

Short Answer Questions

Q.1. Give any two merits of Electoral Competition.

Ans. (i) Political leaders are motivated by the desire to advance their political careers.

(ii) They want to come in power and retain positions for themselves. So they do their best to win the hearts of people.

Q.2. Why are election campaigns needed?

Ans. The main purpose of elections is to give people a chance to choose the representatives, the government and the policies they prefer. Therefore, it is necessary to have a free and open discussion about who is a better representative, which party will make a better government or what is a good policy. It is possible during election campaigns.

Q.3. What choices are given to a voter during elections?

Ans. (i) They can choose who will make laws for them.

(ii) They can choose who will form the government and take major decisions.

(iii) They can choose the party whose policies will guide the government and law-making.

Q.4. What forms does political competition take during elections?

Ans. Political competition takes various forms such as:

(i) The most obvious form is the competition among political parties.

(ii) At the constituency level, it takes the form of competition among several candidates.

(iii) If there is no competition, elections will become pointless.

Q.5. How does electoral competition help the political parties and leaders to win the elections?

Ans. (i) Regular electoral competitions provide incentives to political parties and leaders.

(ii) They know that if they raise issues that people want to be raised, their popularity and chances of victory will increase in the next elections.

(iii) But if they fail to satisfy the voters with their work, they will not be able to win again.

Q.6. What is the 'Voters' List'?

Ans.(i) In a democratic election, the list of those who are eligible to vote is prepared much before the election and is available to everyone.

(ii) This list is officially called the Electoral Roll and is commonly known as the Voters' List.

(iii) This is an important step as it is linked to the first condition of a democratic election.

Q.7. How does the principle of 'Universal Adult Franchise' work in the Indian democracy?

OR

Which section of our country's population is eligible to vote?

Ans. (i) Universal adult franchise means that everyone should have one vote and each vote should have equal value. No one should be denied the right to vote without good reason.

(ii) In India, all citizens aged 18 years and above can vote in an election.

(iii) Every citizen has the right to vote, regardless of caste, religion, and gender.

(iv) Some criminals and persons with an unsound mind can be denied the right to vote, but only in rare situations.

(v) Every five years, complete revision of the voters' list takes place so that the names of the new voters who have attained the voting age are included and names of those who have moved to some other place or are dead can be deleted.

Q.8. What is the outcome of free and fair elections held in India?

Ans. (i) The ruling parties routinely lose elections in India, both at the national and state levels.

(ii) In India, about half of the sitting MPs or MLAs lose elections.

(iii) Candidates who are known to have spent a lot of money in 'buying votes' and those with criminal connections often lose elections.

(iv) Barring very few disputed elections, the electoral outcomes are usually accepted as the people's verdict by the defeated party.

Q.9. Mention any three powers and functions of the Election Commission of India.

Ans. Powers and Functions of Election Commission of India:

- (i) To conduct and control the elections.
- (ii) To implement the code of conduct.
- (iii) To order the government to follow guidelines.
- (iv) To prevent use and misuse of government machinery at the time of election.

Q.10. How do general elections differ from by-elections?

Ans. When elections are held in all the constituencies at the same time, either on the same day or within few days, this is called general elections.

Sometimes, election is held only for one constituency to fill the vacancy caused by death or resignation of a member. This is called a by-election.

Q.11. How are constituencies for Lok Sabha decided by the Election Commission?

Ans. (i) For Lok Sabha elections, the country is divided into 543 constituencies.

(ii) The representative elected from each constituency is called a Member of Parliament or an MP.

(iii) One of the features of a democratic election is that every vote should have equal value.

That is why, our constitution requires that each constituency should have a roughly equal population living within it.

Q.12. How is division of constituencies done at the state level?

Ans. (i) Each state is divided into a specific number of Assembly constituencies on the basis of their population size.

(ii) In this case, the elected representative is called Member of Legislative Assembly or an MLA.

(iii) Each parliamentary constituency has several assembly constituencies within it.

Q.13. How has reservation system been extended to other weaker sections?

Ans. (i) Initially, constituencies were reserved only for people belonging to SC and ST but later on, it was extended to other weaker sections at district and local level.

(ii) In many states, seats in rural and urban local bodies are now reserved for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) as well.

(iii) However, the proportion of seats reserved varies from state to state. Similarly, one-third of the seats are reserved in rural and urban local bodies for women candidates.

Q.14. What do you know about voter's ID card?

Ans. (i) Voter's ID card is also called Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC).

(ii) The government makes efforts to give this card to every person on the voters' list.

(iii) The voters are required to carry this card when they go out to cast their vote, so that no one can vote for someone else.

(iv) But the card is not yet compulsory for voting. The voters can show many other proofs of identity like the ration card, driving licence or the passport, etc.

Q.15. In what manner does the Election Commission monitor the election campaign?

Or

What is an Election Commission? What is its role in the elections?

Ans. The Election Commission monitor the election in the following ways:

(i) It takes decisions on every aspect of conduct and control of elections from the announcement of elections to the declaration of the results.

(ii) It implements code of conduct and punishes the candidate or party that violates it.

(iii) During election period, the EC can order the government to follow some guidelines, to prevent use and misuse of governmental power to enhance its chances to win the elections, or to transfer some government officials.

(iv) When on election duty, government officers work under the control of the EC and not the government.

Q.16. How can we check the quality of the election process?

Ans. The quality of an election process can be checked in three ways:

(i) Who Conducts the Election: Indian elections are conducted by an independent Election Commission, which has the power to even reprimand the government and the administration for their lapses.

(ii) Popular Participation: If the election process is not free and fair, people do not participate in the electoral process. So, the turn-out of the election is also a way to check the quality of the election process.

(iii) Acceptance of the outcome: If the election is not free and fair, the outcome always favour the powerful and the losing party does not accept the outcome. So, to assess the quality of election process, one can check the response of the losing party.

Q.17. How are results declared after an election in our country?

Ans. (i) A few days later after poll, on a fixed date, all the EVMs from a constituency are opened and the votes secured by each candidate are counted.

(ii) In general elections, usually the counting of votes in all the constituencies takes place at the same time, on the same day.

(iii) Television channels, radio and newspapers report this event. Within a few hours of counting, all the results are declared and it becomes clear as to who will form the next government.

Q.18. What does turnout figure indicate?

Ans. (i) People's participation in election is usually measured by voters' turnout figure.

(ii) Turnout indicates the percentage of eligible voters who actually cast their vote.

(iii) It indicates the interest of voters in election related activities.

Q.19. Is it true that the interest of voters is increasing day by day in election-related activities?

Ans. (i) The interest of voters in election-related activities has been increasing over the years.

(ii) During the 2004 elections, more than one-third voters took part in campaign-related activities.

(iii) More than half of the people identified themselves as being close to one or the other political party. One out of every seven voters is a member of a political party.

Q.20. In what way does the outcome of elections matter to the people?

Ans. (i) One final test of the free and fairness of the elections is in its outcome itself.

(ii) If elections are not free or fair, the outcome always favours the powerful. In such a situation, the ruling parties do not lose elections.

(iii) Usually, the losing party does not accept the outcome of a rigged elections.

Q.21. How can you say that elections in India are free, fair and democratic?

OR

What is an Election Commission? Who appoints the Chief Election Commissioner and how can he/she be removed?

Ans. (i) Elections in India are basically free and fair. The party that wins an election and forms government does so because people have chosen it over its rivals.

(ii) India has an independent Election Commission which regulates the election process. The Chief Election Commissioner is appointed by the President of India but after appointment, he is not answerable to anyone. It is virtually impossible to remove him. During election period, he can order the government to follow some guidelines to prevent it from misusing its power to enhance its chances of winning.

(iii) Once the polling is over, all EVMs are sealed and taken to a secure place. They are opened on a fixed day in the presence of agents of all the candidates for counting of the votes. Usually all the parties accept the electoral outcome.

Q.22. What does booth capturing and rigging mean in the elections?

Ans. (i) Booth capturing: Supporters or hired musclemen of party or a candidate gain physical control of a polling booth and cast false votes by threatening everyone or by preventing genuine voters from reaching the polling booth.

(ii) Rigging: Fraud and malpractices indulged by a party or candidate to increase his votes. It includes stuffing ballot boxes by a few persons using the votes of others; recording multiple votes by the same person; and bribing polling officers to favour a candidate.

Q.23. Do you think that elections promote democracy?

Ans. Yes, elections do promote democracy. They help people to choose candidates on the basis of one-vote-one-value. Parties are free to contest elections. Elections must be held at regular intervals. Further, candidates preferred by people only are elected. Besides, elections are free and fair.

Q.24. How far is it good to have political competition? Give reasons.

Ans. It is good to have political competition. In a democracy political leaders know what is good for the people. It motivates them to serve the people. Regular electoral competition provides an initiative to political parties and leaders. Leaders realise that if they raise and work for people's issues they would become popular and their chance to win would increase.

Q.25. You visited an electoral booth and viewed malpractices being used to win the election. Can these malpractices be stopped? Give reasons.

Ans. Yes, the malpractices related to election can be curbed. The Election Commission should ban people with criminal background from contesting election. Further, it should be mandatory for candidates to declare their assets and electoral malpractices or rigging should be checked.

Q.26. Identify the reasons which make India a successful democracy in the world.

Ans. (i) Free and fair elections are held.

(ii) Periodic elections are held.

(iii) Independent Election Commission exists to make elections free and fair.