



# REVIEW OF RESEARCH

ISSN: 2249-894X

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631 (UIF)

VOLUME - 12 | ISSUE - 4 | JANUARY - 2023



---

---

## DEMOCRACY AND VOTING IMPORTANCE

**Dr. Padmanna S. Pujari**

**MA. PHD.SLET**

**Associate Professor Of Political Science Government Womens First Grade College,  
Kalaburagi Karnataka.**

### ABSTRACT

In just 50 years of independence, Indian democracy is looking hollow. Though we are the largest democracy in the world, our democratic set up which is basically founded on free and fair elections, is breaking down signaling a threat to our existence as a bastion of democracy. The entry of criminals into politics, rampant malpractices such as rigging, booth-capturing impersonation etc., have raised a question mark over our credentials as a really working democracy.



**KEYWORDS:** Indian democracy , fair elections , democracy .

### INTRODUCTION

World wide we will see voting importance in democracy Adult Franchise is everywhere The general public are disgusted with elections which are not only too frequent but also prone with violence and goondaism, completely against the spirit of democracy. The money and muscle power has completely dominated the electoral process thereby making a mockery of democracy. Urgent electoral reforms are inevitable to restore the public confidence in the process and sanctity of elections.

Electoral reforms has become very urgent because of grave threat to democracy posed by increasing corrupt electoral practices by almost all political parties. It is not that corrupt electoral practices were not practiced earlier, but the present scale of electoral corruption is dangerous and alarming. Earlier efforts were made to cleanse the system but failed due to lack of political will. The Tharkunde Commission and the Santharam Committee on electoral reforms suggested certain useful recommendations which were not seriously acted upon. The Goswami Committee appointed in 1990 also made valuable recommendations, but they were also not seriously implemented.

### ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES (EVMs)

The Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) have come as a boon to modern democracies. The use of EVMs in India has met with a strong approval. The EVMs have been devised and designed by Election Commission in collaboration with two Public Sector undertakings viz: Bharat Electronics Ltd., Bangalore and Electronic Corporation India Ltd., Hyderabad. EVMs manufactured in 1989-90 were used on experimental basis for the first Rajasthan (9) and Delhi (6) at the General Elections and to the respective Legislative Assemblies held in November 1998. In 2009 elections, there are 13,00,600 even in use.

An Electronic Voting Machine consists of two Units – a Control Unit and a Balloting Unit – joined by a five-meter cable. The Control Unit is with the Presiding Officer or a Poling Officer and the Balloting

Unit is placed inside the voting compartment. Instead of issuing a ballot paper, the Polling Officer in-charge of the Control Unit will press the Ballot Button. This will enable the voter to cast his vote by pressing the blue button on the Balloting Unit against the candidate and symbol of his choice.

EVMs can receive a maximum of 3840 votes. As normally the total number of electors in a polling station will not exceed 1500, the capacity of EVMs is more than sufficient. EVMs can cater to a maximum of 64 candidates. There is provision for 16 candidates in a balloting Unit. If the total number of candidates exceeds 16, a second Balloting Unit can be linked parallel to the first Balloting Unit. Similarly, if the total number of candidates exceeds 32, a third Balloting Unit can be attached and if the total number of candidates exceeds 48, a fourth Balloting Unit can be attached to cater to a maximum of 64 candidates.

Voting by EVMs is simple compared to the conventional system, where one has to put the voting mark on or near the symbol of the candidate of his choice, fold it first vertically and then horizontally and thereafter put it into the ballot box. In EVMs, the voter has to simply press the blue button against the candidate and symbol of his choice and the vote is recorded. Rural and illiterate people had no difficulty in recording their votes and, in fact, they have welcomed the use of EVMs.

The cost per EVM (One Control Unit, one Balloting Unit and one battery) was Rs. 5,500/- at the time the machines were purchased in 1989-90. Even though the initial investment is somewhat heavy, it is neutralized by the savings related to printing of ballot papers in lakhs, their transportation, storage etc., and the substantial reduction in the counting staff and the remuneration paid to them. In the 2004 Lok Sabha elections 10.25 Lakh EVMs were used. It rose to 13,00,000 in 2009.

### **ADVANTAGES OF EVM**

The advantages in using EVMs are:

#### **1. Economy:**

The most important advantage is that the printing of lakhs of ballot papers can be avoided as only one ballot paper is required for fixing on the Balloting Unit at each polling station instead of one ballot paper for each individual elector. This results in huge savings by way of cost of paper, printing, transportation, storage and distribution.

For instance, in 2004 elections by using the EVMs the government saved 8,000 metric tonnes of paper.

#### **2. Quick Result:**

In this system, counting is very quick and the result can be declared within 2 to 3 hours as compared to 30-40 hours, in some cases, under the conventional system, it is generally seen that in huge constituencies such as Outer Delhi, with approximately 30 lakh voters, would almost take 2 days.

#### **3. No invalid votes:**

There are no invalid votes under the system of voting under EVMs. The importance of this will be better appreciated, if it is remembered that in every General Elections, the number of invalid votes is more than the winning margin between the winning candidate and the second candidate, in a number of constituencies. To this extent, the choice of the electorate will be more correctly reflected when EVMs are used. In EVMs each vote polled makes a difference to the fortunes of the candidates because the chance of an error on part of the voter is zero.

#### **4. Easy:**

When the use of EVMs the pace of poll is quickened by the use of EVMs as it is not necessary for the voter to first unfold the ballot paper, mark his preference, fold it again, go to the place where the ballot box is kept and drop it in the box. What he has to do under the system of EVMs is simply to press the button against the name or symbol of the candidate of his choice.

### 5. One man One vote:

The EVMs ensure the principle of 'one man, one vote; As soon as a particular button on the Balloting Unit is pressed, the vote is recorded for that particular candidate and the machine gets locked. Even if one presses that button further or any other button, no further vote will be recorded. As soon as the voter presses the 'blue button' against the candidate and symbol of his choice, a tiny lamp on the left side of the symbol glows red and simultaneously a long beep sound is heard. Thus there is both audio and visual indications for the voter to be assured that his vote has been recorded.

### 6. Fast Process:

The pace of voting will be really very brisk under an electronic voting machine. The voter is saved of reading through the ballot paper to prefer a candidate of his choice, then make a mark against the name or symbol and ultimately folding it (some times ballot papers resemble that of a newspaper as it happened in 1997 elections in Nalagonda Constituency in Andhra Pradesh which had 256 candidates and dropping in the box. Here all that the voter has to do is to press the green button against the name or symbols. The vote is cast.

### ELECTRION PHOTO IDENTIFY CARD (EPIC)

Given the kind of electoral malpractices indulged in by the political parties, the use of voter identity card prevents electoral abuses like bogus voting and booth capturing . Given the rate of illiteracy and ignorance among the Indian masses, issue of voter identity card brings responsibility and legitimacy to elections. The political parties take max advantages of the innocent peope and manipulate their vote. If identity cards are issued it does not permit impersonation or proxy voting as identity card is a must to vote. This not only ensures the voting right for the legitimate voters but also saves the democracy an experience of dead people coming alive in elections and casting their vote, much to the disgrace of democracy.

T.N. Seshan the then CEC, tried to enforce compulsory user Photo Identity Cards but it was struck down by the Supreme Court in case of Bihar elections. It actually slowed down the momentum of EC in pursuing the issue of identity cards further. Later CEC M.S. Gill was firm that true and fair elections can be ensured only with the use of voter identity cards. He went to the extent that elections in Tamilnadu, Kerala, West Bengal and Pondicherry will not be held without the photo identity cards.

To make more and more voters exercise their franchise, the election commission is making all attempts to see that all eligible voters are provided the voter identity card at the earliest. In fact, the task undertaken in 2001 has successfully completed the process of issuing cards throughout the country. In this direction, the methods are also simplified to ensure that many get their cards. To lend real meaning to participatory democracy, the then CEC Manohar Singh Gill suggested that the voter is photographed at the booth, where he will be voting and the identity card is given within half an hour of voting. This kind of an effort helps in reaching all eligible voters.

### MANDATORY DISCLOSURE OF ANTECEDENTS OF THE CANDIDATES: CRIMINAL - EDUCATION - PROPERTY.

'Every saint has a past and every sinner a future' is a popular saying. In tune with this, it is very important for a voter to know the background of a person whom he/she is going to elect. It is very important because he may end up becoming the Prime Minister of our nation. So, a clear knowledge of the past such as the persons' criminal record, his educational accomplishments and his assets and liabilities will help making up our mind simple and easier. For instance, a candidate may be a dreaded criminal who is an underground or a corrupt person, who has amassed wealth beyond limits. If such persons are given power it becomes a licence to carry out their illegal activities. Hence, a complete knowledge of candidates is in the larger interests of the voter and the electoral process.

**CONCLUSION:**

The Representation of People Act 1951 (Section 8) bars criminals from contesting elections for a period of 6 years even if his or her appeal is pending in a higher court. The Law commission in its 170<sup>th</sup> report published in 1999 made it obligatory on every candidate to declare his or her assets or by his or her spouse and dependent relations and particulars regarding criminal cases pending against them.

The Criminal antecedents released by the Election Commission, during 1996 General Elections stated that 1500 out of 13952 candidates has a criminal background of which 520 are from Uttar Pradesh and 350 from Bihar. In Bihar there are 100 criminal gangs in operation and in Maharashtra the number is 110. In 1998 a panel comprising of Kuldeep Singh, Subramanyam, Madhav Godgole and Swami Agnivesh identified 500 Loksabha Candidates having criminal charges against them.

The Vohra Committee (1997) which went into the Criminal-Politician-Bureaucratic nexus, has clearly stated in its report that there do exist a nexus, an unholy alliance, between the politicians and criminals. It states, 'a network of mafia is virtually running a parallel government pushing the state apparatus into 'irrelevance'.

To buttress the fact, the Election Commission of India stated in its report (in 1998) that 700 Vidhan Sabha members had 40 members of Parliament have a criminal record facing charges as serious as murder, rape, extortion etc. In the present scenario, most of the political parties can't boast of being without criminal elements. The lumpenisation of politics is eating into the vitals of democratic polity.

According to the Representation of the People Act 1951 (Conduct of Election Rules, 1961) each candidate has to file an affidavit in Form 26 shall furnish the following information:

- (i) Cases in which the candidate has been accused of any offence punishable with imprisonment for two years or more in a pending case in which charges have been framed by the court.
- (ii) Cases of conviction for an offence other than any of the offences mentioned in Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and sentenced to imprisonment for one year or more.

Apart from this, the Election Commission took the view that the disqualification for contesting election came into effect on the date of conviction by the trial court irrespective of whether the convicted person was released on bail or not during the pendency of appeal.

In recent years certain groups have emerged which are committed to elimination of criminals from politics. One such group known as Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), filed a petition with Delhi High Court seeking direction to the commission to put together the information on criminality of all the candidates in the elections and make it available to the public. In this petition the Delhi High Court gave judgment which is regarded as a major step towards checking criminalization of politics. The court ordered the Election Commission to disseminate through the media, information about the criminal background of candidates in parliamentary and assembly elections.

As H.R. Bhardwaj, the former union law minister has himself said in Rajyasabha that as on 31st March 2017, there were 1300 cases pending against the members of parliament and the state legislative Assemblies.

Lack of punishment is the best reward for a criminal. Criminals should be treated as outcasts and they should have no business to make the laws affecting the nation. At present a candidate shall sign an affidavit to the effect that the contestant concerned is not suffering from any criminals disqualification.

**REFERENCER:**

1. Indian Constitution – H. T. Ramkrishna
2. Indian Constitution – K. M. Suresh
3. Indian Constitution – V. N. Khanna
4. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Philosophy, Dr. D.M. Madari Vijayapur.
5. Political Process in Indian, J.S. Patil Kalburagi.

6. Indian Constitution – C. M. Chikkodi
7. Indian Constitution - S. H. Kavante
8. Indian Political process, Dr. Pornima and Dr. Suresh Kumar
9. Current Social Problems in India – G. Subarmanya.