

The Election Commission of India

Election Commission is an autonomous body. It was established in 25th January, 1950 until October 1989, it had only one Chief Election Commissioner and two other Election Commissioners. It is a permanent constitutional body. For the success of democracy it is indispensable. It is often called the fourth pillar of Indian democracy.

Constitutional Status of Election Commission

Article 324 in the Constitution of India, replacing Article 289 under Constituent Assembly Debates. Article 324(1) provides that the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for and the conduct of, all elections to Parliament and to the legislature of every State and of elections to the offices of President and Vice President held under this Constitution shall be vested in a commission, the Election Commission. Clause (a) of Article 324 says that the Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and any number of other Election Commissioners, as the President may from time to time appoint. Till the appointment of two additional members to the Election Commission by an Ordinance 15 of the Government in 1993, the Commission consisted of only the Chief Election Commissioner.

Since 1993, the concept of multi-member Commission has been in operation, with decision-making power by majority vote. Government had also appointed in 1989, a multi-member Election Commission by including two additional members of the Election Commission. It was reverted to one-man Election Commission by Chief Election Commissioner is assisted in his functions by the two Election Commissioners, 3 Deputy Commissioners and 6 Secretaries.

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The Constitution does not prescribe any qualification for the Chief Election Commissioner or the Election Commissioners. The main concern of the makers of the Constitution was to have an Election Commission, independent of executive and political control.