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## **UNIT 5 PARTY SYSTEMS\***

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### **5.0 OBJECTIVES**

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The interactions among political parties and their relations with the political system define the party system in a country. This unit provides an analysis of party system and illustrates various settings under which they operate. After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- Define party system
- Explain the major types of classifying party systems
- Describe the features of different party systems
- Identify the factors affecting the party system.

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous unit of this block, we have defined a political party and examined the varied functions they perform in a political system. As we saw, political parties, except for those in the single-party system, constantly seek to gain political power at the national, regional or local levels, in every state. In this process, they respond to each other's initiatives in a competitive power struggle. This competitive interplay between parties conceived as a set of interactive structures is known as a 'party system'. The interaction between parties in a party system is impacted by various factors: such as the number of parties interacting with each other, size of parties, level of competitiveness etc. Students of comparative politics are interested in party systems mainly because the number and kind of parties contesting elections affects not only the choices which voters confront, but also government formation and the ease with which political executives can formulate and implement public policies.

Students of political science have been classifying party systems for almost as long as they have been studying parties. Classification of party systems however has been difficult both because of the variety of political parties and the dynamism of the political system. For a long time, the general trend of classifying party systems was based on the 'number approach' (which limited the classification of party systems to one-party systems, two-party systems, and multiparty systems based on the number of parties operating in the system), until Sartori (1976) added degree of polarization as other criteria based on which party systems were either extreme or moderate. This unit will introduce you to some of the typologies of party systems. It will also describe the features of important party systems and examine the interaction between the party system and the wider political system.

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## 5.2 CLASSIFICATION OF PARTY SYSTEMS

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Various attempts have been made by several political scientists to classify party systems based on different criteria. The most enduring ones have been those proposed by two French political scientists, Maurice Duverger and Jean Blondel. Duverger (1954) pioneered the classification of party systems based on the number of parties existing in a system. He identifies 'single-party system' and 'pluralist-party systems'. In the first category, he included the single-party system and the dominant party system and in the pluralist party systems, he included two-party system and multiparty systems. Also, based on the nature of parties of which a party system may comprise, Duverger classifies party systems as 'disciplined/rigid' and 'undisciplined/flexible'. Considering the composition of an absolute majority in a system, he classifies party systems as:

- party systems with an absolute majority consisting of a single party.
- party systems where the absolute majority does not belong to anyone party but rests with a coalition of different parties.

- party systems where the absolute majority is formed with the help of minor/smaller who get to play a significant role in either government or opposition.
- party systems where the absolute majority is formed with the help of minor/smaller parties but with no distinct role for them in either government or opposition.

A decade later, Jean Blondel (1968) carried forward the work of Duverger by introducing additional categories. Blondel used the share of the vote won by parties from 1945 through 1946 to construct a fourfold typology. He distinguished two-party systems, two-and-a-half party systems, multiparty systems with a predominant party and multiparty systems without a predominant party. His typology of party system distinguished one-party dominant systems, two-party systems, moderate pluralism, and extreme multipartyism. Blondel's typology was based on the analysis of the clusters in the average share of the vote won by the largest two parties and then considering the ratio of the first party's share to that of the second and third parties. His analysis showed that in the two-party systems (prevailing in the United States, New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Austria), the two party share was 90 per cent and above and closely balanced between the two parties. In the next cluster, the share of the two-party ranged from 75-80% of the vote cast but there was a wider average difference (10.5%) between the first and second parties (the Federal Republic of Germany, Canada and Ireland). Taking account of imbalance in the share of the vote, Blondel categorized these as two-and-a-half rather than three-party systems.

Giovanni Sartori (1976) introduced a new element into the classification of the party system. Not satisfied with the systems based purely on the 'numbers approach', Sartori analysed how far away parties in system stood from each other in terms of ideas, the intensity of the conflict between them and their role in government. In his typology, Sartori took only those parties that mattered, that is, large or small parties were to be counted only if they affected party competition. Using this approach, Sartori came up with the following four types of party systems:

- 1) **Predominant Party System** in which one party dominates the government in spite the existence of large number of parties. A predominant party could emerge due to factors such as popularity among the masses, its historical lineage, charismatic leadership, strong organizational structures, etc.
- 2) **Two-Party System** in which political power is shared between two relatively powerful political parties.
- 3) **Limited Pluralism** in which the neither of the two dominant parties have a clear cut majority and seek support of other like-minded parties. The coalition government could be seen as 'feeble government' but it may not necessarily be short-lived government. Sartori had included the German Federal Republic, Sweden, Belgium, Ireland, and Denmark as examples of limited or moderate pluralism.
- 4) **Extreme Pluralism** is a system where the supporting parties occupy extreme positions and are largely polarized. The presence of 'anti-system' parties,

bilateral oppositions, and centripetal competitions are some of the features of this type of party system. With deep cleavages and low consensus, the extreme or polarized pluralism does not offer a legitimate party system in world politics.

As you can see, Sartori’s typology is also based on numbers (properly counted) whose principal distinction was not number, *per se*, but rather, the degree of polarization and party competition. This enabled comparative political scientists to explain why certain kinds of multiparty systems led to cabinet instability and system collapse, while others did not.

The party system is a dynamic element of a political system. Since the 1980s, parties and party systems have undergone significant change in Europe and those that transitioned to democratic systems (about which you will be studying in Block IV of this course). As Peter Mair (2002) pointed out, there are fewer and fewer current instances of pure two-party competition and none of polarized pluralism. Instead, party systems in most liberal democracies fit into the increasingly crowded category, moderate pluralism. The most recent approach to classify party systems has been in terms of institutionalization (Siaroff, 2013) explains institutionalization as the level of organization in parties, the extent of their associations with the society, consistency in ideologies of parties, interparty competition; and the extent to which political parties and elections have high legitimacy in a country.

For the sake of ease in understanding the various kinds of party systems prevailing, we will classify the party systems as under:

1. Two-Party System/Bi-party System
2. Two-and-A-Half-Party System
3. Multi-Party System
4. One-Party System/Single-Party System
5. Institutionalized vs de-institutionalized Party System

**Check Your Progress 1**

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.  
 ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

1) What is a party system?

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2) What is the Sartori’s contribution to analysis of party systems?

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### 5.2.1 Two-Party System

Also called the bi-party system, this system is characterised by the dominance of two 'major' political parties which stand equal chances of grabbing the political power and forming the government. Several other smaller parties may exist in the system, but the centre-stage is shared by two parties. The two dominant parties are usually backed by a majority of electorates which implies that the rest of the parties in the system remain in minority. Power keeps shifting from one of the dominant parties to the other, leaving the rest with an almost negligible role in the formation of the government.

Two-party systems work on the foundation of mutual acceptance and coexistence between both parties which openly accept each other and their position with full respect. In this context, Siaroff (2013) identifies two variations in this system. First, as '*Competitive party system*' which exhibits clear alternation in power as the two parties stand equal chances of winning. A good example of such a system is the party system in the USA where both the houses of Congress in general and the Senate in particular witness a high level of competition between the two parties. Malta and most of the erstwhile British colonies, mainly the Caribbean countries also have a similar party system. The second variation is an 'imperfect or imbalanced two-party system', where despite the presence of two major parties, one party has a better chance of winning than the other. For instance, Botswana and some state legislatures of the USA are systems where one party has more chances of winning than the other. Hence, functions more as a dominant party system to some extent (Siaroff 2013).

The two-party system can comprise of parties exhibiting two opposite ideologies or sharing similar ideology but having distinct electoral support. The presence of Labour and Conservative parties in the UK, until the emergence of the Social and Liberal Democratic Party in the late 1980s, is a classic example of a two-party system based on competing ideologies. On the other hand, in the USA, the Democratic and the Republican parties initially had different ideologies/political orientations but with time they both have become flexible and accommodative of varying interests. Both the parties differ in their approaches to achieve the accepted democratic norms in the country and give the citizens a clear choice as per their preferences.

A bi-party system results in a 'party government' which implies that the government is formed by a single party and will account for a stable and accountable government. This system gives a clear straightforward choice to the public while giving strength to the government as well as opposition to fulfil their mandates. A strong government faces a strong opposition which ensures a sense of accountability in the government and continuous zeal in the opposition to enhance their chances of grabbing power.

However, a bi-party system may result in 'adverse politics' where parties are aware and assured of their position in the political system and hence, may try to get into power by all means thus corrupting the system. Both the parties may tend to be driven by interests of a small, wealthy elite prevailing in the country. For instance, in the USA two-party system may provide ample opportunities for

debate, but issues favouring the elite class always get speedy consent than those about the common man.

### 5.2.2 Two-and-Half-Party System

In this system, there are two major parties and one or more than one smaller yet significant party/parties. "A two-and-a-half-party system is where the two main parties get at least 80 per cent of the seats but not more than 95 per cent and where the system does not meet the criteria of one-party predominance. There is no fixed pattern of outcome in a two-and-half-party system as the outcome will depend on the third party's support without which the formation of government is impossible. This system may rarely exhibit a single-party majority and the formation of the government will largely depend on the political equation created between the parties in the system.

Some regard the two-and-half-party system as a transitional phase between the bi-party system and multiparty system. Siaroff (2003) cites the emergence of the Liberal Democratic Party in the 1970s in the UK and the rise of the New Democratic Party in Canada in the early 1980s to argue that most of the two-party systems have now become two-and-half-party systems in the true sense.

The emphasis in the two-and-a-half-party system remains on 'half', the third element/party which might play the role of kingmaker in a political system. There surely remains an asymmetry between the parties. As explained by Bhushan (2015) the first party remains substantially larger than the second, and the third party is much smaller than both first and the second party. Siaroff (2003) places this third party in a position where it works as a 'hinge' or a 'wing'. As a 'hinge' this third party directs the formation of government in one direction or the other because it shares commonalities with the other two parties in the system. This way they play an important role in the government as well. On the other hand, as 'wing', the third parties act as a mere support system of either of the major parties and may or may not get to play a part in the government. The Free Democratic Party (FDP) in Germany, for instance, works as a hinge party. It does not hold huge electoral support (only 13.2 per cent of seats) nor does it get to hold the Chancellor Post, yet it remains the most significant factor in determining the outcomes of the elections in Germany. Depending on its coalition with the Christian Democrats (CDU) and Social Democrats (SDP); the FDP has been in government for about 41 of the 53 years since 1949, with its periods in opposition being only about one term at a time. On the other hand, since the 1980s in Portugal, the Nationalist Popular Party and the Communist party are winged parties of two main parties, the Social Democratic party (PSD) and the People's Party (CDS), respectively.

The presence of 'half parties' creates a more consensual political system rather than a majoritarian one. The dependence of main parties on the 'hinge' or 'wings' increases the extent of accountability and restraints on the major parties which otherwise may act as absolute powers in a single-party majority situation. Hence, a two-and-half-party system accounts for a more democratic procedure in the formation of government than the single-party or the bi-party system.

### 5.2.3 Multiparty System

A multi-party system has three or more political parties. It can be categorized as a stable and unstable multiparty system. The Netherlands, Switzerland are some of the examples of the former while France and Italy exemplify the latter. The party system in Switzerland has nine political parties though only four parties enjoy majority electoral support. The government in Switzerland is normally formed as a coalition of these four parties with the rest of the smaller parties playing a significant role in forming coalitions in different parts of the Swiss Federation. France and Italy have been the most remarkable examples of the 'unstable multiparty system'. France witnessed the formation of at least 26 governments during 1944-1958. Similarly, Italy had 38 governments between 1948 and 1975. In both these countries, smaller parties (French Communist Party in France and Italian Communist Party in Italy) played an important role in distancing the larger parties from the governance, and hence, had to rely on coalitions which due to rising internal differences proved to be highly unstable (Haywood 2013). Another way of categorizing a multiparty system is 'moderately/limited' and 'highly fragmented multiparty system. The former may comprise three to six relevant parties. In this deconcentration, the top two parties are limited to less than 80 per cent of the seats. Coalition government remains to be the only way forward. The highly fragmented party system may have more than six relevant parties. An outcome of this system with frictions among medium and small parties is a weak coalition government of three or more parties. Brazil, Israel, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, India, and Indonesia had highly fragmented multiparty systems (Siaroff 2013).

Multiparty systems are also categorized as 'moderate' and 'polarized' multiparty systems. Moderate multiparty systems exhibit ideological similarity, that is, the difference between various parties' ideologies is very moderate (Sartori 1976). Here, there is a higher tendency among the parties to come to a compromise in case of differences or disputes resulting in a much more stable and strong government. A polarized multiparty system, on the other hand, comprises parties with wide and strong ideological differences. This makes the parties refrain from reaching a middle ground. In such systems, there may even be political parties holding 'anti-system' stance making resolution of disputes or differences difficult. The Communist Parties in France, Italy and Spain, for instance, have created more disputes and resulting in unstable governments in these countries (Haywood, 2013).

A multiparty system is the most efficient system in sustaining democracies. The presence of multiple parties enables a system of internal checks and balances for the governments ensuring greater accountability in return. It creates an atmosphere of discussions and debates and makes policymaking a more inclusive phenomenon. Since there is a greater possibility of coalition governments and lesser feasibility of a single party achieving a majority in a multiparty system, it ensures that the government policies and decisions address the diversity of interests and concerns pertaining to all the groups/segments/sections of that country. A multiparty system not only ensures accountability of the government but also creates a wider platform for public opinion.

Despite its democratic credentials, the multiparty system has some shortcomings. The first and the most important one remains to be the instability induced in the governance due to coalitions. Multiple parties have different interests and achieving cooperation and consensus among them might be a difficult task. Further, during the process of achieving consensus, various malpractices and compromises may take place which may corrupt the entire political system of a country.

The multiparty system also delays and sometimes derails the processes of policy negotiation and implementation. As mentioned above, the difficult task of having the consent of all plagues the smooth functioning of the government most of the time. A lack of clear ideological orientation also is one of the shortcomings of a multi-party system as the parties are more focused on forming a government through unholy coalitions or compromises. A multi-party system thus can become more a system of achieving greater numbers than a system of representing a diversity of interests.

#### 5.2.4 One-Party System

The one-party system, also called a single-party system, implies the system in which only one party exists and is legally allowed to exist, which controls the government. However, according to Duverger, there can be different forms of the one-party system. Under what he called a dominant-party system or one-party dominant system, some minor parties may sometimes be allowed, but they exist on the condition of accepting the leadership of the dominant party. This system is normally found in totalitarian countries where minor parties are either crushed by the ruling party or constitutionally debarred. The former Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China are classic examples of a one-party system. In China's party system, the Communist Party of China (CPC) is the only party authorized to govern the state despite eight other smaller parties existing in the system. The smaller parties neither have the legal sanction to contest in the election nor have the freedom to criticize the decisions and policies of the CPC.

A one-party system is also found in some democratic states, especially those that have gone through colonial rule in the past. These states have started their nation-building under the guidance of their national leaders who had guided them throughout their freedom movement. Political parties in these newly emergent states usually centre on a charismatic leader and the ideology of national development is derived from the leader's ideology itself. For example, Ghana under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, Tanzania under the leadership of Julius Nyerere and Zimbabwe under the leadership of Robert Mugabe have had single-party systems. Being solely dependent on the leadership, the political parties in this kind of arrangement lack the level of organisation and discipline found in the Communist one-party states. As a result, almost all of them have disintegrated or lost their dominant status.

One-party systems generally provide for strong and stable governments, which are a necessity for efficient policymaking and implementation, but they have several shortcomings. The possibility of a single-party system developing into an authoritarian state remains quite high. Such states tend to silence the opposing



voices by forceful means. Hence, such systems may not stand true to the function of the party system which remains to act as a link between a government and citizens. Also, the procedure of transfer of power and leadership may be amended by the single party in power as per its convenience resulting in monopolisation of leadership and power which defeats the role of the party system as an agency of decentralization/diffusion of power in the society. In contemporary times we find these systems in China, Cuba, Eritrea, Laos, North Korea, Syria, Turkmenistan, and Vietnam.

### **5.2.5 Dominant-Party System**

This system is often confused with single-party systems but there remain clear differences between the two. A ‘dominant’ party may consist of multiple parties/political groups competing for power but is generally dominated by a single major party within the system. Whereas, in single-party system, there is absence of multiple parties and the entire political system is under the control of that single party itself. While the former accommodates varying interests and opinion of various other political parties, the latter works generally in an authoritarian political setup where any kind of opposition is not tolerated.

In this system, single party hegemony prevails for a long period of time because it not only predominates in parliament and controls the government but also maintains its dominance over a period of time. Even when it fails to occupy majority, it still retains the potential to form a minority or lead a coalition. Hence, this ability of domination despite missing the majority-mark, distinguishes this system from the ‘imperfect two-party system’ where attaining majority is the only way to govern, and minority ruled governments are not possible.

The presence of one-party dominant system is generally observed in dictatorships where opposition parties are prevented from acting and participating in the political system. For instance, Chad and Cameroon are some cases where dictatorships have discouraged the participation of other parties. Nevertheless, democracies also exhibit this system as can be observed in Botswana Democratic Party in Botswana since 1996, and the Congress party in India from 1947-1977. Another classic example of this party system is Japan where its single largest party i.e., the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) had dominated the party system for 54 years until 2009. During this period, it has served a noticeably short period as opposition (1993-1994) and almost entire duration has held political power under its control. Other examples include Sweden where Social Democrats have managed to remain at the forefront from 1932-1976, Italy dominated by Christian Democrats (1946-1983), Israel by Mapai/Labour Party (1948-1977), Namibia by South West Africa People’s Organization (since 1991), and South Africa remains dominated by African National Congress since 1994.

Dominant-party system on one hand provides a stable, strong, and predictable government; on the other hand, it undermines the democratic credentials of the system as the prolonged system of governance often results in rise in corrupt practices within the party and centralization of power to the extreme levels. As noted by Haywood (2013: 239), the dominant-party system “tends to erode the important constitutional distinction between the state and the party in power.

When governments cease to come and go, an insidious process of politicization takes place through which state officials and institutions adjust to the ideological and political priorities of the dominant party". Another shortcoming of this system is the absence of a strong and effective opposition. While the dominant party remains in power, it ensures its authority is unchallenged and hence, makes every effort to discourage any kind of opposition or protest. A dominant-party system can, therefore, be detrimental to democracy.

### 5.2.6 Institutionalized vs De-institutionalized Party System

Different categories of party systems mentioned above may not be the permanent arrangements in any democracy. It has been observed in various countries that the extent of consistency of party systems and the potential of main parties to maintain their status is not static and varies with time. This phenomenon was first conceptualized as 'Party System institutionalization' by Mainwaring and Scully in 1995 in the context of Latin America. Accordingly, the party system was classified as 'institutionalized' or 'de-institutionalized' party system based on the stability and predictability maintained by the system. Institutionalized party systems smoothen the process of governance because they are less volatile and consist of durable parties which stand deeply rooted in society. Not only do they promote greater economic growth, but they also tend to yield better public policies. An institutionalized party system stands more accountable as it is better in articulating and aggregating the public demands. It exhibits greater party discipline, making it easier for the legislature to function and is more likely to resolve the deadlocks and reduces immobility than in an inchoate system (Siaroff, 2013).

Deinstitutionalized party is often referred to as party system collapse or party collapse – identified as 'inchoate party systems' (Mainwaring and Scully 1950). This system is often observed in third wave democracies (see Block IV). The recent developments make de-institutionalized systems more evident than the institutionalized systems. For example, Papua New Guinea is categorized as an inchoate party system because until recently, no prime minister has been able to complete a full parliamentary term. Another example is Peru where leaders and politicians have adopted party-less strategies by acting as free agents with almost none or fewer attachments to party labels- making Peru a case of democracy without parties (Mainwaring 2016).

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## 5.3 FACTORS AFFECTING PARTIES IN A SYSTEM

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Party systems evolve according to the transformation and changes that take place in (i) the electoral system; (ii) social and cultural diversity; (iii) the constitutional structure; (iv) the degree of international autonomy (Sartori, 1976, 291). A country's party system is largely shaped according to the electoral system opted by it. The electoral system defines the criteria for representations and there remain several ways and methods that are opted by democracies according to their social and political structures. For instance, an electoral system based on a single-member majority tends to yield a less fragmented party system because it provides for a clear majority to the single party whose candidate has got

maximum votes. On the other, proportional representative systems are more conducive for a highly fragmented party system. For instance, during the 1990s, an assessment of 73 democratic countries revealed that the countries having proportional representation systems mostly had a multiparty system, while those with non-PR system were more inclined towards a dominant party system or two-party system. (Krupavičius, Algis. Isoda, et al., 2013). The electoral system also defines the competitive spirit of party systems. For instance, if a country witnesses frequent changes in electoral support, then whatever party system it may have, it will be highly competitive. Since changes in electoral support impact the parties' performance, hence, there will be more efforts put forward by the political leaders and after the elections also there will be uncertainty as the 'political bargain' will rise. There will be greater emphasis on mobilization of masses and in turn, will result in a highly informative and aware political population.

Another factor affecting the condition of the party system is the social and cultural diversity of that given country. For instance, there are fewer chances for a one-party system to emerge in a diverse society as such a system would not be able to address the social and cultural cleavages. A multiparty system or a two-an-half-party system is more likely to emerge in societies with wide gaps and differences in its social and cultural sectors. On the other hand, there is a greater scope for a single-party system or dominant party system to emerge in a less diverse society.

In addition to this, the constitutional structure of a country can shape its political system and accordingly the party system. A highly fragmented social structure may not yield a multiparty system if the constitution restricts the political and civil rights of individuals. Further, the ideological orientation and inclination proposed in the constitution can also shape the party system. Thus, if the constitutional provisions aim to establish a communist society, it will empower the left-winged party to establish a single-party system or a dominant party system.

Party system change may take a variety of forms, from marginal change to the alternation of its essential features. A change of party system might be manifested in four ways: 1) incidental swings, 2) limited change, 3) general change, and 4) alternation of the system. Incidental swings are usually temporary distortions in the patterned way a party system operates, and they might be related to the establishment of some new small parties. Limited change is prolonged or even permanent, but this change is restricted either to one area or confined to the emergence of a party that replaces another one. General change is more serious and relates to several aspects, that is, the fact that changes are multifaceted and prolonged and that they concern salient features of the system. The alternation of the system signifies a dramatic change in most of its aspects, i.e., the party composition, its strength, alliances, and leadership. Party systems also change their format due to long-term social and economic developments. The processes of dealignment or realignment of party affiliations result from structural demographic changes, accompanied by culture shifts (Krupavičius, Algis. Isoda, et al, 2013).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, party and party systems across the world have been facing significant challenges from the forces of globalization and democratization. These include growing marketization, the rise of issue-based politics, and the spread of information and communication technologies. Many argue that these developments are weakening the bonds between the voters and political parties and increasing fragmentation. Others argue that political parties and party systems are transforming and adjust to the new developments. They point to the rise of cartel parties (that often collaborate with each other for state resources as well as for career stability and continuity of their leaders) and the increasing reliance of parties on professionals to run centralised and technically skilled party operations and campaigns as evidence of transformation and adjustment of parties and party systems to the new realities.

### Check Your Progress 2

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.  
 ii) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Distinguish between a dominant party system and a one-party system.

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2) Identify the main characteristics of a multiparty system.

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## 5.4 LET US SUM UP

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Parties and party systems have become the constituent elements of modern representative democracies. Today, they are the most visible institutions of representative democracy. They are the linkage making institutions between political leadership and voters, political elite and civil society, the rulers and the ruled in all representative democracies. In most political systems, there are multiple political parties even though a few continue to be run by single a party. In their competitive power struggle, parties interact and respond to each other. The term party system refers to the structural and institutional arrangement for interaction between political parties. As we saw, there have been many ways in which party systems have been classified. However, the typologies evolved by Maurice Duverger, Jean Blondel and Giovanni Sartori have been enduring ones. In this unit, we have examined the Two-Party System, Two-and-A-Half-Party System, Multi-Party System, One-Party System and the Dominant Party System bringing out their important features and variants. We have also examined the Institutionalized vs de-institutionalized party system

There remain several factors that affect the number and size of parties in the party system. The constitutional structure of a country, the degree of socio-cultural diversity, and type of electoral representative system are some of the aspects of the political system which shape the party system. As we saw, party system is a dynamic concept and tends to change as and when these factors undergo a gradual or a sudden transformation.

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## 5.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress- 1

1) Party system is the competitive interplay between parties conceived as a set of interactive structures.

2) Sartori introduced new elements in the classification of party systems. He included the degree of polarization as necessary component of identifying party systems. This helped in explaining why some multiparty systems were stable or unstable.

### **Check Your Progress- 2**

1) A dominant-party system consists of multiple parties/political groups competing for power but is dominated by a single major party. Whereas, in single-party system, multiple parties are absent and the entire political system is under the control of that single party. While the former accommodates varying interests and opinions of various other political parties, the latter works generally in an authoritarian political setup where any kind of opposition is not tolerated.

2) A multi-party system can be characterized as follows: a) Competition between more than two parties, b) Increased possibilities of a coalition government, c) Less possibility of single-party government, d) Significant role played by even smaller parties, e) No fixed equation for sharing of electoral votes, f) Creates an efficient system of checks and balance over the government, g) Adequate representation for diverse voices and opinions, h) Debates, discussions, and compromise remains to be the guiding principles of government making as well as policymaking, i) Provides voter with ample choices to choose their government, j) Suits best a diverse society with varying groups and opinions, etc.