



◆ What Are Elections and Why Do We Need Them?

 **Election:** A mechanism by which people choose their representatives at regular intervals.

 In a large country like India, it is impossible for all people to sit together and take decisions. So, they elect representatives to govern on their behalf.

Elections allow: ✓ Citizens to choose lawmakers

✓ People to change leaders if they are not happy

✓ Public to decide policy direction indirectly

✓ Accountability of elected officials

◆ How Elections Take Place – Example from Haryana

 Case Study: 1987 Haryana Election

- Devi Lal (Lok Dal) promises loan waivers
- His party wins majority, forms government
- Loan waiver becomes first action


 This shows how:

- Public opinion → Election → Government policy
- Voters can bring change through elections
- Ruling party can lose power if it fails to satisfy people

◆ What Makes an Election Democratic?

5 Key Conditions:

1. Universal Adult Franchise: One person, one vote, one value
2. Free and fair competition: Real choice between parties and candidates
3. Regular intervals: Elections held every few years
4. People's choice wins: Majority opinion matters
5. Transparent process: No bribery, threats, or unfair use of power

 If any of these is missing, it may not be a democratic election.

◆ Political Competition – Is It Good or Bad?

 **Benefits:**

- Keeps leaders accountable
- Forces parties to serve the people
- Helps people get better options

 **Problems:**

- Leads to dirty tricks and blame games
- Creates divisions and party politics
- Good people may avoid joining politics

📖 But overall, competition ensures power stays with people.

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◆ Indian Electoral System – How It Works

1. 🌐 **Electoral Constituencies:**
 - Country divided into 543 Lok Sabha constituencies
 - Each area elects one MP (Member of Parliament)
 - State Assemblies: similar division for MLAs
 - Local bodies (Panchayat/Municipality): divided into wards
2. 👤 **Reserved Constituencies:**
 - Some seats reserved for SCs and STs (proportion to population)
 - Women get 1/3rd reservation in Panchayats & Urban Bodies
3. 📋 **Voters' List:**
 - Updated list of all eligible voters (18+ years)
 - Everyone has equal right to vote regardless of caste, religion, gender
 - EPIC (Election Photo Identity Card) used, but other IDs accepted
4. 🗳️ **Nomination of Candidates:**
 - Any Indian citizen (25+ years) can contest elections
 - Has to file nomination form and security deposit
 - Must declare: criminal record, assets, liabilities, education

📖 No educational qualification required – democracy means voters decide what's important.

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◆ Campaign and Code of Conduct

🗣️ Election Campaign:

- Candidates explain promises, meet voters, hold rallies
- Focus on issues like poverty, justice, development
- Popular slogans: • 1971: "Garibi Hatao" (Congress) • 1977: "Save Democracy" (Janata Party)

📋 Model Code of Conduct:

- No bribes, caste/religious appeals
- No use of government machinery
- Ministers can't make big announcements after elections declared
- Spending limit: ₹25 lakh (Lok Sabha), ₹10 lakh (Assembly)

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◆ Voting and Counting Process

🗳️ Polling Day:

- Voters visit polling booths
- Show ID, get marked, and vote using EVM

- Candidate agents watch polling for fairness

Counting:

- Sealed EVMs opened on counting day
- Candidate with highest votes wins
- Media reports results same day – very transparent process

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◆ **How Democratic Are Indian Elections?**

Strengths:

- Ruling parties often lose
- Many with criminal background lose
- Results usually accepted by all parties
- Voter turnout is high – especially among poor and rural

Charts show:

- India's turnout is better than many developed nations
- Voter interest is rising over years
- SC, ST, OBC participation is strong


 The real test of a democracy is: can people change their rulers? In India, the answer is YES.

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◆ **Role of Election Commission (EC)**

EC: An independent body that conducts elections

- Appointed by President, but works independently
- Controls election schedule, code of conduct, counting, and disputes
- Can cancel or repoll if unfair means are used
- Can stop government officials from misusing position


 Example: EC ordered repolls, banned ads, punished parties, refused political advice – proves its independence

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◆ **Challenges in Indian Elections**

Issues that still exist:

- Excess money used by rich candidates
- Criminal backgrounds in politics
- Family-dominated parties
- Limited choice between similar parties
- Unequal media and campaign access

 But these problems are found in many democracies – not just India.

✓ People, activists, and courts are pushing for reforms.



Important Terms

- Constituency: Area represented by one elected person
 - Turnout: % of eligible voters who vote
 - Rigging: Unfair practices to win elections
 - Code of Conduct: Rules for campaigning
 - Incumbent: Sitting office holder
 - Electoral Roll: List of eligible voters
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Summary

India's electoral system is: ✓ Constitutionally sound

- ✓ People-based and accountable
- ✓ Regularly improving through reforms
- ✓ Reflects the will of the people

🎯 Still, there's a need for more transparency and cleaner politics — and that's only possible when citizens stay aware and active.