



- Politics is seen as associated with governmental activities. This can be illustrated with the help of the notion of politics – existed in classical Greece.
- Politics in Greek usage pertained to participation in decision-making and the, exercise of authority.
- In the nineteen sixties, David Easton conceptualised politics as the 'authoritative allocation of values'.
- For others like Bernard Crick, politics refers not so much to authoritative decision-making, but the processes by which decisions could be reached amiably.
- The two decades immediately following independence have been characterised by Rajni Kothari as 'decades of trust'.
- Politics in these decades was determined by a sense of trust between people marked by a mutual concern & understanding about what constituted the 'common good'.
- Politics was seen as an 'ethical space' where conflicts were resolved amicably and honourably.
- According to Rajni Kothari, the 1970 s marked an 'obituary' of the politics of trust. The 'ethical space' of politics was vitiated by violence, crime, corruption and repression, marking what Kothari calls the 'the virtual elimination of politics':
- Kothari sees this criminalisation as having unfolded in the process of the transformation of Indian politics from an 'organic' and vibrant entity, i.e., something wholesome and alive, into a mere 'mechanical', 'electoral system'.
- The criminalisation of politics was made manifest in a combination of two processes witnessed at this time: (i) the use of gangsterism as a substitute for party organisation and (ii) complete permeation of the State by money power.
- Both these processes were reflective of the means used to stay in power and simultaneously, the use of political power to serve selfish ends rather than public good.
- The emergent infrastructure of politics in the seventies and eighties was a reflection of this degeneration of Indian politics.
- Politics no longer comprised of individuals sensitive to the needs and aspirations of people at the grassroots and local levels, but of musclemen and local mafias who were supported and maintained by a new high-growth sector of the Indian economy, 'the combination of liquor kings, smugglers & fast-buck politicians'
- The gangsters were needed to capture booths and smugglers to provide election finances.
- It may be pointed out that in July 1993 the Government of India set up a committee headed by the then Home Secretary, N.N.Vohra, to take stock of all available information about the activities of crime Syndicate Mafia organisations which had developed links with & were being protected by government functionaries (Vohra Committee Report, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, 1993, p.1)
- The Committee submitted its report in October 1993. It took note of the fact that among other agencies, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) too, had reported the existence to crime syndicates all over India, and their nexus with the police, bureaucracy and politicians.
- The Committee felt that the existing criminal justice system was inadequate to deal with the activities of the Mafia, the provisions of law being especially weak in regard to economic offenses. (Vohra Report, p.2)
- The Election Commission too has pointed out the existence of a large number of Members of Legislative Assemblies (henceforth MLAs) having criminal records, and the need of weeding out criminal elements from politics.
- During the 1998 Lok Sabha elections, an eminent panel consisting of Justice Kuldeep Singh, Madhav Godbole, C. Subramaniam and Swami Agnivesh, identified as many as 72 Lok Sabha candidates facing serious criminal cases.
- It may be said that the majority of criminals enter the electoral fray through the medium of National and State parties, including the two large & all-India parties.
- Another alarming fact is that the bulk of the criminal candidates fell in the categories of accused of serious crime. They include persons already charge-sheeted by judicial courts or by an investigating agency and those with long crime history (Outlook, 23 February 1998, 10-1 1).
- These developments in Indian politics have resulted in both a narrowing of its social base and a loss of autonomy owing to the infusion of criminality and gangsterism into the realm of politics.
- Symptomatic of this is the brutalisation of the police and the paramilitary forces
- Napoleon said that the great difficulty with politics is that there are no established principles. He noted that politics and principles have seldom gone together. If at all they did, it was generally in the nature of an exception, or that the principle itself was distorted to suit the political objective.
- As early as in 1977, the National Police Commission headed by Dharam Vira observed: "The manner in which different political parties have functioned,

particularly on the eve of periodic election, involves the free use of musclemen and „Dadas“ to influence the attitude and conduct of sizable sections of the electorate”.

- The Panchayat elections, like other elections in the recent past, have demonstrated once again that there can be no sanity in India as long as politics continues to be based on caste and Gangsterism
- Earlier orders of election authority, state that (a) each candidate shall submit a sworn affidavit giving financial details and criminal cases; (b) each candidate shall inform the political party in writing of criminal cases against him or her; and (c) the party shall put up on its website and on social media as well as publish in newspapers the names and details of such candidates.
- The Court has asked the political parties to state “the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates.”If a political party fails to comply, it would be “... in contempt of this Court’s orders/directions. (Feb 2020)
- The judgment notes that “In 2004, 24% of the Members of Parliament had criminal cases pending against them; in 2009, that went up to 30%; in 2014 to 34%; and in 2019 as many as 43%, 46%(251) of newly-elected Lok Sabha (of 2024) MPs facing criminal cases of MPs had criminal cases pending against them.” — 27 of them have been convicted,
- Four declared cases related to murder under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and 27 declared cases related to attempt to murder under Section 307 of the IPC.
- Fifteen winning candidates have declared cases related to crimes against women, including two facing charges of rape under IPC Section 376.
- Four winning candidates have declared cases related to kidnapping and 43 have declared cases related to hate speech.
- The winning chances for a candidate with declared criminal cases in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections stood at 15.3 percent.
- Of the 240 winning candidates of the BJP, in the 18th Lok Sabha, 94 (39 percent) have declared criminal cases, according to the ADR
- 49 (49 per cent) of the Congress’ 99 winning candidates have declared criminal cases and 21 (45 percent) of the Samajwadi Party’s 37 candidates face criminal charges.
- From the TMC, which won 29 seats, 13 (45%) declared criminal cases against them and 13 (59 percent) of the DMK’s 22, 8 (50 per cent) of the TDP’s 16, and five (71 percent) of the Shiv Sena’s seven winning candidates have declared criminal cases.
- Sixty-three (26 percent) BJP candidates, 32 (32 percent) Congress candidates and 17 (46 percent) SP candidates have declared serious criminal cases against them
- In case of TMC 7 (24 percent) candidates, six (27 percent) of DMK, five (31 percent) of TDP and four (57 percent) Shiv Sena candidates face serious criminal cases, it further noted.
- There has been a 124 per cent increase in the number of MPs with declared serious criminal cases since 2009
- The chances of winning for a candidate with declared criminal cases in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections stood at 15.3 per cent, compared to just 4.4 per cent for candidates with a clean background, the analysis found.
- An analysis by the ADR and National Election Watch has shed light on the profiles of the candidates.
- Out of the 8,360 candidates contesting, 8,337 have been analysed – 1,643 have criminal cases, while 1,191 (14%) face serious criminal charges, including those related to rape, murder, and crimes against women.
- The financial profiles of the candidates show a substantial number of wealthy individuals running for office.
- Out of the total candidates, 31% are crorepatris (millionaires), which translates to 2,572 candidates.
- This is a notable increase from previous elections, indicating a trend towards more affluent candidates entering the political fray.
- The average assets per candidate amount to ₹6.23 crores, reflecting significant wealth among the contesting candidates.
- Of the 20 elected representatives from Kerala for the Lok Sabha in 2024, 19 had criminal cases against them and 55 per cent had serious criminal cases against them.
- Telangana, which has 17 seats, elected 81 percent of candidates with criminal cases, and 71 per cent of the candidates had serious cases against them
- In the five states with the most Lok Sabha seats — Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Bihar, and Tamil Nadu — over 50 per cent of the representatives had criminal records. Half of Uttar Pradesh’s 80 representatives had criminal cases
- In Maharashtra, 24 of 48 seats are represented by candidates with criminal cases. In West Bengal, 52 percent of MPs had criminal backgrounds and in Bihar, this was 53 percent.
- Dean Kuriakose, the Congress representative from Idukki in Kerala, had the most criminal cases — 88, of which 23 were serious Indian Penal Code (IPC) cases against him. He was convicted in 18 cases.
- Of the ministers in the Modi 3.0 ministry, 39 per cent had criminal cases against them. Two of these ministers, Shantanu Thakur and Sukanta Majumdar, face charges under Section 307 of the IPC for attempted murder. Bandi Sanjay Kumar, a Minister of State for Home Affairs, had 42 criminal cases,

making him the minister with the most criminal cases against him.

- Fake news, trolling, and fanciful claims are still out of the ambit of the ECI
- Ensuring prosecution with public pressure may help.
- All the dozen and more Supreme Court judgments on electoral reforms since 2002 are in fact responses to citizen initiatives.
- Not one initiative has come from the political system
- When a political party puts up a candidate with criminal charges, it results in alienation of large section of people from political class & politics itself.
- Latest verdict of court directed to ensure the asset disclosure & criminal records of candidates, the invalidation of a clause of immunity to sitting legislators from immediate disqualification after conviction, directed the establishment of special courts
- De-criminalisation of politics cannot be achieved by judicial fiat alone. The political class has to respond to the challenge.
- A more meaningful option would be for parties to refrain from giving ticket to such candidates
- SC also stated the parties should submit compliance reports to ECI within 72 hours of the selection of candidates.
- The number might be inflated as many politicians tend to be charged with relatively minor offences “unlawful assembly” and “defamation” — the real worry is that the current cohort of Lok Sabha MPs has the highest proportion of those with serious declared criminal cases compared to its recent predecessors.
- Researchers have found that such candidates with serious records seem to do well despite their public image, largely due to their ability to finance their own elections and bring substantive resources to their respective parties .
- A politician may be disqualified from being a legislator, but he may continue to hold high positions within his party, thus also continuing to play an important public role which he has been deemed unfit for by the law.
- Convicted politicians may continue to influence law-making by controlling the party and fielding proxy candidates in legislature, the Chief Justice wrote in the judgment.
- The observations made by the CIC in Subhash Chandra Agarwal v. INC and others to describe the position of political parties in democracy.
“ It is , necessary to introduce internal democracy, financial transparency & accountability in the working of the political parties”

INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY

- There has been no contest for the president’s post in the BJP since it was founded in 1980. All presidents have come through the selection or nomination route.
- Elections have taken place at the State level but this practice too has been jettisoned in recent years in favour of election by consensus.
- In the Congress, the selection of the Chief Minister is not left to the legislature party in the State assembly.
- Family rule is not a monopoly of the Congress only . Of the BJP’s elected MPs, 14.49 % in 2004, 19.13% in 2009 and 14.89% in 2014 were dynastic.
- In Germany , parties are required to meet certain conditions in nominating their candidates to party posts. They have to be chosen by a direct secret vote at both constituency and federal levels.
- In the U.S., laws were enacted that required the use of secret ballots in intra-party elections
- The British Labour Party, the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party, the Democratic Party in the U.S. and the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada have all seen movements by party activists and by the rank and file to reduce the power of entrenched party elites.
- Taken as a whole, the electoral process is more representative but political parties look a lot like oligarchies
- Political parties — with the exception of the Left parties — still refuse to lay down settled & predictable procedures from the selection of candidates to the framing of a manifesto.
- The more significant issue is the lack of institutionalisation and, partly as a consequence, democratisation.
- Parties are leader-centric and most leaders are unwilling to institutionalise procedures for the selection of candidates
- Strong leaders rarely support institutionalisation because it constrains their discretion and personal power
- Reduction of party organisations into election-winning machines, which depend for their success on the charisma of the leader in winning elections.
- Parties are inattentive to the need for constant organisational change and renewal.
- Leaders are valued for their capacity to attract crowds and raise funds as elections become more and more expensive.
- According to political scientist , E. Sridharan , ‘The opacity of political financing, necessitates ‘unhindered top-down control’ and ‘absolute loyalty down the line’,
- If party funds are raised and controlled centrally, this weakens the State units
- Many chief ministers in different states did not have national profile nor they had local influence

- Daniele Caramani defines party-based representative mechanisms as one where parties fulfil the function of linking citizens and representatives by articulating their interests and of governing responsibly by putting forth political personnel
- Populism reduces representation as the leadership's identification with the people as 'one of (all of) them', while technocracy places rule by a group of experts who are authorised to decide on the people's behalf.
- Populism's legitimacy is based on the 'will of the people'; technocracy on 'rational speculation'.

VOTER TURNOUT

- Voter turnout refers to the number or percentage of eligible voters who cast their ballots.
- A high turnout is indicative of the vitality of democracy, while a low turnout is associated with voter apathy and mistrust of the political process.
- Since 1980s Voter's turnout has come down across the world, especially in Europe, though it has been more or less stable in Asia and the U.S. India has seen voter turnouts increasing largely due to awareness created by ECI
- In 2014, the country recorded the highest voter turnout in a general election since Independence (66.38%).
- The general election 2019 registered the highest-ever voter turnout of 67.47%, 1.03% more than the 2014 figure
- The 2024 Lok Sabha elections saw a voter turnout of 65.79%, with Assam leading at 81.56% and Bihar at 56.19%. India set a global benchmark with 64.2 crore voters, surpassing G7 nations' total by 1.5 times, including 31.2 crore women. Only 39 re-polls were needed, a significant decrease from 2019.
- According to the 2011 census, 45.36 crore Indians are internal migrants- Among them, 5.1 crore migrants moved only for economic reasons.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Election Commission has made it possible for senior citizens above the age of 65 to vote by postal ballot.
- Many migrants never intend to settle down and wish to return to their native villages and towns once their working season ends.
- Migrant workers become quasi-disenfranchised, forgotten voters because they cannot afford to return home on election day to choose their representatives
- Of the 542 constituencies that voted, 11 saw a voter turnout of less than 50%, with Srinagar seeing the lowest turnout at 38.7% vis-a-vis 14.4% in 2014. Assam's Dhubri, saw the highest turnout at 92.3%.
- The six national parties that participated in the general elections — Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BJP), CPI(M), NPEP — accounted for 63.35% of all the valid votes cast.

- The BJP secured 235,974,144 votes, accounting for 36.93% of the votes cast, followed by the Congress at 136,758,952, or 21.4%.
- The BJP had the highest percentage in Tripura (71.77%), while Congress had the highest in Puducherry at 53.37%.
- In Uttar Pradesh, even though the Samajwadi Party won 37 seats, it got 33.84% of the valid votes cast, compared to the BJP which won 33 seats despite getting 41.67%.
- Of the 8,359 candidates who contested the elections, 7,190 (or 86%) forfeited their deposits, 54.3% (3,905) of which were by independent candidates.
- A total of 3,921 independent candidates contested and accounted for 2.79% of the total valid votes. Only seven were elected.
- As many as 230 candidates secured 40-50% of votes cast in their constituencies. Only seven winning candidates secured more than 70% of votes from those cast in their constituencies, while only five secured less than 30%.
- 51.29% votes (329,361,948) were cast by men, 48.7% (312,764,269) by women, and 0.002% (13,058) by the third gender.
- At 13,058, voters from the third gender saw a 27.09% voter turnout, up from 14.64% in 2019.
- Puducherry had the highest share of women voters (53.03%), followed by Kerala (51.56%).
- The number of women candidates rose from 726 in 2019 to 800 in 2024, with the highest number of women candidates coming from Maharashtra (111), Uttar Pradesh (80) and Tamil Nadu (77). However, there were no women candidates in 152 constituencies.
- The number of registered PwD electors rose by 46.4% from 6,167,482 in 2019 to 9,028,696 in 2024.
- The number of registered overseas electors rose by 19.6% from 99,844 in 2019 to 119,374 this year.
- Meanwhile, the number of polling stations increased by 1.43%, from 1,037,848 in 2019 to 1,052,664, but only 40 polling stations saw repolls this year compared to 540 in 2019.
- On average, there were 930 electors per polling station, while only three parliamentary constituencies had more than 3,000 polling stations.
- The authorities seized a noteworthy Rs 10,000 crore, marking a substantial increase from Rs 3,477 crore confiscated in 2019
- Over 10.58 lakh votes were not counted or rejected in the Lok Sabha polls held in 2024.
- More than 97.97 crore citizens had registered themselves as voters as compared to over 91.19 crore in 2019, which is an increase of 7.43%.
- The total number of polling stations were 10,51,016 and the average number of electors per polling

station was 930. There was re-polling in 40 polling stations.

- There were 3,921 Independent candidates of whom only seven managed to win. None of the 279 women Independent candidates won.
- Voter apathy is perceived apathy among those eligible to vote in an election. This can happen when voters are disillusioned with the electoral process or with the political parties and candidates, or when don't think their vote will count, or when they don't care much for the issues around them.
- Our general elections have earned the distinction of being the biggest festival of democracy because they have the highest number of registered voters
- The govt introduced an amendment to the Representation of the People Act, 1951 to allow proxy voting for overseas voters but no such provisions are in place for the internal migrants.
- In 2014, when Gujarat became the first state in India to make voting compulsory in local polls, the

Gujarat high court stayed the law's implementation after a lawyer filed a PIL, citing the violation of Article 19(1)(A) of the Constitution

- EC repeatedly coming under the scanner due to its delayed and often perfunctory actions on violations of the MCC
- EC was also questioned for its stand on the sample size for Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) verification
- Vote shares are generally higher in rural India, because of the centrality of political power in meeting the needs of communities
- Rural politics functions substantially around groups. The fact that these groups are usually formed around caste and religion masks a more basic reason for their resilience
- The local group around a person who negotiates with the larger political parties was what the sociologist MN Srinivas called a vote bank.



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