

Class 9 Electoral Politics Study Notes

Most of the major democratic nations around the world organize periodic elections at various levels, including constituencies, districts, states, and the national level. The political leaders who contest these elections are either members of a strong political party or fight as independent candidates. The campaign under the party banner ensures the redressal of public grievances and social welfare in order to secure majority votes. However, to understand what makes an election democratic, it is essential to first understand electoral politics and its key components. Forming an integral part of the [ICSE/CBSE class 9 syllabus](#), we have collated some important details pertaining to the way elections are held in this PDF!

What is an Election?

To elect means 'to select or make a decision' as per the etymology of the word. An election can thus be defined as a formal decision-making process by which an individual is chosen by a definite population to hold a certain public office. Elections have continued to remain one of the most trusted mechanisms by virtue of which most modern representative democracies have been operating ever since the beginning of the 17th century. These elections may fill vacant public offices in various legislative organs or even in the executive or judiciary at both the regional and local government levels. Many private enterprises, business organizations, voluntary associations, unions, and corporations also follow the principles of electoral politics to make the institution democratic at large.

What do you Mean by Electoral Politics?

Electoral Politics can be understood as a means of conducting free and fair elections where the number of the margin of votes secured by the contesting candidates is taken into consideration. It is done to secure the mandate of the people and guarantee legitimacy for the decision-making process adopted by the political institutions of the country. When you think of the [features of Democracy](#), then this is an essential element of it.

Why do we Need Elections?

To answer this question pragmatically, let us imagine a democracy without elections. In such a scenario, a “rule of the people” is possible without an election if all the people participate in decision-making processes every day. However, this is not possible in a large country like India or the United States, nor is it possible for everyone to have the time and knowledge to make major political decisions.

Thus, in most large democracies, people rule through their directly and indirectly elected representatives. Through elections, voters select their representatives who can uphold and make laws, govern the nation, and make crucial decisions that concern them. These decisions will be political and socio-economic in nature, and the chosen political party will guide the government. Hence, elections provide us with a platform to choose representatives who can bring a change and can redress the grievances of the public at large.

What Makes an Election Democratic?

Elections can be held in many free and fair methods such as glass ballot box elections, EVM elections, etc. This allows the people to be aptly represented at all levels of the government by allowing them maximum participation and opportunity in order to facilitate relevant political decision-making processes. This is a major consequence of electoral politics. However, it is also to be noted that non-democratic or autocratic countries also hold some form of elections for various public positions. But they cannot be referred to as fair elections. *The minimum conditions of a democratic election can be categorized as follows:*

- Firstly, citizens of a nation should have the liberty to choose a leader of their liking. This refers to the fact that every person has one vote, and each vote has the same value. This is in line with the concept of Universal Adult Franchise and the concept of a single non-transferable vote system of democratic elections.
- Secondly, citizens should be given the option to select a representative from a holistic pool of qualified individuals.
- Political parties and their candidates should be free to contest elections as per their priorities and the common will of the electoral college.
- Thirdly, the choice to elect representatives to public offices should be offered to the public at regular periodic intervals. This helps in the process of decentralization that is at the very core of the process of electoral politics.

- The candidate chosen by the majority of the people must be elected for that specific position.
- Lastly, the election commission of the respective country must ensure that the elections are conducted in a free and fair manner where people can vote without coercion for the candidates they resonate with. All of these encapsulated together form the basic preconditions of electoral politics.

Is it Good to have Political Competition?

Our next sub-topic for class 9 Electoral Politics study notes is on political competition and whether it is good to have the same in a democracy or not. By now, we all must be aware of the fact that elections are all about political rivalry. This rivalry comes in a variety of forms. It takes the shape of competition among many candidates at the constituency level. Here are a few reasons why political rivalry is beneficial to individuals:

- Political parties and leaders benefit from regular election rivalry.
- Political parties understand that if they highlight problems that people want to hear about, their popularity and prospects of winning in the next election will rise. On the contrary, if they do not please voters with their job, they will be unable to win again.
- If a political party is motivated only by the desire to be in power, despite that, it will be forced.

What is our System of Elections?

The Indian election system consists of the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha (Assembly) elections which are held regularly after every five years. After five years, all the elected representatives end their terms. The Lok Sabha or Vidhan Sabha stands 'dissolved'. Elections are held in all constituencies at the same time, either on the same day or within a few days which is called general elections. Sometimes an election is held only for one constituency to fill the vacancy caused by the death or resignation of a member. This is called a by-election. Here, we will focus on general elections.

Electoral Constituency

For the sake of elections, India is split into many regions, zones, districts. These areas are known as electoral constituencies. A single representative is elected by the voters in a certain district.

- For the Lok Sabha elections, India is split into 543 seats. A Member of Parliament (MP) is the elected representative from each constituency.
- Each state has a certain number of Assembly constituencies. In this situation, the elected representative is known as a Member of Legislative Assembly or MLA. Each parliamentary constituency has numerous assembly constituencies.

The same holds true for Panchayat and Municipal elections. Each village or town is split into many wards, which function similarly to constituencies. Each ward elects one representative to the village or urban local government. These constituencies are sometimes referred to as "seats," because each constituency represents one assembly seat.

Reserved Constituencies

Our democracy and constitution allow each citizen to elect for their representative. However, some weaker sections may not get a chance to be elected to the Lok Sabha and the state Legislative Assemblies. It could be possible that they may not have the required resources, education, and contacts to contest and win elections against others. Parties that have influence, contacts, and resources might take over and our Parliament and Assemblies would be deprived of the voice of a significant section of our population. That would make our democracy less representative and less democratic. To ensure equal opportunities, the makers of our Constitution have included a special system of reserved constituencies for the weaker sections. These constituencies are reserved for people who belong to the Scheduled Castes [SC] and Scheduled Tribes [ST].

Voter's list

In a democratic election, the list of individuals entitled to vote is produced well in advance of the election and distributed to everyone. This list is formally known as the Electoral Roll, although it is more often referred to as the Voters' List.

Nomination of Candidates

Anyone who is eligible to vote can also stand for election. The candidate must be at least 25 years old. Everyone who wants to run in an election must fill out a "nomination

form" and pay a "security deposit." The applicant must sign a formal declaration outlining all of the following:

- Serious criminal cases pending against the candidate
- Details about the candidate's and his or her family's holdings and liabilities
- Qualifications of the candidate in terms of education

This information is made public so that voters may base their decisions on the information supplied by the candidates.

Election Campaign

Election campaigns are held in order to have a free and open debate on who is a better Representative and, as a result, who party will form a better government. Election campaigns in India last two weeks between the release of the final list of candidates and the day of voting. During this time, candidates contact their followers, political leaders speak at election rallies, and political parties mobilize their supporters. According to Indian election law,

- No party or candidate may bribe or intimidate voters
- Make an appeal to them on the basis of caste or religion
- Make use of government resources for the election campaign
- Spend more than Rs. 25 lakh in a Lok Sabha constituency or Rs. 10 lakh in an Assembly constituency

If a political party does this, the court may overturn their election. In addition to the legislation, all of our country's political parties have agreed to a Model Code of Conduct for Election Campaigns. No party or candidate may, according to this:

- Use any house of religion for electoral propaganda
- Elections should be conducted using government cars, planes, and officials
- Ministers shall not lay the groundwork for any initiatives, make any major policy choices, or make any pledges to provide public amenities until elections have been announced.

Polling and Counting of Votes

The day on which voters cast or 'poll' their votes is referred to as election day. Voting is done as follows:

- Anyone whose name is on the voters' list can go to a local 'polling booth'.

- When a voter enters the voting booth, election authorities identify her, place a mark on her finger, and enable her to vote.
- Each candidate's agent is permitted to sit inside the polling booth and guarantee that voting is fair.

A ballot paper is a piece of paper that lists the names of the candidates running for office, as well as party names and symbols. Previously, ballot paper was utilized. Nowadays, electronic voting machines (EVMs) are being utilized to record votes. The machine displays the names of the candidates as well as party insignia. The voter only needs to push the button next to the name of the candidate for whom she wishes to vote. When the polling is over, all of the EVMs are sealed and transferred to a secure location. After a few days, all of the EVMs are unlocked and the votes cast for each candidate are tallied. The candidate who receives the most votes from a constituency is proclaimed elected.

What Makes Elections In India Democratic?

Despite many news about allegations and unfair voting counts, the Indian democracy is strong and transparent owing to the following points.

- The elections are conducted by the Independent Election Commission of India. They enjoy the same independence as the judiciary.
- This indicates that once an election commission is appointed, they make independent decisions and are not answerable to the president. Regardless of the methods used and decisions made, the election commission of India runs independently.
- They run everything right from election announcements to declaring results.
- They can also punish people for violating the rules and also ask the government to follow the same guidelines and rules.