



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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ELECTION SYMBOLS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Election Symbols". This topic has relevance in the Polity and Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About election Symbol allotment?

For Mains:

GS 2: Polity and Governance

Political Parties' Symbol Preferences According to the 1968 Order?

Why in the news?

The Supreme Court has declined to consider a petition brought forth by the ruling Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) party in Telangana. This petition challenged the allocation of election symbols to two different parties.

About election Symbol allotment:

- **Election Commission of India's (ECI) role:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) holds the responsibility for the allotment of election symbols. This allocation is carried out as per The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, a regulation aimed at specifying, reserving, choosing, and assigning symbols for elections in Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies, particularly for the recognition of political parties.
- **Reserved and Free Symbols:** Symbols can fall into two categories, reserved or free. Reserved symbols are exclusive to recognized political parties, whereas free symbols are not bound by exclusivity.
- **Recognition of Political Parties:** A political party can earn recognition as either a national or state party if it fulfills specific criteria established by the ECI.
- **Publication of Lists:** The ECI publishes lists containing the names of parties and their corresponding symbols through notifications in the Gazette of India.
- **Current Party Classification:** As per the most recent notifications, there are presently six national parties, 26 state parties, and 2,597 registered unrecognised parties in India.
- **Unrecognised Registered Parties and Election Symbols:** Candidates from unrecognised registered parties are allowed to select from free, non-exclusive symbols. These parties typically consist of newly registered parties or those that have not garnered sufficient votes to meet the stipulated criteria for recognition. Subsequently, the symbols chosen by these parties are reclassified as free for use in subsequent elections.

- **Recognised Parties and Election Symbols:** Recognized national and state parties are granted exclusive symbols for their use.

Political Parties' Symbol Preferences According to the 1968 Order

The 1968 order stipulates the procedures for political parties to express their symbol preferences during parliamentary and assembly elections, particularly for the recognition of political parties by the Election Commission (EC). Here's an overview of the process:

- **Specification of Symbols:** The EC is mandated to provide guidelines for specifying, reserving, choosing, and allotting symbols for political parties.
- **Unregistered Parties:** Unregistered political parties are required to submit a list of ten symbols in order of preference. These symbols are chosen from the list of free symbols that the EC has notified.
- **Proposal of New Symbols:** If a political party wishes, they can propose three new symbols of their choice. These proposals should include the names of the symbols, along with clear design and drawings, also listed in order of preference.
- **Commission's Consideration:** The Election Commission has the authority to evaluate these proposed symbols and may consider them for allotment as a common symbol if there are no objections to such allocation.
- **Symbol Criteria:** Symbols proposed by political parties must adhere to certain criteria. They should not bear any resemblance to existing reserved symbols or free symbols. They should also avoid any religious or communal connotations and refrain from depicting birds or animals.

Election Symbol in case of a Split:

- When a recognized political party splits, the Election Commission of India (ECI) follows a set of criteria to resolve symbol disputes. These criteria are based on the principles established in the Sadiq Ali case and generally involve three tests:
- **Test of Aims and Objects of the Party Constitution:** The ECI examines whether the aims and objects of the party, as stated in its constitution, align with one of the rival factions. This test helps determine which faction is more aligned with the original purpose and ideology of the party.
- **Test of Party Constitution:** The ECI reviews the party's constitution to see which faction adheres more closely to the rules and principles outlined in the constitution. This test can help determine which faction has a stronger claim to the party's legitimate identity.
- **Test of Majority:** The ECI assesses which faction has the support of a clear majority within the party. This includes examining the support from party delegates, office bearers, MPs (Members of Parliament), and MLAs (Members of Legislative Assembly). In most cases, the faction with a clear majority of support is favored.
- In situations where disputes persist over the list of office bearers, making it difficult to ascertain the strength of rival groups within the party organization, the ECI may rely solely on the majority support among elected MPs and MLAs. If both the legislative and organizational aspects fail to provide a clear decision, the ECI may freeze the existing symbol and ask both factions to choose a new symbol.

Group that does not get the parent party's symbol:

- **Before 1997:**
 - The Election Commission (EC) recognized the party not receiving the symbol based on specific criteria. If the splinter group had the support of a sufficient number of MPs and MLAs, it could be recognized as a National or State Party.

• **1997 Rule Change:**

- The EC introduced a new rule in 1997. This rule required the splinter group that did not receive the party symbol to register itself as a separate political entity.
- Recognition as a National or State Party was no longer automatic based on the support of MPs and MLAs.
- These newly formed parties could claim such status based on their electoral performance in subsequent state or central elections after their registration.
- Recognition was now dependent on the party's own electoral strength and not inherited from their parent parties.

Source:

[How are election symbols allotted to political parties in India? \(indianexpress.com\)](http://indianexpress.com)

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. The Election Commission of India (ECI) is responsible for the allotment of election symbols
2. Reserved symbols are exclusive to recognized political parties

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: C

Q.2 Which of the following is the Sadiq Ali case related to?

- (a) Election symbol disputes
- (b) Land acquisition laws
- (c) Environmental conservation
- (d) Tax reform legislation

ANSWER: A

Q.3 Examine the role and challenges related to the impartiality of the Election Commission of India (ECI) in ensuring fair and free elections.

Rishabh

BIOFLUORESCENCE

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Biofluorescence". This topic has relevance in the "Ecology and Environment" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is Biofluorescence?

Animals showing Biofluorescence?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

New research has suggested that fluorescence, a phenomenon where certain animals can emit striking and vibrant light, is quite common in mammals.

BIOFLUORESCENCE

- Fluorescence is the process by which a substance absorbs light of one wavelength and emits light of a longer wavelength.
- Biofluorescence is the emission of light by living organisms when they absorb light of a higher energy wavelength and emit it at a lower energy wavelength. This process is similar to fluorescence, but it occurs in living organisms.

HOW DOES FLUORESCENCE WORK IN ANIMALS?

- Fluorescence is caused by **fluorescent molecules** in the animal's body. These molecules can be found in various tissues, including skin, fur, feathers, and bones.
- When a fluorescent molecule **absorbs light of a certain wavelength**, it becomes **excited**. When the molecule returns to its **ground state**, it **releases the excess energy as light of a longer wavelength**.
- The colour of the light emitted depends on the type of fluorescent molecule and the wavelength of light that it absorbs. For example, many fluorescent animals emit green light, but some can emit blue, red, or even yellow light.

BIOLUMINESCENCE

- Bioluminescence is the production of light by a living organism without generating heat. It is a form of chemiluminescence, where chemical energy is converted into light.
- This happens when an enzyme called luciferase reacts with a substrate called luciferin. The luciferin molecule becomes excited and releases its energy through light.
- The main difference between bioluminescence and biofluorescence is the source of light.
 - In bioluminescence, the light is produced by a chemical reaction within the organism.
 - In fluorescence, the light is produced by the absorption of light from an external source.
- Most bioluminescent life forms inhabit the ocean, encompassing various marine species like fish, bacteria, and jellyfish. Nevertheless, certain bioluminescent creatures, such as **fireflies** and fungi, can also be found on land.

WHY DO ANIMALS FLUORESCENCE?

Scientists are still learning about the functions of fluorescence in animals. However, it is thought to have a variety of purposes, including:

- **Communication:** Some animals use fluorescence to communicate with each other. For example, some fish use fluorescent signals to attract mates or warn of rivals.
- **Camouflage:** Fluorescence can also be used for camouflage. For example, some corals fluoresce to blend in with their surroundings and avoid predators.
- **Sunscreen:** Fluorescence can also act as a sunscreen. For example, some animals fluoresce to absorb harmful UV radiation.

- **Prey attraction:** Some animals use fluorescence to attract prey. For example, some anglerfish have fluorescent lures that they use to attract smaller fish.

EXAMPLES OF FLUORESCENT ANIMALS:

- **Invertebrates:** Coral, jellyfish, sea anemones, scorpions, spiders
- **Reptiles:** Chameleons, geckos, iguanas
- **Amphibians:** Frogs, toads
- **Fish:** Anglerfish, clownfish, parrotfish, scorpionfish
- **Birds:** Toucans, puffins, parrots
- **Mammals:** Opossums, wombats, flying squirrels

FLUORESCENCE IN MAMMALS:

- Fluorescence in mammals was thought to be rare until recently. However, new research has shown that fluorescence is quite common in mammals.
- For example, a 2023 study found that over 90% of the mammal species studied were fluorescent in some way.

Sources:

[Fluorescence: making animals glow \(thehindu.com\)](https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/article-fluorescence-making-animals-glow-1017114.html)

Q1. With reference to Biofluorescence, consider the following statements:

1. Fluorescence is the process by which a substance absorbs light of one wavelength and emits light of a shorter wavelength.
2. Fluorescence is caused by fluorescent molecules in the animal's body.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None

Answer: (b)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. Chameleons
2. Frogs
3. Parrotfish
4. Parrots

How many of the abovementioned animals show Biofluorescence ?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All Four

Answer: (d)