

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q8(a)

"The success of electoral democracy can partly be attributed to the status and role of the Election Commission of India." Explain

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · PSIR GS 1 · 20 marks · Statutory Institutions/Commissions

Statutory Institutions/Commissions: Election Commission, CAG, Finance Commission, UPSC, NCSC, NCST, NCBC, National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Women and National Commission for Minorities, NITI Aayog.

Core demand of the question

- "The success of electoral democracy can partly be attributed to the status and role of the **Election Commission of India**." Explain. (20 marks)

Revision summary

Article 324 gives the ECI constitutional command of elections, a status above a department.

The Model Code and roll-and-symbol machinery are the working role that restrains incumbents.

Weber's legal-rational legitimacy and Habermas's fair campaign both need such a referee.

- **Success is only partial:** money, crime, Emergency memory, and social cleavage still shape outcomes.

Kothari's voters and courts complete the story the Commission cannot carry alone.

Introduction

Electoral democracy needs a referee that parties cannot easily capture. The **Election Commission of India**, a constitutional body under **Article 324**, has supplied that referee. Success is only partly its work: federal voters, a free press, and courts also matter. Without the ECI's status and role, the electoral part would still be much weaker.

Body**Status**

- **Article 324** vests superintendence, direction, and control of elections in the Commission. That is constitutional, not departmental, status.
- Security of the **Chief Election Commissioner's** tenure, modelled on a Supreme Court judge, is meant to buy independence from the ministry of the day.
- A multi-member Commission and a separate Secretariat practice (even when law lagged) signal that elections are not a Home Ministry routine.
- **Weber's** legal-rational legitimacy fits: people obey results because an office, not a faction, ran the count.

Role in making elections real

- The **Model Code of Conduct**, though not a statute in origin, disciplines ruling parties in campaign time: transfers, grants, and official speech.

- Electoral rolls, symbols, observers, and now more technology are the machinery of inclusion and of some fairness.
- The Commission has acted against hate speech and against officials, imperfectly, but in a way unknown to many new democracies.
- **Habermas**'s free and fair deliberation needs a campaign that is not simply the state's loudspeaker. The Model Code is a crude tool of that need.

Why "partly"

- **Rajni Kothari**'s party system and social cleavages produce turnout and contestation that no referee can invent.
- Courts, especially after **Kesavananda**'s rights-friendly climate and later representation cases, backstop the Commission.
- Criminalisation, money, and media concentration still distort **J. S. Mill**'s ideal of government by discussion.
- Emergency (1975-77) showed that electoral democracy can be postponed despite a Commission existing on paper; status needs a political culture that fears the voter.

Hung Houses and routine

- In 1989-91 the ECI still delivered a Lok Sabha; the President then faced coalition arithmetic. The Commission's success is the election, not the cabinet's stability.
- State election cycles and simultaneous-versus-separate debates show the Commission as a power in the federal calendar.
- **Easton** would count a trusted election as a support input. When trust in the referee falls, specific support for the system falls with it.

Explanation of the quote

- **The quote is right:** peaceful turnover, massive franchise, and loser consent are hard without a visible, stubborn Commission.
- It is incomplete if it hides voter organisation, **Jaffrelot**'s caste mobilisation, and civil-society watchdogs.
- Status (**Article 324**) plus role (Model Code, rolls, enforcement) is the institutional half of India's electoral success.

Flow diagram

Election Commission -> Art 324 status
 Election Commission -> Model Code role
 Art 324 status -> Electoral democracy
 Model Code role -> Electoral democracy
 Voters parties courts -> Electoral democracy

Conclusion

India's electoral democracy succeeded in part because the **Election Commission** has constitutional status and an assertive referee role, especially through the Model Code and the conduct of giant polls. Parties, cleavages, and courts supply the rest. The Commission is a necessary condition of loser consent, not the whole of democracy.

Facts & figures

Article 324

Superintendence, direction, and control of elections vested in the **Election Commission**.

Model Code of Conduct

Non-statutory (in origin) campaign norms enforced by the ECI, especially against the ruling party's official machinery.

CEC tenure

Chief Election Commissioner removable in the manner of a Supreme Court judge, a design for independence.

Emergency, 1975-77

Showed that electoral democracy can be suspended; the Commission's status is not self-executing without political will.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/psir-gs-1/2021/the-success-of-electoral-democracy-can-partly-be-attributed-to-the-status-and-role-of-the-election-commission-of-india-explain/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com