

Mains PYQs - GS-II (2026) (Q. 4 - 6)

4. Is the right to vote a fundamental right? Discuss the position of the Election Commission of India while undertaking the revision of electoral rolls. Can it also examine the question of citizenship of voters? (150 words, 10 marks)

Directions: Intro-----Is the right to vote a FR? + Position of ECI + ECI - Citizenship----- Conclusion.

Introduction:

Right to vote (or) universal adult suffrage (or) ECI.

Main Body

Is the right to vote a fundamental right?

- No, the right to vote is not a Fundamental Right - it's a constitutional and statutory right. However, its constitutional status has evolved through judicial interpretation.
- Article 326 - Elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies based on adult suffrage.
- Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India (2006) - Right to vote is a statutory right, not a Fundamental Right.
- It is primarily regulated through the Representation of the People Acts, 1950 & 1951.

Position of the ECI during revision of electoral rolls

- ECI has constitutional authority under Article 324 and statutory responsibility under RPA, 1950 to ensure that electoral rolls contain eligible electors.
- During revision, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) verifies whether an applicant satisfies the legal conditions for enrolment:
- Association for Democratic Reforms v. ECI (2026) - The SC confirmed that the ECI has a binding mandate to removal the lists of duplicates, deceased individuals, or ineligible entries to ensure free and fair elections.
- The judiciary requires the ECI to adhere strictly to the principles of natural justice.

Can ECI examine Citizenship?

- Yes, ECI can examine citizenship, but with limitations -
- RPA, 1950 - Non-citizens are explicitly disqualified from registration.
- So, ECI may verify eligibility for inclusion in electoral rolls.
- June 2026 Supreme Court ruling - The definitive authority to grant, deny, or revoke national citizenship lies exclusively with the Central Government (Ministry of Home

Affairs) operating under the Citizenship Act, 1955.

- Deletion from the electoral roll for doubtful citizenship by ECI does not determine loss of citizenship – such cases must be referred to the Union Government.

Conclusion:

Give a positive conclusion.

The right to vote is a constitutional, not Fundamental, right. The ECI has both the authority and responsibility to ensure that only eligible citizens enter electoral rolls.

5. Do constitutional bodies like the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) possess adequate enforcement powers to secure substantive social equality? Suggest measures to enhance their institutional effectiveness. (150 words, 10 marks)

Directions: Intro----- Adequacy of enforcement powers + Measures-----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Brief about NCSC/NCST - Articles 338 and 338A (or) define substantive social equality.

Main Body

Adequacy of enforcement powers

No, the constitutional bodies do not possess adequate enforcement powers.

- Have the civil-court powers.
- Advisory nature – Not binding recommendations.
- Limited punitive authority – Cannot themselves impose penalties, enforce compensation or directly prosecute officials for violations.
- Implementation gap – Government departments may delay or inadequately act upon recommendations, weakening institutional accountability.
- Structural constraints – Vacancies, limited resources, dependence on government machinery and inadequate field-level presence.

Measures

- Binding recommendations
- Provide assured budgets, staffing and administrative independence.
- Ensure timely appointment of Chairpersons, Members and other officials.
- Social-audit approach
- Establish dedicated investigative wings with adequate legal, forensic and field-level capacity.
- Strengthen institutional links with courts, NHRC, police, legal-services authorities, etc.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion.

6. Does India's tribal development policy reflect the aspirations for a socially grounded and equity-based governance? Justify your answer. (150 words, 10 marks)

Directions: Intro-----Reflects aspiration + aspiration remains incomplete-----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Brief tribal development policy.

Main Body

Policy reflects the aspirations

- Constitutional protection - Fifth and Sixth Schedules provide differentiated governance mechanisms for tribal areas.
- Self-governance - PESA Act, 1996, empower Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas.
- The Forest Rights Act, 2006 - Recognises individual and community forest rights.
- Targeted development - Via schemes like PM-JANMAN.
- Political representation - Reserved seats in legislatures and local bodies.

Aspiration remains incomplete

- Implementation deficit - PESA and FRA provisions faced uneven implementation.
- Weak institutional capacity - Gram Sabhas and tribal institutions often lack adequate financial, technical and administrative capacity.
- One-size-fits-all policies - Uniform development models do not work for all groups.
- Displacement - Mining, infrastructure and conservation projects can create livelihood and cultural disruptions.
- Resource alienation: Despite legal safeguards, tribal communities continue to face challenges in securing control over land and forest resources.
- Administrative paternalism - Decision-making remains bureaucracy-driven, limiting genuine community ownership.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion and suggest some measures.

India's tribal policy increasingly embodies the principles of equity, dignity, participation and recognition of community rights.

Tribal development is still transitioning from “development for tribals” to “development with tribals.”



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