

Democratic pol. system cannot function
successfully without pol. parties.
Discuss.

1-Introduction

A well functioning democratic political system is inherently reliant on organized political parties to navigate the complex dynamics of governance and representation. Political parties serve as fundamental pillars upon which the edifice of democracy stands. It provides structure and stability for the expression of diverse societal voices. They are essential for policy formation, consensus-building, and the translation of citizens' preferences into effective governance. The indispensable role of political parties remains integral to the very essence of democracy.

2- Political parties are endemic to democracy

Democracy induces government to be responsive to the preferences of the people. This is a central claim of many democratic theorists.

According to Dahl, "Responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens is a key characteristic of democracy".

The universality of scenario whereby parties originate in legislature and then extend themselves to the electorate has not been established.

Democracy is a representative government.

It is a party based system of government. The number of parties in a state may be one, two or many.

A party is primarily an electoral machine for gaining power with or without an ideology of its own. Wherever a group of persons seeks to acquire political power by collective action, there a political party came into being.

According to Lord Bryce

"Political party is an organized association in support of some principles of policy which by constitutional means it endeavours to make the determinant of government"

A political party is made of five elements: members, principles, programmes, leadership and governmental power.

3 Political parties make democracy workable"

They help make democracy viable for society as a whole.

(a) Political parties ensures diverse voices and interests within a society

In a democracy, citizens hold a variety of beliefs, values, and preferences, and parties

serve as the mechanisms through which these diverse viewpoints are aggregated and presented in an organized manner. Without parties, it would be exceedingly challenging to channel the multitude of individual perspectives into coherent policy platforms.

(b) Political parties are important for development and implementation of public policy

They provide a structure through which policy makers can draft, debate, and refine their agendas. Without this structure, decision-making becomes fragmented and incoherent, making it difficult to effectively address societal issues. Political parties offer stability and continuity in policy making.

(c) Parties offers choices to voters in elections

Parties encourage the candidates to present their ideas and credentials to the electorate. This is an essential function in the modern democratic governments. In the absence of political parties, elections may devolve into a multitude of independent candidates, who may lack the resources to campaign

effectively. Political parties help create a level playing field for political competition.

(d) They endeavor to capture government by constitutional method

In modern politics, ballot has replaced bullets, and heads are counted, not broken. This is the true essence of democracy. Political parties gain hold through a peaceful and constitutional process.

(e) Political parties play a crucial role in accountability mechanisms

They serve as means of holding officials and representatives accountable for their actions and decisions. Through party platforms, voters have a basis for evaluating the performance of politicians. The opposition parties keep the ruling party in check. They expose corruption and favoritism and scandals of ruling party.

(f) Parties are essential to democratic governability

By serving as a bridge between executives and legislatures, parties provide a

critical mechanism for overcoming gridlock. Without disciplining function of political parties, legislature may degenerate into chaos. Without them, there are worse conditions like executive-legislative conflicts, policy ineffectiveness and regime crises.

(g) They hold together their members in legislature

The primary arena through which parties check executive power is the legislature. They maintain their majority. Autonomous legislature also helps to guarantee the independence of judiciary and transparency of electoral institutions.

(h) Political parties often become vehicles for the representation of minority interest

Pluralistic democracies encompass diverse populations of cultural, religious, ethnic and ideological backgrounds. Political parties by virtue of their organization and mobilization capacity, play a crucial role in bridging this representation gap. They provide a platform for the articulation of minority issues, helping to ensure that marginalized communities are integrated into political system.

4. A democratic political system without political parties is a theoretical concept

Such non-partisan system presents considerable challenges to the way of democratic government operates.

(a) This could lead to a disorganized representation of various interest

Candidates would run as individuals, with their own unique platforms, making it difficult for voters to identify broader policy agendas or ideologies. This hinders the formulation of coherent policies.

Formation of

(b) Stable government would be a challenge

In a political landscape devoid of political parties, coalition building would be less structured, making it harder to reach consensus and maintain political stability.

(c) There would be resource disparities between individuals

In the absence of parties, candidates with personal wealth or access to significant resources might have an advantage over

others, potentially skewing the playing field and making it harder for individuals without substantial resources to participate in the political process.

(d) Polarization and functionalism might become less organized.

Polarization may become more diffuse and less structured, with individuals or factions pursuing their own agendas independently. This can make it harder to engage in constructive dialogue and compromise. Without parties, there is no such mechanism to penalize politicians who take polarizing stances.

(f) Without parties, minorities may struggle to have their voices heard in political arena

Minority groups might find it challenging to coordinate their advocacy efforts. It may be more challenging for minority candidates to access the financial resources required to run effective campaigns. They may struggle to gain the same level of recognition. Minority interest might find it challenging to advocate their issues with policy makers.

5-Conclusion

The pivotal role of political parties in the functioning of a democratic political system cannot be overstated. Through representation, policy formation, electoral competition, accountability and the preservation of political stability, political parties are the linchpin of democratic governance.

The success of a democratic political system is tied to the continued existence and evolution of political parties. They are the mechanisms that transform diverse voices into policies, facilitate the smooth transfer of power and ensure accountability to the electorate.
