



Embassy of India Doha

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General Elections in India

Indian Parliament: Hon'ble President of India along with two Houses, namely the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha constitutes the Parliament of India.

President of India: President is the Head of State, elected, from among a group of nominees, by the Members of the Parliament (MP) (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) as well as of the State Legislatures, and serves for a term of five years.

- **Lok Sabha:** It is also known as the "House of the People" or the lower house and has members from 543 parliamentary constituencies. All of its members are directly elected by citizens of India on the basis of universal adult franchise, except additional two MPs who are appointed by the President of India. Every citizen of India, who is at least 18 years of age, is eligible to vote for the Lok Sabha elections.
- **Rajya Sabha:** The Rajya Sabha is also known as "Council of States" or the Upper House. Rajya Sabha is a permanent body and is not subject to dissolution. However, one third of the members retire every second year, and are replaced by newly elected members. Each member is elected for a term of six years. Its members are indirectly elected by members of legislative bodies of the States. The Rajya Sabha can have a maximum of 250 members in all. The Council of States is designed to maintain the federal character of the country. The number of members from a state depends on the population of the state (e.g. 31 from Uttar Pradesh and one from Nagaland).

The Prime Minister of India, as addressed to in the Constitution of India, is the Chief of Government, Chief Advisor to the President of India, Head of the Council of Ministers (Cabinet) and the Leader of the majority party in Parliament. The Prime Minister (PM), who can either be a member of Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha, leads the executive branch of the Government. The PM selects and can dismiss other members of the Cabinet; allocates posts to members within the Government; is the presiding member and Chairman of the Cabinet and is responsible for bringing proposals of legislation. The resignation or death of the Prime Minister dissolves the cabinet.

Constitution provisions for elections: By constitutional requirement, elections to the *Lok Sabha* must be held at most every five years or whenever Parliament is dissolved by the President. The previous election, to the 15th Lok Sabha, was conducted in April–May 2009, and its term will naturally expire on 31 May 2014.

Authority to conduct polls: The elections are organized by the Election Commission of India (ECI) which are normally held in multiple phases in view of the huge electoral base.

Dates for elections: The General Elections to constitute the 16th Lok Sabha in India are being held in nine phases, the longest such polls in the country's history, from April 07 to May 12, 2014. Voting will take place in all 543 parliamentary constituencies of India to elect one Member of Parliament (MP) for each of the constituencies in the Lok Sabha. **Details in annexure- A**

Results: Counting for elections will be carried out in a single phase on May 16, 2014 and results will be declared on the same day, before the 15th Lok Sabha completes its constitutional mandate on May 31, 2014.

Number of Voters: According to the Election Commission, there are a total of 814.59 million registered electors in the country. Out of this, the 28 states together accounts for 98.27% of voters while the 7 Union Territories together accounts for the remaining 1.73%. Among the states, Uttar Pradesh with more than 134.3 million voters or 16.49% of the national electorate has the largest number of electors, while Sikkim with around 362 thousand voters or 0.044% of the national electorate has the smallest number of voters.

Number of contestants per Constituency: In 2009 General Elections, a total of 8,070 candidates had contested for 543 Lok Sabha seats, averaging 14.86 candidates per seat/constituency. Number of candidates averaged in the range of 3-5 per constituency from the first General Elections in 1952 till sixth Lok Sabha elections in 1977. However, the number subsequently rose to record a highest average of 25.69 candidates per seat 1996.

Number of voters per constituency: The number of voters per seat varies from constituency to constituency. As per the latest data, the largest five parliamentary constituencies of the country in terms of number of electors together constitute 11.65 million electors while the smallest five together constitute 756.82 thousand voters. Malkajgiri in Andhra Pradesh with 2.95 million voters has the largest number of electors, while Lakshadweep with 47,972 electors has the smallest number of voters.

First-Past-the-Post Electoral System: Elections to the Lok Sabha are carried out using the first-past-the-post electoral system. Under this system, the candidate securing a majority vote of the total votes polled is declared elected, irrespective of the percentage of total votes polled or the total number of eligible voters.

- **Victory Margins:** In the General Elections 2009, out of 543 Lok Sabha seats, 120 seats were won by the candidates who secured 50% or more of the total votes polled in their respective constituencies. In the remaining 423

constituencies (nearly 78 % of total 543 seats), the winning candidates could not secure 50% of total votes polled.

- In 2009, there were 114 constituencies having victory margin less than three percent with Uttar Pradesh topping the list with 19 such constituencies. The least victory margin was in Tonk-Sawai Madhopur constituency, Rajasthan, where the winning candidate won the seat with 0.039% margin.

Women in Lok Sabha: Representation of women members in Lok Sabha and their participation in General Elections as contestants are increasing gradually. General Election- 2009 sent the highest number of women in Lok Sabha, 59, while in the previous House the number was 45. The lowest number of women elected to the Lok Sabha was in 1977 when only 19 women reached the Lower House.

For further information, please visit the websites of Election Commission of India (<http://eci.nic.in>) and Press Information Bureau (<http://pib.nic.in/elections2014>)
