

Electoral Reforms in India

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Abstract

A representative political system operates through elections and a substantive democracy can be established if free and fair elections are held on a regular basis with greater participation of citizens. India has achieved the credibility of being the largest democracy in the world where the world's largest electorate vote in regularly held elections. Since independence there have been many reforms introduced in the electoral system of India to make it more transparent and impartial and able to produce a truly representative government. Many proactive steps in this direction have been taken to bring desired reforms.

This paper focuses on the different electoral reforms in India.

KEYWORDS: democracy, election, and electoral reforms

Introduction:

Election is essential in a representative democracy. Unlike in a direct democracy where people participate in the decision-making process directly, in a representative system the popular participation is attained through involving the delegates of people while decisions are made. "Election is the act of choosing an individual usually for holding public office through free will of the people in a representative democracy".¹ All modern democracies are representative democracies. 'It is through elections that people in a democracy participate in public affairs and express their wishes. It is through re-election that the transfer of power to new rulers is achieved in a democracy in a peaceful and orderly manner and the authority of the government is legitimized'.² Elections "enable citizens to intervene directly in the political process, select their rulers and express their policy preferences".³ "While politics is the art and practice of dealing with political power, election is a process of legitimization of such power".⁴

Therefore, without a proper electoral system a genuine representative democratic system cannot be imagined. Through elections people express their preferences and choose their governors. To make a political system representative, responsive, and responsible a suitable electoral system is necessary. 'Out of the 167 countries, there are only 23 full democracies, and only 8.4% of the world population lives in a full democracy'.⁵ The makers of the Indian Constitution preferred a parliamentary democracy in India and prescribed an electoral system which according to them