Polity & Governance · GS - II

To enhance the quality of democracy in India the Election Commission of India has proposed electoral reforms in 2016. What are the suggested reforms and how far are they significant to make democracy successful?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2017	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Electoral transparency; political funding; criminalisation of politics; inner-party democracy; election expenditure; free and fair elections

Model Answer

Introduction

Free and fair elections are essential to democratic legitimacy. In 2016, the Election Commission of India advocated reforms aimed at improving electoral transparency, accountability and the fairness of political competition.

Key Areas of Electoral Reform

- **Political funding:** Greater transparency in donations, expenditure and the financial accounts of political parties.
- **Criminalisation of politics:** Measures to address the entry of candidates with serious criminal backgrounds, while respecting due process.
- **Election expenditure:** Stronger monitoring of campaign spending and disclosure of party and candidate expenses.

- **Paid news:** Clearer rules and effective action against disguised political advertising.
- **Inner-party democracy:** Greater transparency in party organisation, leadership selection and candidate nomination.
- **Electoral administration:** Improvements in voter registration, accessible polling, enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct and use of technology.
- **Simultaneous elections:** The proposal has also been debated as a way to reduce repeated election expenditure and administrative disruption, though it involves wider constitutional questions.

Significance

These reforms can reduce the influence of undisclosed money, improve voter information, promote fair competition and strengthen public trust. However, implementation requires legislative support, institutional independence and cooperation among political parties.

Continuing Challenges

Weak enforcement, opaque funding channels, misuse of official resources, misinformation and criminal influence can undermine electoral integrity. Reforms must avoid arbitrary restrictions on political participation.

Conclusion

Electoral reforms are crucial to improving the quality of Indian democracy. Transparency, impartial enforcement and informed citizen participation must operate together to make elections genuinely free, fair and accountable.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP