

ELECTIONS

The modern states are run through indirect democracies due to very large population. It is not possible for all the citizens to participate directly in the affairs of the state. Thus, we have period that run the administration according to the wishes of the people. The process by which people elect their representatives is known as Election. The people who have the right to participate in the election are known as Voters and persons who stand for election are known as candidates. Elections are very important in a democracy .Due to huge populations, the modern democracies are representative, and the representatives can be chosen only through an election. People can maintain their control over the govt. through election because their representative know that they can be voted out of power in the next elections if they do not respect the wishes of the people and work for their welfare.

ROLE OF ELECTORATE (Voters)

In a democratic government, the power of controlling the representatives lies with the electorate. The voters can control the govt. through various ways.

- (a) The electorate can criticize the wrong policies of the govt. and hold it responsible for the same.
- (b) Though elections the electors control the govt. they may vote for the party in power, or may opt for another party. The electorate can

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influence the govt. by holding public meeting, demonstrations and taking out processions etc.

- (c) The electorate can send memorandums and criticize the policies of govt.
- (d) The electorate can influence the govt. by forming strong public opinion against its wrong and unjust policies.

ADULT FRANCHISE

The right to vote is called Suffrage or Franchise. In the beginning, democracy was based on limited franchise only a few people were allowed to vote. Women were not allowed to vote at all. But in modern democracies, every person above the age of 18 is allowed to vote. The rule of one-man one vote is allowed. It gives equal weightage to every citizen whatever his or her sex, race caste, religion, or class. So, when the right to vote or franchise is given to every adult in a state, it is called Universal Adult Franchise. The system of universal adult franchise helps in the establishment of true democracy. It gives equal weight to the opinion of every citizen. Thus, this system is based on political equality.

ACCOUNTABILITY

By the term accountability is meant the responsibility of the rulers. It implies an accountable government. This government is accountable to the electors for all it does. Democratic government has to be essentially a

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responsible government, which is accountable to the legislature directly and to the people indirectly.

VARIOUS STEPS IN THE ELECTION PROCESS

Election process is completed through various processes,. The most basic parts of the election process are filling in the nomination papers, campaigning, casting of votes, and counting of votes and declaration of the results.

a) **Filling in the nomination papers:-** Any person who wants to contest the elections can file his nomination papers to the election commission. He should be a citizen of the state and not holding any government office. His name must be here in the voters list and should be proposed and seconded by the voters. Every candidate has to deposit some security along with his nomination papers. A date is fixed for scrutiny and if the nomination papers of any candidate are not in order, they are rejected. The candidates can also withdraw their names from elections upto a certain date fixed by the election commission.

b) **Campaigning:-** campaigning is the process by which a candidate tries to persuade the voters to vote of campaigning is to seek people's support for the candidate during elections. Campaigning is important because it is a democratic method canvassing support. A candidate usually adapts the following techniques or methods in an election.

(i) **Posturing :-** Posturing is a common method of campaigning .the posters bearing the name and photographs of the candidates along with the

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photographs of the national leaders of the party concerned appear on the main road crossing and streets. Every candidate tries to put more and more posters for showing his popularity and for controlling the mind of the voters.

(ii) **Public meetings and speeches:-** The candidates hold public meeting and propagate their programmes and policies. They preach their high points and target the shortcomings and weaknesses of the other parties.

(iii) **Processions:-** Various parties and candidates half processions using all sorts of transport. The supporters shout slogans in favour of their candidates.

(iv) **House of house canvassing:-** House to house canvassing is also undertaken by the candidates to ask the voters to vote for them. The candidates tell the people about their programmes and listen patiently to the grievances of the people.

(v) **Media :-** Various political parties and candidates use radio and T.V as a means to propagate the message. The leaders express their views in newspapers and appeal to the voters to vote in favour of their parties.

(a) **CASTING OF VOTES (Secret Ballot) :-** The voting takes place on the actual Election Day decided by the election commission. Voters go into the polling booths and use their right to vote through secret ballot. He voter votes for the candidate of his choice in such a manner that the others cannot know about his choice. It enables the voters to cast their precious votes fearlessly and according to their own free will.

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(b) **COUNTING OF VOTES:-** After the polling is over, the ballot boxes are sealed and taken to the counting centers. The boxes are opened before the candidates and independent observers and the votes are counted.

(c) **DECLARATION OF RESULT:-** The candidate who secures the highest number of votes is declared elected.

SYMBOLS

Symbol is given to every party contesting the election. The election commission allots it. The symbol is something with which a political party or an independent candidate is generally understood. In allotting symbols, the election commission makes sure that the symbols allotted are not too similar because it can create confusion in the minds of ordinary voters. The symbols are allotted so that even the illiterate voters are able to recognize the party and the candidate of their choice on the ballot paper. It also becomes easier in making of the votes if there is a large number of candidates contesting in a particular area. In our state, the major parties have the following symbols. National conference (plough) P.D.P (pen and inkpot). In India the symbol of congress is hand symbol of BJP is lotus the symbol of CPI is sickle and sheaf of paddy.

SIMPLE MAJORITY

The term simple majority refers to just more than half. In democracy, the representatives are elected on the basis of simple majority. It means that a candidate, who is able to get more votes than other, is declared elected.

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Simple majority often leads to paradoxes. The elected candidate represents the majority when there are basically two candidates in the field and the election is a straight fight between them.

Suppose constituency “A” has 100 voters. There are only two candidates X and Y. in this case, X can win only if he gets more than half of the voters, at least 50 + 1 = 51. The verdict of the people is clear 51, voters wanted them to represent them, 49 did not.

But, if there are three candidates A, B and C and 100 voters in a constituency. Suppose that at the end of the counting the result is A 40, B-30, and C – 30. A gets elected it is because he has simple majority. But negatively, only 40 people wanted him, 60 did not. So, A gets elected on the basis of the vote of minority. Now, if the country had 10 constituencies, and in all of them the same party won and with exactly the same type of simple majority. The govt. has majority seat in the legislature. But actually, only 400 people voted for it conversely, though 600 people did not want that party to form a govt. they cannot prevent it. The process of simple majority is followed in India.

ELECTION MANIFESTO

Election manifesto is the programme of the candidates or political parties. It is usually in the form of a small booklet or a pamphlet that is issued by a political party at the time of elections. This is done to tell the people about the future policies and programmes of their party. Usually, the election manifesto tells the voters about party's views on major issues of

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internal and foreign policy. It also contains the promises of the party to do certain things if it is voted into power.

Election manifestos are considered as important documents in an election process. Political parties are judged by their manifestos. They give the party's commitment and these commitments may influence the voters. The voters also judge if the party has lived up to its commitment after the election is over. After the elections are over, the voters can exert their pressure on the party which has come to power, to implement the programmes and promises made in their election manifesto. It also gives the opposition opportunity to criticize the bad policies of the government and mobilize public opinion against them.

ELECTION COMMISSION

To make sure that elections are free and an independent body called the election commission manages fair elections. It consists of a chairman and some other members. The president of India fixes their number. The election commission is appointed by the president. The election commission supervises the most basic parts of the election process, like allotment of symbols, fixing of election dates and procedures. It is the commission's task to see to it that elections are fair, and the govt. side does not get undue advantage over the other parties. The election commission also does the delimitation of the constituencies. It supervises the whole procedure of electioneering. The counting of votes is done under the supervision of the commission. Any losing candidate can send a petition to the commission if

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he feels that there has been any discrepancy in the election process. The election commission also keeps a close watch on the candidate's expenditure on the elections. Election commission also prepares and revises electoral rolls. Recently, the election commission has issued identity cards to the residents of India.

BY ELECTION

If any seat in the state legislature or the parliament falls vacant due to the death, resignation or removal of a member, the election held to fill in that vacancy is known as by-election.

MID TERM ELECTION

If the state Assembly or the Parliament is dissolved before the expiry of its full term and elections are held to constitute a new house, it is called a Mid – Term Election.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The system by which the president of India is elected is called Proportional representation by single transferable vote. Under this, voters cast their vote for candidates in order of preference. It ensures, that no vote goes waste. The person to be elected must get what is known as the quota. The quota is fixed by the formula

$$q = \frac{V + 1}{S + 1} \text{ [V = total number of votes S = number of seats]}$$

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The president is elected by an electoral college, consisting of the elected members of both houses of parliament and elected members of Legislative Assemblies of seats.

End.....!