

Role and Functions of Political Parties

Chapter 16: Political Parties · Topic 1

Key Concept

Political parties nominate candidates for elections, present policy platforms to voters, and, if elected, form governments to implement their proposed policies.

Parties act as a link between citizens and government, aggregating diverse public opinions and interests into coherent policy positions and legislative agendas.

Opposition parties play an important role too, holding the ruling government accountable by questioning policies, exposing issues, and offering alternative solutions.

A healthy multi-party system, with parties representing diverse viewpoints, is generally considered essential for a functioning, competitive, and responsive democracy.

Quick Revision Notes

- Political parties contest elections and form governments.
- They nominate candidates and present policy platforms.
- Parties link citizens and government.
- They aggregate diverse opinions into policy positions.
- Opposition parties hold governments accountable.
- They question policies and expose issues.
- Opposition parties offer alternative solutions.
- A healthy multi-party system supports functioning democracy.

Practice Questions

- 1 Research the main functions of a political party.
- 2 Discuss the role of opposition parties in a democracy.
- 3 Research a political party's policy platform.
- 4 Explain why a multi-party system is often preferred.
- 5 Discuss how parties represent diverse citizen interests.
- 6 Debate the strengths and weaknesses of political parties.