

# Opinion poll and Exit poll

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## What are opinion polls and exit polls?

- Opinion polls are **survey researches to determine voter preference** among the candidates running for office and predict the outcome of elections. Exit poll is a post-voting poll, which is conducted just after a voter walks out after casting his or her vote. Such polls aim at predicting the actual result on the basis of the information collected from voters.
- An opinion poll, sometimes simply referred to as a poll, is a kind of voter behavior survey conducted to gauge the public opinion before voting takes place, while an exit poll happens right after voting. Through a scientific survey, the views of a particular group of people are ascertained.

## Rules on exit polls

- **Section 126A of the Representation of the People's Act, 1951**, puts a **ban on exit polls** from the period between the commencements of the poll until half an hour after the closing of the final phase of the poll.
- However, there are **no similar restrictions placed on opinion polls under RPA**. EC has held consultations with political parties to **revive its demand to restrict pre-election opinion polls** as well from the date of notification of elections until the end of polling. But no action has been taken so far.
- The EC has however directed that no opinion polls can be conducted for constituencies that had already voted until the closing of the final phase of elections.
- According to Sec 126(1) of RPA 1951, TV, radio channels, cable networks, websites and social media platforms should ensure that the contents of programmes

telecast/broadcast/displayed by them during the 48-hour period before the end of polls in each phase “do not contain any material, including views or appeals by participants that may be construed as promoting or prejudicing the prospect” of any particular party or candidate.

- Representation of the People Act of 1950 provides for the qualifications of voters, preparation of electoral rolls, delimitation of constituencies, allocation of seats in the Parliament and state legislatures and so on.
- Representation of the People Act of 1951 provides for the actual conduct of elections and deals with administrative machinery for conducting elections, the poll, election offences, election disputes, by-elections, registration of political parties and so on.