



Figure: Increasing Criminalization of Politics

Criminal elements **interfere with the rule of law**, perform poorly on Parliamentary debates and discussions, indulge in **political corruption** and thereby hurt **political justice**. In the **social dimension**, criminal elements **promote hate politics** which causes social division and disturbs social harmony. **Economically**, they indulge in **corruption** to serve their own interests.

The **criminal elements are successful in politics** due to several reasons:

1. **Money and muscle power**: With the increase in competition in politics, the election process becomes **a costly affair**. Since most of the criminal background candidates can do **self-financing**, they are preferred by political parties. They have overall greater **winnability**.
2. **Public perception** that such candidates **can get the public work done** and keep 'arrogant' officials in line.
3. **Lack of basic facilities and social cleavages like caste or religion**: The combination is used by criminal candidates to give **a false promise to protect sectional interest** of a caste or religion. Their **ability to do the work** where State fails attracts them more followers.
4. **Inefficient criminal justice system**: For instance, less than **6% of criminal cases** against MPs and MLAs ends in conviction where the national average is 86%. (**ADR report**). This further boosts the morale of politicians with criminal charges.
5. **Role of media**: Media instead of criticizing and mobilizing voice against criminalization of politics, they indirectly glorify criminal turned politicians with words like "**Baahubali**".
6. **The system of first past the post (FPTP)** makes it possible for candidates to win elections **despite getting lesser votes** than fifty percentage.

To check the problem, the **election commission and the Supreme Court** have taken steps to contain criminalization of politics. Despite these, the criminalization of politics is making its roots stronger and deeper in Indian electoral process.

The following **steps are needed** to decriminalize Indian politics:

1. **Financial measures**:
 - a. **State funding for election process** as recommended by **Dinesh Goswami committee**.
 - b. **Transparency in electoral campaign spending**, with the help of putting political donations in the **public domain**.
2. **Strengthening the election commission**: The EC should be given power to deregister political parties involved in **electoral corruption and criminal activities**. There is need to add provision in