

Election Expenditure per Elector up by Twenty Times in 2009 Compared to First General Elections

General Elections are held to elect representatives for Lok Sabha after normally, every five years. Every election requires a huge amount of resources and efforts, be it planning, labour, technology, and for that matter, money. From the first Lok Sabha Elections in 1951-52 till the fifteenth in 2009, it has been a long journey for democracy. Government's expenditure on an elector has gone up manifold, twenty times to be precise, from the first General Elections to the Fifteenth General Elections. In the first elections, the Government spent Rs 0.60 on an elector whereas it went on spending Rs 12 in 2009 General Elections. Considering expenditure in absolute terms, Rs 10.45 Crore were spent in 1951-52 whereas Rs 846.67 Crore was the amount the Government spent for 2009 General Elections.

Cost wise, 2004 General Elections was the heaviest on government exchequer with about Rs 1114 Crore spent in the elections. This was the elections when per elector cost was also the highest. Government spent Rs 17 on an elector. Significantly, there was increase in the election cost by 17.53% vis-à-vis 1999 General Elections even when there was reduction in number of polling stations by 11.26%.

In first Six General Elections, cost per elector was less than a rupee, but coming elections saw rapid growth in Election Expenditure. Keeping devaluation of money owing to inflation into account, the rise in cost could be attributed to increased level of democratic activities. Many political parties started into being; more independents were now participating. Various voter-friendly initiatives like voter awareness campaigns, distribution of voter slip ahead of election date, use of Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) for the first time in General Elections 2014, may increase expenditure further but these efforts are focused at strengthening the very structure and values of democracy.

It may be known that the entire expenditure on actual conduct of elections to Lok Sabha is borne by Government of India. But expenditure towards law & order maintenance is born by respective State Governments.

Election Expenditure by Central Government for all fifteen Lok Sabha Elections is as follows:-

Year	Expenditure (In Cr Rs)	No of Electors	Expenditure per elector (In Rs)	Polling Station
1952	10.45	17,32,12,343	0.6	1,96,084
1957	5.9	19,36,52,179	0.3	2,20,478
1962	7.32	21,63,61,569	0.3	2,38,031
1967	10.8	25,02,07,401	0.4	2,43,693
1971	11.61	27,41,89,132	0.4	3,42,918
1977	23.04	32,11,74,327	0.7	3,73,910
1980	54.77	35,62,05,329	1.5	4,36,813
1984-85 \$	81.51	40,03,75,333	2	5,06,058

1989	154.22	49,89,06,129	3.1	5,80,798
1991-92 #	359.1	5,11,533,598	7	5,91,020 *
1996	597.34	59,25,72,288	10	7,67,462
1998	666.22	60,58,80,192	11	7,73,494
1999	947.68	61,95,36,847	15	7,74,651
2004	1113.88	67,14,87,930	17	6,87,402
2009	846.67	71,69,85,101	12	8,30,866

* Excludes J&K in 1991-92

1989 to 2009 General Elections' Expenditure figures are provisional

\$ Elections were held separately for States of Assam & Punjab in 1985

Elections were held separately for State of Punjab in 1992

(Source: Ministry of Law and Social
Justice & ECI website)