

# Electoral Politics in India: System, Process, and Challenges

Electoral politics in India, like in many modern democracies, operates on the principle of representative democracy, where citizens govern through elected representatives. This system is essential because direct governance by all citizens is neither possible nor practical in large communities. Elections provide a crucial mechanism for people to choose their representatives, form governments, and influence policy-making at regular intervals, ensuring accountability and responsiveness from leaders. The text highlights that voters make several key choices during elections: selecting lawmakers, deciding who will form the government and make major decisions, and choosing the party whose policies will guide governance.

## What Makes an Election Democratic?

To distinguish democratic elections from non-democratic ones, the text outlines five minimum conditions:

1. **Universal Adult Franchise:** Everyone should have the right to choose, meaning one vote per person, and every vote must have equal value.
2. **Real Choice:** Parties and candidates should be free to contest and offer genuine alternatives to voters.
3. **Regular Intervals:** Elections must be held regularly, typically every few years.
4. **People's Preference:** The candidate preferred by the people should be the one who gets elected.
5. **Free and Fair Conduct:** Elections must be conducted in a manner that allows people to choose genuinely and without coercion.

## The Role of Political Competition

Political competition, while sometimes leading to disunity, factionalism, and even