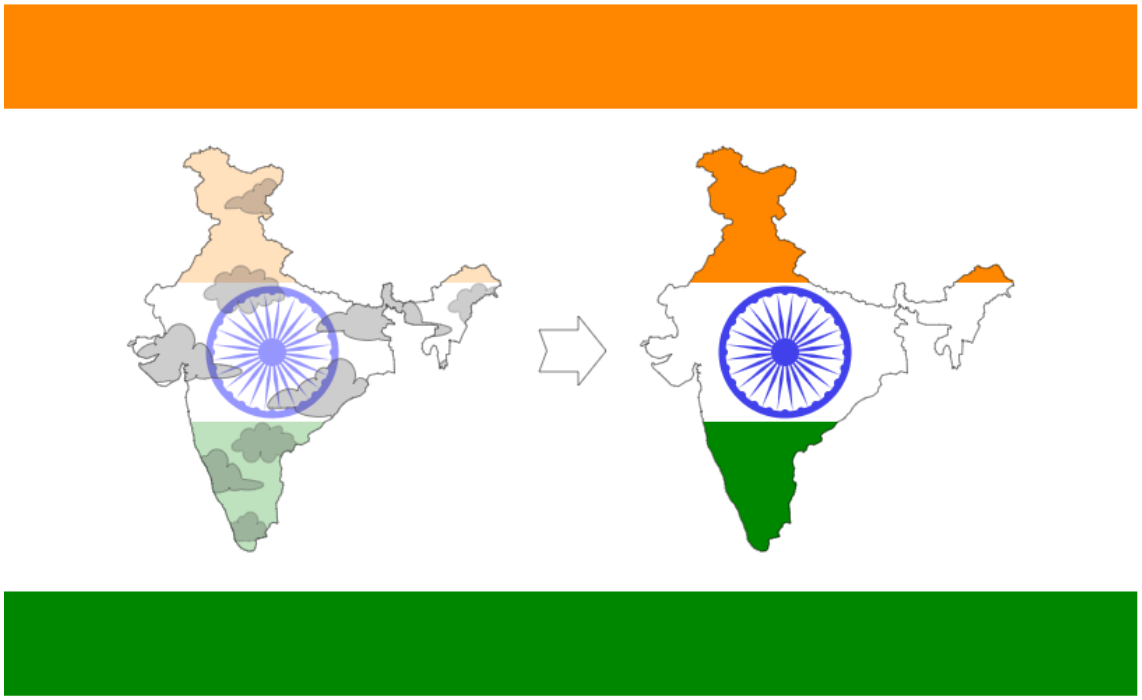
EPIC Reforms

Electoral • Political • Institutional • Constitutional



For Cleaner Politics, Better Governance,
Broad-based Representation
And Accelerated Development.

Thinking Beyond FPTP and PR,
Parliamentary, and Presidential Systems.

Introduction

We all dream of a Nav Bhart (New India) where:

- Politics is free from divisive rhetoric and governance is free from polarizing policies.
- Constitutional offices such as the President of India and the Chief Election Commissioner are truly independent and autonomous.
- Visionary leaders are in power, constantly opening up new vistas and championing causes for accelerated and equitable development.
- Principled leaders are in power, decisively dealing with vices such as corruption and nepotism.
- Committed leaders are in power, relentlessly working for the advancement of various communities and fields.
- The current ratio of some 70% politics and 30% leadership is flipped to 70% leadership and 30% politics.
- Every section of society—under SC, ST, BC, OBC, and other classifications— and even emerging groups such as transport workers, media professionals, sports enthusiasts and environmental activists are represented exactly in proportion to its numbers.
- Leaders and citizens work together on long-term solutions, beyond inducements, appeasements and freebies.
- Issue-based debates and merit-based legislation replace partisan debates and whip-driven legislation.
- Legislatures truly hold the executive accountable.
- Constructive collaboration replaces chronic friction between the Centre and the states, and between the executive and the judiciary.
- Local bodies focus on civic issues such as sanitation, property encroachments, and other local concerns, free from factionalism.

But over time, we have grown too cynical to believe that any of these can come true. Yet history inspires us to set aside that cynicism and seek solutions. The economic reforms of 1991 in India, 1978 in China, and 1994 in Brazil show that systemic change can transform a nation—indeed, dramatically.

Encouraged by these examples, we propose that transforming our democracy into an Organic Democracy—one whose structures reflect people's innate organizing tendencies more strongly than abstract theoretical frameworks do—can make our dream a reality.

In practical terms, this calls for a set of fundamental Electoral, Political, Institutional, and Constitutional reforms—**EPIC Reforms**, for short.

These reforms introduce structural innovations that move beyond constituency-based, first-past-the-post (FPTP) elections and even the oft-proposed proportional representation (PR) as an alternative; the dominance of political parties in the political system; the limitations of parliamentary system, or presidential system adopted by other democracies; and institute

entirely new structures to strengthen and safeguard the Constitution. More specifically, we propose:

- Adaptive Political System (APS) for national and state elections.
- Inculot model for local body elections.
- A Constitutional Steward to safeguard, nurture, and interpret the Constitution.
- Elevating the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas into Leadership Councils.
- Complete decoupling of the executive from the Leadership Councils (legislatures).
- Varishth Parishad, an apolitical body to appoint the holders of neutral constitutional offices.
- Enhancing the Preamble with an inspiring mission that energizes the nation.

Many of these innovations, admittedly, may well be world firsts, much like UPI. And it befits the world's largest democracy—already admired for its regular elections and peaceful transfers of power—to lead the world in democratic innovation.

With that context in place, we now turn to the details. In Part I, we present APS; in Part II, the Inculot model; and in Part III, the remaining innovations.

Part I

Adaptive Political System For National And State Legislatures

The common man instinctively knows much of the solution to addressing almost all the issues in the current system: put three types of leaders in power. Visionary Leaders—those who can provide a coherent vision and champion various causes. Committed Leaders—those dedicated to the advancement of various communities and fields. Principled Leaders—those who can deal decisively with vices such as corruption and nepotism.

Political scientists note that a few more conditions must also be in place for a democracy to function as intended. The system must be inclusive, with every section of society represented in power in proportion to its population. There should be a clear separation of roles and responsibilities among the three branches and the three tiers of government, with little scope for friction between them. Divisive rhetoric must be kept under check; decision-making should be pluralized, not polarized.

We add one more consideration: the system should be flexible and future-proof, capable of adapting to changing times, where issues regularly change, demographics continually shift, and sectors and fields constantly evolve.

We present a new system called the **Adaptive Political System (APS)**, designed with this broad set of considerations in mind. It is centred on two key reforms: **Delocalization** and **Pluralization** of leadership and representation.

Delocalization means removing the existing constituency boundaries, allowing leaders and voters from across the nation with shared interests to find one another.

Pluralization means allowing voters to elect multiple leaders, instead of just one, to represent their multiple concerns, needs, interests, aspirations, and ideals.

Delocalization expands voters' options, and Pluralization is an antidote to Polarization. Together, they work miracles in our political landscape, as we shall discuss in detail.

The blueprint of APS is simple and straightforward. We describe it here in terms of national elections, but it applies equally to state elections.

1. Ballots across the nation are identical, listing all candidates from across the country.
2. Voters are given multiple votes (say, twelve), which they may distribute among one, two, three, four, or more leaders in any proportion.
3. Candidates are ranked by the number of votes they receive, and the top 543 are elected to the Lok Sabha.
4. Legislators' voting power on the floor of the legislature is proportional to the number of votes they receive from the electorate—called Proportional Voting Power (PVP).

In place of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), APS uses a new class of voting machines called Advanced Voting Machines (AVMs), enabling voters to distribute multiple votes among multiple candidates. We will describe these in detail later.

The Transformation

Currently, the pathways to power are all but monopolized by political parties. It is nearly impossible for any aspirant to rise to power without joining one, giving up independence, and toeing the party line. Parties typically nominate leaders with local clout, money, and muscle—qualities considered necessary to challenge their opponents—who usually come from the rich and powerful sections of society. Vision, commitment, and principles are secondary. As a result, all three kinds of leaders people want—the visionary, the principled, and the committed—face a formidable entry barrier.

Delocalization opens the doors for them by demolishing these entry barriers. Leaders known for their vision, principles, or commitment to a cause or field can turn their followers, admirers, and supporters from across the nation into a pan-India voter base, without wasting energy on building local clout, cultivating party influence, spending enormous sums of money, or resorting to foul methods.

Voters too, with Delocalization freeing them from the "cages" of constituencies, can come together from across the nation to send all three types of leaders into power, enabled by Pluralization. Even a woman from an agricultural family in a remote village can elect one leader dedicated to farmers' issues, another committed to women's empowerment, another from her own community, and yet another known for tackling corruption. Similarly, a teacher from a Dalit community who is also Divyang can distribute her votes among leaders dedicated to Dalit upliftment, education, disability-related concerns, and perhaps even clean public toilets and toilets in trains.

Under APS, various caste groups under SC, ST, BC, OBC, and other classifications, as well as communities defined by religious Sampradayas and denominations, could send leaders of their own into power without the need for reserved constituencies or a caste-based census. Even emerging groups such as transport workers, migrant labourers, and media professionals—or, for that matter, any group with shared aspirations or concerns, such as sports enthusiasts or environmental activists—could send leaders of their own to represent them.

Under the current system, the winning candidate typically secures only about 35% of the total vote, yet goes on to represent the entire electorate of the constituency. This means that the remaining 65%—a clear majority—are represented by someone they did not vote for, or may even have voted against. In other words, a majority often feels unrepresented and, indeed, misrepresented, as their mandate is claimed by a candidate they neither chose nor supported.

With this happening in almost every constituency in every election, the country is, in a sense, under perpetual minority rule. In other words, a majority of voters is not aligned with the government, almost all the time. No wonder cynicism and resentment prevail among voters, and no wonder governments often hesitate to undertake bold initiatives and reforms.

There is no such problem under APS. Voters are represented only by leaders they themselves have chosen. Moreover, because voters elect multiple leaders, at least one or two of their preferred candidates are likely to get elected. Thus, they are represented at least partially,

if not fully, but are never misrepresented. No one can claim a mandate from voters who did not vote for them.

The most immediate and impactful transformation brought about by APS would be this: citizens already tired of corruption, criminality, and nepotism would send Principled Leaders into power by the dozens. In fact, even voters with other priorities would likely devote one or two, if not all, of their votes to Principled Leaders, thereby sending even more of them into power. Imagine how dramatically governance would change with a hundred—or even fifty—T. N. Seshans in positions of power!

The second major payoff of APS is that leaders dedicated to communities and fields can develop enduring relationships with their voter bases that transcend periodic elections. They would not fall off the "Top 543" list because of minor fluctuations in voter support (except perhaps the five or ten percent at the bottom of the list), and voters, in turn, need not worry about their preferred leaders losing power because of shifting political winds at every election. These enduring relationships would enable leaders and voters to build stronger bonds and focus on long-term solutions. Votes would no longer be traded for inducements or appeasements. Campaign expenses too would come under control, as organic and enduring connections—not money and muscle—determine the outcome.

Another major payoff of APS is continuity and stability in governance. Under the current system, uncertainty every five years over which party will come to power—and whether existing policies will continue—affects long-term planning not only by governments but also by businesses and individuals, impeding economic growth. Under APS, with no reasonably well-performing leader falling off the "Top 543" list, the composition of the legislatures would remain largely stable from one election to the next. Governments would therefore be less prone to abrupt policy reversals, the discontinuation of successful programmes, or the abandonment of projects midway through implementation.

Elections under APS would simply become opportunities to replace underperforming leaders with more promising ones, rather than high-stakes contests between political parties and a recurring source of uncertainty for citizens, businesses, and the nation.

The current system reduces elections to the national and state legislatures to local contests. As a result, local strongmen often fill these bodies regardless of whether they possess the vision, outlook, or appeal required to serve at those levels. India's progress in many sectors since Independence has been slower than it could have been because of the lack of consistent and competent leadership at the top. There are fewer star leaders in our collective memory than there should be. Farmers should be able to readily name the agriculture ministers who have shaped their future—yet today, few can.

Furthermore, the party hierarchy undermines the independence of the lower tiers of government. MPs and MLAs routinely encroach upon the statutory powers of local bodies. Turf wars among MPs, MLAs, and local leaders for local dominance make matters worse. When the same party is in power at the Centre and in the states, state leadership often gets overshadowed. When different parties are in power, friction prevails.

MPs and MLAs, who should welcome and collaborate in implementing the policies of the national and state governments, often dilute their implementation for fear of local resistance and channel the benefits of government programmes primarily to their party supporters.

APS puts an end to these problems. Under this system, leadership at the three levels becomes streamlined and independent of one another. Leaders with a national vision would be elected to the Lok Sabha, and those with a state-level vision to the Vidhan Sabhas, bringing the appropriate level of expertise and perspective to each body, while leaving local governance to leaders focused on local development. All three tiers would then be able to exercise their statutory powers without extraneous considerations such as party hierarchy or partisan interests.

With Delocalization, political parties themselves are likely to disappear sooner than later, as leaders would no longer need to join any party to get elected. With them would also disappear serious vices that disrupt social harmony, such as divisive rhetoric, vote-bank politics, and partisan polarization.

Even if parties do survive, they would become "less political" in the conventional sense. They would no longer need to find a candidate in each constituency who satisfies all sectarian equations and local political calculations. Instead, they could publish a nationwide (or statewide) endorsed list of all three kinds of leaders that people look for. Voters—party supporters as well as others—would then decide who is worthy among them. In fact, the "Endorsed Lists" compensate for the internal democracy that many political parties currently lack. Further, the choices of party supporters are not limited by the endorsed lists; they could also choose leaders not on the endorsed list.

The Endorsed Lists mechanism also benefits parties. At present, parties risk losing the support of internal factions when nominated candidates in constituencies are not acceptable to them. Endorsed Lists allow parties to include leaders from all factions, satisfying them all. Similarly, they can include moderates as well as radicals, newcomers as well as veterans, and let voters decide who among them is worthy of their vote.

Parties would, in effect, capture nearly all votes intended for them, distributed across multiple candidates. With Endorsed Lists and PVP, the ground-level support of a party would be reflected in the legislature more accurately. The current vote-share–seat-share mismatch—where one party is unduly elevated while another is penalized, thereby distorting the public mandate—would largely become moot.

Regardless of whether parties survive, become weaker, or disappear altogether, partisan politics would become weaker under APS—an important illustration of its transformative power. Pluralization is the anti-dote for polarization.

With Pluralization, voters would gradually move away from habitually or reflexively supporting the same leader or party regardless of performance. Instead, they would become accustomed to objectively evaluating and supporting the best leaders—even across multiple parties—based on who best serves their interests, which is, in fact, the ideal in a democracy.

Pluralization leads to an entirely new phenomenon: leaders and parties effectively "sharing" each individual voter and each other's voter bases. No party could afford to excessively demonize other parties with whom they share voters, as they would risk losing more support than they could gain. In this respect, the dynamic would resemble markets: banks, mobile phone carriers, and other service providers rarely bad-mouth competitors, since customers often engage with multiple providers and can switch or split services. In fact, they often cooperate in enabling customers to move their money or port their numbers to competitors.

With shared voters and overlapping voter bases, the traditional division between "treasury benches" and "opposition benches" begins to lose its meaning. All members, including those affiliated with parties, if any, would prioritise their solemn duty of representing their constituents and collaborate in a more cordial manner. They would elect broadly acceptable leaders—statesmen and stateswomen in the mould of Atal Bihari Vajpayee or P. V. Narasimha Rao—as heads of government.

Articles 75(3) and 164(2) of the Constitution would gain real force, as legislators backed by their own voter bases would be able to *hold the executive accountable* without fear or favour. Furthermore, dedicated to specific causes, communities, or fields, leaders would be able to closely scrutinise the departments and institutions of the executive relevant to them.

Politicians are broadly driven by five goals: Power, Prestige, Popularity, Profit, and Purpose. For one politician, one of these may be the primary motivation; for another, a different one may take precedence. Among the Five Ps, Profit is naturally the most troubling. No one should abuse the power of public office for personal gain. APS addresses this challenge in three ways.

First, by enabling leaders to build organic, long-term relationships with voters, APS reduces the role of inducements and favors in campaigning. There would be less need for leaders to "recover" their campaign expenses—one reason that pushes even service-oriented leaders to seek profit out of office. Second, by enabling leaders to connect directly with voters and reducing the relevance of political parties, APS all but eliminates the pressure to raise funds to run party machinery—another factor that pushes even the reluctant to seek profit. Third, and most importantly, APS enables principled voters to elect principled leaders who can serve as a check on the impulse among their peers to use public office for personal enrichment.

In essence, APS transforms the political landscape from the Five Ps to the Four Ps: Purpose, Power, Prestige, and Popularity. Power serves as the enabler; Prestige (vanity) and Popularity (fame) become incidental by-products for some and sources of personal gratification for others, while Purpose remains the noble motivation when it reflects a vision rather than an agenda.

Under the current system, a party with 300 legislators does not bring 300 minds to generate ideas and 300 pairs of eyes to scrutinize issues; it functions instead as one mouth and 299 echoes. The result is a tremendous waste of the nation's political talent.

Party rivalries often degenerate into acrimony that spills onto the floor of the legislatures. Opposition parties treat it as their solemn obligation to oppose everything the government proposes, regardless of merit. The ruling party, meanwhile, uses enforcement agencies to pressure opposition leaders into submission, as it does its own members in other ways.

Legislative debates become a farce, as no one expresses a point of view that deviates from the party line, and no one changes their mind after debate. Voting on bills becomes largely procedural, as any bill sponsored by the ruling party is passed under the party whip.

APS changes this entirely. It pluralises legislation that is currently heavily polarised. Backed by their own voter bases, leaders can express their genuine positions on any issue more objectively. They can vote on any bill, motion, or resolution without fear or favour.

Furthermore, in an ironic role reversal, nearly 99% of all legislation today is sponsored by the executive branch rather than the legislature itself. With APS, this would change. Members could meaningfully use the "Private Member Bill" provision to sponsor legislation related to the communities, causes, or fields they represent, making it mainstream.

Even more importantly, all concerns of the people—major or minor, affecting small or large sections of the population—would find representation in the legislature and receive due attention. Such community-, cause-, or field-oriented legislation would often pass unanimously, provided it does not adversely affect others, regardless of the PVP of the sponsor. Leaders, as the true art of politics demands, would need only to convince voters of their vision before the election and their fellow legislators afterward to make it a reality under APS, allowing good ideas to come to fruition in this model. They would be neither bogged down by apathy nor by political calculation.

Bills that do conflict with other communities, causes, or fields—for instance, infrastructure projects affecting the environment—would require collaboration among the sponsors. As already discussed, shared voters and overlapping voter bases would nudge leaders toward cordial and constructive cooperation in such situations. They would have no option but to arrive at a compromise that both sides can explain convincingly to their voter bases.

More importantly, contentious bills of this nature would no longer become partisan flashpoints, as they often do under the current system, where legislative and public debate is heavily polarised along party lines. Instead, under APS, discussions would be confined to the relevant members, while others would remain neutral and evaluate proposals and objections more objectively.

Because of Proportional Voting Power (PVP), some members would naturally hold greater voting strength in the legislature than others. One might wonder whether members with higher PVP could dominate the House; however, the mathematics itself provides a check. The combined PVP of the second- and third-ranked legislators is likely tox match or exceed that of the member with highest PVP, acting as a built-in counterweight.

Under the current system, the composition of legislatures depends heavily on the vote banks of the winning party. Even the combined strength of ruling and opposition parties may still fail to represent all sections of society. In contrast, APS guarantees a broad-based representation of all sections, as it enables every section to elect its own leaders.

Under APS, legislatures would evolve into "Leadership Councils." The Lok Sabha would become a true Lok Nayak Sabha. Meanwhile, the Rajya Sabha would continue to serve as the Rajya Pratinidhi Sabha, representing the distinct interests of the states. APS preserves the distinct character of the two Houses, unlike today, where Lok Sabha members are often

expected—formally or informally—to represent their respective states, contrary to the spirit of the Constitution.It may be worth considering officially renaming the Houses as Lok Nayak Sabha and Rajya Pratinidhi Sabha to more faithfully reflect the intent of the Constitution.

Under APS, it is also worth considering the abolition of nominated seats in the Rajya Sabha, with a corresponding increase in the strength of the Lok Sabha. APS enables people interested in fields such as the arts, sports, science, and culture to directly elect eminent personalities from those domains, making nomination unnecessary. A similar reform could be adopted in states with bicameral legislatures.

Likewise, APS also eliminates the need for separate constituencies for graduates and teachers in the states. Both groups, like all others, would be fully capable of electing leaders of their own. Their reserved seats in the Vidhan Parishads could therefore be abolished, with a corresponding increase in the strength of the Vidhan Sabhas.

APS also addresses one of the most contentious issues of our time: delimitation. Under the current system, states that successfully control population growth risk receiving less representation in the Lok Sabha relative to states that do not, due to delimitation exercises that redraw constituency boundaries to equalize population across constituencies. This is fair in one sense and unfair in another, simultaneously. It has, in practice, become a source of resentment among states that have successfully controlled population growth.

APS renders the entire debate—and indeed the issue itself—largely moot. Under APS, aspirants to the Lok Sabha would build pan-India voter bases spanning states with both high and low population growth. Lok Sabha members would no longer belong to any single state; they would draw legitimacy from a national electorate. They would assume a national identity, transcending their regional identities.

The Implementation

To enable voters to distribute votes among multiple leaders from thousands of candidates on the ballot, APS draws inspiration from e-commerce platforms, which provide an intuitive experience for users in quickly finding the two or three products they need from thousands of options. However, voting requires a far simpler and more foolproof experience for the average voter. We achieve this by replacing election symbols with **Leader Cards**, and EVMs with **AVMs (Advanced Voting Machines)**.

Instead of election symbols, the Election Commission of India (ECI), under APS, would assign each candidate a unique Leader Identification Number (LIN). Candidates would then design their own Leader Cards (similar to visiting cards), displaying essential details such as photograph, name, date of birth, LIN, party affiliation (if any), and a QR code, as shown in the sample.

Sample Leader Card



Vote For
Bharat Kumari

Front

LIN: IN34968475

Name: Bharat Kumari
DoB: 10-10-1970
Phone: 980XX 692XX
Party: XYZ

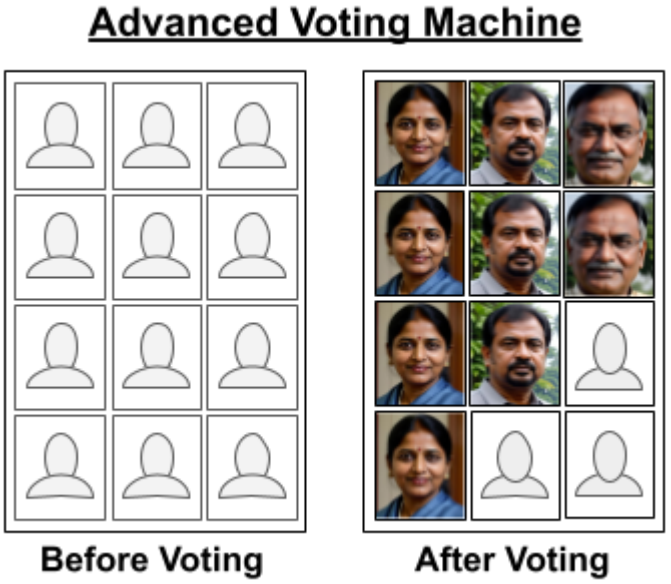
Contesting for
Lok Naayak Sabha

Back

Leaders would distribute these cards physically at public meetings and events, through volunteers, and digitally via websites and social media.

Voters could also obtain printed copies free of cost at local e-Seva centers, download them online, or request delivery by sending an SMS or WhatsApp message to the candidate or the ECI in the weeks and months leading up to election day.

On polling day, voters would carry their Leader Cards along with their voter ID to the booth. The AVM would feature a touchscreen with twelve empty slots arranged in a 3×4 grid, each slot representing one vote. A voter would select a slot, scan the QR code on a Leader Card, and instantly see the candidate's photograph displayed as confirmation. Voters would repeat this process until all votes are allocated. Mistakes could be corrected by reselecting a slot and rescanning the intended Leader Card.



The image here shows a voter allocating four votes to one leader, three to another, and two to a third, while leaving three votes uncast—a valid choice.

To ensure familiarity with AVMs, polling stations would provide dummy machines for practice, and mobile applications would allow voters to simulate the process in advance. Dummy AVMs could also be installed at e-Seva centers and other public locations. Tech-savvy family members, volunteers, and election workers could assist those less familiar with the system, ensuring accessibility across all age groups and backgrounds.

The ECI and others could create instructional videos explaining the AVM-based voting process and post them on social media. Television channels could also broadcast these videos as a public service, while increasing viewer engagement. The same content could be displayed in public spaces such as railway stations and bus stations. Cinema halls, restaurants, and other establishments could also play these videos on their digital displays to inform and engage their customers.

AVMs would also include an interface tailored for mobile-savvy younger voters, closer in experience to e-commerce platforms, where candidates can be searched by name, LIN, or phone number, and votes cast directly.

Since AVMs would be identical across the country or state—each containing the full list of candidates—APS enables delocalized voting. ECI can let voters vote at any polling station in the nation (or state in state elections) using voter authentication systems already developed for Remote Voting Machines (RVMs).

This would significantly benefit migrant workers, nomadic communities, and others living away from their primary residence for work or other purposes. Even voters who are in their native place could choose to cast their ballots at a polling station a few kilometers away from home to avoid potential pressure or influence from local political actors and prying eyes.

The Ultimate Payoff: Organic Democracy

The top layer comprises the party's top leaders—sometimes a syndicate, sometimes a supremo and his or her team. When the party comes to power, this layer becomes the Executive. The middle layer consists of local strongmen who command influence within their constituencies. They become legislators—MPs and MLAs. The bottom layer consists of party cadres. Some are elected to local bodies, while others remain party functionaries, acting as the bridge between the party and the people.

Under the current system, power is concentrated largely in the Executive. Legislators possess relatively little formal power, with their role mostly limited to debates and voting in legislatures. Even that limited power is reduced to almost nothing by the prevailing practice of party-line voting.

Yet many aspire to become MPs and MLAs. Why? The reason is organic. Just as artists, engineers, musicians, writers, and traders form distinct classes of society, politicians do as well. Humans naturally aspire to rise to the top and attain recognizable positions that affirm their standing. In this process, what emerges is a Leadership Pyramid consisting of second- and third-tier leaders.

Becoming an MP or MLA may not provide significant statutory power, but it provides access to power—the Executive and the decision-makers—which is the next best thing. The entire pyramid serves as a ladder through which ordinary citizens, businesses, social organizations, and others can gain access to that power.

This pyramid serves an essential role in helping ordinary citizens and businesses—small, medium, and large—navigate the labyrinth of procedures, some well-defined and others dysfunctional, as well as the bureaucracy. In many cases, these leaders serve as substitutes for the missing "single-window" systems that are difficult to formalize and that governments often fail to establish. The more dysfunctional the system, the greater the need for such intermediary services. They are not always about bending rules or using the back door, although sometimes they are.

A young, energetic, upcoming politician from the South recently made a revealing remark: “There would be no need for us if only the police, the judiciary, the revenue, and the media did their jobs properly.” But, at the same time, being young, he understandably understated the broader role of leaders in society. Strong leaders do more than resolve institutional failures. They respond during emergencies and crises, bring people together during ordinary times, and provide a sense of connection, comfort, and support. What may appear to be a political leadership pyramid is, in reality, a social leadership pyramid.

What reduces this rich social leadership pyramid into a mere political leadership structure is party culture. Young politicians like the one quoted above often enter politics with the intention of serving people. But soon, for recognition, survival, and growth, they must join a political party and end up serving, to a large extent, the party hierarchy. Instead of standing

firmly on the trust of their people, they become dependent on the patronage of those above them.

This uneasy dependence distorts the natural balance between leadership and politics—from what should be 70% leadership and 30% politics into the prevailing 70% politics and 30% leadership.

APS strikes this problem at its root by making political parties less relevant. Leaders, along with the entire pyramid beneath them that they built—or the one they climbed through to reach the top—stand on the trust of their own voter bases, which may rightly be called "trust bases."

Leaders prove their mettle in two ways: first, by growing and sustaining the Leadership Pyramid; second, by making it serve people's needs and maintaining their trust. Here lies an interesting conundrum. Given how dysfunctional and chaotic the system is, most requests they receive relate to immediate needs. Very few people approach leaders for long-term solutions. This creates a serious challenge for leaders who want to bring transformational change.

An ex-MLC representing a teachers' constituency made an illustrative point. He chose not to seek a second term, frustrated by the volume of requests related to teacher transfers and the release of pension funds—issues that consumed his energy—while finding little interest among constituents in the broader vision for education and teaching that he wanted to pursue.

his is a serious problem. It effectively drives many leaders with vision and purpose away from politics, except for the few who manage to rise to the top layer. The nation loses a significant pool of talent and ideas as a result.

However, in the larger scheme of things, the issues that frustrated the ex-MLC are also legitimate needs of people that deserve attention. Leadership needs to be not only visionary but also responsive. But this does not mean both should be provided by the same leader. APS makes it flexible by creating space for Visionary Leaders like that ex-MLC, alongside Responsive Leaders who focus on the immediate needs of constituents.

Through Delocalization, APS enables both types of leaders to gain support: Visionary Leaders by presenting their vision, such as improving the efficiency and quality of teaching, and Responsive Leaders by being transparent about their focus on addressing immediate needs, such as transfers. Through Pluralization, it enables voters to choose whichever type of leader they prefer—or even both.

The demand for both Responsive Leadership and Visionary Leadership will always exist. People always ask: "Help me today. Fix tomorrow." Together, these two demands keep the system in balance, preventing the pendulum from swinging too far in either direction: toward an obsession with perfecting every process or toward neglect that leads to institutional decay.

However, under the current system, the demand for Visionary Leadership is not adequately met. Systemic barriers discourage visionary leaders from entering or remaining in politics, allowing institutions to deteriorate and become increasingly dysfunctional. As a result, the demand for Responsive Leadership rises sharply, masking the unmet demand for Visionary Leadership. This, in turn, shifts the political focus toward appeasement and freebies, hurting

both our ethical and fiscal health—the former evident to all, the latter apparent to the far-sighted.

Systems eventually correct themselves. India's 1990–91 economic crisis, for example, left the nation with little choice but to undertake fundamental reforms. But with APS, we need not wait until things spiral out of control. It creates space for Visionary Leadership to restore fiscal discipline and institutional health to a sustainable equilibrium—and to prevent the system from drifting too far away from it again.

At a deeper level, this reveals something fundamental. While the official governance structure remains Executive + Legislature, the actual operating structure is Executive + Leadership Pyramid. The former is based on political science theory; the latter reflects the organic needs and perceptions of the people.

People do not care whether a rule they have to follow comes from a government order, a law, or a court judgment; they are happy if it is meaningful and unhappy otherwise. Therefore, voters care less about the leaders' legislative role and more about their access to decision-makers and their ability to get things done. Children care more about mom getting permission from dad than about how it is done.

Our democracy will function better when its structures align with people's perception of power and leadership. Any gap between the two weakens the system and leaves people lost. APS achieves this alignment without constitutional amendments or a formal structural change from Executive + Legislature to Executive + Leadership Pyramid. It simply enables people to elect "their own" leaders to address "their own" problems, which may go beyond leaders' statutory responsibilities, including their legislative role. This is why we earlier recommended rechristening Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas as Lok Nayak Sabhas, or Leadership Councils.

However, we would not recommend the same for the Leadership Pyramid, because its essential nature is not to execute constitutional responsibilities—as administrative machinery does through secretaries, collectors, and other officials—but to respond to people's needs and reflect their concerns, even before those concerns are fully articulated.

The Constitution currently views the Leadership Pyramid, if at all, primarily as a feeder mechanism for producing MPs and MLAs. APS seeks to help people recognize and value its richer role—as the eyes, ears, and limbs of society, embedded within society itself. That is what makes democracy organic. More on this in Part III.

Part II

Inculot Model for Local Bodies

APS is designed to improve the political and governance structure at the national and state levels. Politics and governance at local bodies too need improvement to broaden representation and accessibility to power for all communities. For this, we propose a new electoral model called the Inculot Model. “Inculot” is a coined term combining the words *incumbent* and *lottery*.

Under the Inculot Model, incumbents would not secure re-election merely by obtaining the highest number of votes—a feat incumbents could achieve by fragmenting the opposition. Hence we impose an additional condition under this model, that they must secure a higher overall vote percentage than they did in the previous election, proving that the public truly wants them back. If the incumbent fails to meet this benchmark, they are disqualified, and a new leader is selected by lottery from among the top three remaining candidates.

The underlying philosophy of this model is straightforward: Chance will favor individuals from all communities with leadership qualities, and demonstrated performance assures reelection. This model addresses several persistent problems in local politics.

First, candidates would no longer need to chase every marginal vote through excessive spending, coercion, or aggressive tactics, since the final outcome among the leading challengers would depend on the lottery. For the same reason, vote-bank politics and polarization lose their leverage and appeal.

Second, the influence of money, muscle power, inherited privilege, and entrenched social dominance would be significantly reduced, since any candidate capable of securing enough support to reach the top three would stand an equal chance of victory.

Third, anyone seeking to maintain influence or continued access to power would have greater incentive to maintain good relationships with all potential contenders, rather than attempting to dominate them through bitter electoral conflict. This could significantly improve the overall political atmosphere, which often damages the social fabric of rural communities.

Fourth, leaders from smaller or less dominant communities would stand on far more equal footing with candidates backed by numerically or socially dominant groups. Likewise, capable but modest individuals would stand a realistic chance alongside more aggressive or politically entrenched contenders.

Fifth, contestants would be spared the lasting stigma of outright electoral defeat—an especially important consideration in close-knit local communities. This could reduce the tendency of candidates to gamble away personal fortunes, intensify social hostilities, or resort to intimidation and brute force merely to avoid humiliation at the polls.

Part III

Constitutional and Institutional Reforms for Addressing Broader Issues

This section is under construction.
The full version will be available soon, at
reformbharat.org/epic-reforms.

This section will discuss deeper issues beyond APS and Inculot:

- Mechanisms to preserve the independence of offices such as the President of India and the Chief Election Commissioner, ensuring that they remain genuinely powerful and apolitical. We need a clearer separation between the legislature and the executive.
- A steward of the Constitution—an individual or institution dedicated to preserving the spirit of the Constitution, continually upgrading it to fill gaps as and when they are discovered, and, when necessary, acting as a trusted arbiter in disputes among the branches of government.
- A symbolic figure, custodian, and voice for the soul of the nation—larger and more enduring than the political system or the machinery of governance.
- Reframing the Preamble of our Constitution to offer a more inspiring and motivating mission for the nation—one that helps us overcome the challenges we face today and seize the opportunities that tomorrow presents, rather than merely highlighting the basics. Ensuring the basics without setting a higher goal and purpose is like ploughing a farm without sowing seeds for a crop, allowing weeds to take over—which is precisely what the country has been suffering from since independence.