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Elections And Representation

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Abstract

Although it is not straightforward nor uncontested, the idea of representation has remained a keystone of democracy. In various political systems throughout history, a variety of representational concepts have coexisted. In Western Europe, discussions about what should be represented, who should do the portraying, and how they should do it persisted for the past 200 years. In the years between the wars, much of Eastern Europe participated in these discussions; after 1989, it did so once more. Over the past few decades, electoral democracies have swiftly spread throughout the world. In Africa, where there were only two democracies (Botswana and Gambia) in 1975, the expansion of democracy has been particularly evident. Elections, though, are currently not just held in democracies. Elections in non-democracies serve different purposes than in democracies.

The straightforward idea that voters select their fellow citizens to represent their interests is the cornerstone of electoral democracy. Studies on elections and representation have focused on four aspects of this interaction between those who are eligible to vote and those who want to be elected. First, why, and how are there various numbers of candidates or parties in different elections and countries?

Political parties must determine whether to run independently, collaborate in some way, or maintain their neutrality before the election. Second, a party must decide on its election strategy before deciding to run to sway voters. These tactics must involve picking candidates, deciding on policy positions, gauging the significance of problems, and allocating resources. Third, people must determine whether to vote or not, and those who do must select a certain party. Finally, to create a government, voter preferences are compiled and translated into seats. The four dimensions consider the interaction between institutions, particularly electoral

systems, and fundamental presumptions regarding the political knowledge and interest and decision-making process of the electorate. The Soviet idea of representation, which was introduced to Eastern Europe after World War II, was less diversified but not without conflicts. It had a mild but persistent effect that persisted.

Keywords: Democracy, Political Party, Communist Party, Free Elections

Introduction

The constitution of our nation divides authority between the federal government and the states under a parliamentary system. Both the elected head of state and the ultimate commander-in-chief of the whole Indian armed forces are the Republic of India's head of state. The head of the Indian government, however, leads the political party or coalition that secured a majority in the Lok Sabha elections. The leader of the government of India is in charge of the country's executive branch. The Union Committee of Ministers is under the direction of the Prime Minister, who also serves as the leader of the country's Presidency's primary advisor. The term "elections" refers to academic research that focuses on the key stages of the electoral process, including the campaign, the election, the announcement of the results, and the creation of the government that follows. The effects of this sub-genre, which is significantly more apparent than other studies of representative democracy and has ramifications both in the academic and political realms, are the subject of this critical study of the literature on Indian elections since the 1980s. The article argues that because election studies blur the lines between science and politics, it is essential to contextualize them. Given that India has continually had the largest national elections in the world since the country's first ones were held in 1952, studying elections in the greatest democracy in the world would be challenging.

The situation is highly challenging because of the diversity of Indian society in terms of culture, language, ethnicity, and religion as well as the federal structure of the Indian state. The rules we've established will determine how the election concludes. To conduct the elections honestly, we need some tools. Before the game of electoral politics can start, these two decisions must be made, and no administration can be trusted to make them. Our nation is divided regionally into States and Union Territories.

The chief minister of each state oversees the executive branch of its government and works with the leader of the nation of India or their respective ministries on matters that require both state and central attention. The Indian President selects individuals to lead other Union Territory countries. Additionally, some Union Territories have a territorial administration and a legislative body that is elected. It a time that may be viewed as the start of a new political landscape for India, one that is distinguished by:

- (i) the importance of local parties and politics.
- (ii) the development of national and regional ruling coalitions.
- (iii) the polarisation of national politics around the Congress, the BJP, and the third party.

In making crucial decisions and running the government, citizens have a relatively small influence. They don't contribute much to the formulation of the policies. The public is only involved in the process indirectly, through their elected leaders. With elected representatives making all key decisions, the method by which people choose their representatives becomes vital. In democratic elections, voters cast ballots, and the winner is determined by their preferences. However, there are numerous ways in which people can decide. There are several ways to count their preferences. Depending on the many game regulations, the game's winner may change. the result of the match. Larger parties may profit from some restrictions, while smaller players may gain from others. In some circumstances, rules can benefit the dominant population while protecting minorities. The outcomes of these elections decide the cabinet, the two houses of parliament, the state and union territory legislative assemblies, and the president and vice president. Elections in India required a remarkable amount of mobilization and complexity.

First Past the Post System (FPTP)

A PR system would encourage each ethnic group to find its national party in a multi-ethnic nation like India. In terms of Indian democracy, it alludes to a pivotal turning point. In the Lok Sabha elections of 1984, the Congress party won 415 out of the 543 seats up for grabs, garnering more than 80% of the vote and placing it in power. There are 543 constituencies in the nation. Every constituency elects one representative, and the winner is determined by the candidate who receives the most votes in that constituency. It's important to remember that under this method, the person with the most votes overall wins. There is no need that the victorious candidate to get a majority of the votes. This mode of operation is known as the FPTP system. Another name for this procedure is the plurality system. The Constitution lays out the electoral process in this manner.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (PR)

To fill out its allowed number of seats, each party selects most of its members from a preferred list that was made available before the elections. A party's percentage of the popular vote determines how many seats it will obtain under this system. In India, the PR system is only occasionally used for indirect elections. For the election of the president, vice president, and representatives to the Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Parishads, the constitution stipulates a third, more complicated PR process.

What led India to use the FPTP system?

It is so simple to use, the FPTP system has been successful and widely adopted. Even average voters who may lack specialized knowledge of politics and elections can generally understand the entire political process. a decision that the voters in the election were made aware of. Voters need only support a party or candidate when they cast their ballot. According to real politics, voters may give the party or the candidate a higher priority, or they may balance the two.

Under a consistency-based system like the FPTP, voters may hold their representatives accountable because they are aware of whom they are electing. TP system, voters can select from a variety of candidates and political parties.

Why not a PR SYSTEM?

The establishment of a stable government under a parliamentary system may not be possible with PR-based elections.

The legislature must favor the executive in this system by a majority vote. Since the number of legislators would be determined by the percentage of votes, not the total number of voters, the PR system might not provide a clear majority.

A PR system would encourage each ethnic group to find its national party in a multi-ethnic nation like India.

Why FPTP SYSTEM?

The biggest party or alliance frequently receives additional bonus seats under the FPTP system, over and above what their share of the vote would allow. By promoting a stable administration, this approach enables parliamentary governance to run smoothly and productively.

The FPTP system promotes cooperation among voters from various social groups to win a municipal election. The FPTP system is easy and well-known to regular voters.

Universal Adult Franchise and Right to Contest Elections

Our constitution adheres to well-established democratic principles in each of these ways. You are already aware that all of the country's adult citizens must be able to cast a ballot in democratic elections. This is referred to as a global adult franchise.

Before 1989, an Indian citizen who was older than 21 was considered an adult. The constitutional eligibility age was lowered to 18 in 1989.

It guarantees that everyone could take part in choosing their representative.

Right to Electoral Contest

Everybody is entitled to run for office and represent the collective will of the people.

Different states have different minimum ages for candidates. The legislation prohibits anybody who has served two or more years in jail for any crime from running for office.

There are no restrictions on who can run for office based on things like household income, educational attainment, social status, or gender.

Functions of the Election Commission

- Oversees the creation of current vote totals.
- Tries to the fullest to guarantee that the voter list is accurate, ensuring that names of registered voters are not included and that names of those who are ineligible or non-existent are not there.
- Establishes the election timetable and the election timing.
- Election notification, nomination filing deadline, final scrutiny date, withdrawal deadline, election day, election day polling, election day counting, and election day results declaration are all included in the election calendar.
- The election commission has all the power to take necessary steps for free and fair elections, during the entire process.
- If the atmosphere is unfavorable, the election commission may postpone or call off the poll for the whole nation, a particular state, or a particular seat.
- The commission also puts into practice a sample code of conduct for candidates and parties.
- If the panel thinks the counting process wasn't entirely impartial and just. It may direct a re-vote in a certain constituency.
- Political parties are recognized by the election commission, and each one is given a symbol.

METHODOLOGY

Data for the study was taken from research articles and news articles. This research paper focuses on the origin, meaning, and real objectives of elections and their impact on the world. We also conducted a literature review that provided us with key insights into how existing research on elections has developed, also it provided us with identifying the gaps in existing knowledge that catalyzes further research. This paper has used qualitative and quantitative methods such as surveys, case studies, etc.

This research paper also explains how elections should be held and the political parties formed, and it also focuses on the failure of the electoral political party in some regions. It is also mentioned how elections should be performed in the country. This research paper also mentioned the positive and negative effects of elections. This paper also mentions why India has adopted the FPTP system and not the PR system.

THE ELECTION DEBATE

The feasibility of holding elections frequently has received a lot of attention recently. Elections for the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha might be held simultaneously, and they could even be coordinated with local body elections, as a viable alternative. This strategy, nevertheless, depends on changing the Constitution and the People's Representation Act, which calls for political agreement. Whether this strategy is desirable is up for dispute, since some people doubt its timing and motivations. Elections for State Assemblies and the Lok Sabha might be coordinated with municipal and local elections as a medium ground, with the Election Commission actively involved.

Any discussion about elections is undoubtedly political by nature and may be influenced by the interests of one person or a group of people. According to others, the BJP's support for simultaneous elections stems from a desire to defeat anti-incumbency in some states and marginalize regional parties. However, it is crucial to take into account all justifications for and against this strategy rather than immediately dismissing them as unreliable. Election systems are influenced by personal and collective interests and aspirations, just like any other system.

Arguments in favor of and against holding concurrent elections are debatable, raising questions about the viability of frequent elections. This strategy's proponents point out that every year, elections are held in about six states, incurring enormous expenditures for governments and stakeholders. Political parties spent around Rs 1,587.78 crore in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, however, unofficial estimates have the total amount spent by parties and candidates at beyond Rs 30,000 crore.

The installation of the Model Code of Conduct halts all development programs and operations of both the Centre and the state governments that are up for election, according to supporters of simultaneous elections. Analysis reveals that in 2014, for a period of around seven months, governance and developmental operations were essentially put on hold as a result of the model code's implementation. The same thing happened in 2015 when they were put on hold for around three months. According to the parliamentary standing committee on simultaneous elections, this frequently leads to policy stagnation and a governance deficiency.

Other causes that have been highlighted in addition to this include the disturbance of daily life, noise pollution, and the constant referencing of fault lines like caste distinctions, religious feelings, and ethnic ties. Additionally, it diverts the security apparatus, which must annually assess the region's vulnerability, causing other police duties to be neglected.

The aforementioned elements mostly concern monetary and material costs. Electoral democracy is the most expensive form of government. The disruption of the voting cycle should not, however, be done solely for economic or human resource reasons. It is crucial to promote political consensus on limiting party spending and maintaining the openness of donations made to candidates and political parties. Whether or whether there are concurrent elections, this should still be carried out.

The bulk of detractors and political players maintain that holding elections simultaneously is neither feasible nor desirable despite these factors. Because it requires shortening the current terms of some State Assemblies, it is not feasible. Additionally, modifications to current constitutional and statutory Acts are necessary to set fixed terms for the Assemblies and Lok Sabha or to hold re-elections to fill the time remaining after their premature dissolution. Such changes demand political consensus, which might not be simple to achieve.

Debate: Why Indian elections are more about Narendra Modi ?

"Good days are coming "

Many people view the most recent general elections in India as a turning point. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) member Narendra Modi, who previously held the post of Gujarat's Chief Minister for 20 years and was blamed for the state's 2002 anti-Muslim violence, has now been elevated to the position of Prime Minister in New Delhi.

Due to India's first-past-the-post political system, the BJP alliance only received 31% of the popular vote during his first term, which ran from 2014

to 2019. His campaign's catchphrase was "Good days are coming," or *Achhe din aane wale hain*.

Modi's supporters and administration officials are presently discussing in the media whether the "*achche din*" has genuinely arrived for affluent businessmen as opposed to poor farmers, marginalized Dalits, and fearful minorities, as the opposition claims.

However, issues of policy are not the focus of these elections. Instead, they are focused on Narendra Modi as a person and his leadership, as well as the viability of *Hindutva* (Hindu identity) as India's dominant ideology.

There are clear similarities between Indira Gandhi of the Congress Party in the 1970s and Narendra Modi's move from "*acche din for all*" to a highly tailored political campaign. Later, "*India is Indira, Indira is India*" became her tagline in place of "*Garibi Hatao!*" "*Eliminate poverty!*"

The propagandist Modi and his adept at stirring up trouble supporters are unlikely to concede defeat in these elections without a fight. More hostility is a risk associated with this scenario, which may have already influenced a sizable portion of voters to choose Modi. Voters' decision-making is now more difficult than ever due to the failure to forge a strong opposition alliance and the reappearance of Indira Gandhi's heirs as the main option. They are in a difficult situation where they cannot escape.

Legal Provisions of Elections in India

The following laws primarily regulate the legal aspects of elections in India:

1. Representation of the People Act, 1950: This law addresses the requirements and exclusions for parliamentary and state legislative membership.
2. Representation of the People Act, 1951: This law governs how elections are held for state and federal legislatures, including the creation of electoral lists, submission of nominations, administration of voting, and tallying of ballots.
3. The Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961: These regulations include comprehensive instructions for how elections should be run, including how to submit nomination papers, designate polling agents, and tally votes.
4. The Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991: This act provides for the appointment, powers, and functions of the Election Commission of India.
5. The Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 2010: This act introduced provisions for the use of electronic voting machines (EVMs) in elections and amended several provisions related to the conduct of elections.

6. The Political Parties (Registration and Regulation of Affairs) Act, 1951: This act provides for the registration and regulation of political parties in India.

7. The Model Code of Conduct: The Election Commission of India issues a Model Code of Conduct before each election, which lays down guidelines for political parties and candidates regarding their conduct during the election campaign.

The free, fair, and transparent conduct of elections in India is ensured by these legislative guarantees. They guarantee the protection of voters' rights and effective regulation of political parties and candidates.

CONCLUSION

Governments in democracies are said to be representative because they are elected; if elections are openly contested, if voter turnout is high, and if citizens have access to political freedoms, then governments will act in the best interests of the people. One theory, known as the "mandate" theory, holds that elections are used to choose officials who would implement excellent policies. During elections, parties and candidates present policy suggestions and explain how they would affect the welfare of the populace. Voters then choose which of these plans they wish to be implemented and which politicians to entrust with doing so, and governments then carry out these decisions. Elections, therefore, resemble a direct assembly, and the winning program ends up becoming the "mandate" that the government works to fulfill. Elections are used in a second perspective, the "accountability" perspective, to hold governments accountable for the outcomes of their prior activities. Governments are compelled to select policies that, in their opinion, will be well received by voters at the time of the next election because they anticipate the judgment of voters.

However, both perspectives are flawed. Politicians have their aims, interests, and ideals, and they know facts and conduct actions that citizens cannot witness or can only be monitored at a cost. This makes representation a problem. Even after taking office, politicians could only wish to serve the public, consider if they did what they ought to have done in the past, or both.

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