

The background features a light blue grid pattern. On the left, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in shades of orange, green, and dark blue. On the right, a faint, stylized image of the Indian Parliament building (Lok Sabha) is visible, with a large orange arc and a green vertical bar overlaid on it.

Election and Representation

1. Election and Democracy

Why do Elections and Democracy go hand in hand? In a large democracy, all citizens cannot directly participate in every decision. Therefore, citizens elect representatives who make decisions and run the government on their behalf. Elections give citizens the opportunity to choose, change and hold accountable their representatives. However, elections alone do not guarantee democracy. However, elections alone do not guarantee democracy. Elections must be free, fair and meaningful. Some non-democratic countries also conduct elections, but if citizens do not have a genuine choice or elections are not free and fair, they cannot be considered democratic.

Example: China. China conducts elections, but elections do not provide the same level of genuine political competition and choice found in a democratic electoral system. Therefore, holding elections ≠ automatically having democracy.

Democratic vs Non-Democratic Elections

Democratic Election	Non-Democratic Election
Free and fair	Not genuinely free/fair
Genuine choice among candidates/parties	Choice may be restricted
Voters can change the government	Rulers may remain in power regardless of elections
Results reflect voters' choice	Results may not reflect genuine public choice

Direct Democracy vs Indirect Democracy



Direct Democracy

Citizens directly participate in decision-making and governance.

Example: Gram Sabha is often considered the closest Indian example.



Indirect/Representative Democracy

Citizens elect representatives. Representatives make major decisions and govern on behalf of the people.

India follows representative democracy.

Why is indirect democracy necessary? Direct participation of lakhs and crores of citizens in every decision is practically impossible in a large country.



Direct Election vs Indirect Election

Direct Election

Citizens directly vote for the candidate who will represent them.

Examples: Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly elections.

Indirect Election

Citizens elect representatives, and those representatives elect another office-holder.

Examples: President, Vice-President and Rajya Sabha members are elected indirectly through prescribed electoral processes.

Easy distinction: **Direct** = People → Candidate | **Indirect** = Elected representatives → Candidate/Office-holder

2. Election System in India | India mainly uses two important systems: First Past the Post (FPTP) | Proportional Representation (PR)

A. First Past the Post (FPTP) System

- The country is divided into constituencies.
- Each constituency elects one representative.
- Voters vote for individual candidates.
- The candidate who gets the highest number of votes wins.
- The winner does not need to secure more than 50% votes.
- Also called the Plurality System.

Simple Example

Suppose a constituency has:

A → 40 votes
B → 35 votes
C → 25 votes

A wins, even though A has not received 50% of the votes.

Key Point

Highest votes = Winner
50%+ votes are not necessary.

B. Proportional Representation (PR)

- In PR, seats are distributed according to the proportion of votes received by parties.
- It aims to make the share of seats closer to the share of votes.
- It is useful for giving smaller parties and groups greater representation.
- In many PR systems, voters vote for a party/list rather than a particular candidate.

Simple Example

Suppose there are 100 seats:

Party A → 50% votes → about 50 seats
Party B → 30% votes → about 30 seats
Party C → 20% votes → about 20 seats
So, votes ≈ seats.

PR in India

India uses PR mainly for indirect elections, such as:

- Rajya Sabha
- President
- Vice-President
- Legislative Councils

For Rajya Sabha, the Single Transferable Vote (STV) method is used. Voters rank candidates according to preference.

C. FPTP vs PR

FPTP	Proportional Representation
Small constituencies	Larger/multi-member constituencies or wider electoral units
Voter usually votes for a candidate	Voter generally votes for a party/list
One representative elected from each constituency	More than one representative may be elected
Highest-vote candidate wins	Seats distributed according to vote share
Winner may get less than 50% votes	Representation is more proportional
Gives clear local representative	Gives greater scope to smaller parties
Simple and easy to understand	More complex

3. Why did India Adopt the FPTP System?



4. Simplicity: Easy for ordinary voters to understand. Voters simply choose a candidate/party.



5. Clear Local Representation: Each constituency has a clearly identifiable representative. People know who represents their area.



6. Accountability: Voters can directly hold their local representative accountable.



7. Suitable for Parliamentary Government: FPTP generally helps larger parties/coalitions secure a workable majority. This can contribute to stable government.



8. Suitable for India's Diversity: It encourages candidates and parties to seek support from different social groups within a constituency instead of representing only one narrow group.

Keyword: Simple + Local Representation + Accountability + Stability + Social Accommodation

4. Reservation of Constituencies

Why is reservation needed?

Under FPTP, socially dominant groups could potentially win in many constituencies. Historically disadvantaged groups may therefore remain under-represented. To ensure fair representation, the Constitution provides reserved constituencies for SCs and STs.

How does a Reserved Constituency work?

All voters in the constituency can vote. But only candidates belonging to the reserved category can contest from that seat. This is different from a separate electorate, where only members of a particular community would vote for their representative.

Who decides the reserved constituencies?

The Delimitation Commission:

- Draws/revises constituency boundaries.
- Determines which constituencies should be reserved based on the population composition.
- Reserved constituencies can be rotated when delimitation is undertaken.

Important: The reservation is therefore not permanently attached to one particular constituency.

5. Universal Adult Franchise and Right to Contest

Universal Adult Franchise

Meaning: Every adult citizen, subject to legal qualifications/disqualifications, has the right to vote.

The Constitution adopted universal adult franchise from the beginning.

21

Initially, the voting age was 21 years.

18

The **61st Constitutional Amendment Act, 1988** lowered it from 21 to 18 years, effective from 1989.

This is connected with **Article 326**, which provides for elections on the basis of adult suffrage.

Importance

- Promotes political equality.
- Gives all adult citizens a voice.
- No educational or income qualification is required merely to exercise the right to vote.

Right to Contest Elections

Citizens also have the right to stand for election, subject to constitutional and legal qualifications.

25

For Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly elections, the minimum age is 25 years.

There is no general restriction based on income, education, class or gender.

Quick Revision: Vote → 18 years | Contest Lok Sabha/Assembly → 25 years

6. Independent Election Commission

The Constitution provides an independent Election Commission to ensure that elections are conducted freely and fairly.

Article 324

Article 324 gives the Election Commission the superintendence, direction and control of:

- Preparation of electoral rolls
- Elections to Parliament
- Elections to State Legislatures
- Elections to the offices of President and Vice-President.

Article 324

Why is independence important?

- Elections should not be controlled by the ruling party.
- It helps ensure impartiality, transparency and fairness.
- It protects the electoral process from political interference.

State Election Commission

The Election Commission of India does not conduct Panchayat and Municipal elections. These are conducted by State Election Commissions, which function independently in their respective spheres.

7. Functions and Powers of the Election Commission			
Major Functions			
• Prepares and updates electoral rolls. • Announces the election schedule. • Supervises the election process. • Ensures compliance with the Model Code of Conduct. • Can postpone or cancel elections when a free and fair election is not possible. • Can order a re-poll where necessary.		• Can order recounting when required. • Recognises political parties. • Allots election symbols. • Controls election-related administrative machinery during the election process. • Takes steps to ensure free and fair elections.	

In one line:

ECI = Electoral Rolls + Schedule + Supervision + MCC + Re-poll/Recount + Parties & Symbols + Fair Elections

8. Electoral Reforms

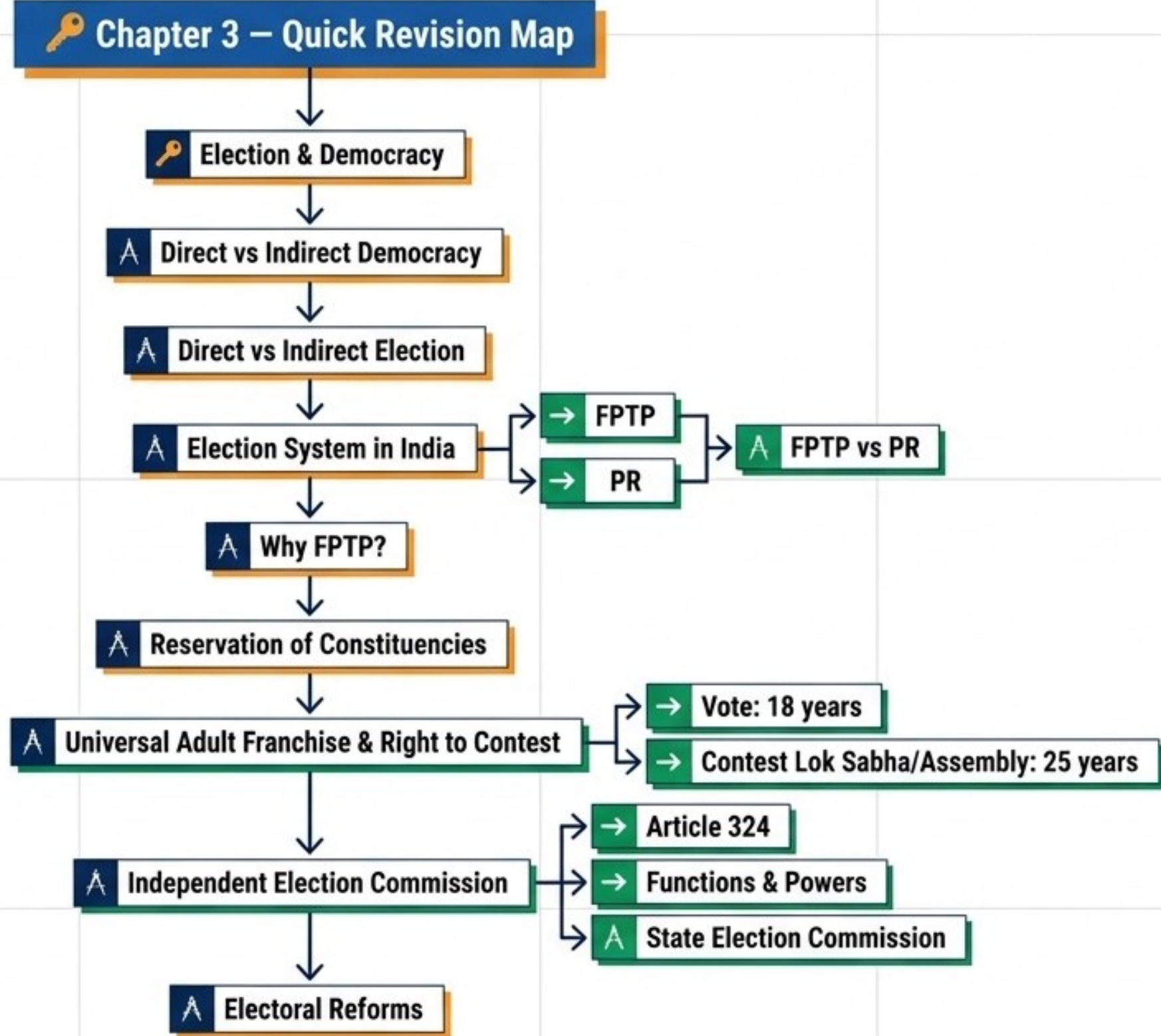
No electoral system is perfect. Therefore, several reforms have been suggested to make elections more free, fair and representative.

Major Suggestions

-  Change FPTP to a suitable form of PR to make representation more proportional.
-  Ensure greater representation of women in Parliament and State Assemblies.
-  Introduce stricter controls on the use of money power in elections.
-  Consider state funding of elections to reduce dependence on private money.
-  Prevent candidates facing serious criminal charges from contesting, as suggested in reform debates.
-  Completely prohibit caste and religious appeals in election campaigns.
-  Introduce laws to regulate the functioning of political parties and ensure greater internal democracy and transparency.
-  Increase voter awareness and participation.
-  Strengthen institutions and civil society organisations that act as watchdogs for free and fair elections.

Core Idea

Electoral reforms aim to reduce → **Money Power** + **Criminalisation** + **Communal/Caste Appeals** + **Lack of Internal Party Democracy**



Chapter 3 — Election and Representation

Important MCQs

1. In the First Past the Post (FPTP) system, the winning candidate is the one who:

- ☐ (a) Secures more than 50% of the total votes
- ☒ (b) Secures the highest number of votes in the constituency
- ☐ (c) Belongs to the party receiving the highest votes nationally
- ☐ (d) Secures at least two-thirds of the votes

Answer: (b) Secures the highest number of votes in the constituency

2. Which electoral system is used for the election of members of the Rajya Sabha?

- ☐ (a) First Past the Post System
- ☒ (b) Proportional Representation by Single Transferable Vote
- ☐ (c) Direct Election System
- ☐ (d) Two-Round System

Answer: (b) Proportional Representation by Single Transferable Vote

3. Which body determines the boundaries and reservation of constituencies for SCs and STs?

- ☐ (a) Election Commission of India
- ☐ (b) Parliament
- ☒ (c) Delimitation Commission
- ☐ (d) Supreme Court

Answer: (c) Delimitation Commission

Chapter 3 — Election and Representation

Important MCQs

4. Universal Adult Franchise in India means:

- ☐ (a) Only educated citizens can vote
- ☐ (b) All citizens above 21 years can vote
- ☒ (c) Every citizen aged 18 years or above is entitled to vote, subject to legal qualifications
- ☐ (d) Only taxpayers can vote

Answer: (c) Every citizen aged 18 years or above is entitled to vote, subject to legal qualifications

5. Which Article of the Constitution provides for an independent Election Commission of India?

- ☐ (a) Article 320
- ☒ (b) Article 324
- ☐ (c) Article 326
- ☐ (d) Article 356

Answer: (b) Article 324

6. Which of the following is NOT conducted by the Election Commission of India?

- ☐ (a) Lok Sabha elections
- ☐ (b) State Legislative Assembly elections
- ☐ (c) Presidential elections
- ☒ (d) Panchayat elections

Answer: (d) Panchayat elections

Important 4 & 6 Mark Questions

Q1. Distinguish between the First Past the Post System and the Proportional Representation System. [6 Marks]

FPTP System	PR System
Candidate with the highest votes wins.	Seats are allotted broadly according to the proportion of votes received.
Usually one representative from each constituency.	Multiple representatives may be elected from a larger electoral unit.
Voters generally choose an individual candidate.	Depending on the PR form, voters may choose parties or rank candidates.
Winning candidate need not secure 50%+ votes.	Aims at making seat share more proportional to electoral support.
Provides a clear link between representative and constituency.	Provides relatively better representation to smaller parties/groups.
Used for Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections.	Used in elections such as Rajya Sabha, President and Vice-President through prescribed forms of PR.

Keywords: Plurality – Constituency – Vote Share – Seat Share – Representation

This comparison is repeatedly emphasised in chapter-focused exam resources.

Q2. Why did India adopt the First Past the Post System? Explain any four reasons. [4 Marks]

- **Simple System** – Easy for voters to understand and operate.
- **Clear Choice** – Voters directly choose among candidates contesting from their constituency.
- **Accountability** – Every constituency has an identifiable representative whom voters can hold accountable.
- **Stable Government** – The system can facilitate the formation of workable parliamentary majorities.
- **Social Accommodation** – Candidates often need support from different communities and social groups to win.

Keywords: Simplicity – Choice – Accountability – Stability – Social Groups

Q3. Explain the system of reservation of constituencies in India. Why is it necessary? [4 Marks]

- **The Constitution provides** reserved constituencies for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to ensure their representation.
- **In a reserved constituency**, only candidates belonging to the concerned reserved category can contest.
- **However, all eligible voters** of the constituency vote, irrespective of their caste or community.
- **Reserved constituencies therefore ensure** political representation of historically disadvantaged groups without creating separate electorates.
- **The Delimitation Commission determines** reserved constituencies according to the prescribed constitutional/legal framework.

SC/ST

Representation

Reserved Constituency

Common Electorate

Delimitation Commission

Q4. Explain the independence, functions and powers of the Election Commission of India. [6 Marks]

Independent Constitutional Body – Article 324 provides for an independent Election Commission.

Electoral Rolls – Supervises the preparation and revision of voters' lists.

Conduct of Elections – Supervises elections to Parliament and State Legislatures and elections of the President and Vice-President.

Election Schedule – Determines and announces the election programme.

Model Code of Conduct – Ensures parties and candidates follow electoral norms during elections.

Political Parties & Symbols – Recognises political parties and allots election symbols according to law/rules.

Re-poll/Recount – Can order appropriate measures such as re-polling where required to protect electoral integrity.

Its independence helps ensure free and fair elections without undue governmental interference.

Article 324

Independent

Electoral Rolls

MCC

Symbols

Free & Fair Elections

Q5. What major electoral reforms have been suggested to make elections in India more free and fair? [6 Marks]

Answer:

- ✓ Control the excessive use of money power in elections.
- ✓ Reduce the criminalisation of politics.
- ✓ Ensure greater representation of women in legislatures.
- ✓ Consider reforms such as state funding of elections to reduce dependence on private money.
- ✓ Prevent the misuse of caste and religion for electoral mobilisation.
- ✓ Increase transparency and internal democracy in political parties.
- ✓ Strengthen voter awareness and people's participation in the electoral process.

Keywords:

💡 Money Power

💡 Criminalisation

💡 Women Representation

💡 State Funding

💡 Transparency

💡 Internal Democracy