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ELECTORAL REFORMS AND ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

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Abstract

To protect the core values of democracy in a representative political system free and fair elections with greater participation of citizens are necessary. In India, the world's largest electorate vote in regularly held elections. The Election Commission of India maintains an electoral system which has earned the credibility of being fairly transparent, free, and impartial. This paper focuses on the work of the Election Commission for bringing different electoral reforms in the country for further improving the electoral system.

Keywords: election commission, electoral reforms, election and democracy

Introduction:

In a representative democracy people elect their rulers. 'People participate in public concerns and express their wishes through elections. The transfer of power in a democracy is ensured through re-election in a peaceful and orderly manner and the authority of the government is legitimized'.¹ An effective election process makes the political system representative, responsive, and responsible. To have a substantive democracy, a suitable electoral system is essential.

'Out of the 167 countries of the world, there are 23 full democracies, and out of the total world population only 8.4% lives in a full democracy.'² The Democracy Index, compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit, measures the states of democracy based on 60 indicator groups in five different categories: electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties.'³ India's overall score fell from 6.9 to 6.61 in 2019 in the Index. India has been classified as a 'flawed democracy'. India was ranked 51st in the 2019 Democracy Index'.⁴

Electoral System in India

The elections in India are conducted according to constitutional provisions, and different laws made by Parliament. The principal laws are the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

The different provisions for regulating elections are described in Part XV and from Articles 324 to 329 of the Constitution. 'The Indian democratic system is based on the principle of universal adult suffrage as well as first past the post system. Any citizen of 18 years of age can vote in elections. The voting age was reduced by 61st Constitutional Amendment Act, 1988 to 18 years from 21 years.

The country is divided into 543 parliamentary constituencies, and there are 4120 constituencies in thirty-one assemblies'.⁵

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