



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the role and importance of the Election Commission of India in ensuring free and fair elections in India. (150 words)

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Approach

- Start your answer with a brief introduction about the Election Commission of India.
- Discuss the role and importance separately.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

The Election Commission is a permanent and an independent body established by the Constitution of India directly to ensure free and fair elections in the country. Article 324 to article 329 of Indian constitution contains provisions related to Election Commission of India.

Body

Role of Election Commission of India:

- **Conducting elections:**
 - Article 324 of the Constitution provides that the power of superintendence, direction and control of elections to parliament, state legislatures, the office of president of India and the office of vice-president of India shall be vested in the election commission.
- **Ensuring a level playing field:**
 - The ECI ensures that all political parties and candidates have a level playing field during elections.
 - It does this by enforcing the Model Code of Conduct, which lays down guidelines for political parties and candidates to follow during elections.
- **Role with Respect to Political Parties:**
 - To grant recognition to political parties and allot election symbols to them.
 - To act as a court for settling disputes related to granting recognition to political parties and allotment of election symbols to them.
- **Voter education:**
 - The ECI conducts voter education programs to increase awareness among voters about their rights and responsibilities.
 - This includes educating them about the importance of voting and how to cast their vote.
- **Monitoring election expenditure:**
 - The ECI monitors the expenditure of political parties and candidates during elections to ensure that they do not exceed the limits set by the law.
- **Addressing electoral malpractices:**
 - The ECI takes strict action against electoral malpractices such as booth capturing, bogus voting, and intimidation of voters.

Importance of Election Commission of India:

▪ **Ensuring free and fair elections:**

- The primary responsibility of the ECI is to ensure that elections are free and fair.
- This is crucial for maintaining the credibility of the electoral process and ensuring that the people's mandate is respected.

▪ **Upholding democracy:**

- The ECI plays a critical role in upholding democracy in India.
- By ensuring that elections are conducted in a free and fair manner, it helps to maintain the democratic values of the country.

▪ **Ensuring peaceful elections:**

- The ECI's efforts to curb electoral malpractices and ensure a level playing field help to maintain peace during elections.
- This is crucial for preventing violence and maintaining law and order.

▪ **Promoting voter participation:**

- The ECI's voter education programs encourage people to participate in the electoral process.
- This helps to increase voter turnout and ensures that the voice of the people is heard.

Conclusion

The Election Commission of India has played a crucial role in ensuring free and fair elections in India. Its efforts to maintain a level playing field, curb electoral malpractices, and promote voter education have helped to uphold democracy and maintain peace during elections. The importance of the ECI in Indian democracy cannot be overstated, and it is essential that it continues to function independently and impartially in the future.

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