspects;
2. Appreciate the introduction and development of democracy in India;
3. Identify major problems and challenges being faced by Indian democracy;
4. I recognize the corrective measures for improving the Indian democratic system; and
5. Explain the roles of citizens in making an efficient and successful democracy;
6. This paper examines the Role of Political Parties in Democracies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study is based on secondary sources of data such as articles, books, journals, research papers, websites and other sources.

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN DEMOCRACIES:

Political parties are fundamental to the functioning of democracies. They are not merely election machines but are essential institutions that help ensure the effective functioning of democratic governance. This study elaborates on the critical roles political parties play, expanding each point to provide a comprehensive understanding of their importance.

A. LINK BETWEEN CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT:

Political parties serve as intermediaries between citizens and the government, facilitating communication and ensuring that public preferences are reflected in policy decisions. This intermediary role is essential for the functioning of a responsive and accountable democracy.

Communication Channels: Political parties establish channels for communication between the electorate and the government. These channels include party offices, representatives, and public forums, where citizens can express their views and concerns. This communication helps to ensure that the government remains attuned to the needs of the people.

Public Mobilization: Political parties mobilize public support for their policies and initiatives. Through rallies, campaigns, and advocacy efforts, parties engage citizens in the political process and build public consensus around key issues. This mobilization is crucial for garnering support for policy decisions and ensuring their successful implementation.

Policy Feedback: Political parties collect feedback from the public on government policies and actions. This feedback is used to assess the effectiveness of policies and to make necessary adjustments. By incorporating public input into the policy-making process, parties enhance the responsiveness and accountability of the government.

B. POLITICAL EDUCATION:

Political education is another critical function of political parties. They play a significant role in informing and educating the public about political issues, policies, and the implications of various choices. This educational role is vital for the health of a

democracy, as an informed electorate is essential for making rational and well-considered decisions.

Campaigns and Manifestos: During election campaigns, political parties disseminate information about their platforms and policies through manifestos, speeches, debates, and advertisements. These campaigns educate voters about the party's stance on key issues and the policies they propose to address them.

Grassroots Activities: Many political parties engage in grassroots activities, such as community meetings, workshops, and door-to-door canvassing. These activities provide opportunities for direct interaction between party members and the public, facilitating a deeper understanding of political issues and party policies.

Policy Advocacy and Research: Political parties often conduct research and produce policy papers on various issues. These documents provide detailed analyses and recommendations, contributing to the public discourse and enhancing the overall quality of political debate.

Youth and Civic Education Programs: Some parties have dedicated programs aimed at educating young people and new voters about the political process, the importance of civic participation, and the values of democracy. These programs help to cultivate a politically aware and engaged citizenry.

C. FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT:

Political parties are central to the formation of governments in most democratic systems. They compete in elections to win the support of the electorate. The party, or coalition of parties, that secures a majority in the legislature typically forms the government. This process is vital for ensuring that the government has a mandate from the people.

The **formation of government** through political parties provides a clear structure and order democratic process. It simplifies the complex task of selecting leaders by narrowing down the choices to a few viable candidates or parties. This clarity helps voters make informed decisions about who should govern them. Once in power, political parties are responsible for implementing their policy agendas. This implementation process involves making decisions on a wide range of issue , from economic policy to social services, and foreign affairs. The governing party or coalition uses its platform as a blueprint for these decisions, ensuring that the government's actions reflect the promises made during the election campaign.

Moreover, political parties contribute to political stability by ensuring a peaceful transition of power. In a functioning democracy, losing parties accept the election results and the winners' right to govern. This acceptance is crucial for maintaining order and preventing political conflicts from escalating into violence.

D. ACCOUNTABILITY:

Accountability is a cornerstone of democracy, and political parties play a pivotal role in ensuring that elected officials remain answerable to the electorate. Through their various functions, parties create mechanisms for holding politicians accountable for their actions and decisions.

Internal Party Mechanisms: Within political parties, there are often internal structures that monitor and evaluate the performance of their members. This internal accountability ensures that party members adhere to the party's values and policies. Failure to do so

can result in disciplinary actions, including expulsion from the party.

Elections and Re-elections: The most direct form of accountability is through elections. Political parties present candidates to the electorate, and voters have the opportunity to endorse or reject these candidates based on their performance. This periodic assessment by the public is a powerful tool for ensuring that elected officials remain responsive to the needs of their constituents.

Opposition Parties: In addition to internal mechanisms and elections, opposition parties play a crucial role in holding the government accountable. They scrutinize the actions of the ruling party, highlight any misconduct or policy failures, and offer alternative solutions. This opposition ensures that there is continuous oversight of the government's actions.

To conclude, no doubt democracy is the best form of government available to the people. Globally, democracy is evolving and the theme for this year International Democracy Day has been '*Democracy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*'. 17 Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) and 169 targets, by the year 2030 cannot be achieved, without the strong and equal participation of not only Parliaments across the country, but more importantly, people, civil society etc. For a democracy to function, it is essential that a factors like political accountability towards the people; strengthening link between Parliament and Citizens; Public Participation; Strengthening the voices of the citizens (including marginalized, deprived and disadvantaged sections) of the society; and more importantly engaging youth in politics, should be take into consideration in any country(including India).

Political parties also play a vital role in maintaining political stability and effective governance by offering structured competition and decision-making frameworks. They balance continuity with the need for reform, supporting both order and progress. By advocating for marginalized groups, parties promote inclusivity and social justice within the political landscape.

References

1. Rao, Ashwini (2010), Democracy and Human Right, Delhi: Pacific Publication.
2. Sharma, Mahendra Singh(2010), Indian Democract and Constitution , New Delhi: DPS Publishing House.
3. Sharma, Sewak Ram (2010), Role of Media in Indian Democracy, New Delhi: DPS Publishing House.
4. . Varadarajan, Samayal (2009), A-Z Government and Politics, New Delhi: Centrum Press.
5. Joydeep, Democracy in India success or failure? (2013)
6. . Dalton, R. J., Farrell, D. M., & McAllister, I. (2011). Political parties and democratic linkage: How parties organize democracy. Oxford University Press.
7. 3. Katz, R. S., & Crotty, W. (Eds.). (2006). Handbook of party politics. Sage Publications.
8. Mair, P. (2002). Party system change: Approaches and interpretations. Oxford University Press.
9. Sartori, G. (2005). Parties and party systems: A framework for analysis. ECPR Press.