Polity & Governance · GS - II

Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in the light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2022	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

The Election Commission of India, under Article 324, supervises elections and enforces the Model Code of Conduct to promote free and fair electoral competition. The Code evolved through political consensus and successive revisions, becoming an important instrument for regulating campaign behaviour, preventing misuse of official machinery and maintaining electoral integrity.

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Model Answer

Introduction

The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a set of guidelines governing political parties, candidates and governments during elections. The Election Commission of India (ECI) plays the central role in its implementation.

Body

Evolution of the MCC

The Code originated from electoral practices in Kerala in 1960 and was subsequently adopted and developed through consultations with political parties. Its provisions expanded over time to address campaigning, public meetings, election manifestos and the conduct of ruling parties.

Role of the Election Commission

1. Ensuring Fair Competition: The ECI monitors compliance and acts against attempts to influence voters through intimidation, bribery or divisive appeals.

2. Preventing Misuse of Official Machinery: The Code restricts the use of government resources, official publicity and public funds for electoral advantage.

3. Regulating Campaign Conduct: It lays down norms concerning speeches, rallies, processions and relations between political parties.

4. Administrative Oversight: The ECI may issue directions, seek explanations, censure candidates and take appropriate action within its legal authority.

Limitations

The MCC is not independently enforceable as a comprehensive statute. Some violations may attract action under existing electoral or criminal laws, but delays, inconsistent compliance and digital campaigning create enforcement challenges.

Conclusion

The MCC has strengthened electoral ethics and public confidence. Greater transparency, timely enforcement, political consensus and effective regulation of digital campaigning are essential to preserve its credibility.

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