

THIRD EYE

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QUARTERLY



ELECTION PROCESS IN INDIA

India, one of the most diverse countries in the world, is known for its different religions, traditions, languages, food, culture, costumes, architecture, heritage, and festivals. While we have at least nine recognized religions, all the major festivals like Diwali, Id-ul-Fitr, Ramzaan, Christmas, Lohri, Mahavir Jayanti, Buddha Pournima, are celebrated with great fanfare amongst the citizens.

However, there is one more event which is no less than any festival and that is elections. Be it general elections or state assembly elections or Panchayat elections - the moment the dates are announced by the Election Commission everyone seems to have expertise in politics and you can find long discussions over a cup of tea or at the dinner table.

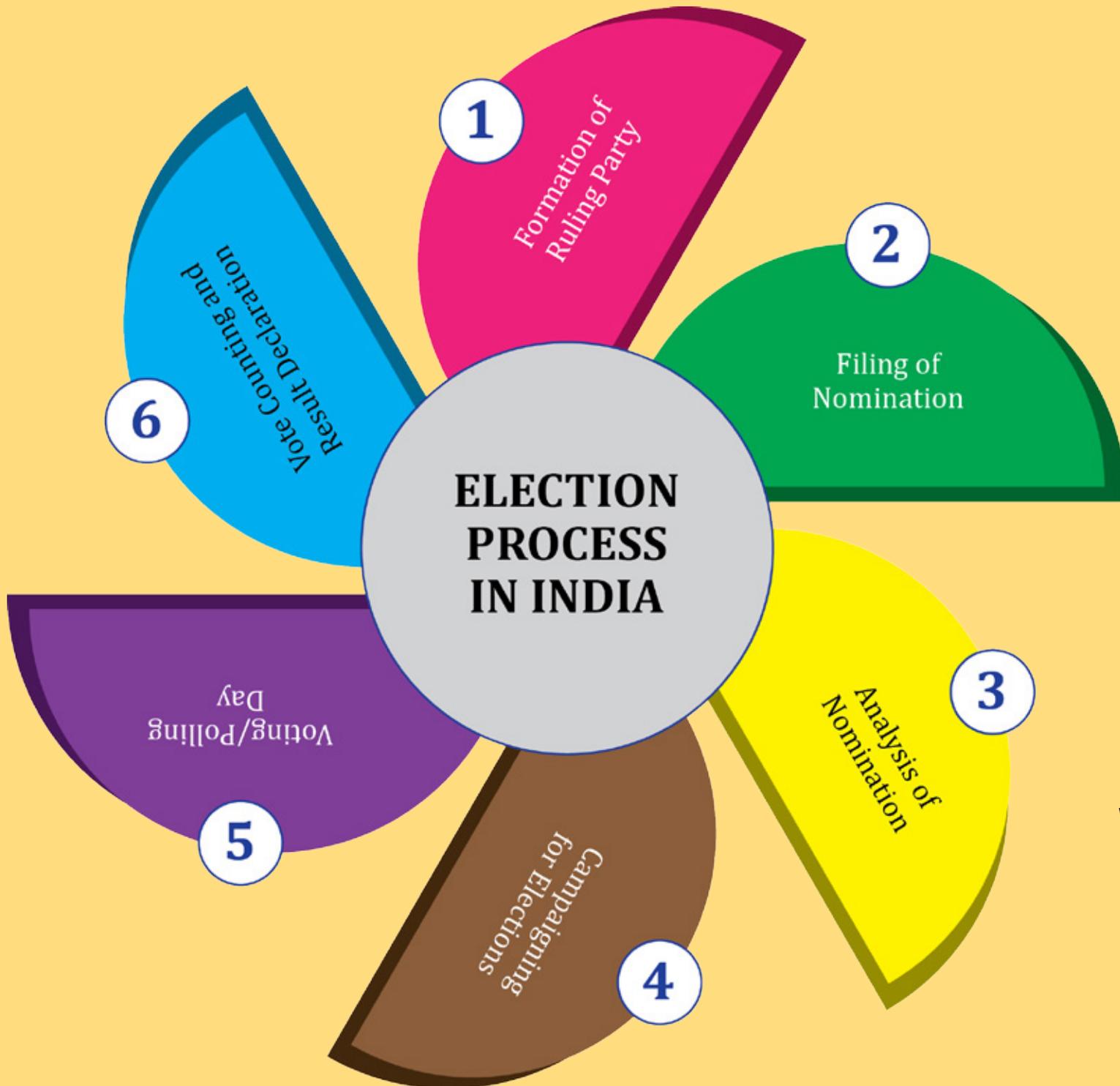
More recently, the elections for the President and Vice-President had all the taste of fierce fight among the ruling and opposition parties.

Elections are the foundation of Indian democracy. Democracy is rule of the people, by the people, and for the people. Elections are held to ensure this 'rule of the people.' As an outcome, elections are the process by which people choose their representatives in government. Journalists play an important role during elections. Candidates communicate with the public in a variety of ways, one of which is through the media.

It is critical for media students to understand our country's election process and we present it here both through the content and visual treat.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) oversees the Indian electoral process, which includes elections to parliament, state legislatures, and the offices of President and Vice-President. Since January 25, 1950, ECI has been an independent constitutional authority.





With this theme in mind, ASCO's Ace Lensman **TRILOCHAN S. KALRA** went around the city with Rashtriya Sahara's photographers **DEEP CHAND & DHARAM CHAND** during last Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections to capture glimpses of the entire process.

FILING OF NOMINATION





- A person who wishes to run for office must file nomination papers in the prescribed form indicating his name, age, postal address, and serial number in the electoral rolls.
- The candidate must be proposed and seconded by at least two voters registered in the relevant constituency.
- Every candidate is required to take an oath or affirmation.
- These papers are then delivered to the Election Commission's designated Returning Officer.

SECURITY DEPOSIT

- When submitting a nomination, each candidate must pay a security deposit. Every candidate for Lok Sabha must make a security deposit of Rs.10,000/-, and every candidate for State Assembly must make a deposit of Rs. 5,000/-.
- Candidates from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, on the other hand, must deposit Rs. 5,000/- if contesting Lok Sabha elections and Rs. 2,500/- if contesting Vidhan Sabha elections.
- If the candidate does not receive at least one-sixth of the total valid votes cast, the security deposit is forfeited.





SCRUTINY & WITHDRAWAL

- On the day set by the Election Commission, all nomination papers received by the Returning Officer are scrutinized.
- This is done to ensure that all paperwork is completed in accordance with the procedure and is accompanied by the required security deposit.
- The Returning Officer has the authority to reject a nomination paper for any of the following reasons:
 - If the candidate is under the age of 25.
 - If he or she has not paid the security deposit.
 - If he/she holds any profit-making office.
 - If he or she is not registered to vote anywhere in the country.
- The last day for candidates to withdraw is the second day following the scrutiny of nomination papers.
- If that day happens to be a holiday or a Sunday, the day after that is set as the deadline for the withdrawal.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN





- Campaigning is the process by which a candidate attempts to persuade voters to vote for him rather than for another candidate. And campaigning is the time when the atmosphere looks festive as political parties and candidates use all the possible avenues to woo voters but within the guidelines of EC.
- During this time, candidates attempt to travel throughout their constituency to persuade as many voters as possible to vote in their favor.
- The cacophony of the campaigning comes to an end 48 hours before the polling day.
- The election process involves a variety of campaign techniques.



MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT



- During the campaign period, political parties and candidates are expected to follow a model code of conduct developed by the Election Commission of India based on political party consensus.
- It takes effect the moment the Election Commission announces the election schedule. The following is the code of conduct:
 - Political parties and candidates should not campaign in religious establishments.
 - Speeches should not be delivered in such a way so to incite hatred among various communities representing various religions, castes, and languages, etc.
 - No official machinery should be used for election purposes.
 - Once the election dates are announced, no new grants, schemes, or projects can be launched.
 - It is not permissible to use the media for partisan purposes.



SCRUTINIZATION OF EXPENSES

- Though the Election Commission provides free access to all recognized National and State parties for a limited time for their campaign, this does not mean that political parties do not spend money on their election campaigns.
- Political parties and candidates running for office spend a lot of money on their election campaigns.
- The Election Commission, on the other hand, has the authority to investigate the candidates' election expenses.
- There is a limit on the amount of money that can be spent on Parliamentary and State Assembly elections.
- Within 45 days of the results being declared, every candidate is required to file an account of his election expenses.
- In the event of a default or if the candidate has incurred (expenses) more than the prescribed limit, the Election Commission has the authority to take appropriate action, and the candidate elected may be disqualified and his election may be annulled.





POLLING, COUNTING & DECLARATION OF RESULTS

- Many polling booths are set up in each constituency to conduct voting.
- To aid the process, each booth is assigned a Presiding Officer who works alongside the Polling Officers.
- A voter casts his or her vote secretly in an enclosure so that no one else is aware of the decision he or she has made.
- It is referred to as a secret ballot. After the polls close, the ballot boxes are sealed in the presence of the candidates' agents.
- Agents ensure that no voter is denied the right to vote if he or she appears within the time limit.



ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES (EVMS)

- To ensure free and fair elections, the Election Commission has begun using tamper-proof electronic voting machines.
- Each machine displays the names and symbols of the candidates in a constituency.
- The machine is simple to use, and it eliminates the need for ballot paper and ballot boxes. Vote counting becomes more convenient and faster when a machine is used.
- The sealed ballot boxes or EVMs are transported to the counting centre under strict security.
- The counting takes place in the presence of candidates and their agents and under the supervision of the Returning Officer.
- If there is any doubt about the validity or otherwise of a vote, the Returning Officer's decision is final.
- The Returning Officer declares the results once counting gets completed.



RE-POLL



If an anti-social element captures a booth during voting, the Election Commission may order a re-poll in the entire constituency or specific booths.