

Electoral Politics

Why Elections?

◇ 1. People must choose their rulers

In a democracy, the government cannot rule without the approval of the people. But the entire population cannot govern directly. So people must **choose representatives** who will run the government on their behalf.

Elections are the method through which people choose **who will govern** and **how the government should work**.

◇ 2. The Haryana Example (1987)

To show why elections are important, the chapter tells the story of a state election in **Haryana**.

What was happening before the election?

- Haryana was ruled by the **Congress Party** since 1982.
- Many people were unhappy with the government.
- Opposition leader **Chaudhary Devi Lal** started a movement called **Nyaya Yudh** (Struggle for Justice).
- He formed a new party called **Lok Dal**.
- Lok Dal joined with other opposition parties to fight Congress.

What did Devi Lal promise?

He said that if he won the election:

- His government would **waive (cancel)** loans of farmers and small businessmen.

This promise attracted a large number of voters.

◇ 3. Election results show people's choice

When elections were held:

- Lok Dal and its allies won **76 out of 90 seats**.
- Lok Dal alone won **60 seats**.
- This showed that people were strongly in favor of Devi Lal and against the existing government.

This is an example of how elections clearly show **what the people want**.

◇ 4. Peaceful transfer of power

After the results:

- The earlier Chief Minister **resigned peacefully**.
- Newly elected MLAs chose **Devi Lal** as the new Chief Minister.
- Within 3 days, he became the CM.
- His government immediately fulfilled its promise and cancelled the loans.

This shows:

- Power changes hands **peacefully** through elections.
- No violence, no conflicts—just the people's decision.

◇ 5. Leaders can be changed again

This is the final and most important message:

In the **next election in 1991**, Devi Lal's party lost.

This time the **Congress** won and formed the government again.

This shows that:

- People can remove leaders if they are unhappy.
- Elections give people the power to **change the government regularly**.

❖ Why Do We Need Elections?

1. Elections happen regularly in democracies

The passage begins by saying that in almost all democratic countries, elections are held regularly. More than **100 countries** in the world hold elections to choose their leaders.

Even some countries that are **not democratic** also hold elections, but those elections may not be free or fair.

★ 2. Why do we need elections?

To understand why elections are needed, the chapter asks us to **imagine a democracy without elections**.

Could everyone sit together and make decisions?

- In theory, people could rule themselves if everyone gathered every day to take decisions.
- But this is **not possible** in a large country like India with millions of people.
- People do not have the **time, knowledge, or practical ability** to make decisions daily.

So people need someone to take decisions **on their behalf**.

This is why most democracies have **representative democracy**, where people elect representatives.

★ 3. Is there a way to choose representatives without elections?

The passage explores other ways:

✓ **Could representatives be selected by age?**

For example, the oldest people rule.

✓ **Could they be selected by education or knowledge?**

For example, only highly educated people become leaders.

Even if people somehow agree on who is "most experienced" or "most educated," this system would **not be democratic**.

★ 4. Why NOT democratic?

Such a system has major problems:

- **The people would not be choosing their leaders.**

- ***There is no way to know if people actually like or trust their representatives.***
- ***There is no way to remove representatives who are not doing their job well.***
- ***Representatives may rule according to their own wishes, not the people's wishes.***

In a real democracy:

- *Leaders must be answerable to the people.*
- *People should have the power to choose and change leaders.*

★ **5. Elections provide this mechanism**

To solve these problems, democracies use elections.

✓ ***Elections let people choose their representatives.***

✓ ***Elections are held at regular intervals (every 5 years in India).***

✓ ***Elections give people the power to replace leaders they do not like.***

✓ ***Elections ensure leaders rule according to the wishes of the people.***

*Therefore, elections are **essential** for any modern representative democracy.*

★ **6. What choices do voters make in an election?**

*The passage lists **three important choices**:*

1. Choosing law-makers

Voters choose the people who will sit in the legislature (Parliament or State Assembly) and make laws.

2. Choosing the government

Voters also decide which group of leaders (party) will form the government and take major decisions.

3. Choosing policies

Voters choose the political party whose ideas, policies, and plans they want the government to follow.

So, a single vote helps decide:

- ***Who governs***
- ***What laws are made***
- ***Which policies guide the government***

❖ **Five Important Conditions**

1. Everyone should have the right to vote

Although the paragraph you shared starts from the second point, the first condition (from earlier text) is:

✓ ***Every citizen should have one vote and every vote should have equal value.***

This means:

- *No one should be denied the right to vote.*

- Rich or poor, men or women, educated or uneducated—everyone's vote is equal.

★ 2. There should be something to choose from

The passage says:

"Parties and candidates should be free to contest elections and should offer some real choice to the voters."

What this means:

- Elections must offer **real options**.
- People should be able to choose between different candidates or parties.
- Anyone who wants to contest should be **allowed** to contest—freely and without fear.

A democratic election is useless if:

- Only one political party is allowed.
- Only one candidate can stand.
- People are forced to vote for a particular leader.

★ 3. Elections should be held regularly

The passage says:

"Elections must be held regularly after every few years."

Why this is important:

- Leaders cannot stay in power forever.
- People must get the chance to **remove** leaders if they are unhappy.
- Regular elections keep the government **accountable**.

In India, elections are held every:

- **5 years** for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

If elections are not regular, democracy becomes weak.

★ 4. The candidate preferred by the people should get elected

This condition means:

✓ **The person who gets the most votes should win.**

✓ **The results must reflect the people's choice, not the choice of those in power.**

If leaders are selected by:

- army
- king
- religious leaders
- only powerful groups

Then it is **not** a democratic election.

The winning candidate must be the one **selected by voters**, not someone chosen behind closed doors.

★ 5. Elections should be free and fair

This is the most important condition.

“Elections should be conducted in a free and fair manner where people can choose as they really wish.”

This means:

- No unfair pressure on voters (no threats, violence, or bribery).
- No cheating, rigging, or misuse of government power.
- All candidates must get a fair chance.
- Voters must feel safe while voting.
- Counting must be honest.

❖ Is it good to have political competition?

★ 1. Elections involve political competition

The passage begins by explaining:

- Elections are mainly about competition — parties and candidates compete to win.
- At the national or state level: parties compete.
- At the constituency level: individual candidates compete.
- Without competition, elections would be meaningless, because voters would not have choices.

Imagine an election with only one candidate — what would be the point?

★ 2. The demerits of political competition

The text points out that political competition often creates problems:

▣ (a) It creates disunity and division

People become divided into groups supporting different parties.

This leads to factionalism — groups fighting or arguing with each other.

▣ (b) “Party politics” causes conflicts

In many localities, people say:

- “This is happening because of party politics.”
It means decisions are influenced by party interests instead of the common good.

▣ (c) Leaders accuse each other

Parties often use negative campaigning:

- Blaming each other
- Calling names
- Making false allegations
This creates bitterness.

▣ (d) Candidates sometimes use unfair or “dirty” tricks

Examples:

- Fake promises
- Bribing voters
- Spreading rumours
- Misusing money or power

▣ (e) Pressure to win may stop long-term planning

To win quickly, leaders think:

- “What will make people vote for me now?”

Not:

- “What will help the country in the next 20 years?”

Short-term benefits are often preferred over long-term development.

▣ (f) Good people may avoid politics

Some talented and honest people stay away because:

- They dislike mud-slinging and competition.
- They don’t want to be part of fights and accusations.

All these are real problems of political competition.

★ 3. But our Constitution makers still chose free competition

Despite these disadvantages, the makers of our Constitution accepted free political competition. Why?

Because in the long run, competition works better for democracy than no competition.

★ 4. Why competition is necessary in the real world

The passage explains that in an ideal world:

- All leaders would know what is good for the people.
- All leaders would work only to serve the country.
- Leaders wouldn’t need competition to keep them honest.

But the world is not ideal.

In real life:

- Leaders everywhere want power, position, and success.
- They also want to serve people, but we cannot rely only on their honesty or sense of duty.
- Sometimes leaders may not know what the people want.
- Sometimes their ideas may not match the people’s needs.

So we need a system to control leaders.

★ 5. How do we deal with real-life political behavior?

There are two ways:

Option 1: Improve the character and knowledge of leaders

Nice idea, but not realistic.

We cannot guarantee that every leader will be perfect.

Option 2: Create a system where leaders are rewarded or punished

This is more practical.

But who gives the reward or punishment?

→ The People.

★ 6. What does electoral competition do?

Electoral competition allows people to:

- Reward good leaders or good performance
- Punish bad leaders or bad performance

This happens through voting.

✓ If leaders work well, raise the right issues, and satisfy people

→ They are rewarded by getting votes again.

✓ If leaders do not perform well

→ They are punished by being voted out.

This keeps leaders:

- Alert
- Responsible
- Forced to listen to the public
- Focused on solving real issues

❖ WHAT IS OUR SYSTEM OF ELECTIONS?

Electoral Constituencies in India

Elections in India are based on an area-based system of representation, not a system where everyone votes for all representatives. This ensures fair representation and makes the voting process manageable.

1. How Haryana elects 90 MLAs

- Haryana has 90 assembly constituencies.
- Each constituency elects one Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA).
- Not every voter votes for all 90 MLAs; each voter votes only for the candidate in their own constituency.
- This ensures that each region of the state has its own representative in the assembly.

2. Parliamentary Elections (Lok Sabha)

- India is divided into 543 Lok Sabha constituencies.
- Each constituency elects one Member of Parliament (MP).
- This system ensures one person, one vote: every vote has roughly equal value.

Equal Population Principle

- The Constitution requires that each constituency should have roughly equal population.
- This ensures that no constituency has unfair advantage or disadvantage in elections.

3. Assembly Constituencies

- Each state is divided into a specific number of Assembly constituencies.
- Each constituency elects one MLA.
- A Parliamentary constituency contains several Assembly constituencies.
- This creates a clear hierarchy of representation:
 - Local issues → MLA
 - National issues → MP

4. Local elections: Panchayats and Municipalities

- Villages and towns are divided into wards, which are like small constituencies.
- Each ward elects one representative to the Panchayat (village council) or municipal body.
- This ensures local governance is representative and accountable.

5. Constituencies as “seats”

- Each constituency represents one seat in the assembly.
- Example: “Lok Dal won 60 seats in Haryana”
 - Means: Lok Dal won in 60 assembly constituencies.
 - Consequently, Lok Dal had 60 MLAs in the Haryana Assembly.
- Similarly, seats in Parliament correspond to MPs elected from each constituency.

6. Why this system is important

- Makes elections manageable: people vote only for local candidates.
- Ensures fair and equal representation: each area has a voice in government.
- Allows political accountability: local representatives are responsible to the people in their area.

★ 1. Constitutional Right vs. Real Challenges

- Every citizen has the **right to vote** and the **right to contest elections**.
- However, the Constitution makers realized that in **open electoral competition**, some sections of society might **struggle to get elected** because they may lack:
 - Resources (money)
 - Education

- Social contacts
- Powerful and influential candidates could dominate elections, **excluding weaker sections** from representation.
- If this happened, **Parliament and State Assemblies** would not truly represent **all sections of society**, making democracy **less representative**

★ 2. Reserved Constituencies: The Solution

To address this, the Constitution provides **reserved constituencies** for weaker sections.

Key Points:

- **Scheduled Castes (SC)** and **Scheduled Tribes (ST)** have reserved constituencies.
- **SC Reserved Constituency:** Only a candidate from **Scheduled Castes** can contest.
- **ST Reserved Constituency:** Only a candidate from **Scheduled Tribes** can contest.

Current Numbers (as of 26 Jan 2019):

- **Lok Sabha:** 84 seats reserved for SCs, 47 for STs.
- These numbers are **proportional to their population**, so no other group loses its fair share.

★ 3. Extension of Reservation

- The system was later extended to **Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** at **district and local levels**.
- In many states, some seats in **rural local bodies (panchayats)** and **urban local bodies (municipalities and corporations)** are reserved for OBC candidates.
- **Proportion of reserved seats** may vary by state.

★ 4. Reservation for Women

- To ensure **women's participation**, **one-third of seats** in rural and urban local bodies are **reserved for women candidates**.
- This applies to **panchayats** and **municipal elections**.

★ 5. Importance of Reserved Constituencies

1. Ensures that **weaker sections get representation** in legislatures.
2. Makes democracy **more inclusive and representative**.
3. Encourages **political participation** of marginalized groups and women.
4. Balances the **power of influential and resourceful candidates** who might otherwise dominate elections.

★ 1. What is a Voters' List?

- After **constituencies are decided**, the next step in elections is to decide **who can vote**.
- This is done well **before the election**; it is not decided on the last day.
- The **official list** of eligible voters is called the **Electoral Roll**, commonly known as the **Voters' List**.

Why is it important?

- Ensures that everyone eligible gets an **equal opportunity** to vote.
- Linked to the **first condition of democratic elections**: everyone should be able to choose their representatives fairly.

★ 2. Principle of Universal Adult Franchise

- In India, **every citizen aged 18 years and above** can vote.
- Every voter gets **one vote**, and **each vote has equal value**.
- No one should be denied voting rights **without a valid reason**.

Key idea:

Even though citizens differ in wealth, education, social status, or personality, **all are equal when it comes to voting**.

- Voting ensures everyone has a **say in decisions** that affect their life.

★ 3. Equality in Voting

- **Caste, religion, or gender** does not restrict voting rights.
- Voting is **universal** and **equal for all eligible citizens**.

★ 4. Exceptions

- Certain groups are **not allowed to vote**, such as:
 - **Some criminals** (depending on law)
 - **Persons of unsound mind** (as declared by a competent authority)

These exceptions exist to **protect the integrity of the election**.

★ 5. Importance of the Voters' List

1. **Identifies eligible voters** clearly.
2. **Prevents illegal voting** and fraud.
3. Ensures that **every vote counts equally**, upholding democracy.
4. Acts as a **foundation for free and fair elections**.

List of constituencies of the Lok Sabha

There are currently 543 constituencies in India. **Given below is the State Wise list, to know about state-wise constituency and MP names click on the State link.**

Sl. No.	Name of State	No. of Constituencies
1	<u>Andhra Pradesh</u>	25
2	<u>Arunachal Pradesh</u>	2

3	<u>Assam</u>	14
4	<u>Bihar</u>	40
5	<u>Chhattisgarh</u>	11
6	<u>Goa</u>	2
7	<u>Gujarat</u>	26
8	<u>Haryana</u>	10
9	<u>Himachal Pradesh</u>	4
11	<u>Jharkhand</u>	14
12	<u>Karnataka</u>	28
13	<u>Kerala</u>	20
14	<u>Madhya Pradesh</u>	29
15	<u>Maharashtra</u>	48
16	<u>Manipur</u>	2
17	<u>Meghalaya</u>	2
18	<u>Mizoram</u>	1
19	<u>Nagaland</u>	1
20	<u>Odisha</u>	21
21	<u>Punjab</u>	13
22	<u>Rajasthan</u>	25
23	<u>Sikkim</u>	1
24	<u>Tamil Nadu</u>	39
25	<u>Telangana</u>	17
26	<u>Tripura</u>	2

27	<u>Uttar Pradesh</u>	80
28	<u>Uttarakhand</u>	5
29	<u>West Bengal</u>	42

Union Territory wise

Sl. No.	Name of State	No. of Constituencies
1	<u>Andaman and Nicobar Islands</u>	1
2	<u>Chandigarh</u>	1
3	<u>Daman and Diu</u>	2
4	<u>Jammu and Kashmir</u>	5
5	<u>Ladakh</u>	1
6	Lakshadweep	1
7	<u>NCT of Delhi</u>	7
8	<u>Puducherry</u>	1

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★ 1. Why Nomination is Important

- Elections should give people a **real choice**.
- A real choice exists only if **any eligible person can contest**, not just a few.
- India's system allows almost anyone who meets basic criteria to **stand for election**.

★ 2. Eligibility to Contest Elections

- **Voter eligibility:** 18 years and above
- **Candidate eligibility:** 25 years and above (for Lok Sabha and State Assembly)
- **Other restrictions:**
 - Certain criminals (convicted in serious crimes)
 - Persons of unsound mind
- These restrictions are **rare and apply only in extreme cases**.

★ 3. Role of Political Parties

- Political parties **nominate candidates** to contest elections.
- Nomination by a party gives the candidate:

- A **party symbol**
- Support of the **party machinery**
- Party nomination is also called a **party “ticket”**.

★ 4. Procedure for Nomination

1. A person who wants to contest fills a **nomination form**.
2. They must deposit a certain amount of money, called a **security deposit**.
 - This prevents **non-serious candidates** from contesting.
3. After the nomination is verified, the candidate's name appears on the **ballot**.

1. Election Campaign

- **Purpose:** To help voters choose representatives, government, and policies.
- **Activities:** Candidates meet voters, parties hold rallies, media debates, and news coverage.
- **Duration:** Official campaigns last **about 2 weeks** between announcement of candidates and polling day, but preparation begins months earlier.
- **Slogans/Issues:** Parties focus on issues to attract voters. Examples:
 - **“Garibi Hatao”** – Congress, 1971
 - **“Save Democracy”** – Janata Party, 1977
 - **“Land to the Tiller”** – Left Front, West Bengal, 1977
 - **“Protect the Self-Respect of the Telugus”** – Telugu Desam Party, 1983

Rules and Model Code of Conduct (MCC)

- No bribing or threatening voters.
- No appeals based on caste or religion.
- No use of government resources for campaigning.
- Spending limits: ₹25 lakh for Lok Sabha, ₹10 lakh for Assembly elections per constituency.
- MCC restricts:
 - Using places of worship for propaganda
 - Ministers laying foundation stones or making big policy promises after elections are announced

2. Polling (Voting Day)

- Voters cast votes at **polling booths** (schools, offices, etc.).
- **Verification:** Voter identity is checked, finger marked, and vote cast using **EVMS (Electronic Voting Machines)**.
- **Polling agents:** Present to ensure fair voting.
- **Voting systems:**
 - Earlier: Ballot papers

- Now: EVMs with candidate names and symbol

3. Counting and Results

- After polling, EVMs are sealed and sent to secure locations.
- Votes are counted on a **fixed date** with candidate agents present.
- **Winner:** Candidate with **highest votes** in the constituency.
- Example: **Gulbarga, 2014**
 - Total voters: 17.21 lakh
 - Votes cast: 9.98 lakh (~58% turnout)
 - Winner: Mallikarjun Kharge (INC) with 50.82% of votes

4. Cost of Elections

- Government spending (2014 Lok Sabha): ~₹3,500 crore (~₹40 per voter)
- Total including parties/candidates: ~₹30,000 crore (~₹500 per voter)
- Compared to:
 - Nuclear submarines: ₹3,000 crore each
 - 2010 Commonwealth Games: ₹20,000 crore
- Conclusion: Elections are expensive but essential for democracy

5. Ensuring Democratic Elections

Independent Election Commission (EC)

- Appointed by the President, but **independent of government**
- Controls all aspects of elections: announcement, conduct, counting, results
- Implements Model Code of Conduct and punishes violators
- Can order **re-polls** if irregularities occur

Fairness Checks

- Ensures voters' list is correct
- Monitors misuse of government facilities
- Limits excess money use
- Prevents voter intimidation

Despite some elections in India are generally free, fair, and competitive, reflecting **true popular support**.