Demystifying Electoral Regulations and Procedures

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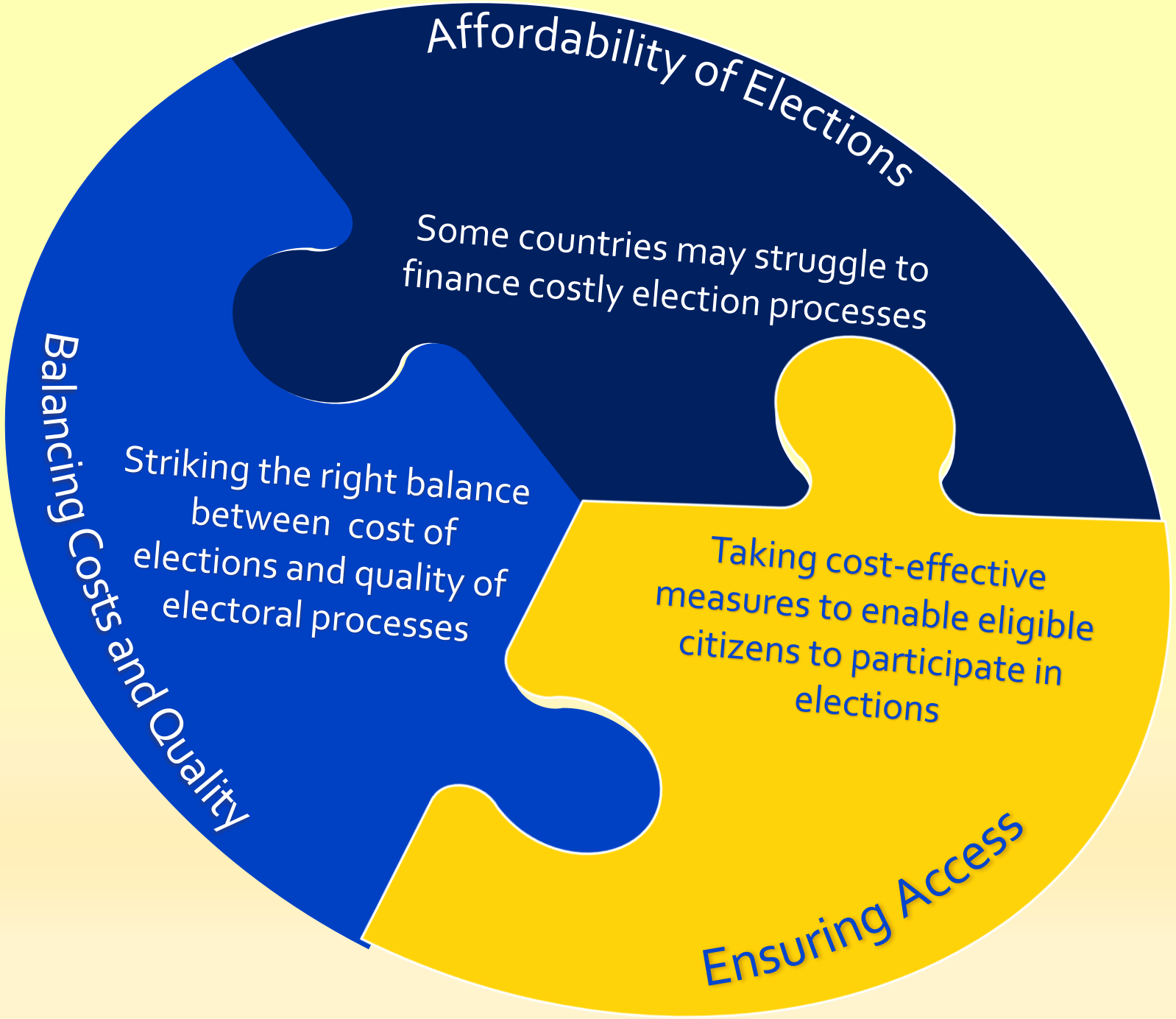
Cost of Elections

A Global Perspective



Simplifying Election Regulations & Procedures

Keep it Simple

Ensuring that election processes are easy to understand and comply for voters and other stakeholders

Sticking to Basics

Electoral processes to be transparent not opaque. Use of new technology where it is really required

Avoid Overuse of Technology

Maintaining the integrity and security of elections by optimum reliance on technology

Contrasting Degrees of Technology use in Electoral Processes

Manual

Advantages

1. Inclusivity
2. Transparency
3. Low Technology Costs
4. Physical Record
5. No Technical Malfunctions

Disadvantages

1. Time-Consuming
2. Potential for Errors
3. Voter Anonymity Concerns
4. Logistical Challenges
5. Vulnerability to Fraud
6. Limited Accessibility

Digital

Advantages

1. Efficiency
2. Accuracy
3. Security
4. Faster Results
5. Accessibility

Disadvantages

1. Digital Divide
2. Cybersecurity Risks
3. Reliability
4. Erosion of Human Element
5. Vendor Dependence
6. Trust Issues

Contrasting Degrees of Technology use in Electoral Processes

Advantages of Hybrid Model

I. Enhanced Transparency
II. Reduced Errors
III. Faster Results
IV. Accessibility
V. Security
VI. Reduced Paper Usage
VII. Remote Voting Options
VIII. Scalability
IX. Reduced Waiting Times

Decoding the Dilemma : Is Digitization necessary?

i. Does the Election commission have the logistical capacity and control mechanism to carry out such level of digitization
ii. Can checks be put in place to minimize the risk of manipulation?
iii. Does local expertise exist to allow this process to be effectively monitored?

Is digitizing elections at best a waste of resources and at worst a costly mistake?

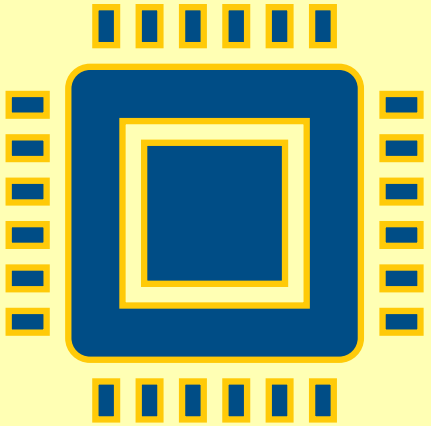
Striking a Balance

Embrace Technology

Focus on essential technological upgrades

Allocate resources efficiently

Use ballot boxes for less than 2000 voters



Global Case Studies

Exploring technology options in Electoral Processes

United States: Challenges with Electronic Voting Machines and Call for Reforms

Challenges

I. Concerns about potential hacking, tampering and system vulnerabilities have increased

II. Lack of paper trail, making it difficult to audit or verify election results in case of disputes

III. Concerns about malfunction, outdated software, and inadequate technical support

Call for Reforms

I. Requirement for voter-verified paper audit trails (VVPATs) in all EVMs to provide a physical record of each vote

II. Robust cybersecurity measures to protect them from potential cyber threats

Estonia's E-Voting Success with Significant Cybersecurity Investments

Success Factors

- Convenience and accessibility
- Reduces the burden associated with traditional paper ballots

Cybersecurity Investments

- Invested substantially in cyber security enhancement
- Regular security audits and penetration testing are conducted

Challenges

- Cybersecurity threats are dynamic and constantly evolving, necessitating ongoing vigilance and adaptation
- Even the most advanced security measures cannot entirely eliminate the risk of hacking and tampering

The success of e-voting systems is inherently linked to their ability to withstand cyber threats

India's Cost-Effective Elections with Paper Trails and Innovative Voting Methods

Innovative Voting Methods	
To enhance participation remote voting for armed forces, absentee voting for citizens abroad, and assistance to specially abled & infirm voters	
Paper Trails and Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs)	
Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) for polling	India introduced Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs) alongside EVMs. VVPATs provide a paper record of the vote, allowing voters to verify their choices

Challenges

- The need for robust cybersecurity measures & innovative methods to protect electronic voting systems from hacking and tampering
- Ensuring equitable access to innovative voting methods in a diverse and geographically vast country is an ongoing challenge
- The process is ongoing to initiate remote voting for internal migrants which is facing some administrative and procedural challenges more than technical ones

Recent Innovations in India

01 Transparency in Elections- Live Nomination and information about candidate to come in public domain(Implemented)

02 Randomization in Electronic Voting Machine to maintain secrecy

03 Application to declare result First to Election office before passing on to media

04 A web portal as well as mobile app is provided to voter to file any complaint or permission online. Live status of any complaint or permission is made available to the voter via mobile app or portal

Conference on "Managing State Election Commissions for effective grassroots democracy" June 2023 by SEC Rajasthan

Inspired by spirit of Cooperative Federalism an All-India State Election Commissioner's Conference was organized to discuss elements in a "Effective Grassroots Democracy"

- Challenges in State Election Administration
- Learning from past experiences
- Manual v/s Digital platforms
- "Getting out the vote" an inclusive approach
- Dealing with disinformation
- Cyber security & IT solutions
- Emerging challenges

State Election Commissioners with Hon'ble Governor (Viceroy)

Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)
Options for Global & Domestic Leasing
And
Demonopolizing Supply Chains

Reducing Market Domination by State Owned Enterprises (SOEs)

- Expertise and Specialization
- Innovation and Technological Advancement
- Cost-Efficiency
- Production Capacity
- Customization
- Competitive Market
- Maintenance and Support
- Accountability
- Risk Sharing between vendor and user

Disadvantages of Purchasing Electronic Voting Machines

- Upfront Capital Expense
- Maintenance and Repairs
- Storage Costs
- Depreciation
- Obsolescence
- Limited Flexibility

Benefits of Leasing Electronic Voting Machines

- Cost-Effective
- Up-to-Date Technology
- No/Less Maintenance and Support
- Reduce the risk of over-committing resources
- Reduced Risk of Obsolescence

Leasing EVMs can be a practical option for governments with budget constraints or changing technology needs

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Endeavors to simplify complexity and focus on basics

Trained master trainers at the district level for the first level checking (FLC) of Electronic Voting Machine

Reuse of Electronic Voting Machine/Ballot box-borrowing and lending of EVM among states reduce costs and efficient resource utilization

Concurrent year round By-elections for positions falling vacant for 110000 seats

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To use warehouse for other purposes i.e. training center etc. besides Electronic Voting Machine/ballot box storage

Increasing cost efficiency and production capacity

Budget to be utilized for performing First level Checks on Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) rather than purchasing new EVMs

Regular Interaction with field election officers

Bottom-up approach, focus on ideas & suggestion from grassroots level where the rubber hits the road

Takeaways

01 Balance between Security, Accessibility & Costs

02 Focus on Final Outcomes than on processes

03 Using technology as a tool, not a silver bullet

04 Need of cost effective elections

Takeaways

05 Randomization in EVM allocation

06 Enhancing Electoral integrity

07 Preventing Misinformation

08 Voter Education & Timely Adjudication of Election Disputes