

## 1. Discuss the merits and demerits of the 'first past the post' electoral system with appropriate examples from around the world.

### Approach

Candidates can start the answer with highlighting FPTP, and simply as question demands present both side of arguments with reference to the different world scenarios.

### Introduction

In the FPTP system, the entire country is divided into small geographical units called constituencies. Every constituency elects one representative, where a voter votes for one candidate.

### Body

Merits of FPTP system:

- Simple and familiar voting method: It is simpler than other voting methods like the PR method, which is followed in countries like the Netherlands, Israel etc. India follows the Proportional Representation system to indirectly elect the president, vice president of India.
- Easy and Convenient: It is easier to conduct the FPTP system than PR in a large country like India. PR is a complicated system and is suitable for small countries.
- Voters know their representatives: In FPTP, candidates know their own representatives, unlike in the PR system. Therefore, in FPTP, candidates can hold the representatives responsible. FPTP is currently used to elect members of the House of Commons in the UK, both chambers of the US Congress and the lower houses in both Canada and India.
- Broad-based political parties: In severely ethnically or regionally-divided societies, FPTP is praised for encouraging political parties to be 'broad churches'. In FPTP Malaysia, for example, the governing coalition is a broad-based movement, and fields Chinese candidates in Malay areas and vice versa.
- Smooth functioning of the Parliamentary government: The parliamentary system requires that the executive has a majority in the legislature. The makers of the Constitution felt that the PR system may not be appropriate for giving a stable government in a parliamentary system like India's.

Demerits of FPTP system:

- Communal division of votes: Due to the nature of the First Past the Post System (FPTP) voting system, it may lead to the communal division of votes.
- FPTP is not truly representative: FPTP System is not truly representative, as a candidate who gets less than half the votes can also win the election. For

example, in 2014, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the BJP won 336 seats with only 38.5% of the popular vote.

- Smaller parties have lesser chances of winning in the FPTP system: Moreover, smaller parties are forced to align with the interests of national parties, which beats the purpose of local self-government and federalism.
- Exaggerating 'Regional Fiefdoms': In some situations, FPTP tends to create regions where one party, through winning a majority of votes in the region, wins all, or nearly all, of the parliamentary seats. This has long been put forward as an argument against FPTP in Canada.
- Encouraging the Development of Ethnic Parties: FPTP can encourage parties to base their campaigns and policy platforms on hostile conceptions of clan, ethnicity, race, or regionalism. For example, Malawi multi-party elections of 1994.
- Open to the Manipulation of Electoral Boundaries: This was particularly apparent in the Kenyan elections of 1993 when huge disparities between the sizes of electoral districts - the largest had 23 times the number of voters as the smallest.
- Excluding Women from Parliament: Women made up eleven percent of the parliamentarians in established democracies using FPTP. This pattern has been mirrored in new democracies, especially in Africa.

### Conclusion

The larger point is if we artificially try to make the political system fairer, the natural competitiveness gets distorted and that is why India should generally prefer FPTP, both on the grounds of voters' convenience and a natural competitiveness being allowed in the system.

### Q-2. Analyse the importance of the opposition leader in India's parliamentary system.

#### Approach -

A simple straightforward question where candidates need to write about the importance of the opposition leader in India's parliamentary system.

#### Introduction -

The LOP is the leader of the largest party that has not less than one-tenth of the total strength of the house. It is a statutory post defined in the Salaries and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act.

#### Body -

The Leader of the Opposition is a member of parliament who leads the largest party, or coalition of parties, that is not in government,

The important Functions performed by Leader of opposition ,The tasks of the Leader of the Opposition include:

- Chairing meetings in which the opposition discusses policies and examines bills
- Presenting alternative policies to those of the government
- Selecting members of the opposition to be shadow ministers
- Leading the shadow Cabinet
- Acting as the chief opposition spokesperson
- Leading the opposition in a federal election.

Significance-

- It is also said that the Leader of Opposition is called the 'Shadow Prime Minister'. The Leader should be ready to take over if the government falls in any adverse circumstance.
- In case of a vacant position of such Leader of the Opposition, It will weaken India as the Opposition will not be able to put up a unified front against the ruling party.
- The leader of the opposition plays an important role in bringing cohesiveness and effectiveness to the opposition's functioning in policy and legislative work.
- It also helps in bringing neutrality to the appointments of institutions of accountability and transparency such as CVC, CBI, Lokpal, CIC, etc.
- The LoP also plays an important role in bringing cohesiveness and effectiveness to the opposition's functioning in policy and legislative work.
- The other role of the leader of the Opposition is to watch for the violation of the rights of minorities. They can also demand debates on such crucial issues, when the government is trying to slide away without parliamentary criticism.
- The Public Accounts Committee is there whose chairmen are is Leader of the Opposition to check the expenditure of the ruling party.

What reforms are needed-

- There arises a problem when no party in opposition secures 55 or more seats. In such situations, the numerically largest party in the opposition should have the right to have a leader recognized as leader of the opposition by the speaker.
- Besides, the 10% formulation is inconsistent with the law 'the salary and allowances of leaders of opposition in Parliament Act, 1977' which only says that the largest opposition party should get the post.

Way Forward-

- No matter whosoever gets the majority, the LoP is critical to effective functioning of the opposition in the Parliament.
- Now that there is a law recognizing the LoP, passed by the Parliament, it has to be enforced and
- LoP plays a crucial role in bringing bipartisanship and neutrality to the appointments in institutions of accountability and transparency – CVC, CBI, CIC, Lokpal etc.
- It can't be overlooked or undermined, no matter what the flexibility or ambiguity that exist in the legal framework.

**Conclusion-**

Under India's almost unique system of state, the Leader of an Opposition features very special responsibility towards the Parliament and to the state. While he remains a critic he must during a sense be, a partner and even a buttress of the Govt to which he is opposed. This dual responsibility he must discharge with fidelity.

### **Q-3 -Does the Parliament seem to have lost its luster as the temple of democracy in recent years ? critically examine.**

#### **Approach -**

In this question candidates need to write about how does parliament seems to have lost its luster as temple of democracy in recent years . examine it critically .

#### **Introduction -**

As an institution, Parliament is central to the very idea of democracy and was assigned a pivotal role in our Constitution by the founding fathers of the republic. It is responsible for legislation and should engage in discourse and debate on issues that concern the nation and the citizens.

#### **Body -**

Parliament is the temple of democracy which provides the highest forum to discuss, debate and decide issues for the well being of the people,

Significance of parliamentary debates-

- These debates provide a forum for MP's to express their opinions and concerns, and contribute towards making policy.
- It allows parliamentarians to voice the interest of the people of their constituencies.
- Better policy formulation, Diverse views, and assist in informed decision making.

Indian Parliament as the temple of democracy has declined in the recent years,

- There are mainly two reasons for this decline. Parliament does not meet or work long enough. And there are institutional constraints on its performance while working.
- Incomes and assets apart, the Criminalization of politics is a reality. ADR, Association for Democratic Reforms, reports that 43 % of sitting MP's have criminal records as of 2019, compared to 34% of the MP's in the 2014 .
- The 'competitive hooliganism' is common sight in parliament in recent years .
- There are institutional constraints on the performance of MP's as well. The allocation of time for MP's to speak is proportional to the strength of their political party in the house and its leadership decides who gets to speak and for how long.
- The speaker of the Lok Sabha or the chairman of the Rajya Sabha have little discretion in the matter. The only other opportunities for MP's are during question hour or zero hour.
- In zero hour, the speaker or the chairman have the discretion to invite an MP to speak, but time is too little and speeches are often drowned out in pandemonium

- In India, the anti-defection law stipulates that a three-line whip can be violated only if more than one-third of a party's MP's do so. This is the unintended consequence of a law that might have mitigated one problem but created another, which is emasculating our Parliament as an institution.
- The excruciatingly slow process of legislating big policy decisions, with months and even years of acrimonious stalemate in parliament, interspersed by the all too rare breakthrough.

Indian parliament stood the test of time -

- Despite the decline in reputation in recent times, the Indian Parliament continues to reflect the deepening of democracy.
- In the past 75 years, the Indian Parliament has many achievements to its name despite its growing unpopularity.
- The parliament reflects the deepening of democracy, which has also had an impact on its functioning. This has, however, led to a fundamental re-imagining of the British parliamentary system and its procedures that the Indian Constituent Assembly opted to follow after independence.
- At the same time, the Parliament has only fitfully lived up to its responsibility of deliberating on and crafting legislation and ensuring accountability and transparency in government.

Steps need to be taken to improve functioning of parliament -

- Parliament can amend its rules to give MP's more clout when confronting the government and to enable its committees to play a larger role in the legislative process.
- For greater knowledge and subsequent legal review, every legislative proposal must include a full analysis of social, economic, environmental, and administrative impacts.
- In order to supervise and coordinate legislative development, a new Legislation Committee should be established in Parliament
- In order to keep the values of our parliamentary democracy we should elect only morally trained representatives; and the members of the Parliament and State Assemblies should set themselves as an example for the public, especially the youth.

### **Conclusion -**

The parliament is frequently referred to as the "temple of democracy." It is because it is one of the highest institutions in which representative democracy is implemented. Its work is crucial to India's government and the fulfillment of the preamble's promise.

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