Whip System in India

Why in News?

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's statement that party whips restrict MPs' freedom of expression has sparked debate, with the Supreme Court stating the whip system is necessary for political party preservation.

- **Origin -** It originates from the hunting fields of England, where a whipper-in was a member of the hunting party whose job was to bring straying hounds back into the pack.
- Its use in politics comes from Anglo-Irish politician and philosopher Edmund Burke.
- In India, the whip system is as old as its parliamentary history.
- The whip system is crucial for parliamentary functioning in India.
- Member of Parliaments (MPs) are expected to vote on crucial matters and follow the party's line, as absence or voting against the party line can embarrass the party.
- Full attendance and compliance during division indicate the strength of the party or alliance, and failure to demonstrate majority can lead to a ***no-confidence motion.***
- The party chief whip serves as a bridge ***between party leadership and MPs***, ensuring their attendance and voting according to the party's wishes. A party whip is sacrosanct in this context.
- **Type of Whips -** There are three kinds namely, one-line whip, two-line whip and three-line whip.
- A one-line whip just informs members about a vote but ***permits them to abstain.***
- A two-line whip asks them to be present but does not tell them how to vote.
- The three-line whip, largely the norm these days, directs members to be present and vote as per the party line.
- A three-line whip to party members by a party’s chief whip carries the heading “Three-Line Whip”.
- As per the Anti-Defection Law, disqualification can happen for violation of a three-line whip.

Anti-defection Law was enacted through the 52nd Amendment Act, 1985 as part of the 10th Schedule of the Constitution of India.

- The most important role in the whip system is that of the chief whip of a political party.
- The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs is the government’s chief whip in the Lok Sabha whereas in the Rajya Sabha, the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs is the government’s chief whip.
- They can request leaders of all parties of the ruling alliance to issue a three-line whip to their members to be present and vote in a certain manner.
- A party ticket elects someone who agrees with its ideology and policies, necessitating discipline.

All-India Whips conference has been held since 1952 and Organized by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

Reference

[The Indian Express | What is the whip system?]