

Election and Representative

India is a constitutional democracy with a parliamentary system of government, and at the heart of the system is a commitment to hold regular, free and fair elections. These elections determine the composition of the government, the membership of the two houses of parliament, the state and union territory legislative assemblies, and the Presidency and vice-presidency. Elections in India are events involving political mobilization and organizational complexity on an amazing scale.

Election :-

In a democratic system, the method by which the people choose their representatives is called election.

Representative :-

In a democratic system, the person whom the public elects and sends to the government (Parliament/Legislative Assembly), that person is called a representative.

Direct Democracy :-

Due to the small population in ancient Greek city-states, the people directly gathered at one place and raised their hands to participate in everyday (daily) decisions and running the government. Which is called direct democracy.

Indirect Democracy :-

Direct democracy has not been practical in modern large population nations. The general public cannot directly participate in the action of the government by directly gathering at one place. Therefore, their presence is registered in the government by sending its representatives. This is called indirect democracy.

Elections and Democracy :-

Elections and democracy are two sides of the same coin. Democracy is incomplete without elections, then elections are meaningless without democracy.

History of Elections in India :-

The first elections in India were held in the year 1951-1952.

The second election was held in the year 1957.

Election system in India :-

In the Indian Constitution, some basic rules for elections, laws and rules for the formation of autonomous bodies have been listed. Detailed rules and regulations amendment. The task of change has been given to the legislature.

In the election system, the constitution of the Election Commission, its functioning, who can contest the election, who can vote, who will oversee the election, how the counting of votes will be done etc. is all clearly written.

Election Commission :-

There is a three-member election commission to conduct free and fair elections in India. It consists of a Chief Election Commissioner and two other Election Commissioners. The Chief Election Commissioner is appointed by the President. The first Election Commissioner of the country was Mr. Sukumar Sen. The tenure of the Chief Election Commissioner is 6 years or 65 years whichever is earlier. The present Chief Election Commissioner is Shri Sunil Arora.

The system of winning by the most votes :-

This system has been adopted in India. In this the one who gets the most votes will win even if the margin of victory is only one vote.

Qualifications fixed in the constitution to become a member of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha :-

Be a citizen of India.

Age should be 25 years.

Do not hold office of profit.

Don't be insane or bankrupt.

Not of criminal tendency or punishment.

Importance of elections in democracy :-

Election and democracy are two sides of the same coin. Today there is democracy in more than a hundred countries in the world. Where there is democracy, the electoral system is adopted to elect the people's representatives.

Election Process :-

Issue of notification by the Election Commission.

Date of election, date of application, withdrawal of nomination. To supervise election campaign and election campaign, to conduct free and fair elections on fixed dates, to conduct vote counting and to declare election results. (Elections, appointment of officers, establishment of polling stations)

What is "First Past the Post"?

The 'First-Past –The-Post' is an electoral system that is also known as a simple majority system. In this system, the candidate with the highest number of votes is the winner. This system is followed in India for the direct election to the 'Lok Sabha' and 'State Legislative Assemblies.

FPTP is a system in which, the entire country is divided into 543 constituencies:

- Each constituency elects one representative
- The candidate who secures the highest number of votes in that constituency is declared elected.
- It is important to note that in this system whoever has more votes than all other candidates is declared elected.
- The winning candidate need not secure a majority of the votes. This method is called the First Past the Post (FPTP) system.
- This method is also called the Plurality System.

What is Proportional Representation?

Each party fills its quota of seats by picking many of its nominees from a preference list that has been declared before the elections. In this system, a party gets the same proportion of seats as its proportion of votes

What type of election system is followed in India?

In India, we have adopted a PR system on a limited scale for indirect elections. The Constitution prescribes a third and complex variation of the PR system for the election of President, Vice President, and for the election to the Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Parishads.

Comparison of FPTP and PR System of Election

FPTP - First Past The Post

- The country is divided into small geographical units called constituencies or districts. Every Constituency elects one representative.
- Voter votes for a candidate
- A party may get more seats than votes in the legislature.
- A candidate who wins the election may not get the majority E.g-U.K and India

Proportional Representation (PR)

Large geographical areas are demarcated as constituencies. The entire country may be a single constituency. More than one representative may be elected from one constituency In this system, a voter votes for the party every party gets seats in the legislature in proportion to the percentage of votes that it gets A candidate who wins the elections gets the majority of the votes. Examples: Israel, Netherlands

Why was the system of 'Win by Most Vote' accepted in India?

This system is simple, for those voters who do not have knowledge of politics and elections.

Voters have a clear choice at the time of election.

Voters in the country get the opportunity to choose candidates instead of parties whom they know personally.

Reservation of constituencies :-

The system of reserved constituencies has been adopted by the Indian Constitution in an attempt to give equal representation to all classes in the Parliament. Under this arrangement, all the voters in a constituency will cast their vote but the candidate will only belong to the community or social class for which the seat is reserved.

Universal adult suffrage: -

Right to vote for all citizens above 18 years of age without any discrimination of caste, religion, sex and region.

Who can vote & who has the right to contest elections?

Universal Adult Franchise gives the right to vote to all adult citizens, regardless of wealth, income, gender, social status, race, ethnicity, or any other restriction, subject only to relatively minor exceptions. Earlier, the voting age of an adult was to be considered above the age of 21. In 1989 this was reduced by the constitution to the age of 18 years through 61st Amendment, 1989. This was known as 'Universal Adult Franchise' which states that all citizens are able to participate in the process of selecting their representative. This is consistent with the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

UNIVERSAL ADULT FRANCHISE

1893 : New Zealand	1944 : France	1994 : South Africa
1917 : Russia	1945 : Japan	1962 : Australia
1918 : Germany	1950 : India	1965 : Unites States
1919 : Netherlands	1951 : Argentina	1978 : Spain
1928 : Britain	1952 : Greece	
1931 : Sri Lanka	1955 : Malaysia	
1934 : Turkey		

Right to Contest Election

All citizens have the right to stand for election and become the representative of the people. There are different minimum age requirements for contesting elections. For example, in order to stand for Lok Sabha or Assembly election, a candidate must be at least 25 years old. There is a legal provision that a person who has undergone imprisonment for two or more years for some offence is disqualified from contesting elections. There are no restrictions of Income, Education, Class or gender on the Right to Contest Elections.

Election Commission Of India

What is the Election Commission of India?

The Election Commission of India is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India. The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and State Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country. Therefore, articles 324 to 329 deal with the power, function, tenure, eligibility of the commission and the members. The Chief Electoral Officer is appointed in every state to assist the task of the Election Commission of India. Hence, the election commission is not responsible for the elections of the local bodies. The Election Commission of India can either be a single member or a multi-member body. It was a single-member body till 1989 but two election commissioners were appointed just before the 1989 elections. In 1993, two election commissioners were appointed making it a multi-member body and has remained till then. The constitution ensures the security of the tenure of the CEC and Election Commissioners. They are appointed for a six-year term or continue till the age of 65, whichever is earlier. The CEC can be removed before the expiry of the term, by the President if both Houses of Parliament make such a recommendation with a special majority. This is done to ensure that a ruling party cannot remove a CEC that refuses to favour it in elections.

What are the functions of the Election Commission of India?

The Election Commission of India has a wide range of functions:

- It supervises the regular update of the voter's list.
- It ensures that the voter's list is free of errors like the non-existence of names of registered voters or the existence of names of those non-eligible or non-existent.
- It also determines the timing of elections and prepares the election schedule.

The election schedule includes the election notification, the start date for filing nominations, the deadline for filing nominations, the last date for filing nominations, the last date for scrutiny, the last date for withdrawal, the polling date, and the date for counting and declaring results. The Election Commission is solely responsible for elections and has the authority to make decisions that will ensure that elections are conducted in a free and fair manner. On the grounds that the atmosphere is tainted, the commission has the authority to postpone or cancel the election for the entire country, a specific State, or a specific constituency. It also establishes a model code of conduct for political parties and candidates

to follow. When it believes the counting process has not been fully fair and just, it can order a re-poll in a specific constituency or a recount of votes. The Election Commission accords recognition to political parties and allots symbols to each of them.

Electoral Reforms

Elections are an important part of Indian politics, as India is one of the world's largest democracies.

India has a democratic government, with electoral reforms playing a critical role in ensuring free and fair elections. Reforms should be implemented on a regular basis.

Experts recommend that our electoral system be changed from the FPTP to a PR variant. This is thought to ensure that parties receive seats proportionate to their vote totals.

A special provision should be made to ensure that at least one-third of the legislature and assemblies are made up of women.

Money's role in electoral politics should be more strictly regulated. Election expenses should be paid out of a separate fund by the government.

Candidates who have been charged with a crime, even if their appeal is pending in court, should be barred from running for office. Caste and religious appeals should be prohibited from being used in the campaign.

A law should be passed to regulate political party operations and ensure that they are transparent and democratic.