

Revision Notes

Class - 9 Social Science (Civics)

Chapter - 3 Electoral Politics

Why do we Need Elections?

- Election is a tool or a mechanism adopted by many countries, through which people choose their representative. In the world, more than 100 countries conduct elections. The process of selection of representatives at regular intervals is known as election.
- Election is necessary because:
 1. Citizens of that country can independently select the person who is going to take important decisions and shape the future.
 2. To maintain a peaceful environment in the country, by making and implementing good policies and laws.
 3. It guarantees that no government is elected for an indefinite period of time.
 4. It helps citizens of the country to engage themselves in their country's betterment.

What makes an election democratic?

- The minimum required conditions for a democratic election are:
 1. Everyone should be able to vote with equal value.
 2. Parties and their candidates shall offer real choices to their voters and should contest elections.
 3. The choices need to be offered at regular intervals, that is, elections should be conducted after every few years.
 4. Only that should be elected which is preferred by the people of that country.
 5. Elections need to be conducted in a free and fair manner, keeping people's wishes as first priority.

Is it Good to Have Political Competition?

- Yes, political competition is good for, due to following reasons:
 1. If there is no competition among several candidates, then the election becomes pointless.
 2. Political leaders get motivated with a desire to do something in their political country.
 3. It provides incentives to the political leaders and their parties.

What is our system of elections?

- After every 5 years, Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha (Assembly) elections are held regularly. The term of the elected representative ends after every 5 years. Elections are held in all the constituencies within a few days, this is called general elections.

Electoral constituencies –

- Our country is divided into different areas, to conduct elections, this is called as electoral constituencies. Voters elect one representative living in an area.
- For Lok Sabha, the country is divided into 543 constituencies.
- Representatives elected from each constituency are called Member of Parliament (MP).
- Each state is divided into a specific number of Assembly constituencies, and the representative elected here is called Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA).
- Each town or village is divided into many wards like constituencies. Each ward elects one member of the village.

Reserved Constituencies –

- Constitution makers have made a special system for reserved constituencies for backward sections.
- In Lok Sabha, 84 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes and 47 seats for Scheduled Tribes.
- In various states, seats for other backward classes and for women as well in the rural and urban areas.

Voters List –

- A list of those who are eligible to vote in a democratic election are prepared, this list is called the Electoral Roll and is commonly known as the Voter's list.
- Citizens who are above 18 years of age are eligible to vote.
- Irrespective of their religion, caste or gender, everyone is allowed to give their vote.

Nomination of Candidates –

- Any citizen who wants to be a candidate needs to have a minimum age of 25 years, for voting minimum age required is 18 years.
- If anyone has a criminal background, then there are restrictions but it is applicable in very extreme cases.
- Those who get the party's nomination are called party 'ticket'.
- According to the direction of Supreme Court, every candidate now has to make a legal declaration, details:
 - i) Any serious case pending against the candidate.
 - ii) Complete details of assets and liabilities of the candidates and his/her family
 - iii) Educational qualifications.

Election Campaign –

- Campaign's are held so that people get a chance to get to know their prospective candidates, which will help them to understand more about their ideas and commitments they will fulfil after becoming the representative.
- During the campaign, candidates contact their voters.
- Political parties advertise in the media and newspapers to promote their candidates.
- Campaign takes place for more than 2 weeks.
- Political parties try each and every possible way to attract the public by focusing their attention on some issues in the society.
- According to election law, no candidate or party can:

1. Give bribes or attempt to threaten voters.
 2. Attract the voters in the name of religion or caste.
 3. Using government resources for election campaigns.
 4. Use of a place of worship.
- Some of the popular slogans used by parties are:
 1. Garibi Hatao (Remove poverty).
 2. Save Democracy.
 3. Land to the Tiller.
 4. Protect the Self-Respect of the Telugus.

Polling and counting of votes –

- The day when voters cast their vote is called election day.
- Voter's having their name in the voter's list go to a nearby 'polling booth' where election officials identify the person and put a mark on the finger before casting their vote.
- Earlier ballot paper system was used, where on a sheet of paper the names of candidates and their party was listed.
- Now, Electronic voting machines (EVM) are used to record votes. This machine shows names of the candidate and party symbol.

What makes elections in India democratic?

a) Independent Election Commission –

- In India, elections are conducted by the Election Commission (EC), it is independent and it has its own Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) appointed by the President.
- EC can take decisions on conduct and control of elections from the announcement of elections to declaration of result.
- It implements code of conduct and can punish any party or candidate who violates it.
- EC orders the government to issue guidelines to prevent any misuse of government power.

- On election day, officials work under the control of EC.
- b) Popular participation –
- The participation of people shows us that elections are being conducted in a free and fair manner.
 - In India, illiterate, underprivileged and low-income groups of people vote in large numbers compared to rich people.
 - Interest of voters in elections has significantly increased in recent years.
- c) Challenges to free and fair elections –
- Overall, in India, elections are effectively free and fair. Few candidates might win purely on the basis of money and power.
 - Candidates with lots of money may not have a guarantee to secure victory.
 - In some parts of the country, candidates with criminal connections try to push other desirable candidates out of the electoral race to secure a ticket.
 - Tickets are being distributed to relatives and family friends.

Important Questions –

1. What are the advantages of electoral competition?

Ans: Advantages of electoral competition are:

- i) Candidates from major political parties are motivated to enhance their political careers like a professional.
- ii) The hunger of coming into power and maintaining the position motivates them to give their best in campaigns and get support from people.

2. Why do electoral campaigns need regulation?

Ans: Election Commission (EC), needs to regulate the electoral campaign in order to ensure that each and every political party and the candidate which is listed gets a fair and equal chance in elections.

No candidate or party can;

- i) Threaten or bribe the voters.

- ii) Seeking votes from the public in the name of religion or caste.
- iii) Using government resources.

3. “We get to read a lot about unfair practices in elections”. Give some examples.

Ans: Malpractices involved in election are:

- i) Exclusion of names of the genuine voters in the voter’s list and inclusion of bogus names.
- ii) Usage of government resources and officials.
- iii) Rich candidates and parties use lots of money for giving bribes and buying votes.
- iv) Rigging on election day.

4. How can we say that elections are expensive?

Ans: Every 5 years when the election is conducted, a huge sum of money is spent on conducting. Example: In 2014 Lok Sabha elections, approx. 3500 crores were spent by the government. The candidates and parties spend individually compared to what the government spent on campaigns. In a developing country like India, where we have elections every 5 years, it looks like a burden to citizens who are paying taxes. Since, money is extracted from this tax only.

5. What are the new trends in the people’s participation during Indian elections?

Ans: Voter turnout figures are used to determine and estimate people’s participation. The turnout is the total percentage of eligible voters who gave their vote. In India, turnouts have either gone up or have been stable.

- Unlike in western democracies, underprivileged and poor vote mainly in India compared to educated and rich people.
- Elections have given a lot of importance to common people in India.
- More than half of the people have shown interest in the election since 2004.

6. What are the basic conditions of democratic elections?

Ans: Minimum conditions required for a democratic election are as follows:

- Every vote should be given equal value and everyone should have the right to vote.
- Elections must be held on regular intervals.
- The candidate which is selected should be of people's choice.
- Elections should be conducted in a free and fair manner.

7. Mention the different methods of voting.

Ans: Two different methods of voting are:

- i) **Ballot Paper:** A ballot paper is a sheet of paper in which names of party and candidates along with their symbols are listed. Simply by putting a stamp on the desired symbol the voter gives his/her choice.
- ii) **Electronic Voting:** Electronic voting machines show the names of candidates along with party symbols with a button. After pressing the button the voter is able to choose the candidate of their wish.

8. Mention some successful slogans used for elections.

Ans: Successful slogans used during election campaign are:

- i) **Garibi Hatao (Remove poverty):** Congress party which was led by Indira Gandhi used this slogan in 1971 Lok Sabha elections.
- ii) **Save Democracy:** Janta party used this slogan in the 1977, Lok Sabha election.
- iii) **Land to the Tiller:** The Left front used this slogan in West Bengal Assembly elections in 1997.
- iv) **Protect the Self Respect of the Telugus:** This slogan was used by N. T. Rama Rao, who was leader of the Telugu Desam Party in 1983, Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections.

9. What do you understand by rigging?

Ans: Rigging is observed when a candidate or a party operates malpractices to increase its votes in an election.