

Role of election commission of India: Conducting free and fair elections

M Mahajan*

Department of Sociology, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India

*Corresponding author: E-mail: mayam@gmail.com

Received: 21-Jul-2022, Manuscript No. GJPSET-22-71962; **Editor assigned:** 25-Jul-2022, PreQC No. GJPSET-22-71962 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 08-Aug-2022, QC No. GJPSET-22-71962 (R); **Revised:** 16-Aug-2022, Manuscript No. GJPSET-22-71962; **Published:** 22-Aug-2022, DOI: 10.15651/GJPSET.22.3.030.

DESCRIPTION

The Election Commission of India is an autonomous, constitutionally established federal authority responsible for administering all the electoral process in the Republic of India. Under the supervision of the commission, free and fair elections have been held at regular intervals as per the principles enshrined in the Constitution. The Election Commission has the power of superintendence, direction and control of all elections to the Parliament of India and the state legislatures and of elections to the office of the President of India and the Vice-President of India (Agnihotri, 2010).

Democracy depends on the following conditions:

- Co-existence of ideas and parties,
- The right to free discussion,
- Universal adult suffrage and
- Periodic election.
- Significance of Election Commission of India
- The following are the significance of election commission of India:
- To conduct free and fair and credible elections in a democratic manner.
- Election commission lays down the manner code of conduct in elections.
- To control violence and criminalization in Indian polity.
- To check the expenditure by the contesting candidates in election campaign, this is flagrantly violated.
- To contain voter intimidation and fraud in elections.
- To issue voter ID card to exercise the adult franchise this is a right of Citizen of India, so as to prevent impersonation of the voter.
- To ensure and encourage proper and equal participation and representation of citizens in the process of voting without any fear, for a democratic governance.

- Election Commission acts as quasi-judicial authority by lending advice with respect to election/candidature of an elected member to the legislature.

A Kaleidoscopic view of transition from colonial rule to democratic governance in India in the last seven decades and the resultant all round development of the country, clearly reaffirm its faith and trust in Functional Democracy (Cai et al, 2009). Every time when it appeared to falter and deviate from the democratic course, reasons may be due to political differences and uncertain pattern in voting behaviour, giving no party full majority, the Indian democracy re-invigorated itself and revived with more vigour and trust in democratic rule. Democracy is expression of will of people translating to power through ballot endowing on its populous equality and equal protection before law. Indian democracy has over time shown resilience that has been marvelled at the world over.

Elections serve as means of communication between the public and their government. It is process through which leaders are selected by vote for a political office. The event of election provides the public with an opportunity to choose between political alternatives and, to a certain extent, in influencing the policies of political parties (Dasgupta, 2005).

Owing to their significance in a democratic political system, the elections are governed by a set of laws: Electoral laws are those which govern the process by which electoral preferences are articulated as votes and by which these votes are translated into distribution of governmental authority (typically parliamentary seats) among the competing political parties. The presence of election in any political system does not necessarily guarantee representative form of government. "Electoral systems are not self-justifying; their function is to afford a means of appointing representatives." Since elections are

the only mechanism of selecting representatives, they assume crucial importance in electing rulers as well as in legitimizing governmental authority in a parliamentary democracy (Levin, 2016). It is, therefore, of considerable interest to examine the mechanics of elections in developing democracies and relate it to their political development. Free and fair elections are the essence of a true democracy and they are considered as basic postulates of a free democratic society. It is an accepted basic principle of all democratic constitutions that the choice of citizens in the selection of their representatives must be free and unfettered. Democracy can indeed function only upon the faith that elections are free and fair and not rigged and manipulated. The significance of this principle was recognized as early as in the First Statute of Westminster in England. Devising an electoral system for ensuring a free and fair election is a formidable task. Part - XV of the Indian Constitution deals with elections and in order to ensure free and fair elections, the Superintendence, direction and control of elections have been vested in an independent and autonomous Elections Commission. The *raison d'être* of autonomous Elections Commission is to provide occasions and Conditions under which this right can be exercised authentically without fear or favour (Sengupta, 2011).

CONCLUSION

However, unlike judges of the Supreme Court or of the High Courts and the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, he is not required to make and subscribe before the President on oath or affirmation under the Constitution. There is no such restriction in the case of the Chief Election Commissioner, still the Chief Election Commissioner is a high dignitary whose independence, impartially and fair mindedness are intended to be guaranteed by the Constitution. To make India as a liberal democratic nation, not only requires conduct of free and fair

elections but also to the fundamental tenets as a means to attain justice, apart from purely the rule of majority, which may be whimsical at times. 'A little anarchy is a dangerous thing, but a good protest is a joy forever'. If democracy were to be a truly legitimate form of government, it must contain certain inherent value; the success of entire democratic political system depends upon free and fair elections and Political stability which is very much threatened due to the era of collusion politics for which electoral reforms are required. Election should be made free from influence of criminals and use of money and muscle power should be checked. Easy availability of information to every citizen is the only way to free and fair elections are cornerstones of democracy. In India, Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were introduced with the objective of reducing electoral fraud. We exploit the phased roll-out of the EVMs in state assembly elections to study its impact on electoral fraud, democracy, and development and check the abuse of powers in elections to maintain transparency.

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