Syllabus subtopic:

- Salient Features of the Representation of People’s Act.
- the Role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

Prelims and Mains focus: about the report and its key findings regarding donations received by national parties

News: Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) in its report analysed submissions made by the parties before the Election Commission (EC) regarding donations received by them.

Background

- The recognised national political parties — the BJP, the Congress, the Trinamool Congress, the Communist Party of India (CPI), the Communist Part of India (Marxist), the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) — were supposed to submit details of all contributions over Rs.20,000, received by September 30, 2019.

- The national parties declared a total of Rs.951.66 crore in such donations in 2018-19 and much of the amount — Rs.742.15 crore — was declared by the BJP.

Key findings of the report

- The Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) received three times more donations over Rs.20,000 than all other national political parties combined in 2018-19.

- The ADR report noted that the BJP was 31 days late in its submission, the CPI(M) 21 days and the CPI three days.

- The BSP declared that the party did not receive any donations above
Rs.20,000 during FY 2018-19, as it has been declaring for the past 13 years.

- **Compared to the previous financial year 2017-18**, the national parties’ declared donations increased by **103%** in 2018-19, which was an **election year**. Donations to the BJP increased from Rs.437.04 crore in 2017-18 to Rs.742.15 crore in 2018-19 and those to the Congress increased from Rs.26.658 crore to Rs.148.58 crore.

- The ADR found that the **bulk of donations to the parties came from Maharashtra among States** and corporate or business sectors when looking at the category of donors. The national parties received a total of Rs.548.22 crore from donors in Maharashtra, followed by Rs.141.42 crore from Delhi and Rs.55.31 crore from Gujarat.

- Over **92%** of the total donations, worth Rs.876.11 crore, came from the **corporate or business sector**, while 3,509 individual donors gave Rs.71.407 crore or 7.5% of the total. Out of the 1,776 donations made by corporate or business sector, the BJP received 1,575 donations totalling Rs.698.092 crore. The Congress got Rs.122.5 crore from 122 donations from the corporate or business sector.

- The **top donor was the Tata Group**-controlled Progressive Electoral Trust, which gave a total of Rs.455.15 crore to the BJP, the Congress, and the Trinamool.

### About Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)

- The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) was **established in 1999** by a **group of professors from the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad**. In 1999, Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed by them with Delhi High Court asking for [or requesting] the **disclosure of the criminal, financial and educational background of the candidates contesting elections**. Based on this, the **Supreme Court in 2002, and subsequently in 2003**, made it mandatory for all candidates contesting elections to **disclose criminal, financial and educational background** prior to the polls by filing an affidavit with the Election Commission.
The first election watch was conducted by ADR in 2002 for Gujarat Assembly Elections whereby detailed analysis of the backgrounds of candidates contesting elections was provided to the electorate in order to help the electorate make an informed choice during polls. Since then ADR has conducted Election Watches for almost all state and parliament elections in collaboration with the National Election Watch. It conducts multiple projects aimed at increasing transparency and accountability in the political and electoral system of the country.

Mission

Its goal is to improve governance and strengthen democracy by continuous work in the area of Electoral and Political Reforms. The ambit and scope of work in this field is enormous, Hence, ADR has chosen to concentrate its efforts in the following areas pertaining to the political system of the country:

- Corruption and criminalization in the political process.
- Empowerment of the electorate through greater dissemination of information relating to the candidates and the parties, for a better and informed choice.
- Need for greater accountability of Political Parties.
- Need for inner-party democracy and transparency in party-functioning.