

Teacher's Guide

Electoral Politics

Part 4

Based on the NCERT Syllabus for Standard IX



JANAAGRAHA CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP & DEMOCRACY

Janaagraha's initiative to improve citizen engagement in India's democracy through their civic learning program

Developed in collaboration with Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC)



Electoral Politics | Teacher's Guide (4/4) Part 4

Class IX

Board – CBSE

Subject – Social Science

Textbook – Democratic Politics- I for class IX (NCERT)

Chapter 4- Electoral Politics

Number of parts – 04

Length – 50-60 minutes (estimated, for a class of 40-45 students)

Note: Teachers may divide the lesson plan into as many periods as they see fit

Section I – What are we going to learn and why is it important?

Learning objectives

Students will:

- Identify the role of the Election Commission
- Articulate the challenges to free and fair elections

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- Analyse the safeguards to maintain free and fair elections
- Suggest measures to maintain free and fair elections
- Articulate the responsibilities of an active citizen in the election process

Key Terms

Election Commission	Voter turnout
Incumbent	Rigging



Section II – How are we going to learn?

1. Democratic Elections: Purpose and Consequence

Time: 15 minutes

Note to the teacher:

- The aim of this activity is for students to realise the consequences of unfair election practices. In groups, students will read about a situation related to unfair election practices.
- Based on the situation they must form a 'what if' question or a question that asks what would happen if this situation actually came true. This question will be answered by another group. They must list the consequences of this situation coming true in India.

Facilitation Notes:

- In the last class we studied about the campaigning process for candidates and the rules that govern the process. Can anyone remind us what these rules are called and why they are needed? (Take 3-4 responses)
- Excellent! The most important reason to have the Model Code of Conduct is to make sure that elections are conducted in a fair manner and lead to a democratic government that works for the welfare of all people.
- To get a deeper understanding of why it is so important that elections are conducted fairly, let's play a game of 'What if'.
- Each group has been given a few news reports or headlines related to elections across the world. One by one, each group will ask a 'What if' question related to that report and another group must answer it.
- Let me give you an example, this newspaper report says

The presidential elections of 2013 in Zimbabwe were branded a 'masterclass in electoral fraud' as millions of anti-Mugabe (the sitting President) voters were not allowed to register and others intimidated by the government.

- So my 'what if' question is 'What if people who are against the ruling party are not allowed to register as voters in India?'
What would happen if this 'what if' statement came true, according to you? Who would like to answer this question? (Take 2-3 responses)
- You are all correct! The ruling party will probably win the elections. People may protest against these unfair elections and lose faith in the election process.

- Now let's try this again, each group will read their news report and frame a 'what if' question for another group to answer. Remember you must list all the consequences if that 'what if' scenario came true. Each member of the group should try to give one consequence.

In country 'PQR', there is no check on election expenses. Parties supported by big businessman often spend lavishly right before the elections.

Expected question: What if parties could spend any amount of money on elections?

In the state 'ABC' voters are tired of the corrupt government and have been protesting against the government. Some protestors got together to form their own political party and wish to contest in the upcoming elections. They are seeking donations from the people in order to organise rallies. The ruling party has large sums of money and have been accused of offering household appliances in return for votes.

Expected question: What if the ruling party offered bribes in return for votes?

On the day of polling in rural constituency 'PQR', the largest polling booth was captured by a group of local goons who stood inside the polling booth armed with sticks. Wearing the symbol of party 'ABC', they kept a watch on the votes being cast. Many voters were fearful of voting against party ABC and therefore decided to turn back.

Expected question: What if the ruling party supervised the voting process?

In constituency 'XYZ', polling agents of some candidates were forbidden from entering the polling booth on the day of counting.

Expected question: What if polling agents of all candidates were not allowed inside polling booths on the day of counting?

Many voters in constituency 'X' went to their polling booth to cast their vote. Many of them found that their names were no longer in the voting list, even though they had voted in previous election.

Expected question: What if names of voters were deleted from voting lists?

In country 'ABC' there are only two main political parties. They both promote very similar policies. The main difference is the candidates.

Expected question: What if the choices offered to voters are very similar?

In state 'XYZ', the same family has been ruling for many years. The party keeps issuing tickets to members of the same family.

Expected question: What if parties offer tickets only to those from political families?

2. Consequences of unfair elections: Popular Participation

Time: 15 minutes

Note to the teacher: In this activity, students will watch a video to understand the disadvantages of low voter turnout and fill up a flow chart. (printable version can be found in the Appendix)

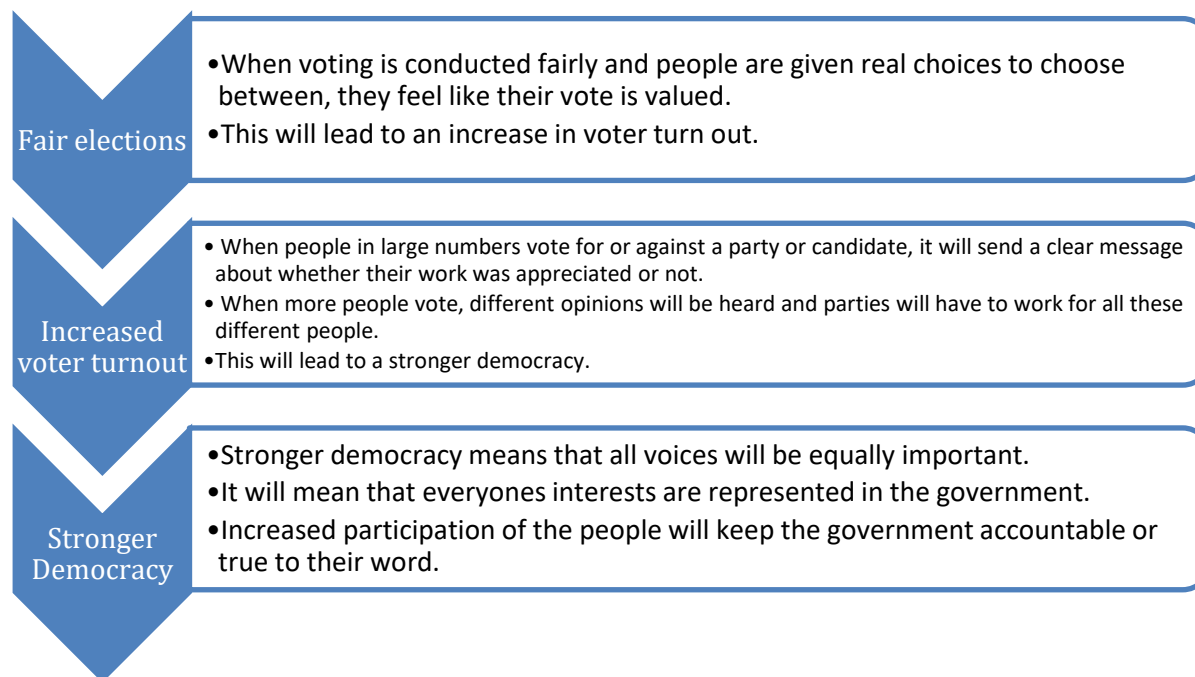
Facilitation Notes:

- The last activity helped us understand the consequences of unfair elections.
- Let's consider the scenario that there are elections for the student council in school. Students in large numbers vote for the candidates of their choice and finally a student council is elected. However, it comes to your knowledge that the Principal chose the Council without considering the votes candidates received. Would you then want to vote in the next election? Why or why not? (Take responses)
- One of the biggest consequences of unfair elections will be that people will lose faith in the election process. Is there any way to measure how many people think the election is fair or unfair? (Take responses)
- Exactly! Voter turnout can tell us whether people believe that the election process is fair. People may not see the point in voting if they think the result is pre-decided and their vote has no value.
- Look at the pie chart on page 71 of your books. What does that tell us? (Take responses)
- Correct! It tells us that a majority of the population believes that their vote has value.

- In the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections 66% of the population cast their vote. Look at the graph on page 70 of your books. What does that tell us? (Take responses)
- Correct! It tells us that voter turnout has been increasing in India while it has been decreasing in the UK. But why is the voter turnout so important? We will still have a government even if very few people vote. So, what's the problem with a small voter turnout? (Take responses)
- Let's watch a video to find out. Remember to make notes as you watch the video.



- So what are the dangers of not voting? (Take responses)
- These are all good points. People's opinion will not be heard, there will be no check on governments and someone else will make decisions for you!
- Our democracy will not be truly representative if everyone doesn't choose their representative.
- Let's fill the flow chart in the worksheet to deepen our understanding. In the first box next to 'fair election, you must explain how fair elections will lead to better voter turnout.
 - In the second box, you must explain how better voter turnout will lead to a stronger democracy.
 - In the third box, you must explain the benefits of a stronger democracy. You can discuss the answers with your partner before filling the flow chart. You have 5 minutes to complete the chart!





3. Outcomes of Elections: Discussion

Time: 5-7 minutes

Facilitation Notes:

- In your opinion, what would be the outcome of unfair elections? (Take responses)
- In the 2019 elections, after the results were announced, Rahul Gandhi of the Congress party said "Frankly, today is the not the day to discuss what I think went wrong because people of India have clearly decided that Narendra Modi is going to be their Prime Minister and as an Indian I respect that"
- Do you think he has accepted the result of the election? (Take responses)
- Do you think he would have accepted the result if he believed that the elections were unfair? If you were the leader of a political party would you accept the results of a rigged or unfair election? (Take responses)

- The outcome of an election tells us about its fairness. Let's look at the example of Turkey. The 24th Turkish general election was held on June 7, 2015.
- The ruling party was accused of committing election fraud like the use of state resources, incorrect voter data, media biased, and intimidation. These accusations led to political violence and vandalism especially of candidates' properties. The Volunteer Election Monitoring Group and other election monitoring groups claimed that the ruling party as well as other parties had recorded extra votes leading to politically motivated violence through the country.
- What do you think the outcome of such an election would be? Would all parties accept the verdict that would come not? (Take 2-3 responses)
- The outcome was that no political party could get a majority, including the ruling party. No coalition government could be formed as the ruling party kept pushing for early elections which finally took place on 1st November 2015.

4. How can we have free and fair elections? – Election Commission

Time: 10 minutes

Note to the teacher:

- The aim of this activity is for students to identify the role of the Election Commission (EC) in conducting free and fair elections.
- Students will read several statements to identify functions of the EC.

Facilitation Notes:

- Now that we know the importance of free and fair elections, let's talk about what we can do to make elections free and fair. To begin with, can you think of any group or body that works towards this cause? (Take responses)
- That's right- The Election Commission! The Commission is responsible for conducting free and fair elections.
- In India, The EC is an independent body. This means that the EC is not answerable to the Government. So, whether the government likes or dislikes the decisions of the EC, they cannot remove them.
- The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) or the head of the EC is appointed by the President of India. However, the Chief Election Commissioner is not answerable to the President or the government. Their decisions cannot be questioned or changed by the Government. Why do you think it is important for the Election Commission to be an independent body? (Take responses)
- Being independent from the Government means that the EC does not depend on the government and cannot be pressurised or influenced by it. It is free to take its decisions.
- You already know of some ways in which the EC keeps the elections free and fair. Look at the statements on the board and identify the statements that are functions of the EC. Make a note of these functions in your notebook. You have 5-7 minutes to note the correct functions of the EC.

1. The EC issues tickets to candidates on behalf of political parties.
2. The EC announces and decides all the important dates of the election process.
3. The EC issues EPIC or Election Photo Identity Cards.
4. The EC chooses the Prime Minister from the winning party.
5. The EC implements the Model Code of Conduct and can punish any candidate for violating it.
6. The EC can issue guidelines for the Government to follow so it does not misuse its power.
7. The EC can make laws on behalf of the government.
8. The EC keeps a watch on safety and security of polling booths.
9. The EC can order a repoll if polling was not fair in some constituencies.
10. The EC monitors and can ban any inappropriate political ads and posters.

(2,3,5,6,8,9 and 10 are functions of the EC)

Debrief:

- Discuss the functions of the EC, as listed above.



5. What can we do to keep the elections fair and free?

Time: 10 minutes

Note to the teacher:

Through this activity, students will be exposed to challenges to fair and free elections. 3 scenarios of malpractices (given below) should be written on the board, along with the table to articulate solutions. Students will analyse the scenario and possible solutions. After they fill the table, you should discuss 5-7 student responses with the class.

Facilitation Notes:

- Now that we are aware of the challenges to free and fair elections, let's see if we can even find solutions.
- Imagine that as a citizen you become aware of certain electoral malpractices. As an active citizen, what would you do in order to address these issues?
- The different scenarios are listed on the board:
 1. You overhear a conversation between 2 party members. They are discussing the party's policy of giving a 'ticket' to people from political families and how the merits of other candidates are often not even considered.
 2. It has come to your attention that a local goon from your constituency has got a party 'ticket' to contest the elections by threatening the other potential candidate and forcing him to opt out of the race.
 3. The 2 major political parties and their candidates in your constituency barely differ from each other in their ideas. Meanwhile, an independent candidate has been gaining popularity due to his actions and plans for the area but lacks resources to campaign actively. It comes to your attention that the other 2 candidates have coordinated with each other to organize bigger rallies with local celebrities on days when the independent candidate seeks to hold rallies.
- Fill up the table, as made on the board, to give structure to your ideas. Given that these issues affect thousands of people, you will need support to solve them. Therefore, first identify who you will approach to help you and then explain what they can do to help. For example, you may approach

the Election Commission by writing a letter or email to them to help solve the problem. So, in the last column, you should explain the steps that the EC can take to fix the problem.

Scenario	Who can you approach to help solve the problem?	What steps can be taken to solve the problem?
1		
2		
3		

Exemplar response:

Scenario	Who can you approach to help solve the problem?	What steps can be taken to solve the problem?
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local journalist 2. President of the Political Party 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An article or news highlighting the instance can make voters aware about the practice and vote accordingly. 2. A letter or email to Party Leaders discussing the problem may encourage them to re-think their policies.
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Election Commission 2. President or other party leaders of the parties involved 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An email/letter to the election commission informing them of the incident. 2. An email/letter to party leaders may encourage party leaders to re-consider their choices
3		

Section III- Assessment –Time: 5 minutes

Q.1. Here are some facts on Indian elections. Comment on each of these to say whether they reflect the strength or the weakness of our electoral system:

- The Lok Sabha has had less than 10 per cent women members till 2009.
- The Election Commission often refuses to accept the government's advice about when the elections should be held.
- The 14th Lok Sabha has more than 145 members whose assets are more than Rs.1 crore.
- After losing an election the Chief Minister said: "I respect the people's verdict".

Answer Key:

- The Lok Sabha has had less than 10 per cent women members till 2009.
(This is a weakness of the system as the Lok Sabha is not truly representative. It has only 10% representation for half its population i.e. women)
- The Election Commission often refuses to accept the government's advice about when the elections should be held.
(This is a strength of the Commission as it ensures that the EC does not have to face any pressure from the government and can conduct free and fair elections)
- The 14th Lok Sabha has more than 145 members whose assets are more than Rs.1 crore.
(This is a weakness of the system as it shows that the Lok Sabha is not truly representative for the economically backward. It may also suggest that those with more resources find it easier to win election even if they may not be the ideal candidate)
- After losing an election the Chief Minister said: "I respect the people's verdict".
(This is a strength of the system as it shows that even political leaders have faith in the election process and its fairness)

Q.2. Here are some reports of electoral malpractices from different parts of the world. Is there anything that these countries can learn from India to improve their elections? What would you suggest in each case?

a) During an election in Nigeria, the officer in charge of counting votes deliberately increased the votes of one candidate and declared him elected. The court later found out that more than five lakh votes cast for one candidate were counted in favour of another.

b) Just before elections in Fiji, a pamphlet was distributed warning voters that a vote for former Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry will lead to bloodshed. This was a threat to voters of Indian origin.



c) In the US, each state has its own method of voting, its own procedure of counting and its own authority for conducting elections. Authorities in the state of Florida took many controversial decisions that favoured Mr. Bush in the presidential elections in 2000. But no one could change those decisions.

Answer Key:

a) During an election in Nigeria, the officer in charge of counting votes deliberately increased the votes of one candidate and declared him elected. The court later found out that more than five lakh votes cast for one candidate were counted in favour of another.

(A representative of each candidate should be present at the counting location)

b) Just before elections in Fiji, a pamphlet was distributed warning voters that a vote for former Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry will lead to bloodshed. This was a threat to voters of Indian origin.

(There should be a Code of Conduct for candidates to follow such that it allows free and fair elections. There should be severe consequences for candidates who violate the Code and are found guilty of violating the principle of free and fair elections. There should also be a platform where citizens can raise complaints about unfair practices.)

c) In the US, each state has its own method of voting, its own procedure of counting and its own authority for conducting elections. Authorities in the state of Florida took many controversial decisions that favoured Mr. Bush in the presidential elections in 2000. But no one could change those decisions.

(There should be an independent Election Commission to investigate all election malpractices. The Commission should establish strict rules or laws regarding the Government's involvement in the election process)

Homework:

Here are some reports of malpractices in Indian elections. Identify what the problem in each case is. What should be done to correct the situation?

a) Following the announcement of elections, the minister promised to provide financial aid to reopen the closed sugar mill.

(Malpractice- As per election laws, no large schemes or initiatives can be started by Ministers following the announcement of elections.

The Minister's action should be reported to the Election Commission and necessary actions should be taken against the Minister)

b) Opposition parties alleged that their statements and campaign was not given due attention in Doordarshan and All India Radio.

(Malpractice: As per election laws, the Government's resources should not be used for campaigning by the ruling party.)



A complaint should be filed with the Election Commission and the ruling party should no longer be allowed to use government resources like All India Radio and Doordarshan for their own election campaign)

c) An inquiry by the Election Commission showed that electoral rolls of a state contain name of 20 lakh fake voters.

(Malpractice: Voting Lists should contain names of only those citizens who are allowed to vote. Addition of fake voters could lead to the election of the wrong candidate or election by unfair means.

A re-count should take place in a fair manner)

d) The hoodlums of a political party were moving with guns, physically preventing supporters of other political parties to meet the voters and attacking meetings of other parties.

(Malpractice: Using violence to gather votes is against the principle of free and fair elections.

A complaint should be filed with the Election Commission against the Political Party. The Election Commission should take strict actions against the party and its members)

Section V – Additional Resources

Resources for teachers

1. Article: [Cause and consequences of voter turnout](#)

This study by Harvard Dash presents case studies to highlight causes and consequences of voter turnout.

Resources for students

1. Article: [Most Rigged And Corrupt Elections In Modern World History](#)

The Article lists unfair electoral practices across the world.

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