



Daily Mains Answer Discussion (Punjab PCS)

(Day - 14)

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Q 1. Election Commission of India today faces 'the crisis of credibility', In the light of the above statement highlight the various issues that have dismantled the constitutional apparatus of Election Commission of India along with the measures that need to be taken for the same.

Structure

- Intro - Brief about the ECI, objectives and its purposes.
- Body - Various issues because of which ECI has been facing crisis of credibility.
- Conclusion - Various Measures that need to be taken in order to strengthen the frame of ECI.

Answer

- Election Commission of India (ECI) is the formidable institution of India which has led the world in electoral efficiency since its inception. ECI is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering Union and state election processes in India. Its powers lie in the Article 324 to 329 of the Constitution which deals with powers, function tenure, eligibility etc of the commission and the members.
- However, over the years, it has been witnessed that it has loosed its credibility and now stands as just a shadow of the body which once held together the election apparatus of the country economically and efficiently. The various issues which have dismantled its reputation are –
 - Incidents involving breach of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), particularly those by the Ruling party.
 - Recently PM's announcement of ASAT satellite during the time when MCC was in place was a serious breach of propriety amounting to unfair publicity to the party in power.
 - Launch of NaMo TV along with Biopic without Licence and that to 48 hours before the hour fixed for conclusion of poll in a particular constituency, thus violating the Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act
 - Hate Speeches by various leaders like Mayawati, Yogi Adityanath etc. were only barred after the intervention of the Supreme Court.
 - Transfer and appointment of Chief Electoral Officer , VVPAT audits, violation of MCC all these issues raise a question over the institutional autonomy of the Election Commission.
- In all of these issues, ECI came into action only after it was vehemently asked by the SC to ECI to look into these matters, and thus they played the reactive role rather than being proactive and that too only after being reprimanded.
- In such a scenario there is need for resurrection which can ensure the independence of the ECI, as the Election Commissioners are appointed by the Government of the day and moreover apart from the Chief Election Commissioner other two Election Commissioners does not even have the security of tenure, thus raising questions over its Independence and in order to address this we can adopt measure such as –
 - A collegium system of appointments - as suggested by the Tarkunde Committee in 1975 and the Goswami Committee in 1990, as this will weaken the influence of Government over the Presidents choice of Election Commissioners.
 - Amending the Appointment and removal process of EC's - We can adopt the best Practices of Fellow Nations such as South Africa, Canada, United States for the appointment of Election Commissioners.

- MCC a legal document - MCC can and should be made a legal document as this will remove the discretion of the ECI and thus resolving most of the issues which go unchecked because of no legal backing of MCC.
- Power to de-register the Political Party - The EC's reputation suffers when it is unable to tame recalcitrant political parties, especially the ruling party, thus the power should be given to them to deregister the political party.
- Re-inventing consistency - EC should continuously reinvent its power given to it under the Indian Constitution as done by many previous CEC's like T.N. Sheshan.



Q 2. Critically Evaluate the three Round Table Conferences?

- The three Round Table Conferences (RTC) of 1930-32 were a series of conferences organised by the British Government to discuss constitutional reforms in India. They were conducted as per the recommendations in the report submitted by the Simon Commission in May 1930.
- The First RTC was the first ever conference arranged between the British and the Indian as equals thus signifying the growing pressure of the Indian agitations in the form of Swadeshi Movement, NonCooperation Movement and Civil Disobedience Movement. It was also a symbolic recognition of Indians as stakeholders in the decision-making process to decide upon constitutional reforms.
- However, the First RTC wasn't too fruitful as the Congress, the largest political group, had boycotted the Conference because the Viceroy Lord Irwin refused to provide assurance that the purpose of the round table conference was to draft a constitutional scheme for dominion status.
- To have the Congress attend the Second RTC, a settlement was brokered between the British Indian Government and the Congress, known as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. However, the National Government in Britain, being dominated by the Conservatives, was not willing to concede much. Also, the other Indian participants rejected Gandhiji's claims that the Congress alone represented political India, and that the "Untouchables" were Hindus. The Second RTC ended with MacDonald announcing a Communal Award. Gandhiji came back empty-handed.
- The Third RTC was boycotted by both the Congress and the Labour Party, defying the whole purpose. Again, like in the two previous conferences, little was achieved. The recommendations were published in a White Paper in March 1933. This became the basis for the Government of India Act, 1935.
- Overall, the three RTCS neither led to Independence nor to Dominion Status, and rather brought forward the unwillingness of the British government to introduce genuine reforms.

Q 3. The significance of Indian Agricultural sector is way beyond than just providing national food security, it's much more than that. In the light of the above statement highlight the significance of Indian Agriculture sector along with the issues that have been dragging it down.

Structure

- Intro + Body (Part 1) - Significance of the the Agricultural sector for the Indian Economy.
- Body (Part 2)- Highlight the issues in the Agricultural sector.
- Conclusion - What measures need to be taken in order to resolve the same

Answer

- Agricultural sector was the only sector in our Indian Economy which has shown positive growth even the the whole nation was under lockdown and had come to a standstill, The significance of Indian Agriculture is way beyond its substantive mandate of national food security, on one side where it is the highest Employment Provider - employing around 48% directly or indirectly, it holds the direct key to reducing India's malnutrition problem thus ensuring the mission of nutrition security of India and upon that it also has the potential to spur India's overall GDP by augmenting the economic growth.
- However, in the last few years the growth in the Agriculture sector has become stagnated even reaching to sub-zero levels in some of the quarters, which raises alarms over the dwindling issues looming in the agriculture sector such as
 - . Non substantive increase in Income - Since Independence, the income of every entity in every sector has increased manifold but Agriculture. The income level of Indian framers especially small and marginal farmers has increased marginally, thus forcing famers to either leave farming or go for suicides because of the amounting debts every agricultural season.
 - Consumer Oriented Policies - Since food security is the paramount service of every Government, therefore the prices of the Agricultural products are kept under check moreover whenever there is a price rise in any agricultural commodity,, the Government imposes restricts on exports to protect Indian customers, thus creating hindrances for farmers taking the benefit of higher price in foreign markets.
 - Upon that Essentials Commodities Act, has meant lower private investment in export infrastructure such as warehouse and cold storage systems.
 - Flawed Agricultural Marketing Policies - Today the APMC acts passed by various states are marred by various lacunae and reforming them has proven to be a major task because of the politics involved, and upon that since Agriculture is a state subject thus causing Federalism issues when centre imposes any new set of laws.
 - Marginal Land holdings - Indian Agriculture is characterised by marginal and small farmers mainly who comprise 85% of the total land holing in the country
- In such a scenario, major reforms are needed in the Agricultural sector, recently brought Agricultural acts were the steps in the same direction, however seem to be failing in solving the purpose as they were brought without any consultation with the famers unions, had the top to bottom policy approach which should have been bottom to up and upon that the way these bills were passed in the Rajya Sabha raises contentious issues over the Constitutionality of these bills.
- Today the need of the hour is to allow land leasing, increasing avenues for Non-farm income, addressing Subsidies problem, improving Agricultural Export Scenario, Agricultural marketing reforms and at last investing in Agriculture infrastructure, in order to double the Farmer's income by 2020 come to reality.