

Electoral Politics

Fastrack Revision

- ▶ Election is the process by which the citizens of a democracy select or choose their representatives and change them if they wish to do so. Elections play a vital role in democracy.

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People can choose who will form the government and take major decisions and make laws.

- ▶ The following are the basic requirements of an election conducted in a democratic country:
 - ▶ Each citizen should be able to choose and he/she should have one vote and every vote should be of equal value.
 - ▶ Parties and candidates should be free to contest election and should offer some real choice to the voters.
 - ▶ The choice should be offered at regular intervals and elections must be held regularly after every few years.
 - ▶ Elections should be conducted on a free and fair basis where people can choose as they really wish.
- ▶ An electoral competition has many demerits. A sense of disunity and factionalism develops in every locality. Also, parties and candidates use dirty tricks, unfair means and even put false allegations against one another.
- ▶ In spite of the above demerits, our Constitution makers opted for free electoral competition because it provides incentives to political parties and leader. They know that if they raise issues that people want to be raised, 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.
- ▶ In India, elections for the Lok Sabha or Parliament are held every five years in our country at the same time and are referred to as general elections. 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.
- ▶ Each state is divided into a specific number of Assembly Constituencies (Vidhan Sabha). The elected representative of these constituencies is referred to as Member of Legislative Assembly or an MLA.
- ▶ Each village or town is further divided into several wards that are like constituencies. Each ward elects one member of the village or the urban local body. These constituencies are sometimes counted as seats.

- ▶ The Constitution makers have reserved constituencies for the weaker sections so that they get a good chance to get elected to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. For Lok Sabha, 84 seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and 47 for the Scheduled Tribes (STs).

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Some criminals and persons with unsound mind can be denied the right to vote, but only in rare situations.

- ▶ In many states, seats in rural (Panchayat) and urban (municipalities and corporations) local bodies are now reserved for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) as well. One-third of the seats are reserved in rural and urban local bodies for women candidates.
- ▶ In our country, all citizens aged 18 years and above can vote in an election. Every citizen has the right to vote, regardless of his or her caste, religion or gender.
- ▶ Prior to elections, a list of those who are eligible to vote is prepared and this list is officially called the 'Electoral Roll' and is commonly known as the 'Voter's List'. In the last few years, a new system of Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC) has been introduced. But the card is not yet compulsory for voting. For voting, the voters can show any other valid ID proof; like driving licence, ration card or PAN card.
- ▶ In India, the minimum age for becoming a candidate in elections is 25 years. There are some other restrictions on criminals, etc., but these apply in very extreme cases. Every person who wishes to contest an election has to fill a 'nomination form' and give some money as 'security deposit'.
- ▶ Political parties nominate their candidates who get the party symbol and support. Party's nomination is often called 'party ticket.'
- ▶ A new system of declaration has been introduced from the Supreme Court. Every candidate has to make a legal declaration, giving details of:
 - ▶ Serious criminal cases pending against the candidate (if any).
 - ▶ Details of the assets and liabilities of the candidate and his or her family.
 - ▶ Educational qualification of the candidate.
- ▶ The main purpose of election is to give people a chance to choose the representatives, the government and the policies they prefer. Therefore, it is necessary to have a free

open discussion about who is a better representative, which party will make a better government or what is a good policy. This objective is fulfilled through an election campaign.

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 The Congress Party led by Indira Gandhi gave the slogan of 'Garibi Hatao' (Remove Poverty) in the Lok Sabha election campaign of 1971.

- ▶ No party or candidate can spend more than the limits specified for the Lok Sabha election campaign and for the Assembly Election campaign. For Lok Sabha election, the expenditure can be between ₹ 54 lakh to ₹ 70 lakh and for Assembly Election, it can be between ₹ 20 lakh to ₹ 28 lakh. These limits are subject to change.
- ▶ The final stage of an election is the day when the voters cast or poll their vote and when their votes are counted.
- ▶ Earlier voting was done by a ballot paper but nowadays, Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are used to record votes.
- ▶ Once the polling is over, all the EVMs are sealed and taken to a secure place.
- ▶ A few days later, on a fixed date, all the EVMs from a constituency are opened and the votes secured by each candidate are counted. The candidate who secures the highest number of votes from a constituency is declared elected.
- ▶ A lot of unfair practices in elections are reported by newspapers and televisions. These can take the following forms:
 - Inclusion of false names and exclusion of genuine names from the voters' list.
 - Misuse of government facilities and officials by the ruling party.

- Excessive use of money by rich candidates and big parties.
- Intimidation of voters and rigging on the polling day.
- ▶ The unfair practices are not on a scale to affect the very purpose of elections. The elections in India are conducted in a democratic manner and this is ensured because of the following factors:
 - In our country elections are conducted by an Independent and very powerful Election Commission.
 - Another way to check the quality of the election process is to see whether people have participated in it with enthusiasm or not. Over the last fifty years, the turnout in Europe and North America has declined. In India, the turnout has either remained stable or has actually gone up.
 - The final test of free and fair election is the outcome itself. If the elections are not free or fair, the outcome always favours the powerful. But in India, this is not true. The ruling parties routinely lose elections in India, both at the national and the state level.

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 Election Commission is headed by a 'Chief Election Commissioner', appointed by the President of India.

- ▶ In some constituencies, a few candidates may win purely on the basis of money power and unfair means. This situation brings many limitations and challenges to the Indian election procedure. It is due to these reasons that citizens, social activists and organisations have been demanding reforms in our electoral system.



Practice Exercise



Multiple Choice Questions

- Q 1. What was the promise Devi Lal made to the farmers and small businessmen?
- Government would provide free electricity to them.
 - Government would provide free water to them.
 - Government would waive the loans of them.
 - None of the above
- Q 2. A geographical area where the voters elect a representative to the legislative bodies is termed as:
- playing field
 - electoral area
 - voter's area
 - constituency
- Q 3. Elections held after the term of 5 years of Lok Sabha are called:
- Half-term elections
 - General elections
 - Unit-elections
 - Mid-way elections
- Q 4. In how many constituencies is the country divided for Lok Sabha elections?
- 533
 - 543
 - 545
 - 565
- Q 5. Since 1982 to 1987, Haryana was ruled by which political party?
- Haryana Sangharsh Samiti
 - Bharatiya Janata Party
 - Congress Party
 - Communist Party of India
- Q 6. Which one of the following is not a factor that makes an election democratic?
- There should be something to choose from.
 - Parties and candidates should be free to contest elections.
 - The choice should not be offered at regular intervals.
 - The candidate preferred by the people should get elected.

Which of the following terms is used when election held only for one constituency to fill the vacancy caused by death or resignation of a member?

- a. Constituency election
- b. General election
- c. By-election
- d. Assembly election

Q 8. Which of the following terms is used for the areas when our country is divided into different areas for purposes of elections?

- a. Panchayats
- b. Wards
- c. Blocks
- d. Constituencies

Q 9. What do we mean when we say that a constituency is reserved for the Scheduled Castes (SCs)?

- a. Any candidate can fight the election but only the SC candidate will be declared winner.
- b. Any candidate can fight the election but only women candidate will be declared winner.
- c. Only SC candidate can fight the election.
- d. None of the above

Q 10. What proportion of seats are reserved in rural and urban local bodies for women candidates?

- a. One-third of the total seats.
- b. Two-third of the total seats.
- c. Half of the total seats.
- d. One-fourth of the total seats.

Q 11. The list of those people who are eligible to vote is officially called:

- a. Voter's list
- b. Electoral roll
- c. Elector's list
- d. Constituency list

Q 12. Each state is divided into a specific number of:

- a. Block Constituencies
- b. District Constituencies
- c. Assembly Constituencies
- d. Ward Constituencies

Q 13. The body which conducts the elections in India is:

- a. Supreme Court
- b. Parliament
- c. Cabinet
- d. Election Commission

Q 14. To ensure that no one vote for some one else, Election Commission of India had issued:

- a. Ration Card
- b. Personal Account Number
- c. Election Photo Identity Card
- d. Driving Licence

Q 15. Members of Election Commission are appointed by:

- a. President
- b. Prime Minister
- c. People
- d. Chief Justice

Q 16. The power and independence of Election Commission (EC) of India is equivalent to which one of the following?

- a. Governor
- b. Assistant Commissioner of Police
- c. Judiciary
- d. National Human Rights Commission

Q 17. Who appoints the Chief Election Commissioner?

- a. Lok Sabha Speaker
- b. The Chief Justice of India
- c. The President of India
- d. The Vice-President of India

Q 18. What does EVM stand for?

- a. Electronic Vending Machine
- b. Electronic Voting Machine
- c. Electoral Voting Machine
- d. Electoral Volunteer Mechanism

Q 19. What is the age of a person who can contest election for the Lok Sabha in India?

- a. 21 years
- b. 25 years
- c. 27 years
- d. 35 years

Q 20. Voter's list is also known as:

- a. Election list
- b. Commission list
- c. Electoral roll
- d. None of these

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In democratic elections, the list of people eligible to vote is prepared much before the election and is officially called the electoral roll or the voter's list.

Q 21. Who has given the slogan 'Garibi Hatao'?

- a. Indira Gandhi
- b. Rajiv Gandhi
- c. Sanjay Gandhi
- d. Sonia Gandhi

Q 22. Which party used the slogan 'Garibi Hatao' in the Lok Sabha elections of 1971?

- a. The Left Front
- b. The Telugu Desam Party
- c. Janata Party
- d. The Congress Party

Q 23. As on September 2012, the number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes in the Lok Sabha is:

- a. 39
- b. 54
- c. 84
- d. 109

Q 24. Which of the following state has the largest number of Lok Sabha seats?

- a. Maharashtra
- b. Andhra Pradesh
- c. Bihar
- d. Uttar Pradesh

Q 25. Which of the following Union Territories has the largest number of Lok Sabha seats?

- a. Chandigarh
- b. Delhi
- c. Lakshadweep
- d. Puducherry

Q 26. In India, which of the following sections vote(s) in larger proportion as compared to the rich and privileged sections?

- a. Poor
- b. Illiterate
- c. Underprivileged
- d. All of these

7. People's participation in election is usually measured by voter figures.

- a. physical b. education
c. turnout d. economic

Q 28. Study the picture and answer the question that follows:



Which challenge to free and fair elections is depicted in the above picture?

- a. Big parties have an advantage over smaller parties.
b. Party tickets are distributed to relatives of the families who dominate the party.
c. Party tickets are given to people with criminal background.
d. None of the above

Q 29. Match the following:

Column I		Column II
1.	Garibi Hatao	A. Janata Party
2.	Save Democracy	B. Telugu Desam Party
3.	Land to the Tiller	C. Congress Party
4.	Protect the Self-respect of the Telugus	D. Left Front

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| a. C | A | D | B |
| b. C | D | A | B |
| c. A | C | D | B |
| d. A | D | C | B |

Q 30. The entire process of election in our country is conducted, controlled and supervised by an independent body called as:

- a. Election Commission b. Planning Commission
c. Welfare Commission d. Lok Sabha

Q 31. Read the following statements carefully and choose the correct option:

Statement (I): An open electoral competition might be unfair to weaker sections.

Statement (II): The weaker sections of the society lack what their influential counterparts have

in terms of resources, education and political connections.

- a. Statement (I) is correct and (II) is incorrect.
b. Statement (I) is incorrect and (II) is correct.
c. Both statements are incorrect.
d. Both statements are correct.

Q 32. Read the following statements carefully and choose the correct option:

Statement (I): In India political parties which formed the governments represented the majority of seats secured in the elections to the House of the People at the Centre and the Legislative Assemblies in the States but not the majority of votes.

Statement (II): The elections based on the majority vote system decided the result on the basis of relative majority of votes secured.

- a. Statement (I) is correct and (II) is incorrect.
b. Statement (I) is incorrect and (II) is correct.
c. Both statements are incorrect.
d. Both statements are correct.

Q 33. Read the following statements carefully and choose the correct option:

Statement (I): Only those parties that are recognised as national parties can contest in elections for Parliament.

Statement (II): Recognition to a political party as a national party is accorded by the Election Commission.

- a. Statement (I) is correct and (II) is incorrect.
b. Statement (I) is incorrect and (II) is correct.
c. Both statements are incorrect.
d. Both statements are correct.



Assertion & Reason Type Questions

Directions (Q.Nos. 34-38): In the following questions given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:

- a. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
b. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
c. Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
d. Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

Q 34. Assertion (A): When on election duty, the government officers work under the control of the Election Commission and not the government.

Reason (R): This ensures free and fair elections.

Q 35. Assertion (A): The interest of voters in election related activities has been increasing over the years.

Reason (R): Common people in India attach a lot of importance of elections. They feel that their vote matters in the way that affairs are managed in the country.

Q 36. Assertion (A): Secret Ballot enables a person to cast his/her vote fearlessly and secretly.

Reason (R): Secret Ballot is a voting method in which a voter's identity in an election or a referendum is anonymous.

Q 37. Assertion (A): Public opinion is important for a democracy.

Reason (R): Public opinion play an important role in formulating and implementing important programmes.

Q 38. Assertion (A): Elections give the voters the right to elect their representatives or rulers.

Reason (R): Through elections, voters can't choose who will form the government and take major decisions.

Answers

- | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (d) | 3. (b) | 4. (b) | 5. (c) |
| 6. (c) | 7. (c) | 8. (d) | 9. (c) | 10. (a) |
| 11. (b) | 12. (c) | 13. (d) | 14. (c) | 15. (a) |
| 16. (c) | 17. (c) | 18. (b) | 19. (b) | 20. (c) |
| 21. (a) | 22. (c) | 23. (c) | 24. (d) | 25. (b) |
| 26. (d) | 27. (c) | 28. (b) | 29. (a) | 30. (a) |
| 31. (d) | 32. (d) | 33. (b) | 34. (a) | 35. (a) |
| 36. (b) | 37. (a) | 38. (c) | | |



Source Based Questions

Source 1

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

Elections can be held in many ways. All democratic countries hold elections. But most non-democratic countries also hold some kind of elections. How do we distinguish democratic elections from any other election? We discussed many examples of countries where elections are held but they can't really be called democratic elections. Let us recall the minimum conditions of a democratic election: First, everyone should be able to choose. This means that everyone should have one vote and every vote should have equal value.

Second, 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.

Third, the choice should be offered at regular intervals. Elections must be held regularly after every few years.

Fourth, the candidate preferred by the people should get elected.

Fifth, elections should be conducted in a free and fair manner where people can choose as they really wish.

These might look like very simple and easy conditions. But there are many countries where these are not fulfilled.

Q 1. Which one of the following is not a factor that makes an election democratic?

- There should be something to choose from.
- Parties and candidates should be free to contest elections.
- The choice should not be offered at regular intervals.
- The candidate preferred by the people should get elected.

Q 2. The mechanism by which people can choose their representatives at regular intervals is called:

- Election
- Model code of conduct
- Electoral roll
- By-election

Q 3. Elections on the basis of fraud or malpractices is:

- Rigged election
- By-election
- Election manifesto
- Electoral roll

Q 4. Which of the following is the minimum condition of a democratic election?

- Everyone should be able to choose.
- There should be something to choose from.
- The choice should be offered at regular intervals.
- All of the above

Q 5. What does it mean: 'Everyone should have the right to choose representative'?

- Every one has one vote.
- Every vote has equal value.
- Both a. and b.
- None of the above

Q 6. There are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read them and choose the correct option:

Assertion (A): Elections are all about competition.

Reason (R): Different political parties make promises and give incentives to motivate the voters to vote them.

- Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
- Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

Answers

- (c)
- (a)
- (a)
- (d)
- (c)
- (b)

ce 2

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

Once the constituencies are decided, the next step is to decide who can and who cannot vote. This decision cannot be left to anyone till the last day. In a democratic election, the list of those who are eligible to vote is prepared much before the election and given to everyone. This list is officially called the Electoral Roll and is commonly known as the Voters' List.

This is an important step for it is linked to the first condition of a democratic election: everyone should get an equal opportunity to choose representatives. Earlier, we read about the principle of Universal Adult Franchise. In practice it means that everyone should have one vote and each vote should have equal value. No one should be denied the right to vote without a good reason. Different citizens differ from one another in many ways: some are rich, some are poor; some are highly educated, some are not so educated or not educated at all; some are kind, others are not so kind. But all of them are human beings with their own needs and views. That is why all of them deserve to have an equal say in decisions that affect them.

Q 1. What is the official term used for showing the list of those who are eligible to vote in a democratic election?

- a. Electoral roll b. Voters' list
- c. Either a. or b. d. Electoral list

Q 2. Which of the following is not a condition for a democratic election?

- a. Everyone should get an equal opportunity to choose representatives.
- b. No one should be denied the right to vote without a good reason.
- c. The citizens do not have an equal say in decisions that affect them.
- d. Everyone should have one vote and each vote should have equal value.

Q 3. Identify the correct conclusion for the given statement. 'Everyone has one and only one vote.'

- a. There is a fair representation of all sections of our society.
- b. Everyone has equal opportunity to elect their representative.
- c. Some people may have moved away from the area where they voted last.
- d. All candidates must have a fair chance of competing in elections.

Q 4. Which one of the following is a feature of election system based on the principle of Universal Adult Franchise?

- a. Each constituency has roughly the same population.
- b. There is a reservation of seats for the SCs and the STs.
- c. Anyone can form a party or contest elections.
- d. Everyone who is 18 years of age or older has a right to vote.

Q 5. Which of the following is prepared by a door to door survey to include only bona fide voters and minimise role of bogus voters?

- a. Constituency
- b. Electoral roll
- c. Election manifesto
- d. Election Photo Identity Card

Q 6. On what basis some constituencies are small in area while others are very big?

- a. Caste reservation
- b. Number of voters
- c. Distribution of population
- d. None of the above

Answers

1. (c) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (d) 5. (b) 6. (b)

Source 3

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:

Our Constitution entitles every citizen to elect her/his representative and to be elected as a representative. The Constitution makers, however, were worried that in an open electoral competition, certain weaker sections may not stand a good chance to get elected to the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies. They may not have the required resources, education and contacts to contest and win elections against others. Those who are influential and resourceful may prevent them from winning elections. If that happens, our Parliament and Assemblies would be deprived of the voice of a significant section of our population. That would make our democracy less representative and less democratic.

Q 1. What makes an election democratic?

Ans. Following conditions can make an election democratic:

- (i) Elections must be held regularly every five years.
- (ii) Every eligible voter must have one vote with equal value.
- (iii) Elections should be conducted in a free and fair manner and people should have full freedom to vote for any candidate they like.

What are electoral constituencies?

In India, an area based system of representation is followed where the country is divided into different areas for election purposes is called electoral constituencies.

Q 3. What makes the democracy less representative and less democratic?

Ans. If our Parliament and Assemblies are deprived of the voice of a significant section of our population, this would make the democracy less representative and less democratic.

Source 4

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:

The main purpose of election is to give people a chance to choose the representatives, the government and the policies they prefer. Therefore, it is necessary to have a free and open discussion about who is a better representative, which party will make a better government or what is a good policy. This is what happens during election campaigns.

In our country such campaigns take place for a two-week period between the announcement of the final list of candidates and the date of polling. During this period the candidates contact their voters, political leaders address election meetings and political parties mobilise their supporters. This is also the period when newspapers and television news are full of election related stories and debates. But election campaign is not limited to these two weeks only. Political parties start preparing for elections months before they actually take place.

Q 1. What is the main purpose of election?

Ans. The main purpose of election is to give people a chance to choose the representatives, the government and the policies they prefer.

Q 2. What is meant by election campaign?

Ans. Election campaign means the promotion or propaganda of the policies, offers and promises that the candidates make to voters to fulfil if they are elected.

Q 3. Mention the period of election campaigning in India. What happens during this period?

Ans. In India, election campaigning takes place for a two-week period between the announcement of the final list of candidates and the date of polling. During this period, the candidates contact their electorate, political leaders, address election meetings and political parties mobilise their supporters.



Very Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. What do you mean by elections?

Ans. The process by which people elect their representatives is called elections.

Q 2. What are General Elections?

Ans. The elections which are held for the Lok Sabha are referred to as General Elections.

Q 3. What is a Democratic Election?

Ans. An election should be conducted in a free and fair manner where people can choose whom they want to. This type of election is known as a Democratic Election.

Q 4. What are Mid-term Elections?

Ans. If the Lok Sabha or any State Legislative Assembly is dissolved before the expiry of its normal term, the elections held to constitute a new House are known as Mid-term Elections.

Q 5. What is the main purpose of elections?

Ans. The main purpose of the elections is to give people a chance to choose the representatives, the government and the policies they prefer.

Q 6. What do you mean by voters?

Ans. People who have the right to vote or participate in the election of representatives are known as 'voters'. In India, every citizen who has attained the age of 18 years is called a voter.

Q 7. What are constituencies?

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

Q 8. What do you understand by 'Reserved Constituencies'?

Ans. Some constituencies are reserved for people who belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Such constituencies are called reserved constituencies.

Q 9. Into how many constituencies is India divided for the Lok Sabha elections?

Ans. For Lok Sabha elections, the country is divided into 543 constituencies.

Q 10. What is the period of election campaign in our country?

Ans. In our country, election campaigns take place for a two-week period, between the announcement of the final list of candidates and the date of polling.

Q 11. Give the full form of EVM. What are they used for?

Ans. Electronic Voting Machine is the full form of EVM. It shows the names of the candidates and the party symbols and is used to record votes.

Q 12. What is the principle of Universal Adult Franchise?

Ans. Universal Adult Franchise means that all the citizens aged 18 years and above possess the right to vote. And each vote has equal value.

What does EPIC stand for?

EPIC stands for Election Photo Identity Card.

What is a ballot paper?

Ans. Ballot paper is a sheet of paper on which the names of the contesting candidates along with the parties they represent and the party symbols are listed.

Q 15. What is a polling booth?

Ans. Polling booth is a place where the citizens go to cast their votes on the day of elections.

Q 16. What is a party ticket?

Ans. Political parties nominate their candidates who get the party symbol and support. This nomination is often called the 'party's ticket'.

Q 17. Who appoints the Chief Election Commissioner?

Ans. The President of India appoints the Chief Election Commissioner.

Q 18. What do you mean by 'Turnout'?

Ans. Turnout means the percentage of eligible voters who actually cast their vote.

Q 19. What is the Election Code of Conduct?

Ans. A set of norms and guidelines to be followed by political parties and contesting candidates during the time of elections is known as Election Code of Conduct.

Q 20. Who vote in a larger proportion in elections in India?

Ans. The poor, illiterate and underprivileged people vote in a larger proportion as compared to the rich and privileged sections in India.

Q 21. What is the final phase of an election?

Ans. The final phase of an election is the acceptance of election outcome by the defeated party.

Q 22. Who can be denied the right to vote?

Ans. Criminals and persons with unsound mind can be denied the right to vote.

Q 23. Who used the slogan 'Land to the Tiller'?

Ans. The Left Front used the slogan 'Land to the Tiller' in the West Bengal Assembly elections held in 1977.

Q 24. Which party gave the slogan 'Garibi Hatao'?

Ans. The Congress Party led by Indira Gandhi gave the slogan 'Garibi Hatao' (Remove Poverty) in the Lok Sabha elections of 1971.

Q 25. What is the election manifesto?

Ans. The pamphlet or the booklet issued by a political party that tells people about its programmes and policies is known as the election manifesto of that political party.

Q 26. Who organises the election procedure in India?

Ans. In India, elections are conducted by an independent and very powerful Election Commission (EC).

Q 27. Study the following two cartoons carefully and write the message of each of them in your own words.



Ans. The cartoon shown on the left gives the message:

(A) That the knowledge, ideas, planning and promises of a candidate are useless if he/she does not have enough votes to win.

(B) The cartoon shown on the right gives the message that during an election campaign a candidate makes plenty of promises but he is unable to fulfill all of them. As a result electorates chase him to fulfill his promises.



Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. What choices do the voters make in an election?

Ans. In an election, the voters make the following choices:

- They can choose who will make laws for them.
- They can choose who will form the government and take major decisions.
- They can choose the party whose policies are beneficial for them.

Q 2. What makes an election democratic?

OR

Mention the factors which make an election democratic.

Ans. There are certain factors which make an election democratic. These are as follows:

- Elections must be held regularly in every few years.
- Every eligible voter must have one vote of an equal value.
- There should be more than one party, so that voters can get some real choice.
- The candidate preferred by the people should get elected.
- Elections should be conducted in a free and fair manner and people should have full freedom to vote for any candidate they like.

Q 3. Why did our Constitution makers opt for a free electoral system?

Ans. Our Constitution makers opted for a free electoral system because of the following reasons:

- Regular electoral competition provides incentives to political parties and leader. They know that if they raise issues that people want to be raised, 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.

- (ii) This system works better in the long run as it finally helps to force political parties and leaders to serve the people.

Q 4. What is meant by 'seat' in elections? Explain with example.

Ans. The electoral constituencies are commonly referred to as 'seats' because each constituency represents a seat in the Assembly.

For example, if BJP has 280 seats in the Parliament then it means that BJP has won 280 electoral constituencies of the Parliament.

Q 5. Why is a system of reservation had been introduced in our country?

Ans. It has been introduced because of the following reasons:

- (i) The Constitution makers were worried that in an open electoral competition, certain weaker sections may not stand a good chance to get elected to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
- (ii) The weaker sections did not have the required resources, education and contacts to contest and win elections.
- (iii) Even if they stood for elections, there was a possibility that those who were influential and resourceful may prevent them from winning elections.

Q 6. What do you mean by voters' list? What is its significance?

Ans. In a democratic election, the list of people eligible to vote is prepared much before the election. This list is officially called the Electoral Roll and is commonly known as the Voters' List.

Its significance can be understood with the help of the following points:

- (i) It contains the name of all those who are entitled to vote in a specific constituency.
- (ii) It helps to ensure that there are no bogus votes cast in the name of deceased people.

Q 7. Write any three successful slogans given by different political parties in various elections.

Ans. Some of the successful slogans given by different political parties in various elections are as follows:

- (i) 'Garibi Hatao' was the slogan of the Congress Party, led by Indira Gandhi in the Lok Sabha elections of 1971.
- (ii) 'Save Democracy' was the slogan of the Janata Party in the Lok Sabha elections of 1977.
- (iii) 'Land to the Tiller' was the slogan used by the Left Front in the West Bengal Assembly elections held in 1977.

Knowledge BOOSTER



'Protect the Self-respect of the Telugus' was the slogan used by NT Rama Rao, the leader of the Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections in 1983.

Q 8. What is rigging?

Ans. Frauds and malpractices indulged by a party or candidate to increase their votes is referred to as rigging. It includes stuffing ballot boxes by a few persons using the votes of others; recording multiple votes by the same person and bribing the polling officers to favour a candidate.

Q 9. Explain any three salient features of the Electoral System in India.

Ans. The main features of the Electoral System in India are as under:

- (i) In India, elections are held on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise. Every citizen who has completed 18 years of age has been given the right to vote irrespective of his caste, religion, sex, etc.
- (ii) In India, elections are held by a secret ballot. Nobody, except the voter himself, knows about the candidate he/she has voted.
- (iii) The Election Commission has been given extensive rights to ensure free and fair elections.

Q 10. 'Regular electoral competition provides incentives to political parties and leaders'. Justify the above statement with reasons.

Ans. 'Regular electoral competition provides incentives to political parties and leaders' in the following ways:

- (i) Due to regular elections, those who are in power take only those decisions which are approved or liked by the common people. They know that if they raise issues that people want to be raised, their popularity and chances of victory will increase in the next elections.
- (ii) If they fail to satisfy the voters with their work, they will not be able to win again. The hope for winning the next elections induces the losers or the opposition parties to raise the issues related to the common people.

Q 11. Explain the role of the Election Commission (EC) in free and fair elections.

Ans. The Election Commission (EC) plays an important role in ensuring free and fair elections in the following manner:

- (i) The Election Commission (EC) orders the government not to misuse their power during the election period.
- (ii) When on election duty, government officers work under the control of Election Commission (EC) and not the government.
- (iii) When it is of the opinion that polling was not fair, then it can order for a repoll.

Enumerate the acts banned by the election law in India.

According to our election law, no party or candidate can be allowed to:

- (i) Bribe or threaten voters;
- (ii) Appeal to them in the name of caste or religion;
- (iii) Use government resources for election campaign; and
- (iv) Spend more than the limits specified for the Lok Sabha election and for the Assembly Election.

Q 13. How can it be concluded that in India elections are always free and fair?

Ans. The final test of free and fair election is the outcome itself. If the elections are not free or fair, the outcome always favours the powerful. But in India, this is not true and the following facts can be cited as valid reasons of this assertion:

- (i) The ruling parties routinely lose elections in India, both at the national and the state level.
- (ii) In India, about half of the sitting MPs or MLAs lose elections.



Long Answer Type Questions

Q 1. Discuss the importance of elections in a democracy.

Ans. Elections are exceptionally important in a democracy because of the following reasons:

- (i) Without elections, a democratic government cannot be set up. It has been rightly said, 'No election, no democracy.'
- (ii) Through elections alone, the people can get rid of a cruel and unpopular government, and in its place, they can elect a new popular government.
- (iii) It is through elections alone that an effective control can be maintained on the executive.
- (iv) All the citizens in a modern democracy cannot run the administration. Only their representatives can do it for them. In order to choose such representatives, elections are mandatory.

Q 2. Explain the nomination process as practised in Indian elections.

Ans. The nomination process of Indian elections follows the given series of steps:

- (i) Party tickets are given.
- (ii) Nomination form is filled.
- (iii) Security amount is deposited.
- (iv) Every candidate has to make a legal declaration giving full details of the following particulars:
 - (a) Serious criminal cases pending against the candidate.
 - (b) Details of the assets and liabilities of the candidate and his/her family.
 - (c) Educational qualifications of the candidate.
- (v) Nomination papers are scrutinised and if everything is satisfactory then the candidate is allowed to contest the elections.



TIP

Write the complete nomination process practised in Indian elections in a sequential manner.

Q 3. Why are slogans used by political parties? Mention any four successful slogans given by different political parties in various elections.

Ans. Slogans are used by political parties in election campaign to attract the public and to seek votes for their party.

Four successful slogans given by different political parties in various elections are:

- (i) The slogan of 'Garibi Hatao' (Remove Poverty) was given by the Congress Party led by Indira Gandhi in the Lok Sabha elections of 1971.
- (ii) The slogan of 'Save Democracy' was given by Janata Party under the leadership of Jaya Prakash Narayan in the Lok Sabha elections held in 1977.
- (iii) The slogan of 'Land to the Tiller' was used by the left front in the West Bengal Assembly elections held in 1977.
- (iv) The slogan of 'Protect the self-respect of the Telugus' was used by N.T. Rama Rao of Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections held in 1983.

Q 4. Enumerate the malpractices reported during elections.

Ans. A lot of unfair practices in elections are reported by newspapers and televisions. These can take the following forms:

- (i) Inclusion of false names and exclusion of genuine names from the voters' list.
- (ii) Misuse of government facilities and officials by the ruling party.
- (iii) Excessive use of money by rich candidates and big parties.
- (iv) Intimidation of voters and rigging on the polling day.
- (v) Booth capturing.

Q 5. Describe the functions of Election Commission of India.

Ans. The main functions of Election Commission of India are as under:

- (i) To take decisions on every aspect of conduct and control of elections from the announcement of elections to the declaration of results.
- (ii) To implement the code of conduct and punish any candidate or party that violates it.
- (iii) To control the government officers who are posted on the election duty.

- (v) To supervise the machinery of elections throughout the country so that the elections are held in a free and fair manner.
- (v) To conduct the elections for President, Vice President, members of both the Houses of Parliament, members of Legislative Assemblies and Legislative Councils of various states.
- (vi) To give recognition to political parties as all India Parties or Regional Parties on the basis of the votes received by them in the last election.

Q 6. What is the procedure for the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner in India?

Ans. In India, elections are conducted by an independent and very powerful Election Commission.

The procedure for the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner is:

- (i) The President of India appoints the Chief Election Commissioner.
- (ii) Once appointed, the Chief Election Commissioner is not answerable to the President or the government.
- (iii) The status, salary and perks of the Chief Election Commissioner are equivalent to Judges of the Supreme Court of India.
- (iv) The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office only through impeachment by the Parliament. So, it is virtually impossible to remove him.

Q 7. Describe the challenges or weaknesses of Indian Electoral System.

Ans. Some of the challenges to the Indian Electoral System are as follows:

- (i) In India, elections are very expensive and a common man cannot fight elections. As a result, only the rich people fight elections and they make use of political power to make more money through illegal methods.
- (ii) With the support of the government officials, the ruling party tries to rig the elections. Some candidates also capture the polling booths and make use of their muscle power to do it.
- (iii) Candidates having criminal records have been able to push others out of electoral race and secure a ticket from major parties.
- (iv) Some families tend to dominate political parties and secure tickets for their own family members.

- (v) Smaller parties and independent candidates suffer a huge disadvantage as compared to the bigger parties.
- (vi) Sometimes, elections offer little choice to ordinary citizens as both the major parties are quite similar to each other both in policies and practice.

Q 8. Suggest some measures to remove the weaknesses of Indian Electoral System.

Ans. The following measures are suggested to remove the weaknesses of Indian Electoral System:

- (i) To minimise the role of money in election, provisions should be made for state funding of elections.
- (ii) Misuse of official machinery should be checked strictly.
- (iii) Candidates making use of caste or religion during elections should be debarred from contesting elections.
- (iv) Rigging of elections, by the use of muscle power and booth capturing, should be strongly checked.
- (v) Every party or candidate should be given a chance to make use of mass media.
- (vi) Voting should be made compulsory.
- (vii) Election petitions should be disposed off without much delay.

Q 9. An electoral competition has many demerits. Analyse the statement.

Ans. An electoral competition has many demerits, some of the important amongst them are as follows:

- (i) A sense of disunity and factionalism develops in every locality.
- (ii) Parties and candidates use dirty tricks, unfair means and even put false allegations against one another.
- (iii) There is a pressure to win elections and this does not allow sensible long-term policies to be formulated.
- (iv) Because of dirty political tactics adopted by the politicians, many good people do not enter politics.
- (v) Just before elections popular schemes are announced such as loan waiver, free electricity, etc., to attract voters. These schemes lead to wasteful expenditure.



Chapter Test

Multiple Choice Questions

- Q 1. Constituencies called 'Wards' are made for the election to:
- Parliament
 - State Legislative Assembly
 - State Legislative Council
 - Panchayats and Municipal Bodies
- Q 2. Which of the following terms is used when election is held only for one constituency to fill the vacancy caused by death or resignation of a member?
- Constituency election
 - General election
 - By-election
 - Assembly election
- Q 3. The list of those people who are eligible to vote is officially called:
- Voter's list
 - Electoral roll
 - Elector's list
 - Constituency list
- Q 4. Which of the following statements is against the democratic process of elections?
- Parties and candidates should be free to contest elections.
 - Elections must be held regularly immediately after the term is over.
 - The right to vote should be given to the selected people only.
 - Elections should be conducted in a free and fair manner.
- Q 5. Which of these is not a feature of Indian democracy?
- 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 the right to vote.
 - In India, the losing parties refuse to accept the electoral verdict.

Assertion and Reason Type Questions

Directions (Q.Nos. 6-7): In the following questions given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:

- Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
 - Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
 - Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
 - Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.
- Q 6. Assertion (A) : The interest of voters in election related activities has been increasing over the years.
Reason (R) : Common people in Indian attach a lot of importance of elections. They feel that their vote matters in the way that affairs are managed in the country.

- Q 7. Assertion (A): Both political party and candidate have to strictly follow the rules and the model code of conduct for election campaign.
Reason (R): Any party or candidate can use any place of worship for election propaganda.

Source Based Question

- Q 8. Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:

The final stage of an election is the day when the voters cast or 'poll' their vote. That day is usually called the election day. Every person whose name is on the voters' list can go to a nearby 'polling booth', situated usually in a local school or a government office. Once the voter goes inside the booth, the election officials identify her, put a mark on her finger and allow her to cast her vote. An agent of each candidate is allowed to sit inside the polling booth and ensure that the voting takes place in a fair way.

- Why are party agents present in the polling booth?
- How is polling of votes done inside the polling booth?
- What do you understand by election day?

Very Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 9. Mention the merits of electoral competition.
- Q 10. What is the period of election campaign in our country?
- Q 11. What are the details needed to be given by the candidates in a legal declaration?
- Q 12. What do you mean by Election Petition?

Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 13. Why did our Constitution makers opted for a free electoral system?
- Q 14. Mention the issues which bring many limitations and challenges of Indian elections to our attention.
- Q 15. Explain any three salient features of the Electoral System in India.
- Q 16. State the powers of the Election Commission which ensure democratic elections.

Long Answer Type Questions

- Q 17. Describe the challenges or weaknesses of Indian Electoral System.
- Q 18. 'The outcome of elections is a final test of free and fair elections'. Explain.