

## INDIA

Date of Elections: March 1-10, 1971

### Reason for Elections

The elections were held as a result of the early dissolution of the Lok Sabha by the President of the Republic, on December 27, 1970. The previous elections had been held in February 1967, and the House would normally have reached the end of its term on March 15, 1972.

### Characteristics of Parliament

The Parliament of the Union of India consists of two Houses known as the House of the People, *Lok Sabha*, and the House of the States, *Rajya Sabha*.

The *Lok Sabha* consists of a maximum of 525 members (521 in the present legislature compared with 523 in the previous one \*). Of the 521 members of the *Lok Sabha*, 518 are elected and 3 nominated by the President of the Indian Republic; two of them represent the Anglo-Indian community and the third represents the North-East Frontier Agency (near the Chinese border). The term of the *Lok Sabha* is 5 years.

In accordance with the Constitution, 114 seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes (77 seats) and Scheduled Tribes (37 seats) elected in as many " reserved " constituencies.

The maximum membership of the *Rajya Sabha* is 250, of whom 12 members are nominated by the President and 238 are elected by indirect ballot to represent the States and territories of the Union. The term of their mandate is 6 years, and one third of them is renewed every 2 years.

### Electoral System

Every Indian citizen of either sex, aged 21 or over, has the right to vote provided that he is a resident of the country and is not disqualified on grounds of crime or insanity. The names of all electors must appear on the electoral lists which are revised before general and by-elections in all constituencies. Voting is not compulsory.

Electors must be at least 25 years old to be eligible for the *Lok Sabha*, and 30 years or over for the *Rajya Sabha*, and must not be under acknowledgement

\* See *Parliamentary Developments* p. 8.

of allegiance or adherence to a foreign State. Several elective mandates are incompatible; if a candidate is elected simultaneously to the *Lok Sabha* and the *Rajya Sabha*, or chosen to fill several seats in the same House, he has a set period during which he must select the seat he intends to fill. An Electoral Committee sets the dates by which candidatures must be filed. Candidates must pay a deposit of 500 rupees (250 rupees for those standing for seats representing the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes).

Members of the *Lok Sabha* are elected by simple plurality of vote, 518 in one member constituencies.

After the counting of votes, the Electoral Committee publishes in the Official gazette the names of the candidates declared elected in the various constituencies by the returning officer. From this date, the *Lok Sabha* is considered formed. Should a vacancy occur during a legislature, a by-election is organized by the Electoral Committee.

### General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The Electoral Campaign started on January 19, 1971, with a speech given by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the outgoing Prime Minister. A few regional parties, in addition to about ten nation-wide political parties were competing.

The majority party, the Ruling Congress, lead by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, put forward candidates in 442 constituencies. A dissenting conservative group, which had split in 1969 and adopted the name of ' Old Congress ' or ' Opposition Congress ' joined up with the *J ana Sangh* Party (Conservative and Hindu), with the *Swatantra* or Freedom Party and with the Socialist Party *Samyukta* (SSP, central left-wing) in order to be able to put forward a candidate from one of the four parties in nearly all the constituencies. This Union became the National Democratic Front.

The *Bharatiya Kranti Dal* (BKD, liberal) and the *Praja* Socialist Party, which were not associated with this front, presented 95 and 63 candidates respectively. Two of the three Communist parties, the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI, Marxist) participated in the elections, putting forward 87 and 85 candidates respectively, while the Marxist-Leninist Party (pro-Chinese) chose to abstain. Finally, apart from the traditional regional parties, over 1,000 candidates stood as Independents.

The Ruling Congress reaffirmed in its programme the desire to follow a progressive policy, particularly in further socializing the national economy, in carrying out agricultural reforms and supervising social justice. On the other hand, the Opposition Congress emphasized the importance of property rights as stated in the Constitution. The *Java Sangh* and *Swatantra* parties adopted closely allied positions in defense of public opportunities and free enterprise, while the SSP requested the election of a Constituent Assembly which would

endow India with socialist structures. The BKD party also emphasized property rights and wanted an improved Indian judicial system; the Socialist *Praja* Party proposed radical agrarian reforms, as well as the progressive socialization of the economy. The Marxist Communist Party demanded the adoption of a new Constitution which would guarantee the sovereignty of the people as opposed to that of private interests, together with increased powers and financial resources for the States; finally, the Communist Party of India (pro-Soviet) intended to protect small property owners, nationalize monopolies and develop relations between India and far-Eastern Communist Governments.

A certain number of violent incidents marked the electoral campaign, particularly between the various Communists groups, but, on the whole, the elections took place without disturbance. Apart from the Ruling Congress Party's victory, the election results showed a great increase in abstentions compared with previous polls: although the electorate increased by more than 23 million between 1967 and 1971, there were 3 million fewer voters in 1971 than in 1967, bringing the percentage of voters down from 61.32 to 55.25.

On March 17, 1971, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, having been re-elected President of her party, formed a Government of 36 members.

## Statistics

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

Number of registered voters. . . . .	273,832,301	
Voters. . . . .	151,296,749	(55.2%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	4,915,347	
Valid votes. . . . .	146,381,402	

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in the Lok Sabha	Number of Seats obtained at Previous Elections
Ruling Congress . . .	<b>441</b>	63,905,356	43.66	350	
National Democratic Front (Alliance):					279*
Opposition Congress	238	15,272,695	10.43	16	
<i>Jana Sangh</i> . . .	<b>157</b>	10,788,896	7.37	22	35
<i>Swatantra</i> . . . .	59	4,498,187	3.07	8	44
<i>Samyukta Socialist Party</i> (SSP) . . .	<b>93</b>	3,555,104	2.43	3	23
<i>Praja Socialist Party</i> (PPS) . . . . .	<b>68</b>	1,525,787	1.04	2	13
Communist Party of India (CPI, Marxist) . . . . .	85	7,510,881	5.13	25	19
Communist Party of India (CPI) . . .	87	6,922,477	4.73	23	23
	1578	32,402,019	22.14	66	79
				515**	515

\* In 3 constituencies elections were held in April, May and June rather than in March.

\*\* The split in the Congress Party occurred during the course of the legislature.

## 2. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men . . . . .	502
Women . . . . .	<u>19</u>
	<b>521</b>