Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the role of pre-poll political alliances in shaping electoral competition and representation in India's parliamentary democracy. Discuss the constitutional and institutional framework governing such alliances.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 12/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Coalition politics, electoral arithmetic, social representation, ideological convergence, anti-defection law, Election Commission, party recognition, First-Past-the-Post system, political accountability.

Model Answer

Introduction

Pre-poll alliances are arrangements between political parties to contest elections together, often through seat-sharing agreements and a common political agenda. They have become an important feature of India's competitive multi-party democracy.

Role in Electoral Competition and Representation

Alliances can bring together parties representing different regions, communities and ideological interests. They may reduce vote fragmentation, facilitate coordination among parties and provide a platform for groups whose political representation is limited. However, seat-sharing disagreements and ideological differences can create internal challenges.

Constitutional and Institutional Framework

The Constitution does not prescribe a separate framework for pre-poll alliances. Political parties and candidates operate within the Representation of the People Acts, 1950 and 1951, and the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968. The Election Commission regulates electoral processes and recognises parties according to prescribed criteria. The Tenth Schedule addresses disqualification on grounds of defection by legislators, rather than directly regulating pre-poll alliances.

Challenges

Opaque seat-sharing arrangements, personality-driven coalitions and shifting political commitments can weaken accountability. Alliances also need to reconcile common programmes with the distinct identities of constituent parties.

Conclusion

Pre-poll alliances reflect India's political diversity and federal character. Transparent agreements, internal democratic processes and accountable common programmes are essential for strengthening their contribution to representative democracy.

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