

**EVA STALIN IAS ACADEMY – BEST IAS COACHING IN CHENNAI**

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## **EDITORIAL ANALYSIS → 27 JULY 2022 → THE HINDU:**

### **FREEBIES POLITICS IN INDIA:**

- **What is it:**

- In order to win the support of the general public, political parties make promises to provide free power and water, monthly allowances for women, daily wage workers, and jobless people, as well as technology like laptops and cellphones.

- **Arguments in favour:**

- Important for Meeting Expectations: When elections are announced, people have expectations that are addressed by promises of freebies in a country like India where each state has a distinct level of development.
- Supports less developed nations: Such freebies become need/demand-based in nations with higher percentages of the population living in poverty and lesser levels of development, and it is crucial to provide the people with these subsidies for their own upliftment.

- **Issues Associated With "Freebies":**

- Economic Burden: This has a considerable negative impact on the exchequer of both the state and the federal governments.
- The distribution of irrational freebies made possible by public money prior to elections is opposed because it taints the electoral process' impartiality by unfairly persuading voters and upsetting the balance of power. It amounts to dishonest behaviour that is on par with buying votes.

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- **Equality Principle Violated:** Several constitutional provisions, most notably Article 14, are violated when private products or services obtained with public money are distributed ahead of an election (equality before law).
- **SC Verdict:**
  - In the 2013 case *S Subramaniam Balaji v. Government of Tamil Nadu*, the Supreme Court determined that unrealistic campaign promises and freebies are a severe problem that affects the fairness of elections.
  - The court further concluded that under the Representation of People Act and other relevant statutes, pledges made in the election platform cannot be considered "corrupt practise." As a result, the court decided that when the ruling party uses public funds for this purpose by adopting Appropriation Acts in the state assembly, the distribution of freebies cannot be prevented.
  - The election manifesto's content is not particularly regulated by law, the court emphasised, and it ordered ECI to create standards for it after consulting with all recognised political parties.
- **Conclusion:**
  - **Better Policy Reach:** The parties' economic policies or development models must be clearly articulated and effectively carried out.
  - **Demand-Based Freebies That Work:** There are still many people living in poverty in India, a huge country. The entire population must be taken into consideration in the country's development plan. Freebies or subsidies that are prudently offered, easily accommodated into the state budget, and may be utilised as leverage do no harm.
  - **Differentiating between subsidies and giveaways:** It's crucial to comprehend how freebies effect tax money and their financial ramifications.
  - Subsidies are benefits that are justified, properly targeted, and the result of demand; freebies must be distinguished from subsidies.
  - People need to be made aware of the harm they are causing when they trade their votes for gifts.
  - They cannot expect effective leaders if they remain silent.