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Election Commission Recommendations

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The nine working groups set up by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to suggest improvements in specific areas, based on their experience during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, **had submitted a total of 337 recommendations, of which 300 have been disposed of so far.**

Recommendations

On Candidates

- Drafting of legal provisions to **disqualify candidates for offences with a minimum of five years' punishment on framing of charges, rather than on conviction.**
 - Currently, under **Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act (RPA)**, any **person convicted** and sentenced to imprisonment for the listed offences **is disqualified** from the date of conviction and remains disqualified for a further period of six years after his release.
 - Listed offences include import or export of prohibited goods, adulteration of food drugs, practice of untouchability, terrorist acts, corruption etc.
- The punishment for filing false affidavits be increased from six months to more than two years and that **candidates found guilty of corruption, disloyalty and heinous crimes be permanently disqualified.**
- A candidate contesting a different election should resign from the current seat.

On Election Process

- With respect to the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), a working group had suggested amendments **empowering the Commission to issue notice to a party for necessary corrections in its manifesto.**
 - It also suggested for the **setting up of courts to adjudicate electoral offences** and disallowing the use of government designations for the purposes of political publicity.
- In order to constrict the duration of the election process, under the community legal

demographic profiling and election time zones system, factors like weather, examination schedules and festivals should be mapped in each State to facilitate the scheduling of polls.

- Standardisation of Electors' Photo Identity Card numbers, setting up of fast-track courts for speedy resolution of expenditure-related matters.

On Political Parties

A major recommendation is for **drafting a comprehensive bill that deals with registration, recognition and funding of political parties.**

- The number of members required for the registration of a party should be increased from 100 to 1,000.
- Parties that do not field any candidate in elections should be de-registered.
- Legal provisions should be drawn to regulate funding.