

Short-Answer Questions**1. What do you mean by an election?**

Ans. An election is a contest between different candidates, whether they belong to different political parties, which they generally do, or whether they stand independently for getting people's support. Any party or combination of parties which gets the support of the largest number of people gets the power and forms the government.

2. What is the need for elections? Why is it said, "No elections, no democracy"?

Ans. Except in dictatorships, elections are a must in all kinds of governments. Their need is greatly felt because modern democracies cover so vast an area that all their citizens, who run into millions, cannot possibly take part in the government. They can do so through their representatives which form a comparatively small number. In order to choose such representatives elections are a must. Through elections alone the people can get rid of their existing unpopular governments and in its place they can elect a new popular government.

It is generally said, "*No elections, no democracy.*" This saying is not without meaning. In simple words, it denotes that without the elections a democratic government cannot be set up.

3. Why is it said that modern democracies are representative?

Ans. Modern democracies cover so vast an area that all their citizens, who run into millions, cannot possibly take part in the government. They can do so through their representatives which form a comparatively small number. In order to choose such representatives elections are a must. That is why it is said that modern democracies are representative democracies.

4. Who controls the elections of the President, Vice-President and the Parliament?

Ans. The Election Commission of India controls the elections of the President, Vice President and the Parliament.

5. Who are the Regional Election Commissioners?

Ans. They are provided by the president or the government of a state on the request of the Election Commissioner to assist him in performing his duties.

6. State one function of the Election Commission.

Ans. The Election Commission identifies eligible voters in each constituency and prepares the list of all eligible voters. This is called Voter's List.

7. What is meant by a by-election?

Ans. The process of conducting elections to fill the vacancy in parliament or state legislatures because of the resignation or death of a member during his term of office is called a by-election. The newly elected members serve the remaining term.

8. What is meant by mid-term election?

Ans. Mid-term Elections : Mid-term elections are the elections which are held before the completion of the term of five years when the legislature is dissolved due to one reason or the other. Such elections are held when the Central government or the State government fails to prove its majority in the legislature and elections are held for the new government. The newly formed legislature will have full 5 years term.

Structural Essay-Type Questions

1. With reference to the nomination of candidates explain the following :

- (a) Who fixes the date of election?
- (b) What are nomination papers?
- (c) What do you mean by scrutiny of papers?
- (d) When is a candidate not eligible for elections. What happens then?

- Ans.** (a) Under the Constitution, the Government decides when the elections should be held. The fixing of exact dates rests with the Election Commission. The Commission states the reasons for holding or not holding the elections during a particular period. The Election Commission refuses to hold elections at a particular time to ensure free and fair elections even if the political parties insist on holding election at that particular time.
- (b) The Candidates willing for contesting the elections give their details in a form. This form / Paper is known as nomination paper.
- (c) The candidates willing for contesting the elections file their nominations up to a particular date. Then the Election Commission scrutinises their papers and accepts or rejects the nomination papers as the case may be.
- (d) When he does not fulfil the conditions of eligibility for contesting such an election.
- (i) If he holds any office of profit under the Government.
 - (ii) If he is of unsound mind.
 - (iii) If he has ceased to be a citizen of India.
 - (iv) If he has been found guilty of election offences or corrupt practices.
 - (v) If he has been sentenced to transportation or imprisonment.
 - (vi) If he has been found guilty of violating any law.

2. For every democratic country, elections are very important. In this connection, answer the following :

- (a) Why is there a need for elections?
- (b) Election Commission.
- (c) Composition of Election Commission.

- Ans.** (a) Except in dictatorships, elections are a must in all kinds of governments. Their need is greatly felt because of the following reasons:
- (i) Modern democracies cover so vast an area that all their citizens, who run into millions, cannot possibly take part in the government. They can do so through their representatives which form a

comparatively small number. In order to choose such representatives elections are a must. That is why it is said that modern democracies are representative democracies.

- (ii) Through elections alone the people can get rid of their existing unpopular governments and in its place they can elect a new popular government.
- (iii) It is the fear of next elections which makes a government work properly, otherwise the people will topple it and throw its members out of their coveted posts and high positions. Thus, it is through elections alone that an effective control can be maintained on the executive.
- (iv) It is generally said, "*No elections, no democracy.*" This saying is not without meaning. In simple words, it denotes that without the elections a democratic government cannot be set up.
- (b) Election Commission is an organisation which conducts free and fair elections in the country. It consisted of a Chief Election Commissioner and two other commissioners appointed by the President. The Chief Election Commissioner condition of service cannot be changed after his appointment to his disadvantage.
- (c) To ensure free and fair elections in the country, there is a special organisation known as the Election Commission. The Election Commission consists of
 - (i) The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), who is appointed by the President.
 - (ii) Two other Commissioners are also appointed by the President.
 - (iii) The number of other Commissioners, if any, are fixed from time to time by the President.
 - (iv) The Chief Election Commissioner acts as the Chairman of the Election Commission.
 - (v) All appointments by the President are made after the approval of the Parliament.

- (vi) The President or the government of a state, when so requested by the Election Commissioner, can provide him with Regional Commissioners, to assist him in performing his duties. In the same manner, other staff can be made available to him and the Regional Commissioners.

3. With reference to the Election Commission explain the following :

- (a) Who appoints the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners?
- (b) Who normally acts as a chairperson of the Election Commission?
- (c) How can the Chief Election Commissioner be removed from service?
- (d) Describe any two functions of the Election Commission.

Ans. (a) The Chief Election Commissioner is appointed by the President. Two other Commissioners are also appointed by the president.

(b) The Chief Election Commissioner acts as the chairman of the Election Commission.

(c) The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from his office only on the same grounds as the Judge of the Supreme Court (i.e. impeachment). The conditions of his service cannot be changed after his appointment to his disadvantage.

(d) **Functions of The Election Commission:** The Election Commission of India has to perform many functions in order to hold free and fair elections :

(i) **Preparation of Electoral Rolls.** The Election Commission identifies eligible voters in each constituency and prepares the list of all eligible voters. This is called **Voter's List**. Electoral Rolls are prepared wherein the name, father's name, age and sex of the voters are clearly mentioned.

(ii) **Delimitation of Constituencies.** The whole area, where elections are to be held, is divided into so many clear-cut constituencies so that elections are held in an organised way.

4. With regard to the kinds of elections explain the following :

- (a) Merits of Direct Election
- (b) Demerits of Indirect Election
- (c) Merits of Indirect Election
- (d) Demerits of Direct Election

Ans. (a) Merits of Direct Election

- (i) Firstly, it is said that the method of direct election is *most democratic* as it enables the electorate to take part in constituting the government directly.
- (ii) The system of direct election *makes the representatives more responsible to public opinion*. He tries to keep himself in touch with the voters and tries to better their condition.
- (iii) The system of direct election *stimulates political interest among voters*. Each voter feels that his voice will count in the formation of the government and selection of the law-makers. Such a system makes people more alert and active citizens.
- (iv) The advocates of this system claim that this system is *less exposed to corruption*. Under this system a candidate has to approach a large number of voters. It is quite difficult to bribe or intimidate such a large number of people.

(b) Demerits of Direct Election: Certain critics, however, point out some defects in the system of direct election:

- (i) The system of direct election *places powers in the hands of ignorant voters*. Most of the voters are either illiterate or ignorant who do not have intelligence or independence enough to vote for the right candidate.
- (ii) Under this system a majority of voters are *swayed by false promises* of the clever orators and they fall in the trap quite easily.

(c) Merits of Indirect Election

- (i) The system of indirect election is said to be free from the complexity of popular passion. It transfers the choice of representatives from

the hands of the masses into the hands of a few selected persons who are likely to be less swayed by political passions.

- (ii) Again, it is said that the system of indirect election saves us from such dangers which can result from haste. It has been rightly said, "*Haste makes waste*". Under this system, in fact, there are two elections, as such mistakes made at one stage can be corrected at another stage. The time-gap in two elections cools down the passions and members of the electoral college can think twice before electing any candidate.

- (d) **Demerits of Indirect Election:** In spite of the aforesaid merits, the system of indirect election has not been widely accepted because of its inherent weaknesses or demerits:

- (i) Firstly, it is said it is anti-democratic. Democracy requires that contact between the representatives and voters should be direct and immediate. But indirect election *keeps a distance between the voters and their representatives*.
- (ii) The system of indirect election is condemned on the ground that it kills popular interest in the elections. The primary voters cease to take any interest in public matters.
- (iii) The system of indirect election breeds political intrigue and corruption. As candidates, under this system, are not elected by a large number of voters, but by a smaller intermediate group, so its members can easily be bribed by a rich and powerful candidate.
- (4) Lastly, it is pointed out that the system of *indirect election has been reduced to a mere formality* by the operation of the arty system which serves as a link between the primary voters and the intermediate electors.