

Proportional Representation

There are three types of Proportional Representation systems or PR electoral systems that are as follows:

- Single Transferable Vote (STV)
- Party-list PR
- Mixed-member proportional representation (MMP)

We have discussed the forms of proportional representation below in detail.

Proportional Representation By Single Transferable Vote

Single Transferable Vote (STV) is also known as the Hare system after one of its English developers named, Thomas Hare. The single transferable vote allows a voter to rank his/her candidate in order of preference, i.e., by providing backup references and casting only one vote. As the candidates qualify a specific electoral quota, they are elected, and their surplus votes are apportioned to the remaining candidates until all the open seats are filled.

STV enables voters to choose the most preferred candidate of the party and vote for independent candidates.

List System of Proportional Representation

Party List PR is a type of Proportional representation where the political parties define the candidate list, and voters vote for a list. The list can be closed or open. The open list allows voters to indicate individual candidate preferences and vote for independent candidates. The voting districts in Party List PR can be small or large or even an entire country.

Multiple candidates are elected through their position on an electoral list in the List system of Proportional Representation. For example, in an election, if the assembly has 500 seats to be filled, then every voter would vote for the list created by their favorite party. Under party list PR, every party obtains a number of seats that is proportional to the share of the popular vote.

Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMP)

Mixed member proportional representation (MMP) is also known as the Additional Member System (AMS). MMP is a two-tier mixed electoral system that combines local non-proportional plurality/majoritarian elections with compensatory regional or national party list PR elections. Voters have two votes, one for their single-member district and the other for the party list.

Practice of Proportional Representation in India

Proportional Representation is practiced on a limited scale in India. For instance, for the election of members of Rajya Sabha, President, Vice President, proportional representation system is practiced. In all these examples of proportional representation, the candidate is elected through the

single transferable vote system. Below you can check in detail how proportional representation is used in India.

Proportional Representation in the Election of President

The President of India is elected through the PR system with a single transferable vote (STV), where a secret ballot system is used to elect the President. The electoral college, which consists of the Legislative Assemblies of the States, Council of States, and members of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, elects the Indian president through a proportional representation system utilizing an STV.

- The number of votes is calculated by dividing the total number of valid votes cast by the number of candidates who are to be elected plus one and another plus one to the result. In this case, only one candidate will be elected as president.
- The formula to calculate the votes for the election of President by STV is as follows:

$$\text{Electoral Quota} = \frac{\text{Total number of valid votes polled}}{1+1=(2)} + 1$$

- As each electoral college in proportional representation is given only one ballot paper. Therefore, the voter indicates his/her preference by marking 1, 2, 3, and so on against the name of the candidate.
- The first preference vote is counted in the first phase of proportional representation. He is elected if the candidate wins the necessary quota in this phase. If not, then the vote transfer method is used.
- Candidates who receive the least first preference votes are considered invalid, and the second preference vote is then transferred to the first preference votes of other candidates.
- The same procedure is repeated till the time the candidate gets the required quota in proportional representation in the election of the President.

Single Transferable Vote System in Rajya Sabha

One of the best examples of a single transferable vote system in proportional representation is the Rajya Sabha elections.

- In Rajya Sabha elections, through proportional representation, the members are chosen by the respective state legislatures, as each state has a set number of seats in Rajya Sabha.
- MLAs are elected by the voters of that state. Each voter ranks the candidates in preference.
- In order to emerge as a winner in proportional representation through STV, a candidate must obtain a certain number of votes that is determined through the formula that is given below:

$$(\text{Total Number of Votes Polled/Total number of candidates to be elected} + 1) + 1$$

For example, if 400 MLAs in Haryana have to elect four Rajya Sabha members, the winner would need $(400/4+1= 100+1)$ 101 votes.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Proportional Representation

Proportional representation in Indian Polity is used to elect representatives in multi-member constituencies and remove the flaws in territorial representation. It aims to provide representation for all the interest groups in the community. PR system tends to offer a better chance of representation to the smaller political parties and groups. However, the proportional representation system has got few advantages and disadvantages as well that we have listed below.

Advantages of Proportional Representation

Proportional representation tends to avoid the anomalous results of plurality/majority systems. It gives better clarity on the representative legislature. The advantages of proportional representation are as follows.

- PR gives a true reflection of popular votes as every vote is counted and reflected in the result. Thus, less number of votes are wasted, and people's choice is considered.
- PR electoral system provides equal representation for all interest groups in a community as it ensures that every group gets to elect the leader that they want to be.
- It further is democratic in nature. Every member is allowed to participate in it, thereby emphasizing the leadership of the people.
- Another advantage of the proportional representation system is that it protects the minority of the country. It protects the interest of the minority who cannot influence the government through their less population.

Disadvantages of Proportional Representation

Proportional Representation tends to dilute the relationship between the voter and the candidate, as the candidate may now be seen as representing the party and not the constituency. The disadvantages of proportional representation are as follows:

- A major drawback of the PR system is that it is a way too complicated form of election. It gets difficult to understand its structure since all the groups in society are led by different people or political parties.
- It is expensive in nature as it becomes costly to operate. A majority of the amount and resources cannot be utilized to conduct elections.
- Proportional representation leads to political instability. This is so because a lot of political parties often make efforts to supersede their opposition and take full authority. Furthermore, the inability of different political parties to win the majority in the legislature also lead to the formation of a coalition government.
- Political parties often make manipulation, making it difficult for the voters to assess them before voting.

First Past The Post System

First Past the Post is a type of territorial representation method of the voting system. The Indian Constitution has adopted proportional representation in Rajya Sabha elections but not in the election of members of the Lok Sabha. In First Past the Post or FPTP, a candidate who receives the majority of votes from a constituency wins the seat. Thus, FPTP is also known as a simple majority system. It is used in direct elections of the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

FPTP is simple to understand. It allows the voters to have clarity as to which party to vote for that will form a government. FPTP is comparatively less expensive than the proportional representation system. The counting of votes is done quickly, which simplifies the declaration of the results.

FPTP vs Proportional Representation

As per the discussion, both First Past the Post (FPTP) and Proportional Representation (PR) have their own advantages and disadvantages. FPTP is more stable, while proportional representation is a more representative form of election. Thus, it can be proposed that the countries can follow a hybrid pattern combining elements of both direct and indirect elections. To give you a border knowledge of FPTP and PR system, you can find out the major differences between the two below in the table.

FPTP	Proportional Representation (PR system)
A candidate who gets one vote more than the other candidate in a constituency is a winner in First Past the Post (FPTP) system. It is also known as the simple majority system.	Proportional representation (PR) is a political system in which the number of seats won by a political party or group should be proportionate to the number of votes received, i.e., seats are assigned as per the number of votes received.
In FPTP, the division of the country is done into geographical units known as constituencies.	In the PR system, the large geographical areas are said to be known as constituencies.
First Past the Post is used in direct elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.	Proportional representation is used to elect the President of India, Vice President, members of the Rajya Sabha, etc.
Votes are cast for candidates in FPTP.	Votes are cast for the party in PR system.