

Electoral Politics (Simple & Easy Notes) for Class 9th

- [Demerits](#)
- [Merits](#)
- [Introduction:](#)
 - [1. Why Elections:](#)
 - [2. What makes an election democratic?](#)
 - [3. Is it good to have political competition?](#)
 - [4. What Is Our System of Elections?](#)
 - [Electoral Constituencies:](#)
 - [Reserved Constituencies:](#)
 - [5. Election Procedure:](#)
 - [1. Voters' List:](#)
 - [2. Nomination of Candidate:](#)
 - [3. Election Campaign:](#)
 - [Code of Conduct:](#)
 - [4. Polling and Counting of Votes:](#)
 - [6. What makes elections in India Democratic?](#)
 - [1. Independent Election Commission:](#)
 - [Powers of the election commission of India:](#)
 - [2. Popular Participation:](#)
 - [3. Acceptance of election outcome:](#)
 - [7. Challenges to free and fair elections:](#)

Introduction:

In previous chapters, we learnt about the better form of government i.e. [democracy](#) and the way leaders designed our constitution on democratic principles. Well, this chapter will help you understand how democratic election process is conducted in India. Also, the provision that makes people represent themselves and educational qualifications for candidates. Moreover, you will know the role of the Election Commission. First, let's discuss the need and features of democratic elections.

1. Why Elections:

Democratic principle states that people are the real rulers of the country. So, People have the option to govern the country directly without elections. Yet, we need elections. The reason behind it is our large community. Perhaps, direct rule of people is possible in small communities but not in the vast country like India. Therefore, we consider elections essential for representative democracy.

By [representative democracy](#) we mean that voters will have the following choices:-

1. Voters can **choose who will make laws** for them.
2. They can **choose who will form the government and take major decisions**.
3. They can **choose the party whose policies will guide the government and law making**.

2. What makes an election democratic?

In the modern world, there is a trend of elections. Almost all countries hold elections through different ways. Hence, it is clear that any country holding elections cannot be counted as democratic. So, here our question is, what minimum conditions do we require for democratic elections? These conditions are as follows:-

1. **One Vote One Value:** Everyone should be equally able to choose (Equal choice:- EC).
2. **Political Competition:** Candidates should be free to contest elections and should offer some real choice to the voters (Different Choices:- DC).
3. **Regular elections:** Choices should be offered at regular intervals (Regular choices:- RC)
4. **Preferred Candidates:** The candidate preferred by the people should get elected (People's Choice:- PC).
5. **Free and Fair elections:** People should have freedom to choose according to their own wishes. It means no use of unfair means. (No cheating in choice:- NCC)

3. Is it good to have political competition?

- Political competition is necessary because if there is no competition, elections will become pointless.
- However, we cannot say whether it is good to have political competition or not. This is because it has both Merits and Demerits.

Demerits

1. It creates a sense of disunity and 'factionalism'.
2. Different political parties and leaders often level allegations against one another.
3. There is tendency to use dirty tricks to win elections.

Merits

1. People have the power to make the parties win or lose elections.
 2. To remain in power and position, political leaders will have to serve the people and satisfy them.
- Although, it has some demerits in the short run but it will have better outcomes in the long run.

4. What Is Our System of Elections?

- Our country India is divided into different areas for the purposes of elections. These areas are called electoral constituencies.
- There are three kinds of direct elections.
 - **General Elections:** When all the constituencies hold elections at the same time, either on the same day or within a few days. We call it general elections.
 - **By Elections:** When single constituency holds election to fill the vacancy caused by death or resignation of the member.
 - **Mid term Elections:** When the Lok Sabha or State legislative Assembly dissolves before the expiry of its full term, authority announces the mid term elections.

Electoral Constituencies:

- India follows an area based system of representation.
- Voters living in that area, elects one representative.
- Each constituency is equal to one seat.
- Number of constituencies in any state depends on the population of that state.
 - It means some states can have only one constituency whereas other states can have 60 or above constituencies due to large size of state and people living in that state.

Reserved Constituencies:

- There is provision of reserved seats for unprivileged people from different communities in our constitution.
- It is to help them to get the chance and win elections against others.
- Only those candidates can contest elections in these reserved seats for whom these constituencies are reserved.

5. Election Procedure:

1. Voters' List
2. Nomination of Candidates.
3. Election Campaigns.
4. Polling and counting of votes.

1. Voters' List:

- **Preparation of List:** Concerned authority prepares the list on the basis of eligibility i.e. 18 years or above.
 - **Official name of list:** Electoral Roll.
 - **Common name:** the voters' list.
- **Principle of Universal Adult franchise:**
 - In India, no one should be denied the right to vote without a good reason.

- Also, poor, rich, educated, illiterate, all will have equal value of vote.
- **Revision of the list:** It takes place every five years in order to remain up to date.
 - It is the responsibility of Government to add the names of new eligible person and delete the names of dead from the list.
- **Elector's Photo Identity Card:** It is compulsory ID proof for all the voters to carry EPIC with them on the day of voting.
 - **Note:** In case of absence of EPIC, a person can also use other photo identity documents. Such as- PAN card, Aadhar card, Driving licence etc.

2. Nomination of Candidate:

- **No restrictions on contesting elections:** It means anyone who is eligible to become a voter, can also become candidate in elections. However, he or she must fulfill age criteria that is 25 years or above.
 - **Note:** Restrictions on criminals are applicable only in very extreme cases.
- **Party's Nomination:** Political parties nominate to their candidates who get party symbol and support. Party's nomination is often called party 'ticket'.
- **Process to become Candidate:**
 - Person has to fill a 'nomination form' to contest an election.
 - He/She will have to give some money as 'security deposit'.
 - For Lok Sabha elections, it is 25,000 Rs and for State Assembly, it is 10,000 Rs.
 - Every candidate has to make 'legal declaration' in which candidate will give full details of:-
 - Serious criminal cases pending against the candidate.
 - Details of the assets and liabilities of the candidate and his or her family.
 - Educational qualification of the candidates.
 - Thus, this provides an opportunity to the voters to make their decision on the basis of the information.

3. Election Campaign:

- Campaign take place for a two-week period between the announcement of the final list of the candidates and the date of polling.
 - In between these days, candidates contact their voters.
 - Political leaders address elections meetings.
 - Political parties mobilize their supporters.
 - Television and newspapers are full of election related stories and debates.
 - These parties start preparing for elections months before they actually take place.
 - Parties try to focus public attention on some big issues in order to the attract the public and get the votes in their support.
 - They also use slogans such as 'Garibi Hatao' (By Indira Gandhi), 'Save Democracy' (by Janata Party), 'Land to the tiller' (by Left front), 'Protect the Self-Respect of the Telugus' (by N.T. Rama Rao).
- Although candidates are free to conduct campaigns, but with **some exceptions**. Since, these exceptions help the political party and candidate in getting a fair and equal chance to compete.
 1. No candidate can bribe or threaten voters.
 2. Candidates cannot appeal for the vote in the name of caste or religion.

3. They cannot use government resources for election campaign.
4. They are not allowed to spend more than 25 lakh Rs. in a constituency for a Lok Sabha elections or 10 Lakh Rs. in a constituency in an Assembly elections.

Code of Conduct:

- A set of norms and guidelines to be followed by political parties and contesting candidates during election time.
- According to **code of conduct**, political parties or candidates cannot do below given things during campaigns.
 1. Parties or candidates cannot use any place of worship for election propaganda.
 2. They cannot use government vehicles, air crafts and officials for elections.
 3. Once elections are announced, ministers shall not lay foundation stone of any projects, take any promises of providing public facilities.

4. Polling and Counting of Votes:

- This is the final stage of an election. On this day, voters 'poll' or cast their votes. This day is known as Election Day.
- Every voter goes to the polling booth. These booths are situated usually in a local school or a government office.
- An agent of each candidate is allowed to sit inside the polling booth and ensure that the voting takes place in a fair way.
 - **Note:** Earlier, there was a ballot paper system but now people vote through Electronic Voting Machines (E.V.M)
- Within a few hours of counting, the concerned authority declares the result. Thus, this way the new government forms.

6. What makes elections in India Democratic?

- There are several *unfair practices* that we often hear in newspapers and television about elections.
 - **For Example:** Inclusion of false names and exclusion of genuine names in the voter's list.
 - Misuse of government facilities and officials by the ruling party.
 - Excessive use of money by rich candidates and big parties.
 - Intimidation (to frighten and threaten someone) of voters and rigging (fraud) on the polling day.
- However, these above given malpractices are not on such a scale so as to defeat the very purpose of elections. This is due to several reasons. So, Let's understand how.

1. Independent Election Commission:

- Our country has an Independent and very powerful election commission (EC) for conducting elections.
 - Although, the President of India appoints the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). But CEC

is not answerable to either president or the government after his/her appointment.

Powers of the election commission of India:

1. EC takes all the decisions from the announcement of the elections to the declaration of results.
2. It implements the code of conduct and punishes any candidate or party that violates it.
3. During the election period, EC can order the government to follow some guidelines.
4. When on election duty, government officers work under the control of the EC and not the government.
5. Election officials can order a re poll if they find elections unfair.

Do you know? Shri Rajiv Kumar (current CEC) is the 25th Chief Election Commissioner of India.

2. Popular Participation:

- **Increase in People's Participation:** We usually measure people's participation in elections through voter turnout figures which has been showing growth. But in Europe and North America, the turnout has declined.
 - **Note:** Turnout figure indicates the percent of eligible voters who actually cast their votes.
- **Large proportion of unprivileged social groups:** In India, the poor, illiterate and underprivileged people vote in larger proportion as compared to rich and privileged sections. Whereas, it is not so in USA.
- **Elections has importance for the common people:** Common people in India attach a lot of importance to elections. They feel that they can bring pressure on political parties to adopt policies and programs favorable to them.
- **Increasing interest of the voters:** Voters have started taking part in campaign related activities and becoming members of a political parties. It is due to their increasing interest in elections.

3. Acceptance of election outcome:

- Elections are democratic because it does not favors the powerful instead ruling parties routinely lose elections in India both at national and state level.
- In the US, an incumbent or sitting elected representatives rarely loses and election. In India, about half of the sitting M.P. or M.L.As lose elections.
- Furthermore, candidates who are known to have spent a lot of money on buying votes and those with known criminal connections often lose elections.
- Lastly, Barring very few disputed elections, the defeated party usually accepts the electoral outcomes as '*People's Verdict*'.

7. Challenges to free and fair elections:

There are several challenges that still we need to overcome. These are :-

- Money provides unfair advantage to the wealthy candidates.

- Criminals make use of connection to secure a 'ticket' from major parties.
- Some families tend to dominate political parties.
- No meaningful choices for citizens as major parties are quite similar to each other both in policies and practice.
- Smaller parties and independent candidates suffer a huge disadvantage.

These challenges are not just confined to our country India. But there are many other countries as well which are facing the same problem in a democratic country like ours. Therefore, citizens, social activists and organizations have been demanding reforms in electoral system.

Category

1. Class 9th

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