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Ch: ELECTORAL POLITICS (NOTES)

System Of Elections In India

In India, Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha (Assembly) elections are held regularly every five years. After five years, the term of all the elected representatives comes to an end. Elections are held in all constituencies at the same time, either on the same day or within a few days. This is known as General Election. Sometimes an election is held only for one constituency to fill the vacancy caused by death or resignation of a member. This is known as a by-election.

Electoral Constituencies

In India, an area based system of representation is followed where the country is divided into different areas for purpose of elections. These are called Electoral Constituencies. Every voter who lives in an area elect one representative.

For the Lok Sabha election, India is divided into 543 constituencies. The representative elected from each constituency is called Member of Parliament or an MP. One of the features of a democratic election is that every vote has equal value. For Vidhan Sabha election, each state is divided into a specific number of assembly constituencies and the elected representative of each assembly constituency is called the Member of Legislative Assembly or an MLA.

By-election: If a representative from a constituency dies while in office or if the office-falls are vacant because of reasons like resignation, fresh elections are held in that particular constituency. Such an election is called a by-election.

Constituency' Voters in a geographical area who elect a representative to the Legislative Bodies.

Each parliamentary constituency has within it several assembly constituencies. The same principle applies for Panchayat and Municipal elections.

Each village or town is divided into different wards that are like constituencies. Each ward elects one member of the village or the urban local body. Sometimes these constituencies are counted as 'seats' and each constituency represents one seat in the assembly.

For example, when we say that 'Lok Dal won 60 seats¹ in Haryana, it means that candidates of Lok Dal won in 60 assembly constituencies in the state and thus Lok Dal had 60 MLAs in the State Assembly.