

Election Process in India

- • Elections are essential for democracy in India.
- • India is the largest democracy with 67+ crore voters.
- • The Election Commission of India manages elections.
- • It ensures fair and democratic processes.
- • Elections help people choose their leaders.

The Election Commission of India

- Formed on 25 January 1950, autonomous body.
- Conducts national/state elections and for President/VP.
- 25 Jan is celebrated as National Voters Day.
- Uses state/central staff under Article 324(6).
- Controls government departments during elections.

Chief Election Commissioner & Role

- • Heads the Election Commission.
- • Tenure: 6 years or up to 65 years of age.
- • T.N. Seshan brought major electoral reforms.
- • Equal power among all 3 commissioners since 1993.
- • Maintains integrity and independence.

Functions of the Election Commission

- • Prepares electoral rolls and supervises elections.
- • Schedules elections and scrutinizes nominations.
- • Allots symbols and monitors conduct.
- • Can act like a court (quasi-judicial powers).
- • Advises President/Governors on disqualification.

Political Parties and Recognition

- • Parties must register and follow code of conduct.
- • Allotted symbols by Election Commission.
- • 3% vote = regional party; 6% in 4 states = national party.
- • Voting age reduced to 18 years in 1988.
- • Symbol recognition helps voter awareness.

Model Code of Conduct

- • Becomes active once election dates announced.
- • Prohibits hate speech and religion-based campaigns.
- • Stops use of government resources for campaigns.
- • No campaigning within 100m of polling station.
- • Ensures peaceful, free, and fair elections.

Conducting Elections & Voting

- • Returning Officers handle nominations and polling.
- • EVMs or ballots used; votes sealed post-poll.
- • Indelible ink marks used on voters.
- • Counting done at centers; highest votes win.
- • Staff deployed to ensure smooth process.

Election Reforms and Court Judgments

- • VVPAT helps verify the vote cast.
- • NOTA lets voters reject all candidates.
- • Candidates must declare assets/criminal records.
- • Supreme Court ensured voter transparency.
- • EC empowered to act against malpractices.

Control over Ruling Parties

- • Ruling party restricted from misusing resources.
- • No ads, new schemes or grants during polls.
- • Visits must not mix official with campaign work.
- • Public buildings can't be used for rallies.
- • Fairness ensured by Model Code of Conduct.

Challenges and Reforms Ahead

- • Electoral corruption and bribery must stop.
- • Postal ballots for election staff.
- • Mid-term and by-elections handled separately.
- • Voter education and awareness needed.
- • Active citizenship vital for strong democracy.