

2. Recognition/Derecognition of political parties

Prelims Syllabus: Election and Electoral Reforms

Mains Syllabus: GS-II Salient features of the Representation of People's Act.

Why in News?

- A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to seize the election symbol or de-register a political party that promises or distributes “irrational freebies” from public funds before elections.

About the News:

- It said there should be a total ban on such populist measures to gain undue political favours from the voters as they violate the Constitution and the ECI should take suitable Deterrent Measures.

Why it is Needed?

- The plea urged the court to declare that the promise of irrational freebies from public funds before elections unduly influences the voters, disturbs the level playing field and vitiates the purity of the poll Process.
- This unethical Practice is just like giving bribes to the electorate at the cost of the exchequer to stay in power and must be avoided to preserve democratic principles and practices.

Registration of Political Parties:

- Registration of Political parties is governed by the provisions of Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- A party seeking registration under the said Section with the Election Commission has to submit an application to the Commission within a period of 30 days following the date of its formation as per guidelines prescribed by the Election Commission of India in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 324 of the Commission of India and Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Eligibility for a ‘National Political Party of India:

- It secures at least six percent of the valid votes polled in any four or more states, at a general election to the House of the People or, to the State Legislative Assembly.
- In addition, it wins at least four seats in the House of the People from any State or States.

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- It wins at least two percent seats in the House of the People (i.e., 11 seats in the existing House having 543 members), and these members are elected from at least three different States.

Eligibility for a 'State Political Party:

- It secures at least six percent of the valid votes polled in the State at a general election, either to the House of the People or to the Legislative Assembly of the State concerned.
- In addition, it wins at least two seats in the Legislative Assembly of the State concerned.
- It wins at least three percent (3%) of the total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the State, or at least three seats in the Assembly, whichever is more.

What are its Benefits?

- If a party is recognised as a State Party', it is entitled for exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates set up by it in the State in which it is so recognised, and if a party is recognised as a 'National Party' it is entitled for exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates set up by it throughout India.
- Recognised 'State' and 'National' parties need only one proposer for filing the nomination and are also entitled for two sets of electoral rolls free of cost at the time of revision of rolls and their candidates get one copy of electoral roll free of cost during General Elections.
- They also get broadcast/telecast facilities over Akashvani/Doordarshan during general Elections.
- The travel expenses of star campaigners are not to be accounted for in the election expense Accounts of Candidates of their Party.