BPSC-104: Political Process in India

(TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT)

Assignment Code: BPSC-104/ASST/TMA/2026-27

Marks: 100

Assignment – I

Answer the following questions in about 500 words each. (2 × 20 = 40 marks)

1. Analyse the evolution of political parties and the party system in India.

2. Discuss autonomy movements, insurgency and movements for separate statehood as forms of regional aspiration in India.

Assignment – II

Answer the following questions in about 250 words each. (3 × 10 = 30 marks)

3. Explain the social determinants of voting behaviour with reference to caste, class, gender and tribes.

4. Discuss secularism and communalism in Indian politics.

5. Examine the relationship between caste organisations and political formations.

Assignment – III

Answer the following questions in about 100 words each. (5 × 6 = 30 marks)

6. What is meant by a party system?

7. Explain the political significance of ethnicity and language.

8. What is affirmative action?

9. Write a short note on reservation.

10. What is meant by development in the context of the political process?

1. Analyse the evolution of political parties and the party system in India.

Answer

Political parties connect citizens with the state. They recruit leaders, present alternative policies, contest elections and organise governments and opposition. The evolution of political parties in India reflects the expansion of democratic participation, the growth of social movements, changes in economic policy and the country's linguistic, religious and caste diversity. Indian party politics cannot be understood simply as competition between two national parties, because regional parties and alliances have been central to both state and national politics.

The origin of modern party politics lies in the colonial period. The Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, initially provided a platform for educated Indians to seek constitutional reforms. It later became the principal organisation of the freedom struggle and developed a broad social coalition under Mahatma Gandhi. The Muslim League, established in 1906, represented a different strand of political mobilisation. Socialist, communist, Hindu nationalist, anti-caste and regional organisations also developed before independence. These organisations brought ideological differences and competing ideas of representation into public life. Partition fundamentally changed this political setting, but did not end its diversity.

Following independence, India adopted universal adult franchise and parliamentary democracy. Congress entered the first general elections of 1951–52 with a strong organisation, experienced leaders and the prestige of the freedom movement. It dominated national and most state governments for roughly two decades. Political scientist Rajni Kothari described this arrangement as the 'Congress system'. The party operated as a broad umbrella, accommodating different classes, castes, regions and ideological tendencies. Opposition parties existed and influenced debate, but were generally unable to displace Congress nationally. The Communist parties, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, socialists, Swatantra Party and emerging regional parties represented important alternatives.

The situation began to change in the 1960s. Food shortages, economic difficulties, internal conflicts and growing aspirations among backward classes and regional groups weakened Congress dominance. In the 1967 elections, non-Congress coalitions formed governments in several states. The growth of Dravidian politics in Tamil Nadu was especially important: the DMK won power in 1967, showing that a regional movement could reshape a state party system. Congress nevertheless maintained significant support at the centre. The split in Congress in 1969 and Indira Gandhi's popular appeal brought a more centralised style of party leadership.

The Emergency of 1975–77 marked a major turning point. Restrictions on civil liberties and political opposition produced widespread criticism. In 1977, several opposition groups joined in the Janata Party, which defeated Congress and formed