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ELECTORAL POLITICS

INDIAN DEMOCRACY

India is the largest democracy in the world. 'Democracy' is one of the basic principles on which the Constitution of India is based. Indian democracy is the largest democracy in the world because India has the largest number of voters in the world which elect the government. Indian citizens participate in the election process or formation of the governments not only at the central level, but also at the state and the local levels.

One of the boldest and most courageous acts of the Constituent Assembly was to accept and adopt the principle of universal adult franchise for the people of India. It was a bold act on the part of the Constituent Assembly because:

- (i) Most of the voters were predominantly illiterate, poor and traditional.
- (ii) Most of the voters were not having any experience of democracy.

Giving to the illiterate, poor and tradition bound people, the right to elect their own government was indeed a challenging task. India emerged as a true democracy which has already experienced fourteen general elections based on universal adult franchise.

The Constitution affirms that all the people of India are free and equal and have the right to vote without any distinction of caste, creed, colour, sex or place of birth. The system of universal adult franchise is based on the principle 'One person one vote'. This ensures political equality in the country. The disqualifications are also given in the Constitution. Those who are declared bankrupt or mentally unsound, are debarred from voting.



A woman casting her vote on electronic voting machine.

ELECTIONS: MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

An election is a contest between different political parties in order to get people's support. Through this people choose their representatives at regular intervals and change them if they wish to do so.

Election is the main vehicle through which modern representative democracy moves. Elections generate a new political attitude which can determine the future course of the country at large. Election gives the people an opportunity to assess the socio-economic environment of the country.



Elections: It is a mechanism by which people can choose their representatives at regular intervals and change them if they wish to do so.

NEED FOR ELECTIONS

- Elections give the voters the right to elect their representatives or rulers.
- Through elections voters can choose who will form the government and take major decisions.
- They can choose the party whose policies will guide the government and law making.
- Election provide political equality.

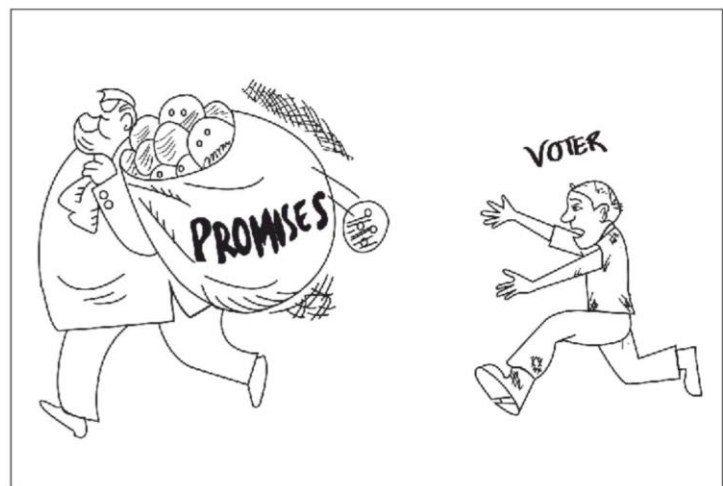
Democracy is a government of the people, for the people and by the people. The people are the real source of sovereign power in a democracy. The voters express their opinion and take part in the democratic process through elections. Hence, the significance of elections in democracy is self-evident.

IS IT GOOD TO HAVE POLITICAL COMPETITION?

Elections are thus all about political competition. This competition takes various forms. The most obvious form is the competition among political parties. At the constituency level, it takes the form of competition among several candidates. If there is no competition, elections will become pointless.

But is it good to have political competition. Clearly, an electoral competition has many demerits :

- It creates a sense of disunity and 'factionalism' in every locality as it leads to party politics.
- Parties and candidates often use dirty tricks to win elections.
- The pressure to win electoral fights does not allow sensible long-term policies to be formulated.
- Sometime the electoral competition leads to communal riots.
- Many a time political parties announce non-viable schemes just to lure the voters.



Read these two cartoons carefully. Write the message of each of them in your own words. Have a discussion in class on which of the two is closer to the reality in your own locality. Draw a cartoon to depict what elections do to the relationship between votes and political leaders.

The makers of our Constitution were aware of these problems. Yet they opted for free competition in elections as the way to select our future leaders. They did so because this system works better in the long run.

Political leaders all over the world, like all other professionals, are motivated by a desire to advance their political careers. They want to remain in power or get power and positions for themselves.

Electoral competition is a method through which politicians get power and position.

Regular electoral competition provides incentives to political parties and leaders. They know that if they raise issue that people want them to raise, their popularity and chances of victory will increase in the next elections. But if they fail to satisfy the voters with their work they will not be able to win again.

So if a political party is motivated only by desire to be in power, even then it will be forced to serve the people.

CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

Holding elections is not a difficult task. Elections were even conducted when India was under the British rule. But the elections conducted at that time were non-democratic. There are some minimum conditions of democratic elections:

1. Everyone should be able to choose. This means that everyone should have one vote and every vote should have equal value.
2. There should be something to choose from. Parties and candidates should be free to contest elections and should offer some real choice to the voters.
3. The choice should be offered at regular intervals. Elections must be held regularly after every few years.
4. The candidate preferred by the people should get elected.
5. Elections should be conducted in a free and fair manner where people can choose as they really wish.

LET US CHECK

You have noticed the conditions of democratic elections. Keeping in mind answer the following:

- Who has the right to vote in India?
- What kind of party system is there in India?
- After how many years the General elections are held?
- Who elects the candidates?
- Who is responsible for free and fair elections in India?

TYPES OF ELECTIONS

1. General Elections: The Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabhas in the states are normally elected every five years which is known as **General Elections**.



General Election: The Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabhas in the states are normally elected every five years which is known as General Election.

2. By-Elections: If a representative from a constituency dies while in office, or if the office falls vacant because of reasons like resignation, fresh elections are held in that particular constituency. Such an election is called **By-Election**.

3. Mid-Term Elections: If the Lok Sabha or any of the State Assemblies (Vidhan Sabhas) is dissolved before the expiry of its full term and elections are held to constitute a new house, it is called **Mid-Term Elections**.

CONSTITUENCY — ITS MEANING, KINDS AND DELIMITATION

For election the entire country is divided into fixed electoral areas with a body of registered voters. These areas are called **constituencies**.

Each constituency elects a representative for the State Assembly. Five or six assembly constituencies are grouped together to make a parliamentary constituency. Efforts are made to keep the size of all the constituencies equal as far as possible. In India, we have single-member constituency system, *i.e.*, only one representative is elected from one constituency.

For Lok Sabha elections, the country is divided into 543 constituencies. The representative elected from each constituency is called a Member of Parliament or an MP. One of the features of a democratic election is that every vote should have equal value. That is why our Constitution requires that each constituency should have a roughly equal population living within it.

Similarly, each state is divided into a specific number of Assembly constituencies. In this case, the elected representative is called the Member of Legislative Assembly or an MLA. Each Parliamentary constituency has within it several assembly constituencies. The same principle applies for Panchayat and Municipal elections. Each village or town is divided into several 'wards' that are like constituencies. Each ward elects one member of the village or the urban local body.

See the table and answer the following questions:

- What is the number of Lok Sabha constituencies in your state and the neighbouring two states?
- Which states have more than 30 Lok Sabha constituencies?
- Why do some states have such a large number of constituencies?

RESERVED CONSTITUENCIES

Our constitution makers were aware of the fact that there exist some weaker or backward sections who may not have the required resources, education, money and contacts to win elections against others. So they decided to reserve some constituencies for people who belong to the Scheduled



By-Election: If a representative from a constituency dies while in office or if the office falls vacant because of reasons like resignation, fresh elections are held in that particular constituency. Such an election is called By-election.

Mid-term Elections: If the Lok Sabha or any of the State Assemblies (Vidhan Sabhas) is dissolved before the expiry of its full term and elections are held to constitute a new house, it is called Mid-term Elections.

Constituency: Voters in a geographical area who elect a representative to the legislative bodies.

Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). In these constituencies only those belonging to the SC or ST can contest the elections. Currently in the Lok Sabha, 84 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes and 47 for the Scheduled Tribes (ST) (15th Lok Sabha Elections). The system of reservation has been extended to other weaker sections at the district and local level. One-third of the seats are reserved in rural and urban local bodies for women candidates. Many states have extended the reservation policy even to OBC (Other Backward Classes). The reservation of constituencies have led to empowerment of SC and ST.

ELECTION PROCEDURE

1. Preparation of Electoral Rolls: Once the constituencies are decided the next step is to decide the voters who can vote. In a democratic elections, the list of those who are eligible to vote is prepared much before the elections. The list of eligible voters is known as **Electoral Roll** and is commonly known as Voter's List.

In India, we follow **Universal Adult Franchise**, i.e., all the citizens aged 18 years or above can vote without any discrimination based on caste, colour, religion, sex etc. But there is one exception to this, i.e., some criminals and persons with unsound mind can be denied the right to vote. Voters list is prepared by Election Commission. In the last few years a new system of **Election Photo Identity Card** has been introduced. This has been done to ensure that no one votes for someone else.

But the voter card is not yet compulsory for voting. For voting, the voters can show many other proofs of identity like the driving license, ration card, passport etc.

2. Nomination of Candidates: True democracy demands that all should get an equal opportunity to be elected as a ruler. In India anyone who can be a voter can also become a candidate in elections. The only difference is that in order to be a candidate the minimum age is 25 years, while it is only 18 years for being a voter. Political parties nominate their candidates who get the party symbol and support.

STATES CONSTITUENCIES

Andhra Pradesh	25
Arunachal Pradesh	2
Assam	14
Bihar	40
Chhattisgarh	11
Goa	2
Gujarat	26
Haryana	10
Himachal Pradesh	4
Jharkhand	14
Karnataka	28
Kerala	20
Madhya Pradesh	29
Maharashtra	48
Manipur	2
Meghalaya	2
Mizoram	1
Nagaland	1
Odisha	21
Punjab	13
Rajasthan	25
Sikkim	1
Tamil Nadu	39
Tripura	2
Uttar Pradesh	80
Uttarakhand	5
Bengal	42
Telangana	17

Union Territories

Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1
Chandigarh	1
Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	2
Delhi	7
Lakshadweep	1
Puducherry	1
Jammu & Kashmir	
Ladakh	

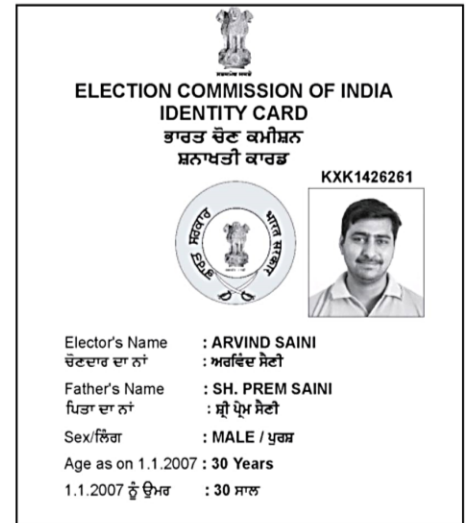


Universal Adult Franchise: A voter is registered at the age of 18 years to vote without any discrimination of caste, creed, colour, religion or sex. This is called universal adult franchise.

Every person who wishes to contest an election has to fill a 'Nomination Form' and deposit some money as security deposit. To check the entry of criminals and corrupt candidate the Supreme Court of India has given some guidelines to the election commission. According to this every candidate has to make a legal declaration, giving full details of:

- Serious criminal cases pending against the candidate ;
- Details of the assets and liabilities of the candidate and his or her family ; and
- Education qualifications of the candidate.

This information has to be made public. This provides an opportunity to the voters to make their decision on the basis of the information provided by the candidates.



Election Photo Identity Card

Educational qualifications for candidates

Why is there no educational qualification for holding such an important position when some kind of educational qualification is needed for any other job in the country?

- Educational qualifications are not relevant to all kinds of jobs. The relevant qualification for selection to the Indian cricket team, for example, is not the attainment of educational degrees but the ability to play cricket. Similarly, the relevant qualification for being an MLA or an MP is the ability to understand people's problems and to represent their interests in the Parliament. Whether they can do so or not is examined by lakhs of examiners *i.e.*, their voters after every five years.
- Even if education was relevant, it should be left to the people to decide how much importance they give to educational qualifications.
- The literacy level in our country is very low and if we put condition of education it would go against the spirit of democracy as it would mean to deprive a majority of the country's citizens the right to contest elections. If, for example, a graduate degree like B.A., B.Com. or B.Sc. was made compulsory for candidates, more than 90 per cent of the citizens will become ineligible to contest elections.

3. Scrutinising of nomination papers: The nomination papers are scrutinised on the fixed date. The incomplete or incorrect papers are rejected by the commission.

4. Withdrawal of nominations: The candidates are given a date for withdrawal of their names.

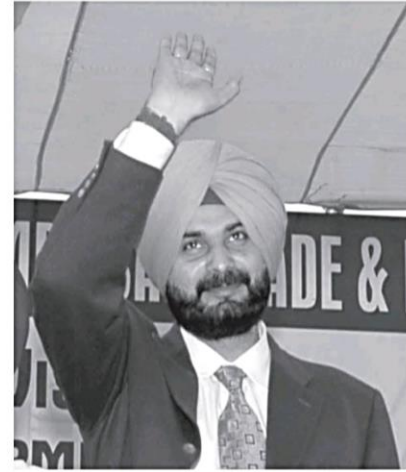
5. Publication of the final list: After the withdrawal the final list is printed. Election symbols are allotted to the candidates.

6. Appointment of Electoral Staff: The Election Commission appoints a Chief Electoral Officer for every state and one Returning Officer for every constituency. These officers appoint several other officers who make arrangement for the elections. According to the Representation of the People Act, 1988, the electoral staff will work under the control and discipline of Election Commission.

7. Election Campaign: When the list of the eligible candidates gets printed by the Returning Officer, the different political parties launch their election campaigns to canvass for their candidates. Political parties issue their election **manifestoes** and propagate their programmes to the people through public meetings, processions, rallies, newspapers, booklets, radio and television.



Manifesto: A public usually written announcement of policies and intentions, especially by a political party.



Can you recognise this person? He was a Cricketer. But he became a politician during the 14th Lok Sabha election and contested the election on BJP ticket. He won the election and became an M.P. In India all are free to contest elections.

Let us look at some of the successful slogans given by different political parties in various elections.

- The Congress party led by Indira Gandhi gave the slogan of **Garibi Hatao (Remove poverty)** in the Lok Sabha elections of 1971. The party promised to reorient all the policies of the government to remove poverty from the country.
- **Save Democracy** was the slogan given by Janta Party in the next Lok Sabha election held in 1977. The party promised to undo the excess committed during Emergency and restore civil liberties.
- The Left Front used the slogan of **Land to the Tiller** in the West Bengal Assembly elections held in 1977.
- **'Protect the Self-Respect of the Telugus'** was the slogan used by N.T. Rama Rao, the leader of the Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections in 1983.

Though it is best to leave political parties and candidates free to conduct their election campaigns but it is sometimes necessary to regulate campaigns to ensure that every political party and candidate gets a fair and equal chance to compete. According to our election law, no party or candidate can:

- Bribe or threaten voters;
- Appeal to them in the name of caste or religion;
- Use government resources for election campaign ; and
- For a Lok Sabha elections the candidate can spend between ₹ 50 Lakh and 70 Lakh depending upon size of the state. Whereas for the Assembly elections, the ceiling is between ₹ 20 Lakh and ₹ 28 Lakh.

If they do so, their election can be rejected by the court even after they have been declared elected. In addition to the laws, all the political parties in our country have agreed to a **Model Code of Conduct** for election campaigns. According to this no party or candidate can:

- Use any place of worship for election propaganda;
- Use government vehicles, aircrafts and officials for elections ; and
- Once elections are announced, Ministers shall not lay foundation stones of any projects, take any big policy decisions or make any promises of providing public facilities.



Model code of Conduct: A set of norms and guidelines to be followed by political parties and contesting candidates during election time.

Ballot paper: A piece of paper on which voter record his vote.

Polling: The casting and registering of votes in an election.

8. Polling: Casting or registering a vote in an election is known as **polling**. On the election day (which is decided by the Election Commission) every person whose name is on the voter list can go to a nearby polling booth; situated in a school or a government office. Before 1999 ballot paper system was followed for elections. Under ballot paper a voter used to put a stamp on the **ballot paper** to record his/her vote. Nowadays **electronic voting machines** are used to record votes. The machine shows the name of the party as well as independent candidates and their symbols. While casting his/her vote the voter has to press the button against the name of the candidate he/she wants to cast his/her vote. Once the voter enter inside the booth, the election official identify her, put a mark on his/her finger and allow him/her to cast his/her vote. To make the elections fair an agent of each candidate is allowed to sit inside the polling booth.

9. Counting of Votes: After the election is over the counting personnels are appointed by the Election Officer, who at the fixed place and at the fixed time start their counting work in the presence of the Returning Officer.

It is the duty of the officers to check that agents of all the parties should be present to ensure that counting is done properly.

10. Declaration of Results: After the counting of votes is over the election officer declares the candidates getting the maximum votes, as elected.

11. Election Petitions: After the declaration of election results, the defeated candidate of the constituency can file an election petition against the successful candidate within a fixed period to the concerned court or election tribunal. In the petition, it is alleged that malpractices have been used in the election. In India election petitions are filed in the High Court and appeal is filed in the Supreme Court. If the allegations are proved true, the court declares the election of the successful candidate invalid and it declares the defeated candidate as successful.

WHAT MAKES ELECTIONS IN INDIA DEMOCRATIC?

We get to read a lot about unfair practices in elections. But fortunately they are not on such a scale as to defeat the very purpose of elections. Let us carefully examine whether Indian elections are democratic or non-democratic.

1. Independent Election Commission: In our country the elections are conducted by an independent body, i.e., Election Commission. It enjoys same kind of independence that the judiciary enjoys.

The Chief Election Commissioner is appointed by the President but once appointed he/she is not answerable to the President or the Government. Even if ruling party or the government does not like what the Commission does, it is virtually impossible for it to remove the Chief Election Commissioner.

2. Popular Participation: People's participation is one of the best way to check people's faith in the democracy.

People's participation in election is usually measured by voter **turnout** figures. Turnout indicates the per cent of eligible voters who actually cast their vote. Over the last fifty years, the turnout in Europe and North America has declined. In India, the turnout has either remained stable or actually gone up.

3. Participation of under-privileged: In India, the poor, illiterate and under-privileged people vote in larger proportion as compared to the rich and privileged sections. This is in contrast to western democracies. For example, in the United States of America, poor people, African Americans and Hispanics vote much less than the rich and the white people.

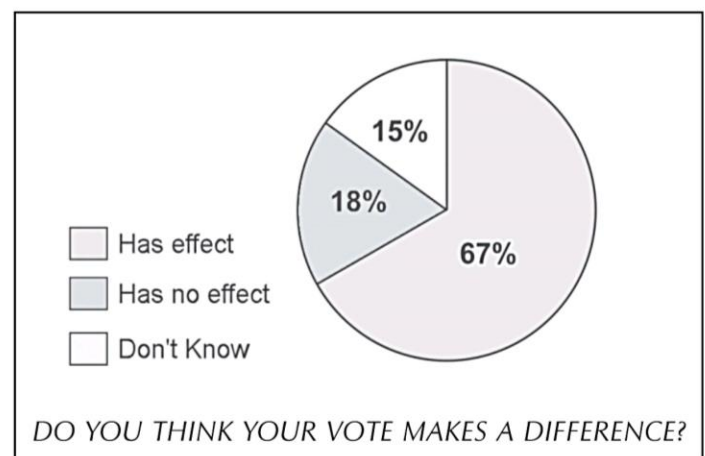
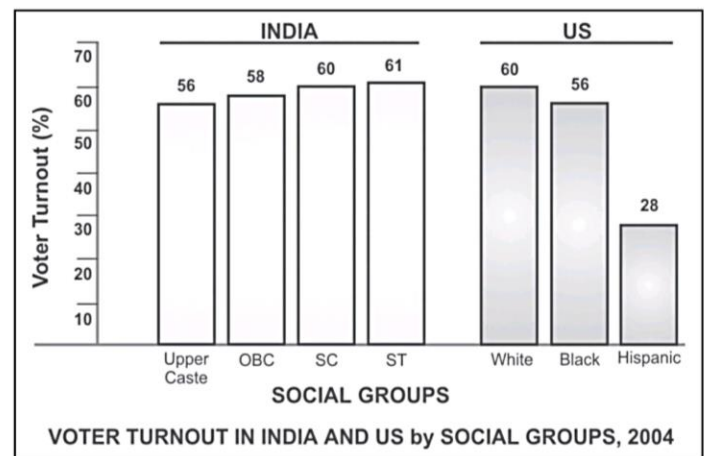
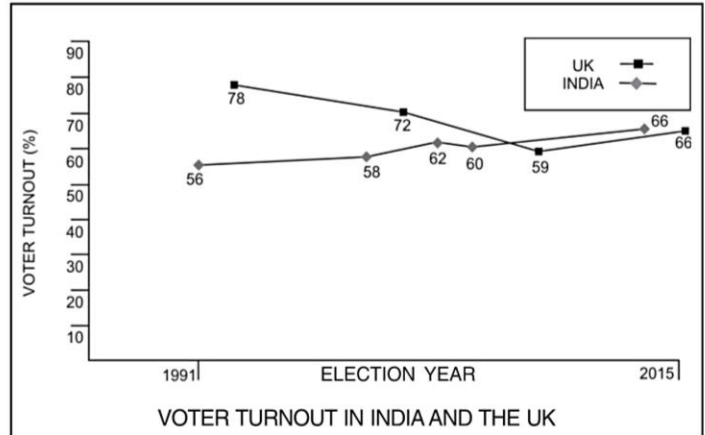
4. Participation of Common people: During elections common people of India give lot of importance to the elections. They participate in local election (Panchayats), state elections and general elections. The encouraging point is that more and more people are becoming politically conscious.

5. Participation of people in election related activities: It is not only the turnover and casting of votes people are also taking lot of interest in election related activities. According to a survey one out of every seven voters is a member of a political party. During the General elections of 2004, more than one-third voters took part in a campaign related activities.

6. Acceptance of election outcome: One final test of the free and fairness of election has in the outcome itself. If elections are not free or fair, the outcome always favours the powerful.



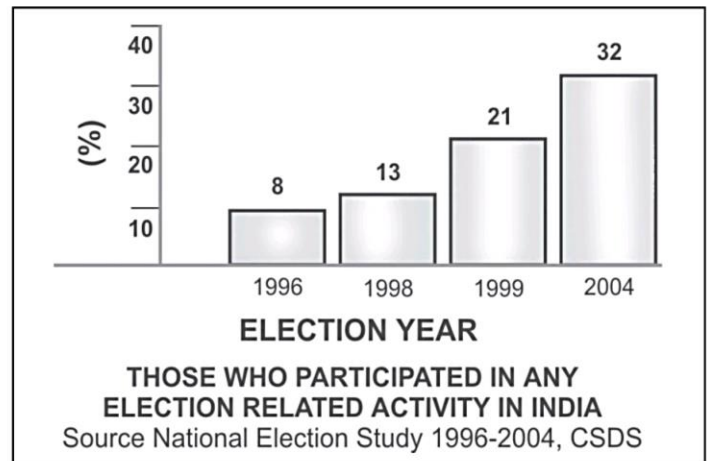
Turnout: The percentage of eligible voters who cast their votes in an election.



In such a situation, the ruling parties do not lose elections. Usually, the losing party does not accept the outcome of a rigged election.

The outcome of India's elections speaks for itself:

- The ruling parties routinely lose elections in India both at the national and state level. In fact in every two out of the three elections held in the last fifteen years, the ruling party lost. Even during the last General Elections it was the National Democratic Alliance which was in power but it lost the election and it was UPA (United Progressive Alliance) which came into power.
- In the US, an **incumbent** or 'sitting' elected representative rarely loses an election. In India about the half of the sitting MPs or MLAs lose elections.
- Candidates who are known to have spent a lot of money on 'buying votes' and those with known criminal connections often lose elections.
- Barring very few disputed elections, the electoral outcomes are usually accepted as 'people's verdict' by the defeated party.



Incumbent: The current holder of a political office. Usually the choice for the voters in elections is between the incumbent party or candidate and those who oppose them.

CHALLENGES TO FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

Though overall Indian elections are democratic but still there are not level playing field for all.

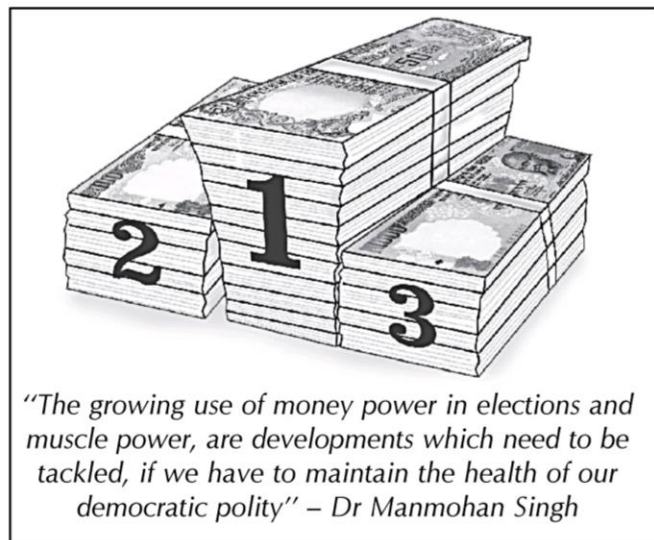
1. Wide gap between the seats won and the votes polled: It is often seen that in India there is a wide gap between the seats won by the different political parties and the votes polled. It means that the political parties do not secure as many per cent of seats as many percentage of votes they secure. For example, in the election to the Lok Sabha held in December 1984, Congress secured 49.3% votes and got more than three-fourth seats whereas the remaining political parties secured more than 50% votes and captured only one-fourth of the total seats. In May, 1996 in the elections of 11th Lok Sabha Congress got 142 seats by getting 28.1% of votes whereas Bhartiya Janta Party got 161 seats by getting 23.5% votes. These figures reveal the fact that in the Indian electoral system a party which secures less number of votes can also come into power. In the elections of 13th Lok Sabha Congress polled 28.42% votes and won 114 seats whereas B.J.P. polled around 23.07% votes and won 182 seats.

2. Elections are very Expensive: Elections have become very expensive in India. Consequently, a poor person however capable he may be, cannot dream of contesting an election. The rich persons establish their hold on political power after getting success in the elections by the influence of their wealth and use this power for the promotion of their own interests. Moreover, the persons who win elections by spending lots of money try to collect money by fair and foul means and thus unprincipled politics comes into being. It spreads corruption.

3. Misuse of Governmental Machinery: Though the use of governmental machinery has been prohibited in election according to election laws, yet the reality is contrary to it. During elections the government machinery becomes the 'propaganda machinery' of the ruling party. The government officials pressurise the voters to cast their votes in favour of the ruling party and offer so many allurements to them for the purpose. Rigging is also very common in elections.

4. Problem of smaller parties and independent candidates: Smaller parties and independent candidates suffer a huge disadvantage as compared to big parties.

5. To get support on the basis of Religion, Caste, Language, etc: It is often seen that different political parties instigate the feelings of the people by propagating on the basis of religion, caste, language, race, etc., and try to secure votes. Moreover, the caste, religion and language of the candidates is taken into consideration while making nominations of the candidates.



THE ELECTION COMMISSION

The entire process of election in our country is conducted, controlled and supervised by an independent body called the **Election Commission**.

1. Conduct of Elections: The Election Commission is obliged to conduct all elections to the Parliament and State Assemblies. It also supervises and directs the elections to the office of the President and Vice-President of India. It also gets the requisite number of ballot papers printed.

2. Recognition to Political Parties: The Election Commission grants recognition to political parties. For this purpose, it has evolved its own procedure.

3. Allotment of Symbols: The Election Commission allots symbols to political parties and to independent candidates.

4. Ensuring Free and Fair Election: To ensure free and fair elections is one of the major functions of the Election Commission.

5. The Model Code of Conduct for Elections: Another important function of the Election Commission is to prescribe a Model Code of Conduct for the candidates and political parties, which ought to be followed by them.

6. Preparation of Electoral Rolls: The Election Commission prepares the electoral rolls and includes the names of the valid voters in the electoral rolls.



Election Commission: The entire process of election in our country is conducted, controlled and supervised by an independent body called the Election Commission.

RECAPITULATION

- ❖ India is the largest democracy in the world. 'Democracy' is one of the basic principles on which the Constitution of India is based.
- ❖ Public opinion is the opinion or view of common people over any political, economic or social issue.
- ❖ In the modern age, electronic media contribute significantly in the formulation of public opinion.
- ❖ The entire process of election in our country is conducted, controlled and supervised by an independent body called the Election Commission.
- ❖ An election is a contest between different political parties in order to get people's support.

ASSIGNMENT

Q.1. Who appoints the Chief Election Commissioner of India?

Options:

- (a) The Chief Justice of India (b) The Prime Minister of India
(c) The President of India (d) The Law Minister of India

Q.2. Which of these is not a feature of Indian democracy?

Options:

- (a) India has the largest number of voters in the world
(b) India's Election Commission is very powerful
(c) In India, everyone above the age of 18 has a right to vote
(d) In India, the losing parties refuse to accept the electoral verdict

Q.3. In India, elections for which of these bodies are held after every five years?

Options:

- (a) Rajya Sabha (b) Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha
(c) Vidhan Parishad (d) Only Lok Sabha

Q.4. What is an election held for only one constituency to fill the vacancy caused due to the death or resignation of a member called?

Options:

- (a) By-election (b) Mid-term election
(c) General election (d) None of these

Q.5. What do you mean by "Universal Adult franchises"?

Q.6. What is the significance of Election Photo Identity Cards?

Q.7. What do you mean by 'Polling Booth'?

Q.8. What is the full form of EVM?

Q.9. What are the reserved constituencies?

Q.10. What do you mean by 'code of conduct'?

Q.11. What are the main functions of the Election Commission of India?

Q.12. What are the choices generally a voter can make in an election?

Q.13. What are the minimum conditions of a democratic election?

Q.14. What unfair practices are generally used in elections by our contesting candidates?

Q.15. What are the changing trends of people's participation in elections in India?

OBJECTIVE TYPE QUESTIONS (Self Practice)

A. Multiple Choice Questions:

- Which of the following statements about the reasons for conducting elections are false?
 - Elections enable people to judge the performance of the government.
 - People select the representative of their choice in an election.
 - Elections enable people to evaluate the performance of the judiciary.
 - People can indicate which policies they prefer.
- Which of these is not a good reason to say that Indian elections are democratic?
 - India has the largest number of voters in the world.
 - India's Election Commission is very powerful.
 - In India, everyone above the age of 18 has a right to vote.
 - In India, the losing parties accept the electoral verdict.
- The entire process of election in our country is conducted, controlled and supervised by an independent body called:
 - Election Commission
 - Planning Commission
 - Welfare Commission
 - Lok Sabha
- To ensure that no one votes for someone else, Election Commission of India had issued:
 - Ration Card
 - Personal Account Number
 - Election Photo Identity Card
 - Driving Licence

B. Fill in the blanks:

- For the elections, the country is divided into 543 constituencies.
- Currently in the Lok Sabha seats are reserved for the Scheduled Tribes.
- In India one-third of the seats are reserved in rural and urban local bodies for candidates.

C. Match the following:

Column A	Column B
(i) Women don't have the right to vote	(a) Mexico
(ii) Communist Party	(b) Saudi Arabia
(iii) PRI	(c) China

(A) (i) (b), (ii) (c), (iii) (a)

(B) (i) (c), (ii) (b), (iii) (a)

(C) (i) (a), (ii) (b), (iii) (c)

(D) (i) (a), (ii) (c), (iii) (b)

D. Assertion and Reason Based Question:

Two statements are given-one labelled Assertion (A) and the other labelled Reason (R). Select the correct answer to these questions from the codes, (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) as given below:

- (i) Both A and R are true and R is correct explanation of the assertion.
- (ii) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of the assertion.
- (iii) A is true but R is false.
- (iv) A is false but R is true.

Assertion: India is known for free and fair elections.

Reason: In India elections are conducted by an independent any way powerful Election Commission.

Options:

- (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)

E. Correct the following statements and rewrite:

- (i) In order to be a candidate to contest MP or MLA elections the minimum age is 35 years, while it is only 25 years for being a voter.
- (ii) Now a days ballot papers are used to record votes.

F. Read the extract and identify the feature democratic and the nondemocratic feature:

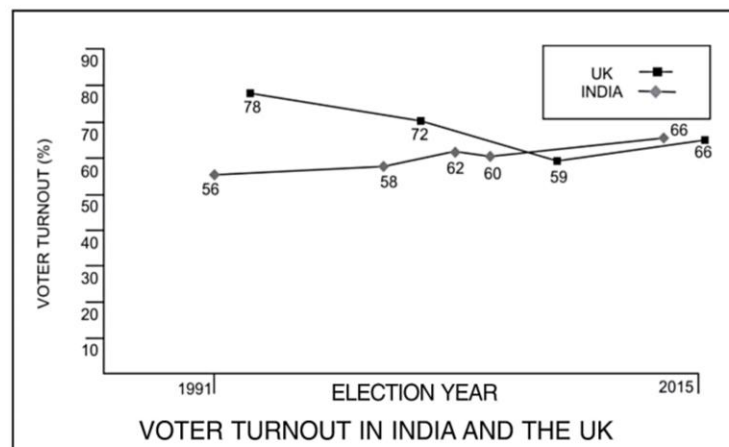
In China, elections are regularly held after every five years for electing the country's parliament, called Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui (National People's Congress). The National People's Congress has the power to appoint the President of the country. It has nearly 3,000 members elected from all over China. Some members are elected by the army. Before contesting elections, a candidate needs the approval of the Chinese Communist Party.

G. Think and answer:

1. Surekha is an officer incharge of ensuring free and fair elections in an assembly constituency in a state. Describe what should she focus on for each of the following stages of election:
 - (a) Election campaign
 - (b) Polling day
 - (c) Counting day
2. Here are some facts on Indian elections. Comment on each of these to say whether they reflect the strength or the weakness of our electoral system:
 - (i) The Lok Sabha always had less than 10 per cent women members.
 - (ii) The Election Commission often refuses to accept the government's advice about when the elections should be held.
 - (iii) The current Lok Sabha has more than 145 members whose assets are more than 1 crore.
 - (iv) After losing an election the Chief Minister said: "I respect the people's verdict".

3. Can we draw the following conclusions from the information given in this chapter? Give two facts to support your position for each of these:
 - (a) Election Commission of India does not have enough power to conduct free and fair elections in the country.
 - (b) There is a high level of popular participation in the election in our country.
 - (c) It is very easy for the party in power to win an election.
 - (d) Many reforms are needed to make our elections completely free and fair.
4. Chinappa was convicted for torturing his wife for dowry. Satbir was held guilty of practising untouchability. The court did not allow either of them to contest elections. Does this decision go against the principles of democratic elections?
5. Here are some reports of electoral malpractices from different parts of the world. Is there anything that these countries can learn from India to improve their elections? What would you suggest in each case?
 - (a) During an election in Nigeria, the officer incharge of counting votes deliberately increased the votes of one candidate and declared him elected. The court later found out that more than five lakh votes cast for one candidate were counted in favour of another.
 - (b) Just before elections in Fiji, a pamphlet was distributed warning voters that a vote for former Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry will lead to bloodshed. This was a threat to voters of Indian origin.
 - (c) In the United States, each state has its own method of voting, its own procedure of counting and its own authority for conducting elections. Authorities in the state of Florida took many controversial decisions that favoured Mr. Bush in the Presidential elections in 2000. But no one could change those decisions.

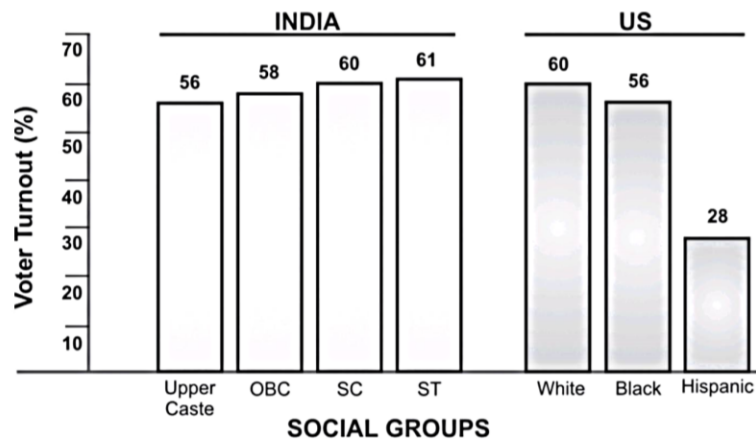
6. Study the given figure carefully and answer the following questions:



- (i) How can you measure people's participation in election?
- (ii) What was voter turnout in India and UK in 1991?
- (iii) What can you conclude about the turnout?

7. Study the given figure carefully and answer the following questions:

- (i) Which class in India and USA has the highest turnout?
- (ii) What conclusion can you draw from the above bar graph?



VOTER TURNOUT IN INDIA AND US by SOCIAL GROUPS, 2004

BOARD QUESTIONS

1. Explain any four challenges faced by election system in India. [CBSE 2011, 2012]
2. Why do we need elections? Mention any three demerits of an electoral competition. [CBSE 2011,2012]
3. How can we check the quality of the election process? [CBSE 2013]
4. Explain the role of the Election Commission in free and fair elections. [CBSE 2012,2013]
5. What is meant by booth capturing? [CBSE 2014]
6. What is 'Ballot Paper'? [CBSE 2014]
7. What do you understand by the term 'By-election'? [CBSE 2014]
8. What is meant by General Election? [CBSE 2014]
9. How and by whom is the voters' list prepared? [CBSE 2014]
10. Describe the need for reserved constituencies for SCs and STs. [CBSE 2014]
11. What is Model Code of Conduct in Indian electoral system? Mention its chief elements. [CBSE 2011]
12. Analyse why party in power is not allowed to use government vehicles in elections? [CBSE 2014]
13. Do you think educational qualification should be necessary for the candidate aspiring to fight elections? Give your views in favour or against it. [CBSE 2011]
14. How does the common man in India relate himself to elections? [CBSE 2014]
15. Is it easy for the party in power to win an election in India? Justify your answer. [CBSE 2014, 2015]
16. Highlight any three issues which bring many limitations and challenges of Indian elections to our attention. [CBSE 2012]
17. What are elections? [CBSE 2015]
18. Describe any three demerits of electoral competition. [CBSE 2015]
19. Why should seats be reserved for women in Parliament and State legislature? Express your view point. [CBSE 2016]