

CLASS 9 SOCIAL SCIENCE

Chapter 7: Elections

Easy-to-Understand Study Notes | Tiwari Academy

Chapter at a Glance

Elections are at the heart of democracy. They allow citizens to choose representatives, hold them accountable and give legitimacy to government. In India, elections are managed through constitutional institutions, laws, electoral systems and a large administrative machinery.

- Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha and local-body members are elected directly, normally every five years.
- The President, Vice President and Rajya Sabha members are elected indirectly.
- Important democratic outcomes of elections include representation, equality, accountability and legitimacy.
- Free and fair elections require impartial institutions, transparent rules, informed voters and meaningful political choices.

1. Why Do Elections Matter?

Importance	How Elections Help
Representation	Citizens choose people who will make decisions on their behalf.
Equality	Each eligible voter has an equal opportunity to participate through the vote.
Accountability	Representatives must seek a fresh mandate periodically and can be voted out.
Legitimacy	An elected government gains authority through the consent of the people.

- Direct Election: citizens vote directly for their representative or leader.
- Indirect Election: citizens elect representatives who then elect the office-holder.
- Psephology is the scientific study of elections.

2. Inside India's Election Machinery

India's vast and diverse elections require coordination at national, State and local levels. Important stakeholders include the Election Commission of India (ECI), political parties, voters, media and civil society. Their roles are defined by the Constitution and election laws.

3. Electoral Systems

System	How It Works	Used in India
First-Past-The-Post (FPTP)	Candidate with the highest number of votes wins, even if the total is below 50%.	Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha
Majority System	A candidate must obtain more than 50%; if needed, the top candidates face another round.	Explained for comparison here
Proportional Representation (PR)	Seats are distributed according to vote share or preferences.	Rajya Sabha; President and Vice President; Vidhan Parishad uses PR by single transferable vote

- India adopted the plurality or FPTP system for Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections.
- Six States have bicameral legislatures: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.
- Their Upper House is the Vidhan Parishad and Lower House is the Vidhan Sabha.

Single Transferable Vote – Basic Idea

- Voters mark candidates in order of preference.
- First-preference votes are counted and candidates reaching the required quota are elected.
- The candidate with the lowest votes is eliminated and those votes transfer to the next preference.
- The process continues until the required number of candidates is elected.

4. Major Election Laws

Law	Main Purpose
Representation of the People Act, 1950	Allocation of seats, delimitation of constituencies, electoral rolls and voting rights of eligible citizens.
Representation of the People Act, 1951	Nomination, campaigns, voting procedures, electoral offences, corrupt practices and election disputes.
Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952	Governs elections to the offices of President and Vice President.

- Corrupt practices include bribery or inducement to influence voting.
- Appeals for votes on the basis of religion, caste, race, community or language are prohibited.
- Candidates cannot improperly seek assistance from specified government personnel for election purposes.

5. Delimitation Commission

Delimitation means determining the number of seats and fixing constituency boundaries so that representation is as equal as possible in relation to population. Article 82 provides for a Delimitation Commission. India has had commissions in 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002.

6. Election Commission of India (ECI)

The ECI is an autonomous permanent constitutional body established on 25 January 1950. Articles 324–329 provide for election-related constitutional arrangements and the ECI's powers and duties.

Major Function of ECI	What It Does
Electoral Rolls	Prepares, updates and verifies voter lists for every constituency.
SIR	Special Intensive Revision helps include eligible voters and remove ineligible, duplicate, shifted or deceased entries.
Election Schedule	Fixes dates while considering weather, agriculture, examinations, festivals and other practical factors.
Political Parties & Symbols	Registers parties, classifies them and allocates election symbols; independent candidates may also contest.
Free & Fair Elections	Regulates the process, coordinates officials, campaigns, security, counting and declaration of results.
Dispute-related Role	Acts in a quasi-judicial capacity in disputes concerning party recognition and symbols.

7. Inclusive Elections - 'No Voter to Be Left Behind'

- EVMs with Braille help visually impaired voters.
- Home voting was extended nationwide in the 2024 General Elections for voters above 85 years and eligible persons with benchmark disabilities.
- ETPBS (Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System) enables service voters to receive and cast postal ballots from outside their constituency.
- The ECI also focuses on inclusion of PwDs, senior citizens, transgender persons and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

8. Digital Electoral Services

Tool / App	Purpose
Voter Helpline App	Registration, verification, voter services, election information and updates.
cVIGIL	Allows citizens to report Model Code of Conduct violations and election misconduct quickly.
ERONET	Helps process electoral forms and maintain electoral-roll databases.
Sugam	Manages vehicles requisitioned for election work.
Suvidha	Supports candidates and parties with nominations, permissions and election-related updates.
Saksham App	Provides customised voter-registration and polling services for persons with disabilities.

National Voters' Day

25 January is celebrated every year as National Voters' Day. The voters' pledge emphasises free, fair and peaceful elections and voting without fear, discrimination or inducement.

9. Political Parties and Elections

- Most candidates contest through political parties, though independent candidates may also contest.
- Parties present candidates, policies, development visions and positions on public issues.
- They organise public opinion, campaign on issues, offer meaningful choices and help voters make informed decisions.
- The winning party or alliance forms the government; opposition parties scrutinise government and help ensure accountability.
- India has a multi-party system, reflecting its diversity of languages, cultures, religions and regions.

10. Recognition of Political Parties

Category	Brief Meaning
National Party	A recognised party that fulfils ECI criteria based on vote share, Lok Sabha seats or recognition in multiple States.
State / Regional Party	A party recognised in a State after meeting ECI criteria related to votes and/or seats.
Registered Unrecognised Political Party (RUPP)	A registered party that has not yet met the required recognition criteria, or may not have contested elections.

To get the detailed numerical criteria for recognition; for quick revision, remember that recognition is based mainly on vote share, seats won and the number of States in which a party qualifies.

11. Defection and Anti-Defection Law

- Defection means leaving or switching from the political party under whose banner a representative was elected, or acting against the party's direction in specified legislative voting.
- The Anti-Defection Law was introduced in 1985 through the 52nd Constitutional Amendment.
- A member may be disqualified for voluntarily giving up party membership or voting against the party whip in applicable cases.
- The Speaker or Chairman of the House decides such cases.

12. Political Alliances

- From 1967 onward, alliance politics became more visible in India.
- In 1977, the Janata Party formed the first coalition government at the national level.
- Coalitions allow multiple political parties to work together to form a government when no single party has sufficient support.

13. Key Terms

Term	Simple Meaning
Constituency	An area from which voters elect a representative.
Electoral Roll	Official list of eligible voters in a constituency.
Delimitation	Fixing the number and boundaries of electoral constituencies.
Manifesto	Document containing a political party's policies, promises and programme.
Defection	Switching from the party on whose ticket a member was elected.
Whip	Party direction to its legislators on voting in the House.
FPTP	System in which the candidate with the most votes wins.
PR	System in which representation is linked to vote share or preference.

14. Challenges to Free and Fair Elections

- Misinformation and fake news can mislead voters and distort public opinion.
- Intimidation or pressure can prevent citizens from exercising a free choice.
- Inducements, corrupt practices and misuse of influence can reduce electoral fairness.
- Accessibility barriers may prevent some voters from participating fully.
- India's huge electorate, geographical diversity, large number of polling stations and many political parties make election management complex.

15. How the ECI Addresses Challenges

- Uses the Representation of the People Acts, election rules and the Model Code of Conduct.
- Uses EVMs and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) to support transparent voting and verification.
- Runs voter-awareness and inclusion programmes.
- Uses digital systems such as cVIGIL, Voter Helpline, Saksham and ETPBS.
- Coordinates security, law enforcement, counting, result declaration and dispute resolution.
- Promotes the principle: 'No Voter to Be Left Behind'.

16. Quick Revision

Remember	Key Point
Election	A process through which citizens exercise the right to vote and democratic responsibility.
Direct vs Indirect	Lok Sabha/Vidhan Sabha/local bodies are direct; President/Vice President/Rajya Sabha are indirect.
FPTP	Candidate with the highest votes wins.
PR	Representation is based on vote share or preferences; used for several indirect elections.
RPA 1950	Seats, delimitation, electoral rolls and voter eligibility.
RPA 1951	Conduct of elections, campaigns, offences and disputes.
ECI	Autonomous constitutional body managing major elections in India.
SIR	Revision of electoral rolls to include eligible and remove ineligible entries.
Political Parties	Offer choices, organise opinion, contest elections, govern and provide opposition.
Free & Fair Elections	Must be inclusive, impartial, transparent and trustworthy.

17. Important Dates

Date / Year	Importance
25 January 1950	Election Commission of India established.
1950 & 1951	Representation of the People Acts.
1985	Anti-Defection Law through the 52nd Constitutional Amendment.
25 January	Observed annually as National Voters' Day.
2024	Over 96.8 crore eligible voters; nationwide home-voting provision expanded for specified senior citizens and PwDs.

One-Line Conclusion

Elections are the soul of democracy because they give citizens an equal voice in forming governments and, with strong laws and institutions, help make political power accountable to the people.