

# The ELECTORAL LITERACY CLUB

JESUS & MARY COLLEGE

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

FROM THE TEACHER'S DESK

MEET THE CORE TEAM

INTRODUCTION, TIMELINE AND THE  
IMPORTANCE OF ELC

HISTORICAL ELECTIONS IN INDIA

TIMELINE

EVMS AND BALLOT PAPER, A COMPARATIVE  
ANALYSIS OF VOTING SYSTEMS

THE INDIFFERENT VOTER

A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO FUNDAMENTAL  
RIGHTS AND DUTIES

OPINION PIECE: SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS  
IN INDIA, 'ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION'!

FROM THE SILENCE OF OPPRESSION TO THE  
VOICES OF BREAKTHROUGH

ELECTIONS AROUND THE WORLD

1952 BLOSSOMS OF BALLOTS

WORDSEARCH

ACTIVITIES DONE BY ELC JMC 2023-2025

INTERVIEW WITH DISTRICT ICON

ACTIVITIES - CROSSWORD AND QUIZ

# Letter from the Editor

By Daksayani Chandra

Dearest Readers,

It is with great honour and excitement that I present to you the very first edition of the Electoral Literacy Club (ELC), Jesus and Mary College's Newsletter. This newsletter marks a significant milestone for the ELC, reflecting the tireless efforts of a team committed to fostering voter awareness and democratic values among students.

My journey with the ELC began in its nascent stages in 2023, as the club laid its foundation as a new society on campus, working in alignment with the guidelines laid down by the Election Commission of India (ECI). As the first General Secretary of this remarkable initiative, I was determined to create a platform that not only educated but also empowered students to recognize their role as responsible citizens in a democracy.

The past year has been a whirlwind of activities and learnings. From organizing thought-provoking events such as Ballot Bistro and Democracy Walls to conducting impactful Voter Registration Drives, the ELC has grown into a dynamic community that actively engages with the core values of electoral literacy. This newsletter is a culmination of our shared vision—to inform, inspire, and instil the importance of electoral participation among our peers.

Democracy thrives on the collective power of informed voters. Every vote cast shapes the nation's future, reminding us that the true strength of democracy lies in the hands of its citizens. By engaging actively, we ensure that our voices are heard and that governance reflects the will of the people.

As I reflect on this journey, I am filled with gratitude for the support and enthusiasm of my fellow ELC members, faculty advisors, and, most importantly, the students who have embraced this cause wholeheartedly. Together, we are building a legacy of informed and empowered voters, one step at a time.

Thank you for being a part of this historic moment. I look forward to your feedback, suggestions, and continued participation in our upcoming endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

*Daksayani Chandra*

Editor,  
Vice President, Electoral Literacy Club,  
Jesus and Mary College.



# *From The Teacher's Desk*

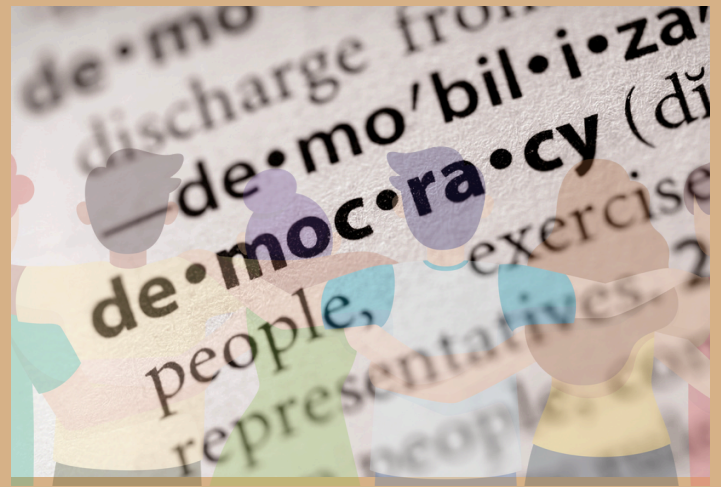
## **THE BINDING AGENT IN DEMOCRACY**

V ALAN BOSCO

Guy de Maupassant in his short story 'Solitude' ponders "We are all in a desert. Nobody understands anybody", and then asks "Does the earth know what passes in those stars that are hurled like a spark of fire across the firmament – so far that we perceive only the splendour of some?" It is a difficult process for a human being to understand another, this much is clear to thinkers of all ages. Great institutions are founded on this understanding...of the innumerable efforts to understand each other. Understanding! Efforts! But understanding isn't enough, efforts aren't enough. Togetherness requires one to sacrifice one's own identity for the whole, and this is the foundation of great institutions. Sacrifice!

In the present world where everyone seeks their individual identities, the need for recognition has created havoc to society and its institutions. A process clearly visible in social media and its various forms. Togetherness collapses where even the powerful desires recognition, where the powerful alone appropriate spaces of efforts. Togetherness in a college requires the institutionally powerful teachers to take a step back and give space to students. ELC is that splendour where students argue with each other amicably during the multiple elections it holds, and teachers bask in the glory of the democratic processes.

Are students conscious of the power and powerlessness of students fraternity themselves? Are teachers and students conscious of the power that come from their own individual positioning in language, religion, caste, politics and even a great institution? The complexity and limitations of the very process of 'understanding', 'efforts' and 'sacrifice' come to the fore when we try to answer these questions. Nowhere this process becomes more entrenched in its own complexities than in Democracy.



Democracy is not a natural process but it is a necessary process. Nature is unequal and equality exists only historically. The existence of individuals in historical circumstances necessitates the existence of democracy. While an individual functions through relationships, democracy gives rise to institutions. Institutions have the task of socialising the individual in the democratic process and socialising in the process of elections. The desire of the individual to interact with another is so intuitive that it doesn't always exist in its purest form, but rather in habits of the society. Socialisation in the process of elections is the foundation of relationship – of togetherness. Students have to be inclusive, in the process sacrificing their individuality. Togetherness would have to be founded on the intuitive desire to communicate and not run after recognition. This is the challenge our ELC society faces – to bring students of diverse backgrounds together for the greater good of being, of togetherness.





Ananya Raghuwanshi, President



Daksayani Chandra, Vice President

# Meet The Core Team



Manasvi Singh, General Secretary



Sweety Sonawat, Convenor



Anshika Vashisht, Campus Ambassador

# AN INTRODUCTION :

## BY ANNANYA RANA

### Electoral Literacy Clubs: Building an Informed Electorate in Delhi

Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) have been established across Delhi as part of a nationwide initiative to promote electoral literacy among citizens engagingly. Spearheaded by the Election Commission of India (ECI) under its Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program, these clubs strengthen democracy by fostering informed participation.

### Why Electoral Literacy Clubs?

Civic studies often lack practical information on electoral participation, such as voter registration and using Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), leading to low engagement among young voters. The idea of forming ELCs emerged from a 2017 working group analysis, which highlighted the need to cultivate a culture of electoral participation.

ELCs empower first-time voters, particularly those aged 18-21, by familiarizing them with the voting process and fostering responsibility toward the democratic system. They uphold the principle of "No Voter to Be Left Behind," ensuring every eligible citizen registers and votes.

### Formation and Structure

ELCs in Delhi are primarily set up in colleges, with participation open to all students. Each club is led by a faculty convener and engages students through activities like mock elections, quizzes, debates, and role-plays that simulate real electoral scenarios. These clubs extend to schools and rural communities, promoting hands-on voter education and confidence in using EVMs and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs). Since 2023, the ELC at Jesus and Mary College has conducted impactful activities such as Voter Awareness Walks, Registration Drives, and Documentary Screenings to spread awareness.

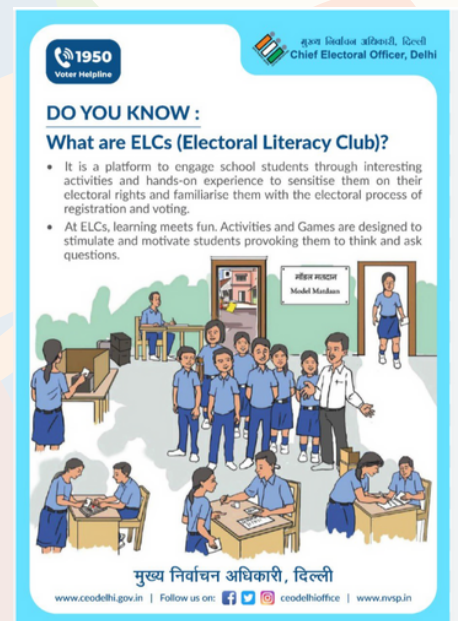
### Objectives and Importance

#### Primary Objectives:

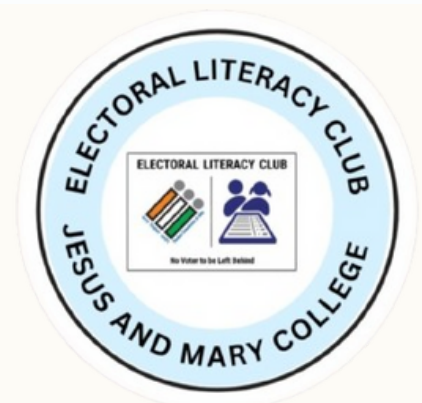
- **Voter Education:** Inform citizens about voter registration and the integrity of electoral processes.
- **Empowering Young Voters:** Encourage ethical, confident participation.
- **Community Engagement:** Mobilize ELC members to spread electoral literacy locally.
- **Promoting Participation:** Cultivate informed, ethical voting habits.

### Conclusion

ELCs are pivotal in fostering an informed electorate and strengthening democracy. As a member since 2023, I have seen how these clubs empower students, particularly in an all-girls institution like ours, to raise awareness and inspire active participation. They demonstrate the power of collective action in shaping a vibrant democratic society.



**No Voter to be Left Behind**





# HISTORICAL ELECTIONS IN INDIA

By Trikkur S. Lakshmi

*'The ballot is stronger than a bullet' - Abraham Lincoln.*

**History is made every time a voter chooses to use the right to suffrage. Every voter who stands at a polling booth reinforces democracy by standing up for their voices, and their opinions. To understand the vibrance of the Indian State, the Electoral Literacy Club brings you a piece on the historic elections of India.**

## 1952

### Independent India conducts its first democratic election

India attained independence in the glorious autumn of 1947, but the reality of Gandhi's dream was darkened by the tragedy of Partition. It would take four years for India to unite Delhi with 584 Princely States and establish a fully functioning legislature. Among India's historic elections, none are as momentous as the first election of a united and independent India.

In March 1950, Sukumar Sen was appointed as the first Chief Election Commissioner. Soon after, the Representation of People Act, 1951, was passed, laying the foundation for free and fair elections. India's first general election was held between 25th October 1951 and 21st February 1952. Himachal Pradesh voted early due to harsh winters, while Jammu & Kashmir was excluded because of socio-political instability and inadequate infrastructure. The state eventually participated in its first parliamentary elections in 1967.

This election was a colossal undertaking—the largest the world had witnessed, with 68 phases of voting, 53 political parties, and 533 Independent candidates. A staggering 173 million voters were registered, embodying India's commitment to universal suffrage. For the first time, citizens above 21, regardless of gender, religion, caste, or class, had the right to vote.

The Indian National Congress (INC), led by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, emerged victorious, securing 44% of the votes and 364 out of 489 seats. The Socialist Party of India stood a distant second with 11% votes and 12 seats. Nehru's campaign, marked by his vision of "Naya Hindustan," struck a chord with the people.

Nehru served as Prime Minister until 1964. The first legislature, with an extraordinary 677 sittings and 3,784 hours of debate, remains unmatched in India's parliamentary history. This inaugural election was a testament to India's democratic ideals and the indomitable spirit of its people.

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Indian National Congress	47,665,951	44.99	364
Socialist Party of India	11,216,719	10.59	12
Communist Party of India	3,487,401	3.29	16
Bharatiya Jana Sangh	3,246,361	3.06	3
Scheduled Castes Federation	2,521,695	2.38	2

Figure 1 : 1952 Elections

## 1977

### First Peaceful Transition of Power

In 1977, Morarji Desai made history by becoming the first opposition leader to win a general election in India. At 81, he assumed office as Prime Minister on 24th March, marking a peaceful transition of power after three decades of Congress dominance. This election came at a time when India was struggling with political instability and recovering its democratic rights after the Emergency.

The previous election in 1971 had seen Indira Gandhi and the INC(I) win decisively. However, in 1975, the Allahabad High Court disqualified Mrs Gandhi from her Rae Bareilly seat for malpractice during the election, leading to the imposition of Emergency. Many Janata Alliance leaders were jailed, and protests led by Jayaprakash Narayan erupted across Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh. Despite Mrs Gandhi's efforts to consolidate power, dissent continued to grow, fueled by the enduring rights enshrined in India's Constitution.

With the Emergency set to end in February 1977, elections were inevitable. In an unexpected outcome, the Janata Alliance secured a sweeping victory, ending Congress's unbroken rule. Mrs Gandhi's controversial 20-point economic programme and Sanjay Gandhi's unpopular 5-point agenda contributed to the INC(I)'s defeat. Despite this, Congress retained a loyal voter base in southern states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh (then united with Telangana).

The Janata Alliance's absolute majority signified a strong mandate. The smooth transition of power underscored India's democratic resilience and its capacity for renewal even in challenging times.

# 1999

## First Elected Coalition Government which lasted a Full Term

In the months succeeding India's victory at the Kargil War, the incumbent NDA consisting of the Bharatiya Janata Party, the AIADMK, Shiv Sena and 16 other parties lost a No-Confidence motion in the Lok Sabha. Tensions were rising between the BJP and one of its key allies the AIADMK as J. Jayalalitha wanted the incumbent Centre to sack the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu. However, the NDA was strengthened during the campaign by a rift in the INC between Sonia Gandhi and then INC leader Sharad Pawar. Issues such as the Babri Masjid Demolition, handling of the Kargil War and low inflation boosted the sitting NDA. The election, held between 5 September and 3 October 1999, resulted in a victory for the NDA with the BJP being the single largest party. Atal Bihari Vajpayee once again took the oath of office for the position of Prime Minister and his NDA coalition was the first in Indian history to last a full five - year term.

The 1999 general elections were significant for several reasons. The BJP's victory marked a shift in Indian politics, with the party emerging as a dominant force. The election also highlighted the importance of coalition politics, as the NDA's success was largely due to its ability to form alliances with regional parties. The campaign saw a focus on national security and economic stability, with the BJP capitalizing on its handling of the Kargil War and the country's economic performance. The election results also underscored the declining influence of the Congress party, which struggled to regain its former dominance in Indian politics.

PARTY	VOTES	%	SEATS
Indian National Congress	106,935,942	19.3	44
Bharatiya Janata Party	171,660,230	31.0	282
All India Trinamool Congress	21,262,665	3.8	34
AIADMK	18,111,579	3.27	37

Figure 4 : 2014 Elections

From the first democratic election in 1952, which established the foundation of universal suffrage, to the peaceful transition of power in 1977, each election has marked significant milestones. The 1999 elections highlighted the importance of coalition politics, while the 2014 elections showcased the electorate's desire for change and development. These historic moments underscore the power of the people's voice and the enduring strength of India's democratic principles. As India continues to evolve, the lessons from these elections remain relevant, inspiring future generations to actively engage in the democratic process and shape the nation's future.

# Figure 2 : 1977 Elections

Party	Votes	%	Seats	+/-
Janata Party	78,062,828	41.32	295	209
Indian National Congress (I)	65,211,589	34.52	154	-198
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	8,113,659	4.29	22	-3
AIADMK	5,480,378	2.90	18	New
Communist Party of India	5,322,088	2.82	7	-16
DMK	3,323,320	1.76	2	-21
Indian National Congress (O)	3,252,217	1.72	3	-13

# Figure 3 : 1997 Elections

PARTY	VOTES	%	SEATS
Indian National Congress	103,120,330	28.3	114
Bharatiya Janata Party	86,562,209	23.75	182
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	19,695,767	5.4	33
Telugu Desam Party	13,297,370	3.65	29
Samajwadi Party	13,717,021	3.76	26

# 2014

## The first non-coalition government in 30 years

The General Elections of 2014 saw the first time the Bharatiya Janata Party rose to power on its own. Former three-time Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi swept the Indian General Elections and was voted into power with a majority of 282 seats. 834 million voters were registered on the electoral roll and over 8,000 candidates contested. The incumbent Indian National Congress registered a shocking defeat with its lowest-ever seat count at 44. Even with the assistance of fellow alliance parties such as the DMK, TMC and NCP, the UPA managed only a dismal 59 seats out of 545. It also marked the first time that the Indian Parliament did not have an official opposition party. To become the Leader of the Opposition, a party needed a minimum of 55 seats on its own. The history of India's elections is a testament to the resilience and vibrancy of its democracy.

# TIMELINE

## Evolution of Elections In India

1

### 1950-52 - ECI



Formation of Election Commission of India in 1950 and the First general elections in 1952 with Congress emerging as the ruling party and Jawaharlal Nehru as the Prime Minister.

### 1968-71 - Symbols

2



Political parties are allotted symbols by the Election Commission of India under the Election Symbols (Reservation & Allotment) Order, 1968 and thereby fixed for respective political parties.

3

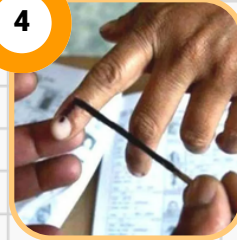
### 1982 - EVMs



Firstly, the Electronic Voting Machines were tested in Kerala during the general elections. In 1989, with a constitutional amendment, the use of EVMs was legalised. From 2004 onwards, EVMs were used nationwide.

### 1988 - Voting Age

4



The 61st Constitutional Amendment of 1988, reduced the voting age for citizens from 21 years to 18 years old. This was done by amending 326 Article of Indian Constitution.

5

### 2013 - VVPAT



**Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail**  
After the success of EVMs, VVPAT was introduced and implemented in 2013 to enhance transparency and ensure fair and free elections in India.

### 2020 - Remote Voting

6



The Election Commission introduced blockchain-based remote voting to enable secure, inclusive voting for migrants, ensuring transparency and anonymity while tackling digital and cybersecurity challenges.



# EVMS VS BALLOT PAPERS: THE TALE OF TWO VOTING SYSTEMS

BY ALVIYA SHEEJO

The introduction of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) as an alternative to the traditional ballot paper system has revolutionised the voting process worldwide. Both systems aim to conduct 'free and fair elections' but differ significantly in their approach, efficiency, and impact. While the ballot paper system relies on manual voting and counting for simplicity and transparency, EVMs offer speed and accuracy through modern technology. Both systems have distinct advantages and challenges.

## Ballot Paper

Ballot papers were used for elections before the advent of EVM and VVPAT. These are slips of paper used for secret voting, listing the names of contesting candidates along with their party names and symbols.

### Merits and Demerits of Ballot Paper

Ballot papers are simple and accessible, enabling even illiterate voters to cast their votes independently using symbols or pictures. They are cost-effective for elections in both urban and rural areas and provide a tangible vote record, crucial for recounts and dispute resolution. Ballot papers are independent of technology, making them free from technical failures and cyber threats.

However, the ballot paper system has significant drawbacks. The process of casting, collecting, and manually counting votes is time-consuming and labour-intensive. It is prone to electoral fraud, such as ballot stuffing and tampering, which can undermine the integrity of elections. Results take longer to announce, and manual counting increases the risk of human error. Additionally, the extensive use of paper contributes to deforestation and waste, making this method environmentally unsustainable.

## Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)

Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were introduced in 1989 by the Election Commission of India to address challenges like large-scale electoral fraud. These machines streamline the voting and counting processes, ensuring efficiency and accuracy.

### Merits and Demerits of EVM

EVMs provide several advantages, including enhanced security and resistance to tampering, which builds trust in the electoral process. They are portable, battery-operated, and suitable for remote locations. EVMs significantly reduce paper usage, promoting environmental sustainability. They also ensure quick and accurate vote counting, minimizing errors and enabling swift declaration of results.

Despite these benefits, EVMs have some limitations. They are not entirely free from tampering or hacking risks. Technical glitches or software malfunctions can disrupt the election process, and improper handling of hardware can lead to issues. EVMs require a higher initial investment and technical expertise for maintenance and operation, posing challenges in some regions.

## Conclusion

Both ballot papers and EVMs play significant roles in the democratic process, each with unique strengths and weaknesses. Ballot papers offer simplicity and transparency but face inefficiency, fraud, and environmental challenges. EVMs promise speed, accuracy, and sustainability but depend on careful handling and technical reliability. Ultimately, the choice between these systems depends on the specific needs and priorities of the electoral process, as both aim to uphold the principle of 'free and fair elections' in a democracy.

# COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

## COMPARISON

Aspect	Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)	Ballot Papers
<b>Efficiency</b>	Faster voting and counting process, making elections more efficient.	Time-consuming for both voting and counting.
<b>Transparency</b>	May lack transparency; requires VVPAT for verification.	Transparent and manually verifiable.
<b>Cost</b>	High initial investment but cost-effective in the long run.	Low initial cost but recurring printing expenses.
<b>Error Rate</b>	Minimizes human errors during counting.	Prone to human errors in marking and counting.
<b>Fraud Risks</b>	Perceived risk of hacking and tampering.	Vulnerable to ballot stuffing and other fraudulent activities.
<b>Environmental Impact</b>	Environmentally friendly due to reduced paper usage; potential e-waste issue.	High paper consumption negatively impacts the environment.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Requires voter familiarity with technology, less accessible.	Simple and easy for all voters to use.

# The Indifferent Voting

By Anshika Vashist

Why do I vote?  
Stuck with this day and night,  
Would it even create a difference?  
Doubt reigns over my mind.  
Oh! They are all the same.  
Money, vote banks, victory—  
Is all they care about.

Then why would my vote make a difference,  
If all lead India to the same path of ignorant  
development?  
My heart often wanders: what does the youth  
want?  
Free bus rides, majestic temples, constitution  
protector?  
Is that what we really want? Never!  
So who's been pleased?  
Only if we were innocent enough to consider  
this as genuine  
“Development” without political motives.  
What we actually want is growth,  
employment, security.

What we want is justice, equality, and freedom  
without fear.  
That day, the ever-energized youth will turn  
up to polling booths.  
That will be the day when NOTA would be  
dropped forever.



## DID YOU KNOW? POLITICAL TRIVIA

🗳️ **Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)**- India pioneered the use of EVMs in elections in **1982**, replacing paper ballots. This innovation ensures quicker results and a **more eco-friendly process**.

👤 **The Youngest and Oldest members of Parliament-** **Chandrani Murmu** and **Rishang Keishing** at 25 years old and 94 years old were elected to the 17th Lok Sabha in 2019 and the first Lok Sabha session in 1952 respectively.

🏛️ **Rashtrapati Bhavan-** The Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi is not just the President's residence but also a **historic landmark**, with 340 rooms, amazing gardens, and stunning architecture spread over 320 acres.

🌟 **The First Voter of Independent India-** **Shyam Saran Negi**, a schoolteacher from Himachal Pradesh, cast the first vote in independent India in 1951. He continued voting in every election until his passing in 2022 at **the age of 105**.

🗳️ **The Speaker's Role-** The Speaker of the Lok Sabha is impartial and resigns from their political party upon assuming office, reflecting their commitment to **fair parliamentary proceedings**.

🗳️ **The Election Commission's Neutrality-** The Election Commission of India is an **independent** constitutional body responsible for ensuring free and fair elections, a role it has upheld since **1950**.

🗳️ **A Voter ID Card Innovation-** India introduced the **Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC)** in **1993** to reduce electoral fraud and streamline the voting process.

🕒 **Zero Hour in Parliament-** "Zero Hour," a unique Indian parliamentary innovation, is the time for MPs to raise urgent matters without prior notice. It **starts at noon** and isn't mentioned in the Constitution.

By Drishti Kumar

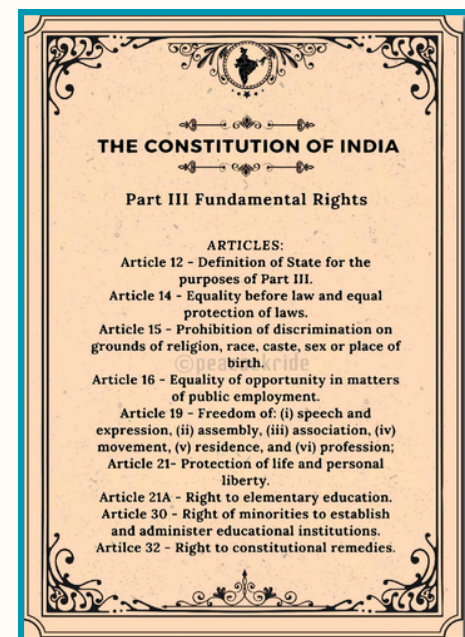
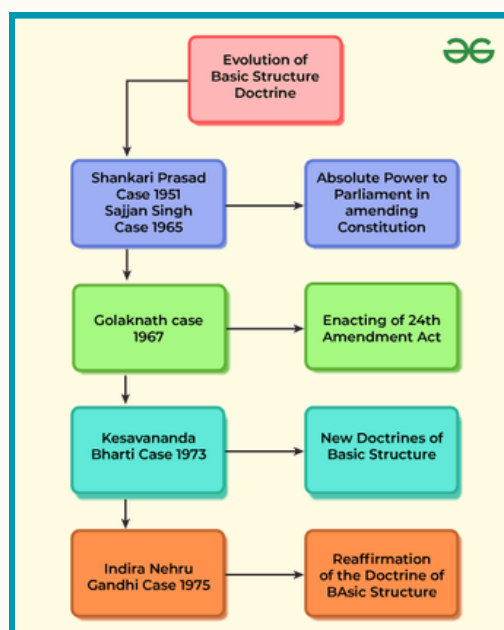
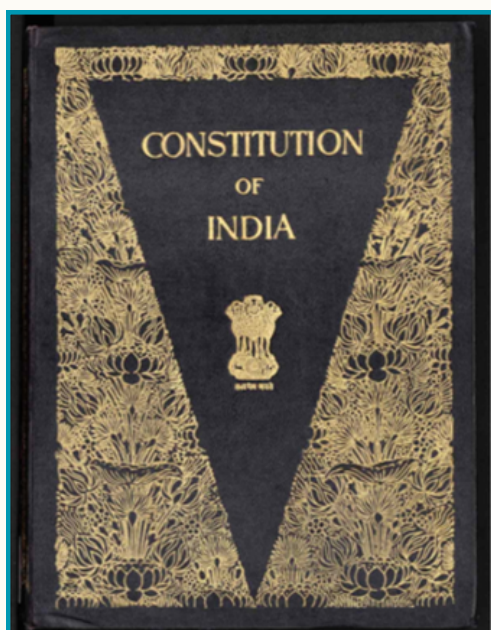
# A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND DUTIES

BY NIJA SEHWAG

**Fundamental Rights** form the cornerstone of any democratic society, embodying the principles of equality, liberty, and justice. These rights serve as safeguards against oppression, ensuring that every individual is treated with dignity and respect. They empower citizens to live freely, express themselves, and pursue their aspirations without fear of discrimination. In a democracy like India, Fundamental Rights are not merely privileges; they are essential for fostering an inclusive and equitable society where every voice matters.

Enshrined in **Part III** of the Indian Constitution, Fundamental Rights draw inspiration from international charters such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They reflect a collective commitment to upholding human dignity and protecting individuals from injustice. Rooted in the ideals of freedom and fairness, these rights are designed to create a balance between the needs of the individual and the larger society. They are not abstract ideals but practical tools that guide our daily interactions and ensure accountability from those in power.

Indian citizens are granted **six** broad categories of Fundamental Rights, each addressing specific aspects of human dignity and societal harmony. These rights emphasize equality before the law, the freedom to express opinions, the protection of individual liberties, and the right to live without fear of exploitation. For instance, the right to education not only guarantees access to schooling but also ensures that minority communities can preserve their distinct cultural identities. In daily life, these rights manifest in simple yet significant ways: when an individual speaks up against discriminatory practices, access free and compulsory education for their child, or practice their faith without interference, they exercise their Fundamental Rights.





Equally important is the concept of **duties** that accompany these rights. Rights and duties are two sides of the same coin, forming the foundation of a responsible and harmonious society. While citizens are entitled to rights, they are also obligated to uphold constitutional values and contribute to the nation’s progress. Simple acts, such as respecting public property, maintaining communal harmony, or voting responsibly, reflect a commitment to these duties. When individuals refrain from actions that harm the environment or report corruption, they embody the spirit of both rights and responsibilities, ensuring the well-being of society as a whole.

The significance of Fundamental Rights lies in their ability to empower individuals to challenge injustice and hold authorities accountable. To safeguard these rights, the Constitution provides the **remedy of writs**, including habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, certiorari, and quo warranto, enabling citizens to directly approach the courts for justice. Courts have played a pivotal role in interpreting and upholding these rights, often transforming abstract principles into actionable remedies. Landmark cases such as the Kesavananda Bharati case and the Maneka Gandhi case underscore how citizens have successfully asserted their rights to protect democracy and personal freedoms. These examples remind us that the judiciary is not just a guardian of the Constitution but also a refuge for those seeking justice.

Understanding and exercising these rights is not merely an individual privilege but a **collective responsibility**. Each citizen has the power to shape a society where fairness and equality prevail. By standing against discrimination, raising awareness about injustices, and participating in community-building activities, individuals contribute to the larger democratic framework. Similarly, embracing Fundamental Duties—such as promoting a scientific temper, protecting the environment, and upholding the spirit of unity—ensures that citizens actively participate in the nation’s progress.

Ultimately, Fundamental Rights and Duties are tools that empower individuals and strengthen democracy. They remind us that freedom is not an entitlement but a shared responsibility, requiring **active participation** from every citizen. By understanding and living these principles, we not only secure our rights but also contribute to the common good, ensuring that the ideals of justice, liberty, and equality continue to thrive in our society.



### Fundamental Duties of Indian Citizens

To abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem	To cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom
To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;	To defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so
To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women	To value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture
To protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures	To develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform
To safeguard public property and to abjure violence	To strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement





# OPINION PIECE

## ‘SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS IN INDIA : ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION’

BY DAKSAYANI CHANDRA

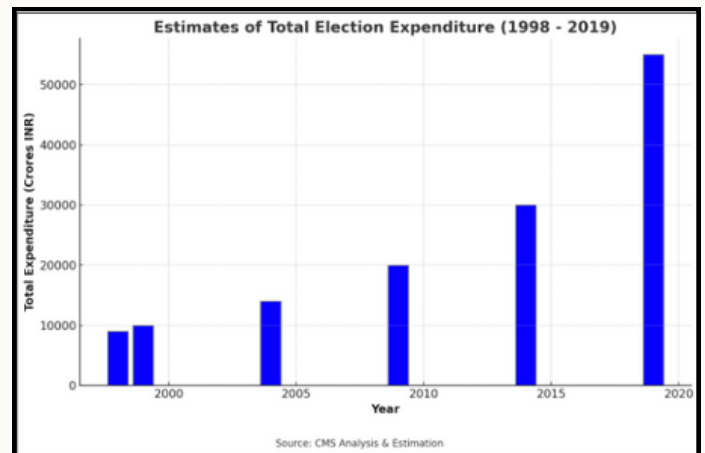
Inked fingers, duty performed, walking out of the multiple polling booths, each Indian citizen above the age of eighteen felt empowered by their ability to be a part of the decision-making for the country during the 2024 General Elections. Within the next few weeks, many of them once voted again in states like Haryana for the assembly elections. Voting is a cornerstone of democracy, ensuring active citizen participation. However, the recurring election cycles across states and at the national level require significant time and resources, posing challenges to uninterrupted governance and development.

The government constituted a commission chaired by former President Shri Ram Nath Kovind in 2023 to assess the feasibility and implications of this policy, reflecting a renewed focus on electoral reform. “The term ‘Simultaneous Elections’ is defined as structuring the Indian election cycle in a manner that elections to Lok Sabha and State Assemblies are synchronised together. In such a scenario, a voter would normally cast his/her vote for electing members of Lok Sabha and State Assembly on a single day and at the same time” (Debroy and Desai 4 ). Interestingly, this idea of simultaneous elections is not alien to the Indian electorate as the general elections of 1951-52, 1957, 1962, and 1967 were held simultaneously for both the Parliament and the state assemblies until midterm elections for Kerala (1960) and Odisha (1961) disrupted the cycle. Subsequently, this policy suggestion also goes way back to being first suggested by the Election Commission in 1983 and by The Law Commission of India headed by Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy in its 170th Report on “Reform of Electoral Laws” (1999) as a part of electoral reforms (Law Commission of India). However since the idea did not see tangible implementation, it was only post-2014 when the focus on it returned with a change in government.

The question that arises after understanding the historical context of this policy is the need for its implementation and its feasibility. One of the primary reasons for this policy is the excess amount of resources spent on elections, in terms of time, money and deployment of security forces. A developing superpower like India spends far too much time electing rather than developing. The status quo suggests that the country witnesses about 5-7 State Assemblies every year. Costs increase not only for the Government to conduct elections but for political parties, candidates and voters as well to partake in this fundamental democratic activity. According to a report (‘Poll Expenditure: The 2019 Elections’) by the Centre for Media Studies, the 2019 Lok Sabha election in India emerged to be the most expensive election anywhere ever. Theorists also connect black money and the root cause of corruption being the large sums of money parties and candidates spend during elections. Lastly, an average of about 10.75 Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel per polling station are deployed engaging not only CAPF but additional reinforcement troops from State Armed Police, Home Guards, District Police etc to help maintain peace. This policy helps combat this trifold excessive use of resources.

Another aspect that is important to focus on is the impact of The Moral Code of Conduct (MCC) which is a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission to regulate political parties and candidates prior to elections, in order to ensure free and fair elections. The MCC is operational from the date that the election schedule is announced till the date that the results are announced (Sinha 2019). The imposition of the above code has been articulated by the Parliamentary Standing Committee which states "...The imposition of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) puts on hold the entire development programme and activities of the Union and State Governments in the poll-bound State. It even affects the normal governance.

Frequent elections lead to imposition of MCC over prolonged periods of time. This often leads to policy paralysis and governance deficit". Simultaneous elections help cure this paralysis as a once-in-five-year phenomenon. Other issues that help see the need for this policy include election fatigue, disruption of governance and perpetuation of caste, religion and communal issues across the country. Voices of support for this policy include Former Election Commission S Y Qureshi, who has said "From the Election Commission's point of view, this is the easiest thing to happen, the voter is the same, polling stations are the same, and the security needed is the same".



The feasibility of this policy needs great mountains to be moved. As per the recommendations of the Law Commission, this policy needs at least five constitutional amendments: in Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 356 and multiple acts like the People's Representation Act (1951) to reorganise the legal framework surrounding the entire electoral structure. This process requires significant constitutional amendments and logistical alignment across election cycles nationwide, which would involve meticulous planning and collaboration among all stakeholders.

### The Latest Pitch & Roadblocks

**CLASH OF ROLES**

The Law Commission raised common voter list issue with the EC on Wednesday

EC prepares electoral roll for polls to Parliament and state legislatures while States do it for Panchayati Raj institutions and municipal bodies

While some states rely on EC's roll, others do it de novo

**SETTING BOUNDARIES**

As far as EC's purview is concerned, the delimitation of constituencies is frozen until 2031

There is no such bar on states for determining the boundaries of wards for local election

To enable a common electoral roll, all states will have to amend respective laws to freeze constituency boundaries to synch to a uniform calendar

**LOGISTICAL ISSUES**

EC says it's difficult to prepare list for over 78 cr electors as there is no uniform system for preparation of rolls by SECs

It would not be possible for the ECI to collect the data of Panchayat, municipal body and ward numbers and feed it into a common database

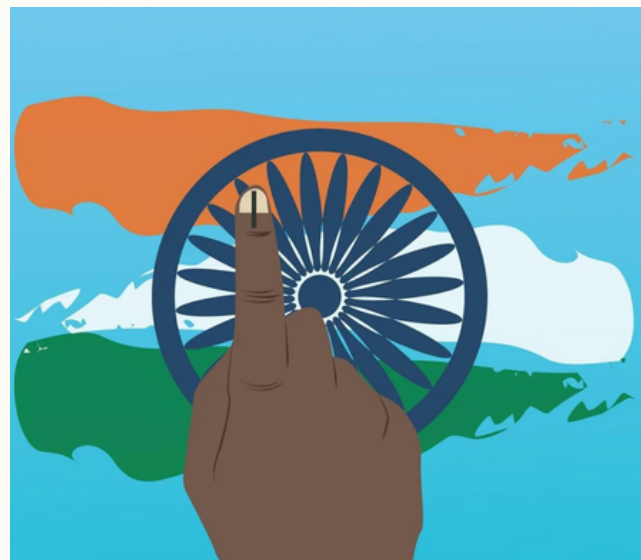
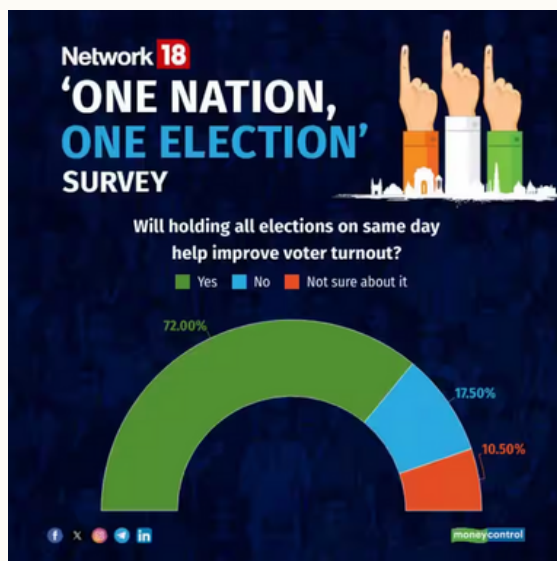
**₹500 crore** Required for preparing common roll

**₹300 crore** Proposed to be allocated in Budget

Additionally, critics have argued that holding simultaneous elections dramatically shrinks the electorate's choices (Kumar). Such elections are assumed to predominantly cater to the utilitarian good of the majority and to the issues national parties raise, forcing regional parties, regional issues, and minority voices into an unheard chamber and threatening the country's federal democratic structure.

Another argument against the bill involves impacting voter behavior in a manner where as shown by an analysis by the IDFC Institute, there is a 77% chance that the Indian voter will vote for the same party for both the State and Centre when elections are held simultaneously. This threatens to homogenize voter behaviour in a manner where the strength of the multiparty system in India will soon vanish into the shadows of bipolarity. Elections are known to be unpredictable and situations like defections, untimely death of candidates, hung assemblies, and by-elections often occur. The big question is what happens when such a phenomenon occurs? Such exceptional situations require rearrangement of said rules which seem to be built in a rigid and undemocratic manner following recommendations of the high-level committee in this policy.

The conversation in favour of simultaneous elections is often backed with example-based evidence from countries like Germany, Japan, Sweden, South Africa and Indonesia where successful implementation of simultaneous elections has been noticed. For example, Subhash C Kashyap, a member of the high-level committee, supported the German model of a constructive vote of no-confidence in addition to the procedure for the appointment of the chancellor". Another example quoted was of Sweden which conducts Parliament (Riksdag), County Councils and Municipal Councils every four years on the second Sunday of September. The question is, whether this policy is meant for us. Each of these nations differ in either their electoral systems and electorates. Some follow the presidential elections, some a proportional representation system and some operate sans a population as diverse and large as India's. Hence while their successes are inspiring, they are not enough to be used as justifications to implement simultaneous elections in India.



As a first-time voter, I envision voting as a duty that provides me with a sense of empowerment and participation to choose the three tiers of my government. If my franchise is limited to once in five years, I will be forced to cause conflict between my identity as a national and regional voter and my expectations from different tiers of decision-making,

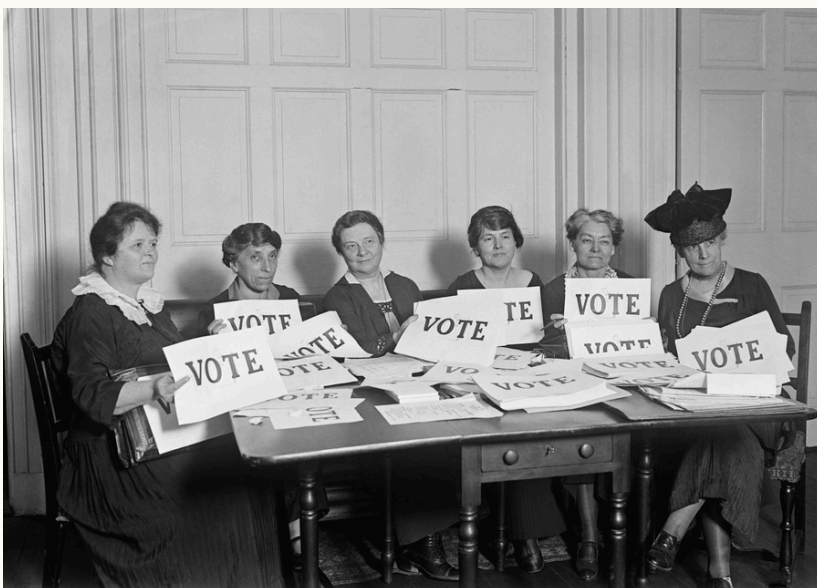
Understanding voices for and against this policy and factors such as its necessity and feasibility help shed light on the tug-of-war between the intention to streamline elections in a resource-effective manner to promote governance and the fundamental idea to preserve and uphold the diverse federal identity of the nation and its electorate. This previously implemented policy does aim to be a flagbearer of the much-needed electoral reform our nation needs but it forces stakeholders to stand at crossroads to travel a path fraught with more guaranteed obstacles than visible rewards. The main impact of this policy should be to help India and its voters feel heard and develop at a faster pace yet analysing all factors, this policy seems like an answer that needs extreme precision and perhaps re-evaluation to be successful. The challenge before us is to rally support across political parties to help make elections truly a festival of democracy sans the cost of the common man and excess resources. Yet there are doubts whether the 'One Nation, One Election' policy of simultaneous elections will bring us out of the modern-day political chakravayuh.



# FROM THE SILENCE OF OPPRESSION TO THE VOICES OF BREAKTHROUGH

BY MAITREE SHEORAN

In halls where power once resided, a select few,  
Women now rise, voices strong and true.  
With courage, care, and understanding deep,  
They **shatter barriers**, secrets they will keep.  
No longer silenced, their voices now resound,  
Breaking through ceilings, on fertile ground.  
Pillars of nations, architects of peace,  
They bring harmony, and conflicts cease.  
In the realm of **democracy**, their strength is clear,  
Guiding societies with vision sincere.  
With **strength and grace**, their actions unfold,  
A blend of courage and stories untold.  
Of a brighter tomorrow under their roof,  
How tragic it was that these voices lay still,  
Unheard, unheeded, against their will.  
But now, a new era unfolds its testament true:  
Women are not just equal—they are the **breakthrough**.  
They are the embodiment of peace and sustainability,  
The beacon the world needs for lasting stability.  
They are the glory, the guiding light,  
Shining brighter than the sun and moon at night.  
With knowledge and passion, they lead the fight—  
Women, the essence of democracy's light.

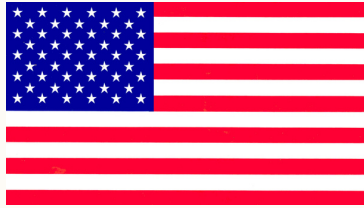


# AROUND THE WORLD

EXPLORING ELECTIONS GLOBALLY IN THE YEAR 2024

BY ANANYA RAGHUVANSHI

01



## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In one of the year's highest-profile elections, Democrats in the United States lost the presidency, with Donald Trump, the Republican former president, defeating Vice President Kamala Harris. Republicans also won majorities in both houses of Congress.

It was the third straight U.S. presidential election in which the incumbent party lost.

02



## INDIA

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party won a third consecutive victory but were forced into a coalition government. Official results from India's Election Commission on Wednesday showed the NDA won 294 seats, more than the 272 seats needed to secure a majority but far fewer than had been expected.

For the first time since his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party swept to power in 2014, it did not secure a majority on its own, winning 240 seats — far fewer than the record 303 it won in the 2019 election. Modi now depends on the support of key allies, including the Telugu Desam Party in southern Andhra Pradesh state with 16 seats and Janata Dal (United), which won 12 seats in eastern Bihar state, as well as smaller groups.

03



## UNITED KINGDOM

In the United Kingdom — unlike in the U.S. — political power swung to the left. The Labour Party won an overwhelming parliamentary majority, bringing 14 years of Conservative Party rule to an end. The Conservative Party lost more than 250 seats, its worst-ever defeat. Keir Starmer became the UK's 58th Prime Minister, pledging to steer the country towards "calmer waters" in his first address to the nation.



04



## BOTSWANA

The most dramatic defeat for a longtime incumbent party may have occurred in the southern African nation of Botswana, where the Botswana Democratic Party lost power for the first time in nearly 60 years. The party that has governed Botswana since it became independent in 1966 received a stunning rebuke in national elections this week, losing its majority in Parliament for the first time, according to results announced on Friday morning.

President Mokgweetsi Masisi, leader of the governing Botswana Democratic Party, conceded defeat at a news conference on Friday, and by evening, his successor, Duma Boko, was sworn in.

06



## SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, the African National Congress failed to win a majority of National Assembly seats for the first time since the end of apartheid, the case becoming an example of one of those countries where the incumbent party faced significant setbacks..

05



## JAPAN

Japan's Liberal Democratic Party – which has governed the country for most of the post-World War II era – and its coalition partner, Komeito, lost their majority in the parliament as voters handed the longtime governing party of Japan a resounding blow in snap parliamentary elections on Sunday, signalling that their frustration could convert one of the region's most stable democracies into a much more chaotic one. **“The last 30 years of stagnation and the deterioration of the living standards, especially for young people — the frustration is there,”** said Kunihiko Miyake, a former Japanese diplomat who is now a special adviser at the Canon Institute for Global Studies in Tokyo.

Mr. Miyake said that L.D.P.-led governments had so far managed to contain voter discontent over flat wages, labor shortages and a rapidly aging population. But now, he added, **“the doomsday has come”** to Japan. The Liberal Democrats, custodians of the status quo, have been put on notice.

# 1952 Blossoms of Ballots

NAYSHA KHURANA

The chamomile of Veritas

unfold,

Where the ballet of ballots

Tell fables of ages old.

1952 trails of sowing hope,

in a garden full of clematis

and columbine cold

The lilac light lifts,

a journey so bold.

Leap through the zinnia of the

bygone,

Drifting through Ether's electric

sigh

The tarragon blooms of

freedom's dawn,

Gaze merrily upon

A democracy unparalleled,

where

The rues of people's decree are

still drawn.

# Word Search: ELC Edition

JIYA DATA



REFERENDUM

POLLS

FRANCHISE

SCRUTINY

CONSTITUENT

VOTER

COMMISSION

RCANDIDATE

ELECTION

BALLOT

DEMOCRACY

ELECTORATE

TURNOUT



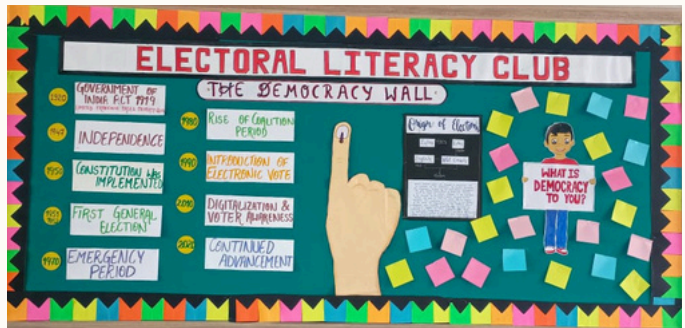
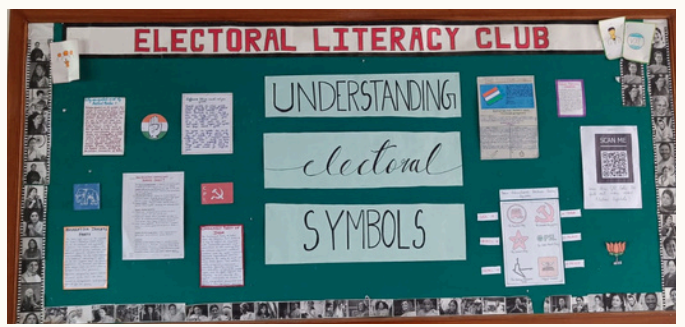
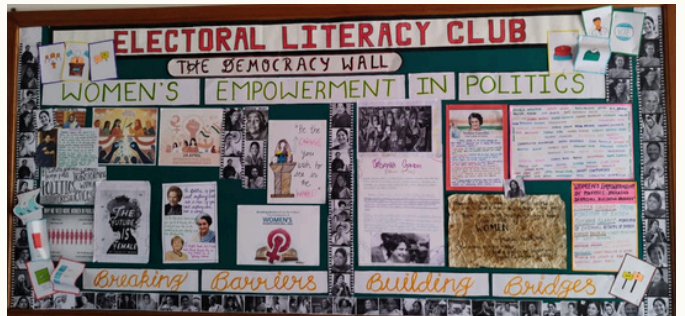
# HIGHLIGHTS : ELC JMC 2023-2025

## BALLOT BISTRO

The **Ballot Bistro** events fostered dynamic discussions on key electoral themes:

- **Women’s Reservation Bill:** Explored the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023, focusing on gender parity in governance.
- **Model Code of Conduct:** Analysed Election Commission guidelines to ensure free and fair elections, addressing caste-based campaigning and misuse of resources.

These sessions enhanced civic engagement and understanding of India’s electoral framework.



**ELECTORAL LITERACY CLUB**  
Jesus and Mary College  
University of Delhi

Invites you all to the  
**Inaugural Lecture**

**SPEAKER:-**  
**MR. ASHOK LAVASA**  
(Former Election Commissioner of India)

**DATE** 1 November, 2023

**TIME** 12:30 pm

**VENUE** Room No. -308

**ELECTORAL LITERACY CLUB**

IN COLLABORATION WITH  
**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
JESUS AND MARY COLLEGE

Invites you to a documentary screening on  
**'60 YEARS OF ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA'**

**DATE** - 31 JANUARY, 2024  
**TIME** - 1:00P.M- 2:00P.M  
**VENUE** - SEMINAR HALL

**ELECTORAL LITERACY CLUB**  
JESUS AND MARY COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

invites you to  
**The Awareness Booth**  
on the use of **EVM and VVPAT**

**DATE:** 07 MARCH, 2024  
**VENUE:** PARKING AREA, NEAR THE COLLEGE GATE  
**TIME:** 11:00 AM ONWARDS

**YOUR VOTE MATTERS**

For any queries:  
Neha Kumari Mishra (President) +91 88640 60592  
Ananya Raghuvanshi (Vice President) +91 93028 53205  
Dakshayani Chandra (Secretary) +91 92054 17096

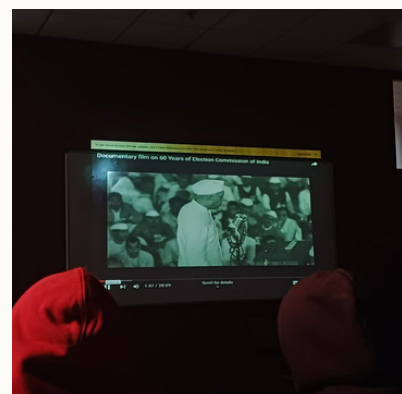
## DEMOCRACY WALL SERIES

The Democracy Wall initiatives encouraged critical thinking and dialogue on various electoral and political themes:

- **Election: Origin and Evolution:** Explored India’s electoral history, from colonial systems to post-independence democratic institutions.
- **Social Media and Political Campaigning:** Highlighted the role of digital platforms in shaping political discourse and voter behaviour.
- **Women’s Empowerment in Politics:** Focused on breaking barriers and celebrating female political leadership.
- **Understanding Electoral Symbols:** Detailed the evolution of symbols in Indian and global elections, with interactive elements like QR codes for deeper exploration.
- **Impact of Social Media on Democracy:** Addressed the dual role of social media in empowering and polarising public opinion.

# Activities Done By ELC JMC 2023-2025

- **Inaugural Lecture:** Former Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa emphasized the importance of electoral literacy, NOTA, and voter responsibility.
- **Voter Awareness Drive:** A campus-wide rally with slogans, banners, and pamphlets encouraged voter participation and ID registration.
- **Fundraising Fair:** A Pani Puri stall paired food with electoral education, raising funds and awareness among students and faculty.
- **National Voters' Day Quiz:** Combined an interactive quiz and a pledge ceremony to emphasize the importance of voting and civic engagement.
- **Documentary Screening:** Showcased The History of Indian Elections by National Geographic, providing insights into India's electoral process.
- **Awareness Camp:** Combined voter registration with EVM awareness to educate students about their voting rights and electoral processes.
- **Group Discussion:** In collaboration with NSS, this event on Women in Politics highlighted progress, challenges, and systemic changes needed for greater female representation in governance.
- **Voters' Pledge Ceremony:** A ceremony inspired students to commit to active democratic participation.
- **Podcast Screening:** Featured DM New Delhi Sunny Kumar Singh addressing youth apathy towards voting and the importance of electoral participation.
- **Voter Registration Drives:** Spanning the year, these drives registered over 400 students through online and offline methods with EVM demonstrations.





# INTERVIEW

## with Ms. Pinki



### Arjuna Awardee, CWG Gold Medalist, District Icon for District Central

#### 1. What inspired you to take on the role of District Icon, and how do you plan to use this platform to promote electoral literacy?

“The belief that voting is both a right and a responsibility inspired me. As District Icon, I aim to raise awareness about the power of every vote and promote informed participation through workshops, campaigns, and interactive sessions.”

#### 2. What message would you like to share with first-time voters about the importance of their vote in shaping the future of our nation?

“Your vote is your voice and your power to create change. First-time voters have the chance to shape a future aligned with their vision. Take pride in participating in democracy and stand for what you believe in.”

**दिल्ली विधानसभा चुनाव 2025**

अपनी ताकत को पहचान  
चलो करें हम सब मतदान

**5 फरवरी 2025**  
को मतदान अवश्य करें!

**Ms. PINKI**  
Arjuna Awardee (Lawn Bowlers)  
District Icon, District Central

एक आवाज एक मत  
जबमत का पद

1950

Dist Election Office, 14  
to send ballot paper (with Seal) or  
Call: 182 or for more information call: www.ecdelhi.gov.in

#MyDelhiMyVote  
#PledgeToVote

Follow us:  
f i o

**District Election Office, District Central**  
14, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002

Follow us: @isoddelhioffice /isoddelhioffice /isoddelhioffice

#### 3. How can the values you've upheld in sports, such as discipline and teamwork, be applied to encourage a more active and informed electorate?

“Discipline fosters commitment, and teamwork highlights collective effort—both essential for democracy. These values encourage citizens to vote responsibly, knowing that collective participation strengthens democracy.”

#### 4. How do you think sports can inspire youth to actively participate in democratic processes like voting?

“Sports instil unity and dedication, showing youth that every effort, like every vote, matters. Just as teamwork drives success in sports, youth participation ensures a thriving democracy.”



Team ELC JMC is grateful for this interview.

# QUIZ

## WHAT KIND OF VOTER ARE YOU?

### 1. How do you decide whom to vote for in an election?

- Based on the party's manifesto and track record.
- By following what my family or friends suggest.
- By analysing how the candidate will benefit my community directly.
- I don't give it much thought and decide last minute.

### 2. How often do you research political candidates or parties before an election?

- Always, I ensure I know their background and policies.
- Sometimes, if I feel it's necessary.
- I rarely go with my instinct or what I hear around me.
- Never, I don't think research is necessary.

### 3. What issues are most important to you when voting?

- Development, education, and employment.
- Cultural and traditional values.
- Local issues that directly affect me or my family.
- I don't focus on specific issues.

### 4. How do you view your responsibility as a voter?

- It's a fundamental duty, and I take it very seriously.
- It's important, but I don't prioritise it.
- I vote only when I feel strongly about an issue or candidate.
- I don't think my vote matters much.

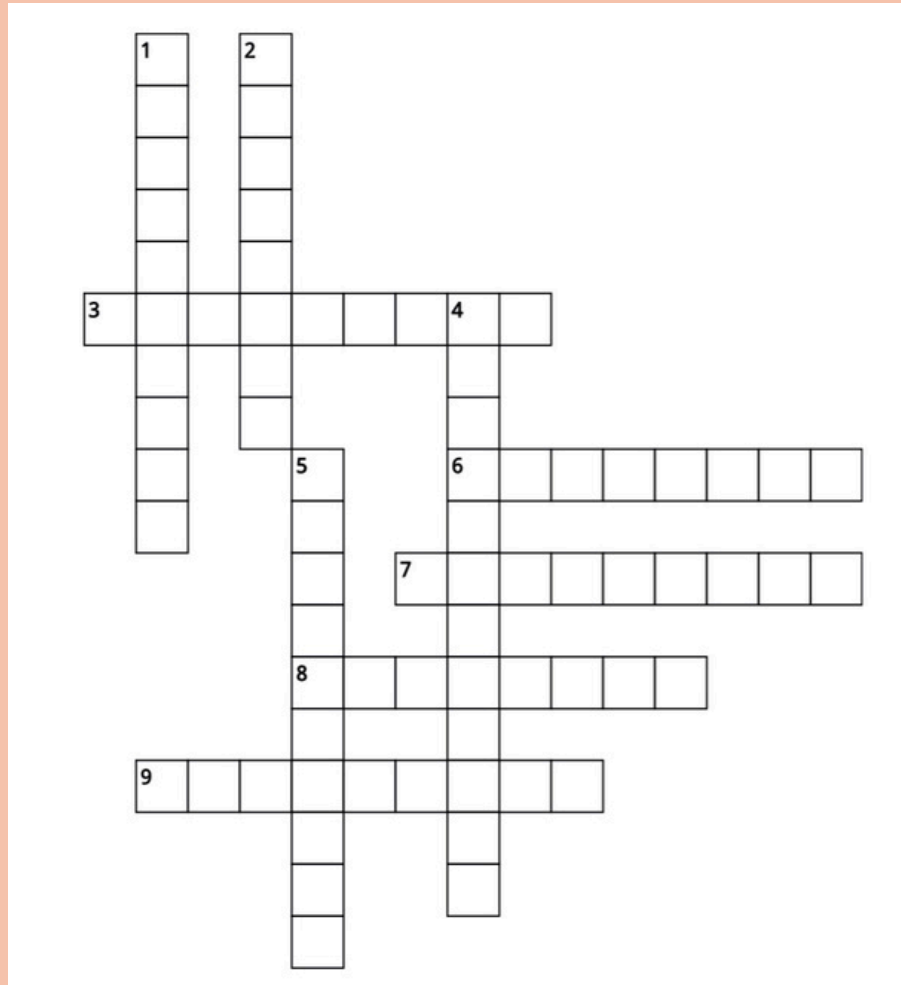
### 5. How do you react if your preferred candidate/party loses?

- I analyse why they lost and hope for improvement next time.
- I feel disappointed but accept the results as part of democracy.
- I blame others for not supporting the right candidate.
- I don't care about the results much.

### Results: What Kind of Voter Are You?

- **Mostly A's: The Informed Voter:** You research manifestos and track records, valuing facts before voting.
- **Mostly B's: The Influenced Voter :** Your choices reflect community or family opinions rather than personal research.
- **Mostly C's: The Pragmatic Voter :** You focus on immediate benefits and prioritize local impact over broader policies.
- **Mostly D's: The Apathetic Voter :** Voting holds little importance to you, and you rarely engage in political processes.

# CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

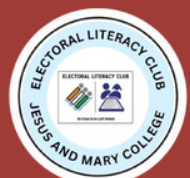
3. Government by the people, exercised directly or through elected representatives.
6. The right to vote in political elections.
7. The art of managing international relations and negotiations.
8. A system of government where the country is considered a public matter, and officials are elected.
9. An alliance of political parties to form a government.

## DOWN

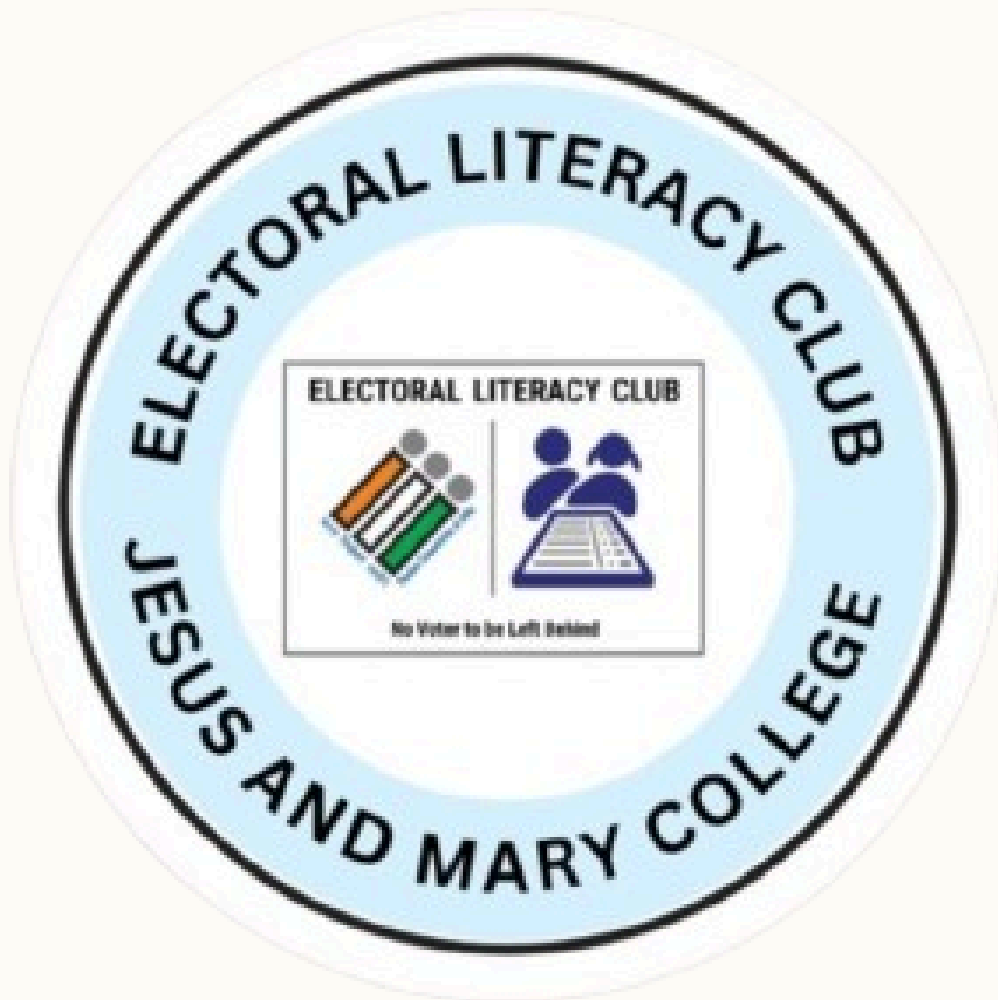
1. A direct vote by the people on a specific issue or law.
2. A set of beliefs or principles that guide political, social, or economic systems.
4. The supreme law or fundamental principles governing a nation.
5. A system where power is divided between a central authority and regional entities.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Alviya Sheejo, Ananya Raghuvanshi, Anshika Vashist, Daksayani Chandra, Drishti Kumar,  
Nija Sehwaq, Preeti Batra, Sweety Sonawat, Trikkur S. Lakshmi,  
Editor - Daksayani Chandra







PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN  
NEW DELHI, 2025

EDITORIAL BOARD