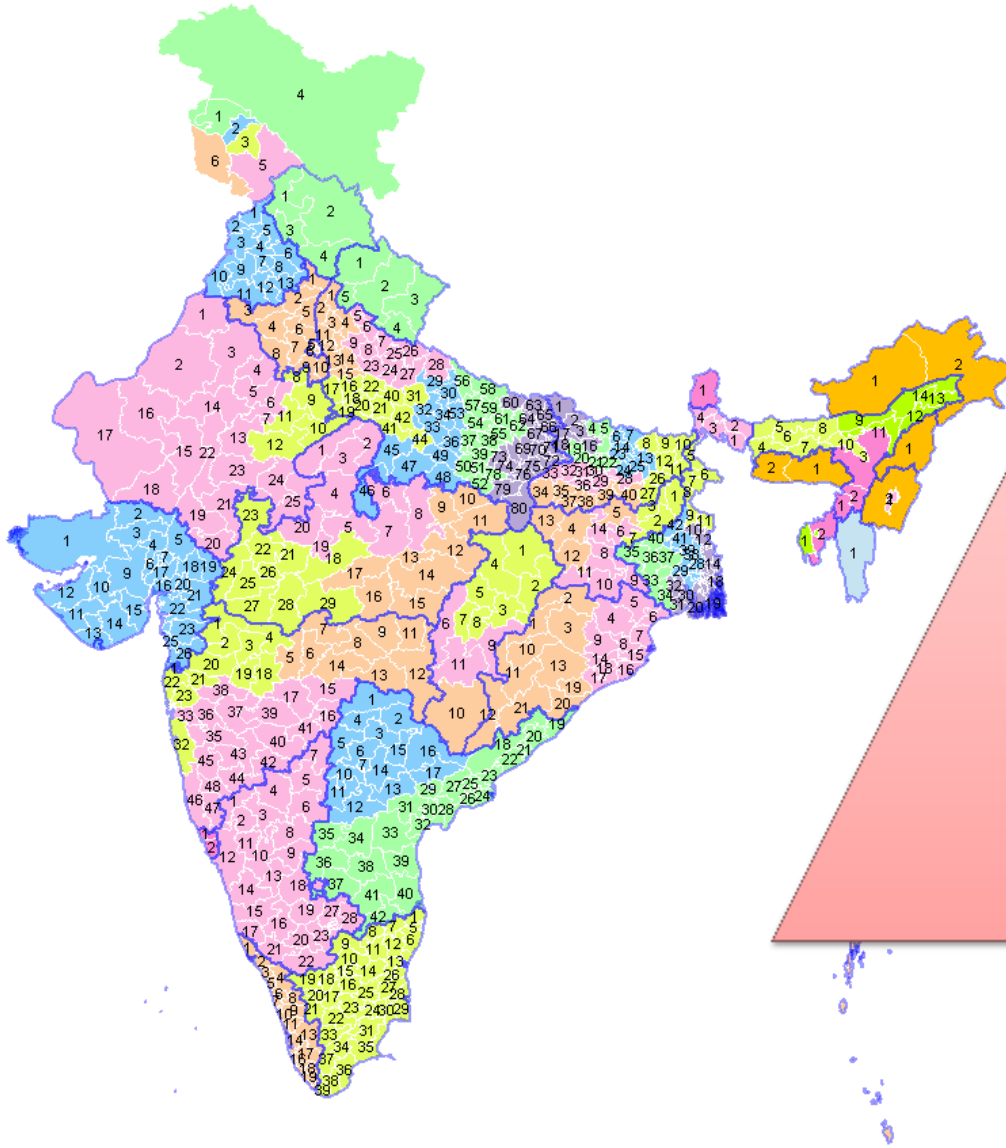# ELECTORAL LITERACY IN FORMAL EDUCATION: EDUCATION CURRICULA & EXTRA CURRICULA

Dr. Chandra Bhushan Kumar
Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

INCLUSIVE
- GETS REGISTERED AND PARTICIPATES

INFORMED
- UNDERSTANDS THE VALUE OF ELECTIONS

ETHICAL
- FREE FROM INDUCEMENTS

content

Electoral Literacy

and Multiple Forms in Schools

Formal Education:

curricula and extra-curricula
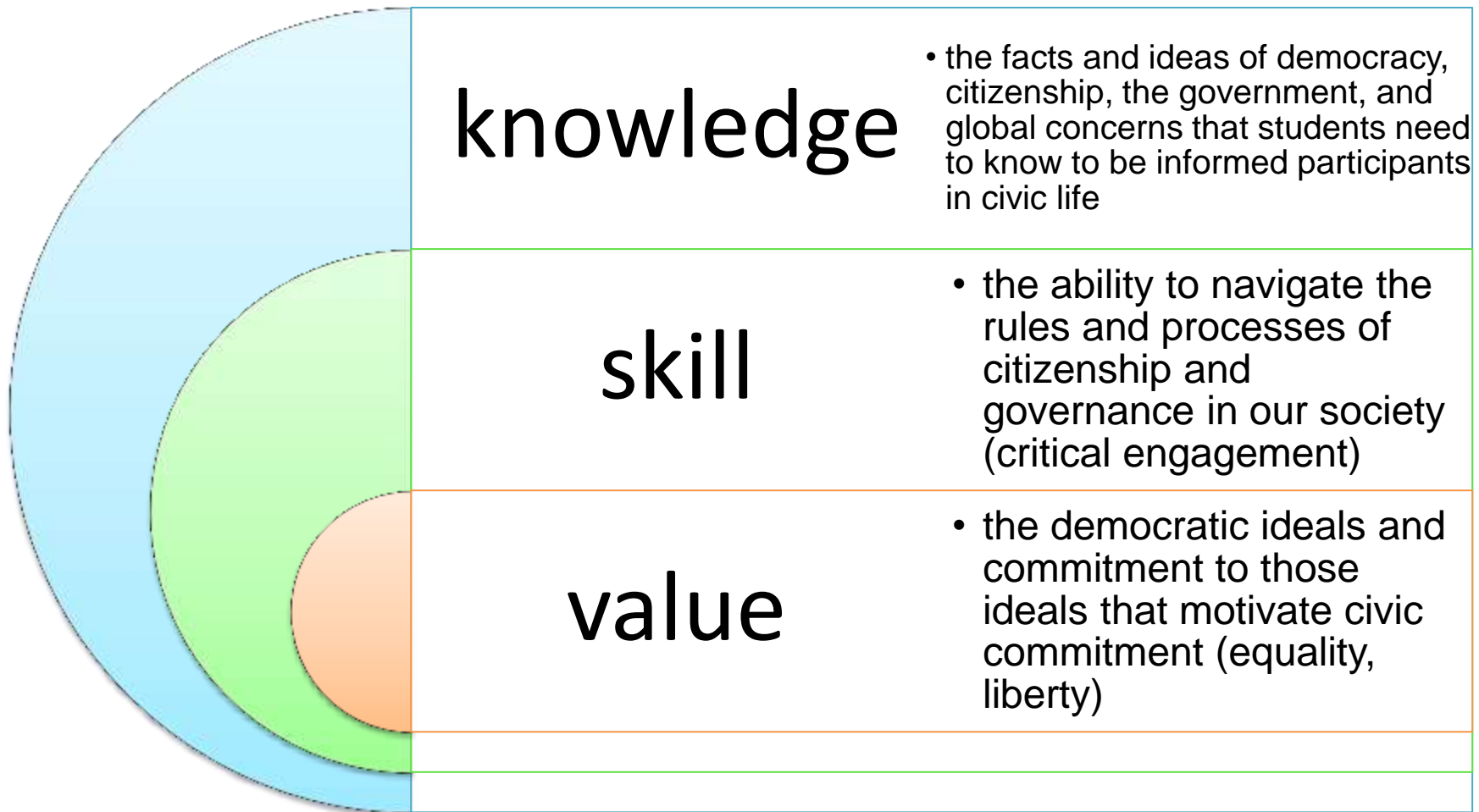
Challenges and Opportunities

Electoral Literacy in Schools: Multiple forms

Civic Education (most popular mode of imparting electoral literacy)

Social and Political Life (National Curriculum Framework, NCF, 2005 changed 'civics' to move away from colonial mindset and to promote diverse and liberal discourse)

Political Science (usually at higher education level, though a clear link with 'social and political life' is indicated in the NCF 2005)

Three dimensions of electoral literacy

knowledge
- the facts and ideas of democracy, citizenship, the government, and global concerns that students need to know to be informed participants in civic life

skill
- the ability to navigate the rules and processes of citizenship and governance in our society (critical engagement)

value
- the democratic ideals and commitment to those ideals that motivate civic commitment (equality, liberty)

School education in india

- Education in Concurrent List: Federal (Union) as well as Provinces (States) have the freedom to design the curricula.
- Federal level, *National Council of Educational Research and Training* (NCERT) developes curricula of school education in consonance with the principles of National Curriculum Framework, 2005.
- State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and State Education Boards either adopt or adapt NCERT's model syllabi and textbooks or develop their own syllabi and textbooks based on NCF.
- 18 Provinces use NCERT textbooks; Rest 18 have adapted to it.

Electoral Literacy targeted for School students (in '000)

Level	Girls	Boys	Total
Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	32035	33746	65781
Secondary (IX-X)	17477	19484	36961
Senior Secondary (XI-XII)	10406	11747	22153
Total			**124895**

Social and Political Life – I, II, III
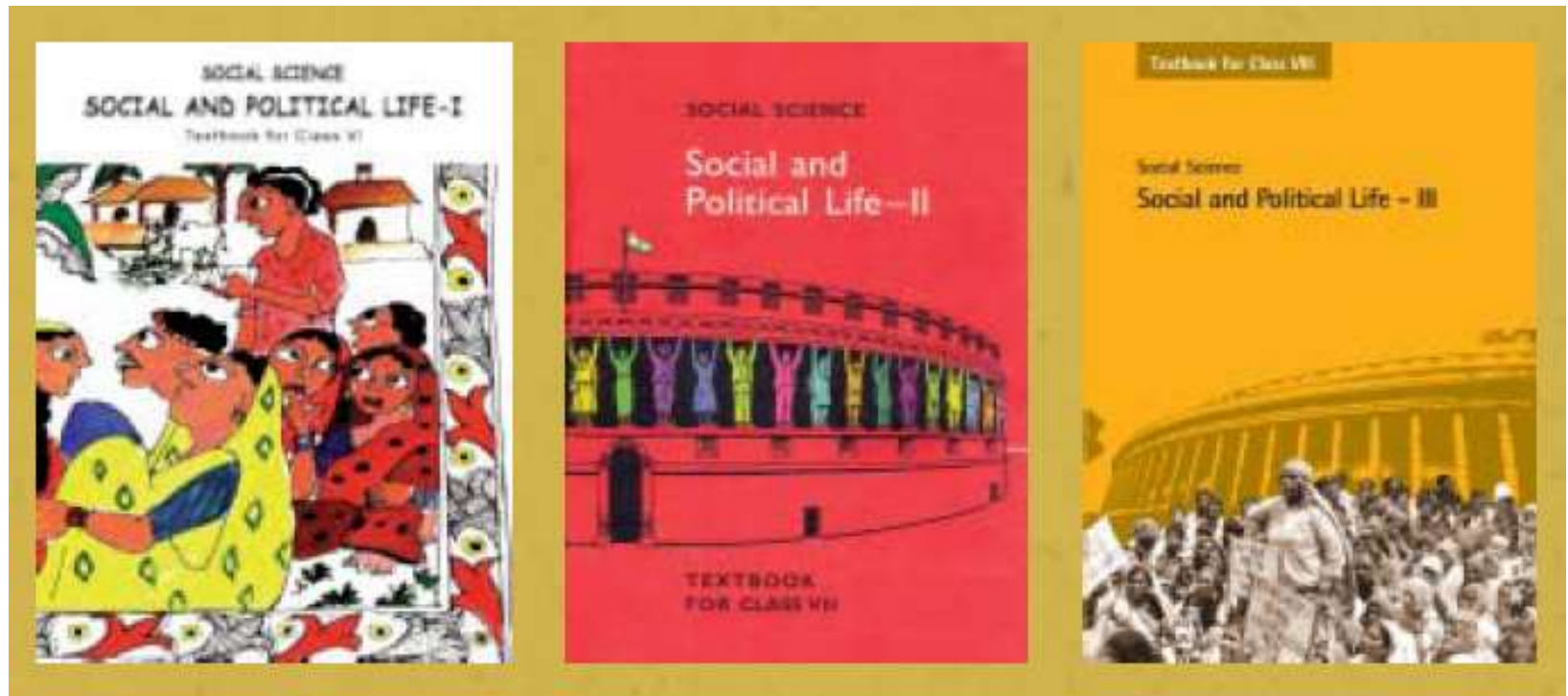
Upper Primary Stage

Class VI *Social and Political Life-I* **(2006)**

Chapter 3 What is Government? (pp. 32-34)
Chapter 4 Key Elements of a Democratic Government (pp. 36-37)

Class VII *Social and Political Life-II* **(2007)**
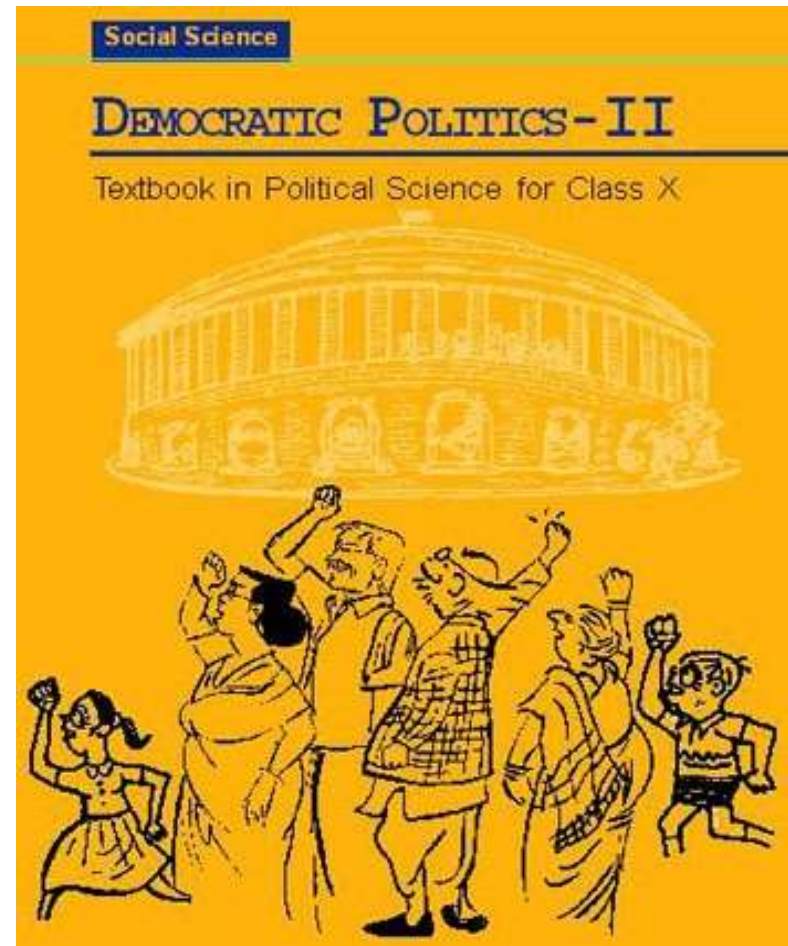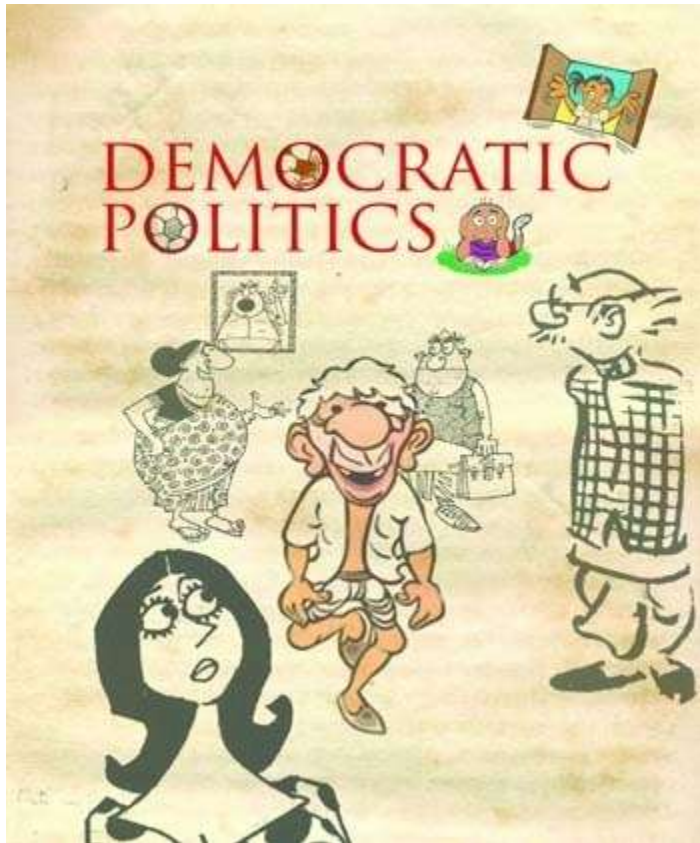
Chapter 1 On Equality (pp. 4-6)
Chapter 3 How the State Government Works (pp. 30-41)

Class VIII *Social and Political Life-III* **(2008)**

Chapter 1 The Indian Constitution (pp. 12-13)
Chapter 3 Why Do We Need a Parliament? (pp. 30-41)

Democratic Politics–I and II

Secondary Stage

Class IX *Democratic Politics-I* **(2006)**

Chapter 1 Democracy in the Contemporary World (pp. 11-12)

Chapter 2 What is Democracy? Why Democracy? (pp. 24-39)

Chapter 3 Constitutional Design (pp. 44-51)

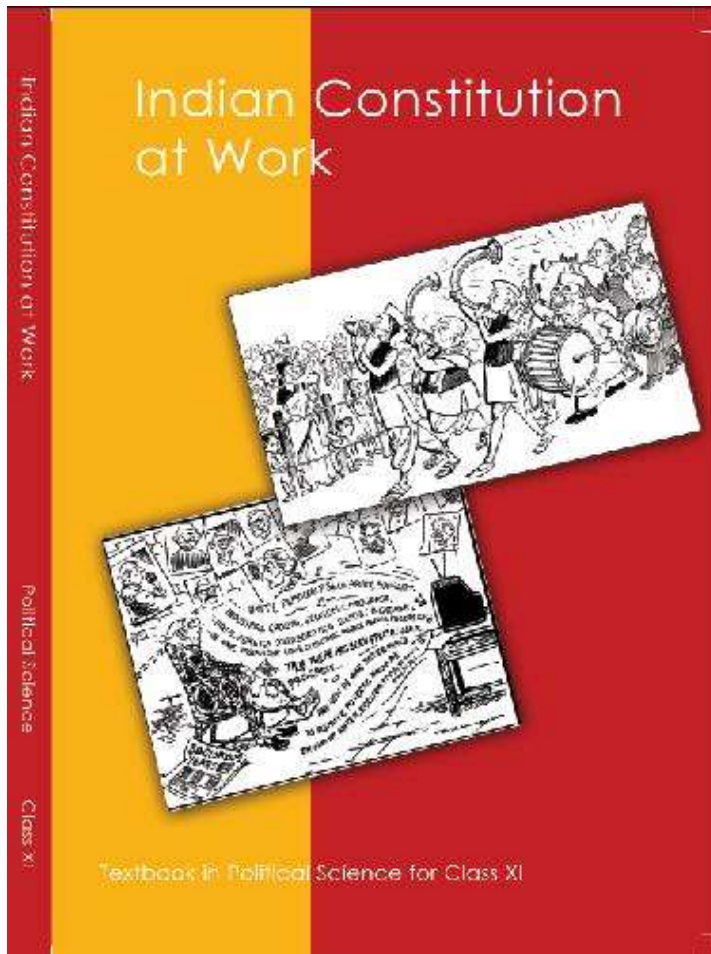Chapter 4 Electoral Politics (pp. 56-76)

Class X *Democratic Politics-II* **(2007)**

Chapter 6 Political Parties (pp. 71-88)

Chapter 7 Outcomes of Democracy (p.90-92,95-96,98-99)

Chapter 8 Challenges to Democracy (p.106,108-111)

Senior Secondary Stage

❖ Chapter 1: Constitution: Why and How?   (pp. 4,12-16,18)

❖ Chapter 3: Election and Representation (pp. 51-77)

Exercises

1. Why do you think our national movement supported the idea that all adults have a right to vote?

2. In this 2004 map of Parliamentary constituencies alongside, roughly identify the constituencies in your State. What is the name of the MP from your constituency? How many MPs does your state have? Why are certain constituencies coloured green while others are coloured blue?

TOTAL SEATS 543

GEN	423
SC	79
ST	41
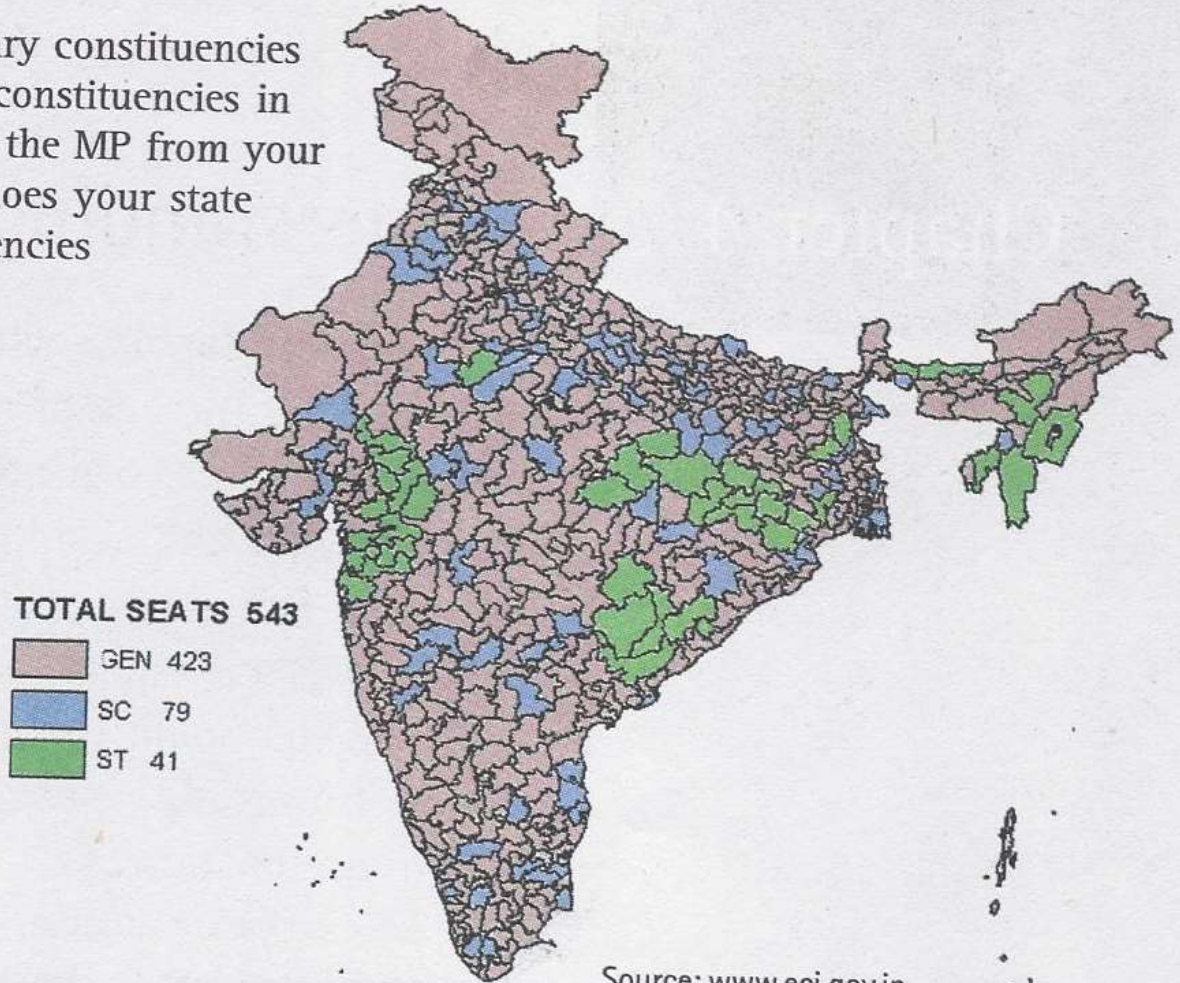
Source: www.eci.gov.in

Do you know when the last Assembly election was held in your state? Which other elections have taken place in your locality in the last five years? Write down the level of elections (National, Assembly, Panchayat, etc.), when were they held and the name and designation (MP, MLA, etc.) of the persons who got elected from your area. Why do we need elections?

Elections have become a part and parcel of our democratic life. No one can imagine a situation where a government would disrespect the verdict of an election. Similarly, no one can imagine that a government would be formed without holding elections. In fact, regularity and periodicity of elections has earned fame for India as a great democratic experiment.

read the cartoon

R.K. Laxman, The Times of India

- Candidates and parties with a lot of money may not be sure of their victory but they do enjoy a big and unfair advantage over smaller parties and independents.
- In some parts of the country, candidates with criminal connection have been able to push others out of the electoral race and to secure a 'ticket' from major parties.
- Some families tend to dominate political parties; tickets are distributed to relatives from these families.
- Very often elections offer little choice to ordinary citizens, for both the major parties are quite similar to each other both in policies and practice.
- Smaller parties and independent candidates suffer a huge disadvantage compared to bigger parties.

These challenges exist not just in India but also in many established democracies. These deeper issues are a matter of concern for those who believe in democracy. That is why citizens, social activists and organisations have been demanding reforms in our electoral system. Can you think of some reforms? What can an ordinary citizen do to face these challenges?

Here are some facts on Indian elections. Comment on each of these to say whether they reflect the strength or the weakness of our electoral system:

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- The Lok Sabha has had less than 10 per cent women members till 2009.
- The Election Commission often refuses to accept the government's advice about when the elections should be held.
- The 14th Lok Sabha has more than 145 members whose assets are more than Rs.1 crore.
- After losing an election the Chief Minister said: "I respect the people's verdict".

©Nerilicon, *El Economista*, Mexico, Cagle Cartoons Inc.
17 May 2005

read the cartoon

This cartoon was titled 'Building Democracy' and was first published in a Latin American publication. What do moneybags signify here? Could this cartoon be applied to India?

Textbooks for electoral literacy

- The textbooks in these subject areas aim to promote education for democracy.
- Various electoral issues are described and explained in a child-friendly manner with help of visuals to engage attention of students.
- They provide ample scope for discussion and debate in the classroom, especially using the in-text questions, exercises and activities.
- Moreover, the activities in the textbooks are aimed at making learners take greater interest in the electoral issues in their respective localities.
- These issues also provide space for moving beyond the textbooks and connect with the real world.

ECI with Schools: SVEEP

National Voters Day: 25 January and VOTER's PLEDGE

Institutional linkages with education department

Concept of campus ambassadors

Sankalp Patra

Edutainment

VOTER's PLEDGE IN SCHOOLS

- "We, the citizens of India, having abiding faith in democracy, hereby pledge to uphold the democratic traditions of our country and the dignity of free, fair and peaceful elections, and to vote in every election fearlessly and without being influenced by considerations of religion, race, caste, community, language or any inducement"

Campus Ambassador

➢Facilitating the voter registration by providing forms and guiding how to fill forms both manually and on-line and co-ordinating with the election machinery for approval of new applications, correction and distribution of voter cards to the campus electorate

➢Organizing special drive for registration i.e. correction of errors, transposition of names, voting process and ethical voting with the help of local Election office

➢Creating core team of students to work as volunteers for the SVEEP activities in the campus

➢Organizing talk/workshops etc. for capacity building in voter education among student community

➢Organising National Voters' Day programme in their campus

World's Largest Rangoli in Uttar Pradesh: Created by more than 770 students
The largest *rangoli,* 190,000 sqft in area and a mammoth map of India using 240,000 candles were among the high visibility activities taken up in Bulandshahr to motivate people to vote in the election

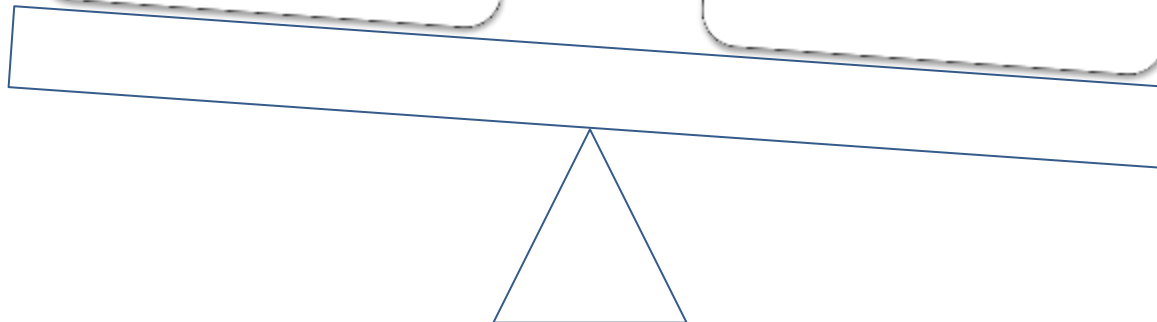# Edutainment for students

challenges	opportunities

Curriculum engagement planned

Teacher's education

Concept of supplementary reading material

Understanding, embracing, and upholding the values of electoral democracy

Developing scenario-based engagement

Thanks a lot