

Online portal for political party registration

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Manifest pedagogy: Elections in India and issues regarding the functioning of political parties have remained in the limelight in the recent past. Controversies such as symbols, functioning, women representation and electoral bonds demand transparency and accountability on the part of parties in larger national interests. Thus, a system of registration is a step in that endeavor and important for governance and Indian polity.

In news: Election Commission of India (ECI) to launch online portal for Political Parties registration

Placing it in syllabus: Salient features of the Representation of the People's Act (RPA).

Static dimensions:

- Difference between Registered and Recognized parties
- Benefits enjoyed by them

Current dimensions:

- What is the online portal all about?
- Registration process at present under RPA

Content:

Difference between Registered and Recognized parties:

An association or body of individual citizens of India calling itself a political party and intending to avail itself of the provisions of **Part-IVA** of the RPA (relating to registration of political parties) is required to get itself registered with

the ECI.

In order **to be recognised as a State party**, the political party should fulfill **any of the following conditions**:

- At General Elections or Legislative Assembly elections, the **party has won 3% of seats in the legislative assembly of the State (subject to a minimum of 3 seats)**, OR
- At a Lok Sabha General Elections, the **party has won 1 Lok sabha seat for every 25 Lok Sabha seats allotted for the State**, OR
- At a General Election to Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly, the **party has polled a minimum of 6% of votes in a State and in addition it has won 1 Lok Sabha or 2 Legislative Assembly seats**, OR
- At a General Election to Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly, the **party has polled 8% of votes in a State.**

For National Status:

- The party **wins 2% of seats in the Lok Sabha (11 seats) from at least 3 different States**, OR
- At a General Election to Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly, the **party polls 6% of votes in four States and in addition it wins 4 Lok Sabha seats**, OR
- A party gets **recognition as State Party in four or more States.**

The registered but **unrecognised political parties do not have the privilege of contesting elections on a fixed symbol of their own**. They have to choose from a list of 'free symbols' issued by the poll panel.

A recognized National or State party can have a maximum of 40 "Star campaigners" and a registered unrecognised party **can nominate a maximum of 20 'Star Campaigners'**.

Benefits enjoyed by registered political parties:

- RPA allows them to **accept contributions voluntarily** offered to it by any person or company other than a government company.
- Candidates of registered parties get **preference in allotment of election symbols.**
- Registered political parties, in course of time, **can get recognition as `State Party` or `National Party`** subject to the fulfillment of the conditions prescribed by the Commission in the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.
- 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.
- 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.**
- They are **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 get **broadcast/telecast facilities over Akashvani/Doordarshan** during general elections.
- Political parties are **entitled to nominate "Star Campaigners"** during General Elections.

As per the Election Commission of India's latest data, **India is having a total of 2,293 political parties.** They include **seven "recognised national" and 59 "recognised state" parties.**

What is the online portal all about?

The Registration of Political Parties is governed by the provisions of **Section 29A** of the RPA.

- ECI has now reviewed the system and process of

registration of political parties.

- The **new guidelines will be effective from 1st January, 2020.**
- The **“Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System” (PPRTMS)** will be implemented through an **online portal**, to facilitate **tracking of status of application by applicants.**
- The salient feature in PPRTMS is that the applicant (who is applying for party registration from 1st January, 2020 onwards) will be able to track the progress of his / her application and will get status updates through SMS and email.
- The applicant should provide **contact mobile number and email address of the party / applicant in his application.**

Registration process at present under RPA:

- A party seeking registration has to **submit an application** to the Commission **within a period of 30 days** following the date of its formation.
- The **application should be in prescribed format with basic particulars** about the party such as name, address, membership details of various units, names of office bearers, etc, as required under sub-section (4) of Section 29A.

The **application along with all the below mentioned documents** should reach the Secretary to the Commission within 30 days following the date of formation of the party.

- A **demand draft for Rs. 10,000/-** on account of processing fee which is non-refundable should be submitted.
- A **printed copy of the memorandum and regulations of the Party** containing a specific provision as required under sub-section (5) of Section 29A of the RPA should be included.

- There should be a **specific provision** in the Constitution and memorandum of the party **regarding organizational elections and their periodicity** at different levels and terms of office of the office-bearers of the party.
- The **procedure to be adopted in the case of merger/dissolution** should be specifically provided in the Constitution and memorandum.
- **Certified extracts from the latest electoral rolls** in respect of at least 100 members of the party to show that they are registered electors.
- An **affidavit duly signed by the President/General Secretary of the party** and sworn before a First Class Magistrate/ Notary to the effect that no member of the party is a member of any other political party registered with the Commission.
- **Particulars of Bank accounts and Permanent Account Number**, if any, in the name of the party.
- Any application made after the said period will be time-barred.