

CBSE Class 9 Political Science

Chapter 3: Electoral Politics

PREMIUM STUDY NOTES — EXAM REVISION EDITION

SECTION 1: CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In a democracy, the people do not govern directly. They rule through their chosen representatives. This chapter looks at how these representatives are elected, focusing on the mechanics of **Electoral Politics**.

- **What is Electoral Politics?** It is the system of competition, rules, and procedures through which people choose their political representatives and determine who forms the government.
- **Importance of Elections in a Democracy:** Elections ensure that the government remains accountable to the public. They provide a peaceful mechanism for transferring political power and changing leadership.
- **Why Elections are Necessary:** In a modern large society, it is impossible for all citizens to sit together to make daily decisions. Elections offer a structural solution by allowing citizens to choose decision-makers, policymakers, and leadership at regular intervals.
- **Brief Overview of the Chapter:** The notes explore the necessity of democratic choices, establish the ground rules that make an election truly free and fair, systematically break down the 6 stages of the election process in India, highlight the powers of the Election Commission, and analyze major structural challenges.

SECTION 2: DETAILED EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS

Elections

A formal, systematic mechanism by which people choose their representatives at regular intervals and can change them if they wish to do so.

Electoral Politics

The entire field of political competition, legal rules, campaigning strategies, voting processes, and civic engagements centered around elections.

Representative Democracy

A democratic framework where sovereign power is exercised by chosen delegates elected by citizens, rather than by citizens directly enacting legislation.

Constituency

A specific geographical area designated for electoral purposes, from which a fixed number of voters elect a representative to a legislative body (like the Lok Sabha or State Assembly).

Political Party

An organized group of citizens sharing similar political views and ideologies who contest elections to hold and exercise political power in government.

Candidate

An individual citizen who officially enters an election contest to seek a representative seat in a legislative assembly.

Voter

An adult citizen who meets the legal criteria to cast a ballot in an election, participating in the democratic process.

SECTION 3: WHY DO WE NEED ELECTIONS?

To understand the necessity of elections, we look at the real-life NCERT case study of the Haryana State Assembly elections in 1987. The state had been ruled by a Congress party government since 1982. **Chaudhary Devi Lal**, an opposition leader, led a movement called **'Nyaya Yudh'** (Struggle for Justice) and formed a new party, **Lok Dal**. His party promised that if they won, they would waive the loans of small farmers and shopkeepers. The voters were unhappy with the existing government and voted overwhelmingly for Lok Dal and its allies, winning 76 out of 90 seats. Devi Lal became the Chief Minister, demonstrating how elections empower ordinary citizens to change their government smoothly.

The Substantive Purpose of Elections

- **Choice of Policy and Law Makers:** Voters can choose who will make laws for them, ensuring that the legislative path aligns with public interest.
- **Choice of Government Formation:** Citizens choose who will form the government and take major executive decisions, steering national development.
- **Choice of Guiding Ideology:** Voters can choose the political party whose policies will guide the government and law-making processes.
- **Accountability Tool:** If representatives fail to deliver on their promises, citizens can vote them out in the next election loop, keeping leaders responsive.

SECTION 4: WHAT MAKES AN ELECTION DEMOCRATIC?

Elections can take place in non-democratic countries as a formality. For an election to be genuinely democratic, it must satisfy five essential conditions outlined by NCERT:

1. **Everyone Should Be Able to Choose:** This means that every citizen must have one vote, and every vote must carry equal value (**Universal Adult Franchise**).

2. **Real Choice for Voters:** There should be multiple political parties and candidates contesting elections, offering real alternatives to the voters.
3. **Regular Opportunities:** Elections must be held regularly at fixed intervals (e.g., every five years) so that the public choice remains current.
4. **True Mandate:** The candidate preferred by the people should get elected, meaning results must not be manipulated or pre-arranged.
5. **Free and Fair Environment:** Elections must be conducted in a completely free and fair atmosphere, where voters can cast their ballots without fear, threat, or illegal pressure.

SECTION 5: THE ELECTION PROCESS IN INDIA

The execution of an election in India follows a strict, systematic sequence of stages overseen by constitutional guidelines.

Stage 1: Demarcation of Electoral Constituencies

The country is divided into different areas for purposes of elections, known as **electoral constituencies**. The voters who live in an area elect one representative.

- For Lok Sabha elections, India is divided into **543 constituencies**. The representative elected from each constituency is called a **Member of Parliament (MP)**.
- Similarly, each state is divided into a specific number of Assembly constituencies. The elected representative from each assembly unit is called a **Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA)**.
- **Reserved Constituencies:** Our Constitution makers worried that in an open electoral competition, weaker sections might not have a fair chance to get elected to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. To prevent this, a system of **Reserved Constituencies** was introduced. Currently, seats are reserved for **Scheduled Castes (SC)** and **Scheduled Tribes (ST)** based on their population proportion. In rural and urban local bodies (Panchayats and Municipalities), seats are now also reserved for **Other Backward Classes (OBC)** and **Women** (one-third of all seats).

Stage 2: Compilation of the Electoral Roll (Voters' List)

Once the constituencies are decided, the next step is to decide who can and who cannot vote. This list of official eligible voters is prepared long before the election and is officially called the **Electoral Roll**, commonly known as the **Voters' List**.

- In India, all citizens aged **18 years and above** have the right to vote, without discrimination based on caste, religion, or gender. Only a few individuals, like those with unsound minds or serious criminal records, can be denied the right to vote under rare conditions.
- The government introduces the **Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC)** to prevent proxy voting, though voters can still present other valid documents like a Ration Card or Driving License on polling day.

Stage 3: Nomination of Candidates

Anyone who can be a voter can also become a candidate in elections. However, the minimum age to be a voter is 18 years, while the minimum age to contest elections is **25 years**.

- Political parties nominate their candidates, who receive the party symbol and support. This party nomination is often called a party **'ticket'**.
- Every person who wishes to contest an election has to fill out a **'Nomination Form'** and deposit a specific amount of money as a **'security deposit'**.
- **Mandatory Legal Declaration:** Following Supreme Court directives, every candidate must make a full public disclosure via a legal affidavit, listing:
 1. Serious criminal cases pending against them.
 2. Details of the assets and liabilities of the candidate and their family.
 3. Their formal educational qualifications.

Stage 4: The Election Campaign

Election campaigns take place to facilitate free and open discussions about who is a better representative and which party will form a better government. In India, campaign periods officially last for a **'two-week period'** between the announcement of the final list of candidates and the date of polling.

- During this period, candidates contact their voters, political leaders address election meetings, and political parties mobilize their supporters.
- **The Model Code of Conduct (MCC):** A set of norms and guidelines agreed upon by all political parties and monitored by the Election Commission. According to the code, no party or candidate can:
 1. Use any place of worship for election propaganda.
 2. Use government vehicles, aircraft, or officials for elections.
 3. Once elections are announced, Ministers cannot lay foundation stones of any projects, make major policy decisions, or make promises of providing public facilities.
- **Campaign Limits:** To ensure fairness, the law caps expenditure. No party can spend more than a set limit per constituency for Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, nor can they bribe or threaten voters, or appeal to them in the name of caste or religion.

Stage 5: Polling Process (The Election Day)

The final stage of an election is the day when the voters cast or 'poll' their votes. This day is commonly called election day. Every voter whose name is on the voters' list goes to a designated **'polling booth'**, usually located in a local school or government building.

- Once inside, election officials identify the voter, put an indelible ink mark on their finger, and allow them to cast their vote.

- Historically, voting was done using paper ballots. Today, India uses **Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)**, which display candidate names alongside their unique party symbols. The voter simply presses the button next to their chosen candidate's name to record their vote securely.

Stage 6: Counting of Votes and Final Declaration of Results

Once polling ends, all EVMs are sealed and transported to a secure, heavily guarded facility. On a fixed date, all EVMs from a constituency are opened and the votes secured by each candidate are counted. Agents of all candidates sit inside the room to ensure the process remains fair. The candidate who secures the highest number of votes in a constituency is officially declared elected. When all constituencies are counted, the party with the majority of seats is invited to form the government.

SECTION 6: THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA (ECI)

The independence and power of the body conducting elections are critical to maintaining their fairness. In India, elections are conducted by an independent and highly powerful constitutional body called the **Election Commission of India (ECI)**.

1. Structural Independence

The ECI enjoys the same degree of independence that the Judiciary enjoys. The **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)** is appointed by the President of India. However, once appointed, the Chief Election Commissioner is not answerable to the President or the government. Even if the ruling party dislikes the Commission's decisions, it is virtually impossible to remove the CEC from office.

2. Mighty Powers & Functions of the ECI

- **Control over the Electoral Cycle:** The ECI takes decisions on every aspect of conduct and control of elections, from the announcement of election dates to the final declaration of results.
- **Enforcement of the Code of Conduct:** It enforces the Model Code of Conduct and punishes any candidate or party that violates its rules.
- **Command Over Government Machinery:** During the election period, the ECI can order the government to follow specific guidelines to prevent the misuse of governmental power. Government administrative and police officials on election duty operate under the direct control of the ECI, not the ruling political executive.
- **Ordering Repolls:** If the ECI finds that polling was unfair at specific booths or inside an entire constituency, it holds the constitutional power to cancel the vote and order a fresh **repoll**.

SECTION 7: MAJOR CHALLENGES TO FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

While India's electoral architecture is robust, several deep structural challenges persist, preventing elections from being fully democratic:

- **1. Distortion of Money Power:** Candidates and parties with a lot of money may not be guaranteed a win, but they enjoy a massive, unfair advantage over smaller independent candidates and newer political parties.
- **2. Infiltration of Muscle Power:** In several regions, political parties give tickets to candidates with criminal backgrounds or strong-arm connections, securing seats through fear and intimidation.
- **3. Dynastic Politics:** Many political parties are dominated by single families, leading to a system where party tickets are distributed to relatives rather than deserving grassroots workers.
- **4. Lack of Meaningful Choices:** Major political parties often look very similar in their policies and ideologies, leaving voters with limited meaningful alternatives.
- **5. Disadvantage of Smaller Parties:** The election system favors major institutional coalitions, placing smaller independent candidates at a severe structural disadvantage.

SECTION 8: IMPORTANT TERMS & DEFINITIONS

- **Election:** A formal, structured democratic process by which citizens select representatives to hold public office at regular intervals.
- **Constituency:** A defined geographical area whose registered voters elect a single representative to a legislative body.
- **Electoral Roll:** The official government register containing the names of all citizens eligible to vote in an upcoming election.
- **Election Manifesto:** A formal document issued by a political party before an election, outlining its proposed policies, plans, and promises to the public if elected.
- **Code of Conduct:** A binding set of guidelines and ethical rules issued by the Election Commission to regulate the behavior of political parties and candidates during campaigns.
- **Incumbent:** The current holder of an elected political office.
- **Secret Ballot:** A voting method that ensures a voter's choice remains completely private and anonymous, preventing intimidation.
- **EVM (Electronic Voting Machine):** An electronic device used to record votes securely, replacing traditional paper ballots.
- **Rigging:** Fraudulent manipulation of the election process to unfairly alter results, such as through booth capturing or proxy voting.

SECTION 9: NCERT KEY POINTS

CRITICAL EXAM FACTS TO REMEMBER

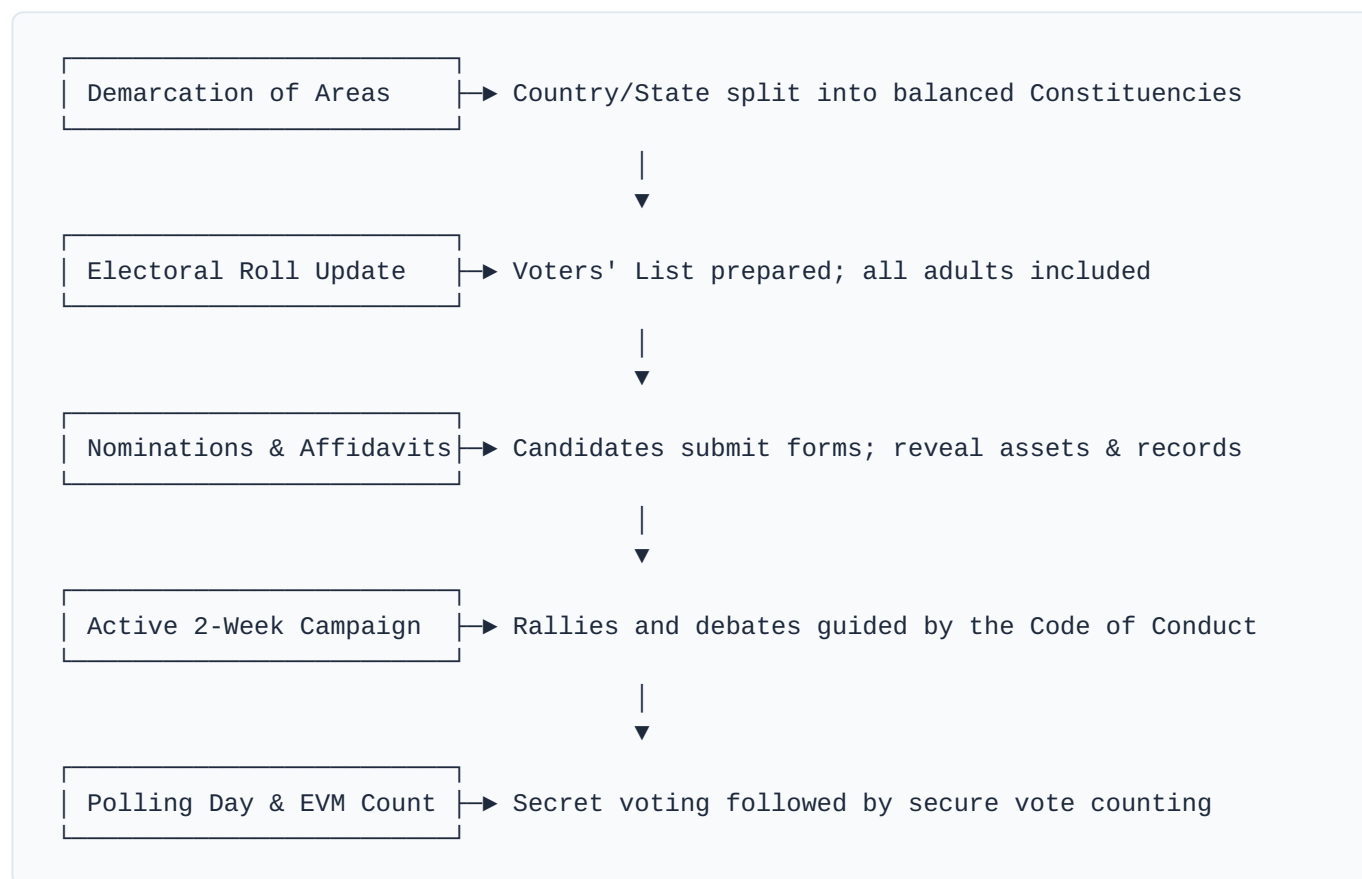
- **Lok Sabha Structural Count:** India is divided into exactly **543 parliamentary constituencies** for general elections.
- **The Candidate Age Cutoff:** A citizen must be at least **25 years old** to contest an election as a candidate.
- **Campaign Window Duration:** The official active campaigning period in India lasts for exactly ****two weeks**** after the final list of candidates is announced.
- **Devi Lal's Historic Movement:** Chaudhary Devi Lal spearheaded the *****Nyaya Yudh***** movement in Haryana, establishing the Lok Dal party before his 1987 election victory.
- **Judicial Equivalence:** The Election Commission of India holds the same level of constitutional independence and immunity as the Supreme Court of India.

SECTION 10: TABLES & FLOWCHARTS

1. Summary Matrix of the Election Stages

Electoral Stage Order	Primary Purpose & Description	Democratic Significance
1. Constituency Demarcation	Dividing the nation or state into balanced geographic units.	Ensures equal representation for all regions.
2. Electoral Roll Prep	Updating the list of eligible voters aged 18 and above.	Upholds the principle of Universal Adult Franchise.
3. Candidate Nomination	Filing forms, security deposits, and legal affidavits.	Maintains transparency regarding candidate backgrounds.
4. Election Campaign	A 2-week window for public speeches, meetings, and rallies.	Allows open public debate on policies and party platforms.
5. Polling Day	Voters cast their secret ballots using EVMs at local booths.	Empowers citizens to directly express their political preference.
6. Counting & Declaration	Secure counting of all votes to identify the winner.	Reflects the true mandate of the electorate.

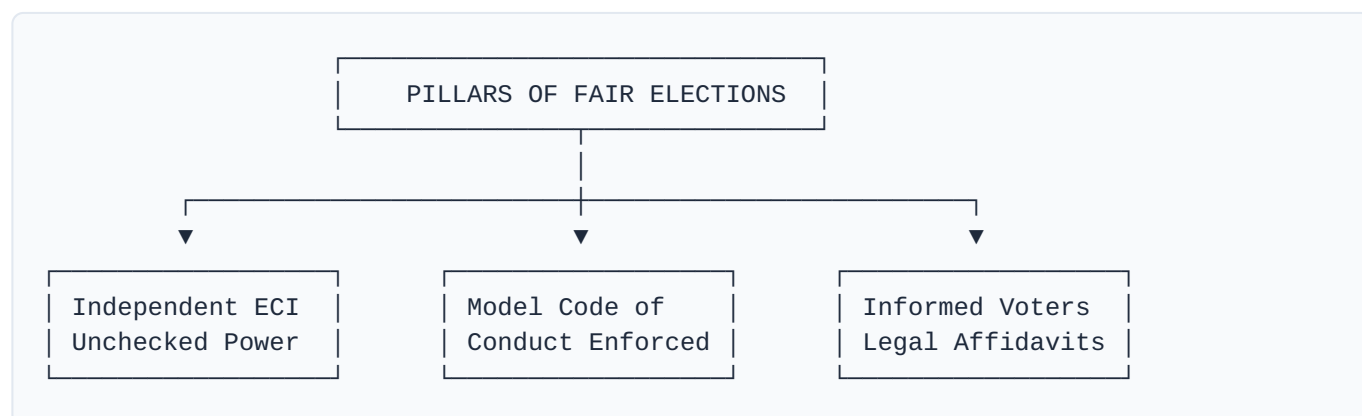
2. The Electoral Process Flowchart



SECTION 11: DIAGRAMS & VISUAL LEARNING NOTES

[Image of election process flow chart]

The Chain of Democratic Accountability



Visual Learning Tip:

Think of the election process as a competitive sporting tournament. For the tournament to be fair, you need clear rules (the Model Code of Conduct), an unbiased referee with the power to penalize rule-breakers (the Election Commission), and full transparency regarding the players (candidate affidavits). If any of these elements are missing, the competition cannot be truly fair.

SECTION 12: MEMORY TRICKS

1. How to Remember the Stages of the Indian Election Process

"Remember the acronym: C.R.N.C.P.C."

- **C** — **C**onstituency Demarcation (Dividing the map).
- **R** — **R**oll Preparation (The Voters' List).
- **N** — **N**omination of Candidates (Filing tickets).
- **C** — **C**ampaign Launch (The 2-week push).
- **P** — **P**olling Day (The EVM vote).
- **C** — **C**ounting & Declaration (Announcing the winner).

2. The ECI Power Checklist

"ECI rules with an IRON Hand"

- **I** — **I**ndependent standing, equal to the Judiciary.
- **R** — **R**epoll control (Can cancel tainted voting).
- **O** — **O**fficial command over state administrative staff.
- **N** — **N**orms enforcement (Upholding the Model Code of Conduct).

SECTION 13: COMMON MISTAKES STUDENTS MAKE

✗ Mistake: Confusing the age requirements for voting and contesting elections.

✓ Correction: To vote, a citizen must be at least ****18 years old****. To contest an election as a candidate, they must be at least ****25 years old****. Do not confuse these two age benchmarks in your answers.

✗ Mistake: Believing that internal borders and constituencies are divided arbitrarily.

✓ Correction: Constituencies are demarcated systematically based on population proportions, ensuring that each representative speaks for a roughly equal number of citizens.

✗ Mistake: Thinking that government officials on election duty answer to the ruling political party.

✓ Correction: During elections, all government employees and police officers on election duty operate under the direct control of the ****Election Commission****, not the ruling government.

SECTION 14: QUICK REVISION NOTES

- **Core Mechanism:** Elections allow citizens to choose their lawmakers, government leaders, and preferred policy directions.
- **The 543 Split:** India is divided into 543 parliamentary constituencies for Lok Sabha elections, alongside a network of assembly constituencies within each state.
- **Protective Reservation:** Seats are reserved for SC and ST candidates based on population proportions to ensure fair political representation for historically marginalized groups.
- **Transparency Affidavits:** Candidates must legally disclose their assets, liabilities, educational qualifications, and criminal records when filing nominations.
- **The Model Code:** A binding code of conduct that prevents political parties from misusing government resources or appealing to religious sentiments during campaigns.
- **Constitutional Authority:** The Election Commission of India operates independently of the executive, holding full power over the conduct and management of the electoral cycle.

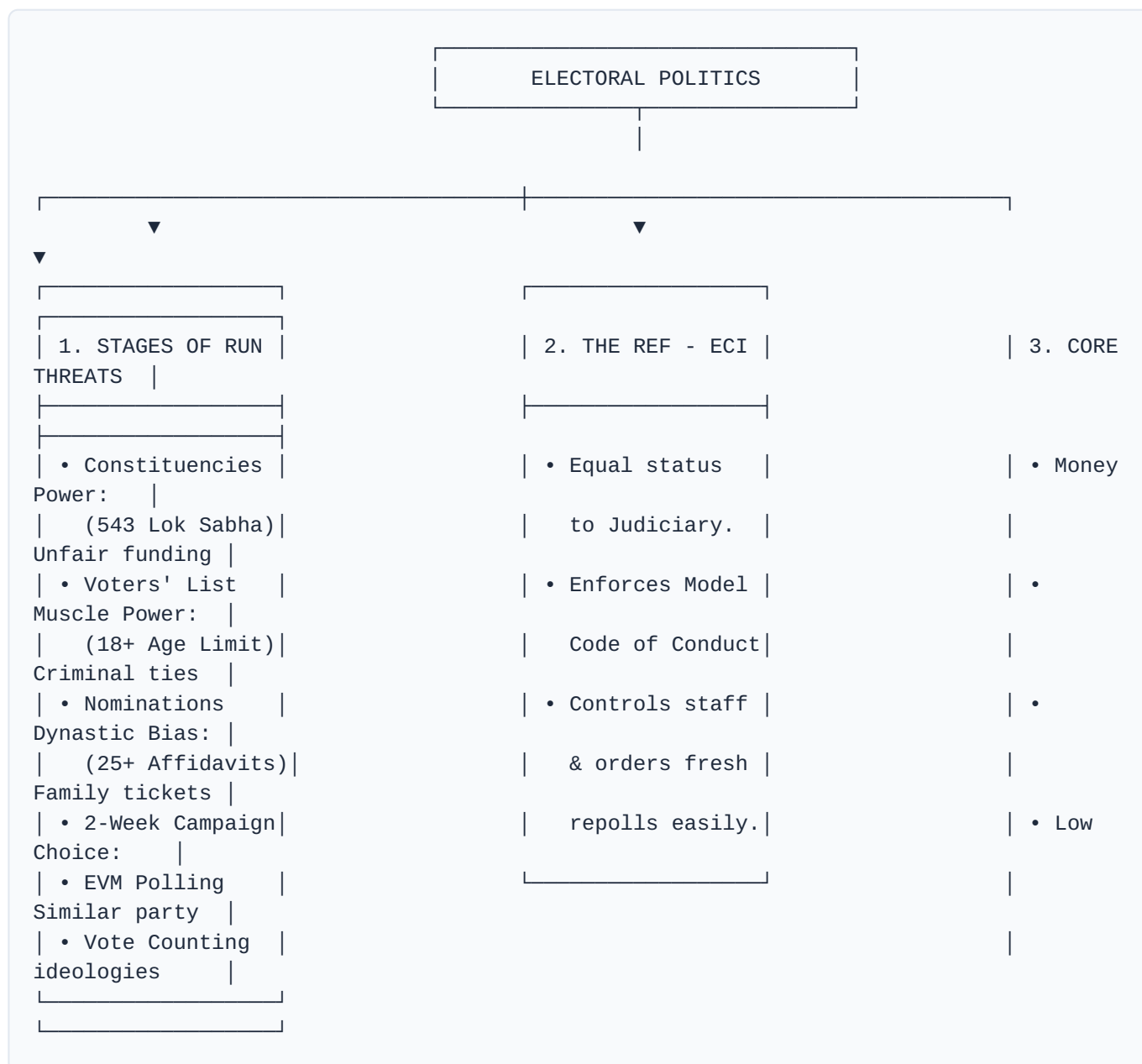
SECTION 15: ONE-PAGE SUMMARY

Electoral politics provides the practical framework for large-scale representative democracies, allowing citizens to select their leaders and guide policy directions at regular intervals. Using real-world examples, such as the 1987 state elections in Haryana, NCERT demonstrates how elections empower the public to hold governments accountable and change underperforming leadership. For an election to be genuinely democratic, it must meet key conditions: universal voting rights with equal weight, meaningful choices

among candidates, regular contests, and a free and fair environment where voters can cast their ballots without fear or manipulation.

In India, the electoral process moves systematically through several stages: the demarcation of 543 parliamentary constituencies, the reservation of seats to ensure fair representation for SC and ST communities, the update of the Electoral Roll, candidate nominations accompanied by transparency affidavits, a strict two-week campaign period governed by the Model Code of Conduct, and concluding with Polling Day via EVMs and vote counting. This entire cycle is managed by the independent Election Commission of India (ECI). Holding powers equal to the judiciary, the ECI enforces campaign rules, controls administrative machinery during elections, and can order repolls if irregularities occur. Despite challenges like money power, muscle power, and dynastic politics, India's independent electoral architecture continues to protect the voice of the electorate.

SECTION 16: MIND MAP



SECTION 18: EXAM TIPS

- **Detail the Model Code of Conduct:** Questions frequently ask about the rules of the Model Code of Conduct. Remember to explicitly list its core prohibitions, such as the ban on using government vehicles or places of worship for campaign propaganda.
- **Explain Reserved Constituencies:** When discussing reserved constituencies, explain the underlying reason: our constitution makers wanted to ensure that historically marginalized groups were not shut out of legislative power by better-resourced candidates.
- **Highlight ECI Independence:** When writing long-form answers about the Election Commission, emphasize its independence. Contrast it with the ruling government and explain that administrative staff answer directly to the ECI during elections to prevent the abuse of state power.