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A BETTER ELECTION MODEL

MULTIPLE VOTES
ANYTIME VOTING
MINIMUM VOTES

TRUST BASES
INDEFINITE TERMS
PERMANENT COUNCILS



KRISHNA SHARMA

An Election Model for the Electronic Age

A Proposal to the Government of India

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దేశమును ప్రేమించుమన్నా
మంచి అన్నది పెంచుమన్నా !
వట్టిమాటలు కట్టిపెట్టోయ్
గట్టిమేల్ తలపెట్టవోయ్ !

గురజాడ అప్పారావు

Dear brother,
Love thy country
And promote goodness!
Shun empty talk
And commence good work
At once!

Gurajada Apparao

Introduction

1. The emergence of electronic age helped us make many things in life simpler and better. For example, in stead of paying with cash and checks, we now make payments electronically to anyone from anywhere instantly, without having to meet anyone in person or visit any branch of a bank. In stead of standing in line at a railway station to make a reservation, we now make a reservation from anywhere to anywhere from the comfort of our homes. In stead of carrying a paper map or asking people around for directions, we now use online maps that give turn-by-turn directions from any place to any place in the world.

2. All these dramatic improvements are a result of bold and unfettered imagination. What if we can similarly and boldly re-imagine election process, taking advantage of the same technological advances, beyond merely replacing paper ballots with Electronic Voting Machines? This paper is a result of pondering on this question for a few years, and identifying six fundamental changes and four symbolic changes that would help us do many 'things better' and many 'better things' to get to closer to the ideal state of democracy.

Fundamental Changes

Single vote per voter	→	Multiple Votes
Once-in-five-years elections	→	Anytime Voting
Maximum votes (FPTP[1])	→	Minimum Votes
Geography-bound constituencies	→	Trust Bases
Fixed terms	→	Indefinite Terms
Finite-Term Legislatures	→	Permanent Councils

Symbolic Changes

Parliament	→	National Leadership Council (NLC)
MP	→	National MLC
State Legislatures	→	State Leadership Councils (SLC)
MLA	→	State MLC

1 FPTP is a technical term used in the political science circles. It stands for First Past The Post. It simply means the candidate with maximum number of votes wins. To know more about such concepts, one can go to such resources as the Hand Book on Electoral System Design prepared by the **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)**, available at: https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/electoral-system-design-new-international-ideahandbook.

3. We will describe the meaning of these changes, and the new election model that results from these changes, and its benefits to the voters, the leaders, the political parties and governments and how it helps us do things better and do better things for the democracy itself, in the later sections.

* * *

4. We do not know when and how this model gets to be embraced and implemented, but we do hope that it would, in the least, trigger a broader and deeper discussion about the shortcomings, problems and issues of the current model, and the need for a better model.

5. We trust that there are enough smart people in power today at the center and the states, and if, by good fortune, they get to focus on this model, they might consider implementing it sooner rather than later, for the many benefits it brings. The ideal scenario would be the Government of India setting up an all-party forum, inviting all political parties, and eminent national and international political scientists, thinkers and consultants to examine this model thoroughly and adopting it, tweaking as needed.

6. There is no need for the entire country to switch to the new model over night. It can be implemented in two states to begin with, one where the party in power at the center is in power, and another where a different party is in power. Later it can be implemented in every state in phased manner and finally at the center.

* * *

7. This model, by no means, is a panacea for all the social and political ills, many of which have their roots in history, culture, fallibility of human nature and the limitations of the democracy itself. However, it is presented with the confidence that it will help the people who seriously seek to cure those ills come together easily and quickly, by providing incentives to collaborate and denying incentives to polarize.

8. The changes proposed in this paper take a different approach compared to many other electoral reforms that are put forward in India, in that, their focus is on barring the entry of bad leaders into power, while this model's focus is on enabling the entry of good leaders into power. Once good leaders get a seat at the table, things will start changing automatically.

9. This paper is written for the context of democracy in India, but the model itself is generic and universal and is applicable to any democracy that is still using election models designed decades and centuries ago. This model can be implemented in any democracy that has a sophisticated enough digital infrastructure, as India does.

The New Model

1. We will, in this section, give a formal definition of the New Election Model that results from the six fundamental changes and four symbolic changes identified in the previous section.

2. In this new model, leaders who aspire to get elected to the leadership councils declare their candidacy by registering themselves with the election commission. They can do so at any time without having to wait till the next election, as there are no once-in-a-few-years elections in this model.

3. Voters have *twelve* votes each in this model. They give their votes to multiple leaders of their choice, whom they trust would address their needs, issues, causes and concerns. Voters can give all their twelve votes to one leader or distribute them to multiple leaders, of even multiple political parties, in any proportion of their choice.

4. Voters can distribute their votes at anytime, at their will and convenience, using a mobile App or at an e-Seva center, or using any other mechanism established by the election commission.

5. Voters can redistribute their votes to a different set of candidates or to the same set of candidates in a different proportion, at any time.

6. The voters who give their votes to a specific leader are called the 'Trust Base' of that leader. Voters, by distributing their votes to multiple leaders, can be part of the Trust Bases of multiple leaders at the same time.

7. The Trust Bases of leaders can be spread all over the country. Voters from any part of the country can distribute their votes to leaders from any part of the country. Similarly, at the state level, voters from any part of the state can distribute their votes to leaders from any part of the state. The same applies to local levels also.

8. The Election commission, in this model, publishes the size of the Trust Bases of all the registered candidates every day, maintaining, however, secrecy about who gave votes to whom.

9. Registered candidates become Elected Leaders when the size of their respective Trust Bases rises above a set *minimum number of votes* (MNV) and stays there for ninety days continuously. A leader ceases to be an Elected Leader if and when the size of the leader's Trust Base falls below MNV and stays there for ninety days continuously.

10. The Election Commission sets the MNV as a percentage of the size of the electorate depending on the desired size of the Leadership Councils. MNV size set, for

example, as 1% of the electorate, will yield a maximum of 100 elected leaders and at 0.5% will yield a maximum of 200 elected leaders.

11. There is no upper limit to the size of the Trust Bases in this model and hence Trust Bases can grow very large. Leaders with larger Trust Bases will have proportionally higher voting power in the leadership councils.

12. The Leadership Councils are permanent in nature. They never get dissolved. New leaders gain membership and existing members lose membership all the time, depending on growing and shrinking sizes of the individual leaders.

* * *

13. The kind of technology needed to implement this model is already available. It is the same technology that is behind the Aadhaar card system, online banking systems, reservation systems, eCommerce platforms and so on, with multiple layers of security.

14. In the rest of this paper, we will describe how this new model is free from the shortcomings and issues of the current model, and how it makes Indian democracy orders of magnitude better, and how it brings various major and mior benefits to the stakeholders of democracy, i.e, the voters, the leaders, the political parties, the minorities, the election commission, and the governments as well.

Improvements to the Democratic Process

1. The role of legislatures in Indian democracy is more than making legislation. Legislatures are also responsible for electing the executive and overseeing it. The members of the legislatures also serve as part of the executive in the form of ministers, chairmen of the government bodies, corporations, etc. Plus, at the ground level, the members also serve as the elders and leaders of the communities, responding to their needs, issues, causes, concerns and emergencies. The new terminology of NLC, SLC, NEL and SEL represents this broader role and spirit of the elected leaders.

2. The once-in-a-five-years elections feature of the current model actually creates an asymmetric relationship between leaders and voters. The leaders get to decide the fate of the voters every single day, but voters get to decide the fate of the leaders only once in five years. Voters do not know what leaders would do, and leaders do not know what voters think of them, till the next election. There is no mechanism for voters to express their disapproval or even approval of the policies or actions or performance of the leaders and the governments on a *regular* basis. There is also no mechanism to express approval or disapproval of each individual policy or action. Voters have to accept or reject the policies and actions of the leaders and parties as a whole. The new model, with the Anytime Voting feature, addresses this asymmetry. Voters can show their approval or disapproval by redistributing their votes any time.

3. In the current model, even though there are many capable, knowledgeable, innovative, honest and committed leaders in the society, the voters are forced to choose from just two or three candidates, shortlisted for them by the political parties, based on the candidates' money power, muscle power, party loyalty, and ability to win the election by hook or crook. This means that the candidate's have to meet the parties' criteria before they meet the voters' criteria. They are loyal to their party before they are, to the voters. A vote for anyone other than those shortlisted candidates, essentially, becomes a wasted vote. People often have to vote the same leaders and parties into power whom they have rejected in the previous election, for lack of other viable choices. The new model, with the Trust Bases feature addresses this problem and gives the voters access to all the leaders in the society.

4. In the current model, with the geography-based constituencies, winning candidates are forced to represent the voters who did not vote for them, i.e., did not put trust in them, and the voters have to let the leaders who they did not trust to begin with, represent them. This creates an uneasy relationship between the voters

and the leaders. There should be no such 'forced marriages' between the voters and leaders in an ideal democracy. The new model, with the Trust Bases feature, addresses this issue. In this model, a leader represents only the voters who explicitly chose him or her as their leader, who are called his or her Trust Base.

5. In the current model, just a few votes can push a bad leader who uses all kinds of tricks and demagoguery into power and leave a good, principled and straightforward, leader by the wayside. This means that the voters not only have to put up with the bad leader but also lose the benefit of being served by a good leader. This is completely undesirable. We may not be able to avoid bad leaders, but should not have to leave the good leaders by the wayside. In the new model, a good leader who can attract enough Trust Base gets into power, as easily as a bad leader can.

6. Democracy, in theory, is the rule of majority. But with the current election model, it almost always, ends up being a minority rule, contrary to what is expected of it. And, this is how it happens. Considering the fact that only about 70% of voters turn out in the elections and the polled votes are split between two or three candidates, the winning candidates typically receive only thirty to forty percent of the votes of the total electorate. On average, on any given day, sixty to seventy percent of the voters do not have a leader that they trust, in power. This completely contradicts the spirit of democracy, of people governing themselves through trusted leaders. The new model remedies this with the Multiple Votes and Minimum Votes features. In this model voters distribute their votes to multiple leaders and hence the likelihood of voters seeing at least one of their trusted leaders in power, representing them, is near 100 percent. This means, not just a majority, but nearly one hundred percent of voters would have representation in the Leadership Councils.

7. In the current model, a minority of swing voters can determine the outcome of an election, wielding a disproportionately higher level of influence in public life. In that sense also, FPTP can result in an indirect minority rule. The new model rectifies this problem with the Trust Bases and Minimum Votes features. In the new model, no leader loses the election *because* someone else got slightly more votes, of the swing voters. Every leader who can build his or her own sizable Trust Base has to never care about the swing voters.

8. No wise person puts all of one's money in one bank, or in one stock, or in one property. Similarly, no voter should put all of one's trust in one leader. No leader is infallible. But, the current election model, with the one-vote-per-voter feature, forces each voter to put all of one's trust in only one leader. The new model solves this problem with its Multiple Votes feature. Voters would no longer have to choose one

leader over the others. They can distribute votes to multiple leaders, as and when they like.

9. Many voters abstain from voting in the current model when they think the chances of their preferred leader winning is low. In other words, they think their vote could go 'waste'. In the new model, with the Multiple Votes feature, the voter no more have to focus only on one leader. It is near one hundred percent likely that at least one of the candidates of their liking will come to power, if not all. Thus the new model encourages, rather than discourages, every voter to participate in the democratic process. This benefit alone should serve as a strong reason to adopt this new model as quickly as possible.

10. The election of one leader, in the current model, implies the rejection of all the other leaders; at least that is how the winning leader portrays the results. But in reality, a voter may not have a huge preference regarding one leader over the other, and may have the same disposition towards two or more leaders. The new model, with the Multiple Votes feature, allows the voters to express such equal disposition towards multiple leaders. Single vote increases the tendencies for polarization, as everyone is pressed to choose one leader, and Multiple Votes decreases the tendencies for polarization, because one can patronize more than one leader all the time.

11. In the current model, a leader loses to another leader. In the new model, a leader loses for lack of the ability to attract a sizable Trust Base and not because he got fewer votes than the others. It is no more a zero-sum game. The current model sets one leader against another in a fight. The new model sets a target for the leader to achieve. This model discourages leaders from the demagoguery of polarizing the people, on the lines of ideology religion, caste etc.. They can no more ask for ‘all’ the votes, but only a ‘share’ of the votes of voters. They cannot win the hearts of the voters, if they speak negatively about the other choices of the voters.

12. In the current model, voters who voted for a leader who lost the election are forced by the system to put their faith in the winning leader, whom they did not trust to begin with. Similarly, the leaders are also forced, by the system, to represent the people who did not vote for them. No leader is a Mahatma and no one will be able to treat the voters who voted for him/her and the voters who did not, in the same way. The new model provides an ingenious solution for this problem, by letting the leaders represent only the voters in their Trust Base, and never someone who did not vote for them. This guarantees a strong, healthy trust-based relationship between the leader and the electorate, which is a cornerstone of democracy.

13. Currently, the population distribution among constituencies is not even. Some constituencies have 1.5 to 2 times that of the population of some other constituencies.

As a result, the leader of one constituency represents a large number of people, while another leader in another constituency represents only a small number of people. Neither of these situations is desirable. This problem will not get corrected until a census is taken and the boundaries of the constituencies are redrawn, which happens very rarely. The new model, with the Trust Bases feature, makes this a mute point. A There would be no need to redraw the boundaries in the new model as there are no constituencies to begin with. Leaders represent exactly as many voters as there are in their respective Trust Bases.

14. In the current model, because the leaders are guaranteed power for five years, they can easily turn their backs on the voters after the election. They can promise one thing before the elections and pursue altogether something else after the elections with impunity. The new model, with the Anytime Voting feature, curtails this kind of behavior, as the voters can withdraw their support whenever they see leaders deviating from their promised policies and professed principles.

15. In the current model, we expect the *media, activists, and the opposition*, to act as watchdogs over the governments. But there are three problems with this expectation. Firstly, it leads to polarization as the watchdogs try to oppose everything the ruling party says or does, to establish and substantiate their own identity. Secondly, the watchdogs do not wield real power over the government, and their voice can be easily ignored. Thirdly, there is no guarantee that the watchdogs themselves do not pursue their own agendas, which may not reflect what people want. In the new model, with the Anytime Voting feature, voters themselves play the role of the watchdogs. They can withdraw their support to the leaders who are not addressing their needs and concerns properly, and increase support to the leaders who are addressing their needs and concerns, constantly and officially.

16. In the current model, voters have to resort to media posts, online petitions, street demonstrations and protests to express their displeasure or disapproval of the actions of leaders. This leads to violence and disruption of life, both for the protesters and for the general public. Organizing such protests and demonstrations, and sustaining them for a long time is not easy. In most cases, the protesters run out of energy and the protests die down before they achieve their intended goal. The new model, with the Anytime Voting feature, removes the need for such ineffective petitions, demonstrations, protests, or violence. It enables voters to simply withdraw their votes from the non-performing or questionable leaders and give them to other or new leaders. In other words, a sophisticated and inexpensive 'recall' process is built into this new model.

17. In the current model, the winning leader is expected to address each and every issue, need, and concern of the people of the constituency. This is not an easy task by any means. It is impossible for one person to have the required understanding and passion for all the issues. Many issues may not get adequate attention and some may get no attention at all. The new model, with the Multiple Votes feature, solves this problem elegantly. Consider the situation of a farmer from a minority community and say his or her concerns about civic amenities, farming and those issues pertaining to the specific minority community. In the new model, he or she can distribute the multiple votes to three different leaders, who are good at addressing those three issues respectively. And thus the new model propels more expert politicians into power rather than generic politicians, which isa powerful paradigm shift, that would pay dividends forever. This incentivizes the political parties also to promote expert politicians rather than generic politicians.

18. Issues, problems, ideas, dreams that pertain to only a small percentage of people, such as handicapped people, or people of any specific trade or craft, would never find a champion in the current model, as they form only a small minority in any given constituency. But they could be sizable in number when combined across all the constituencies. The new model, with the Trust Bases feature brings all such thinly spread minorities together, so that they can have their voices heard and their issues addressed.

19. In the current model, parties fight the election on one or two of the 'hot' issues. Voters get swayed by them and ignore other issues of their concern. Whereas, in the new model, with the Anytime Voting feature, there is no pressure on the voters to decide everything on one single election day, and live with the consequences for five years. They can think about issues that are important to them at their own convenience and pace, and then distribute votes to the leaders who addresses those issues. This is no small a paradigm shift. With the Anytime Voting feature, the new model promotes rational and thoughtful decisions, unlike the current model, which forces the voters to make a decision in an emotionally charged election season.

20. The new model also addresses a key, but less noticed, gap in the current model. Consider the situation of a bill that is good for the country as a whole, which requires a certain sacrifice from the constituency. The Constitution assumes that the MLA/MP would focus on the interests of the country as a whole. But the voters assume that the MLA/MP would focus on the interests of the constituency. These two contradictory assumptions put any conscientious MLA/MP in a bind. And there is no clear cut ethical stand that one can take. In the new model, there are no constituencies. There is no national vs. local interests conflict. A leader whose Trust Base is localized gives preference to local interests over national interests, and a

leader whose Trust Base spans the country or multiple regions gives preference to the national interests over the local interests.

21. In the current model, programs and projects started by the governments face uncertainty every five years. A new government belonging to a different party would have few incentives to continue the programs and projects started by the previous government. They do not want do anything that the previous government may take credit for. Investments made by the previous government in the programs and projects could simply go waste. This is a loss of national resources and impedes national progress. The new model solves this problem. Because there are no once-in-five-year elections, there would be no such abrupt change of governments and hence no abrupt end to any program. Every program will take its natural course, either to evolve into something better and bigger or to peter out. One of the reasons for China's enormous progress in a short period is the continuity of the Government. The new model brings the same kind of continuity and stability within the fold of democracy.

22. The new model, with the Trust Bases feature, engenders a long lasting association and an organic bond between leaders and voters. Voters would not let go a good leader who understands their needs, issues and concerns well. Where as, in the current model, any leader, no matter how deeply one understands the issues, can lose the next election and thus the association between the leaders and voters can get broken. Long lasting associations between leaders and voters create the atmosphere for working out long-lasting solutions.

23. The long-lasting association and the organic bond allows the leaders to be candid and honest with the voters about the intricacies of the issues. They don't have to promise Utopian solutions. They don't have to focus on emotionally appealing solutions. They can educate the voters about the pros and cons of the possible solutions. In the current model, the 'generic' politicians would not normally have the required depth on any issue to educate the people. Further, no matter what solution a leader proposes out of one's limited understanding, there would be more people who oppose it than support it, as leaders in the current model get only 35% to 40% of the votes, on an average.

24. What are the most important issues for the voters? How to prioritize them? Leaders, voters, and even the analysts find it hard to answer the question. Leaders can easily go wrong in guessing the priorities of the voters, both during the election campaigns and during budget allocations. The new model removes any such ambiguity. Trust Bases are formed based on issues, needs and concerns. And hence, they are a clear indication of what issues are important to whom, and to how many of them. This makes budget allocations and policy decisions easier.

Benefits for the Political Parties

25. In the current model, elections are like a gamble for every political party. Even after spending enormous amount and money, the outcome is uncertain. The new model removes this certainty, with the Trust Bases and Anytime features. In the new model the Trust Bases of each individual leader of the political party grow and shrink gradually and independently, like the customer bases of the businesses. They will have enough lead time to correct the course to keep and grow their Trust Bases. No party will ever be routed out of power all of a sudden.

26. Voters who like a political party but not the candidate fielded by the party face a tough choice in the current model. In such situation some may choose to vote for the candidate of the other party. That would be a loss of voters for the party. There would be no such loss to a political party in the new model. Voters who want to be loyal to the party can always find another leader from the party whom they like and give votes to him/her. Thus this model helps the parties retain all their loyal voters.

27. In the current model, political parties are forced to choose a candidate who can win the election by hook or crook. They have to go through the difficult political exercise of giving 'tickets' and 'funding' the candidates. In the new model, parties can simply endorse a large number of candidates who have the potential to win, and let the voters decide who among them are worthy. Parties, thus, will know which of their candidates are truly trusted by the voters. This also addresses the issue of lack of internal democracy in the political parties.

28. In the current model, candidates who are not popular among the voters can also win an election, based on the popularity of the party and the party chief. Such leaders, whom the voters do not like, can erode the popularity and credibility of the party and party chief in the long run. In the new model, candidates who have enough Trust Base only will win. The party gets to develop genuine and long-lasting roots into the Trust Bases of its candidates. The party also gets a deeper understanding of the needs, issues, and opinions of the voters, based on the candidates chosen by the voters.

29. Should a leader, who switches from one political party to the other, lose his/her seat? There has been a lot of debate, constitutional provisions and amendments, and supreme court rulings on this question, but none of them are satisfactory. This new model answers this question elegantly. The voters can simply withdraw their votes to the particular leader if they feel that the switch was done for wrong reasons. If they feel that the switch is justified, they do not have to do anything. In the true spirit of democracy, it lets the voters be the judges.

Benefits for the Leaders

30. The new model increases *the ease of doing politics*. Any leader with good ideas and ability to connect to people, can immediately register one's candidacy and become an Elected Leader in a matter of weeks, with his or her followers and supporters forming the Trust Base. There is no need to wait for the next elections. There is no need for getting any political party's endorsement. There is no need to defeat others in the election. It is similar to starting a business, which anyone can do any time, if one has the ideas and potential customer base. No leader who enjoys the support of a sizable number of Voters can ever be driven out of power, in this new model. Every leader who enjoys enough support among the voters gets a seat at the table of decision making.

31. In the current model, voters do not vote for new or independent, or service-oriented candidates because they are afraid that their vote would go 'waste'. In the new model, with the Multiple Votes feature, voters can 'keep the old as well as try the new' leaders, by distributing some of their votes to the established candidates and some to the emerging and alternate leaders. Thus, the new model makes it easy for new blood to flow into politics.

32. Quite frequently, we see leaders winning elections three or four elections in a row, lasting in power for twenty to thirty years. Why do leaders who enjoy the confidence of the voters need to go through elections, which are expensive, again and again? The reason is that, in the current model, there is no other mechanism to make sure that the voters are still keeping their confidence in those leaders. Whereas, in the new model there is no need for expensive elections. The leaders continue to be in power as long as the sizes of their respective Trust Bases, which are published by the Election Commission everyday anyway, stay above the MNV.

33. In the current model, a candidate who gets even one vote less than his immediate rival loses the election. This makes the elections very contentious. Every candidate is forced to fight tooth and nail to snatch every single vote from the opponents. They resort to making false promises, taking populist stances, appealing to the base emotions of voters, and so on, to gain every single possible vote. The conscientious and principled leaders have no choice but to resort to similar techniques if they want to win the election. One is forced to employ foul means keeping one's own principles aside. In the new model, candidates do not contest against each other. They do not have to fight tooth and nail for the same votes. Each one can develop a Trust Base of one's own, at one's own pace. Since the Trust Base could be spread across the entire country, no two candidates have to fight for the vote of the same

voters in a specific constituency. Each leader can form and grow one's own Trust Base, without having to compete directly with any other leader.

34. In the current model, the incumbent leaders are never sure of getting the party ticket and winning the next election. This uncertainty propels them to focus more on the next election than on the people's issues. It incentivizes them to make hay while the sun shines. They cannot take a long-term stand on any issue. In the new model, they can stick to their stand on any issue and can stay in power as long as they can retain the confidence of their respective Trust Bases, by working on their concerns, issues and needs.

35. In the current model, there is no good mechanism for the leaders to gain feedback on their performance from the voters. Opinion polls, approval ratings, etc., are neither reliable nor conducted regularly. Whereas in the new model, the changes in the size of the Trust Bases, which can be monitored daily, like businesses do their stock prices, serve as instant feedback to the leaders about their performance. They can immediately put efforts to re-connect with the voters if the see their Trust Bases shrinking.

Benefits for the Voters

36. In the current model, young people attaining the voting age, i.e., turning eighteen, right after the day of the election, have to wait till the next election, i.e., till the age of twenty-three, to exercise their right to vote for the first time. In the new model, with the Anytime Voting feature, there will be no such delay for eligible voters. They can register themselves as voters at an election office as soon as they attain the voting age, and distribute their votes to the candidates of their liking on the very same day.

37. In the current model, people who are away from home for work or business or pleasure or pilgrimage, have to disrupt their plans, to come back to their home polling station on the election day to cast their vote. The other alternative is to use the postal ballot, which is a cumbersome process and is not familiar and available to all the voters. In the new model, there are no polling stations or election dates. Voters can distribute or redistribute their votes anytime and from anywhere using a Mobile App or at an e-Seva center.

38. In the current model, voters who happen to migrate from one place to another place because of marriage or job or business, have to give up their voting rights at the old place in order to establish voting rights in the new place. In the new model, there is no such need, as anyone from any place can vote for any candidate from any place in the country. Further, they can do the same at the state level too. They can give some of their state level votes to the leaders of the new state, and some to the leaders of the old state. This is especially useful for people who have business, property or family interests in more than one state.

39. In the current model, there is no good solution for the nomadic tribes to vote, as they don't have a 'native place' or 'residential address' as all the others do. It is difficult for them to exercise their voting privilege. It is a problem for the voters as well as for the leaders and the Election Commission. This problem is elegantly solved in the new model, as anyone can distribute their votes to any candidate from anywhere at an e-Seva center or using mobile App.

40. In the current model, we do not have a good solution for Indian citizens who happen to be abroad for various reasons at the time of elections, to vote. The new model solves that problem also. They can distribute their votes through Internet or Mobile App or at the nearby Indian Consulate.

Benefits for the Minorities

41. In the current model, small, poor, and powerless communities hardly have any representation. Ideally, they should have seats in proportion to their numbers. The current model tries to address this problem by reserving certain constituencies for SC, ST, and women candidates. This solution, however, is flawed, for three reasons. One, the minority leader from the reserved constituencies cannot be expected to represent the voters of the other majority and minority communities truthfully. Two, the leader cannot represent the minority communities that live in the other constituencies, and thus the minorities in the other constituencies go without representation. Three, it is not possible to create a reserved constituency for every type of minority, and hence many minorities go without representation. The new model gives a much better, and in fact, an ideal solution to the problem. Minorities of every kind, from all over the country, can form Trust Bases and elect leaders who care about their particular needs and issues. No minority, whose size exceeds MNV goes unrepresented in the new model. All the plurality of the country, whether it is based on language, culture, religion, caste, profession, issues, needs, or causes will be proportionally represented in the new model.

General Benefits

42. In the current model, candidates, parties, and governments incur huge expenses every five years. Whereas in the new model, there are no elections, and hence there are no such huge expenses. There is no deadline to win. Every leader can build up his Trust Base gradually, at his/her own pace, by virtue of his/her deeds, words, and leadership qualities.

43. In the current model, resources are drawn from many government departments during the election season, disrupting their normal function. In the new model, with no elections, there is no such need. The workload on the election offices will be mostly uniform all round the year.

44. In the current model, leaders are allowed to contest from more than one constituency. A candidate who wins in more than one constituency, has to resign from all the constituencies but one. Bye-elections need to be conducted in those constituencies, which is an added expense to the candidates, to the parties, and to the government as well. In this new model, there will be no constituencies, and hence someone contesting from more than one constituency becomes a moot point. A leader can have his or her Trust Base in all areas where he or she has support.

45. In the current model, normal public life gets disrupted in the election season, which sometimes lasts for almost six months before the election. There is no such disruption in the new model, as there are no elections to begin with.

46. In the current model, elections have to be postponed if a natural disaster like floods or pandemic strikes. In the new model, no such issue arises as there are no elections to begin with. The voters can continue to distribute and redistribute their votes, whenever and wherever connectivity is available and wherever the e-Seva centers are open.

47. In the new model, the voters can distribute their votes using Aadhaar cards. There is no need to go through the cumbersome, error-prone and sometimes contentious exercise of preparing the voter lists.

Clarifications

1. Does this model pass the 'common man' test? Could this model be too complicated for the average voter?

First, we will make a general comment and then discuss whether this model passes the 'common man' test.

The general comment is that, democracy itself fails the 'common man' test. Democracy assumes that the voter, a 'common man', can understand the complex social and economic issues, can assess the capabilities and character of the contesting politicians and the implications of the policies put forward by them, and are prudent enough to make the right choice. A common man is, of course, not capable of performing such a complex job. But it didn't stop us from choosing democracy. We adopted democracy anyway because we believe it is better than any other form of government, in spite of its imperfections. Similarly, we have to ignore imperfections, if any, of the 'Better Election Model', because it brings many benefits and solves many problems.

Now let us look into whether the features of the 'new model', would pass the 'common man' test. The two main features of this model that affect the voter are Anytime Voting and Multiple Votes. These two features can be combined into one feature, and we can call it 'Occasional Redistribution of Votes'. The voter in this model knows he has twelve votes. And all that he/she has to do is give a couple to one leader, and a couple more to another leader and so on. Conceptually it is as simple as distributing a dozen bananas to a few children, or distributing one's own pocket money or salary or wages or profits to various categories of expenses. 'Common man' understands these kind of 'distribution' tasks innately. This new model does not demand any more sophisticated skills than that.

The mechanism of distribution, however, can be a little complex, but that can be ameliorated by various methods. Those who are sophisticated enough to use smartphones or computers can distribute their votes as easily as they operate the UPI Apps for banking. Those who are not comfortable with technology, can redistribute votes at an election office (which can be an e-Seva center or post office, etc), with assistance, if needed. The only thing we should make sure is that the process is simple and secrecy is maintained. We can introduce the new model in one State or in a few Local Bodies to begin with, on a pilot basis. Within two or three years, we should be able to identify any difficulties in the process and address them, and then implement it in the new model in more States and at the Center.

2. Why change the model established by the eminent members of the constituent assembly?

The new model is not about change, but about evolution. At the time of independence, we moved from the age of kingdoms to the age of democracy. Moving from kingdoms to democracy is like advancing from the bullock carts age to motorized vehicles age, which is a big leap. That does not mean we stopped there. We kept on innovating, decade after decade, to increase safety and efficiency and to decrease the cost of production of motorized vehicles. We shall do the same with everything and anything, including with democracy. We have to constantly look for opportunities to make it reflect the spirit of democracy better and better, such as in simplifying and strengthening the relationship between the voters and leaders. This new model is designed with that spirit. It brings the election process to the electronic age and addresses the eight major flaws and many minor flaws, bringing voters and leaders closer to each other. Again, this new model may not and should not be the end-all and be-all. After a few more decades of implementing this model, yet another model may come up to address the shortcomings or flaws of this model, if any. We need to invent and adopt new and better models every few decades to elevate democracy to a higher level.

3. Some people are already talking about 'digital democracies', where voters vote on policy decisions directly, without needing leaders. Why can't we go to it directly?

This is a fair question. 'Voting on policies' is a good idea, but only when two conditions are met: 1) the number of policies are few and do not require a lot of subject knowledge. 2) the role of leaders is limited to policy making only.

But these conditions do not match the reality. First, the number of policy decisions are neither few nor simple. Many of them are nuanced, intricate issues with long ranging implications. Second, the role of leaders is not limited to policy making. As the term 'leaders', implies, they 'lead' people, by bring them together, by bringing up new and sometimes bold ideas, by rising up to the demands of emergency situations, by helping people to navigate through the systems, by defending people when they are abused by the systems, and so on.

Even in a 'digital democracy' you cannot but expect the emergence of 'opinion leaders', who could be talk show hosts, media personalities or celebrities, who would sway people's opinion for or against a given policy. In other words, 'digital democracy' promotes 'unofficial leaders'. Unofficial leaders are not accountable for anything. Another, rather better option is to make them official and hold them accountable. That is what this new model does, much more so than the current model.

4. Doesn't 'anytime voting' cause leadership churn and lead to instability and volatility in the governments?

Actually, it does not. In fact, it works the other way around. It increases the stability and continuity of leadership, which may seem counterintuitive. This is how it happens. A voter distributes votes to only those leaders whom one trusts and one develops a sort of bonding. Voters do not change their set of chosen leaders willy-nilly every day, just because they can do so. An average voter actually feels good developing a long-term relationship with leaders and parties and stay loyal to them for long periods of time. We see that happening even in the current model. Voters can change their party affiliation, in theory, on any day; but in practice, they tend to stay loyal to the party for even decades. Similarly, voters would not drop leaders from their chosen list willy-nilly. They may do so only when the leaders perform too poorly or betray the trust of the voters, or turn apathetic to issues, or retire from politics.

Also, when one drops a leader from one's chosen list, one has to find another leader whom one can trust and connect to. This is not easy. Good leaders are not easy to come by. After all, we do not drop even our servant maid or driver or priest or guru or tailor or barber willy-nilly, because finding a replacement is not easy. It is much easier and prudent to give the existing ones a chance to correct themselves and become better. This is how life normally works, and we can expect to see the same even with respect to choosing leaders.

In the current model, even a leader who is doing well can lose an election and go out of power all of a sudden if the political party of the leader happens to perform poorly at the polls. There would be no such unpredictable and drastic changes in the new model, either for the individual leaders or for the governments. Never will all the members of the Leadership Councils go out of power at the same time, in the new model. Leadership Councils work like cricket teams or the boards of publicly traded companies, which remain permanent, enjoying continuity, with only the individual members that constitute the Councils changing every now and then.

Thus the new model with 'anytime voting' will bring in stability to the individual leaders and to the Leadership Councils and Governments, which is what we look for.

5. Why twelve votes per voter? Why not twenty or hundred or something else?

The reason for setting the number of votes per voter as twelve is simple. First of all, the basic idea behind the multiple votes is to allow voters to choose multiple leaders who can address multiple issues that matter to them. We cannot expect a voter, on an average, to be interested in more than three or four issues, and hence

more than three or four leaders. An average voter cannot keep track of and keep trust in more than three or four leaders at the same time. The number *twelve* allows the voter to distribute votes to three or four leaders in equal as well as variable proportions. The number twelve is familiar to common man as a 'dozen' and as the number of hours on the clock. There is no sanctity for the number twelve besides these common sense reasons. If anyone thinks that a different number such as twenty or hundred would a better choice for any other reason, it can be adopted in place of twelve, and it would not change the nature or benefits of this model.

6. What are the advantages of giving higher voting power in the legislature to leaders with larger Trust Bases?

This feature enhances the spirit of democracy. Leaders derive their power in a democracy by the trust the voters keep in them. Leaders with larger Trust Bases represent more people and their vote on legislation represents the voice of that many voters. Ten lakh voters, for example, can choose just one leader to represent them, in stead of five leaders or ten leaders, if they so wish. This does not violate the spirit of democracy in any way.