

CHAPTER -3

Election And Representation

Q1. Which of the following resembles most a direct democracy?

ANSWER:

- (a) Discussions in a family meeting.
 - (b) Election of the class monitor.
 - (c) Choice of a candidate by a political party.
 - (d) Decisions taken by the Gram Sabha.
 - (e) Opinion polls conducted by the media
- Ans.
- (d) Decisions taken by the Gram Sabha.

Q2. Which of the following tasks are not performed by the Election Commission?

ANSWER:

- (a) Preparing the Electoral Rolls.
 - (b) Nominating the candidates.
 - (c) Setting up polling booths.
 - (id) Implementing the model code of conduct.
 - (e) Supervising the Panchayat elections.
- Ans.
- (e) Supervising the Panchayat elections.

Q3. Which of the following is common to the method of election of the members of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha?

ANSWER:

- (a) Every citizen above the age of 18 is an eligible voter.
 - (b) Voter can give preference order for different candidates.
 - (c) Every vote has equal value.
 - (d) The winner must get more than half the votes.
- Ans:
- (a) Every citizen above the age of 18 is an eligible voter.

Q4. In the First Past the Post System, that candidate is declared winner who:

ANSWER:

- (a) Secures the largest number of postal ballots.
 - (b) Belongs to the party that has highest number of votes in the country.
 - (c) Has more votes than any other candidate in the constituency.
 - (d) Attains first position by securing more than 50% votes.
- Answer:
- (c) Has more votes than any other candidate in the constituency.

Q5. What is the difference between the system of reservation of constituencies and the system of separate electorate? Why did the Constitution makers reject the latter?

ANSWER:

There is much difference between the system of reservation of constituencies and system of separate

Separate electorate system:

- It has been a curse to India.
- The British started this system to divide votes between the Sikhs, the Muslims, and some other minorities.
- These groups elected their own representatives by separate vote.
- In separate electorate system, the candidates are elected by those voters, who belong to that particular community.

System of reservation of constituencies:

- All voters are eligible to vote.
- Candidate must belong to a particular community for which seat is reserved.
- The constitution provides the reservation of seats in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies. The constitution-makers rejected the latter because they were aware that the system of separate electorate destroyed the spirit of national integration.

Q6. Indian electoral system aims at ensuring representation of socially disadvantaged sections. However, we are yet to have even 10 per cent women members in our legislatures. What measures would you suggest to improve the situation?

ANSWER:

The Indian Constitution provides the reservation for SC's and ST's in our legislative's. But it lacks the similar reservation for disadvantaged groups. As there should be some more reservation for women through the constitutional amendment, which should not only be a proposal, but also be passed.

Q7. Here are some wishes expressed in a conference to discuss a constitution for a new country. Write against each of these whether FPTP or Proportional Representation system is more suited to meet each of these wishes.

ANSWER:

- (a) People should clearly know who is their representative so that they can hold him or her personally accountable.
- (b) We have small linguistic minorities who are spread all over the country; we should ensure fair representation to them.
- (c) There should be no discrepancy between votes and seats for different parties.

(d) People should be able to elect a good candidate even if they do not like his or her political party.

Answer:

- (a) FPTP
- (b) Proportional Representation
- (c) Proportional Representation

Q8. Indian electoral system aims at ensuring representation of socially disadvantaged sections. However, we are yet to have even 10 per cent women members in our legislatures. What measures would you suggest to improve the situation?

ANSWER:

Election Commission of India is a constitutional independent body set for conducting elections of the Union Parliament, the state Legislative Assembly, President and Vice President under the Article 324(i) of India Constitution. The Election Commission is an impartial agency to conduct free and fair elections in country. Hence, Election Commissioner must not be allowed to contest any election because it can affect the impartiality of the Commission.

Q10. What is an Indirect Method of Election?

ANSWER:

In Indirect Method of Election:

- Voters do not elect the representatives directly.
- Voters elect intermediary electors who are collectively known as Electoral College.
- Electoral college elects the representatives to the legislative assemblies.

Q11. Which of the following is common to the method of election of the members of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha?

- (a) Every citizen above the age of 18 is an eligible voter.
- (b) Voter can give preference order for different candidates.
- (c) Every vote has equal value.
- (d) The winner must get more than half the votes.

ANSWER:

- (a) Every citizen above the age of 18 is an eligible voter.

Q12. What is the difference between the system of reservation of constituencies and the system of separate electorate? Why did the Constitution makers reject the latter?

ANSWER:

There is much difference between the system of reservation of constituencies and system of separate electorate:

Separate electorate system:

- It has been a curse to India.
- The British started this system to divide votes between the Sikhs, the Muslims, and some other minorities.
- These groups elected their own representatives by separate vote.
- In separate electorate system, the candidates are elected by those voters, who belong to that particular community.

Q12. “Indian democracy is now ready to shift from a crude First Past the Post system to a system of Proportional Representation”. Do you agree with this statement? Give your reasons for or against this statement.

ANSWER:

Yes, I agree with the statement along with the following reasons:

- India enjoys a multi-party system including regional parties, hence to provide the shape to all the political parties, the proportional system is far better.
- Decentralization of power strengthens the sense of responsibility along with national unity and integrity.
- Representation democracy makes the democracy more effective and trustworthy.
- It ensures the political parties to get seats along with proportionate votes.
- The election system has allowed the voters to change governments peacefully both at the state and the national level.
- Voters have consistently keen interest to the election process. Hence, the number of candidates and parties are continuously on rise.

Q13. Sometimes criticism has taken place against Universal Adult Suffrage. Explain them.

ANSWER: Universal Adult Suffrage refers to the right to vote given to all adult citizens without any distinction of caste, class, colour, creed, language, religion, etc. It has faced some criticisms also:

- Right to vote is a special privilege to confer on those who utilize it for the welfare of the state. Hence, it should be conferred only to the educated persons and illiterate persons should be debarred from it because they cannot understand who is the best candidate for the state.
- The Universal Adult Suffrage establishes the government of fools because fools and ignorant form the majority in the society which can create some dangerous consequences in the state.
- All the people should not be given the right to vote equally and to contest elections as well because God has not created everybody equal.
- The right to vote should be extended to those persons only who are competent or capable of using it because it is a responsibility not the right and a responsibility cannot be extended to the incompetent persons.
- The Universal Adult Suffrage leads to corruption because contesting and voting, both are usually made on the bases of money and muscle power by dominating the poor the downtrodden people.

Q14. What is the electoral process in India?

ANSWER:

The electoral process is performed into different stages under the provisions of Representation of People Act, 1950 and 1951:

- First of all, constituencies are formed in a territorial area from where a candidate contest election.
- The nomination papers are filled with the returning officer.
- The scrutiny is made to check whether the information filled in nomination form, are correct.
- After the scrutiny is over, the candidate is given a date for withdrawal.
- Then Election campaign takes place by various techniques by holding rallies, meetings, processions, distributing handbills and door-to-door canvassing, etc.
- The election campaign stops 48 hours earlier before polling is held on the due date. Presiding officers and polling officers supervise the whole polling process. The voters vote through the secret ballot.
- After the voting is over, the counting made on a fixed date and time. The candidate getting highest number of votes, is declared elected.

Q15. What is the composition of Election Commission of India?

ANSWER:

- The Election Commission consists of Chief Election Commissioner and the number of other Election Commissioners may also be fixed by the president from time to time.
- Thus, the Election Commission may be single member or multi member body. Till 1989, the Election Commission was a single member body.
- In 1993, two more Election Commissioners were also appointed and become multi-member body since then.
- The Chief Election Commissioner presides over the Election Commission, but the other Election Commissioners also enjoy the same power to work mainly on consensus as a collective body only.
- The constitution of India has ensured independence of Election Commission and declared it can importantly body to conduct free and fair elections.

Q16 . How does the Election Commission of India ensure its independence?

ANSWER:

The Election Commission ensures its independence by the following provisions

- Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners and Regional Election Commissioners are appointed for a fixed term.
- The Chief Election Commissioner cannot be removed from his office before the expiry of his term except on the grounds of incapacity and misbehavior only if a resolution to this effect is passed by both the houses of parliament by a two-third majority.
- Other Election Commissioners and Regional Election Commissioners can be removed from the Office only on the recommendations of the Chief Election Commissioner.

- Salaries and other allowances of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners are to be paid out of consolidated fund of India.
- Tenure and other service conditions of Chief Election Commissioner and others, are fixed by the president, but they cannot be changed to their disadvantage during their term of office.

Q17. Suggest some major suggestions for electoral reforms

ANSWER:

The various committees have worked on electoral reforms, i.e. the Goswami Committee and Tarkunde Committee, but these have not brought substantial changes in electoral system and law. It seems that political parties are indifferent to electoral reforms because in some cases, political parties have neutralized the steps taken by the Election Commission to bring in some desired changes. It is now widely recognized to preserve and strengthen the democratic setup a comprehensive agenda of reforms is necessary in system, structure and processes:

- Criminalization should be checked in politics.
- Political parties' functions should be regulated.
- Voters' participation and awareness should be ensured.
- Make the election machinery effective and credible.
- The use of money and muscle power should be stopped.
- A proportionate share to every class, section and society should also be provided in the parliament.