



National and State Parties

For Prelims: Election Commission of India, Declaration of national and state parties, registered-unrecognised parties, Representation of People Act 1951

For Mains: Procedure of recognition of political parties as national or state

Why in News?

Recently, the Aam Aadmi Party became the **9th National Party of India** after the result of Gujarat elections where it gained almost 13% of the vote share.

- At the time of the **first General Elections (1952)**, there were **14 national parties in India**.

Note

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** 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 other parties are simply declared as **registered-unrecognised parties**.
 - As per the **Representation of People Act 1951**, Registered political parties, in course of time, can get recognition as 'State Party' or National Party'.

What is a National Party?

- **About:** As the name suggests, it has a **nationwide presence** as opposed to a regional party that is restricted to only a particular state or region.
 - A certain stature is sometimes associated with being a national party, but this **does not necessarily translate into having a lot of national political influence**.
- **Conditions for Declaring a Party 'National':**
 - As per the ECI's **Political Parties and Election Symbols, 2019 handbook**, a political party would be considered a national party if:
 - It is **'recognised' in four or more states; or**
 - If its **candidates have secured at least 6% of total valid votes in** at least 4 states (in latest **Lok Sabha** or Assembly elections) and the **party has at least 4 MPs in the last LS polls; or**
 - If it has **won at least 2% of the total seats in the LS** from at least 3 states.

How is a Party Declared a State Party?

- A party is recognised as a state party in a state **if any of the following conditions is fulfilled:**
 - If it **secures 6% of the valid votes** polled in the state at a general election to the

respective state legislative assembly (state LA) and **also, it wins 2 seats in the same state LA.**

- If it **secures 6% of the total valid votes in the state** at a general election to the LS; and **also, it wins 1 seat in the LS from the same state.**
- If it wins **3% of seats in the LA** at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned or **3 seats in the assembly (whichever is more).**
- If it wins **1 seat in the LS for every 25 seats** or any fraction thereof allotted to the state at a general election to the LS from the state concerned.
- If it secures **8% of the total valid votes** polled in the state at a General **Election to the LS from the state or to the State LA.**

What is the Significance of Being Declared a National/State Party?

- A recognised party (national or state) has the **right to certain privileges like allocation of the party symbols, provision of time for political broadcasts on the state-owned television and radio stations and access to electoral rolls.**
- These parties are allowed to have **40 “star campaigners”** during the time of elections (the **registered-unrecognised parties are allowed to have 20 “star campaigners”**).
- Every **national party is allotted a symbol exclusively reserved** for its use throughout the country. **Even in the states where it is not contesting elections.**
 - For a state party, the allotted symbol is exclusively reserved for its use in the state/s in which it is so recognised.

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