STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

What is Electoral Integrity? How does the Election Commission of India ensure free and fair elections?

Polity & Governance

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What is Electoral Integrity? How does the Election Commission of India ensure free and fair elections?

1. Meaning of Electoral Integrity

- Conduct of elections that reflect the true will of the people
- Voters can exercise their franchise freely, without fear, coercion or inducement
- Level playing field for all political parties and candidates
- Absence of misuse of state power, money power and muscle power
- Foundation of democratic legitimacy and public trust

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2. Constitutional Position of the Election Commission of India (ECI)

- Established under Article 324 of the Constitution
- Responsible for superintendence, direction and control of elections
- Conducts elections to President, Vice-President, Parliament and State Legislatures
- Functions as an independent constitutional authority

3. Measures Taken by ECI to Ensure Free and Fair Elections

A. Legal and Administrative Measures

- Enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC)
- Prevention of misuse of government machinery
- Regulation and monitoring of election expenditure
- Action against electoral offences and violations

B. Technological and Procedural Safeguards

- Use of EVMs with VVPAT for transparency and verifiability
- Regular revision of electoral rolls

- Deployment of central armed police forces in sensitive areas
- Appointment of general, police and expenditure observers
- C. Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms
- Grievance redressal through cVIGIL app and helplines
- Monitoring of social media and fake news
- Webcasting and videography at polling stations
- Swift response to voter complaints

4. Key Challenges

1. Influence of money power and political polarization
2. Spread of misinformation on digital platforms
3. Debates over institutional autonomy and credibility

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