

INDIA

Dates of Elections: 24, 27 and 28 December 1984

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for 515 elective seats in the *Lok Sabha* on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of India consists of the *Lok Sabha* (House of the People) and the *Rajya Sabha* (Council of States).

The prescribed maximum strength of the *Lok Sabha* is 547. It currently has 544 members, of whom 542 are elected for 5 years and 2 are nominated by the President of the Republic to represent the Anglo-Indian Community.

The prescribed maximum strength of the *Rajya Sabha* is 250 members, of whom 12 are to be nominated by the President of the Republic and 238 indirectly elected by the Assemblies of the States and Union Territories. All members have 6-year terms of office, one-third of them retiring every 2 years. The present strength is 244.

Electoral System

Every Indian citizen aged 21 years or over who is ordinarily resident in a constituency may vote therein if he is not disqualified on grounds of insanity, crime or electoral offences.

Electoral registers are normally revised before general and by-elections in all constituencies. Voting is not compulsory. Postal voting is permitted for certain public officials, members of the armed forces, police forces serving in another State and Government employees abroad.

Qualified electors who are at least 25 years old are eligible to be candidates for the *Lok Sabha*. Requirements for the *Rajya Sabha* are 30 years of age and residence in the State or Union Territory where election is sought. Disqualified from being a member of either House are undischarged bankrupts and persons owing allegiance to a foreign State. No members of the armed forces or persons holding certain offices of profit, whether public offices or government contractors, can at the same time be members of Parliament.

Candidates must be nominated by one qualified elector and make a deposit of 500 *rupees* (250 *rupees* for those standing for seats representing Scheduled Castes or Tribes), which, in the case of the *Lok Sabha*, is refunded if the candidate is elected or obtains more than one-sixth of the total of valid votes polled in his constituency and, in the case of the *Rajya Sabha*, if he obtains more than one-sixth of the number of votes prescribed as sufficient to secure the return of a candidate. An individual who is candidate for both Houses may be fully reimbursed if he fulfils these two requirements.

The 542 members of the *Lok Sabha* are elected by simple majority vote in a like number of constituencies. Popularly chosen members of the *Rajya Sabha* are elected indirectly by the 26 Legislative Assemblies of the States and Union Territories in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote, with each elector indicating his order of preference among the candidates; each constituency has from one to 34 seats, depending on its population.

By-elections are held to fill vacant seats of elected members between general elections. Nominated seats are filled through nomination of the President.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The election date was set on 13 November 1984. The election campaign commenced on 14 November. Altogether 5301 candidates (including 3797 independents) and 46 registered parties (of which seven national ones and 27 in the opposition) contested 508 *Lok Sabha* seats. Wintry conditions and civil disorders forced postponement of elections in 34 constituencies.

During the campaign, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (Congress (I) Party) - who had assumed power following the assassination of his mother, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, on 31 October 1984 - portrayed his family as a force for national unity and stability and himself as a reformer who could invigorate the country's political institutions. Both the left and right-wing opposition parties failed to put up a united front.

On polling day, Congress (I) swept to a landslide victory. Final results gave it a total of 403 *Lok Sabha* seats and more than 50% of the popular vote for the first time. A record number of women were elected to the House.

The outgoing Parliament was dissolved on 31 December 1984. The same day, Prime Minister Gandhi named a 40-member Council of Ministers.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the Lok Sabha

Number of registered electors.					379,116,623	
Voters.					240,846,499	(63.5%)
Blank or void ballot papers.					6,053,649	
Valid votes.					234,792,840	
Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats	Number of Seats held prior to Dissolution	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections
Indian National Congress	490	115,221,078	49.07	403	337	337
Indian Congress (Socialist)	31	3,577,377	1.52	4	5	
Janata Party.	206	16,208,264	6.90	10	21	31 (including BJP)
<i>Bhartiya Janata Party</i> (BJP).	223	18,110,368	7.71	2	16	31
Lok Dal.	171	14,040,064	5.98	3	23	41 (Janata S)
Communist Party of India	61	6,363,430	2.71	6	13	11
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	59	13,809,950	5.88	22	36	35
				450*		

*Excluding seats of Mandi (Himachal Pradesh) and Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir) parliamentary constituencies.

2. *Distribution of Members of the Lok Sabha according to Professional Category*

	%
Agriculturists.	38.4
Political and social workers.	19.0
Lawyers.	18.0
Traders and industrialists.	7.3
Teachers and educationists.	7.0
Medical practitioners.	4.4
Civil and military service.	1.6
Journalists and writers.	1.3
Former rulers.	1.1
Engineers and technologists.	0.7
Artists.	0.4
Religious missionaries.	0.2
Others.	0.6
	100%

3. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex*

	Lok Sabha	Rajya Sabha
Men.	472	220
Women.	43	24
	515*	244

4. *Distribution of Members of the Lok Sabha according to Age Group*

	%
25-30 years.	2.2
31-35 ».	6.7
36-40 ».	13.0
41-45 ».	12.4
46-50 ».	15.1
51-55 ».	14.9
56-60 ».	15.1
61-65 ».	12.4
66-70 ».	5.3
71-75 ».	1.6
76-80 ».	0.9
81-85 ».	0.4
	100%

*No data on remaining seats.