

Electoral Reforms - The Road to strengthen Indian Democracy

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Abstract: Elections are an integral part of every country political system. Elections decide what will be the future of the country for the next five years. In India election are an vital element of politics .With the advancement in technology and rise in globalisation, we require a change in the electoral system, as the old method has resulted in massive corruption, casteism and violence, India lacks proper management system when it comes to contesting elections followed by their are lack of staffs members available, India held a number of elections which requires vast amount of finance. The Election Commission of India has introduced several reforms from time to time in the conduct of elections in the country starting from ballot papers to electronic voting machine , proxy voting for NRI and service voters , introduction of partial rights to rejection through NOTA (None of the above) ,Introduction of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail for reinforcing transparency in the voting , Introduction of Electors Photo Identity card to pre-empt impersonation and bogus voting , conduct of elections under the supervision of ECI and Central Police Forces. and introduction of a model code of conduct (MCC) still we face a number of problems which calls for electoral reforms for a democratic India when a deserving candidate win the election , We need to apply section 125A, 126 of the representation of people act 1951 , restricted paid news with election connection , restricted government sponsored advertisement, moratorium on exit and opinion polls on news media , We need to add prohibition over antonym donation over political parties and many others .

Keywords: Elections, electoral reforms, corruption, lack of proper management system, Election Commission of India Democratic India

Introduction

Electoral system can be delineated as relocation of votes recorded by voters in election into seats won by parties and candidates Different electoral system capitulate different results and forms of representation. India uses First past –the post system one person, one vote. the person who receives maximum vote in the constituency wins the elections .It is based on categorical ballot where a person decides the candidate he will vote for .The first past the post system is a simple method which allows people to choose between parties and candidates which also provides stability and can be described as the merit of predominance of conclusiveness over representation. It provides the opportunity to form majority governances which is fast and conclusive, this guarantees stability of power and fast implementation of policies .Another positive point about first past the post system is, it gives rise to strong oppositions by virtue of opposition getting enough seats to perform an important role , this system is also inclusive it allows independent candidates who do not belong to any party to stand for elections , the parties are diverse in nature which appease to different groups so that they can feed the different demands and aspirations of people living in different parts and under different environment. Geographic accountability –since people are elected from specific constituencies, they are compel to work for the betterment of people as their re-election is dependent on these people. One of the biggest disadvantage with the Indian Electoral system is: it excludes women and minorities from fair elections, as parties tend to put out the most admissible person as the candidate from a particular constituency, because of societal pressure and norms these candidates turn out to be women or a person belonging to the minority class. It has significant insinuation because the structure of the parliament bear the problem of lack of representatives i.e 50% of the population in the country , at the end laws which are made are biased towards women and minorities. The candidates cosset in vote-bank politics and sectoral politics to win elections , the candidates talk about issues and make fake problems to secure vote from public by appealing their emotions and beliefs, these people are the minorities and disadvantage section who suffer from serious economic and social problems. Disproportionality between the number of votes won by parties and share of seats won by them is never same. The party winning the election is not the one who receives the most number of votes .This calls for electoral reforms in India will the aim of achieving fair elections and providing opportunities to people who deserve to win, with the creation of proper infrastructure and bringing in scientific advancement for development.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this exploration, I have used a amalgamation of two of the archetypical social sciences research tools application –as they are authentic and brilliant method to assemble statistics from multiple appellant in an methodical and convenient way. Question were asked to the parents and their children, survey, interviews –consisting of several interrogation which were dispersed among representative of each contender group.

Objective of the Research Paper

The main areas of exploration in this paper incorporates

1. Election system in India
2. Why India requires Electoral Reforms in India .
3. What changes have been made over the years in the electoral system

4. How can we overcome the challenges of Electoral Reforms.

Literature Review

India is a democratic country and elections are a very integral part of it. The Election Commission of India has been empowered with the authority to conduct elections, a permanent constitutional body. The electoral Commission of India conducts elections all through the year, elections to the parliamentary, different state assemblies and local bodies including panchayats. Being a first past post system where every head counts where electoral numbers make all the differences in deciding the fate of a candidate in an election, the political parties in India have generally taken the populist route in this country to win the elections and using the weapon of caste to gather majority support, as India society based on orthodox believes. Many a times we finding Political leaders getting hold of illegal immigrants and getting them registered as Indian citizens, as a voter in the country.

The Election Commission of India has introduced several reforms from time to time in the conduct of elections in the country starting from ballot papers to electronic voting machine, proxy voting for NRI and service voters, introduction of partial rights to rejection through NOTA (None of the above), Introduction of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail for reinforcing transparency in the voting, Introduction of Electors Photo Identity card to pre-empt impersonation and bogus voting, conduct of elections under the supervision of ECI and Central Police Forces. And introduction of a model code of conduct (MCC), still we face a lot of problems in conducting of election in India in a proper manner. Majority system is also a very big problem in India. It decides on the basis of majority among the contest without taking the voting percentage into account. A person who has received less than 25 percent of the total vote is declared as the winner. Government machinery is utilized by the both the central and state government for their selfish purpose, where we see Government Issue advertisement with photos even before elections with public money.

Government vehicles, bureaucracy are used for the party benefits. Muscle power and control are another major issue in Indian electoral system boot capturing, improvise, giving threat voters are some forms of muscle power, Criminalization of Politics in our present political system is a very serious problem. Law makers should not be trained with criminal charges and should be kept away. Non-serious independent candidate –serious candidates float non-serious in elections to cut a good portion of the votes that would otherwise have gone to rival candidates, Casteism-Caste has been used as a weapon by many political parties to gather support and caste groups also try to pressurize parties to offer tickets for their members elections. Voting on caste lines is accepted in India and this is a serious blotch on democracy and equality. This also leads to rift in the country. Communalism is a matter of concern which causes serious threat to the Indian political ethos of secularism and federalism, there is lack of moral values in the political leaders, Indian political system is a product of corruption, people enter the political system to make money and be power, and no one is concern for the development of Nation.

Findings

The ECI has taken a steps in recent times to ensure free and fair election for cutting down electoral malpractices, posting of external election observers, videography and photography of critical electoral processes and events including sensitive polling booths. The very fact that the distribution of elector's photo identity cards have still not reached all parts of the country, as the country is moving towards digitalisation, the concept on online voting is taking grounds but not in practice which shall not only be cheaper but also efficient and effective that would reduce the need to make arrangements for elections which requires a lot of money, space and time.

EPIC has been successful to a great extent in preventing bogus voting but it still requires improvement, frequent reports of tampering with the cards and recovery of fake EPICs have been set has proved of the existing of shortcuts and unlawful means to win election. There has been some bio-metric identification feature added to the EPIC to stop fake or tampering EPIC.

Electoral Voting Machine (EVM) has its negative impact also, contesting candidates and the political parties get to know which polling station has voted for them and which are not in prefer of them, this was not possible in ballot voting system, ballot papers of particular constituency where duly bundled and mixed before they were counted, it is difficult to identify voting trends. EVM counting process, helps us to know who all have voted in favour of which candidate and which political party, by which a political party is able to recognise the rival and victimise them, the government of India is introducing something called Totalize which would prevent any such step as it is against the norms of democracy. However EVM has been successful in removing the money power which candidates used as a weapon to gain domination and win, which would have forced candidates to indulge in corrupt practices as the financial requirement of an Indian election is very huge

The presences of undemocratic parties in a democratic country, the political parties who talk about political ethics and values, themselves run undemocratic organizations, most of the parties seldom conduct their organisational elections to elect various functionaries. Entry into the political party's managerial position is very blurred. States like Haryana have imposed minimum educational and other qualifications including owing a sanitary toilets for being eligible to contest educational, same kind of qualifications to be introduced for legislators too, if there is minimum qualification required for a peon or clerk then why should lawmakers be left behind who will hold important positions like Chief Minister, Prime Minister, Ministers. This kind of imposing will restrict many voters from participating in the election process, which calls for debates on such advisable qualifications. Compulsory voting has been recommended by many, as part of a democratic society. Voting should be made compulsory and mandatory for the voters to have a representative government and the candidate much poll at least 51% of votes before being declared as elected.

There is a need for the appointment of a full time officers and staff members for managing the section at the district level. It is difficult for the district Magistrate who in his capacity as the District election officer also has to do different election related work with his regular officers and staff members. There has been lack of staff members available as the many government departments

including education, relief, women and child development, health and backward classes departments have issued specific direction against engaging their staffs member in election work as just engagements have a negative impact on the normal functioning of these departments. The district administration is therefore finding it increasingly difficult to rope in the services of line department officers and staff for electoral purpose. The school department has the largest number of teachers as employees who are engaged in election and other works around the year their basic job suffers, the Supreme Court of India has completely banned the employment of school teachers, which has made the situation more difficult for the district administration. We require a complete separate infrastructure and dedicated manpower for the purpose of attending to various electoral needs of the country, a country with a humongous size and three tiered governance structure which calls for a complete new installation of the development and electoral activities. Post-poll violence is a major problem in recent times with the introduction of EVM. The voters and workers of opposite party or rival party are victimised once the elections is over.

Introduction of alphabetically arranged electoral roll at such VABs has been a good beginning and should be continued. Such electoral roll should also be there at the permanent EPIC Centres. Further steps must be taken to completely rule out the spectre of booth-jamming and booth capturing.

Electoral reforms refers to bringing in better practices for ensuring smooth democracy, fair elections, no casteisms and communalism in the voting process, clean politics and ideal and deserving members to be part of the ruling body and in over legislature, election process should represent the current and should not be forced upon contemporary society, to prevent criminalisation of politics and stop the misuse of government machinery, prohibit the use of money and muscle power in the contest of election, to remove non-serious candidates to contest in the election, Elections needs to be neutral and post election violence should be prevented, Electoral reforms are required to intensify the trust in the eyes of citizens towards electoral processes. Use technology as a means to improve the election process and be in synch with modern days method.

ECI has taken a step which imposes that the election agents of the contesting candidates have to from the same polling booth areas and a registered voter of that area. This step has been taken because of reported induction of imported goons as election agents by some political parties which would plant dummy candidates to have these goons masquerade as election agents within the booth premises thereby making it easier for them to engage in all sorts of activities in favour or against of particular candidate. The electronic machine has still not reached the local bodies, EVM should reach the local bodies as they are the base upon which the whole democracy lies ECI should make sure that monitory punishment is dispensed to those who are involved both directly and indirectly in aiding and abetting electoral malpractices.

It is very convenience to find out voting patterns when elections are conducted through electronic voting machine, which requires a serious opinion as this is a negative and regressive way, whereas the manual system in the ballot paper it was difficult to find out the voting pattern as different polling booths were mixed before counting to prevent identification of voting pattern and consequent victimisation of the voters. Rationalisation of polling booths, there should not be more than one polling booth in a premises, locating more than one polling booth at the same place makes the task of security forces difficult in the occurrence of law and order problem. We also find voter having problem in locating their booth at such multi-premises. The ECI has introduced the concept of Voter Assistance Booth for multi-booth premises in the recent assembly elections.

In order to stop the populist routes taken by the political parties serious talks on issuing identity cards to citizens in the border areas to distinguish the infiltrators from the genuine citizens. There has been a proposal to grant citizenship to all such illegal voters and start taking all kind of precaution from now on to effectively tackle the immigration menace in this country, We require strict action from our border security and intelligence team

The MCC imposition and norms which ECI so religiously and steadily enforces during elections often seem to have gone overboard, Now that election are stretched over two to three months, the developmental work almost come to a screeching halt. Even though dawning and critical works are allowed but the approval procedures are meticulous that more than not many welfare and development interest of the common people stand endanger.

Suggestion

As we know India represent a humongous democratic system across the world over all paradigm so there are several fundamental criteria for assess and electoral reform

1. Being a participant of the largest democratic electoral system we need to reform our electoral system on technical basis by providing quick and efficient electoral outcomes in every possible situation. Inconsistency, impracticability and vigorousness in an electoral reform depress technique merit and transform the system in a surprising way such as conflicting pressure a rational compromises, tiecemeal decision making. In the short term the legitimates of an electoral law over technique merit is a direct result of democratic availability towards proportional electoral system which consist an attractive balanced governability, varying flexibility, preventive reformation, optimal representation of candidates with authoritarian legacy which will maximize the changes of popular legitimise to prohibit all negative side effect of electoral reformation.
2. We need to analyse the impact of electoral reforms on women representation as in recent decades an inclusive democracy have witnessed growing demand for the inclusion of women and minorities which will articulate different prospects on political issue. In the light of this global pattern the contemporary record on average district magnitude, several party ideology and there consistent association, use of gender quota, level of proportionality will create an impact over all regime.
3. We need to overcome election management issues, election officials and their logistics, candidate nomination under the amendment to the constitution of India.
4. We need to decriminalise our politics by avoiding religion aspects for electoral profit, election bribery as a cognizable offence
5. We need to apply section 125A, 126 of the representation of people act 1951, restricted paid news with election connection, restricted government sponsored advertisement, moratorium on exit and opinion polls on news media.

6. We need to add prohibition over antonym donation over political parties
7. We need make compulsory to produce audit report of all political parties and deregister the odd ones .we also provide tax realise for political parties and keep an eye on expenditure cause by electoral parties for campaign
8. We need to introduce an independent constitutional body which will have a separate secretarial of its own with the service condition of its officers and staffs being regulated by the rules made by the president under article 209 of the constitution , in this reformation lower level officer are the primary or the permanent body and higher officials such as level of deputy , joint , election commission are appointed on a tenure basis on deployment from civil serviced as previously Goswami committee on electoral reforms in 1990 .

Conclusion

Indian electoral system is backed by corruption, regionalism, communalism and casteism .Being a democratic country, we don't follow the democratic system in the true sense of the term .Right to vote is a fundamental right which should be available to everyone without any discrimination on the basis of caste, sex and religion. In India politics is run by the business of religion and caste, the lower caste are manipulated and given fake promises to gain vote. Electoral Voting Machine (EVM) has its negative impact also, contesting candidates and the political parties get to know which polling station has voted for them and which are not in prefer of them, this was not possible in ballot voting system, ballot papers of particular constituency where duly bundled and mixed before they were counted, it is difficult to identify voting trends. The government from time to time has introduced many changes in the election system which had both positive and negative impact on its people.

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