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Political Parties in India

India has very diverse multi party political system. There are three types of political parties in India i.e. national parties (7), state recognized party (48) and unrecognized parties (1706). All the political parties which wish to contest local, state or national elections are required to be registered by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

A recognized party enjoys privileges like reserved party symbol, free broadcast time on state run television and radio in the favour of party. Election commission asks to these national parties regarding the date of elections and receives inputs for the conduct of free and fair polls

National Party:

A registered party is recognised as a National Party only if it fulfils any one of the following three conditions:

1. If a party wins 2% of seats in the Lok Sabha (as of 2014, 11 seats) from at least 3 different States.
2. At a General Election to Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly, the party polls 6% of votes in four States in addition to 4 Lok Sabha seats.
3. A party is recognised as a State Party in four or more States.

The Indian political parties are categorized into two main types. National level parties and state level parties.

National parties are political parties which, participate in different elections all over India. For example, Indian National Congress, Bhartiya Janata Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Samajwadi Party, Communist Party of India,

Communist Party of India (Marxist) and some other parties. State parties or regional parties are political parties which, participate in different elections but only within one

state. For example Shiv Sena participates only in Maharashtra, Telegu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, Akali Dal in Punjab, Dravida Munnetra Kazagham (DMK) in Tamil Nadu and there are other such state parties. There are some small communist parties who participate only within one state. Some states have more than one state party. For example in Tamil Nadu another important state party is All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazagham (AIADMK). Because of these long party names many party names are abbreviated to their initials.

Some the political parties have their origin from before India's independence, for example, Indian National Congress, Forward Bloc, Akali Dal, National Conference and some other parties. Some of these parties were either social or political organization before India's independence and they became political parties after India's independence. But many of the present parties were established after India's independence. Members, who split from larger parties, established some of these parties. For example in the 1960s, Lok Dal was established by people who split from the Indian National Congress. Communist Party of India (Marxist) was established after the split in Communist Party of India and there are other such examples.

In Indian politics, there are political parties in which one person pulls all the strings. This feature existed even before India's independence, when Mahatma Gandhi was the father figure of the Indian National Congress until his death in 1948 even though he resigned from the Congress in 1933. Indira Gandhi for some period was in complete control of her party. Her party was also named, Congress (Indira). Shiv Sena is dominated by Bal Thakarey. Even when the Shiv Sena won the state elections in Maharashtra, Bal Thakarey handled the establishment of the state government but did not appoint himself as the Chief Minister but appointed someone else for this post.

Some of these parties, like the Shiv Sena in which one person pulls all the strings, have their stronghold in the public not because of their leader but because of party ideology. While other parties are completely dependable on the respect the leader of the party has in the public. One such party is Samata Party and its leader is George Fernandes. Another such party was Lok Shakti and its leader was Ramakrishna Hegde.

Many of the large national parties have a pre-election agreement with smaller parties on joint candidates in some constituencies. This candidate belongs to one of the parties and the other party supports this candidate. This is done to prevent a possibility of parties, with common national agenda or common state agenda, nominate their own different candidates causing the splitting of the votes of their wing and so losing the constituency to the rival wing.

In Indian politics there are also many independent candidates. These candidates participate in election constituencies independently without the support of any party. In very few cases the larger parties also support independent candidates.

Another feature unique to Indian politics is the high number of film actors who join the Indian politics. The Indian cinema produces films in different languages. The largest and the most popular film industry is the Hindi language film industry. Many national parties recruit Hindi movie actors in their parties. While many state parties with state chauvinism attract local film industry actors in their parties. These actors do not only appear along side with the party politicians to attract the mob towards the politicians gatherings, but they even participate as candidates in elections. Some of the state parties in south India were established by former movie actors.

Criterion for Recognition

The Election Commission has laid down certain criteria for a party to be recognised as national or state level parties.

National Party

A party has to live up to at least one of the following qualifications to be recognised as a national party:

- It has to win a minimum of two per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha from at least three different states.
- In General Elections, the party must manage to win six per cent of the votes and win at least four Lok Sabha seats as well.
- The party is recognised as a 'state level party' in four or more states.

State Party

A party has to live up to at least one of the following qualifications to be acknowledged as a state party.

- The party has to win at least three seats or three per cent of the seats in the state legislative Assembly.
- It has to win minimum one seat in the Lok Sabha for every 25 seats or any fraction allotted to that concerned state.

- In a particular election, the party has to bag at least six per cent of the total votes, and also win one Lok Sabha and two Assembly seats.
- The status of a state party can still be bestowed upon an entity even if it fails to win any seats in the Lok Sabha or the Assembly, if it manages to win at least eight per cent of the total votes cast in the entire state.

List of all the National Parties in India are given below:

No.	Name of Party	Abbreviation	Foundation year
1.	Bharatiya Janata Party	BJP	1980
2.	Indian National Congress	INC	1885
3.	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	CPI-M	1964
4.	Communist Party of India	CPI	1925
5.	Bahujan Samaj Party	BSP	1984
6.	Nationalist Congress Party	NCP	1999
7.	All India Trinamool Congress	AITC	1998

List of the National Political Parties and their leaders.

S.No.	Name of Party	Leader
1.	Bharatiya Janata Party	Amit Shah
2.	Indian National Congress	Rahul Gandhi
3.	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	Sitaram Yechury
4.	Communist Party of India	Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy
5.	Bahujan Samaj Party	Mayawati Prabhu Das
6.	Nationalist Congress Party	Sharad Pawar
7.	All India Trinamool Congress	Mamata Banerjee

Source: Election Commission of India

A registered party has to fulfill any of the following conditions to be known as State political Party:

1. A party should win minimum 3% of the total number of seats or a minimum of 3 seats in the Legislative Assembly.

2. A party should win at least 1 seat in the Lok Sabha for every 25 seats or any fraction thereof allotted to that State.

3. A political party should secure at least 6% of the total valid votes polled during general election to a Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assembly and should, in addition, win at least 1 Lok Sabha, and 2 Legislative Assembly seats in that election.

4. Under the liberalized criteria, one more clause has been added to provide that even if a Party fails to win any seat in a State in a general election to the Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly of the State, the party will still be eligible for recognition as State Party if it secures 8% or more of the total valid votes polled in the State.

S.No.	Name	Abbreviation	Foundation Year	States/UT
1.	Aam Aadmi Party	AAP	2012	Delhi, Punjab
2.	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	AIADMK	1972	Puducherry, Tamil Nadu
3.	All India Forward Bloc	AIFB	1939	West Bengal
4.	All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen	AIMIM	1927	Telangana
5.	All India N.R. Congress	AINRC	2011	Puducherry
6.	All India United Democratic Front	AIUDF	2004	Assam
7.	All Jharkhand Students Union	AJSU	1986	Jharkhand
8.	Asom Gana Parishad	AGP	1985	Assam
9.	Biju Janata Dal	BJD	1997	Odisha
10.	Bodoland People's Front	BPF	1985	Assam
11.	Desiya Murpokku Dravidar Kazhagam	DMDK	2005	Tamil Nadu
12.	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	DMK	1949	Puducherry, Tamil Nadu
13.	Haryana Janhit Congress (BL)	HJC(BL)	2007	Haryana
14.	Hill State People's Democratic Party	HSPDP	1968	Meghalaya
15.	Indian National Lok Dal	INLD	1999	Haryana

16.	Indian Union Muslim League	IUML	1948	Kerala
17.	Jammu & Kashmir National Conference	JKNC	1932	Jammu & Kashmir
18.	Jammu & Kashmir National Panthers Party	JKNPP	1982	Jammu & Kashmir
19.	Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party	JKPDP	1998	Jammu & Kashmir
20.	Janata Dal (Secular)	JD(S)	1999	Karnataka, Kerala
21.	Janata Dal (United)	JD(U)	1999	Bihar
22.	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha	JMM	1972	Jharkhand
23.	Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajanatrik)	JVM(P)	2006	Jharkhand
24.	Kerala Congress (M)	KC(M)	1979	Kerala
25.	Lok Janshakti Party	LJP	2000	Bihar
26.	Maharashtra Navnirman Sena	MNS	2006	Maharashtra
27.	Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party	MGP	1963	Goa
28.	Manipur State Congress Party	MSCP	1997	Manipur
29.	Mizo National Front	MNF	1959	Mizoram
30.	Mizoram People's Conference	MPC	1972	Mizoram
31.	Naga People's Front	NPF	2002	Manipur, Nagaland
32.	National People's Party	NPP	2013	Meghalaya
33.	Pattali Makkal Katchi	PMK	1989	Puducherry, Tamil Nadu
34.	People's Party of Arunachal	PPA	1987	Arunachal Pradesh
35.	Rashtriya Janata Dal	RJD	1997	Bihar, Jharkhand
36.	Rashtriya Lok Dal	RLD	1996	Uttar Pradesh
37.	Rashtriya Lok Samta Party	RLSP	2013	Bihar
38.	Revolutionary Socialist Party	RSP	1940	Kerala, West Bengal
39.	Samajwadi Party	SP	1992	Uttar Pradesh
40.	Shiromani Akali Dal	SAD	1920	Punjab
41.	Shiv Sena	SS	1966	Maharashtra

42.	Sikkim Democratic Front	SDF	1993	Sikkim
43.	Sikkim Krantikari Morcha	SKM	2013	Sikkim
44.	Telangana Rashtra Samithi	TRS	2001	Telangana
45.	Telugu Desam Party	TDP	1982	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana
46.	United Democratic Party	UDP	1972	Meghalaya
47.	YSR Congress Party	YSRCP	2011	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana
48.	Samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya)	SJP	1990	Uttar Pradesh

Source: Election Commission of India

A political party is a group of people who share similar political views, come together to contest elections and try to hold power in the government. The members of the political parties agree on some policies and programmes for the society with a view to promote the collective good. Political parties that wish to contest local, state or national elections are required to be registered by the Election Commission of India (EC). Currently there are 6 national parties in India.

Types of Political Parties in India – Unrecognized Parties

What is an Unrecognized Party?

- An Unrecognized Political Party is the one who do not have the privilege of contesting the elections on a symbol of its own.
- This party have to choose one symbol out of the list of 'free symbols' issued by the poll panel.

There are more than hundred Unrecognized Political Parties in India, some of them are enlisted below:

S. No.	Name	Abbreviation	Foundation Year	States
1	Bhartiya Gramin Samaj Party	BGSP	2015	Madhya Pradesh
2	Amra Bangali	AMB	1983	West Bengal
3	Bhartiya Minorities Suraksha Mahasangh	BMSM	1994	Maharashtra
4	Hindustani Awam Morcha	HAM	2015	Bihar
5	Indhiya Jananayaga Party	IJK	2010	Tamil Nadu

6	Indian Bold Citizen Party	IBCP	2016	Kerala
7	Jan Samaikyanshra Party	JSP	2014	Andhra Pradesh
8	Jan Adhikar Party Loktantrik	JAP	2015	Bihar
9	Jana Sena Party	JSP	2014	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana
10	Kerala Congress (Jacob)	KCJ	1991	Kerala
11	Kerala (B)	KCB	1989	Kerala
12	Kongynadu Makkal Desia Katchi	KMDK	2001	Tamil Nadu
13	Namathu Kongu Munnetra Kalagam	MKMK	2016	Tamil Nadu
14	Kisan Party of India	KPI	2014	Bihar
15	Lok Satta Party	LSP	2006	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana
16	Manipur Peoples Party	MPP	1968	Manipur
17	Manithaneyya Makkal Katchi	MMK	2009	Tamil Nadu
18	Marumalarchi Munnetra Kazhgam	MDMK	1992	Tamil Nadu
19	Janta Dal	JD	2017	Bihar, Jharkhand
20	Odisha Janmorcha	OJM	2013	Odisha
21	Param Digvijay Dal	PDD	2014	Uttar Pradesh
22	Peace Party of India	PPI	2008	Uttar Pradesh
23	Puthiya Tamilagam	PTK	1996	Tamil Nadu
24	Rashtriya Samaj Paksha	RSP	2003	Maharashtra
25	Rashtriya Ulama Council	RUC	2008	Uttar Pradesh
26	Rashtriya Parirakshana Samiti	RPS	2013	Andhra
27	Social Democratic Party of India	SDPI	2009	Delhi, UP, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Goa, Tamil Nadu

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