

CLASS 9 SOCIAL SCIENCE – PART 1

Chapter 7: Elections

Exam-Preparation Notes

1. Why Elections Matter

Regular, periodic elections are central to democracy. They allow citizens to choose representatives and hold them accountable.

Elections support representation, accountability, legitimacy and equality. They give people a peaceful way to express their choice about who will make decisions on their behalf.

In direct elections, citizens vote directly to choose their representatives or leaders. In indirect elections, citizens elect representatives who then choose or elect leaders.

In India, members of the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies (Vidhan Sabhas) and local bodies are elected directly. The President, Vice-President and Rajya Sabha members are elected indirectly.

2. Psephology and Electoral Systems

Psephology is the scientific study of elections. The word comes from the Greek psēphos, meaning ‘pebble’; pebbles were used for voting in ancient Greece.

An electoral system determines how votes are converted into seats in a legislature.

First-Past-The-Post (FPTP): Voters choose a candidate in a constituency. The candidate with the most votes wins, even if the candidate receives less than 50% of the valid votes polled. India uses FPTP for Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections.

Proportional Representation (PR): Seats or representation are allocated in proportion to votes, according to the system’s rules. The textbook identifies PR for elections to the Rajya Sabha, President and Vice-President.

Single Transferable Vote (STV): Voters rank candidates by preference. First-preference votes are counted; candidates who reach the required quota are elected, and votes may be transferred from eliminated candidates according to later preferences until the required number are elected.

A bicameral state legislature has two houses: the Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly) and, where present, the Vidhan Parishad (Legislative Council). The textbook lists six states with a Vidhan Parishad: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

3. Laws Governing Elections

The Representation of the People Act, 1950 deals mainly with allocation of seats, delimitation of constituencies and preparation and revision of electoral rolls. It also concerns voting rights for eligible citizens aged 18 and above without discrimination.

The Representation of the People Act, 1951 deals with other aspects of election conduct and post-election disputes, including nominations, campaigns, voting procedures, electoral offences and corrupt practices.

The Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952 governs elections to those offices.

Examples of electoral offences or corrupt practices described in the chapter include offering gifts or promises to influence whether someone contests, withdraws, votes or refrains from voting; appealing for votes on grounds of religion, caste, race, community or language; and prohibited assistance from government-related personnel.

4. Delimitation Commission

Delimitation is the process of determining the number of seats and fixing territorial boundaries of constituencies for Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections.

It aims to keep the ratio of seats to population as close to equal as possible across constituencies, supporting fairer representation as population distribution changes.

Article 82 of the Constitution provides for a Delimitation Commission. The chapter lists four commissions: 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002.

5. Election Commission of India (ECI)

The Election Commission of India is an autonomous, permanent constitutional body established on 25 January 1950. Articles 324–329 of the Constitution concern elections and the ECI's powers and duties.

The ECI supervises, directs and controls the process for elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Vidhan Sabha, Vidhan Parishad, President and Vice-President.

Functions include preparing and revising electoral rolls; deciding election schedules; registering political parties and allocating symbols; supervising the election process; and supporting free, fair and transparent polling and counting.

At the state level, election work is supervised by the Chief Electoral Officer. Other assigned officers include District Election Officers, Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers.

6. Electoral Rolls and Inclusive Voting

An electoral roll is the official list of eligible voters for a constituency, organised by polling station. Only people whose names appear on the roll can vote.

Special Intensive Revision (SIR) involves updating, verifying and correcting electoral rolls. The chapter says entries may be added or removed for reasons such as a voter's death, change of residence, duplicate enrolment or being permanently untraceable; claims and objections are considered before the final roll is published.

The voting age in India is 18 years. Eligible citizens should register and check their details on the electoral roll.

The chapter highlights inclusion measures for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), senior citizens, transgender persons and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). It notes that voting from home was extended across India for the first time during the 2024 General Elections for senior citizens above 85 and PwDs with benchmark disability of 40%.

ETPBS stands for Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System. It enables service voters to receive and cast postal ballots electronically from a location outside their assigned constituency.

7. Digital Tools for Electoral Services

Suvidha: Provides contesting candidates and political parties with nomination forms, updates and a way to apply for permissions for meetings, rallies, vehicles and loudspeakers.

Voter Helpline App: Offers voter services, including registration, transposition and verification, and provides election information and updates.

Saksham App: Offers customised services for voters with disabilities, including support for registration and finding polling stations.

cVIGIL App: Allows voters to report suspected Model Code of Conduct violations and election misconduct; flying squads can use location information to respond.

ERONET supports form processing and management of electoral-roll databases. **Sugam** is a web-based application for managing vehicles used for election work.

8. Political Parties and Their Role

Political parties organise public opinion, campaign on specific issues, offer voters meaningful choices and help voters make informed decisions.

Parties communicate their policies, vision for development and positions on social, economic, cultural and political issues. Candidates may belong to parties or contest as independents.

The ECI registers political parties, allocates symbols and classifies parties as recognised national or state parties or registered-unrecognised parties. It also addresses disputes concerning party recognition and symbols.

The chapter's table gives specific criteria for national and state party recognition. Use that table for questions requiring exact vote-share or seat thresholds.

9. Defection and the Anti-Defection Law

Defection refers to abandoning or switching away from the political party under whose banner a member was elected, as described in the chapter.

The Anti-Defection Law was passed in 1985 through the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act. It aims to discourage specified forms of party switching and support stability in elected governments.

10. Challenges to Free and Fair Elections

Elections must be free, fair, transparent, inclusive and trustworthy. If voters face intimidation, votes are not counted accurately or people cannot access polling facilities, the democratic value of an election is reduced.

The chapter identifies misinformation, fake news and intimidation as challenges. It discusses measures including the Representation of the People Acts, the Model Code of Conduct, Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT), voter-awareness campaigns and active citizen participation.

Free and fair elections help ensure that citizens can make choices and that the result has public legitimacy.

11. Important Terms

Election: A process through which citizens exercise the right to vote and choose representatives or leaders.

Psephology: The scientific study of elections.

Direct election: Citizens vote directly to choose their representatives or leaders.

Indirect election: Citizens elect representatives who then choose or elect leaders.

FPTP: First-Past-The-Post; the candidate with the highest number of votes wins.

Proportional Representation: A system that allocates representation in proportion to votes, according to its rules.

STV: Single Transferable Vote; voters express preferences and votes may transfer according to the counting rules.

Delimitation: Determining seats and fixing constituency boundaries.

Electoral roll: The official list of eligible voters.

ECI: Election Commission of India.

ETPBS: Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System.

VVPAT: Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail.

Model Code of Conduct: Guidelines for parties and candidates during elections.

12. Revision Flowcharts

Election process: Electoral roll → Election schedule → Nominations and campaign → Polling → Counting → Results.

ECI functions: Prepare/revise electoral rolls → Announce election schedule → Register parties and allocate symbols → Supervise election process → Support counting and results.

FPTP: Voters choose candidates in constituencies → Votes are counted → Candidate with the highest votes wins.

Free and fair elections: Clear rules + impartial administration + inclusive access + transparent process + informed citizens → public confidence.

13. Exam Practice Questions

1. Why are regular elections essential to democracy?
2. Differentiate between direct and indirect elections with one Indian example of each.
3. Explain how the First-Past-The-Post system works.
4. What is psephology?
5. Distinguish between the Representation of the People Acts of 1950 and 1951.
6. What is delimitation, and why is it important?
7. State four functions of the Election Commission of India.
8. What is an electoral roll, and why is it revised?
9. Explain two measures that help make elections more inclusive.
10. Describe the roles of political parties in elections.
11. What is defection? When was the Anti-Defection Law passed?
12. Identify three challenges to free and fair elections and explain one measure used to address them.

14. Answer Hints

Q1. Elections let citizens choose representatives periodically and hold them accountable; they support representation, legitimacy and equality.

Q2. In direct elections, citizens choose representatives themselves, such as Lok Sabha members. In indirect elections, an electoral group chooses a leader, such as the President.

Q3. In FPTP, the candidate with the most votes in a constituency wins, even if the candidate receives less than 50% of votes polled.

Q4. Psephology is the scientific study of elections.

Q5. The 1950 Act mainly covers allocation of seats, delimitation and electoral rolls. The 1951 Act covers election conduct, nominations, campaigns, voting procedures, offences and post-election disputes.

Q6. Delimitation determines seats and fixes constituency boundaries to keep representation more balanced in relation to population.

Q7. Examples: preparing electoral rolls; deciding election schedules; registering parties and allocating symbols; supervising elections; helping ensure fair polling and counting.

Q8. An electoral roll lists eligible voters. It is revised to add eligible electors and update or remove entries where appropriate.

Q9. Examples include accessible polling facilities, Braille-enabled EVMs and voting from home for eligible senior citizens above 85 and PwDs with benchmark disability of 40% as described for the 2024 General Elections.

Q10. Parties organise public opinion, campaign on issues, present policy choices and help voters make informed decisions.

Q11. Defection is switching away from the party under whose banner a member was elected. The Anti-Defection Law was passed in 1985 through the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act.

Q12. Challenges include misinformation, fake news and intimidation. Measures include the Model Code of Conduct, EVMs, VVPAT, voter-awareness campaigns and citizen vigilance.