

Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP)

The Constitution of India has established a permanent and independent body to ensure free and fair elections in the country known as the Election Commission. It was established on 25th January 1950.

The Constitution has vested to this body superintendence, direction and control of the entire process for conduct of elections. Powers of the Election Commission include granting recognition to the various political parties and allocating them election symbols.

Political parties are a very important topic in the polity section of the UPSC exam. It is a basic static portion of the [UPSC syllabus](#) but it is highly dynamic in the sense that it is featured in the daily news in some form or the other. Hence, it is highly important for the [IAS exam](#).

In this article, you can read all about Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP).

What are Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP)?

Registered unrecognised parties are those parties which are either newly registered or which have not secured enough percentage of votes in the assembly or general elections to become a state party or those which have never contested elections since being registered.

- Registered but unrecognised political parties don't enjoy all the benefits extended to the recognised parties.

Registration of Political Parties

Registration of political parties is governed by the provisions of Section 29A of the [Representation of the People Act, 1951](#).

- A party seeking registration under Section 29A with the Election Commission has to submit an application to the Commission within a period of 30 days following the date of its formation as per guidelines prescribed by the [Election Commission of India](#) in the exercise of the powers conferred by Article 324 of the Commission of India and Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

What are the benefits of registration with the Election Commission of India?

- The candidates set up by a political party registered with the Election Commission of India will get preference in the matter of allotment of free symbols vis-à-vis purely independent candidates.
- Further, registered political parties, in course of time, can get recognition as 'State Party' or 'National Party' subject to the fulfilment of the conditions prescribed by the Commission in the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, as amended from time to time.

Recognised Political Party

A recognised political party shall either be a National party or a State party if it meets specific required conditions.

- A party must obtain a specific minimum percentage of valid votes cast or a specific number of seats in the state legislative assembly or the [Lok Sabha](#) during the most recent election to be recognised as a political party, either at the state or national level.
- This recognition determines parties' right to certain privileges like allocation of the party symbols, provision of time for political broadcasts on the state-owned television and radio stations and access to electoral rolls.
- The Election Commission (EC) reviews the national and state party status of political parties every ten years.

Benefits for recognised political parties:

- A party that has been designated a "National Party" is entitled to exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates set up by it throughout India.
- A party recognised as a 'State Party' is entitled to exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates set up by it in the State in which it is so recognised.
- Recognised parties need only one proposer for filing the nomination.
- They also get broadcast/telecast facilities over Akashvani/Doordarshan during general elections.
- Political parties are entitled to nominate "Star Campaigners" during General Elections. Recognised parties can have a maximum of 40 "Star campaigners".
 - The travel expenses of star campaigners are not to be accounted for in the election expense accounts of candidates.

How RUPPs are different from Recognised parties?

Under this section, you shall read how RUPPs are different from the recognised political parties.

- RUPPs are not entitled to an exclusive allotment of a reserved election symbol. They have to choose from a list of 'free symbols' issued by the Election Commission.
 - Common symbols are provided to RUPP under Symbols Order, 1968.
- They are also not eligible either to get free copies of electoral rolls, free authorisation for broadcast/telecast facilities over All India Radio/Doordarshan during Assembly and general elections, and are not eligible for subsidised land for party offices.
- A registered unrecognised party can only nominate a maximum of 20 "Star Campaigners" compared to 40 "Star Campaigners" by Recognised Political Parties.

Why has EC declared several RUPPs as non-existent and inactive?

- In recent days, the Election Commission has declared hundreds of RUPPs inactive and barred them from availing of benefits of the Symbol Order, 1968.
- Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 requires every political party to communicate any change in its name, head office, office bearers, address, and PAN to the Commission without delay.

- Several RUPPs violated this requirement and were found to be non-existent after physical verification while several other RUPPs actually applied for a common symbol as per the Symbol's Order 1968 and did not contest the respective elections.
- The privilege of a common symbol is given to RUPP based upon an undertaking for putting up at least 5% of total candidates with regard to said legislative assembly election of a State.
 - The possibility of such RUPPs occupying the available pre-election political space by taking benefits of admissible entitlements without contesting elections is high which also tends to crowd out the political parties actually contesting elections and also creating confusing situations for the voters.
- As per Election Commission guidelines, a political party must contest an election conducted within five years of its registration and thereafter should continue to contest. If the Party does not contest elections continuously for six years, the Party shall be taken off the list of registered parties.

Frequently Asked Questions about Political Parties in India:

Q. How many political parties are unrecognised in India?

As per the latest publication dated 23 September 2021 from the Election Commission of India, the total number of parties registered was 2858, with 8 national parties, 54 state parties and 2796 unrecognised parties.

Q. How many national parties are there in India?

At present, there are eight national political parties in India. They are:

- Bharatiya Janata Party
- Communist Party of India
- Communist Party of India (Marxist)
- Indian National Congress
- Nationalist Congress Party
- National People's Party
- All India Trinamool Congress
- Bahujan Samaj Party

Q. Who is a Star Campaigner?

A star campaigner is a celebrity vote seeker in an election for a party. He/she can be anyone, a politician, film star or an influencer.

There is no specific law governing the eligibility criteria for a star campaigner.

They are nominated by the concerned political parties specifying their constituencies and the duration of the status.

The ECI issues guidelines under the Model Code of Conduct regulating poll campaigns.