Updated Value Addition Material 2020

POLITY & CONSTITUTION

ELECTIONS IN INDIA
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1. The Electoral Process

1.1. Introduction

Elections are part of the electoral system which makes use of all those means whereby a person becomes a member of an elected assembly. The Indian Constitution attaches special significance to independent electoral machinery for the conduct of elections. It puts in place an Election Commission of India, which is responsible for superintendence, direction and control of all elections. It is responsible for conducting elections to both the Houses of Parliament and State Legislatures and for the offices of President and Vice-President. Besides, it is also responsible for the preparation revision, maintenance and update of the list of voters. It delimits constituencies for election to the Parliament and the State Legislatures, fixes the election programme and settles election disputes. It performs many other functions related to elections.

1.2. Objectives of our founding fathers

Our founding fathers conceived of a representative parliamentary democracy as the most suited to our ethos, background and needs. They advocated equal participation of all the adult citizens in the democratic process without any discrimination. At that time, the makers of the constitution did not require much debate to decide that all adult citizens (having attained 21 years of age) will be entitled to vote in elections irrespective of education, caste, race, religion or gender. This criterion was subsequently revised and brought down to 18 years of age.

In comparison with other older democracies, this was probably the first time anywhere that adult suffrage was implemented at one go rather than incrementally. Given the state of our nascent republic, universal adult franchise was a bold and ambitious political experiment and a symbol of the abiding faith that the founders reposed in the agency and wisdom of great masses of the country.

1.3 Brief Overview of the Election Process in India

Broadly, there are 3 levels to which elected officials can be appointed: Centre, State, and Local Bodies. Elections in India are held to elect members of the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Assemblies, Legislative Council, to the posts of President, Vice-President, Local Bodies, Municipal Corporation, Gram Panchayat, Zila Panchayat and Block Panchayat.

The stages of the election process of India can be thought to begin with the delimitation of constituencies wherein the entire area (the whole country in the case of Lok Sabha elections and that particular state in the case of Legislative Assembly elections) is divided into constituencies. Thereafter, the electoral roll i.e. voters' list for each constituency is prepared/revised and published.

The Election Commission (EC) normally announces schedule of elections a few weeks before the formal process is set in motion. The Model Code of Conduct for guidance of candidates and political parties comes immediately into effect after such announcement.

The formal process for the elections starts with notification calling upon the electorate to elect Members of a House. As soon as Notifications are issued, candidates can start filing their nominations in the constituencies from where they wish to contest. These are scrutinized by the Returning Officer of the constituency concerned. The next stage is the campaign by all the candidates and the parties. The election campaign ends 48 hours before the polling. The last step is the counting of votes and declaration of result.
1.4. Types of Voting Systems

1.4.1. First past the post System/Plurality System

In elections held under FPTP, each voter makes a mark next to one candidate on the ballot paper or on the Electronic Voting Machine. This system is a “plurality” voting system i.e. the candidate who secures the highest number of votes in that constituency is declared elected. It is important to note that in this system whoever has more votes than all other candidates is declared elected. The winning candidate need not secure a majority of the votes. This is the method of election prescribed by the Indian Constitution for most of the elections. The problem with this system is that it follows a winner takes all approach i.e. The votes that go to all the losing candidates are wasted. For instance, if a party gets only 25% of the votes in every constituency, but everyone else gets even less votes. In that case, the party could win all the seats with only 25% votes or even less. This leads to a large section of electors without representation.

1.4.2. Proportional Representation Systems

The basic principles underlying proportional representation elections are that all voters deserve representation and that all political groups in society deserve to be represented in our legislatures in proportion to their strength in the electorate. This can be achieved in various ways:

a. Party List Voting

Party list voting systems are the most common form of proportional representation constituting over 80% of the PR systems used worldwide. It is followed in most European democracies and in many newly democratized countries, including South Africa.

Legislators are elected in large, multi-member districts. Each party puts up a list of candidates equal to the number of seats in the district. Independent candidates may also run, and they are listed separately as if they are their own party.

On the ballot, voters indicate their preference for a particular party and the parties then receive seats in proportion to their share of the vote. For instance, in a five-member district, if a party wins 40% of the vote, it would win two of the five seats. The two winning candidates would be chosen according to their position on the list.

There are two types of list systems:

- Closed list
- Open list.

In a closed list system, the party fixes the order in which the candidates are listed and elected, and the voter simply casts a vote for the party as a whole. Voters are not able to indicate their preference for any candidates on the list, but must accept the list in the order presented by the party. Winning candidates are selected in the exact order they appear on the original list.

The Open list system allows voters to express a preference for particular candidates, not just parties. Voters are presented with unordered or random lists of candidates chosen in party primaries. They cannot vote for a party directly, but must cast a vote for an individual candidate. This vote counts for the specific candidate as well as for the party. The final order completely depends on the number of votes won by each candidate on the list. The most popular candidates rise to the top of the list and have a better chance of being elected.
b. Mixed-Member Proportional Voting

It is also known as "the additional member system," "compensatory PR," the "two vote system," and "the German system." People cast votes on a double ballot. On one side of the ballot i.e. District List, they vote for a district representative. This part of the ballot is a single-member district plurality contest to see which person will represent the district in the legislature. The person with the most votes wins. Usually half of the seats in the legislature are filled in this way. So in a hypothetical 100-member state legislature, the winners of these district contests would occupy 50 of the seats.

On the other part of the ballot i.e. National Party List, voters indicate their choice among the parties, and the other half of the seats in the legislature are filled from regional lists of candidates chosen by these parties. These party list votes are counted on a national basis to determine the total portion of the legislature that each party deserves. Candidates from each party's lists are then added to its district winners until that party achieves its appropriate share of seats.

For instance, in the district elections (first part of the ballot), party A won 28 seats. It won 40% of the party list votes in the 100-member state legislature (second part of the ballot). Hence, they would be entitled to a total of 40 of the 100 seats. But they already elected 28 of their candidates in district elections, they would then add 12 more (i.e. remainder of the two 40-28=12) from their regional party lists to come up to their quota of 40 seats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Number of District Seats won</th>
<th>Percentage of National Party List Vote</th>
<th>Total No. of seats deserved by the Party</th>
<th>Number of seats added from Party List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. Alternative Vote System/Preferential Voting System/Single Transferrable Voting System

In elections held under the Alternative Vote, each voter may rank candidates in order of preference (1, 2, 3 etc.). After marking their first preference, voters may then choose to express further preferences for as many, or as few, candidates as they wish.

The count begins by allocating votes in line with first preferences. If a candidate has an “absolute majority” – more than 50% – of the votes after this allocation they are elected.

If no candidate has an absolute majority, then the candidate in last place is eliminated and their votes are reallocated according to the next highest preference expressed on each ballot paper; if a voter has not marked a preference for any candidate that remains in the contest, then the ballot paper is set aside from the count.

This process continues until a candidate has an absolute majority of the votes left in the count, and is elected. This system of proportional representation by single transferable vote is used for the election of the President of India and elections to Rajya Sabha seats.

1.5. Provisions of the Constitution

Article 326 of the Constitution enfranchises all the adult citizens (not less than 18 years of age) and empowers them to vote at the elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies.

Article 324 vests the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and conduct of elections in an independent Election Commission.

Articles 243K and 243ZA delineate to the State Election Commissions the responsibility for elections to local bodies – Panchayats and Municipalities.
2. Composition of the Elected Houses

2.1. Lok Sabha

Article 81 of the Constitution provides for the maximum number of seats in the Lok Sabha or House of People. It shall consist of—

(a) not more than 530 chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in States, and,
(b) not more than 20 to represent Union territories, chosen in such manner as Parliament may by law provide.

It further provides that:

(a) Each State shall be allotted number of seats in Lok Sabha in such manner that the ratio between number of seats and population of the State is, so far as practicable, the same for all States. This is, however, not applicable for the allotment of seats in the House of the People to any State with a population up to six millions.
(b) Each State shall be divided into territorial constituencies in such manner that the ratio between population of each constituency and number of seats allotted to it is, so far as practicable, the same throughout the State.

For the purposes of allotment of seats, the population of States shall be taken to be the same as ascertained at the last census. The present figure has been arrived at on the basis of 2001 Census. This is meant to secure uniformity in the scale of representation for the States in the Lok Sabha.

Under Article 330 of the Constitution, seats are to be reserved in the House of the people for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

2.2. State Legislative Assemblies

Article 170 of the Constitution lays down the maximum and minimum number of seats for the Legislative Assembly of each State to be chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the State. Legislative Assembly of each State shall consist of not more than five hundred, and not less than sixty, members chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the State.

Each State shall be divided into territorial constituencies in such a manner that the ratio between the population of each constituency and the number of seats allotted to it shall, so far as practicable, be the same throughout the State.

Under Article 332, seats shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the State Legislative Assemblies.

2.3. Rajya Sabha

Article 80 of the Constitution lays down the maximum strength of Rajya Sabha. It has been fixed at 250, out of which 12 members are nominated by the President and 238 are representatives of the States and of the two Union Territories.

The Fourth Schedule to the Constitution provides for allocation of seats to the States and Union Territories in Rajya Sabha. The allocation of seats is made on the basis of the population of each State.

2.4. Legislative Council

Article 171 of the Constitution provides for the composition of the Legislative Council. The total number of members in the Legislative Council of a State having a Council shall not exceed one-third of the total number of members in the Legislative Assembly of that State and not be less than forty.
Of the total number of members of the Legislative Council of a State—

(a) one-third shall be elected by electorates consisting of members of municipalities, district boards and such other local authorities in the State as Parliament may by law specify;

(b) one-twelfth shall be elected by electorates consisting of persons residing in the State who have been for at least three years graduates of any university in the territory of India;

(c) one-twelfth shall be elected by electorates consisting of persons who have been for at least three years engaged in teaching in such educational institutions within the State, not lower in standard than that of a secondary school, as may be prescribed by or under any law made by Parliament;

(d) one-third shall be elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State from amongst persons who are not members of the Assembly;

(e) the remainder shall be nominated by the Governor.

3. Delimitation of Constituencies for Elections to the Lok Sabha/Legislative Assemblies

For electoral purposes, the entire country is divided into geographical areas known as constituencies each returning one member to the Parliament or the State Assembly. There are two types of constituencies:

   a) Parliamentary constituencies
   b) Assembly constituencies.

Each parliamentary constituency consists of an integral number of assembly constituencies. This number varies from State to State. For the purpose of determining the number of seats to be allotted to the States in the Lok Sabha and the seats, if any, to be reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the total population of all the States is divided by the total number of seats in the House of the People. This gives the average population per seat. The population of each State is then divided by this number to arrive at the number of seats to be allotted to that State.

A uniformity of representation to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has also been ensured by stipulating that the number of seats reserved in any State or Union Territory for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats allotted to that State or Union Territory in the House of the People as the population of the Scheduled Castes or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or part of the State, as the case may be, in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the State or Union Territory.

3.1. Readjustment of Seats after every Census

Article 82 of the Constitution declares that upon the completion of each census, the allocation of seats in the House of the People to the States and division of each State into territorial constituencies shall be readjusted by such authority and in such manner as Parliament may by law determine.

Article 170 makes provision in regard to the seats in the State Legislative Assemblies and the division of the States into territorial constituencies. Article 327 gives specific power to Parliament to make elaborate provision for such readjustment including delimitation of constituencies and all other related matters. The delimitation of constituencies is done by the Delimitation Commission as per provisions of the Delimitation Act. Delimitation Commissions have been set up four times in the past viz. 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002 under Delimitation Commission Acts of 1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002 respectively.
As per Article 82 of the Constitution of India, there has to be readjustment of seats after each census (every 10 years) and such adjustment should be based on the population. However, the 42nd Amendment Act of 1976, provisions were included in Articles 55, 82, 170 and 330 of the Constitution not to make any changes to the number of Lok Sabha seats, Assembly seats etc. until the figures from the first Census after the year 2000 have been published. This ban on readjustment was extended for another 25 years (ie, upto year 2026) by the 84th Amendment Act of 2001.

The 84th Amendment Act of 2001 also empowered the government to undertake readjustment and rationalisation of territorial constituencies in the states on the basis of the population figures of 1991 census. Subsequently, the 87th Amendment Act of 2003 provided for the delimitation of constituencies on the basis of 2001 census and not 1991 census. However, this can be done without altering the number of seats allotted to each state in the Lok Sabha.

4. Preparation/Revision of Electoral Rolls

The electoral process begins with the preparation of electoral rolls. If the rolls are incomplete or defective, the whole electoral process is vitiated. Article 325 provides for a general electoral roll for every territorial constituency for election to either House of Parliament or to the House or either House of the Legislature of a State. No person can be excluded from inclusion in any such roll or claim to be included in any special electoral roll on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or any of them.

At present, the Election Commission (EC) is responsible for preparing the electoral rolls for assembly and parliamentary constituencies. The State Election Commissions are responsible for electoral rolls for local body elections. In some States, the EC and State Election Commissions (SECs) have agreed to coordinate the preparation of electoral rolls.

The electoral roll for a constituency contains the names of all the persons eligible to vote at an election in that constituency. Unless otherwise directed by the Election Commission, the roll is revised before each general election, by-election or mid-term election in a constituency. It may also be revised in any year if so directed by the Election Commission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Election</th>
<th>Election to constitute a new Lok Sabha or Assembly upon completion of the term of the previously constituted body is called General Election.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By-Election</td>
<td>If at any time there is a mid-term vacancy due to the death or resignation of a member either in Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly only one seat falls vacant. The election for that seat is known as by-election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Election</td>
<td>If the Lok Sabha or State Assembly is dissolved before completion of five years and the election is held to constitute new Lok Sabha or new State Assembly, etc. is called midterm election.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a Union territory where there is no Legislative Assembly, rolls are prepared and revised separately for the parliamentary constituencies. Any person whose name is not included in the electoral roll of a constituency may get his name included by making an application to the electoral registration officer of the constituency concerned.

There are two methods of revising the electoral rolls:

1. **Intensive revision**: Intensive revision is carried out by house to house visits by enumerators who enter the names of all citizens ordinarily residing in a house and who have attained the age of 18 years and above on the qualifying date.

2. **Summary Revision**: In summary revision, no house to house visits are made. The existing rolls with supplements, if any, are published for inviting claims and objections. After the disposal of claims and objections the rolls are finally published with supplements.
5. Voter Registration

The Constitution under Article 326 confers the right to vote at an election on every adult citizen unless disqualified under the Constitution or law on the ground of non-residence, unsoundness of mind, crime or corrupt or illegal practice.

5.1. Eligibility

The Constitution provides that every person who is not less than eighteen years of age on the qualifying date, and who is ordinarily resident in a constituency is entitled to be registered as a voter in the electoral roll of that constituency. The original Article 326, providing for adult suffrage fixed the age of eligibility to vote for elections to the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas, at 21 years, but by the 61st Amendment to this clause passed in 1989, it has been reduced to 18 years.

In order to be allotted a polling booth at the time of elections, eligible citizens are required to register themselves as voters and get a voter ID card. They can do the same by filling up and submitting Form-6 to the Electoral Registration Officer of their constituency.

**One Registration:** No person is entitled to be registered in the electoral roll of more than one Constituency; and no one can be registered in any electoral roll more than once.

In 1993, the Election Commission of India ordered the making of photo identity cards for all voters of the country in an attempt to improve the accuracy of the electoral rolls and prevent electoral fraud. The voter ID card or EPIC (Electors Photo Identity Card) is an identification card issued by the Election Commission to all eligible voters to enable voter identification on Election Day.

5.2. Disqualification

Persons disqualified for registration as voters are:

- persons who are not citizens of India, or
- persons who are of unsound mind and stand so declared by a competent court, or
- persons who for the time being are disqualified from voting under the provisions of any law relating to corrupt practices and other offences in connection with elections.

The name of a person who becomes disqualified after registration is struck off the electoral roll.

5.3. Categories of Voters/Electors

Electors are citizens who are eligible to vote in India. They are of three main types or categories

- **General/Resident Electors:** residents of India who can vote in a polling booth.
- **Service Electors:** residents of India who work for the Indian Government away from their home or are in the Armed Forces.
- **Overseas Electors:** non-residential Indians who have not taken citizenship of any other country.

5.3.1. General Voters

Every Indian citizen who has attained the age of 18 years on the qualifying date i.e. first day of January of the year of revision of electoral roll, unless otherwise disqualified, is eligible to be registered as a voter in the roll of the part/polling area of the constituency where he is ordinarily resident.

5.3.2. Service Voters

The following persons (and their wives if they reside with them) have the right to be registered in the electoral rolls of the constituencies in which they would be residing but for their services:
(a) Members of the armed forces of the Union.
(b) Members of a force to which the Army Act, 1950, applies.
(c) Members of an armed police force of a State serving outside the State.
(d) Those employed under the Government of India, in a post outside India.

5.3.3. Overseas Voters
In order to qualify as a voter, the person must reside in the particular constituency. Thus, NRIs are prohibited from participating in the voting process, except in one case. If the NRI happens to be an Indian citizen employed under Government of India and is currently posted overseas, he or she may get registered as a voter.

5.4. Members of Parliament and State Legislatures
As members of Parliament and State Legislatures are required to remain away from their constituencies for a considerable part of the year in connection with their duties as such members, they may not be in a position to verify whether their names in the electoral rolls are continued from time to time, particularly when the rolls are revised. The Election Commission has, therefore, a system of special check in regard to their inclusion in the electoral rolls.

- Exhaustive lists of the names of all sitting members of Parliament and the State Legislatures are prepared in respect of every assembly constituency.
- The Chief Election Officer sends this list to the electoral registration officer of the constituency concerned.
- This list is kept up-to-date and the electoral registration officer is kept informed from time to time of all changes therein.
- At the time of the publication of the draft electoral rolls the electoral registration officer concerned has to certify to the Chief Electoral Officer that the name of every member of Parliament or State Legislature is included in the roll if he continues to be eligible for such inclusion.

Can a person confined in Jail vote?
No, a person confined in jail cannot vote in an election in India. As per the provisions given in The Representation of the People Act, 1951, (RPA) Section 62 (5), a person in prison, “under sentence of imprisonment or transportation or otherwise, or in the lawful custody of the police” is not eligible to cast his vote in an election.

6. Qualifications & Disqualifications for a Candidate
6.1. Qualifications
The qualifications for a Member of Parliament & State Legislature as laid down under Article 84 & Article 173 of the Constitution are that he/she should:

(i) be a citizen of India,
(ii) be not less than 30 years of age in the case of the Council of States/Legislative Council and not less than 25 years of age in the case of the House of the people/Legislative Assembly, and
(iii) be possessing such other qualifications as may be laid down by Parliament.

The Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951 requires that he/she should be an elector for a parliamentary constituency in India i.e. his/her name should be registered in any parliamentary constituency. For seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, a candidate should belong to those castes or tribes. A member of the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe is, however, not disqualified to contest election from a general seat, i.e., seat not reserved for members of those castes or tribes, if he is otherwise qualified to contest such a seat.
A candidate is required to make and subscribe before a person authorised in that behalf by the Election Commission, an oath or affirmation of allegiance to the Constitution and to uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India.

6.2. Disqualifications

Under Article 102(1) & Article 191(1), a person is disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of either House of Parliament/State Legislature if he/she:

a) holds any office of profit under the central or any state government, other than an office declared by Parliament by law not to disqualify its holder; or
b) is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court; or
c) is an undischarged insolvent; or
d) is not a citizen of India, or has voluntarily acquired the citizenship of a foreign state, or is under any acknowledgement of allegiance or adherence to a foreign state; or
e) is otherwise disqualified by or under any law made by Parliament.

Clause (2) of the Article clarifies that a person shall not be deemed to hold an office of profit by reason only that he is a Minister either for the Union or for such State.

Other criteria for disqualification from the membership of a Legislature are provided for by the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

7. Officers on Poll Duty

To ensure that elections are held in free and fair manner, the Election Commission appoints polling personnel to assist in the election work. These personnel are drawn from amongst magistrates, police officers, civil servants, clerks, typists, school teachers, drivers, peons etc. There are three main officials who play very important role in the conduct of free and fair election. They are:

7.1. Chief Electoral Officer

The Election Commission of India nominates or designates an Officer of the Government of the State/Union Territory as the Chief Electoral Officer in consultation with that State Government/Union Territory Administration. Chief Electoral Officer of a State/ Union Territory is authorized to supervise the election work in the State/Union Territory subject to the overall superintendence, direction and control of the Election Commission.

7.2. District Election Officer

The EC nominates an Officer of the State Government as the District Election Officer (DEO) in consultation with the State Government. The District Election Officer is authorized to coordinate and supervise all work in the district or in the area within his jurisdiction in connection with the conduct of all elections to Parliament and the Legislature of the State subject to the superintendence, direction and control of the Chief Electoral Officer.

With the previous approval of the Election Commission, DEO provides a sufficient number of polling stations for every constituency, the whole or greater part of which lies within his jurisdiction, and publishes a list showing the polling stations so provided and the polling areas or groups of voters for which they have respectively been provided.

7.3. Observer

The Election Commission may nominate an Observer who shall be an officer of Government to watch the conduct of election or elections in a constituency or a group of constituencies. Earlier, the appointment of Observers was made under the plenary powers of the Commission. But with the amendments made to the Representation of the People Act, 1951 in 1996, these are now statutory appointments. They report directly to the Commission.
The Observer has the power to direct the Returning Officer for the constituency or for any of the constituencies for which he has been nominated, **to stop the counting of votes at any time before the declaration of the result or not to declare the result** if in his opinion booth capturing has taken place. In case of stopping the counting of votes or non-declaration of result, a report shall be sent by the Observer to the EC, which issue appropriate directions.

### 7.4. Returning Officer

The Election Commission of India nominates or designates an officer of the Government or a local authority as the **Returning Officer** for each of the assembly and parliamentary constituencies in consultation with the State Government/Union Territory Administration. Same person can be appointed as the Returning Officer for more than one constituency. In addition, the Election Commission of India may appoint one or more **Assistant Returning Officers** for each of the assembly and parliamentary constituencies to assist the Returning Officer in the performance of his functions in connection with the conduct of elections. Every such person must be an officer of Government or of a local authority.

Every Assistant Returning Officer, subject to the control of the Returning Officer, is competent to perform all or any of the functions of the Returning Officer, except functions which relate the scrutiny of nominations unless the Returning Officer is unavoidably prevented from performing the said function. While Returning Officer may always include an Assistant Returning Officer in performing any function which he is authorized to perform him, it is the general duty of the Returning Officer at any election to do all such acts and things as may be necessary for effectually conducting the election in the manner provided by RPA, 1951 and rules or orders made thereunder.

### 7.5. Presiding Officer

The District Election Officer appoints a presiding officer for each polling station. Same person can be the presiding officer for more than one polling station in the same premises. It is the general duty of the presiding officer at a polling station to keep order and to see that the poll is fairly taken.

### 7.6. Polling Officer

A polling officer performs all or any of the functions of a presiding officer based upon his direction. If a polling officer is absent from the polling station, the presiding officer may appoint any person who is present at the polling station other than a person who has been employed by or on behalf of, or has been otherwise working for, a candidate in or about the election, to be the polling officer during the absence of the former officer, and inform the District Election Officer accordingly. It is the duty of the polling officers at a polling station to assist the presiding officer for such station in the performance of his functions.

### 8. Election Notification

The electoral process for the elections to the Parliament starts with **Presidential notification** calling upon all the parliamentary constituencies to elect members to constitute a new House of the People either on the expiry of the tenure of the existing House or on its dissolution.

As soon as the notification is issued, the **Election Commission shall, by notification**, appoint:

a) the last date for making nominations;

b) the last date for the withdrawal of candidatures;

c) the date or dates on which a poll shall, if necessary, be taken, and

d) the date before which the election shall be completed.
8.1. Nomination Process

On the issue of notification, the **Returning Officer** shall give public notice of the intended election in such form and manner as may be prescribed, **inviting nominations** of candidates for such election and specifying place at which the nomination papers are to be delivered.

On or before the date appointed, each candidate shall either in person or by his proposer, deliver to the Returning Officer a nomination paper completed in the prescribed form and signed by the candidate and by an elector of the constituency as proposer. If the candidate belongs to a recognised national/state party, he/she would require only one elector of the constituency as **proposer**, under Section 33 of RPA, 1951. It also provides that as an independent candidate or a candidate of an unrecognised political party, ten electors from the constituency should subscribe his/her nomination paper as proposers.

In a constituency where any seat is reserved, a candidate shall not be deemed to fill that seat unless his nomination paper contains a **declaration** specifying the particular caste or tribe of which he is a member and the area in relation to which that caste or tribe is a scheduled caste or tribe of the State.

The candidate is also required to make **declarations** in the nomination form regarding his affiliation to a political party, if any, with name, and the choice of three election symbols in order of his preference.

As per Section 33 (7) of RPA 1951, a person cannot contest from more than **two constituencies** for a Lok Sabha/Vidhan Sabha election.

Where the candidate is an elector of a different constituency, a copy of the electoral roll of that constituency, or a certified copy of the relevant entries in such roll shall be produced before the Returning Officer at the time of scrutiny.

8.2. Deposits for Election

A candidate seeking election to the Parliament is required to deposit a fixed amount as security. The deposit will be refunded if the candidate is elected or has obtained more than one sixth of the total number of valid votes polled in the constituency. The deposit is intended to ensure that the candidate is a serious contestant.

In other cases, the deposit will be forfeited. If a candidate was a contesting candidate in more than one constituency for the same House of a legislature, he is entitled to the refund of only one deposit. If, however, he was contesting an Assembly seat and a Lok Sabha seat simultaneously, he would get a refund of the deposits made in both, provided that he obtains more than one-sixth of the total number of valid votes polled in each constituency. As per Section 34(1)(a) of the RPA, 1951, every candidate is required to make a security deposit of Rs. 25,000 for Lok Sabha elections (Rs 12,500 for SC/ST candidates). As per Sec. 34(1)(b) of the RPA 1951, a general candidate for contesting an Assembly election will have to make a security deposit of Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 5,000 for SC/ST candidates.

8.3. Scrutiny of Nominations

On the date fixed for the scrutiny of nominations, the candidates, their election agents, one proposer of each candidate and one other person duly authorised in writing by each candidate, may attend the proceedings for scrutiny.

The **Returning Officer** is given the power to examine the nomination papers and decide objections which may be made to any nomination.

A nomination paper will be rejected if:

- the candidate is either not qualified or is disqualified in law to be such member;
• the nomination paper has not been submitted in the prescribed manner and within the stipulated time or is not accompanied by the necessary deposit;
• and the signature of the candidate or the proposer on the nomination paper is not genuine.

The Returning Officer is not authorised to reject any nomination on the ground of any defect which is not of a substantial character. He/she is required to record reasons for rejecting a nomination paper.

8.4. Withdrawal of Candidature

Any candidate may withdraw his candidature by a notice in writing either himself or through his proposer or election agent, who should be duly authorised by the candidate, to present such notice on the last date fixed for such purpose. The notice of withdrawal is irrevocable.

Immediately after the expiry of the period within which candidatures may be withdrawn, the Returning Officer is required to prepare and publish a list of contesting candidates. If there is only one duly nominated candidate, the election will be an uncontested one and the Returning Officer will declare that candidate elected immediately after the expiry of the time for the withdrawal of candidature.

9. Recognition of Parties

One of the important functions of the Election Commission is to recognise political parties as all India (National) or State (Regional) Political Parties. A political party shall be treated as a recognised political party in a State, if and only if the political party fulfills any of the following conditions:

• At General Elections or Legislative Assembly elections, the party has won 3% of seats in the legislative assembly of the State (subject to a minimum of 3 seats).
• At a Lok Sabha General Elections, the party has won 1 Lok sabha seat for every 25 Lok Sabha seat allotted for the State.
• At a General Election to Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly, the party has polled minimum of 6% of votes in a State and in addition it has won 1 Lok Sabha or 2 Legislative Assembly seats.
• At a General Election to Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly, the party has polled 8% of votes in a State.

For National Party Status:

• The party wins 2% of seats in the Lok Sabha (11 seats) from at least 3 different States.
• At a General Election to Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly, the party polls 6% of votes in four States and in addition it wins 4 Lok Sabha seats.
• A party gets recognition as State Party in four or more States.

Both national and state parties have to fulfill these conditions for all subsequent Lok Sabha or State Assembly elections. Else, they lose their status.

10. Election Campaign

The Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 under the Representation of the People Act, 1951 provides for an interval between the last date fixed for the withdrawal of candidatures and the date of the poll. This period is utilised by the candidates for canvassing and educating the electors.

10.1. Duration of Election Campaign

After the last date of filing nominations, usually two days are provided for the candidates to withdraw their nominations. From the last day of withdrawing the nominations to the polling day, a candidate is given around 14 days for campaigning in which the last 48 hours prior to the
polling the candidate is not allowed to hold rallies, road shows or any campaign which involves a gathering. The last 48 hours are called the Silence Period, during which no active campaigning by candidates or political parties is allowed, and television or any digital media cannot carry any election-related matter. Star campaigners and other political leaders are to refrain from addressing the media by way of press conferences and giving interviews on election matters.

10.2. Campaigning Guidelines and Model Code of Conduct

On the eve of every general elections some guidelines are issued by the Election Commission whereby candidates are instructed to follow certain norms in carrying out their election campaign. Most of these relate to what is called the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). The MCC is a set of norms for conduct and behavior on the part of the Parties and candidates, in particular. Model Code of Conduct for guidance of political parties and candidates is a small but unique document that contains the following 8 parts:

(i) **Part I** of Model Code lays stress on certain minimum standards of good behaviour and conduct of political parties, candidates and their workers and supporters during the election campaigns;
(ii) **Parts II and III** deal with the holding of public meetings and taking out processions by political parties and candidates;
(iii) **Parts IV and V** describe as to how political parties and candidates should conduct themselves on the polling day and at the polling booths;
(iv) **Part VI** exhorts political parties and candidates to bring their complaints to the notice of the observers appointed by the Election Commission for remedial action;
(v) **Part VII** deals with the parties in power. This part is, in essence, the flesh and blood of Model Code, which deals with several issues relating to Government and its Ministers, such as visits of Ministers, use of Government transport and Government accommodation, announcements of various schemes and projects etc.

The newly added **Part VIII** says that election manifestoes shall not contain anything repugnant to the ideals and principles enshrined in the Constitution and further that it shall be consistent with the letter and spirit of other provisions of Model Code.

11. The Poll

Following the last date of withdrawal of candidatures to the date of poll when the candidates and political parties are busy in electioneering, the District Election Officer/Returning Officer makes necessary arrangements for holding the poll, such as setting up of the polling stations, appointment of polling parties to man the polling stations, etc.

11.1. Polling Stations

Each constituency is divided into a number of polling areas. For each polling area, one or more polling stations are provided according to the number of voters.

Outside each polling station there will be displayed prominently a notice specifying the polling area, the electors of which are entitled to vote at the polling station and a list of the contesting candidates.

11.2. Fixing time for poll

According to Section 56 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 the Election Commission shall notify the hours during which the poll will take place, but the total period allotted on any date for polling in an election of a Parliamentary or Assembly constituency should not be less than eight hours.
11.3. Secret Ballot

Section 39 in the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 provide for the maintenance of secrecy of voting by electors within polling station and voting procedure. It lays down some safeguards such as every elector shall maintain secrecy of voting within the polling station; every elector shall vote without undue delay; No elector shall be allowed to enter a voting compartment when another elector is inside it et al.

11.4. One Person One Vote

Section 62 of the RPA, 1951 specifies that no person shall vote in more than one constituency of the same class and no person shall vote in the same constituency more than once.

11.5. Personation

In order to prevent the same person from personating another voter and voting again, every voter's left forefinger will be marked by one of the polling officers with indelible ink before he/she goes to cast his/her vote.

12. Conducting Elections

The Election Commission of India (EC) uses Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) to conduct elections. Since 2000, ECI has conducted 113 assembly elections and three general elections using EVMs. Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) system was added to EVMs in 2013 to increase transparency and improve voter confidence in the system. The VVPAT system generates a printed paper slip bearing the name and election symbol of the candidate.

12.1. Counting of Votes

The Returning Officer (RO) is responsible for conducting elections in a constituency, which also includes counting of votes. Ideally counting of votes for a constituency is done at one place. However, if a constituency has multiple assembly segments, counting can take place at different locations under the direct supervision of an Assistant Returning Officer (ARO).

Counting is performed by counting supervisors appointed by the RO. Counting staff is appointed through a three stage randomisation process to ensure impartiality. Candidates along with their counting agents and election agents are also present in the counting hall.

Counting of votes begins with Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballots (ETPB) and Postal Ballots (PB). These votes are counted under the direct supervision of the RO. In each round of counting, votes from 14 EVMs are counted. In case of simultaneous parliamentary and assembly elections, the first seven tables are used for counting votes for assembly elections, and the rest for parliamentary elections. At the end of each round of counting, the results from 14 EVMs are declared.

In 2019, the Supreme Court of India instructed ECI that printed VVPAT slips from randomly selected five polling stations in each assembly segment of a parliamentary constituency should be matched with EVMs. This implies that VVPAT paper slips need to be matched for about 25-50 machines for each parliamentary constituency. This process requires personal supervision of RO/ARO. The ECI has decided that the counting of five VVPATs will be done sequentially.[5] The RO can declare the final result for the constituency after the VVPAT matching process has been completed.

If there is a discrepancy between VVPAT count and EVM results, the printed paper slips count is taken as final. ECI has not clarified whether there would be any further action (such as counting of all VVPATs in a constituency or assembly segment) if there is a discrepancy in the counts of one of the five VVPATs.
12.2. Recording of Result

After completion of counting, the total number of votes polled by each candidate is recorded in a result sheet and is also announced to those present at the counting.

12.3. Equality of votes

If, after the counting of the votes is completed, an equality of votes is found to exist between any candidates, and the addition of one vote will entitle any of those candidates to be declared elected, the Returning Officer shall forthwith decide between those candidates by lot, and proceed as if the candidate on whom the lot falls had received an additional vote.

12.4. Declaration of Result

When the counting of the votes is finally completed and the Returning Officer has completed and signed the result sheet, he/she will forthwith declare the candidate who has obtained the largest number of valid votes to be duly elected.

The Election Commission may, for any special reason, direct the Returning Officer not to declare the result; and in that event the declaration will be withheld in accordance with such direction.

12.5. Recount

When the announcement of the total votes polled by a candidate is made, a candidate or his agent dissatisfied with the counting may, in writing, apply for recount giving reasons why such recount is asked for. A recount may be demanded when the votes obtained by two candidates are very close and there may be a possibility of a small number of votes changing the result. The Returning Officer’s decision on any such application is final.

No demand for a recount can be made after the Returning Officer has completed and signed the result sheet. The Supreme Court has held that there can never be any hard and fast rule as to the circumstances when an order of recount would be permissible and it should always be dependent upon the circumstances of the case.

12.6. Reporting of Result

As soon as the result of an election has been declared, the Returning Officer shall report the result to the appropriate authority and the Election Commission shall get it published in the official gazette in India.

The date on which a candidate is declared by the Returning Officer to have been elected to any House of Parliament or State Legislature, shall be date of election of that candidate.

13. Disputes Regarding Elections

13.1. Election Petitions

Section 80 of the RPA, 1951 provides for a mechanism to settle disputes related to elections. It requires matters of election to be challenged by an election petition.

13.2. Presentation of Petitions

- There can be one or more grounds for presenting an election petition calling in question any election
- It can be presented by any candidate at such election or any elector within forty-five days from, but not earlier than the date of election of the returned candidate i.e. a candidate who has been declared elected as a member, or if there are more than one returned candidate at the election and the dates of their election are different, the later of those two dates.
• "Elector" means a person who was entitled to vote at the election to which the election petition relates, whether he has voted at such election or not.

13.3. Jurisdiction
The High Court has the jurisdiction to try an election petition.

13.4. Decision of the High Court
At the conclusion of the trial of an election petition the High Court shall make an order—
(a) dismissing the election petition; or
(b) declaring the election of all or any of the returned candidates to be void;
(c) declaring the election of all or any of the returned candidates to be void and the petitioner or any other candidate to have been duly elected.

14. Process of Election to the Rajya Sabha
The representatives of the States and of the Union Territories in the Rajya Sabha are elected by the method of indirect election. The representatives of each State and two Union territories are elected by the elected members of the Legislative Assembly of that State and by the members of the Electoral College for that Union Territory. This is done in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

The Electoral College for the National Capital Territory of Delhi consists of the elected members of the Legislative Assembly of Delhi, and that for Puducherry consists of the elected members of the Puducherry Legislative Assembly.

Every State has a specific quota of seats in the Rajya Sabha which is fixed as per Schedule 4 of the constitution. Elections to 1/3 of these seats occur every 2 years. The members are elected by the respective State legislative assemblies. The voters are the MLAs in that State. Every voter is required to rank candidates according to her or his preference. To be declared the winner, a candidate must secure a minimum quota of votes, which is determined by a formula:

\[
\frac{\text{Total number of votes polled}}{\text{Total number of candidates to be elected}} + 1 + 1
\]

Consider an example, wherein 4 Rajya Sabha members have to be elected by the 200 MLAs in a state. The winner would have to obtain \((200/4)+1\) i.e. 41 votes.

• When the votes are counted, it is done on the basis of first preference votes secured by each candidate, of which the candidate has secured the first preference votes.
• If after the counting of all first preference votes, required number of candidates fail to fulfil the quota, the candidate who secured the lowest votes of first preference is eliminated and his/her votes are transferred to those who are mentioned as second preference on those ballot papers.
• This process continues till the required number of candidates are declared elected.

15. Process of Election to Local Bodies
Article 243C (1), provides for the composition of Panchayats, wherein it states that the Legislature of a State may make provisions by law, with respect to the composition of Panchayats. It is subject to the condition that the ratio between the population of the territorial area of a Panchayat at any level and the number of seats in such Panchayat to be filled by election shall be the same throughout the State so far as practicable.

15.1. Delimitation of Constituencies
Each Panchayat area shall be divided into territorial constituencies in such manner that the ratio between the population of each constituency and the number of seats allotted to it shall, so far as practicable, be the same throughout the Panchayat area.
All the seats in a Panchayat shall be filled by persons chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the Panchayat area.

15.2. Disputes Regarding Elections to Panchayats

Article 243-O stipulates that no election to any Panchayat shall be called in question except by an election petition presented to such authority and in such manner as is provided for by or under any law made by the Legislature of a State.

It further states that the validity of any law relating to the delimitation of constituencies or the allotment of seats to such constituencies, made or purporting to be made under article 243K, shall not be called in question in any court.

16. Conducting Elections to Municipalities

Article 243-R, provides for the conduct of elections to all the seats in a Municipality. These seats are to be filled by persons chosen by direct election from the territorial constituencies in the Municipal area. Each Municipal area shall be divided into territorial constituencies to be known as wards.

16.1. Disputes Regarding Elections to Panchayats

Article 243-ZG stipulates that the validity of any law relating to the delimitation of constituencies or the allotment of seats to such constituencies, under article 243ZA shall not be called in question in any court.

It provides for an election petition, presented to such authority and in such manner as is provided for by or under any law made by the Legislature of a State, to call in question election to any Municipality.

17. Identifying problem areas with elections in India

The main problem areas may be identified to be as follows:

1. Increasing cost of elections leading to unethical, illegal and even mafia provided electoral funding, corruption, criminalisation and black money generation in various forms.
2. With the constituents/electors being the same for all directly elected representatives from the lowest Panchayat level to the Lok Sabha level, there are competing role expectations and conflict of perceptions e.g. the constituents expect even members of the Union Parliament to attend to their purely local problems.
3. With the electorate having no role in the selection of candidates and with majority of candidates being elected by minority of votes under the first-past-the-post system, the representative character of the representatives itself becomes doubtful and their representational legitimacy is seriously eroded. In many cases, more votes are cast against the winning candidates than for them. One of the significant probable causes may be the mismatch between the majoritarian or first-past-the-post system and the multiplicity of parties and large number of independents.
4. The question of defections under the Tenth Schedule.
5. Inaccurate and flawed electoral rolls and voter identity leading to rigging and denial of voting rights to a large number of citizens.
6. Booth capturing and fraudulent voting by rigging and impersonation.
7. Use of raw muscle power in the form of intimidation of voters either to vote against their will or not to vote at all, thus taking away the right of free voting from large sections of society and distorting the result thereby.
8. Involvement of officials and local administration in subverting the electoral process.
9. Engineered mistakes in counting of votes.
10. **Criminalisation of the electoral process** i.e. increasing number of contestants with serious criminal antecedents.

11. **Divisive and disruptive tendencies** including the misuse of religion and caste in the process of political mobilization of group identities on non-ideological lines.

12. An **ineffective and slow judicial process of dealing with election petitions**, rendering the whole process quite often meaningless.

13. **Fake and non-serious candidates** who create major practical difficulties and are also used indirectly to subvert the electoral process.

14. **Incongruities in delimitation of constituencies** resulting in poor representation.

15. Problems of **instability, hung legislative houses** and their relation to the electoral laws and processes.

16. Last but not the least, loss of systemic legitimacy due to **decay in the standards of political morality and decline in the spirit of service and sacrifice** in public life.

### 18. Attempts at Electoral Reforms and Previous Committees/Panels

The task of reforming election process in India is nothing new. The question of bringing about comprehensive changes in the election laws and electoral processes has been receiving the attention at various levels right from the time of the first general election. Several Committees and Panels have been assigned this task earlier. The most prominent of these official exercises in this regard have been:

- The Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms (1990)
- The Vohra Committee Report (1993)
- The Indrajit Gupta Committee on State Funding of Elections (1998)
- The ECI Proposed Electoral Reforms (2016)

Some of the **main recommendations** of the aforementioned committees and panels are as under:

#### Criminalization of Politics

Over the last two decades, the influence of criminals in the political arena has shown a tremendous increase. Earlier these criminal elements used to influence the elections from outside but now they have become a part of the political system by contesting the elections themselves. The Supreme Court made the disclosure of criminal antecedents of candidates mandatory; following which Election Commission of India started asking candidates contesting elections to the Parliament and State Assemblies to file affidavits in the specified format disclosing the same as essential parts of their nomination forms.

#### Money Power in Elections

It is widely believed that contesting an election in India costs a significant amount of money that is often much greater than the prescribed limits. The high cost of elections creates a high degree of compulsion for corruption in the public arena, that the sources of some of the election funds are believed to be unaccounted criminal money in return for protection, unaccounted funds from business groups who expect a high return on this investment, kickbacks or commissions on contracts, etc., and that Electoral compulsions for funds become the foundation of the whole super structure of corruption.
In view of the increasing cost of the election campaigns, it is desirable that the existing ceiling on election expenses for the various legislative bodies be suitably raised to a reasonable level reflecting the increasing costs. However, this ceiling should also apply to the political parties. As of now, there is no limit on how much a political party can spend on elections.

There is also a need to curb the high cost of campaigning to provide a level playing field for anyone who wants to contest elections.

Another recommendation that has been suggested by previous committees to reduce the cost of elections is state funding of elections. The idea is to establish such conditions where even the parties with modest financial resources may be able to compete with those who have superior financial resources. However, before that elections need to be freed from the influence of all vitiating factors, particularly, criminalization of politics.

Misuse of Caste and Religion for Electoral Gains

The use of religion, caste, community, tribe, and any other form of group identity for electoral gain or for gathering political support should not be allowed and the Representation of the People Act, 1951, be suitably amended to give the Election Commission powers to take deterrent actions against those candidates and political parties who resort to it. Such actions should include, but not limited to, disqualifying candidates from contesting elections and de-registering the offending political parties. Political parties should also not be allowed to use overtly religious, caste, community, tribe, and other such expressions and words in their names.

Regulating Political Parties

It is a desirable objective to promote the progressive polarization of political ideologies and to reduce less serious political activity. The Election Commission should progressively increase the threshold criterion for eligibility for recognition so that the proliferation of smaller parties is discouraged. There are more than 1600 political parties registered with the ECI, however, only a few ever contest elections. ECI should be authorized to de-register such parties, which do not contest elections.

Political Reforms

The underlying democratic foundations are severely lacking in the political system in India. No electoral system can provide real and effective representation for the larger societal aspirations unless the political system underlying it is not democratic in real terms. Some of the areas of concern are:

- **Institutionalization of political parties:** There is a need for a comprehensive legislation to regulate party activities, criteria for registration as a national or State party, derecognition of parties.
- **Structural and organizational reforms:** Party organizations-- National, State and local levels; Inner party democracy-- regular party elections, recruitment of party cadres, socialization, development and training, research, thinking and policy planning activities of the party.
- **Party system and governance:** There must be mechanisms to make parties viable instruments of good governance. Deeper political reforms can be presented in three interrelated but distinct parts:
  - **Registration and de-registration of political parties:** The authority for registration, de-registration, recognition and de-recognition of parties and for appointing the body of auditors should be the Election Commission. The decisions of the ECI should be final subject to review only by the Supreme Court of India.
  - **Internal democracy in political parties:** It is absolutely beyond any doubt that political parties are sine qua non of a representative democracy. Political parties which function in a democracy, and claim to be defenders of democracy at every opportunity should function in a democratic manner in their own internal functioning.
✓ Lack of internal democracy makes political parties over-centralized.
✓ Moreover, in a party, which does not have internal democracy, power will be exercised more remotely from the members of the party. This increases the distance between authority and accountability.
✓ Additionally, in large political parties without internal democracy, there will be very few decision makers.

Hence, provisions should be made to introduce inner-party democracy within the political parties. This should include mandatory secret ballot voting for all elections for all inner party posts and selection of candidates by the registered members, overseen by Election Commission of India.

- **Financial transparency in political parties:** This is also one of the fundamental deeper political reforms that is a necessary precondition that must be satisfied before any meaningful electoral reforms can actually take place on the ground. Bulk of the donations is currently from unknown sources of funds and the introduction of ‘Electoral Bonds’ has made the financial transparency even more opaque than earlier.

✓ Political parties should be required to maintain proper accounts in predetermined account heads and such accounts should be audited by auditors recommended and approved by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), and available for the information of the public.

✓ For bringing a sense of discipline and order into the working of our political system and in the conduct of elections, it is necessary to provide by law for the formation, functioning, income and expenditure and the internal working of the recognized political parties both at the national and State level. There must be a comprehensive law be enacted to regulate the functioning of political parties.

### Timeline of Electoral Reforms in India

#### 19. General Elections 2014 Factsheet

Out of 834,101,479 registered electors, male electors constituted 52.4 % while female electors constituted 47.6 %.

In absolute numbers, out of the total 834,101,479 electors, 553,801,801 people constituting 66.4 % cast their votes in the 2014 General Elections.

Uttar Pradesh with more than 13.90 crore electors or 16.66 % of the national electorate has the largest number of electors, while Sikkim with around 3.71 lakh electors or 0.04 % of the national electorate has the smallest number of electors.

The transgender persons were allowed in the electoral rolls for the first time with gender written as ‘Others’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Electors</th>
<th>834,101,497</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Electors who voted</td>
<td>553,801,801 (66.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Male and Female Voters</td>
<td>293,236,779 Males (67.09%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Largest number of Electors in a constituency</strong></td>
<td>260,565,022 Females (65.63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lowest number of Electors in a constituency</strong></td>
<td>Malkajgiri, Andhra Pradesh, 3,183,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum contestants in a Parliamentary constituency</strong></td>
<td>Municipal Corporation, Andhra Pradesh, 42 contestants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polling station with the least number of Electors</strong></td>
<td>Chennai (South), 18 with less than or equal to 10 electors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum women contestants in a State</strong></td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh (126 contestants)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

464 parties participated in the elections vis-a-vis only 53 parties in the First General Elections.

A total of 8251 candidates contested the elections, out of which 668 were women and 7,578 were men and 5 were transgenders.

The 2014 General Elections saw the lowest ever number of Independent candidates getting elected. Out of a total of 8251 contestants, 3235 were Independent candidates and out of this, only 3 candidates were elected.

The percentage of NOTA votes in the 2014 General Elections was 1.08. In certain constituencies, the number of NOTA votes was many times more than the winning margins.

Out of total of 8251 candidates contested, 668 were women.

A record number of 62 women were elected as compared to 59 women elected in the General Elections 2009.
Heartiest Congratulations to all successful candidates

7 in Top 10 Selections in CSE 2019
From Various Programs of Vision IAS

2 AIR
JATIN KISHORE

3 AIR
PRATIBHA VERMA

6 AIR
VISHAKHA YADAV

7 AIR
GANESH KUMAR BASKAR

You Can Be Next

9 in Top 10 Selections in CSE 2018

1 AIR
KANISHAK KATARIA

2 AIR
AKSHAT JAIN

3 AIR
JUNAID AHMAD

4 AIR
SHREYANS KUMAT

5 AIR
SRUSHTI JAYANT DESHMUKH

7 AIR
KARNATI VARUNREDDY

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