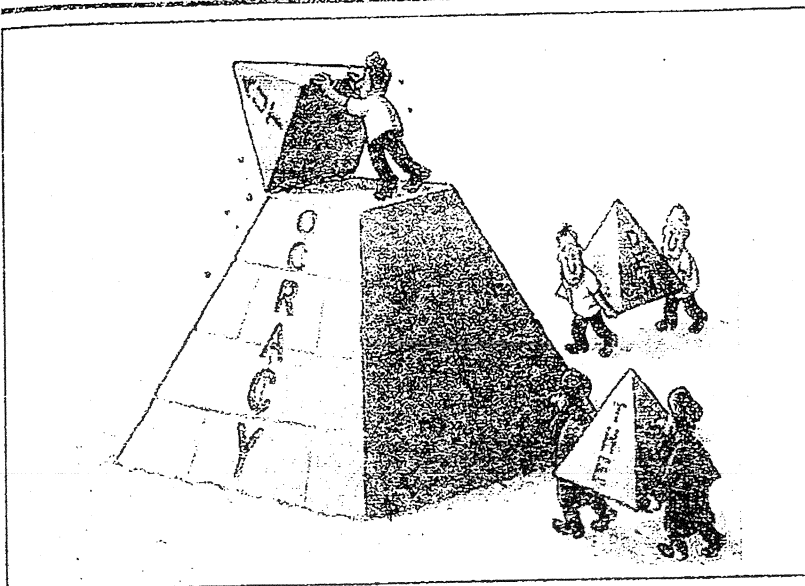


Electoral Politics



"In democracy it is neither possible nor necessary for people to govern directly. The most common form of democracy in our times is for the people to govern through their representatives. In this chapter we will look at how these representatives are elected."

15.1 Why elections ?

Assembly election in Haryana

"The time is after midnight. An expectant crowd sitting for the past five hours in a chowk of the town is waiting for its leader to come. The organisers assure and reassure the crowd that he would be here any moment. The crowd stands up whenever a passing vehicle comes that way. It arouses hopes that he has come.

The leader is Mr. Devi Lal, chief of the Haryana Sangharsh Samiti, who was to address a meeting in Karnal on Thursday night. The 76-year-old leader, is a very busy man these days. His day starts at 8 a.m. and ends after 11 p.m....he had already addressed nine election meetings since morning... been constantly addressing public meetings for the past 23 months and preparing for this election."

This newspaper report is about the "State assembly election in Haryana in 1987. The State had been ruled by a Congress party led government since 1982. Chaudhary Devi Lal, then an opposition leader, led a movement called 'Nyaya Yuddh' (Struggle for Justice) and formed a new party, Lok Dal. His party joined other opposition parties to form a front against the Congress in the elections. In the election campaign, Devi Lal said that if his party won the elections, his government would waive the loans of farmers and small businessmen. He promised that this would be the first action of his government.

The people were unhappy with the existing government. They were also attracted by Devi Lal's promise. So, when elections were held they voted overwhelmingly in favour of Lok Dal and its allies. Lok Dal and its partners won 76 out of 90 seats in the State Assembly. Lok Dal alone won 60 seats and thus had a clear majority in the Assembly. The Congress could win only 5 seats.

Once the election result were announced, the sitting Chief Minister resigned. The newly elected members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) of Lok Dal chose Devi Lal as their leader. The Governor invited Devi Lal to be the new Chief Minister. Three days after the election results were declared, he

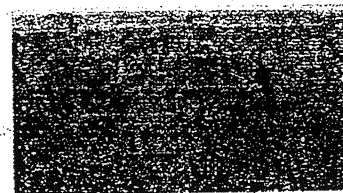


Fig.1
Future lies in the hands of the voter



Fig.2 Image showing the importance of voter

became the Chief Minister. As soon as he became the Chief Minister, Government issued a Government Order waiving the outstanding loans of small farmers, agricultural labourers and small businessmen.

His party ruled the state for four years. The next elections were held in 1991, but this time his party did not win popular support. The Congress won the election and formed the government.

15.2 Why do we need elections?

Elections take place regularly in any democracy.

- (i) There are more than one hundred countries in the world in which elections take place to choose people's representatives.
- (ii) A rule of the people is possible without any elections if all the people can sit together everyday and take all the decisions. This is not possible in any large community. Nor is it possible for everyone to have the time and knowledge to take decisions on all matters. Therefore in most democracies people rule through their representatives.

15.3 What are elections ?

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

Elections are considered essential in our times for any representative democracy. In an election the voters make many choices :

- (i) They can choose who will make laws for them.
- (ii) They can choose who will form the government and take major decisions.
- (iii) They can choose the party whose policies will guide the government and law making.

15.4 What makes an election democratic ?

There are certain conditions which make an election democratic :

- (i) Everyone should be able to choose. This means that everyone should have one vote and every vote should have equal value.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) The choice should be offered at regular intervals. Elections must be held regularly after every few years.
- (iv) The candidate preferred by the people should get elected.
- (v) Fifth, elections should be conducted in a free and fair manner where people can choose as they really wish.

15.5 Political competition : There is no denying the fact that political competition is essential in elections. It is pointed out that if there is no competition, there is no point in having elections.

(a) Advantages

- (i) This competition allows the voters to judge for themselves which party would serve them better.
- (ii) Without this competition, no candidate shall ever feel himself responsible to his voters because he had not come to ask for their votes.

But political competition has many defects which must be removed to make political competition a more viable system.

(b) Disadvantages

- (i) It creates a sense of disunity.
- (ii) Political parties and candidates often levy allegations against each other.
- (iii) They often make false promises and try to deceive the public.
- (iv) Afraid of dirty attacks, many good people do not like to contest elections.

Regular electoral competition provides an incentive to political parties and leaders. They fully know they stand the chance of winning the elections if they serve and satisfy their voters. But if they fail in this task, they will not be able to win the next elections. Political competition may cause some ugliness and divisions yet ultimately it puts pressure on the political parties and their leaders to serve the people for their own survival.

15.6 System of elections in India

(a) Electoral constituencies

The country is divided into different areas for purposes of elections. These areas are called electoral constituencies. 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 villager or the urban local body. Sometimes these constituencies are counted as 'seats', for each constituency represents one seat in the assembly. When we say that Lok Dal won 60 seats in Haryana, it means that candidates of Lok Dal won in 60 assembly constituencies in the state and thus Lok Dal has 60 MLAs in the state assembly.

(b) Reserved Constituencies

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.

So, the makers of our Constitution thought of a special system of reserved constituencies for the weaker sections. Some constituencies are reserved for people who belong to the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). In a SC reserved constituency only someone who belongs to the Scheduled Castes can stand for election. Similarly only those belonging to the Scheduled Tribes can contest an election from a constituency reserved for ST. Currently, in the Lok Sabha, 79 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes and 41 for the Scheduled Tribes. This number is in proportion to their share in the total population. Thus the reserved seats for SC and ST do not take away the legitimate share of any other social group.

In many states, seats in rural (panchayat) and urban (municipalities and corporations) local bodies are now reserved for Other Backward Classes (OBC) as well. However, the proportion of seats reserved varies from state to state. Similarly, one-third of the seats are reserved in rural and urban local bodies for women candidates.

GULBARGA LOK SABHA CONSTITUENCY

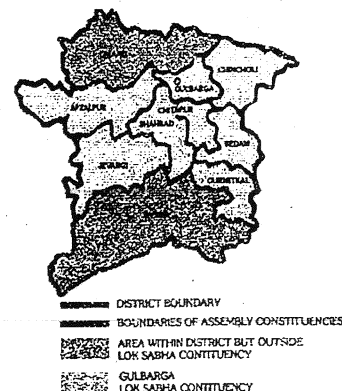


Fig.3

GULBARGA DISTRICT IN KARNATAKA



Fig.4

STATES	Constituencies
Andhra Pradesh	42
Arunachal Pradesh	2
Assam	14
Bihar	40
Chhattisgarh	11
Goa	2
Gujarat	26
Haryana	10
Himachal Pradesh	4
Jammu & Kashmir	6
Jharkhand	14
Karnataka	28
Kerala	20
Madhya Pradesh	29
Maharashtra	48
Manipur	2
Meghalaya	2
Mizoram	1
Nagaland	1
Orissa	21
Punjab	13
Rajasthan	25
Sikkim	1
Tamil Nadu	39
Tripura	2
Uttar Pradesh	80
Uttaranchal	5
West Bengal	42

UNION TERRITORIES	Constituencies
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1
Chandigarh	1
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1
Daman & Diu	1
Delhi	7
Lakshadweep	1
Pondicherry	1

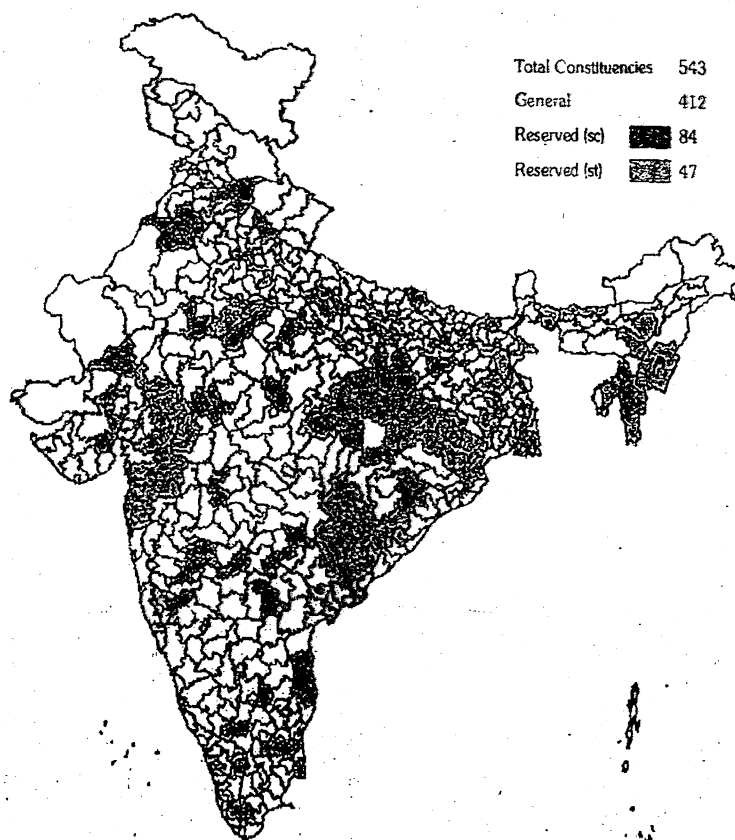


Fig. 5 Lok Sabha constituencies

(c) Voters list

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) Everyone should get an equal opportunity to choose representatives. In Chapter One 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.
- (iv) 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.
- (v) In our country, all the 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.
- (vi) It is the responsibility of the government to get the names of all the eligible voters put on the voters' list.
- (vii) Names of those who move out of a place or those who are dead are deleted. A complete revision of the list takes place every five years.
- (viii) In the last few years a new system of Election Photo Identity Card [EPIC] has been introduced. The government has tried to give this card to every person on the voters list.

- (ix) The card is not yet compulsory for young. For young, the voters can show many other proofs of identity like the ration card or the driving licence.

(d) Nomination of candidates

- (i) Any-one 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.
- (ii) Political parties nominate their candidates who get the party symbol and support. Party's nomination is often called party 'ticket'.
- (iii) Every person who wishes to contest an election has to fill a nomination form and give some money as 'security deposit'.
- (iv) Recently, a new system of declaration has been introduced on direction from the Supreme Court. 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.
- (v) 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.

15.6 Educational qualification for the candidates

In some countries, educational qualification is quite necessary for the voters and the candidates. They hold the view that when some kind of qualification is quite necessary for holding any job, it should also be there for the voters especially the candidates who would hold such important post of responsibility.

But many people, especially those of the developing countries, do not agree with the above view because of the following reasons :

- (i) It is argued that educational qualifications are not relevant to all kinds of jobs. A cricket player should be judged by his ability to play cricket and not by his qualification.
- (ii) The voters are the best judge to choose the educated candidate or an experienced man who has the ability to understand people's concerns, problems etc.
- (iii) It is also argued that if a graduate degree (B.A, B.Sc., B.Com.) is made compulsory for candidates, more than 90 percent of the voters would become ineligible for, contesting an election.

15.7 Election Campaign

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) In election campaigns, political parties try to focus public attention on some big issues.

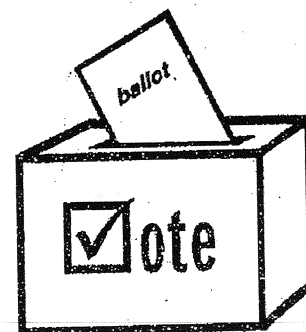
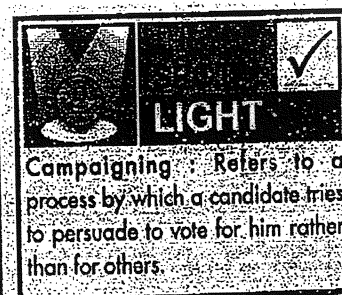
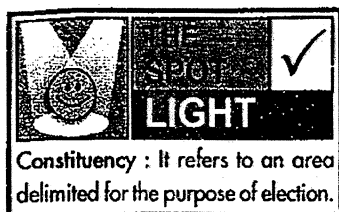


Fig. 6
voting through a secret ballot





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 Janata Party in the next Lok Sabha election held in 1977.
- The party promised to undo the excesses 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.

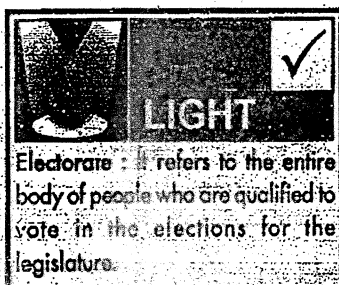
CHECK YOUR LEARNING 15.1

1. We have seen why democracies need to have elections. But why do rulers in nondemocratic countries need to hold elections?
2. Which of the following statements about the reasons for conducting elections are false?
 - (a) Elections enable people to judge the performance of the government.
 - (b) People select the representative of their choice in an election.
 - (c) Elections enable people to evaluate the performance of the judiciary.
 - (d) People can indicate which policies they prefer.

15.8 Techniques and methods adopted in election campaigns

A party usually adopts the following techniques or methods in elections to the Lok Sabha or the Vidhan Sabha.

- (a) **Postering** : A few days before the actual election day, the election campaign begins with postering. These posters bearing the photographs of the national leaders of the party concerned appear on the walls of the main bazars and the streets.
- (b) **Meetings** : Then the candidates hold various party meetings and common meetings to get the support of the party workers as well as the local social, religious and cultural bodies.
- (c) **Speeches** : Then various public meetings are held at different places of the constituency to get support of the common masses. In these meetings various speeches are delivered by the local as well as national leaders. Much light is thrown in these meetings on the policies and programmes of the party to which the candidate belongs.
- (d) **Processions** : So often long processions are taken in the constituency from one corner to the other. In these processions large number of trucks



tempos, tongas, rickshaws, motor-cycles, scooters, cycles, etc. are used to carry the processionists who shout slogans in favour of the their candidate, or sometimes against the other candidates at their loudest voice.

- (e) **House to house canvassing** : Then house to house canvassing is undertaken by the candidate and his partymen to get the support and sympathies of the general public. The pamphlets and respective manifestoes are freely distributed among the people to get their vote.

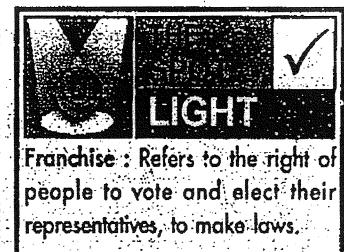
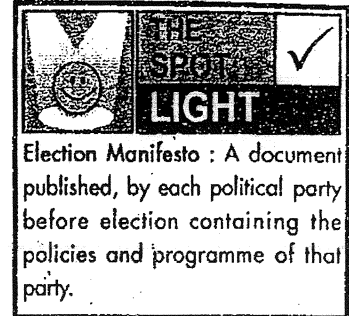
(f) **Model code of conduct**

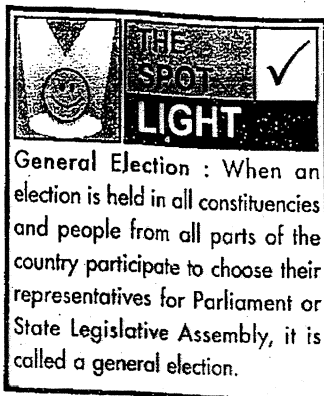
The different political parties have agreed to follow certain principles during an Election Campaign. Such principles, as a whole, are known as **Model Code of Conduct**. Some of the principles of the Model Code of Conduct are the following :

- (i) No place of worship shall be used for election propaganda.
- (ii) Criticism of the opponents should be limited to their policies and programmes.
- (iii) Government should not be used by any minister and the ruling party.
- (iv) No announcement of reforms or favours shall be announced after the elections have been announced.

(g) **Polling and counting of votes**

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) An agent of each candidate is allowed to sit inside the polling booth and ensure that the voting takes place in a fair way.
- (v) Earlier the voters used to indicate who they wanted to vote for by putting a stamp on the ballot paper. A ballot paper is a sheet of paper on which the names of the contesting candidates along with their name and symbols are listed.
- (vi) Electronic voting machines (EVM) are used to record votes. The machine shows the names of the candidates and the party symbols. Independent candidates too have their own symbols, allotted by election officials. All the voters have to press the button against the name of the candidate whom one wants to give vote.
- (vii) 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 agent of all candidates are present there to ensure that the counting is done proper.





- (viii) The candidate who secures the highest number of votes from a constituency is declared elected. In a general election, usually the counting of votes in all the constituencies takes place at the same time, on the same day. Television channels, radio and newspapers report this event. Within a few hours of counting, all the results are declared and it becomes clear as to who will form the next government.

15.9 Are the elections expensive ?

Some people hold the view that elections are a great burden on the government, political parties and the candidates which a developing country like India cannot afford. There is some truth in this statement. According to an estimate about Rs. 3,000 crores were spent in the Lok Sabha Elections in 2004 by the government, political parties and by different candidates.

But such an amount is worth spending on the elections because if there are no elections, there will be no democracy. One government will continue in the absence of elections which can become dictator and corrupt.

If we go deep, we come to know that only Rs. 50 were spent on one voter is Rs. 3000 crore are divided by the total number of voters for all the Lok Sabha seats. This is a small amount as compared to the liberties that the people enjoy in a democracy.

Seen from another angle, Rs 3000 crore is less than the cost of a single nuclear submarine for which we have to pay Rs. 3, 166 crores.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS 15.1

1. They need to hold elections to make people believe they are ruling by popular vote and have the people behind them. But in non-democratic countries elections are not free or fair (as in Mugabe's Zimbabwe) or allow every one to vote (as in China). You have to be a member of the Chinese Communist Party to be able to vote.
2. a and c

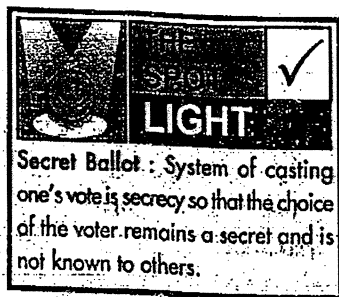
15.10 What makes Indian elections democratic

There is no denying the fact that some people indulge in unfair practices during election in India. The ruling party misuses the government facilities. Rich candidates use money and openly distribute clothes and even wine among the people, especially the poor people to buy their votes. Some unsocial elements try to capture booths and cast votes on behalf of the illiterate rural people. Some influential political parties manage to include false names in the voters list. Many steps have been taken to ensure free and fair elections in India.

(a) Independent Election Commission

One simple way of checking whether elections are fair or not is to look at who conducts the elections.

- (i) In our country elections are conducted by an independent and very powerful Election Commission (EC). It enjoys the same kind of independence that the judiciary enjoys.



- (ii) The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) is appointed by the President of India. But once appointed, the Chief Election Commissioner is not answerable to the President or the government. Even if the ruling party or the government does not like what the Commission does, it is virtually impossible for it to remove the CEC.
- (iii) EC takes decisions on every aspect of conduct and control of elections from the announcement of elections to the declaration of results. It implements the Code of Conduct and punishes any candidate or party that violates it.
- (iv) During the election period, the EC can order the government to follow some guidelines, to prevent use and misuse of governmental power to enhance its chances to win elections, or to transfer some of its officials.
- (v) When on election duty, government officers work under the control of the EC and not the government.

(b) Popular participation

- (i) Another way to check the quality of the election process is to see whether people participate in it with **enthusiasm**. If the election process is not free or fair, people will not continue to participate in the exercise.

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.

Voter turnout in India and the UK

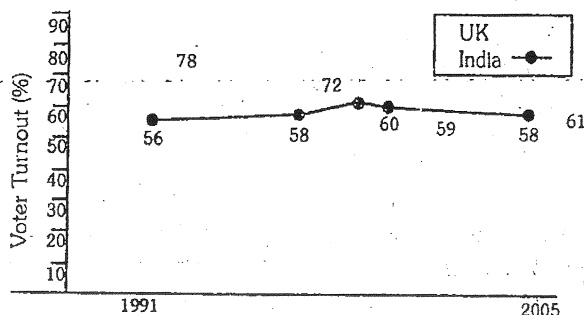
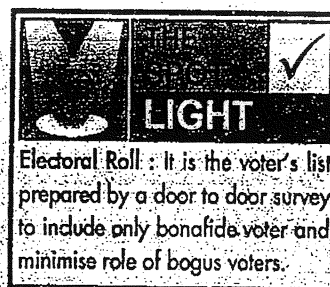
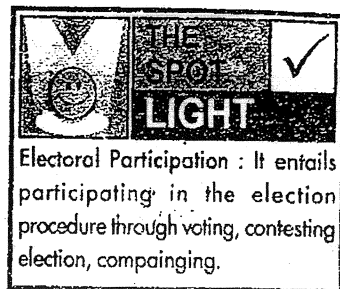


Fig. 7 Election year

- (ii) In India the poor, illiterate and underprivileged 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.
- (iii) Common people in India attach a lot of importance to elections. They feel that through elections they can bring pressure on political parties and programmes favourable to them. They also feel that their vote matters in the way things are run in the country.
- (iv) The interest of voters in election related activities has been increasing over the years. During the 2004 elections, more than one-third voters took part in a campaign-related activities. More than half of the people identified themselves as being close to one or the other political party. One out of every seven voters is a member of a political party.



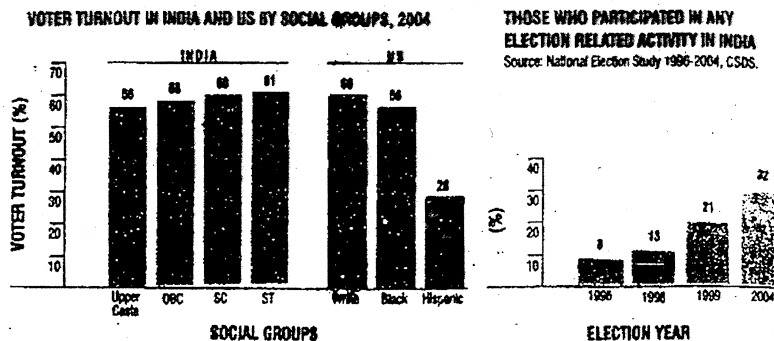
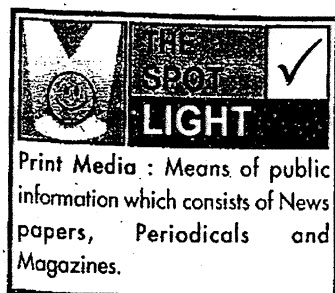


Fig. 8 : Figures for India from National election study 2004, CSDS. Figures for US from national Election study 2004, University of Michigan.

(c) Outcomes of Elections

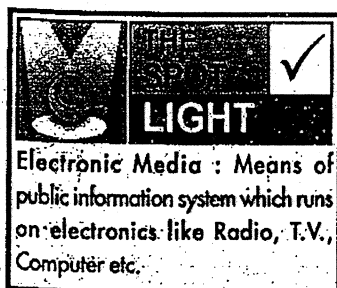
The outcome of India's elections –

- (i) 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.
- (ii) In the US, an or 'sitting' elected representative rarely loses an election. In India about half of the sitting MPs or MLAs lose elections.
- (iii) Candidates who are known to have spent a lot of money on 'buying votes' and those with known criminal connections often lose elections.
- (iv) Barring very few disputed elections, the electoral outcomes are usually accepted as 'people's verdict' by the defeated party

15.11 Challenges to free and fair elections

All this leads to a simple conclusion : election in India are basically free and fair. The party that wins an election and forms government does so because people have chosen it over its rivals. This may not be true for every constituency. A few candidates may win purely on the basis of money power and unfair means. But the overall verdict of a general election still reflects popular preference. There are very few exceptions to this rule in the last fifty years in our country. This is what makes Indian elections democratic.

- Candidates and parties with a lot of money may not be sure of their victory but they do enjoy a big and unfair advantage over smaller parties and independents.
- In some parts of the country, candidates with criminal connection have been able to push others out of the electoral race and to secure a ticket from major parties.
- Some families tend to dominate political parties; tickets are distributed to relatives from these families.
- Very often elections offer little choice to ordinary citizens, for both the major parties are quite similar to each other both in policies and practice.



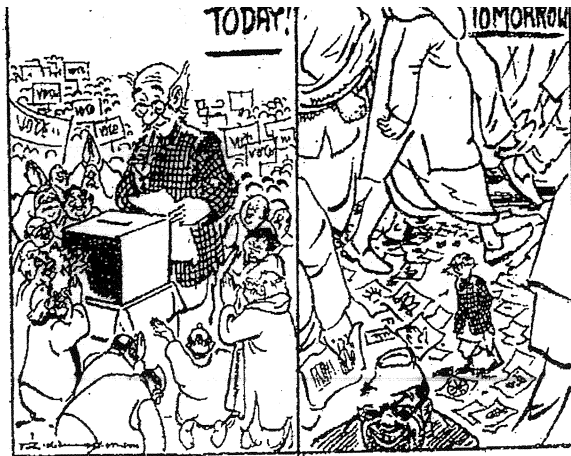
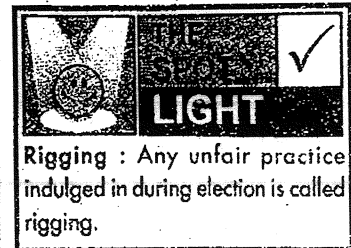


Fig. 9 : A voter at the voting day and after voting

Smaller parties and independent candidates suffer a huge disadvantage compared to bigger parties.

These challenges exist not just in India but also in many established democracies. These deeper issues are a matter of concern for those who believe in democracy. That is why citizens, social activists and organisations have been demanding reforms in our electoral system.



EXERCISE # 1

Multiple choice questions

1. In India, elections for which of these bodies are held after every five years?
(1) rajya sabha
(2) lok sabha and vidhan sabha
(3) vidhan parishad
(4) only lok sabha
2. Elections held after the term of five years of lok sabha are called
(1) mid term elections
(2) general elections
(3) by elections
(4) special elections
3. Constituencies called wards are made for the elections to -
(1) parliament
(2) state legislative assembly
(3) state legislative council
(4) panchayats and municipal bodies
4. Which of these options is not correct?
(1) In an open electoral competition, certain weaker sections may not get elected
(2) resources, education and contacts may be lacking in their case
(3) influential people may prevent them from winning elections
(4) influential people help certain weaker sections in winning elections
5. How many seats are reserved in lok sabha for the scheduled tribes ?
(1) 40 (2) 41 (3) 51 (4) 71
6. How many seats are reserved for women in rural and urban local bodies?
(1) 1/2 of the seats
(2) 1/3 seats
(3) 2/3 seats
(4) None of the above
7. For voting, the voter has to show which of these as identity proof?
(1) ration card
(2) driving license
(3) election photo identity card
(4) any of these

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

8. What is the minimum age required to contest an election to lok sabha?
(1) 20 years (2) 18 years
(3) 25 years (4) 30 years
9. What is a set of norms and guidelines, which is to be followed by political parties and contesting candidates during the election time, called?
(1) discipline roll (2) code of conduct
(3) conduct rules (4) both (1) and (2)
10. Which of these is permitted under the code of conduct for election campaigns ?
(1) use of place of worship for election propaganda
(2) use of government vehicles for election
(3) use of media
(4) once elections are announced, making any promises of providing public facilities
11. Which candidate is declared elected ?
(1) one who secures the highest number of votes from a constituency
(2) one who secures two third majority
(3) one who secures $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total votes cast
(4) none of these
12. Name the body which conducts the election in India
(1) Supreme court (2) Parliament
(3) Cabinet (4) Election commission
13. How is the Chief Election Commissioner chosen?
(1) appointed by the President
(2) elected by the people
(3) elected by the MPs
(4) elected by MPs and MLAs
14. When on election duty, under whose control do the government officers work
(1) central government
(2) election commission
(3) district magistrate
(4) district court
15. Which of these powers are exercised by the election commission to ensure free and fair elections?
(1) election commission tightens norms for poll expenses
(2) election commission orders repoll in 398 booths
(3) election commission appoints new Haryana DGP
(4) both (1) and (2)

16. In India, who votes in larger proportion in the election?
 (1) poor and illiterate (2) rich and privileged
 (3) educated people (4) women
17. What does the term incumbent mean?
 (1) the current holder of a political office
 (2) the candidate contesting the election
 (3) the outgoing candidate of the dissolved house
 (4) none of the above
18. An electoral malpractise in which a person assumes the identity of another for unlawful purposes is
 (1) incumbent (2) rigging
 (3) impersonation (4) turnout
19. The election commission is
 (1) an elected body
 (2) an appointed body
 (3) an independent body
 (4) both (2) and (3)
20. Which among the following is not correct?
 (1) the election commission conducts all elections for the parliament and assemblies
 (2) the election commission directs and controls the preparation of electoral roll
 (3) it cannot fix the election dates
 (4) it does scrutiny of nomination papers
- True or false**
1. Code of conduct is a set of norms and guidelines to be followed by political parties.
2. MLA is a representative elected from each parliamentary constituency.
3. We have the right to vote after 21 years of age.
4. Voters list is also known as ticket.
5. 79 seats are reserved for SCs in the lok sabha.
6. EPIC stands for election photo identity card.
- Fill in the blanks**
1. In most democracies people rule through their _____
2. _____ provide a mechanism by which people can choose their representatives.
3. Elections are all about _____ competition among several parties of candidates.
4. Lok sabha elections are held after every _____ years.
5. _____ machines are used to record votes.
6. Elections are conducted by _____
- Match the column**
- | Column-I | | Column-II | |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------|--|
| (1) garibi hatao | (a) right to vote after 18 year of age | | |
| (2) chief election commissioner | (b) slogan given by Indian National Congress | | |
| (3) universal adult franchise | (c) each constituency has roughly the same population | | |
| (4) one vote one value | (d) house of people | | |
| (5) lok sabha | (e) appointed by the President of India | | |

EXERCISE # 1 ANSWER KEY FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Multiple choice questions

Qn.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Ans.	2	2	4	4	2	2	3	3	2	4	2	4	1	2	1	1	1	3	3	3

True or false

1. True 2. False 3. False 4. False 5. True 6. True

Fill in the blanks

1. Representatives 2. Elections 3. Political 4. five 5. Electronic voting 6. Election commission

Match the column

1. (1) → b; (2) → e; (3) → a; (4) → c; (5) → d

EXERCISE # 2

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Short answer type questions

1. What are the choices that voter makes in an election?
2. What is the check on the political leaders which makes them serve the people?
3. Mention the provisions laid down under the model code of conduct to regulate the election campaigns?
4. What is called a 'by election'?
5. What is called a constituency?
6. Mention one advantage of regular electoral competition?
7. What is a voter's list?
8. What is the significance of EPIC?
9. What is meant by booth capturing?

Long answer type questions

1. What are the merits of electoral competition? Explain them
2. What do you mean by election? Why is it needed in a democracy.
3. What are demerits of political competition?
4. What is a reserved constituency? Why did India introduce this system?
5. Explain any four powers enjoyed by Election Commission of India?
6. What is a secret ballot? Why is it good ?
7. Describe briefly the different process of election?
8. Why the candidates are required to give a detailed account of their property?

NCERT QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

1. Which of the following statements about the reasons for conducting elections are false ?

- (a) Elections enable people to judge the performance of the government.
- (b) People select the representative of their choice in an election.
- (c) Elections enable people to evaluate the performance of the judiciary.
- (d) People can indicate which policies they prefer.

Ans. (a) and (c)

2. Which of these is not a good reason to say that Indian elections are democratic ?

- (a) India has the largest number of voters in the world.
- (b) India's Election Commission is very powerful.
- (c) In India, the losing parties accept the electoral verdict.

Ans. The first one-India has the largest number of voters in the world.

3. Match the following :

Column-I

- (a) It is necessary to keep the voters list up to date because sections of our society
- (b) Some constituencies are reserved for
- (c) Everyone has one and only one vote
- (d) Party in power is not allowed to use

Column-II

- (i) There is a fair representation of all
- (ii) Everyone has equal opportunity to SCs and STs so that they elect their representative
- (iii) All candidates must have a fair so that chance of coming in elections
- (iv) Some people may have moved away government vehicles because from the area where they voted last

Ans. (a) - (iv) ; (b) - (i) ; (c) - (ii) ; (d) - (iii)

4. List all the different election related activities mentioned in the chapter and arrange them in a time sequence, beginning with the first activity and ending with the last. Some of these activities are given below : releasing election manifestos ; counting of votes ; making of voters list ; election campaign ; declaration of election results ; casting of votes ; ordering of re-poll ; announcing election schedule ; filing nomination.

Ans. 1st step : Making of voters list

2nd step : Announcing election schedule

3rd step : Division of areas into constituencies

4th step : Filing of nominations

5th step : Parties present their manifestoes

6th step : Election campaign

7th step : Polling day : casting of votes

8th step : Ordering Repoll

9th step : Counting-declaration of election results.

5. 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

Ans. (a) Surekha should ensure that following unfair means are not used in the campaign by the parties :

- (i) Misusing government vehicles, machinery or resources.
- (ii) Using any place of worship for election campaign.
- (iii) Spending more than the expenditure limit allowed for an election campaign in a constituency.
- (iv) Appeal in the name of religion or caste
- (v) Ministers shall not lay foundation stones of any projects, take any big policy decisions or make any promises of providing public facilities once elections are announced. In short, to see that 'Code of conduct' is not violated.

(b) **Polling day** : There is no campaigning done. All campaigning should stop 36 hours before actual polling starts. No bribing or buying of voters. No rigging. Only voters in the voters list allowed to vote. Identities should be checked. Every voter votes only once, mark is put on the finger. Fair voting is done in the presence of an agent of the candidates.

(c) **Counting day** : They should ensure that all EVMs are sealed. All EVMs are opened on the same day in a constituency. Agents of all candidates are present when counting is done. Results declared as soon counting is done.

6. 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 powers to conduct free and fair elections in the country.
- (b) There is a high level of popular participation in the elections 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.

Ans. (a) No, this is untrue. EC can order a re-poll in case unfair means are used in elections. It can punish if a party or a candidate violates the code of conduct for elections.

(b) (i) Yes, in India, unlike USA, it is the illiterate, the uneducated and the underprivileged people who participate more in elections.

(ii) The number of people whose vote has gone up over the years, which proves the popularity of elections.

(c) (i) No, the 'Code of conduct' for elections prohibits the misuse of power and government machinery by the ruling party.

(ii) If the ruling party fails to fulfil people's expectations, it is voted out as it has been proved in India many times.

(d) Yes, there are some reforms needed

(i) Candidates with criminal connections have won elections. This should not have happened.

(ii) Some families tend to dominate elections. Tickets are distributed to relatives from these families.

7. Chinappa was convicted for torturing his wife for dowry. Satbir was held guilty of practicing untouchability. The court did not allow either of them to contest elections. Does this decision go against the principles of democratic elections?

Ans. No, they don't. Any one convicted of a crime is not allowed to stand for elections, so Chinappa was debarred. Satbir was also guilty of breaking a law by practising untouchability. So he was also debarred.

8. 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 in charge 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 the voters of Indian origin.

(c) In the US, 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.

Ans. Nigeria, Fiji and US can follow the Indian example of having a powerful Election commission which is independent of the government. They should also have a "Code of conduct" for elections which would stop rigging of votes and parties threatening the voters as they did in Nigeria and Fiji. "The Code of Conduct" should apply to the whole country and different states should not have different rules as in the case of Florida, USA.

9. Here are some reports of malpractices in Indian elections. Identify what the problem in each case is. What should be done to correct the situation?

(a) Following the announcement of elections, the minister promised to provide financial aid to reopen the closed sugar mill.

(b) Opposition parties alleged that their statements and campaign was not given due attention on doordarshan and All India Radio.

(c) An inquiry by the election commission showed that electoral rolls of a state contain name of 20 lakh fake voters.

(d) The hoodlums of a political party were moving with guns, physically preventing supporters of other political parties to meet the voters and attacking meetings of other parties.

Ans. (a) The problem in the first case was to gain some popular votes for the ruling party by making promises after the announcement of elections. This should not have been allowed.

(b) In the second, opposition parties were not given the same time to air their views and campaign for elections by the media TV and Radio. More time was granted to the ruling party. Each party should have the same access to media and given equal importance by it.

(c) Fake voters list should be condemned, a new census taken, a new electoral voters list prepared by impartial agents.

(d) They should have been arrested and punished. This is use of force in favour of a party and breaks the 'Code of conduct' for elections.