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eElections

Electronic Age
Election System
For a Better Democracy

A concept paper



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A Concept Paper
for the consideration of
the People and Leaders of India

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1. In this paper, we take a deep dive into the issues and problems faced by the Indian democracy for various reasons including the constraints and limitations of the election system. Then we suggest a new and simpler model of elections, called eElections that addresses those issues, solve those problems and make democracy work better, by taking advantage of the power of the emerging electronic age technologies, like computers, internet and mobile phones. We will also suggest a road map to transition to this new model from the current model in a smooth and phased manner without causing any disruption to the public life or governance.

2. This paper is presented for the consideration of the people, thinkers, leaders, political parties and governments, interested in making the democracy function better. We hope everyone gives this proposed eElections model a serious consideration and do whatever is in their power to make it a reality.

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3. ChatGPT, when asked, 'what are the problems with democracy?', responded:

There are several potential problems* with democracy, including:

- Majority rule can lead to a tyranny of the majority, where the rights and interests of minority groups are ignored or oppressed.
- The democratic process can be expensive and time-consuming.
- Campaign finance and lobbying can lead to corruption and a lack of representation for average citizens.
- Voter apathy and low voter turnout can result in a lack of participation and engagement in the democratic process.
- The two-party system can limit political diversity and make it difficult for third parties or independent candidates to gain representation.
- Political polarization can lead to gridlock and inability to pass meaningful legislation.
- It can be vulnerable to misinformation and manipulation by powerful individuals or groups.
- It can be influenced by money and power, leading to unequal representation for different social groups.

**emphasis added.*

4. This ChatGPT analysis, which must be a summary of information available on various sources on the Internet about democracy, is quite telling. Everything is not fine and dandy just because we chose democracy. Role of money, misinformation and manipulation, majority tyranny, voter apathy, polarization, unequal representation, high entry bar for new parties, expensive and time-consuming process, are still issues that we have to deal with.

5. In India, we have our own set of issues to complain, besides these issues which are generic to democracy. Caste, Community, Cash and Criminality win, frustratingly and unfortunately, over Character, Caliber, Capacity, as one of our former vice-presidents, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu[1] put it bluntly. By caste, some mean caste divisions and others mean upper caste dominance, both of which are of concern. Feeling absolutely hopeless and helpless about these issues, everyone is praying for a respite. But, nothing will happen by itself magically. Things do not change unless we make a serious attempt and put forward a concerted effort.

* * *

6. The issues outlined by ChatGPT, and those outlined by Venkaiah Naidu are related to one another, as we shall see. We will also see, how they can be addressed, to the degree possible, by raising what we call Ease of doing Politics, or EoP, which means bringing down the role of money, making the process simpler and thereby making the playing field level, for everyone interested in politics. EoP is similar to EoB, i.e., Ease of doing Business. Economy flourishes in a country with high EoB and flounders in a country with low EoB. Similarly, democracy flourishes in a system with high EoP and deteriorates in a system with low EoP.

7. Let us begin with the 'criminality' factor, the ugliest of all. It has been a shameful and vexing issue for long time and has only been getting worse over time. Many people think of strict laws as the solution for this problem. But there are two problems with this solution. One, strict laws can't really stop powerful politicians from doing what they do. They know how to game the system. In the worst case, they can field their spouses or other trusted lieutenants to the elected positions and operate from behind the scenes. Two, laws that are too strict will only end up serving as tools in the hands of the party in power to suppress the opposition, and become even more autocratic. Legal solutions may be able to handle the criminality issue to a certain degree, but not in its entirety.

8. A better question we should ask is why are people voting for criminals, knowingly? Because they do not have much choice, because it is the political parties who pick the candidates. Political parties ignore the criminality factor, as they need candidates who has the money and muscle power to outdo the candidates of other parties and win the election by hook or crook. This all ensues from the *time-consuming,* shall we say convoluted, and *expensive* process as ChatGPT results point out and as everyone knows. 'Cash' factor contributes to the 'Criminality' factor.

9. Things became worse with the new trend of 'buying' votes that make a mockery of democracy. Everyone is at their wits end on how to deal with this menace.

1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hy5zoKxzWs&t=2005s

Things have deteriorated to such a degree, that voters, in stead of feeling ashamed of selling votes, are protesting for not getting a 'fair' price for their votes. Now, where does money come from for these extremely expensive elections? Either one invests one's own money, in which case, one has to earn it all back once in power, which means making corrupt deals rather than curbing corruption, or one depends on other's money, in which case, one has to pay them back after getting into power, which again leads to nepotism and corruption. The net result is the leaders who are supposed to curb corruption end up initiating and propagating it.

10. Once money power, muscle power and corruption become essential for entering and surviving politics, there obviously would be no room for such things as "character, caliber, capacity and conduct". So, the question ultimately is, is there a way to make the elections less expensive and less time-consuming, so that the leaders with "character, caliber, capacity and conduct" can find a place in politics? Is there a way to increase the Ease of doing Politics, or EoP? If we can raise the EoP, the politicians with clean record will stand a chance to face the candidates with criminal background. 'Criminality' factor will come down, at least, to some degree, if not completely erased.

* * *

11. Now, let us examine the 'caste' factor. First of all, caste means many things to many people. For the educated, it is a dirty word. For the average analyst, it is the root of all evil. For the common man, it is just a part of life that gives cultural and professional identity, defines lineage / pedigree, gives a sense of belonging, and serves as a source of pride. For a politician, it signifies a population segment, it is a part of social diversity and above all a vote bank. But for a sociologist, it means altogether something else. It is the social substratum on which democracy is slapped. Castes, unique to Indian society, divide it into a *large number of small minorities*, creating what we can call *minority-plurality.*

12. The minority-plurality is a blessing in disguise for Indian democracy. It helps India's democracy from deterioration on three interesting counts – 'polarization', 'majority tyranny' and 'upper caste domination'. Let us see how. Castes are not on or two or half a dozen. They are hundreds and thousands in number. None makes up no more than one or two percent of the population. What this means is, India has no 'majority' in the first place, and hence there is no question of 'majority tyranny'. At the time of independence, leaders and thinkers and the departing British feared that the diversity of India can lead to fissiparous tendencies. Some even predicted that the country would very likely break apart into pieces, in a short span of time. They did not realize that the minority-plurality would actually resists fissiparous tendencies,

which we should be thankful for. Similarly, minority-plurality also resists polarization. It is almost impossible to draw any type of clean line that divides all these minorities into two camps.

13. Having said that, India is not going to be immune to the polarization, as time progresses. With education and urbanization, the emerging India is becoming more and more caste-less. Urbanization leads to individualization. Organic communities give place to digital communities. People live in echo chambers of social media, which has already started happening. Echo chambers are susceptible to the propaganda of all sorts, including those by the divisive elements and forces.

14. Once the caste-identity is lost, people would try to find other kinds of identities, to differentiate themselves from the others, a basic psychological need. The echo chambers are bound to polarize the population, if not radicalize. It can happen on the lines of political divide of *left* and *right* or on the religious lines. If it happens on the religious lines, it can lead to 'majority tyranny', because one of the religions is a dominant religion in India.

15. Polarization, essentially, means one half of the population perpetually 'disapproving' the other half of the population for being what they are, and trying to 'convert' them to their side. It means, one half opposing whatever the other half says and undo whatever the other half does. Polarization leads to a constant tug of war, and society loses the sense of common purpose. Polarization can hold back social progress even in the midst of technological progress, as the USA bears witness. Polarization is not as benign a division as castes, i.e., minority-plurality. Castes by nature do not try to 'disapprove' or 'convert' each other. The ethos of plurality and 'live and let live' are built into the castes.

16. One other concern we all share regarding the 'caste' factor, is the 'upper caste dominance'. The high 'cash' factor of elections, unfortunately and unsurprisingly, gives an upper hand to the richer and powerful sections of the society in any democracy, as the ChatGPT's analysis says. In India, it reflects in the form of 'upper castes'. But, in India, the upper caste dominance, fortunately, is curtailed to a great degree, again, by the minority-plurality factor. Since any given caste, including the upper castes, makes up only a small fraction of the Indian politician, no matter which caste a leader belongs to, he or she has no choice but to appeal to multiple castes, besides one's own, to get into power and stay in power. Thus, the interests of the 'lower' castes, or more generically of minorities, do not go unrepresented in Indian democracy, albeit by someone not necessarily belonging to that minority. We can see the proof in the ever-increasing percentage of reservations. The only thing that can be more ideal is to have the leaders of the specific minority represent the issues and concerns of that specific minority.

17. Thus the polarization, majority tyranny and upper caste domination, which are hitherto reined by the minority-plurality, may become worse henceforth with education and urbanization. So, the question is, can we do anything about it? The answer is same EoP, again. If we can make the elections cheaper and easier, the diversity, of all sorts, not only caste, but cultural, ethical, professional, etc. will thrive, as leaders from every such minority can find a place at the table of power, in proportion to the size of the minority.

* * *

18. There are more issues with democracy in India than the ones outlined by ChatGPT and summarized by the former vice-president. They are to do with the quality of democracy (QoD) and spirit of democracy (SoD) – like, trust issues, lack of choices, Effective minority rule, leadership talent loss, broken minorities, low focus on professions, generic politicians, poor representation of minorities, forced partisanship, low accountability, lack of feedback, disproportional representation, absence of independents, compromised stability, toothless watch dogs, and emotive elections. These issues are subtle and hence are not discussed widely, but are there to see once we scratch the surface. While the issues outlined by ChatGPT are generic to democracy and those outlined by our former vice-president are specific to India, these QoD and SoD issues largely stem from the design of current election system.

19. The design of the current election system comprises of three core elements: 1) Geographically-bounded constituencies, with FPTP[2] criterion for electing the representatives. 2) One vote per voter 3) Once-in-five-years elections, with a maximum five-year term for the lower houses of the parliament and the state legislatures. We are used to these three elements for a long time, and hence we do not tend to analyze them or see the problems inherent to them. Democracy means people governing themselves through their elected representatives. More precisely we must say is is people governing themselves through their *trusted* representatives. The above three elements undercut the 'trust' factor in multiple ways, causing the QoD and SoD issues, which we shall discuss.

* * *

20. First of all, consider one of the essential features of democracy: Every voter should be able to vote for a leader of one's choice. But this is only in theory. In practice, the choice of voters is limited to the leaders fielded by the major political

2 See the Hand Book on Electoral System Design prepared by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), for the meaning of terms like FPTP (First Past The Post - i.e., candidate with maximum votes wins) and description of many concepts related to election models that are in vogue around the world. The handbook is available for a free download at https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/electoralsystem-design-new-international-idea-handbook

parties. Voters cannot choose *any* leader they trust. They have to choose one among the leaders thrust on them by the parties. When voters cannot choose leaders who they think are the best, the quality of democracy (QoD) suffers. If they choose not to vote for the candidate of a major political party, it is as good as their vote going 'waste'. This prospect, obviously, is one of the causes of another issue, 'voter apathy'.

21. Further, what if there is no candidate on the ballot paper who a given voter cannot put his or her trust in? To address this issues, we introduced the option of NOTA. But this does not solve anything in real terms. It cannot help the voters vote a leader whom they *trust*. It is basically, a tool for the voter to display frustration over his or her lack of choices.

22. Further, what if a voter likes or dislikes all the major parties and candidates equally? How can a voter 'express' it, in the current system? There, obviously, is no provision to do that. Voters are forced to choose one of the leaders, and one of the parties, by the 'one vote per voter' rule. This means, no matter whom you vote for, it appears as if you supported one political party and *rejected* the other, which is not your intention. The winning leader and political party *claim* that you rejected the other leader and the other party, a misrepresentation of your mind. In the process, the system makes the party-neutral voters appear as partisan voters. It *conditions* the voters, however mildly, to think *along* the party lines, instead of *above* the party lines. This conditioning makes a big dent on the spirit of democracy (SoD). Voters spiral down, from the role of 'assessing' the parties, to 'siding' with the parties, and 'aligning' with the parties. They get used to blindly accept what one party says and does as right and what the other party says and does as wrong. We slowly loose our own sense of right and wrong, which leads not only to political and democratic deterioration, but to social deterioration. Lack of choices lead to a 'no trust' and 'blind trust' situation. What would be an ideal situation? Any leader with sufficient number of voters trusting him or her should become a member of the parliament.

23. With the votes split between two or three candidates, and with good percentage of voters abstaining from voting, the winning candidates, on an average, get no more than 30% to 40% of the votes. But the system makes the candidate a representative for the rest of the 60% to 70% voters also. This means the candidate preferred by 30% to 40% of voters will make decisions for the other 60% to 70% voters also. This is nothing but 'minority rule', a huge subversion of the spirit of democracy (SoD) that goes unnoticed. More people are represented in this constituency-based system by a leader whom they do not trust, than otherwise.

24. The constituency-based elections cause one other weird issue. To understand this issue, let us call *all* the political leaders capable and interested in serving the country (or state), as the *political talent*. Political paries, of necessity, field strong

candidates against strong candidates, medium candidates against medium candidates and weak candidates against weak candidates. In other words top talent competes against top talent, medium against medium and weak against weak. In this situation, regardless of who wins and who loses, one thing is for sure: half of the top talent will lose, while half of the medium and half of the weak talent will win. The weird part here is that this process throws away of half of the top talent and takes in half of the weak talent. This happens time and again, and history provides many examples of good parliamentarians thrown out of power many times. Not having half of the top-talent on the floor of the house is certainly a loss for the democracy, a QoD issue.

25. The constituencies-based system also, inherently, has one other QoD issue, 'broken minorities'. This system ensures that there is a representative from every nook and cranny of the country, and hence covers the entire regional diversity. But it prevents every professional, cultural and ethical diversity from being represented. For example, consider the weaver profession or community. They form a small minority in every constituency, though they form a sizable population when put together across the constituencies. The constituency-based system slices such minorities into small pieces, leaving them with no *effective* representation. The slicing of such vocations, arts, crafts and professions, and lack of representation for them is one of the major reasons for the lack of progress in India. We call this 'broken minorities' issue. When people of common interest, professional, economic or cultural, etc., cannot come together, economy and culture suffers. This issue is not limited to traditional professions and arts. It is an issue for modern professions also. Teachers, for example, know more about education and children than anyone else. Their knowledge and insights into children and their sociol-economic-cultural background is an extraordinary useful soft resource that gets completely wasted. But their voice, being a minority voice in every constituency, is heard only feebly. Their fate and even daily routine is largely determined by the generic career politicians.

26. The constituency-based system locks us into a weird paradox. The issues and concern of the constituencies vary, hence generic politician is more apt to represent a constituency. But, a generic politician, being a 'jack of all, master of none', does not have the depth of understanding required to provide any meaningful and lasting solution for any of the issues. And anyone with deep knowledge and focus on any one subject cannot win the election, as the voters for whom that particular issue matters are a minority, in any given constituency. The names of such leaders do not even make to the ballot paper. The net result is that we have many vital issues that drag on and deteriorate for the lack of proper attention. Like we discussed earlier, we are not only losing half of the strong candidates with the constituency-based system, we

are also losing almost all of the leaders who are experts in any given area. That is why we don't have good solutions for farmers' issues, healthcare issues, educational issues, etc., even after these many decades of independence. We live with someone with little or no knowledge of education becoming education minister, someone with little or no knowledge of agriculture becoming agriculture minister, and so on. We try to solve this problem with Rajya Sabha members with special constituencies like 'teacher' constituencies, 'graduates' constituencies, etc. But they represent only a tiny fraction of professional diversity.

27. There are even ethnic minorities, beside the professional minorities, in India, like Banjaras and the other SCs, STs. Such minorities are spread across the country and can easily find a leader of their own ethnicity to represent them, if they were not broken into pieces by the geographical constituencies. They don't have to depend on a generic politician who do not belong to their ethnicity to represent them. We try to solve this issue in the current system, with the solution of 'reserved constituencies'. But this is a very convoluted and ineffective solution. True, it succeeds in guaranteeing the presence of leaders *belonging* to minority groups in the parliament, but not leaders *focused* on the issues of the minority groups. This is because they would also usually be 'generic politicians', in order to get the ticket of a major political party, and have to appeal to all groups in the constituency in order to win the election. The current system is only good to appease the minorities, but not to enable to express themselves, or find leadership among them.

28. There is one more related point to discuss. Suppose we somehow put together a system in which voters can vote for a politician who focuses on the issues of importance to them. What if there are more issues of concern to a particular voter? Suppose there is a teacher who is from a minority community and also who, unfortunately, happened to be physically handicapped. Since there are more than one issues, we might ask, isn't a generic politician better, than one focused on only one of those issues, to represent that voter? The answer is yes. But there is a better answer. What if we can remove the 'one vote per voter' restriction and give the voters multiple voters enabling them to choose multiple leaders, each focused on a different issue. It is something to ponder, and we will discuss that later.

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29. Because of the once-in-a-five-year elections, voters can't hold the elected leaders accountable till the next election. The leader and the political party are free to do whatever they want for full five years, without the fear of losing power. There is not even a mechanism for the voters to give feedback. There is no clear and dependable mechanism for the leader also to get feedback. They would not know whether their popularity among people is growing or shrinking. Opinion polls, if at

all, are serving that purpose to some degree, but they are rare and unreliable. So, both voters and leaders feel that they are treading in a dark alley. Voters do not know what leaders would do, and leaders do not know what voters think of their decisions and actions, a significant QoD issue.

30. In the current system, we like to compensate this lack of continuous oversight by the voters on leaders, with the concept of 'watchdogs'. We expect the 'opposition parties', media and activists to act as the watchdogs on behalf of the people. There is an inherent SoD issue with it. How can 'opposition parties', who did not win the mandate of people, and media or activists who never won an election, act as representatives of people? If we let them, they are not immune to pushing their own agenda in the name of the people. Why should the ruling party, which has the people's mandate, care about the views of the opposition parties or media or activists? Is that even the right thing to do? Did we put them in power to put other's agenda above their own? What is the use of these 'powerless' watchdogs? The right and effective thing to do is to somehow enable the people themselves to be the watchdogs on a constant basis. In a true spirit of democracy, people should be enable to react, positively or negatively as the case may be, on each and every decision and action of the leadership. But that is not easy or feasible, and is a known weakness of the current system. We have to see how we can overcome this, and put people in charge of overseeing the leadership.

31. In the current system, a candidate who gets the maximum votes is declared as the winner. (In political science terms, this is called FPTP, first past the post). Though this is a fair mechanism, it has many issues. We discussed one among them already. It causes unintended 'minority rule'. There is one other problem too with this. It makes the elections highly contentious and a zero-sum game. It makes outspending, outwitting and outdoing the opponents major focus of the leaders, than getting closer to the voters. If one leaders resorts to unscrupulous techniques of demagoguery, the other would have no option but to follow suit. If one spends a certain amount of money, the other has to spend more. The elections become a bidding war or a wrestling match. Leaders cannot develop relationships or gain the trust of the voters in a slow and steady manner. This is an EoP as well as QoD issue.

32. The FPTP method also results in another issue which all of us are too familiar with. Parties can gain or lose disproportionate number of seats for gaining or losing a small percentage of votes in the elections. On the one hand, it leads to a misrepresentation of the people's will, an SoD issue, and on the other, it puts one party at an undue advantage and another at an undue disadvantage. The alternative to FPTP is called proportional representation, which is long known in political science circles and is in practice in many countries. But it is somewhat complex to implement

compared to FPTP, and that is why it was not adopted in India. But we need to examine whether we can implement proportional representation in one form or the other, taking advantage of the power of technology.

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33. The ultimate question is, is there a way to address the three sets of issues, those generic to democracy, those specific to India, those that stem from the limitations of the current system. The answer is yes, and to quite a good degree, by bringing the elections system to the electronic age, i.e., with the help of technological advancements such as computers, internet and mobile phones.

34. We have already been utilizing these advances to make things better and easy in many areas like banking, reservations, government services, etc. We used them to implement such complex systems as Aadhaar cards. We can do the same with elections also. With the help of technology, we can replace the geographically-bounded constituencies with what we call 'nation-wide trust bases', FPTP with 'top talent', one vote per voter with multiple votes per voter, and once-in-a-five-year elections with anytime voting, that make the Lok Sabha a permanent house like Rajya Sabha. We will call the system with these changes as eElections, a short form, for 'electronic age elections system'.

	Current System	eElections
1	Geographic Constituencies	Nationwide Trust Bases
2	FPTP	Most Trusted (Top Talent)
3	One Vote per Voter	Multiple Votes per Voter
4	Once in Five Years Elections	Anytime Voting
5	Finite-Term Legislatures	Permanent Councils

35. Geographic Constituencies were necessary once upon a time, for inclusiveness, i.e., to ensure every voter from every corner of the country is represented. But as we have discussed, the geography-based constituencies have several issues like generic politicians, low focus on professions, broken minorities and poor representation of minorities. Now that we have technology in our hand, enabling everyone from every part of the country to talk to each other, pay each other, and so on instantly, we can collapse all these constituencies into one single constituency.

36. Single constituency models are not a brand new concept, and they are already in place in some countries (See Electoral System Design prepared by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)[3]. It opens up all the leaders from all over the country to all the voters around the country. In other words this

3 https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/electoralsystem-design-new-international-idea-handbook

completely removes the limitations on the choice for voters. The choices are limited only by the number of politicians interested in being elected. We call all the voters who vote for a particular leader, as his or her Trust Base. The Trust Base of a leader can span all over the country. Hence we can call them Nationwide Trust Bases.

37. Now the question is, how do we determine who is the winner and who is the loser? The concept of winner and loser is specific to the current system, and not a necessary construct in implementing democracy. Rather what we can do in the 'single constituency', a.k.a., Nationwide Trust Bases model is, use the 'Top Talent' or 'Most Trusted' method, i.e., choose the top 543 candidates who got the most votes, 543 being the number of elected members in Lok Sabha. This is similar to what we do in many other instances like in selecting the candidates for the IAS or IFS. We simply pick the 'top talent'. In the case of elections, the equivalent of 'top talent' is 'most trusted'.

38. This 'Most Trusted' method has many advantages. Elections are no more a zero-sum game. No one is directly competing against the other. Everyone is trying to get a 'market share', on their own merit. There is no need for the leaders to 'outspend' each other. With no direct competition, leaders will automatically focus on making a case about their candidacy with the voters, rather than wasting time and energy on trouncing an opponent. There is no pressure to project oneself as 'all things to all people' kind of generic politician. The leaders can focus on one or two issues in which they have the expertise and experience, and about which they are passionate. Every leader can build his or her own Trust Base slowly and steadily, just like a business builds up its own customer base at its own pace. This opens up doors for a lot of political talent that is dormant now, though it has the necessary Caliber, Capacity, Character and Conduct. It gets an opportunity to compete and trounce, Caste, Community, Cash and Criminality.

39. Nationwide Trust Bases, with the 'Most Trusted' criteria becomes even more powerful when combined with 'Multiple Votes per Voter' option. We propose the *multiple* as *twelve* votes, a number that is not too small or too big, that allows the voters to distribute their votes *upto* twelve different leaders. It is not necessary that the voter gives twelve votes to twelve different leaders. A voter can give all the twelve votes to the same leader, or six votes each to two leaders, or four votes each to three leaders or three votes each to four leaders. They can also distribute votes in unequal proportion to different leaders if they want, like five votes to one leader, four to another and remaining three to yet another. The number twelve gives a reasonable number of ways to distribute votes to a reasonable number of leaders in equal or unequal proportions. Again, there is no sanctity about *twelve*, it is just a suggestion.

40. The multiple votes is a solution for the 'partisanship' issue also. No more the voters are forced to choose one party over the other, even though they equally like or dislike all the parties. Voters can distribute a few of their votes to the leader of one party, and a few to the leader of another party, if they so choose. It is a boon for the voters who are innately party-neutral. It also goads people to think *above* party lines, rather than *along* party lines. It encourages them to think independently and express their mind accurately. If one cares for one issues more than the other, or likes one leader more than the other, or one party more than the other, they can express the same by giving more votes to one and less votes to another.

41. With multiple votes, voters can consider voting even for independent leaders, i.e., those without party affiliation. They can always set aside two or three votes, as a principle, to be cast to independent leaders, while giving the rest to the party candidates, it so wishes. Today, independent leaders in parliament are near zero. This is not healthy for democracy. A good number of independent leaders is necessarily for higher QoD.

42. The multiple votes model reduces political polarization in one other way also. The leaders, in this model, have to accept the fact that the voters are unlikely to give all of their votes them. They have to appeal to the voters to give as many votes as possible, rather than trying to 'convert' or 'convince' the voter to switch parties. In the business world, no supermarket, for example, can demand the customers to buy all their groceries from them exclusively. Businesses have to do 'customer-sharing' with other supermarkets, corner stores, online stores and so on. The eElection model forces the leaders and parties to do the same, to learn the healthy habit of 'voter-sharing'.

43. Also, taking advantage of multiple votes, voters can try and encourage new blood, by giving one or two of their votes to new leaders, while casting the majority of their votes to the 'tried and tested' leaders, as they wish to. Voters, with multiple votes, can 'keep the old', and 'try the new' at the same time. In the current system, new leaders who want serve people, have to work with political parties more than they do with people in order to enter politics and contest in elections. With the multiple votes system, they are better positioned to go directly to the voters without having to 'sell' themselves or their ideas to any political party. Rather, when they become successful, the political parties can 'buy' the leaders and their ideologies. We see this in the business world all the time. Big businesses are not good at innovation. The innovation happens in the start-ups, which later get absorbed by and into, and supported by the mainstream businesses. With multiple votes we can bring this proven methodology into politics. And it is even better than the business world model. Because, in the business world, once a start-up sells itself to a big company, it ceases to exist and it loses independent hold on its patents, products and finances. In the

political world, an independent leader can join a political party that supports the issues which he or she dispassionate about, and abandon the relationship as well, if the party falls short of its promise. This creates a new type of powerful 'checks and balances' between the peoples issues and party power. Anyone who has the support of people can negotiate their way into politics, rather than compromise their way, more easily in the eElections model, than in the current model.

44. In the current model, anyone who wants to start a new party, or want to rejuvenate an existing party, have to find issues that appeal to a sizable segment of the population across the country. But people would naturally have more issues specific to them, than common to all. Faced with this problem, the parties try to identify one or two emotive issues with which a major chunk of the population can related to, to ride upon. They try to focus 'fast food restaurant' type of solutions, which appeal to the base emotions and needs, rather than rich and varied cuisine of various locales. But in a system with high EoP index, any leader who can spot an unaddressed concern or need can appeal to that small segment of the population, no matter whether they are concentrated in one corner of the country or spread all over the country, can come into power, bringing attention to that specific need or concern or issue. This is the best one can ask for in a democracy.

45. With the Trust Bases, all the professions, cultures, ethnicities that are in the country find representation in the parliament. In fact, we could even think of raising the number of members of the parliament from 543 to a 1000 or 2000 or to a population-adjusted number, such as one representative for every ten lakhs population, to give scope for the diversity of the country to be represented properly (In USA every congressmen represents close to ten lakh voters, in UK, about one lakh voters). This is 'proportional representation' at its best. It enables not only all the minorities and all the professions and cultures to be represented true to their proportion, but also the political parties who stand behind those concerns.

46. And coming back to the 'trust' issues, the most important effect of the Trust Bases and Multiple Votes is that a voter is always represented by a leader that he or she voted for, not anyone whom the voter did not vote for, like it happens in the current constituency-based system. Since every voter has multiple leaders, it is likely that al least one of the chosen leaders of every voter will be in the top 543, and hence, in power. This is phenomenally different from the current system, in which 60% to 70% of the voters have to put up with a leader they did not vote for, all the time. This also means there is no more 'effective minority rule'.

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47. The Trust Bases and Multiple Votes thus take our democracy to glorious heights, on the EoP, EoD and SoD scales, that hitherto are even difficult to imagine. It gets even better with Anytime Voting, that replaces the once-in-a-five-year elections. Anytime Voting means voters can use a Mobile App or walk into an Election Commission authorized center, such as e-Seva center, and can distribute their votes at any time, to the leaders of their choice. Every voter can do this at his or her own convenience regardless of the other voters, as there would be no once-in-a-five-year elections, or an election day, or polling station or polling booth. If, the voters find their chosen leaders are not performing or working as expected, they can use the mobile App or go to e-Seva center to redistribute their votes to different leaders, or to the same leaders in different proportion.

48. As voters distribute and re-distribute their votes, the sizes of the Trust Bases of each leader keeps growing and shrinking. This can happen any single day. And it is the role of the Election Commission to publish this up-to-date information about the size of the Trust Base of each leader, of course with the help of technology. The growing and shrinking Trust Bases serve as an excellent feedback mechanism for the leaders to know where they stand with the voters. It allows them to act and react and course-correct, to match up to the expectations of the voters. This sets up a real time feedback and course-correction loop between the voters and leaders, fostering strong relationships between the representatives and the represented, taking the QoD way up.

49. Anytime Voting is great for the leaders too. One can get into power by building one's Trust Base, slowly and steadily over the time, at one's own pace. There is no 'election day', which puts an end to one's efforts. Once in power, no leader has to fear of losing one's power on an election day, all of a sudden, because of getting a fewer votes less than someone else. A leader does not have to worry about losing power unless one happens to be in the bottom dozen or two of the top 543 leaders. In this model, the power is not guaranteed for five-years, but there is no threat of losing the power at the end of five years either. A leader will last in power as long as one can maintain the size of one's Trust Base, which in turn, as it should be, will be based purely on one's performance.

50. As voters distribute and redistribute their votes, the dozen or so leaders at the bottom of the top 543 can lose power one day and gain power the very next day. This sort of problem can be easily handled by the Election Commission with two simple measures: Publish the 'top 543' list once in sixty days, and take the average Trust Size of the leaders over the last sixty days.

51. A similar measure can be applied on the voters side too. To prevent voters from redistributing votes too frequently, either playfully or emotionally, the election

commission can impose a sixty day compulsory gap between two consecutive redistribution of votes for any given voter, all enabled by technology.

52. With Anytime Voting, obviously, there is no meaning, reason or role for dissolving parliament every five years. First of all, we had put that provision to dissolve parliament to make sure the members of parliament still hold the trust of the electorate, or yield their power to someone else, whom the voters trust. With Anytime Voting, the trust is verified every day. A non-performing leader gets thrown out of power whenever sufficient number of voters lose trust in him or her. This means in this model parliament, more specifically Lok Sabha will be a permanent house like Rajya Sabha. The only difference is, in Rajya Sabha, one third of the members are re-elected every two years, and in Lok Sabha, leaders may change any time, based on whose Trust Base shrinks or grows. Lok Sabha is called Lok Sabha, because its members are elected by the people directly. The same will be true even with this change.

53. Permanent Lok Sabha takes the 'stability' to the highest possible levels. In fact, the once-in-a-five-year elections are a compromise between accountability and stability. Elections held too frequently would increase accountability and decrease stability, and held infrequently would increase stability at the cost of accountability. In this new model, no such compromise is necessary. The Anytime Voting takes the accountability, a QoD factor to the highest possible levels, and the permanency of Lok Sabha takes the stability, another QoD factor to the highest levels possible. Neither is compromised for the sake of the other.

54. In the current system, the policies, projects and programs of the governments hang in suspense, every five years, creating a lot of uncertainty in the business world and also civic world. When there is a change of party, the new party, unfortunately, makes it a mission to undo whatever the previous government, belonging to the other party, did, letting all the investments made by the previous governments, i.e., public money, go waste. With eElections there would never be such a waste. Policy changes, closing down projects and programs would still happen as it makes sense, but in a much smooth and more thoughtful manner.

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55. There will be no change to the Parliament vs. Government relationship in the eElections model. Government will be elected by the parliament as it happens in the current system. Members of parliament will participate in the government as ministers in the government, as is true now. Parliament would still bring down a non-performing government through no-confidence motion. The only change we need to make is to give higher voting power for members with larger Trust Bases, similar to

larger stockholders of a company having larger voting power in electing the board members of a publicly traded company.

56. Also, we may see some positive changes in the government because of eElections. By promoting non-partisan thinking among voters, eElections are likely to promote non-partisan thinking among leaders and parties also. eElections make it easy for new and small parties to form and succeed. It would be a great development if it happens. The ruling party, opposition parities dichotomy will weaken. There will be more 'coalition' governments. This means governments will consists of members of multiple parties and even independents. Governments would then reflect the entire diversity of members of parliament, and hence the diversity of the people.

57. The culture or ruling vs. opposition, which is dominant now, is bad and has been detrimental to progress of the country in many ways. The word 'opposition' itself is bad, and we should get rid of it. We don't elect leaders to 'oppose' each other. We elect them to 'collaborate' with each other and solve problems. Taking the concept of 'opposition' literally, the parties that are not in power think 'opposing' is their 'sacred' duty. They feel they speak for the people more than the party which got the people's mandate. They oppose everything and anything the party with mandate says, proposes and does, even if that is exactly what they would do when they themselves are in power.

58. The very concept of political parties is fraught with a fundamental problem. They have to carry the burden of the past. Even if the political parties want to tread a new path, their legacy keeps haunting it. Both the party members and the opponents try to box the parties into what they have been in the past. The dreams, ideas and ideals of the loud voices of the past override the current, bold, new and forward looking ideas. It is difficult for any party to extricate itself from the box. Party system won't let the parties progress or evolve. This is bad for the democracy as a whole. Small parties, on the other hand, when they become the mainstream, are a great solution for this problem. They can get easily formed and dissolved. The decision making would be more democratic and more amenable to change and progress.

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59. There is one small change in nomenclature we suggest that could be made to reflect the role and function of parliament better. It is about the name of Lok Sabha. Lok Sabha is a misnomer. The literal meaning of Lok Sabha is assembly of people. But in reality, the lower house is not the assemble of people, but the assembly of peoples' representatives. The term 'legislature', which is used for parliament at the center, and for the Vidhan (Sashan) Sabhas in the states, also does not reflect their full role. They are responsible not only for 'legislating', but also for electing, participating in, and

supervising the Executive, i.e., government. Keeping this broader role in mind, it would be appropriate to call them as Leadership Councils. Lok Sabha as National Leadership Council, Vidhan (Sashan) Sabhas as State Leadership Councils.

60. We sometimes use the term 'representative' to refer to these elected leaders. But 'representation' is only a part of their role. Leaders not only 'represent' what people think, but also lead them and guide them. Leaders should help people on how to balance between long term gains and short term pains. Moreover, the elected leaders also respond to emergencies and crisis, and other needs of the people constantly. Leaders, indeed, try to do, more than what is their constitutional responsibility, which merely is to 'legislate'. They do like to serve, if for nothing, just to maintain their good standing among the people. For this reason also it is better to use the generic terms Leader and Leadership Councils.

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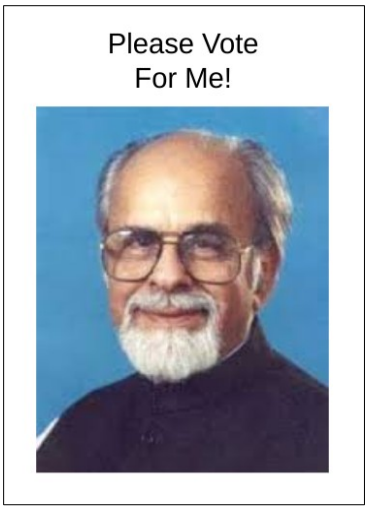
61. One of our concerns, as noted right in the beginning, is about EoP, i.e., ease of doing politics. Among other things, high EoP demands that the system should be simple and easy to use. We should ask, is eElections going to be as easy as the current system, with all its Nationwide Trust Bases, Multiple Votes per Voter, and Anytime Voting. The answer is yes, with the help of technology, it can in fact be even simpler. Technology is so powerful that it has got even the roadside vegetable vendors accept digital payments, four year olds play digital games or do e-learning, villagers send and forward Whatsapp messages to each other. We can make eElections system as easy as any of these to by using the power of technology.

62. Just as a driver of a car need not know all the complicated engineering and physics involved in making the car, users need not be aware of the philosophical or procedural or technological complexity of the system. All we need to do is provide a Mobile App with an easy to use interface. Within months of release of such easy-to-use app, people can be expected to get to use the system, or know at least one family member or friends who knows how to use it. People help each other on how to use the system, just as they help each other on how to use social media apps such as Whatsapp or productivity apps such as Google Pay or Google Maps. And for the benefit of those who cannot or do not want to use mobile App, we can provide an equivalent app that the e-Seva centers, or similar agencies authorized by the election commission can operate.

63. The job of Election Commission is to create a computer system to serve as the back bone of eElections system, in conjunction with or independent of the Aadhaar Card system. It should be built using as advanced and secure a technology as is used

in the Aadhaar Card system, eBanking systems or military systems. This system should serve as the back-end to the mobile App (or e-Seva App).

64. Any leader interested in building a Trust Base and becoming a member of the Leadership Councils, would register with this system, at one's own convenience, without a formal nomination process. Upon registration, the system would assign a unique Leader Identification Number (LIN) to the leader. Leaders can then print their own posters, leader cards (similar to visiting cards or business cards), etc., with their name, date of birth, photo, email, phone number, etc. and the LIN, and a QR code, which may look like the one shown below, which they can distribute to all the potential voters. No election symbols are needed in this system. For the sake of illustration, we use here the picture of Inder Kumar Gujral, former prime minister of India.



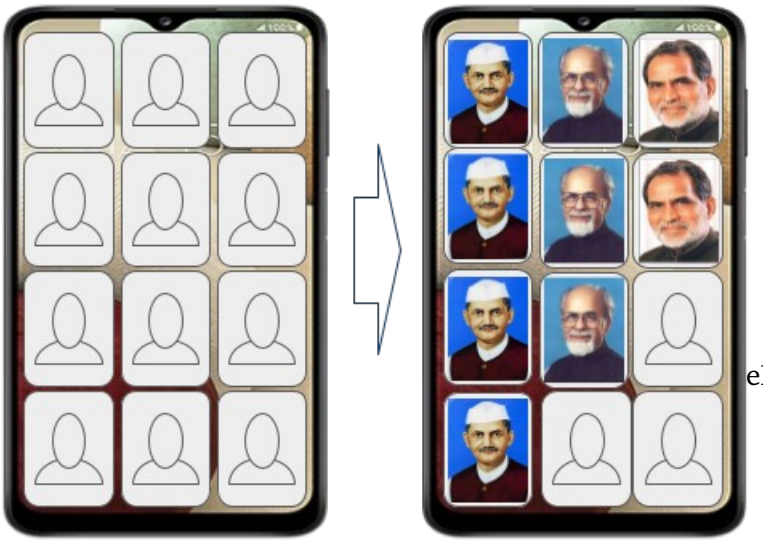
Leadership Card - Front



Leadership Card - Back

65. The registered voters, whenever they want to distribute or redistribute their votes would identify themselves with Aadhaar Card or Voter Id to the mobile App (or at the e-Seva app), and then authenticate with OTP or biometrics or both, as specified by the election commission. There is no scope for impersonation, or voting twice, in this system, and hence no need for the 'ink mark' on the finger either.

66. Once authenticated, the mobile App or e-Seva App shows a 3x4 grid that looks like the images shown below.



67. The image on the left shows a 3x4 grid with blank faces, as it appears to a first time voter. The image on the right shows the same 3x4 grid for a voter who has already distributed one's votes for some leaders. This images shows an example of a voter who has cast four votes to one leader, three votes to a second leader and two voters to a third leader, leaving three votes yet to be cast. (We chose the pictures of lesser known former Prime Ministers of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Inder Kumar Gujral and Chandrasekhar, for the sake of illustration.)

68. The voter can then press any of the twelve boxes, blank or already filled with the picture of a leader, and scan the QR code on the Leader Card of any other leader. If one wants to give another vote to the same leader, one would press another box on the grid and scan the same leader's card again. If one wants to give the third vote to a different leader, one would press another box and scan the Leader Card of another leader. One can fill or change all the twelve boxes, in the same manner, or one can leave some of them blank.

69. This system is so simple and straightforward, that no one can make a mistake. The grid is so simple and clear that one always can see and change one's twelve votes easily at any time and without ambiguity. Even if one makes a mistake and scans the wrong leader card or scans a card more or less than intended, they can always correct it by scanning the right cards again.

70. From the App users should be able to see the size of any leader's Trust Base and how it has been falling and raising over the time, similar to the chart of a stock. It should also show whether the Trust Bases is in the top 543 or not. They should be able to search for the leader using the name or date of birth or phone number or LIN or by scanning the Leader Card. The system should make the current and historical sizes of the Trust Bases of all leaders available to all major and minor web or news or similar outlets, while keeping the 'who voted to whom' a secret, as is true now.

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71. We have discussed the democracy and eElections thus far in reference to parliament, and more precisely, Lok Sabha. But the same is applicable to the state level legislatures and state level elections also. In fact, as far as the implementation of eElections goes, it should be tried in two states first, one where the same party as in the center is in power, and another, where a different party from the center is in power. Once we gain certain experience with the new model, and workout any legal, social and technological quirks that we might notice in that first phase of implementation, we shall implement it in other states and finally at the center, in phases.

72. The eElections model, as can only be expected may require a few amendments to the constitution, especially to articles 81, 82, 83, 325[4]. But, it is up to the constitutional experts to weigh in and draft all the major and minor amendments needed to implement this model.

* * *

73. With eElections, there will be no huge expenses to the political parties or the election commission every five years. The cost of democracy, as pointed out by ChatGPT, comes down. There will be no disturbance to the public life also. The once-in-a-five-year create an emotionally volatile environment every five years, causing riots and other disturbances and abetting polarization. All these incidental headaches will be a thing of the past with the eElections system. There are many other incidental benefits like these that ensue from the eElections system, for the public, voters, leaders, parties and the election commission of India.

74. Consider some of the issues faced by voters in the current system. What happens when a voter is away from their native place, on business or vacation or an occasion? They have to come back on the election day to their respective native places to vote. This causes unnecessary inconvenience to lakhs of voters in every election season. All that would be a thing of the past with eElections system. They can vote from anywhere with the mobile App or by walking into a e-Seva office anywhere. Similarly, what happens when a voter moves to a new place because of transfer or other reasons? The need to re-register in the new place as a voter gets added to one more chores of relocation, in the current system. No such re-registration is needed in the eElections system. Once registered in the system, they stay registered forever, unless they move out of the country and accept the citizenship of another country. eElections system also makes the lives of Indian citizens living abroad. They can just use the mobile App from wherever they are to vote in the elections. Voting from anywhere makes the lives of the nomadic tribes also easy.

75. Another issue in the current system is that someone who turns eighteen right after the election day has to wait for almost five years to exercise one's vote for the first time, which means an eligible voter could go without representation for almost five years, which does not certainly uphold the spirit of democracy (SoD). There is no such issue in the eElections system. Anyone who turns eighteen can register oneself in the eElections on the very same day, and distribute one's votes immediately.

76. One other interesting, but unaddressed problem is that of self-doubt. In the current system, many voters who come out of the polling booth after voting would wonder whether they have cast their vote to the intended candidate or to someone

4 Digital copy of the Indian constitution in English can be found at: https://www.iitk.ac.in/wc/data/coi-4March2016.pdf

else by mistake. Many wonder whether they have made a mistake that makes their vote invalid. There is no process for verification and to make sure no mistake is done, or recourse to correct a mistake if it is done. There is no such problem in the eElections system. The user can check hundred times if one wants before submitting the redistribution of votes. Since they can do it from home, there is no pressure, commotion, etc., around. This, in fact, gives time and scope for the voter to think logically before voting. Voters would never have to vote impulsively or emotionally. Even if they make a mistake, or change their mind, they can change their votes after sixty days.

77. 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 eElections model, with Anytime Voting, removes the need for such ineffective petitions, demonstrations, protests, and unnecessary violence and disturbances. 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, what is called 'Constructive Vote of No Confidence' in the political science circles[5], is built into the eElections system, which is a much better version of 'recall' process, which many of us dream about.

78. The eElections system is also much easier and smoother to run for the Election Commission compared to the current system. In the current System EC has to gear up a lot of resources, physical and human, borrowing them from other departments, to conduct an election. Governments have to deploy police force widely. The elections cause a disruption to many other government departments also. The eElections, once and for all, solves these problems. The main job of Election Commission would only be to maintain the eElections system. The work load of the EC will be evenly spread across the year and across the country. The current system is a high-cost, high-emotion and high-drama system. The public life, government policies and actions, legislation, etc. get disrupted every five years, for many months before the election, in the current system. All of that would be a thing of the past with the eElections system. The eElection system is also highly immune to the natural disasters. In the current system, elections have to be postponed, fully or partially, if a natural disaster strikes at the time of elections, such as a pandemic or floods. In the eElections system there are no such once-in-a-five-year elections. Every voter whose

5 See https://www.jstor.org/stable/26160090

mobile phone works can continue to distribute or re-distribute one's votes without an issue. In other words, eElections are even COVID-proof.

79. 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. Elections need to be conducted again in those constituencies, which is an added expense to the candidates, to the parties, and to the government as well. With Nationwide Trust Bases, someone contesting from multiple constituencies becomes a moot point. A leader can have his or her Trust Base spread over all the places where he or she has support.

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80. The eElections system also solves many of the problems faced by the political parties. Political parties, in the current system, have to go through a tedious, challenging and expensive process to win the elections and stay in power. Everything from selecting the candidates to raising funds to attracting voter base to keeping them loyal, involves a lot of time, effort and money. Even with all of that, the results, at the end, remain uncertain. The eElections model removes all of this complexity and uncertainty for the political parties. With the Trust Bases, it gives a path for any political party to develop itself slowly and steadily in a methodical manner. With Anytime Voting, party leaders can rise to power at any time without having to wait till the next election. Parties can also co-opt leaders who have already formed a stable Trust Base.

81. In the current model parties have to field only one leader per constituency, and the voters have to vote for or against that one leader. What if the voters like the particular political party but not the candidate fielded by the party in their constituency? In the current model, if not all, some might choose to vote for the candidate of another party. That would be a loss for the particular political party. The new model gives a better option to the parties to keep those voters. The parties no more have to field candidates constituency by constituency. In stead of *fielding* the candidates, parties endorse a list of candidates, say a couple of thousands to the Lok Sabha. Voters would have a large pool of leaders to choose from. They don't have to vote for candidates of other party. Thus the eElections model helps every political party retain all its loyal and even marginally loyal voters. And whichever leaders make to the top 543, will be the winning leaders.

82. Endorsing a large list of candidates also gives two more great advantages to the parties. One, it relives the political parties from the difficult exercise of picking the candidates, i.e., giving the 'tickets'. The exercise of giving 'tickets' is fraught with many challenges. Not only it is difficult to pick the right candidate, but it is also difficult to

assuage the leaders who did not get the ticket. They can turn against the party, or against the candidate who got the ticket, or provide only lukewarm support, weakening the party. In the new system, there is no 'giving tickets' exercise. Parties can just endorse all the potential and worthy candidates and challenge them to build their own Trust Bases. Parties can let the leaders grow or fall based on their own strength and merit. Two, this indirectly, compensates for the lack of internal democracy in the political parties. The leaders in the large list of candidates have to compete against each other to attract the voters. In stead of the party 'high command' taking the responsibility to decide who the best leaders are, it can let the voters decide who the best leaders are.

83. 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. The 'large list of endorsed candidates' solves this problem completely. Voters do not have to vote for a leader they do not like, just for the sake of staying loyal to the party. Thus the elected leaders in this system are liked by the party as well as the voters. This strengthens the party-voter relationship.

84. This eElections model also provides an elegant answer to another question that proved to be very difficult to answer for a long time, in spite of a lot of debate, constitutional provisions and amendments, and supreme court rulings. The question is, should a leader who switches from one political party to the other, lose his/her seat? In the eElections model the decision is left to the voters. If the voters feel that the switch is done for wrong reasons, they can simply withdraw their votes from the particular leader. If they think that the switch is done for the right reasons, they do not have to do anything. In the true spirit of democracy, voters will be the judges.

eDebates

85. In addition to and independently of the eElections, we should think of bringing the *parliamentary debates* also into electronic age. In this electronic age, there is no need for the members of the parliament to gather physically in one expensive place, and fight for a time slot to express their views. With the power of technology, they should be able to implement what we call 'eDebates', allowing the members to express and record their views, opinions and comments in as much detail as they want, without the limitation of time and without ever being shouted down by others.

86. The intention of the debates in the parliament is three fold. 1) Every member should be able to express his views about the proposed bill 2) All the members should be able to hear the views of all the other members. 3) Every member should be able to cast one's vote for or against the bill.

87. All these objectives can be met much easily and elegantly with eDebates. The mechanics are very easy to implement. First, we need to establish a robust bill registry. Every bill sponsored by anyone as per the procedure should be listed on that registry. Members of parliament should be given a deadline to post their views and comments on the bill, in text or video format. Members should be able to record their 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' for the bill. Members should be given the ability to update or change their comments or vote at anytime before the deadline. Technology wise, this is no different from what we do in social media posts, blogs and vlogs.

88. With eDebates, members need not have to fight for getting floor time. No one can shout down the other. No member need to cut short what they want to say because of limitation of available time. Every member can give as detailed a response as they like. They should be able to give even links to any reference material they want.

89. Certain guidelines and code of conduct can be set to make the comments meaningful and respectful. For example, members can be prohibited from commenting on the comments of the other members, or from using any sort of 'unparliamentary' language, and so on.

90. Currently discussions on bills are limited to a few hours, for want of time. With eDebates there needs to be no such limitation, and the discussions can be allowed to go even for months. The more sensitive or controversial a bill is, the more discussion it needs. We need the emotions on such issues to cool down. Nothing is as good as time in cooling down emotions.

91. With, eDabates people can read or watch the comments of any member on any bill at any time. Anyone should be able to search any time for the comments of any member or any bill with the name of the member, title or date or key words of the bill. A translation wing should be set up to translate the text, and to 'sub-title' or 'voice-over' the bills and comments.

92. Democracy will function better if people actually pay attention to the views and opinions of the leaders, especially those expressed in support or opposition of the bills. Once the eDebates registry is established, people will start referring to the bills and comments in public and private discussions, which puts the right kind of pressure on the members of the parliament to word their comments carefully.

93. Every child in every school should be introduced to the eDebates registry, just as they are introduced to the national anthem. This will bring immense change in the culture of democratic participation. It is enough even if half or one-third of the children catch on to the eDebates. If one out of two or three people refer to eDabates registry in their regular conversations, the others would come to know about it automatically.

94. We recommend that the eDebates are is implemented in a phased manner, just as eElections. eDebates should be piloted in two states to begin with, one where the political party in power at the center is in power, and another where a different political party is in power, and then be implemented in other states in a phased manner, and then finally at the center.

* * *

95. India may not be the pioneer in digital technology. But it definitely is, in putting digital technology into the service of people. The UPI system and the Aadhaar Card system, implemented by India, are the envy of the entire world today. We proved ourselves to be the leaders in using digital technology. Why not do the same with eDebates and eElections?

Clarifications

1. Why do we need to change the model established by the eminent members of the constituent assembly?

We are not changing, but improving. The members of the constituent assembly defined the first version. We are defining the next version. When the technology allows us to do things better or do better things, we must go for it. The members of the constituent assembly, if they were to come alive, would only be happy to see us make the democracy even better. They gave us the best model possible in those days of no Internet, no television channels, no mobile phones and no social media, and when commuting and communicating across lands was difficult. But its limitations or crippling the spirit of the democracy, as we have noted right at the beginning of this paper. Had they had the benefit of these advances at that time, they would have surely implemented this kind of eElections right then itself.

2. 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.

But these conditions do not match the reality. We need leaders for two reasons. First, the number of policy decisions are neither few nor simple. Many of them are nuanced involving intricate issues with long ranging implications. Just as we trust a doctor for making the right medical decisions, we need to trust a leader for making the right policy decisions.

Second, the role of leaders is not limited to policy making. As the term 'leader', implies, they 'lead' people, by bringing 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' we are bound to depend on some experts, or opinion leaders, such as talk show hosts, media personalities, and celebrities. As such they can sway people's opinion for or against a given policy. In other words, 'digital democracy' promotes 'unofficial leaders', who cannot be held accountable for anything. Rather, a better option is to make them official and hold them accountable. That is what the eElections model does, much more so than the current model.