

## A STUDY ON PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON ELECTORAL REFORMS IN INDIA

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### Abstract:

This paper deals with the study of electoral reforms and the public perception about electoral reforms. Elections are conducted to choose our own candidate to govern ourselves. Elections are the most important feature of a country. For a country to be democratic the process of election is a very essential matter. Elections provide an opportunity for the people to choose their leader who they feel that the particular person will govern the, And lead them in a rightful path towards development and betterment of their community or society as a whole. Apart from the people choosing their leader, free and fair elections are the most important thing for a successful democracy. For a country's growth free and fair election is the considered as the basic thing. But The electoral justice is a need of today's modern power-politics. In order to protect the democratic structure from withering out it is necessary to introduce changes that would protect the fundamental machinery of Electoral system which form an essential part of the foundation of democracy. Politics is a way through which a change can be brought in a society. In democracy, justice spreads through the sections of politics, hence it is to be understood that the Electoral Politics is a soul of a Democracy without which it cannot exists in its true spirit. Lawful structure relating to the Electoral System requires timely change. Strong Electoral system is a mechanism which is necessary to strengthen the democratic structure of India and to strengthen the Electoral system timely reforms are necessary which not only would give justice to the people but also to the ideals enshrined in the Constitution of India. Today, the main question arises is that the electoral deterioration of electoral politics. There is a urgent need to strengthen the electoral system of our country in order to realize and to know about the potential of a well functioning

democracy.

**Keywords:** Elections, democracy, lawful system, politics, electoral reforms.

**Introduction:**

Elections play a vital role in democratic system of governance. In India the political propaganda is related with elections ([Palmer 1972](#)). The election process in India is considered to be the inheritance or the main thing of the political corruption. The present elections are not in a way of correct manner as it requires an enormous amount of money and muscle power to win the elections in India ([Eswar Reddy, 2014](#)). The persons who are contesting in elections usually spent enormous amount of money to attract the votes of people by giving money for vote or spending lavishly to get the votes in elections. Voting system in India has gone through multiple changes. During the first two General Elections in Lok Sabha in the year 1952 and 1957, each candidate was allotted a separate ballot box with the symbol of the candidate and the names and symbols of the candidates were not printed on the ballot paper and voters had to drop a pre-printed ballot paper in the ballot box of the candidate of their choice ([k.Chandrasekar 2017](#)). The system created the thinking and fears of tampering, booth capturing, and handling in the minds of the various stakeholders and was soon replaced ([ECI,2015](#)). In 1977, the ECI, requested the Electronics Corporation of India to study the possibility of using an electronic device for conducting elections and the assignment of designing and developing an electronic gadget for conducting elections. In 1979, a prototype was developed and its operation was demonstrated by the ECI before the representatives of political parties on 6th August, 1980. In 1982, the Election Commission of India issued directives under the Article of 324 of the Constitution of India, for the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and conducted elections at 50 polling stations using the machines in a bye election in Parur Assembly Constituency (AC) of Kerala in the way of an experimental basis. ([DhirendraOjha2017](#)). Due to the absence of any specific law prescribing the use of EVMs, the election was challenged in a petition and on 5th March, 1984, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India held that EVM cannot be used in an election unless a specific provision is made in law for its use. After this a law was amended by the Parliament in December 1988 and a new Section 61A was included in the Representation of the People Act 1951, there by empowering the ECI to use EVM and the amendment came into force on 15th March, 1989([electioncommissionofIndia2017](#)).

\_\_\_\_\_ Despite taking all the measures for fair elections in India the Election Commission of India is failed in conducting unbiased and fair elections in India. The number of cases filed in various courts of India will strengthen this point. There have been no. Of cases been filed in the court regarding election. The political parties in the regional and national level is selecting candidates on the basis of the demographic features of the constituency. Not a single party, directly opposes casteism, is free from the dominant influence of caste. Caste tends to determine electoral nominations and the voting behavior . But the main conditions that requires is that an honest, and upright person who is public spirited and wants to serve the people, should be able to contest and get elected as people's representatives, but in practical no such person has no chance of either contesting or in any case winning the election ([Eswar Reddy, 2014](#)).

The future of democracy and the system of parties in a country depends upon the perception of the society to change according to the demands of the democracy. Illiteracy among the backward groups, citizens affected by poverty , lack of awareness among the rural people are some of the reasons why there is prevalence of casteism in elections ([Bimal Prasad Singh, 2013](#)). The Election Commission has conducted a number of ideal electoral reforms to strengthen the democracy and enhance the efficient functioning of elections. The election machinery, under the protection and support of the EC, deserves credit for conducting elections in a free and fair manner ([Sumandeep Kaur, 2008](#)). But our system is still affected by many problems .To win votes, political parties resort to foul methods and corrupt practices. These encourage the anti-social elements to enter the electoral fray. The problem is not insufficient of laws, but lack of their strict implementation. In order to stamp out these unfair tendencies, there is a need to strengthen the hands of the EC and to give it more legal and institutional powers. The EC must be given with the powers to punish the corrupted politicians who violate the electoral laws. Election is a device which a modern state creates amongst (Trishala A , Lakshmi T and Rajeshkumar S2018) its citizens a sense of involvement and participation in public affairs. To discover the "will of the people" election should be conducted or to be held at regular intervals to give people a chance to express their approval or disapproval of the stewardship of key office ([Sivakumar clv 2011](#)). The major defects which affect the electoral system in India area are money power, muscle power, criminalisation of politics, poll violence, booth capturing, communalism, casteism, non-serious and independent candidatures ([Monika Chopra, 2017](#)). The

objective of the paper is to study about the electoral reforms and to discuss about the public perception about electoral reforms.

### **Materials and methods:**

The methodology used throughout this research is empirical approach to discuss the public opinion on electoral system in India. (Dr.Lakshmi T and Rajeshkumar S 2018)The study used both primary and secondary information. The secondary information for the study was collection from books, research articles, thesis and other e-sources. A survey was conducted among 300 randomly selected respondents, who are having voting right through a structured questionnaire to collect the primary information for the study and the study used percentage for meaning analysis of the results.

### **Results:**

According to the survey people public perception about electoral reforms people have responded to the questions that have been asked , For the question of whether politicians need educational qualification, majority of the people that is 91.5% of the people have voted that the politicians must need educational qualification and the remaining 8.5% have voted that there no need of educational qualification for the politicians. For the question of whether the electronic voting machine is useful the majority of the respondents that is 68.1% of the people have voted that the electronic voting machine is useful and the remaining 31.9% of the respondents have voted that the electronic voting machine is not useful. For the question of which method of voting is useful, the majority 72.3% people that is the respondents have voted that the modern method is useful and the minority 27.7% of the people have voted that the traditional method of voting is useful. The question related to NOTA is raised and 82% of the respondents supported the option to vote NOTA in EVM and 18% of the respondents felt that it is unnecessary. And the respondents preferred NOTA due to lack of efficient political leaders (34%), lack of good governance (26%) and due to both the above mentioned reasons (40%)., for the question of whether having the right of "right to recall " is necessary 74.5% of the people have voted it is necessary and the remaining 25.5 of the people have voted that that the right to recall is not necessary. For the question of the question of whether young politicians will bring a change in governance majority that is 78.3% have voted that young politicians will bring a change in

governance, and the remaining 21.7 % of the people have voted that the young politicians will be no change in governance. For the question of why there is lack of governance 53.2% of respondents have voted that it is because of corruption, and the 14.9% of the respondents have voted that it is because of lack of education of politicians and the remaining 31.9% of the people have voted that it is because of both corruption and lack of education of politicians. For the question whether the electoral system following is effective 70.2% of the people have voted that it is not effective, and the remaining 29.8% of the people have voted that it is effective. For the question whether they have voted in the last election 2016 72.3% of the people have not voted and the remaining 27.7% of the people have voted that they have voted in the last election. For the question of basis of voting 40% of the people vote on the basis of political party 27.5% of the people vote on the basis of local candidate and the remaining 32.5% of the people vote on the basis of the leader of the political party. For the question whether there should be a law that requires everyone to vote 53.2% of the people have voted that there should be a law and 21.3% of the people have voted it is not necessary and the remaining 25.5% of the people say that they have no opinion. For the question whether there should be any age limit for the politicians 70.2% of the respondents have voted that there should be an age limit for the politicians and the remaining 29.8% of the respondents have voted there should be no age limit for the politicians.

For the question of whether there should be an limit for political leaders to become in a post again and again, 72.3% have voted there should be an limit for the political parties to become in power again and again and the remaining 27.7 % of the respondents have voted that there should be no limit for the political parties to become in power again and again . For the question whether the association for democratic reforms(ADR) is effective in handling electoral reforms, 52.3% have voted that the democratic reforms is effective and the remaining 47.7 have voted it is not effective . For the question why the people vote 66% of the respondents replied that it is their right and responsibility, and the 14.9% of the people says that they vote to get those they have trusted and the 3.4% of the people say it is they are just following others and 2.5 of them says they vote at the request of the candidates and 2.5% of the people say it is their sacred duty. 10.6% of the people say that they vote for other reasons. For the question whether the reimbursement system is useful for electoral reforms 48.9% of the people have voted that the system is useful and the remaining 51.1% of the people have voted that the system is not useful.

According to the survey for the question of which influences the voters in choosing a political party 17.4% of the people say they are influenced by parents and friends and 17.4% of the people are influenced by media and the remaining of them choose on their own. criminalisation of politics and politicisation of crimes is the major problem for bad governance agree? For this question 93.3% of them agrees and the remaining 7.7% of them disagrees.

**Discussion:**

The election commission of India is most powerful in the Indian republic and democracy system, its foundation was under the Constitution of India article 324([Kolhapuri Chandrashekar 2017](#)).Electoral reforms are the systems that governs and directs the electoral system. From the above result we can say that there is some basic Knowledge about the electoral reforms to the people. But there are some conflicts that affects the electoral system. Form the above data it is said that 31.9% of the people say the electronic voting machine is not useful , when more information was collected through the study, it is because of data breach and hacking. The maximum respondents answered that if youngsters take part in elections and by-elections there would be good governance than existing.And people prefer Nota because of lack of efficient political leaders and lack of good governance. So there should be efficient political leaders for the improvement in the governance for the people.Right to recall is the right of voter to de-elect the candidate he had chosen , if he fails to do his duty. This is to be implemented and should be made effective so , that the inefficient leaders or the person can be removed from his power when he fails to do the work. In 2016, Varun Gandhi presented 'The Representation of the People Amendment Bill' in Lok Sabha to review MPs, MLAs for the non-execution. Nonetheless, the idea of Right to Recall was not another one in India. The idea of "Rajdharm" amid the Vedic circumstances is like the idea of Right to Recall. In this framework, the lord was expelled when there is an absence of powerful administration. In 1944, M.N. Roy proposed the decentralization and devolution of administration which will take into account the decision and review of agents. The right to review was expressed by Somnath Chatterjee when he said that it can be utilized for responsibility purposes. The Representation of Peoples Act RPA 1951 discusses Right to Recall. RPA does not account the ground of inadequacy or the disappointment of the electorate as the ground for review and excursion. It accommodates the get-away of the workplace upon the commission of the specific offense. Ideal to review exists in the

neighborhood collections of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh([Live mint 2017](#)).Age limit is one the major drawback,for the present electoral system,there should be an age limit for the politicians so that the young generation and others can get their chances.91.5% of the respondents answered that politicians need educational qualification, in the present scenario many has a invalid degree, when we discussed with the respondents we came to know that most of the politicians who have degree of qualification obtained from open university.In open universities is there Questionable credibility of degrees?.when the same question was raised to the respondents majority of them answered that even unrecognised degrees are offered which creates bad impact in the society.

At Present, the EC does not have independent staff of its own. Whenever elections take place, the Election Commission has to depend upon staff of Central and State Governments. The dual responsibility of the administrative staff, to the government for ordinary administration and to the EC for electoral administration is not conducive to the impartiality an efficiency of the Commission. Along with it comes the problem of disciplinary control over the staff deputed to do election work which generally generates confrontation between the Government and the BC. Now, when the elections have ceased to be a mere periodical affair, it is desirable .that the BC should have a permanent electoral administration with adequate disciplinary control over the staff([BimalPrasadSingh2013](#)).

\_\_\_\_\_To prevent criminalisation of politics the Candidate should also present their sources of income along with the declaration of their total assets and liabilities to election Commission of India. To prevent bribery (i.e) giving money to people for getting vote.And Introducing the option of NOTA on the EVM's for better alternatives to the voters should be made an essential.The option of "None of the above" should be made compulsory in the Electronic Voting Machines under the section 49 to protect the identity and right of the voters.([Aditi Singh and Yogesh 2015](#)).Revise voters lists in time to avoid bogus polling and correct mistakes in the lists.Prompt action by the judiciary, if any kind of violation is detected during elections.Declare elections results is mandatory. Preparation of constituent rolls by election are to be governed and controlled at village level and certificates from officials who prepare electoral rolls have to be thoroughly revised.([Monika Chopra 2017](#)). We also need to make it difficult for people with criminal and corrupt background to reach Parliament. The Government should implement the

various electoral reforms in this field and enact a comprehensive Electoral Reforms Bill which will also include provisions for putting a check on criminalization of politics and misuse of money and muscle power in elections.([Ayush Mishra & Jyoti Kumari 2015](#)). Simultaneous Elections are to be conducted to curb the election expenditure it would help much if elections are simultaneously held for the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies and also the local bodies. This would drastically reduce election expenditure of all kinds and would incidentally promote development of a healthy party system at all levels of administrative structure.([Surender Kumar 2014](#)).

**Recommendations:**

Though we all live in democratic country, all our rights are not fulfilled, the candidate we select for our country or the state should be selected only on the basis of the capability and the act of serving people and to develop and work for the betterment of the people. The right to recall of a candidate should be implemented so that the members who are elected by the people should be restrained from doing wrong and encourage welfare of the people. So if right to recall is implemented the candidates who are elected by the people will have a fear of posting where if he fails to do his duties he will be removed from the posting. And according to the results people feel that young politicians will bring a change in governance system it is because generation gap could be reduced there would be reduction of corruption as the problems of the current generation can be easily understood and laws can be implemented to a better future.

**Conclusion:**

Free and fair Election process is a foundation of healthy democracy. The Democracy of India depends on a proper political environment, and to protect it free and fair election process is inevitable. The entry of criminals in election must be restricted at any cost. The standard of free and reasonable decisions is a basic purpose of majority rules system, which in its turn is a piece of the essential structure of the Constitution of India. The arrangement of popular government through constituent process is the most functional of all frameworks and the one that offers the best openings and satisfaction with the least dangers to the everyday citizens. It is the main arrangement of government in which the general population can make the most of their most esteemed rights and freedoms. It itself has a most advantageous impact on the advancement of the good and scholarly statue of natives. Be that as it may, the framework isn't without traps. Be that as it may, its shortcomings or blemishes don't diminish the greatness of the perfect of this framework. The shortcomings of the framework are for the most part found because of social,



monetary or authentic elements impossible to miss to it, which can be evacuated or limited. Further, the shortcomings might be cured, not by less, but rather by more popular government. From the above results and studies here are some suggestions that can be made to have a good electoral system. There should be Changes in the voting machines that should be made properly and by in building the faith of the people with young leaders coming up with a qualification, it is said that criminalisation of politics is the main reason for bad governance, so this should be prevented by the government and proper steps have to be taken by the government to prevent criminalisation of politics and to bring faith among the people.

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