

□ The institutional representation of democracy includes universal adult franchise, elections, political parties and coalition government.

Most modern democracies now practice universal adult franchise, which means that all adults have the right to vote irrespective of their race, sex, religion, economic or social status.

Elections

Elections are the process by which the citizens of a democracy select or choose their representatives. The elected representatives from different parts of the country meet in a body called the assembly or parliament.

Elections have to be held at regular intervals- some countries hold them every five years, while some hold them every four or six years.



- i. General election: In India, elections are held once in five years. This is called the general election.
- ii. Bye election: Sometimes when a members of parliament or state legislature dies in office, or resigns, elections are held in his or her constituency before the completion of five year. This is called by election.
- iii. Mid- term election: If for certain reasons, the president, on the advice of the prime minister, dissolves the Lok Sabha or a state assembly, elections will be conducted ahead of five years. This is called a mid-term election.

Requirements for fair elections

- All citizens should have only one vote and all votes should carry the same value.
- If people have to vote, they should have choices.
- Elections should be held regularly.
- Elections should be conducted in an atmosphere free of fear or violence.

Election Commission

- *For elections to be free and fair, they have to be administrated by a neutral, fair and professional body that treats all political parties and candidates equally.*
- *In India, this is done by the election commission.*

- *This is an independent body that is answerable only to the parliament.*

The head of this body is the chief election commissioner, who is appointed by the president of India.

Electoral Constituencies

- *In India, to make elections truly representative, each state is usually divided into a number of small units called constituencies.*
- *These constituencies are drawn up in such a way that all of them consist roughly of the same number of people.*

Election Campaigns

- The election commission also allots symbols for the different political parties. The candidates hold rallies where they tell the people what their party will do if elected to power. Posters and banners are used to appeal to the people to vote for the candidate. Campaigning ends at 6pm two days before the polling day.
- The Process Of Election-Polling
 - On the appointed day, people go to the polling booth allotted to them, to cast their votes.
 - Nobody, except the person who votes, knows who he or she has voted for. This is called secret ballot.

After the elections are over, the election commission's next job is the counting of votes and the announcement of the names of the successful candidates.

Absolute And Simple Majority

In a democratic election, candidates can win by either absolute majority or by simple majority.

Formation Of Government

The party that wins the majority of seats gets qualified to form the government. The party meets to elect a leader from among the

successful candidates. This leader would become the next prime minister of India.

Political Parties

A political party is a group of people who voluntarily decide to enter politics and who aspire to run the government if elected to power.

National Parties of India:

Indian National Congress(INC), Janata Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP), Communist Party of India(CPI), Smajwadi.

Party, Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist) among many more. State parties or regional parties are political parties which are recognised in less than four states. For example, Telegu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, Akali Dal in Punjab, Dravida Munnetra Kazagham (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazagham (AIADMK) in Tamil Nadu are examples of state parties.

Coalition Government:-

A coalition government is a governing body formed by multiple parties that must compromise on principles. A coalition government comes into power when there are many political parties fighting an election and no one party is able to achieve a majority or gain more than 50 per cent of the seats in the Parliament or Assembly. In such a situation, several parties come together to form a government, generally under the Prime Ministership of the leader of the largest party. In India, the first ever coalition government was formed at the national level under the Prime Ministership of Late Shri Morarji Desai in the sixth general election. It existed from March 1977 to July 1979 and was headed by the Janata Party. Since 1996, Indian politics has been dominated with several coalition governments both at the Centre as well as in the states. Governments in Kerala and West Bengal are successful coalitions at the state level.

The United Progressive Alliance (UPA), a coalition of 15 political parties was formed after the 2004 General Elections; as no party won majority. Led by the Indian National Congress (INC), under the Prime Ministership of Dr Manmohan Singh, the coalition came to power for

the second time in 2009. Coalition government is also formed in states. BJP and PDP have a coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir. The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition is the Government of the United Kingdom, formed after the 2010 General Election. In many democratic countries such as Germany, Belgium, India, Israel and Italy, a government by coalition of political parties is common today.

TYPES OF PARTY SYSTEM

There are kinds of party systems in democracies around the world?single-party system, two-party system and multi-party system.

Single-Party System

In the single-party system, only one political party is legally allowed to hold effective power. China and Syria have a single party system.

Two-Party System

Two-party system where only two parties dominate, as in the United States-Republican Party and Democratic Party-is widely known to form a stable government.

Multi-Party system

Multi-party system has more than two political parties that are represented and elected to public office. Australia, Canada, UK, Israel and Pakistan are examples of countries with multi-party system. India also has a multi-party system. Elections are fought between different political parties on the basis of their differing manifestos. The Indian political parties are categorised into two main types: national-level parties and state level parties.

India is the largest democracy in the world.

For the Indian democracy to become stronger, we need the following.

- i. Responsible citizenship: It is necessary that the Indian citizens be educated and made aware of the value and importance of their vote.

- ii. Good leaders: To lead a huge democracy like ours, we need strong, good and honest leaders, people who put national interests ahead of personal interests.
- iii. Public opinion: For public opinion to develop, the people should be literate.
- iv. Tolerance: A democracy, which is the rule of the majority, should not forget the interests of the minority. For this to happen, all of us should cultivate tolerance and learn to respect one another.

Equality: We already know that democracy rests on two pillars- equality and justice.

Democracy is often the most preferred form of government. Why is this so? Firstly, this is because people are at the helm of affairs in a democracy. They elect their own representatives who govern the country. Secondly, in times of social, cultural or political conflicts, the decisions are taken with popular consent of all people. This is called a "Referendum". Thirdly, equality is the hallmark of a democracy. A democratic government ensures equal respect and importance for all languages, religions and customs. So we learn to be more tolerant and broadminded towards the differences that exist amongst us.

Challenges to Democracy

India's democratic system has been working successfully for the past half century. But this democratization has also been facing several challenges. Some of these challenges are:

- (i) Tendencies to separate out;
- (ii) Unemployment;
- (iii) Extremism/Terrorism;
- (iv) Illiteracy;
- (v) Corruption and
- (vi) Population explosion.

Social evils such as beggary, dowry and poverty are being overcome by providing equal opportunities to both the sexes and employment opportunities for the backward classes and the poor. Persons with disabilities are given equal rights and special privileges through the

"Disabilities Act". The children of poor sections of the society are provided "Mid-Day Meals" through government schemes so that the affluent and underprivileged children get treated as equals.