District Election Management Plan

Why in News?

In light of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the conduct of elections has become increasingly complex and multifaceted, requiring meticulous planning and execution to ensure a free, fair, and inclusive electoral process.

- A cornerstone of this planning process is the **District Election Management Plan (DEMP).**

What is the District Election Management Plan (DEMP)?

- **About:**
    - **The DEMP** is a comprehensive document that uses statistics and analysis to ensure the smooth conducting of elections in districts.
- **Preparation:**
    - According to the directives of the Election Commission of India**, the DEMP** must be formulated at least six months before the tentative date of polling.
    - The dynamics of the electoral process often necessitate periodic reassessment and modification of the plan after the official announcement of elections.
    - The effective execution of the DEMP entails a coordinated endeavour involving **electoral officials, administrative bodies, law enforcement agencies**, and other pertinent stakeholders.
    - Scheduled engagements with political entities and media outlets are also arranged to provide them with comprehensive briefings on electoral regulations and procedures.

What are the Elements of DEMP?

- **District Profile:**
    - It is the foundational element of the electoral strategy, incorporating a political map delineating **constituencies**, pertinent **demographic and infrastructure statistics,** and an overview of the district's administrative structure and socio-economic characteristics.
- **Polling Station Infrastructure:**
    - Detailed strategies are devised to enhance the availability and accessibility of polling stations, ensuring essential amenities such as ramps, electricity, lighting, drinking water, toilets, and internet connectivity.
        - Special provisions are made for voters with **disabilities** and senior citizens, including the establishment of help desks, 24/7 control rooms, home voting options, and advanced postal ballot voting for essential service personnel.
- **EVM Management:**
    - **Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)** management is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the electoral process, with plans necessary for secure storage and availability of EVMs and **Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs)**, including plans for their transportation and maintenance.
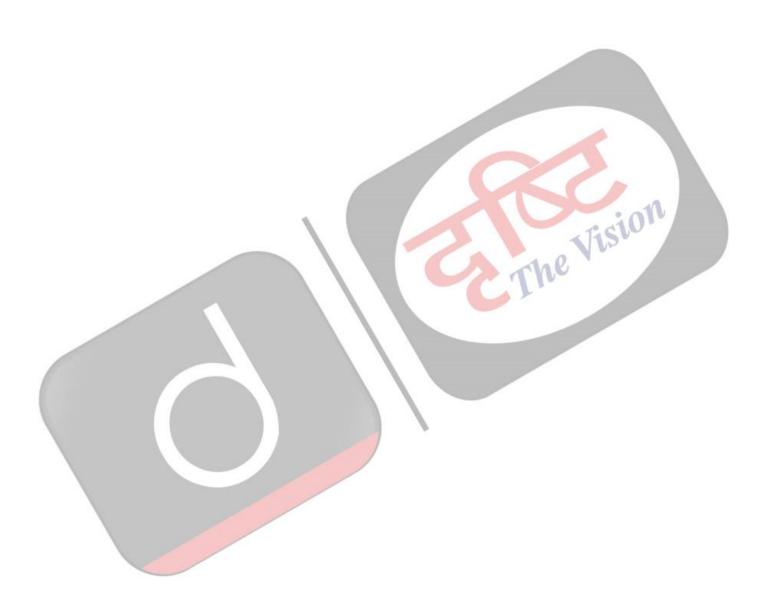- **Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) Plan:**
    - It focuses on augmenting electoral participation by analysing voter turnout data to identify

polling stations with subpar or notably low participation rates.
  - It involves leveraging social media platforms, engaging with diverse community and youth organisations, and organising awareness-raising events leading up to the polling day.
- **Personnel Planning and Training:**
  - The DEMP outlines a comprehensive strategy for the recruitment, training, welfare, and deployment of election personnel.
  - It emphasises the necessity of establishing a robust database of poll personnel, categorising them by cadre and group, and assessing their deployment requirements while devising strategies to bridge gaps in personnel across various election roles.
  - The plan incorporates training programs for district-level teams to enforce the **Model Code of Conduct (MCC)** and provides comprehensive training for all election personnel to ensure they possess the requisite skills and knowledge for their respective roles.

Election Commission of India (ECI)

About

- **Autonomous Constitutional Authority -** Administers Union/state election
  - LS, RS, State LA, the offices of the President and VP
- Estd - **25th Jan 1950** (National Voters' Day)

Constitutional Provisions

Part XV - Article 324 to 329

Structure

- 1 Chief Election Commissioner and 2 Election Commissioners **appointed by President**
- **Tenure- 6 years, or up to the age of 65 years,** whichever is earlier
- Retiring ECs – **eligible for further appointment by the govt.**
- **Removal of CEC-** Resolution on the **ground of proven misbehaviour or incapacity,** with majority of 2/3rd members present and voting, supported by more than 50% of the total strength of the house

Major Roles and Responsibilities

- Determining Electoral Constituencies
- Preparing/Revising electoral rolls
- Notifying the schedules and dates of elections
- **Registering political parties and granting them the status of national or state parties**
- Issuing the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for political parties
- Advising the President on **matters concerning the disqualification of MPs**

Challenges

- Truncated Tenure of CEC
- Executive Influence in Appointments
- Dependence on Centre for Finance
- Lack of Independent Staff

Drishti IAS

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year's Questions (PYQs)

Q Consider the following statements: (2012)

1. Union Territories are not represented in the Rajya Sabha.
2. It is within the purview of the Chief Election Commissioner to adjudicate the election disputes.
3. According to the Constitution of India, the Parliament consists of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) None

Ans: (d)

Q. The Constitution (Seventy-Third Amendment) Act,1992, which aims at promoting the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the country provides for which of the following? (2011)

1. Constitution of District Planning Committees.
2. State Election Commissions to conduct all panchayat elections.
3. Establishment of State Finance Commissions.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 3 only

Ans: (d)