

Elections and voting in India are constitutionally guaranteed rights under the Article 325 and 326.

Qualifications and criteria for contesting

In India public can freely contest in state legislative assemblies and lok

Sabha elections.

→ Citizen of India.

Conditions such as → Age limit: 25 for assembly and lok Sabha.

30 for Panchayats and state councils.

must not hold any office of profit

should be of sound mind and not an undischarged insolvent.

→ The section 33(7) of Representation of Peoples Act (1951) limited the contest

of one candidate contesting from more than two seats.

* Dichotomy prevails such as, in assembly elections only legislator from that state can contest. But, in Lok Sabha, a contestant can contest from any location.

Electoral Commission has brought a slew of changes to the elections.

ECI's changes

* Funding Reduced the funding to parties from ₹ 20,000 to ₹ 2000. This will greatly reduce the cash flow in the elections.

* Measures such as the SVEEP, which addresses the unfair practices in the election has been successful.

* Electoral Bonds: The scheme was struck down by the Supreme Court stating clear case of quid pro quo.

* Revised expenditure limits: The Commission has increased the expenditure limits for candidates upto 30%.

Yet, there are still areas of reform.

Needed reforms

- * Reducing the phases of elections
- * National electoral fund to fund parties
- * Depoliticise constitutional appointments.
- * Cap on party spending.

Elections in India are the cornerstone of democracy. Election Commission's role and autonomy can be further strengthened for a free and fair election.