NURTURING THE ROOTS OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

PRAJASETU'S CHRONICLES

THE BHARAT ELECTORAL LITERACY FEST (BELF)

was founded to address important issues but soon transformed into positive activism

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1. The Indian defence personnel faces several difficulties. Such as postal ballots arriving late to the counting. **It is suggested that the Indian Defence can have a virtual constituency, particularly for the 18 lakh soldiers on the reserve list. They suggest that the Rajya Sabha designate a member for defence people in a manner akin to that of the arts, sports, literature, and cinema.**

2. Transgender people face the problem when their families refuse to provide them with unique voting names or remove ones that already exist. The problems are exacerbated by restricted access to social facilities and rented accommodations, where proving one's address is a significant obstacle. **The implementation of "One India One Vote," or "One ID card fits all" User-friendly ID cards, And the establishment of trans representative zones, akin to other minority reservations, are among the suggestions made to address these problems.**

3. **The key problem here is the non-inclusivity of the key cohort, Youth and Migrant Voters, both Domestic and Overseas.** The ECI finds that young people are less interested in the elections, particularly those who live in cities. Disenfranchisement based on migration is, in fact, unthinkable in the modern era of technical growth. The Election Commission of India is worried about the issue of over 30 crore voters not exercising their right to vote and the disparity in voter participation across different States/UTs, even though the turnout for the general elections of 2019 was 67.4%.

4. The efficacy of the Electoral Bond system is called into question due to its substantial amount **(between 10,000 and 16,000 crores), even if it is supposed to be transparent. Comparatively speaking, the total amount of money spent on elections makes up 16% of the GDP, but the amount spent on education is only 6% of the GDP.** Mizoram's distinct strategy and proactive method ensures fair elections by monitoring and controlling hate speech, and the use of force and money and does away with the necessity for costly campaigns.

5. Since the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) and Remote Electronic Voter Machines (RVMs) are in the pilot run and continuous trials, **It is suggested that the integration of Blockchain and Aadhar in the secure transmission of data, which here can be the votes that are cast.**

6. **It is recommended to enable the use of Aadhar cards in the voting process. This would help increase voter turnout, track the voters, and create a robust database of voters.** Such integration of world-class technology is itself a psychological boost to the Youth of the nation, which nudges them to participate in the electoral processes. **This emphasizes the necessity of regular reviews and recommends constitutional amendments if necessary to take into account pertinent changes and popular participation.**

7. **Since the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) and Remote Electronic Voter Machines are in pilot run and in the continuous trials from the Government of India and the Election Commission of India which promotes the remote voter as well as Non-residential Indians in the light of inclusivity, she suggests that the integration of Blockchain, Aadhar and Digi Locker in the secure transmission of data, which here can be the votes that are cast. Such a technology can be revolutionary just like the UPI.**

8. **It is recommended to establish polling booths in prisons providing an opportunity to cast their vote.**

9. **Voting is the gesture of transfer of the voter's power to the most eligible candidate, hence making him/her the leader. There should also be a factor considered that the Candidate's profile should be considered rather than the political party.** The suggestions highlight how crucial it is to empower citizens, actively engage in society, and pursue well-informed decision-making to strengthen India's democracy.

INTRODUCTION

The Bharat Electoral Literacy Fest (BELF) is a bright spot for civic engagement and knowledge in the colourful fabric of India's democracy. Bharat Electoral Literacy Fest (BELF), which was created and is led by PrajaSetu, is a movement that is dedicated to creating a society in which all citizens actively participate in the democratic process of their country rather than just watching it happen.

Fundamentally, We want to turn voting from a civic obligation into a joyful celebration of voices, a group effort that shows the way to freedom. The festival envisions a day when all people vote, and it seeks to impart in each person the wisdom to make deliberate decisions that are essential to the welfare of the country.

The Bharat Electoral Literacy Fest (BELF) was founded to address important issues regarding the power of the vote, voter turnout, and obstacles that keep people from carrying out their civic duty. The event transformed into a priceless election handbook that painstakingly recorded the research, education, and activism related to "The Festival of Democracy." named. "Why Vote? Exploration of India's Electoral process", authored by The founder and President of PrajaSetu.

The committed team at PrajaSetu is a prime example of how the Bharat Electoral Literacy Fest (BELF) journey is entwined with the spirit of patriotic youth. This youth-led project, which is fully online, is a great example of innovation and fits in perfectly with the idea of a "Digital India."

BELF is more than just an event; is it a movement. It's an all-encompassing effort to close electoral knowledge gaps, identify particular problems, and provide potential fixes. The results of the festival are assembled into an extensive report, which is a demonstration of PrajaSetu's dedication to providing insightful analyses and suggestions to pertinent authorities, **such as the President of India, the Prime Minister's Office, and the Election Commission of India.**

BELF aims to empower citizens, simplify the electoral process, and establish a culture of active civic involvement to promote a lively and knowledgeable democratic society. By providing a forum for discussion, sharing of ideas, and information, Bharat Electoral Literacy Fest (BELF) is a collaborative endeavour to help India get closer to having an informed and engaged citizenry as opposed to just having a high voter turnout.

As such, the Bharat Electoral Literacy Fest (BELF) is a call to action for citizens to actively shape the future of their country via the power of informed and purposeful voting, as well as a celebration and responsibility combined into one. It is an expression of democratic values.

ENHANCING CIVIC PARTICIPATION AMONG DEFENCE PERSONS

1.1 - DERIVATIVES

1 During elections, Indian defence personnel face several difficulties. First of all, the postal ballot system is problematic since it frequently arrives late to the counting, making it difficult for people to take part in the democratic process.

2 Second, a typical worry is that there isn't enough information available for the defence personnel about the contestants. In such instances making an informed decision is difficult, as many defence personnel feel ignorant about the backgrounds and policies of the candidates.

3 In addition, there is widespread concern about voting privacy and a sense of prejudice when enquiring about the candidates. This jeopardises the confidentiality of their vote since they could be reluctant to publicly voice their choices.

4 Additionally, defence personnel find it difficult to keep an eye on the activities of the political authorities. They are oblivious to the acts done on their behalf as systems are in place to monitor the performance of elected representatives.

5 To enable defence personnel to confidently and actively engage in the electoral process and advance an inclusive and transparent democracy in India, these issues must be addressed.

6 According to the report from Times of India, the Postal ballots can make or mar the fortunes of a candidate in a closely fought contest. For instance, in the 2017 assembly polls in Gujarat's Dhokla constituency, Ashwin Rathod lost by 327 votes while the returning officer had rejected 429 postal ballots — the matter is now in court.

1.2 - DATA AND STATISTICS

Defense Vote Bank: 17 lakh serving, 16 lakh reserve (exceed India's largest constituency)
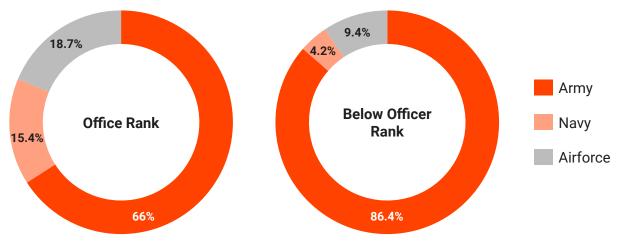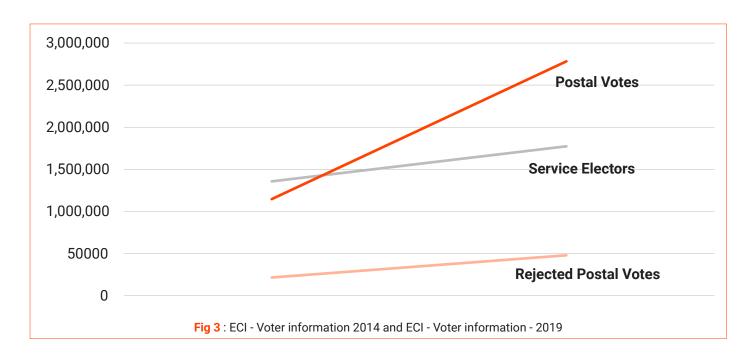
Defence Personnel Data

Fig 1: Strength of Defense - Officer Rank

Fig 2: Strength of Defense - Below Officer Rank

Rejection of Postal VotesPersonnel Data

Year	Service Electors	Total Postal Votes	Rejected Postal Votes
2014	1365625	1154607	225300
2019	1800388	2807427	507990

Fig 3 : ECI - Voter information 2014 and ECI - Voter information - 2019

1.3 - RECOMMENDATIONS

Indian military soldiers draw attention to important political problems by highlighting their emotional appeal and support base. There is proof that results from the postal ballot system, which involves people stationed away from their houses, have been altered.

These troops, who are frequently stationed in far-off locations like Srinagar, convey a lack of understanding with candidates from their constituency. They suggest that the Rajya Sabha designate a member for defence people in a manner akin to that of the arts, sports, literature, and cinema.

It is suggested that the Indian Defence can have a virtual constituency, particularly for the 18 lakh soldiers on the reserve list. This virtual constituency would guarantee a representative cognizant of the particular difficulties encountered by the military people.

Given the potential connectedness of applications, a request is made to modernise the voting process. problems in the border regions. Since some staff members now rely on friends or family for candidate information, maintaining privacy is essential.

Concerns about constitutional members are also raised, implying that a more inclusive system would be promoted by having representatives for those who are not in their constituencies. It is suggested to improve the postal ballot system by establishing profiles with educational material and posting candidate information on a platform.

Finally, it is stressed how important it is to have a specific spokesperson for defence workers. Simplifying the voting procedure is thought to be essential to guaranteeing defence personnel actively participating in the democratic process, particularly for younger generations who are accustomed to using smartphones.
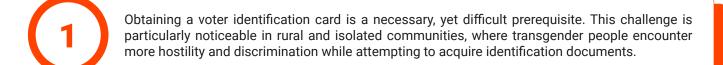
CHAPTER
02

BEYOND BINARY BALLOTS-PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSGENDER INCLUSION
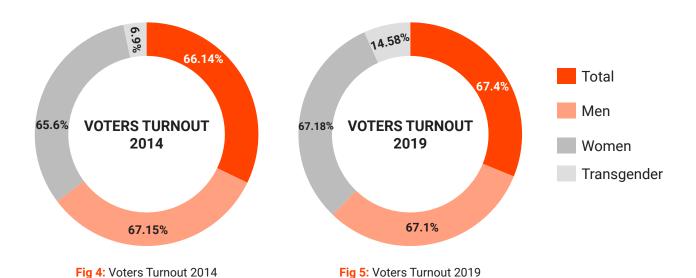
2.1 - REPORT DERIVATIVES:

There are substantial obstacles for transgender people in India to overcome to vote.

1 Obtaining a voter identification card is a necessary, yet difficult prerequisite. This challenge is particularly noticeable in rural and isolated communities, where transgender people encounter more hostility and discrimination while attempting to acquire identification documents.

2 Another issue is transgender people's mobility. They move around a lot and frequently struggle to acquire the required paperwork, which makes it challenging to obtain a voter ID in a new city. They find it difficult to obtain a necessary identity certificate, which makes it difficult for them to actively participate in the election process.

3 Furthermore, transgender people are noticeably less knowledgeable about the process of obtaining a voter ID. Their inability to fully comprehend the bureaucratic procedures involved is further hampered by this knowledge gap.

4 The lack of a distinct voting line for transgender people is a major problem in terms of inclusivity. This error may cause unease and possibly even discrimination when voting.

5 In addition, election officials frequently lack the training required to handle and process transgender voting respectfully. Transgender people encounter additional difficulties in exercising their democratic rights due to the ignorance and insensitivity of officials. To ensure that the Indian voting system is more inclusive and accessible for transgender people, it is imperative that authorities receive training, improve awareness, and streamline procedures.

6 Since 2015, there have been some improvements as well as new challenges brought about by the efforts of NGOs and district collectorates. Transgender people find it considerably more difficult to vote when their families refuse to provide them with unique voting names or remove ones that already exist.

7 ID creation camps tend to be exclusive and favor a select few, leaving many people behind. The problems are exacerbated by restricted access to social facilities and rented accommodations, where proving one's address is a significant obstacle.

8 In India, voting presents many difficulties for transgender people, from obtaining voter identification cards to encountering prejudice and underrepresentation. One major problem is the difficulty in obtaining identity documents, which is frequently made worse by the drawn-out procedure and officials' ignorance of it.

9 The Digital India initiative's push for digitization in India hasn't made things any easier for transgender people. They are sent to camps for verification even though they have all the proper documentation, which creates needless complications.

10 When a bill granting transsexual people their first voter cards was passed in 1984, hopes were raised. Albeit, there is an increase in the voter participation of transgender persons, because of a lack of outreach, understanding, and respect, there is still a disconnect between awareness and real voting. 40 years is a remarkable time frame.

2.2 - DATA AND STATISTICS

The data below is generated from the data provided by the Election Commission of India. This shows a rise in the participation of Transgender personnel. It sure is optimistic, provided that the below-mentioned recommendations are taken into consideration, the voter turnout will increase drastically.

Fig 4: Voters Turnout 2014

Fig 5: Voters Turnout 2019

2.3 - RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of "One India One Vote," or "One ID card fits all"

User-friendly ID cards,

And the establishment of trans representative zones, akin to other minority reservations, are among suggestions made to address these problems.

An inclusive set-up in all the places, society, and government offices will facilitate transgender participation in civic activities.

A drastic shift in the behaviour among the citizens of the society is recommended to propel a change and serve as an instrument for an inclusive and sustainable society.

With these adjustments, the transgender community in India hopes to improve the election process by increasing participation, overcoming practical obstacles, and bringing about beneficial improvements.

CHAPTER
03

CATALYZING CHANGE - EVALUATING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT

3.1 - DERIVATIVES

1   The impact of family members on women's voting choices is another problem. It is imperative to surmount this impact to enable women to make autonomous decisions devoid of outside influences and psychological proddings.

2   There has been a noticeable upward trend in women's participation in Indian elections. Women who used their right to vote increased by 8% between the 1960s and the 1990s. With a historic high turnout of 67.11% in 2019, women's participation in the political process is on the rise

3   The 2011 election saw a somewhat lower turnout of 908 women to 1000 men, despite a sex ratio of 943 women to 1000 men. This suggests that despite their active participation, women still need to be represented more.

4   It's interesting how men and women view voting differently. Different parents, particularly moms, may view the same child from different angles. Values, safety, electricity, cleanliness, education and schools, and roads and street lights during the voting process are frequently given priority by women.

5   And thus it reveals that increased female participation and representation lead to improved governance and the emphasis on value systems will have its sway in the reduction of corruption and other governance-related hurdles. This highlights the vital role that women play in influencing the political environment and highlights the necessity for ongoing initiatives to support and encourage their active participation in Indian elections.

6   It is recommended that the stimulus in the form of education and other activities should start at minuscule level from the schools. This behavioural change pattern should be adopted and practised in the society.

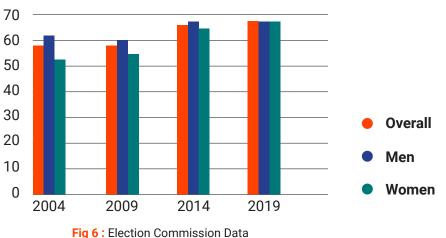## Observers Research Foundation's Report outcomes:

The analysis finds that the sex ratio of electors fell marginally from 939 in the 1970s to 928 in the 2010s. However, the sex ratio of voters increased significantly from 793 to 928. (ORF Report Data)

This paper argues that there are systematic and comprehensive increasing trends in women's participation—as voters, contestants, and winners—in the democratic process at the state legislative elections across India. The most impressive gains were made in women's participation as voters and contestants.
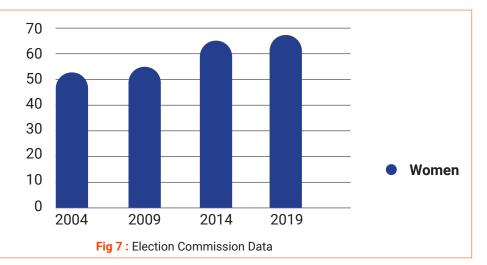
3.2 - DATA AND STATISTICS:

VOTER TURNOUT
INDIAN ELECTIONS

Fig 6 : Election Commission Data

WOMEN VOTER TURNOUT
INDIAN ELECTIONS

Fig 7 : Election Commission Data

3.3 - RECOMMENDATIONS

For a more inclusive democratic process, attention must be paid to the unique problems that women in India experience during elections.

Because some women are not on the electoral roll, first-time voters face obstacles. This emphasises the need for expedited registration procedures to guarantee women's involvement in the democratic process.

The disinterest and ignorance of those who have previously cast ballots in elections is a worrying trend. To address this, concentrated efforts must be made to inform and involve voters regularly, cultivating a sense of the significance of each vote.

Women are less likely to vote than men for a variety of reasons, including professions that are located outside of their hometowns, a lack of background knowledge on candidates, and a vulnerability to misinformation. To address these concerns and promote more informed and active engagement, awareness campaigns that are specifically designed to address the demands and obstacles experienced by women should be developed.

In conclusion, tackling family influence, streamlining registration processes, and launching focused awareness initiatives are all necessary to increase women's engagement in the political process. By guaranteeing that every woman's voice is heard in community government, such initiatives are crucial to strengthening India's democratic fabric.

CHAPTER
04

PINNACLE PERSPECTIVE OF INCLUDING THE YOUTH AND MIGRANT VOTERS

This chapter holistically approaches the problems and possible derivatives from the micro-managed and dissected cohort under one single umbrella. The reforms are discussed concurrently in the upcoming chapters.

The key problem here is the non-inclusivity of the key cohort. One fit solution can be remote voting where the ETPBS and proxy voting are currently only available to service voters, such as those serving in the armed forces or diplomatic missions. The ECI report states that proxy voting would be a "convenient" and "doable" technique.

4.1 - DERIVATIVES FROM YOUTH OF INDIA

To address gaps and stagnation in voter registration and turnout, the Election Commission of India (ECI) launched the Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) campaign in 2009. The overall voter turnout rose from 58.2% in 2009 to 66.4% in 2014 as a result of the SVEEP initiative as well as other political variables including the desire to alter the political system. The youth vote, which increased from 58% in 2009 to 68% in 2014, was significantly greater than the average voter turnout, according to Lokniti-CSDS surveys.

The ECI finds that young people are less interested in the elections, particularly those who live in cities. This is a component that could be present even though voter turnout has been somewhat rising annually, which makes it a growing concern that calls for cooperation.

The current prevailing Election Literacy clubs are one way to reach the Youth Voters. Considering its effectiveness the sample size of the Election Literacy Club (ELCs) in Thiruvananthapuram district in the state of Kerala, the ELCs have neither been universalized nor have they made major progress towards realising the goal for which they were established, according to a recent study on the clubs.

To give the clubs an institutionalised structure and recognition, the clubs need to be recognized by the educational departments and work more closely with other youth organisations like NYKS (Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan), RGNIYD (Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development), NSS (National Service Scheme), and other youth NGOs.

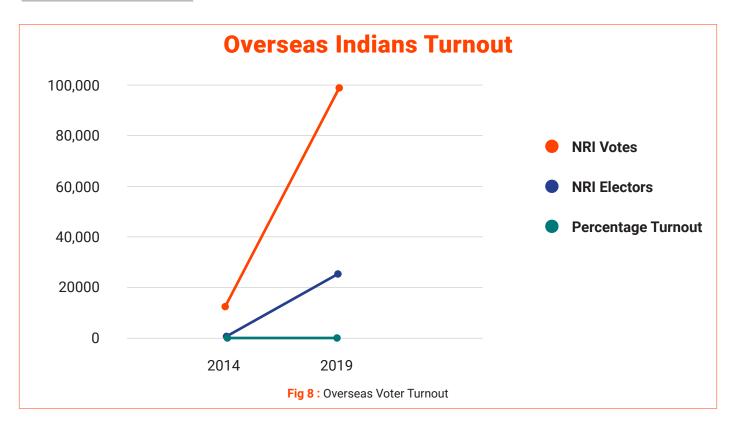# 4.2 - PANEL DISCUSSION DERIVATIONS - YOUTH

Though intelligent and motivated, India's youth frequently confront obstacles like bad political perceptions and a rigid attitude from earlier generations. It is difficult to achieve 100% involvement in rural areas due to the absence of connectivity and knowledge among tribals, hills, and villages.

Emphasis is placed on the necessity of reforming the educational system and pushing for a move toward reality-based conversations on politics, law, as well as the Constitution. Informed political engagement can be facilitated by establishing a distinct organisation for policy ideation and discussion.

4.3 - OVERSEAS VOTERS REPORT DERIVATIVES

As per the data of the Ministry of External Affairs, there are around 32285425 Overseas Indians, out of which 18683645 Persons of Indian origin (merged with Overseas Citizens of Indian post amendment in 2015) and 13601780 Non-residential Indians. Out of which the total eligible electors and the respective turnout are given below.

Year	Total Electors	Total Voters	Percentage Turnout
2019	99844	25606	25.65%
2014	13039	8	0.06%

Fig 8 : Overseas Voter Turnout

The ECI wrote to the Law Ministry in 2020 stating that it was "technically and administratively ready" to facilitate ETPBS for NRIs in the 2021 Assembly elections in five States, despite the External Affairs Ministry noting "huge logistical challenges" related to voter identity verification, the lack of polling agents, the burden on embassy staff, etc.

4.4 - DOMESTIC MIGRANTS REPORT DERIVATIVES:

Disenfranchisement based on migration is, in fact, unthinkable in the modern era of technical growth. The Election Commission of India is worried about the issue of over 30 crore voters not exercising their right to vote and the disparity in voter participation across different States/UTs, even though the turnout for the general elections of 2019 was 67.4%.

It is acknowledged that a voter sometimes chooses not to register to vote in a new location for a variety of reasons which is depriving them of the opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

To increase voter turnout and guarantee participatory elections, one of the main causes of incapacity to vote resulting from internal migration (domestic migrants) must be addressed.

Despite the lack of a national database on migration, the examination of publicly accessible data indicates that mobility connected to employment, marriage, and education is a significant factor in domestic migration.

In terms of total domestic movement, out-migration is more common among rural populations. Internal migration makes up around 85%.

CHAPTER
05

KEY PROBLEMS FOR REFORMS:

This chapter deals with overall problems along with that, which were elaborated in the previous chapters as well. With an astounding 94 crore voters, India is an ideal democracy and example model that has established itself as a solid democratic power in Asia and around the world.

5 - KEY PROBLEMS FOR REFORMS:

India's electoral system is affected by several issues that affect the democratic process' accountability and transparency. The enormous expense of elections, for political parties as well as the government, is one of the main problems. This presents a systematic problem that calls for more potent fixes.

The lack of civic and ethical education, which is frequently impacted by cultural influences, is another issue. Closing this educational divide is necessary to create an informed and accountable voter base.

The appropriate operation of the government is hampered by the use of force and money in elections. To promote accountability and transparency, stricter rules are required, particularly concerning foreign funding of Political parties and independent candidates under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, or FCRA.

Concerns about anonymity have been raised by the introduction of Electoral Bonds, which were meant to increase openness. The current government has access to donor data, however, there may be a gap in the system due to the absence of public disclosure.

To encourage openness in the political process, people must be aware of where political parties receive their funding. The efficacy of the Electoral Bond system is called into question due to its substantial amount (between 10,000 and 16,000 crores), even if it is supposed to be transparent.

Comparatively speaking, the total amount of money spent on elections makes up 16% of the GDP, but the amount spent on education is only 6% of the GDP. This emphasises how resources must be distributed fairly to guarantee India's democratic process and educated populace. These issues must be resolved if the Indian voting system is to continue developing and being legitimate.

According to the Association of Democratic Reforms' 2019 report, the situation of electoral affairs in India is alarming. Remarkably, 29% of elected politicians are currently facing serious accusations, and 43% of them have a criminal history. The average wealth of parliamentarians who are elected has increased to 20 crores, a 143% rise from 2014. Furthermore, some offenders even run for public office while incarcerated.

Civilians must act in this circumstance because a state that profits from these actions can only be stopped by popular pressure. A 51 vs. 49 situation suggests that, although 49% may not be wholly incorrect, development necessitates that we go past this point.

Democracy should continue to evolve; this is a lifelong journey. A minimum of 80% consensus ought to be the standard for determining morality. Reforms must be ongoing because depending only on populist choices could mislead us. In a strange voting situation, voters frequently cast their ballots to guarantee the loss of another candidate rather than for a winner.

When deciding which of the three candidates is the best, for example, even if C receives 40 votes and wins, the combined 60 votes against C (30 for A and 30 for B) show that a sizable majority didn't want C. This emphasises the necessity for us to reconsider our strategy—it's not just about getting more votes; it's also about knowing how to deliberately subtract votes from other candidates. India is hearing a lot of calls for electoral reforms and for citizens to participate fully in the political process.

06

CASE STUDIES:

This section speaks on the learnings inside India and what the world has done in response to their indigenous problems and how it caters to their system:

6.1 - FROM INDIA: THE MIZORAM MODEL

Mizoram, a prosperous state in India, opposes democracy's populist mentality by highlighting the importance of education. With a population of 12 lakh, of which 9 lakh are eligible to vote, the state has shown how education can change citizens' participation in politics.

During elections, the Mizoram People's Forum and churches serve as watchdogs, facilitating contact between candidates, the Election Commission (EC), and the general public. This proactive method ensures fair elections by monitoring and controlling hate speech, and the use of force and money.

Mizoram's distinct strategy does away with the necessity for costly campaigns by having candidates present their goals mostly through public discussions. These initiatives are overseen by a committed committee, which helps create an informed and conscious voting public with little financial clout.

Mizoram's remarkable 80.52% voter turnout in 2018 was credited to the state's high literacy rate and Human Development Index (HDI). Approaching the state as a constituency with a population of five lakh people might provide other areas with a reproducible model.

The success of Mizoram highlights that education is a solution in contrast to the dramatic character of politics in certain other civilizations. This strategy combats the "star factor" that exists in some places when candidates are more concerned with social events than with formulating policies.

For long-term success, systematic and people-centered reforms with an emphasis on accountability are essential. In the end, Mizoram's story shows how educating and empowering individuals may lead to improvements in government and election participation.

6.2 - FROM THE GLOBE:

Taking cues from other countries' successful election changes, India could think about introducing proportional representation with a 50% minimum threshold. This method has been adopted by nations like Canada, New Zealand, and Germany, fostering equitable representation. Making use of India's effective bureaucracy could help ensure that these reforms are implemented smoothly.

Models from France, Brazil, Canada, and Japan show how state funding of elections promotes equality in the struggle between different political entities. India can provide a fair playing field by limiting the impact of power and financial resources on the electoral contest by allocating election expenses equitably.

India should encourage internal funding over foreign sources to adopt a more transparent approach to fundraising, taking a page from the US. This action supports transparency and clarity in the funding process and is in line with the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

India can use modern technology in the election process to increase voter awareness. India should investigate options akin to the notion of a "One Nation One Election" (ONOE), taking cues from Germany's post-World War II electoral reforms. Positive electoral improvements are frequently sparked by post-major historical events globally, suggesting that timely reforms can reinforce the democratic fabric.

By implementing these suggestions, India may build an electoral system that is more transparent, equitable, and inclusive by using lessons from other countries' successful case studies and adapting them to the particulars of Indian elections.

07

ELECTORAL REFORMS AND PROSPECTIVE SOLUTIONS:

Because there is a lack of desire to apply solutions that are already in place on a global scale, Honourable. B.R. Ambedkar's outstanding achievements are sometimes overlooked. The economy is greatly impacted by the voting process itself, but reforming it is resisted. Reforms are achievable every year, and "One Nation One Election" is a significant step forward that could lead to a full solution.

7 - ELECTORAL REFORMS AND PROSPECTIVE SOLUTIONS:

Young people, who spend a lot of time on social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, X, etc are crucial in bringing about societal change. In the Indian setting, the differentiation between what is deemed cool and uncool is especially relevant.

To put these electoral changes into effect, it is necessary to comprehend the dynamics that are changing and to match the election process with the shifting preferences and dynamics of India's dynamic youth.

A constitutional amendment is essential for improving Indian election systems in the long run. This amendment ought to include changes to the candidate selection procedure, financing rules, and representation. The goal of these modifications is to establish an election system that is more open, responsible, and inclusive.

Shortly, effective models that are already in place in several states must be put into practice. Immediate improvements to the voting process can be achieved by taking lessons from these examples and implementing their successful strategies.

Improving voter education is also essential. In this sense, bridging the divide between rural and urban communities is crucial. To address the particular difficulties that voters in urban and rural areas confront, different strategies could be required. To guarantee that voters, wherever they may be, are educated and able to actively engage in the democratic process, this includes focused campaigns, awareness-raising initiatives, and streamlined information distribution.

Essentially, two approaches are needed: a short-term plan that involves putting successful models into practice and stepping up voter education, and a long-term reform that involves amending the constitution. Together, these initiatives will help create an electoral system that is more responsive, transparent, and resilient and that is suited to the many requirements of the Indian people.

7.1 - ONE NATION ONE ELECTION AS A SOLUTION

Supporting India's 'One Nation One Election' (ONOE) campaign means pushing for a decentralisation of power that will result in more representation. This action, like frosting on a cake, sets a notable example by emphasising women's involvement enhancement.

The Planning Commission, Law Commission, and Niti Aayog have all made recommendations that assist the Central government's shift to ONOE. In the past, we used a single-election system (ONOE) until 1956.

It is projected that putting ONOE into practice will save expenses, simplify budgets, and improve governance. A coordinated election process improves the efficiency of allocating resources, such as the police, for crime prevention.

Moreover, decentralisation is expected to facilitate bureaucratic procedures. Nowadays, elections frequently cause delays to projects, resulting in policies that are more motivated by immediate vote worries than future planning.

Furthermore, coalition issues—such as those, recently, in Maharashtra and other states—are addressed by a unified electoral system. This action guarantees higher voter turnout and promotes a more logical and effective system of government, which is a major step toward a more cohesive and efficient democratic process in India.

7.2 - KRITHIKA RAMASETHU'S VIEWS IN THE CONTEXT OF ELECTORAL REFORMS

1. The president and founder of PrajaSetu, Krithika Ramasethu, offers some suggestions for changing the voting system in India, stressing the importance of spending carefully, given that approximately 16% of GDP is allotted to elections. She is influenced by Mizoram's micromanaged growth and sees room for huge cost savings.

2. **She draws attention to India's well-developed bureaucratic structure and suggests expanding it to boost productivity.**

3. Krithika presses on a need for an "Update" in democracy, imagining India at the forefront of model reforms that the rest of the world can follow.

4. She advocates for an accountability framework in which all accused persons must go through a trial, face persecution, and if found guilty before receiving any kind of punishment.

5. She emphasises the significance of a mental shift, pushing a focus on improvement rather than the loss of others, in the spirit of cleanliness in democracy.

6. **She promotes a distinct, Indian, and Indo approach, emphasising India's variety as a strength that can be disseminated around the world.**

7. She recommends that it start at minuscule level from the schools. Let the schooling curriculum take a similar approach to choosing class monitors and allow aspiring leaders to demonstrate their abilities.

8. **She advocates for less pomp and circumstance in politics to emphasise leaders' approachability, pragmatism, and the compromise is struck with less exaggeration.**

9. **Since the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) and Remote Electronic Voter Machines are in pilot run and in the continuous trials from the Government of India and the Election Commission of India which promotes the remote voter as well as Non-residential Indians in the light of inclusivity, she suggests that the integration of Blockchain, Aadhar and Digi Locker in the secure transmission of data, which here can be the votes that are cast. Such a technology can be revolutionary just like the UPI.**

10. **It is recommended to enable the use of Aadhar cards in the voting process. Additionally, the use of secure digital platform is recommended for replacing postal ballots. This would help increase voter turnout, track the voters, and create a robust database of voters.**

11. **Such integration of world-class technology is itself a psychological boost to the Youth of the nation, which nudges them to participate in the electoral processes. She recommends having polling booths in prisons providing an opportunity to cast their vote.**

12. **Krithika emphasises the necessity of regular reviews and recommends that constitutional modifications take into account pertinent changes and popular participation.**

CONCLUSION

FOR THE CITIZENS OF INDIA

◆ The founder of the Bharat Electoral Literacy Fest, Krithika Ramasethu, offers persuasive suggestions for empowering people and encouraging rational decision-making in the Indian political process.

◆ While appreciating the efforts of the government, she stresses the value of citizen involvement and calls on people to become helpful contributors rather than obedient recipients. She raises concerns about the low level of citizen participation and exhorts people to share their knowledge impartially with the next generation.

◆ Krithika expresses gratitude to the government and the Election Commission of India (ECI) for their efforts and provides examples of their dedication to inclusivity, such as polling places in Gir National Park and close to border areas.

◆ She exhorts people to get away from narratives and be less swayed, emphasising the need to comprehend the power dynamics of a single vote. She is a proponent of early childhood education in schools, highlighting the value of civics and its influence on making well-informed decisions.

◆ She draws attention to the necessity for citizens to actively participate outside of government projects by highlighting the longer-term effects of actions, such as contracts, agreements, and bids. She urges people to adopt a new perspective, putting aside party politics, putting aside ego, and exercising initiative.

◆ She believes that the moment has come for Indians to welcome change and make sure that both the people and the system advance for the benefit of the country.

◆ Voting is a reflection of the enormous power that individuals possess, according to Krithika. She emphasises the desire to improve the welfare of the country and urges people to see politics as a field and possible vocation.

◆ Citizens should vote for their local representative, and through the means of transfer of power, the leader of the ruling government is elected for the Nation. This emphasises the significance of local administration that has to be pressed on through means of awareness. This is one important realisation.

Her demand that people ask questions and that elected officials respond is in line with the Indic behaviour of empathy. She argues that voting is a civic duty that voters should fulfil to ensure that their elected officials are accountable. But for that, the people must be responsible enough to have the eligibility and the correct intent of questioning the authority in the rightest way possible.

In conclusion, Krithika Ramasethu strongly propagates and emphasises the point that - Voting is the gesture of transfer of the voter's power to the most eligible candidate, hence making him/her the leader. There should also be a factor considered that the Candidate's profile should be considered rather than the political party. Her suggestions highlight how crucial it is to empower citizens, actively engage in society, and pursue well-informed decision-making to strengthen India's democracy.

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