

Overseas Voters in Election

Why in News?

According to recent Election Commission data, there was a poor electoral participation of overseas Indian voters in 18th Lok Sabha polls in 2024.

- **Overseas voters** - Generally, they are referred as NRI voters but Election Commission of India describes them as overseas electors.
- NRI's are Indians living abroad for a variety of reasons and
- **Voting rights** - They are eligible to vote in the Lok Sabha, Assembly and other direct elections.
- They have to show their original passport as proof of their identity.

*According to Election Commission of India, while eligible Indian citizens who enrol in electoral rolls are called **electors**, those who actually exercise their franchise are described as **voters**.*

Overseas Voters in 18th Lok Sabha Election

- **Increased registration** - Overseas Indians showed great enthusiasm in registering as electors, with nearly 1.2 lakh enrolling in the voter list.
- According to the data released by the Election Commission, as many as 1,19,374 registered as overseas electors in 2024, with Kerala witnessing the highest registrations at 89,839.
- In 2019, as many as 99,844 had registered as overseas electors.
- **Minimal turnout** - Only 2,958 overseas electors flew down to India to participate in the largest democratic exercise in the world.
- **Higher participation** - 2,670 were from Kerala alone.
- **Zero turnout** - Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu among larger states and Assam, Bihar, Goa among smaller states.
- **Cause for lower turnout** - Travel costs, compulsions of employment overseas, and education, among other things.
- **Recommendations** - In 2020, the EC proposed to extend the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) facility, so far available only to service voters, to eligible overseas Indian voters as well.

In 2018, the 16th Lok Sabha passed a bill to allow proxy voting rights to eligible overseas Indians but it could not be brought to the Rajya Sabha.

Reference

[The Hindu| Reduced Voter Participation of Overseas Electors](#)

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