



Strengthening People's Participation

Impact and Policy Conference
Bangkok, Thailand
August 30, 2012

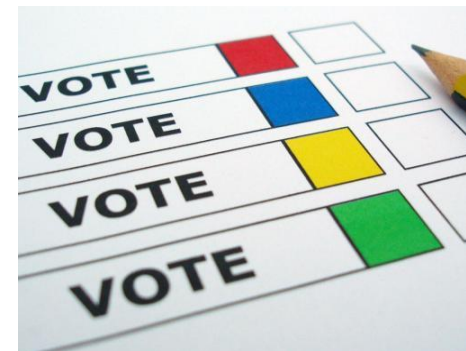
Dr S.Y. Quraishi

Former Chief Election Commissioner of India

Presentation Outline



- ❖ Election Commission of India (ECI)
- ❖ Role and success of democracy
- ❖ Top issues in elections and election reform
- ❖ Electoral Participation
- ❖ ECI Initiatives
- ❖ Areas for future research





- ❖ India is the world's largest, diverse democracy
- ❖ ECI is an autonomous, constitutional authority responsible for administering free, fair and peaceful elections
- ❖ ECI superintends, directs and controls all elections to parliament and the state legislatures



Officials checking EVMs and polling materials



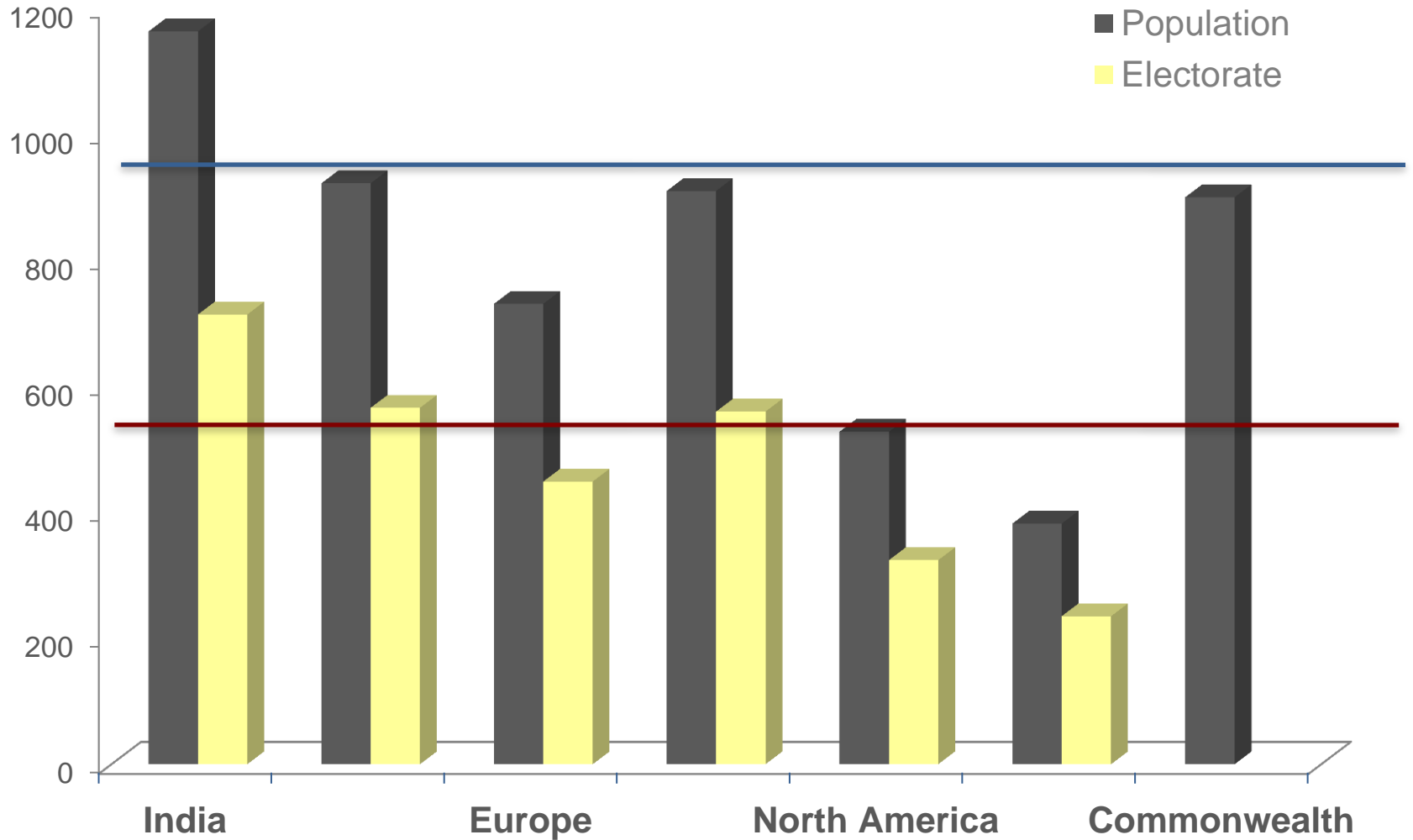
Indelible ink being marked on elector's finger

The Electorate



		Population	Electorate
❖ Entire Europe (50 Countries)	-	731 m	449 m
❖ Entire Africa (54 Countries)	-	922 m	566 m
❖ North America (41 Countries)	-	528 m	324 m
❖ South America (15 Countries)	-	382 m	235 m
❖ N&S. America (56 Countries)	-	910 m	560 m
❖ India	-	1,163 m	714 m

India's Unparalleled Electorate





❖ Key Issues concerning Indian citizens today:

- Poverty
- Development
- Health
- Employment
- Corruption



Is Democracy making a difference?



YES....

- ❖ Democracy has arguably led to improvements in:
 - All round development
 - Literacy
 - Health – IMR/MMR reduction
 - Nutrition
 - Agriculture/Irrigation
 - IT

Is Democracy making a difference?



Yes, and No....

- ❖ There have also been simultaneous increases in -
 - Casteism & Communalism
 - Ethnic divides
 - Parochialism
 - Corruption & Criminality
 - ➔ ***Paradox of elections***

Key Issues in Elections and Election Reforms



- ❖ Voters' proactive participation
- ❖ Money control
- ❖ State funding in elections
- ❖ Accountability of elected representatives
- ❖ Financial transparency
- ❖ Internal party democracy



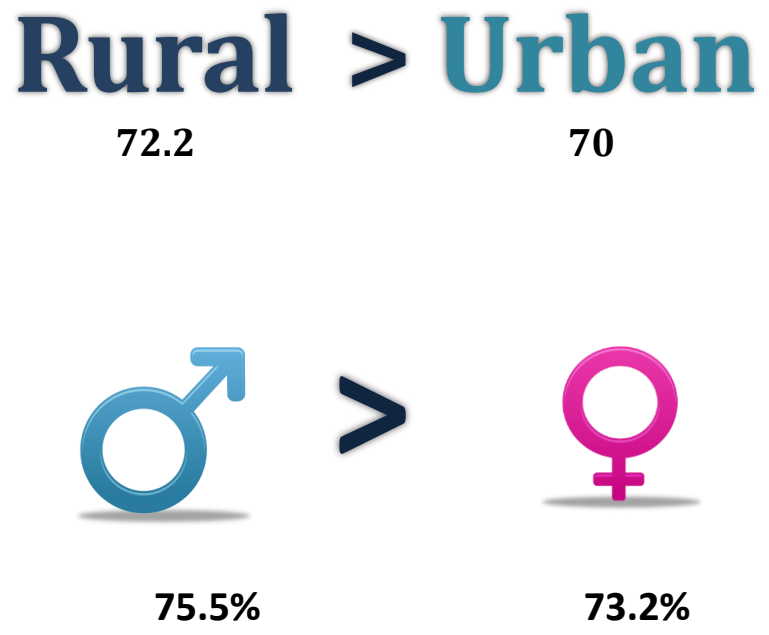
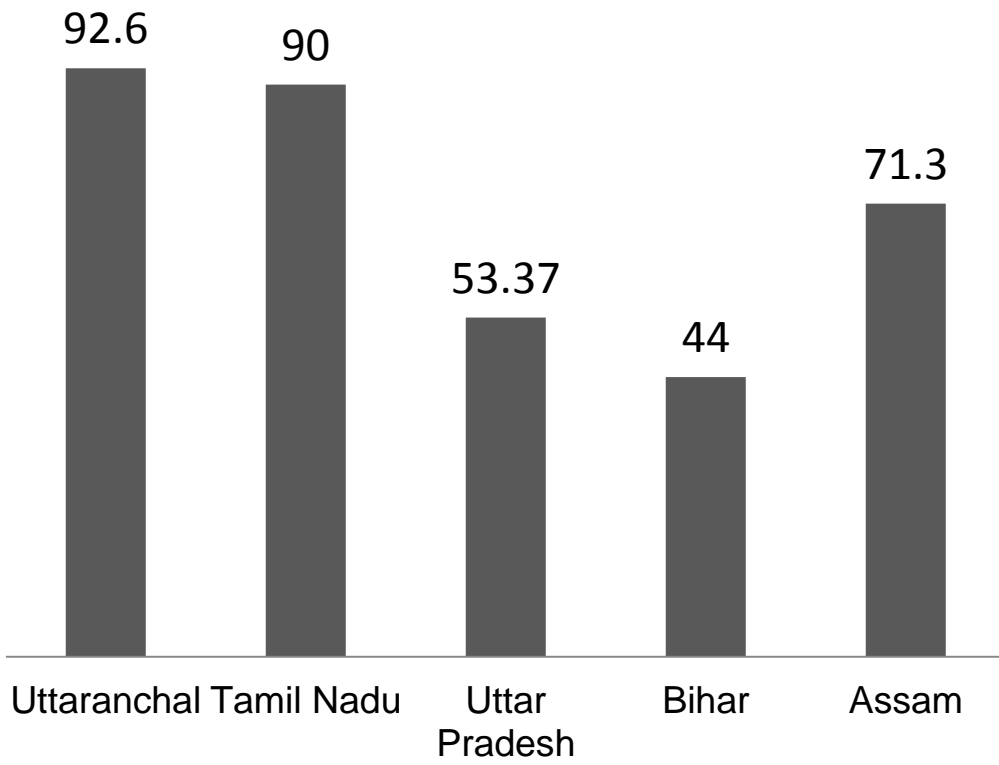
DEMOCRACY



KABP Survey: Voter Registration and Turn out

- ❖ Overall, 9% of the Indian electorate, 75 million people, are not registered
- ❖ Wide disparity in turn-out figures between states, urban vs rural areas

- ❖ Turn-out is lower among women, urban areas, especially urban youth



KABP Survey: Voter Registration and Turn out

Reasons for not Registering

❖ The most important constraint is lack of documents for registration.

Lack of Valid Documents	28.24
Lack of time	27.12
Don't know how to get registered	26.63
Don't want to register	23.17
Process very difficult	21.02

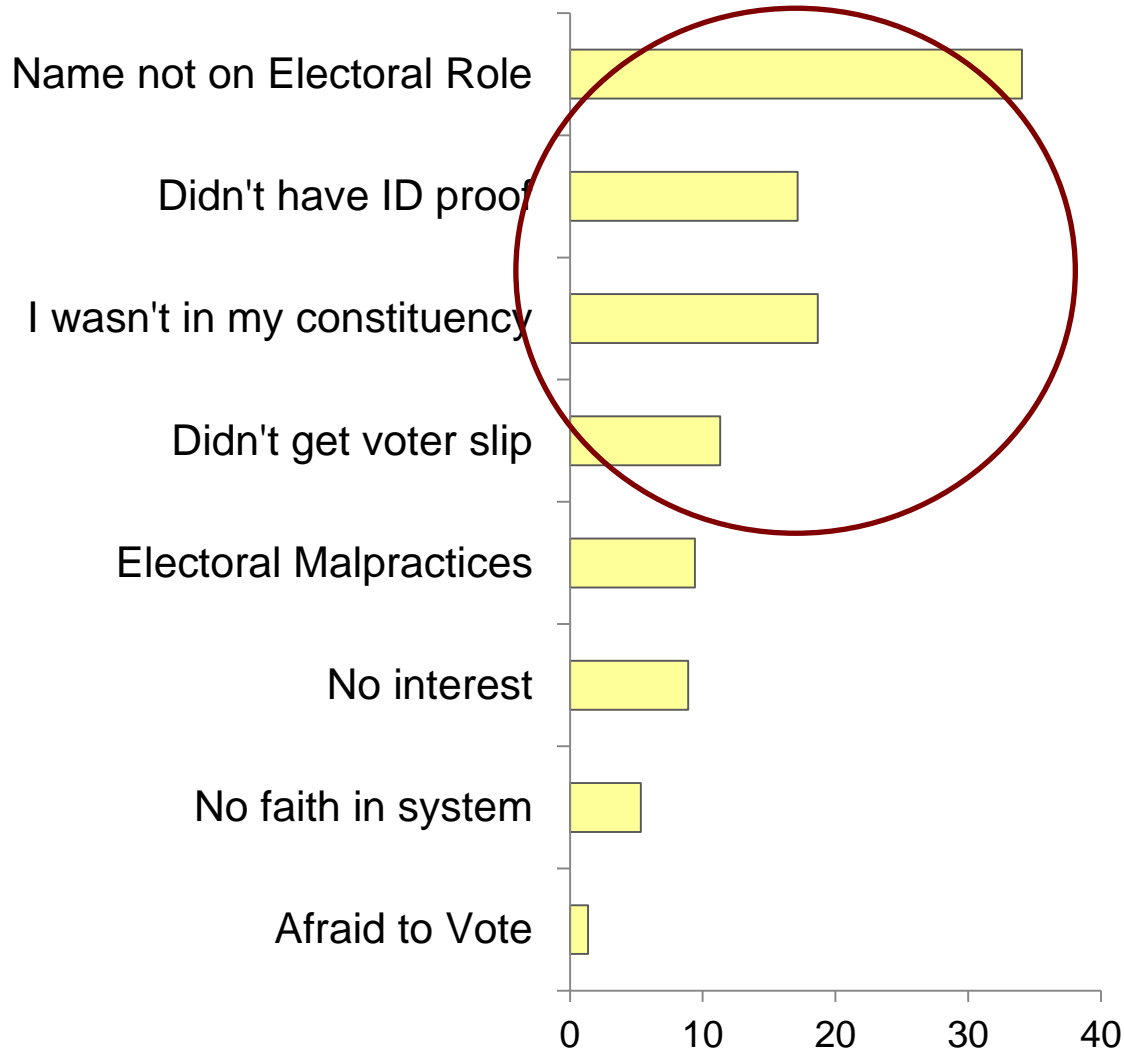
KABP Survey: Voter Registration and Turn out

Reasons for not voting

❖ 11.3% people say they would not vote

Nothing will change/no interest	39.34
I don't believe in electoral democracy	28.37
Name not on rolls	27.26
Disenchantment with candidates/ parties	25.75
No voter ID	19.31
Lack of awareness	11.44
Inconvenience at polling booth	7.33

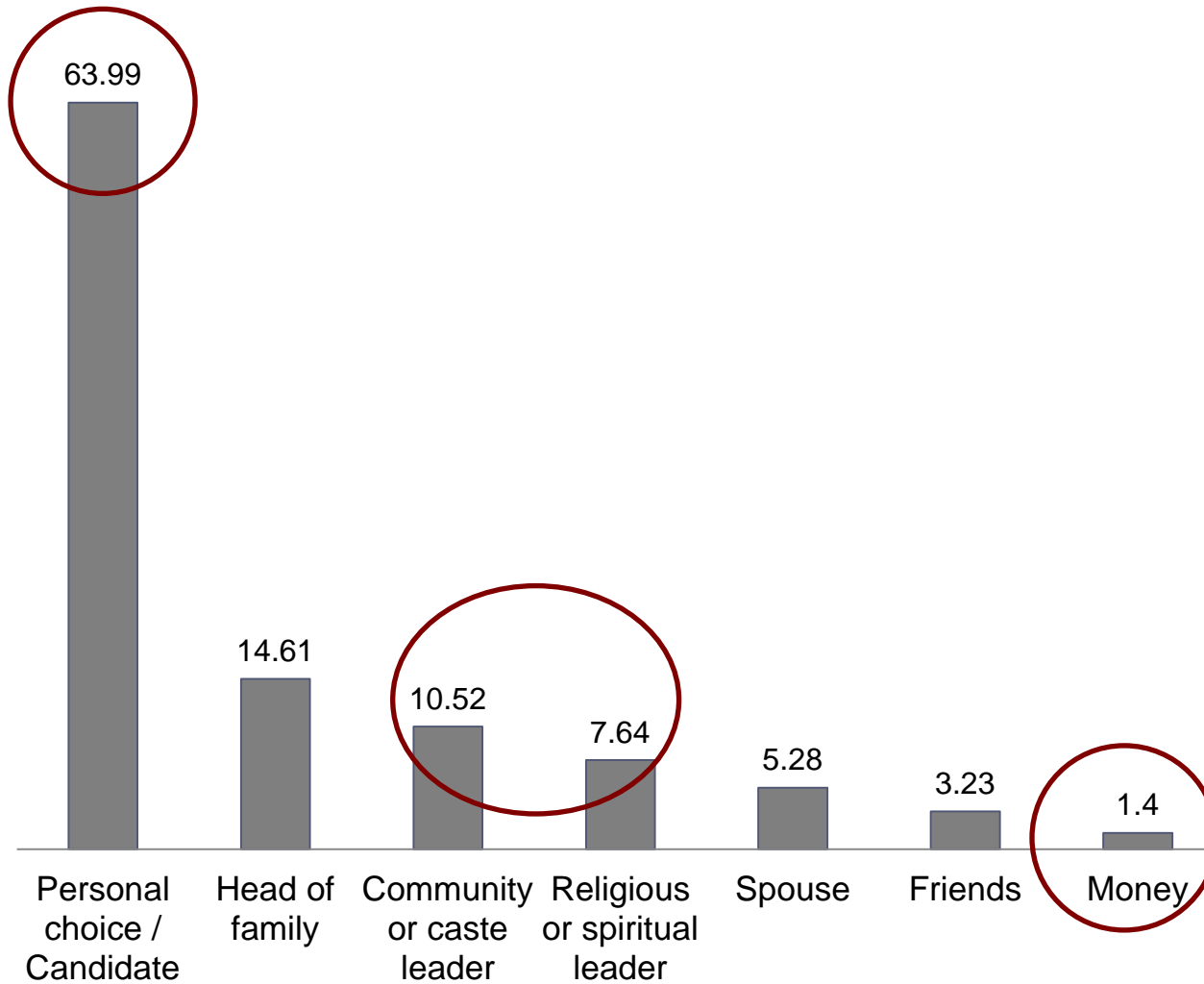
KABP Survey Findings: Factors Demotivating Voters



Factors demotivating voters (%)

- ❖ Not being registered in electoral rolls was cited as top most reason for respondents who didn't vote.
- ❖ Lack of documents (ID proof or Voter slip) and absence from constituency constitute 50% of responses.
- ❖ Electoral malpractices were cited in top 5 reasons which demotivate the voters.

KABP Survey Findings: Major Influencers



❖ Significant voting reported on caste/religious lines

❖ Low reported influence of money – possible reporting bias, hard to ignore

Major Influencers (%)



❖ Participation goes beyond voting....

- Universal enrolment and inclusive process

*Involves special care to include the marginalized –
women, disabled, minorities, elderly, poor,
transgender*

- Securing Voter ID

- Turning up and voting on polling day

- Ethical voting



❖ Voter Education division

Aims: Promote voters' proactive participation especially among youth, women, urban residents and marginalized groups

- Multimedia campaign
- Engagement of civil society organizations
- National Voters Day
- Involvement of youth
- Use of research findings *Eg Knowledge Attitude Behavior Practice (KABP) surveys*



❖ ***Knowledge Attitude Behavior Practice (KABP) survey findings***

- Findings determine the strategies and communication plans to improve voter education, registration, turn out and participation of youth and women

❖ ***Countrywide 'vulnerability mapping'***

- Data used for logistical, surveillance, security and communication planning



❖ **Cleansing politics**

- Debar criminals
- Promote financial transparency
- Promote inner party democracy

❖ **Strengthening ECI**

- Parity in protection from removal
- Appointment by collegians
- Independent Secretariat
- Charged budget



Further research and empirical evidence needed on -

- ❖ Strategies and institutional design to increase voter awareness, participation and responsiveness
- ❖ Strategies to reach out to and involve the marginalized in the electoral process
- ❖ Strategies to promote performance-based voting and reduce the salience of caste/communal/identity factors