



8. 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?

Answer:

This decision does not go against the principles of democratic elections. Any person who is convicted for a crime has not right to remain a part of the society and hence has no right to contest the election.

9. 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 exercises 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 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.

Answer:

(a) In this case, representatives of each candidate should be present to make sure that the votes are counted in a fair way.

(b) The election commission should set up an enquiry into the case and debar the candidate or party involved in distributing such pamphlets.

(c) There should be a single election commission which should be free from political influence and should be responsible for conducting elections throughout the country.

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10. 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 in 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.

Answer:

(a) After announcement of election, it is not legal to announce policy decisions according to Code of Conduct. The minister should be immediately taken to task by the Election Commission.

(b) The election commission must ensure that all political party are

given equal opportunity to appear on Doordarshan and All India Radio. EC take action against misuse of this media.

(c) The presence of the fake voters means that the elections were rigged by the authorities who prepared the electoral rolls. The election commission should supervise preparation of fresh electoral rolls.

(d) By using hoodlums, the political party is terrorising its rivals. The election commission should order the arrest of the hoodlums and bar the party from the elections.

11. Ramesh was not in class when this chapter was being taught. He came the next day and repeated what he had heard from his father. Can you tell Ramesh what is wrong with these statements?

(a) Women always vote the way men tell them to. So what is the point of giving them the right to vote?

(b) Party politics creates tension in society. Elections should be decided by consensus not by competition.

(c) Only graduates should be allowed to stand as candidates for elections.

Answer:

(a) The statement is wrong because the policy of secret ballot ensures that an individual can vote for whoever he/she wants. Women are fully capable of taking decisions on their own and selecting the candidate they like.

(b) Competition works as both deterrent and motivator for the political candidates. A fear of losing the election and a motivation for winning the elections works in favour of people.

(c) Educational qualification is not required to understand the people's needs, and to represent their interests. Therefore, it is not necessary for politicians to be graduates.

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