



# STREAMLINING DEMOCRACY: EXPLORING CONSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENTS FOR SYNCHRONIZED NATIONAL ELECTIONS

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## Abstract

The concept of “One Nation, One Election” (ONOE) has emerged as a significant electoral reform proposal in India, aiming to synchronize the schedules of elections to the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) and State Legislative Assemblies. This research undertakes a comprehensive legal inquiry into the constitutional amendments required to implement ONOE, evaluating its feasibility, implications, and potential challenges within the Indian constitutional framework. The research begins by examining the historical context and rationale behind the ONOE proposal, tracing its evolution and the diverse perspectives it has garnered among policymakers, legal experts, and political stakeholders. It analyzes the constitutional provisions governing the electoral process in India, particularly focusing on the distribution of legislative powers between the Union and the States, the tenure of elected bodies, and the process of dissolution and reconstitution of legislative assemblies. Central to the legal inquiry is an examination of the constitutional amendments necessary to facilitate ONOE. This entails a detailed scrutiny of Articles 83, 85, 172, and related provisions of the Constitution, which prescribe the duration and timing of parliamentary and state legislative assemblies’ terms. The paper evaluates the feasibility of amending these provisions to align the election schedules, considering the procedural requirements for constitutional amendments and the potential implications on federalism, electoral integrity, and political accountability. Furthermore, the research explores the interplay between ONOE and constitutional principles such as federalism,

separation of powers, and the basic structure doctrine. It delves into the delicate balance between ensuring uniformity and preserving the autonomy of State governments in the electoral process, critically analyzing the legal and political ramifications of centralizing election schedules.

**Keywords:** Constitutional Amendments, Electoral Integrity, Electoral Reform, Federalism, Indian Constitution, One Nation One Election.

## Introduction

The concept of ‘One Nation One Election’ has garnered significant attention within Indian political circles, eliciting both favorable and opposing viewpoints. In India, a country characterized by its diversity and the prominent role of regional parties in both central and state politics, achieving consensus on this matter presents a considerable challenge. While simultaneous elections have been successfully implemented in several democracies worldwide, India continues to grapple with deliberation and discord surrounding this issue.

Post-independence when Sardar Patel integrated 565 Princely States into one India<sup>2</sup> and shaped present ‘Bharat’ then one thing was clear in his mind and also to the other members of Constituent Assembly, that probability of another division of the country should be eliminated with all possibilities and the best methods should be adopted to keep India intact as “One Nation”. For this purpose, ‘One Flag’, ‘One Citizenship’, ‘One National Anthem’, ‘One Supreme Court’ and ‘One Constitution’ were kept as supreme Constitutional Par-

1. Researcher, Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

2. PIB, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/printrelease.aspx?relid=172053> (last visited April 13, 2023).

adigm. On 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950 the Constitution of India came into existence, which shaped India into a Quasi-Federal country with a powerful Centre.

Post-independence, a single political party (Indian National Congress), ruled in the Centre as well as in the States for a long time without facing any serious conflict from the states. For the first time in 1977, in post emergency elections the monopoly of Congress was breached, and Janta Party came to the power. After the death of Mrs. Gandhi, regional parties have seen their golden era by registering their strong presence in the Centre as well as in the State governments. In 1989, when Janta Dal formed the second coalition government in the Centre, a long era of coalition politics was begun again.

This era of coalition government in Centre and states changed the dynamics of politics in India. By the passage of time the national issues started receiving back seat and regional issues became more dominant. Because of the political compulsions, pre and post poll political alliances were made between national and regional parties, and because of their ideological mismatch many times the governments could not complete their prescribed five years term in Centre and States.

In the history of early independent India from 1952 to 1967 simultaneous elections for State Assemblies and Lok Sabha were held together. For the first time this process was derailed in the year 1971 when then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi advanced the election by dissolving Lok Sabha which were scheduled to be held in 1972 along with State Assemblies. This was the triggering point which set in motion a long cycle of holding separate elections<sup>3</sup>.

Regional issues started hitting the national interests including foreign policy of the country. Few examples are like the attitude of West Bengal Chief Minister

Mamta Banerjee on Teesta river water sharing treaty between India and Bangladesh<sup>4</sup> or a strong threatening objection of then Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalaita to then Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on attending a Commonwealth Summit in Sri Lanka<sup>5</sup>. The most recent controversy reflecting complete opposite stand of Bengal CM Mamta Banerjee and Central government's ambitious AADHAR Scheme and Rohingyaas<sup>6</sup> where ideological war is going on between the duos.

In essence, an attempt has been made here to explore the notion of simultaneous elections, meticulously examining its advantages and drawbacks. Through an analysis of various data points and logical arguments, the feasibility and potential challenges of its implementation are scrutinized. By delving into legal frameworks, empirical evidence, and comparative analyses, the paper aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the subject matter. Ultimately, it strives to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding electoral reforms in India, offering insights to policymakers and stakeholders alike.

### **Revamping the Voting Landscape: Exploring Electoral Reforms and the One Nation One Election Theory (Onoe)**

Electoral reforms are crucial to enable governments to deliver fast-track progress by ensuring that the wheels of administration move at a fast clip and do not get bogged down by prolonged elections<sup>7</sup>.

In past few decades some electoral malpractices have been curbed to a large extent, but even in 21<sup>st</sup> century divisive politics and brazen distribution of money by candidates to voters is a big hurdle in electoral reforms and good governance. It is also a reality that in India election has attained the level of industry and through-

3. NITI, [http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/document\\_publication/Note%20on%20Simultaneous%20Ele](http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/document_publication/Note%20on%20Simultaneous%20Ele), (last visited April 20, 2024).

4. The Teesta river dispute explained in 10 points, [TIMESOFINDIA.COM](https://www.timesofindia.com), (last visited April 30, 2024).

5. India-Prime-Minister-Manmohan-SinghCommonwealth-Summit-Sri-Lanka, [://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/10/](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/10/), (last visited Jun. 4, 2024).

6. Not-Just-Aadhar-Mamata-Banerjee-has-a-history- of opposing-narendra-modis-decisions-here-are-5-such-instances , available at: <https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/> /912159/30 Oct.2017, (last visited Jun. 15, 2024).

7. It's time to hold simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and state assemblies, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/it-s-time-to-hold-simultaneous-elections-for-lok-sabha-and-stateassemblies/story-BOXsnmQMzNEJHexBOWnonL.html/> Updated: Aug 09, 2016, (last visited Jul.9, 2024).

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out the year in one or another part of the country money is spent like anything to gain or retain political power. It involves not only the expense of huge amount of black money but also provides scope for anti-national powers to be involved and active. The issue of “Cambridge Analytica” is the latest one. Thus it is crucial to evolve some method to tackle this growing menace, which is a threat to the healthy democracy.

Very recently Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi has floated the idea of ‘One Nation One Election’ (hereinafter mentioned as ONOE) as an instrumental suggestion for powerful electoral reforms in India. This idea was also supported by then President Mr. Pranab Mukherjee and many other political parties, though received some resistance from others. The purpose of this is to synchronize the Lok Sabha and assembly elections and to stop frequent elections imposing an onerous burden on the country’s exchequer. This ONOE Idea has different dimensions which are required to be discussed in detail.

## Global Electoral Models: Comparing Democracies

In India one of the biggest challenges in conducting simultaneous election is consensus among considerable number of regional parties. Developing simultaneous election model of India is another challenge.

There are countries like US, UK, Germany and Canada, whose election model can be useful for us in developing the idea of ONOE. Obviously, the structure of Indian Constitution is different from the written and unwritten constitution of these countries, but the study of their model can be used as persuasive to evolve an amicable model on simultaneous elections in India.

### US Model of Election

The American Constitution is Federal in nature and US has adopted the Presidential form of the government. American Congress is bicameral, consisting of two chambers- “the Senate and the House of Representa-

tives”. Both senators and representatives are chosen through direct election. Congress comprises a total of 535 voting members out of which 435 are Representatives and 100 Senators<sup>8</sup>.

### Election of Representatives

Since 1911, as per set law the number of members in the U.S. House of Representatives remained at 435. After every two years all 435 representatives are up for re-election in each mid-term congressional election. While all registered voters in a state may vote for senators, only the registered voters residing in the congressional district that the candidate will represent may vote for representatives<sup>9</sup>.

### Election of Senators

Prior to 1913 and ratification of the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment, U.S. Senators used to be elected by their state legislatures, but the founding fathers realized that since the senators represented an entire state, they should be elected by a vote of the state legislature. Today, two senators are elected to represent each state and all registered voters in the state may vote for senators. Election winners are determined by the plurality rule. Each senator is elected for six years and after every two years 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the Senators go for elections, but because of their staggered 6 years term both the senators never up for reelection at the same time<sup>10</sup>.

### Election of US President

The President of the United States is elected for the period of four years. His election is held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Thus, the next Presidential election will be held on November 3, 2020<sup>11</sup>.

Unlike other elections of U.S., the President and Vice President are not directly elected by the people of US, instead, they are chosen by “electors” through a process called the Electoral College. First, the citizens of the United States who are registered to vote in one of the 50 U.S. states or Washington D.C. cast their ballots

8. Whitehouse, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/the-legislative-branch/>, (last visited on Jul 24, 2024).
9. A. Brudnick & Jennifer E. Manning, *African American Members of the United States Congress: 1870-2018*, 2018, <https://www.senate.gov/CRSPubs/617f17bb-61e9-40bb-b301-50f48fd239fc.pdf/>, (last visited Jul. 27, 2024).
10. 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Direct Election of U.S. Senators, <https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/17th-amendment>, (last visited Jul. 30, 2024).
11. Presidential Election Process, <https://www.usa.gov/election>, (last visited Sept. 3, 2024).

for members of the “U.S. Electoral College”, known as electors. Subsequently these electors cast their votes, which is known as “Electoral Votes”, directly for the President and Vice President. Total number of electors in US is 538 and to win the Presidential Election a candidate needs to win at least 270 electors, which is more than half of the total strength of electors.

If ever it happens when ‘no candidate’ receives required majority for President, then House of Representatives chooses the President. In the similar condition if no one receives a majority for Vice President, then the Senate chooses the Vice President.

### UK Model of Election

It is said that the “Parliamentary form of the Government” of India is an adoption from UK. The Parliament of the United Kingdom is the supreme legislative body, alone possessing legislative supremacy and thereby commanding ultimate power over all other political bodies in the UK and its territories. UK parliament has two houses- “House of Commons (Lower House) and House of Lords (Upper House)”<sup>12</sup>.

The House of Commons is a democratically elected chamber with elections held at least every five years. To restrict snap elections UK Parliament has passed ‘**Fixed-term Parliaments Act, 2011**’. The Act seeks to provide a sense of stability and predictability to British Parliament and its tenure.

Prior to the Act of 2011, the British Prime Minister had the de facto power to call an election at will by requesting dissolution of Parliament from the monarch. Earlier there was no traditional fixed period for holding elections, but since 1997 there has been an unwritten agreement that the government should hold elections alongside local elections on the first Thursday of May<sup>13</sup>.

This Act of Parliament, which was part of the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition agreement produced after the 2010 general election, was introduced fixed-term elections to the Westminster parliament<sup>14</sup>.

12. Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Parliament>, (last visited Sept.23, 2024).

13. Fixed election dates and term limits, <https://thenassauguardian.com/2017/11/13/consider-fixedelection-dates-term-limits/>, (Last visited Sept. 25, 2024).

14. Professor Robert Hazell, *The Conservative-Liberal Democrat Agenda for Constitutional and Political Reform*, The Constitution Unit, University College London June 2010, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitutionunit/publications/tabs/unit-publications/149.pdf>, (last visited Sept. 30, 2024).

15. Gesetze, [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_gg/index.html](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/index.html), (last visited Oct. 3, 2024).

The salient features of the Act are-

1. “Under the provisions of the Act, parliamentary elections must be held every five years, beginning on the first Thursday in May 2015, then, 2020, 2025 and so on”.
2. To ensure the remoteness of mid-term election a provision has been kept which says that- “Snap election can only be called when the government loses a confidence motion or when a two-thirds majority of MPs vote in favour of no confidence motion or if a motion for an early general election is agreed either by at least two-thirds of the whole House (including vacant seats) or without division; or if a motion of no confidence is passed and no alternative government is confirmed by the Commons within fourteen days by means of a confidence motion”.

The Act provided that the first elections would be held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 2015 and on the first

Thursday of May every fifth year thereafter. The fixation of date of elections means that the

Thus, the Act tries to provide some stability of tenure to the British Parliament in order to avoid early election. Now the no confidence motion became more Constructive in a way to ensure stability of the Legislature.

### German Model of Election

The Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (German: Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland) is the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany<sup>15</sup>. Chapter VI of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany deals with Federal Government.

“Article 67 of the Basic law for Federal Republic of Germany proposes constructive vote of nonconfidence which says:

1. The House of Representatives (Bundestag) can express its lack of confidence in the Chancellor

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only by electing a successor with the majority of its members and by requesting the President to dismiss the Chancellor. The President complies with the request and appoints the person elected”.

2. Forty-eight hours must elapse between the motion and the election.

Article 68 of the Basic Law- “Deals with dissolution of Parliament which says-

1. Where a motion of the Chancellor for a vote of confidence is not carried by the majority of the members of the House of Representatives (Bundestag), the President may, upon the proposal of the Chancellor, dissolve the House of Representatives (Bundestag) within twenty-one days. The right of dissolution lapses as soon as the House of Representatives (Bundestag) elects another Chancellor with the majority of its members.
2. Forty-eight hours must elapse between the motion and the vote thereon”.

Thus, in the case of Germany after exploiting all possible options dissolution is used as a last resort to ensure the completion of the term of House and to avoid mid-term poll.

## Challenges

Though as an Idea ‘One Nation One Election’ is exemplary good and but it cannot be denied that there are several practical challenges in implementing the same. The challenge ranges from political consensus to the constitutional and statutory limitations/challenges.

## Political Consensus on ONOE

One of the biggest challenges is to develop a consensus in such a vast country like India having total number of 7 national parties, 59 state parties and 2088 registered unrecognized parties<sup>16</sup>.

To explore the feasibility of simultaneous election a parliamentary committee headed by Dr.

E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan, after processing the opinion of different political parties on ONOE submit-

ted its report on “Feasibility of Holding Simultaneous Elections to the House of People (Lok Sabha) and State Legislative Assemblies” in December 2015.

Different political parties have given different suggestions. Few of them have supported the idea but majority either rejected or suggested. According to Congress- to conduct the elections simultaneously, all the Legislative Assemblies cannot be unilaterally abolished for no fault of them and this idea is unscientific and impracticable.

According to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) - holding parliamentary and state elections together would change the characteristics of the State-Centre relations and also would reduce the tenure of the state assemblies that have a different schedule of elections.

Parties like Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), and Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) supported it in toto. While parties like the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) supported the idea in principle, they also made suggestions on how to conduct simultaneous elections.

It is strange that many regional parties supported the idea of ONOE but national parties like Congress and Communist parties opposed it, though it is portrayed that ONOE is more detrimental to the interest of regional parties.

## Views of Election Commission of India

Present government wants to conduct simultaneous election from 2024. Election Commission of India which conducts 5 to 7 elections per year is agreeing to conduct simultaneous elections from 2018. But the Election Commission of India has certain reservations which are primarily related with logistic and administrative issues.

According to EC one election would require a large-scale purchase of Electronic Voting Machines and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines. To conduct simultaneous elections smoothly, a total of rupees 9284.15 crores will be needed for procurement of EVMs and VVPATs. But these machines would be needed to be replaced after every fifteen years which

16. NIC, [http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main1/polpar/listofpolparties.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/polpar/listofpolparties.aspx), (last visited Oct. 7, 2024).

would again entail expenditure. Storing these machines in warehouses would add further expenses<sup>17</sup>.

As per former election commissioner S.Y.Quraishi if the reason behind conducting simultaneous election is only financial then it can be controlled through some other ways, like regulating the election expenses of the political parties as it is being controlled in case of candidates contesting election<sup>18</sup>.

### Opinion of Social Research Institutions

According to Sanjay Kumar of Centre for Developing Societies (CSDS) ONOE would benefit the dominant national parties only as people tend to vote for the same party at the Centre and the State level if simultaneous elections are being conducted<sup>19</sup>.

Praveen Chakravarthy of IDFC Institute has studied the election trends of the country and has pointed out that from 1999 the “trend of choosing the same party has gone from 68% in 1999 to 77% in 2004 to 76% in 2009 and 86% in 2014”<sup>20</sup>.

According to many experts the current system of conducting separate elections put a check on the central government’s anti-people policy and governance. Some others believe that this reform is an attempt to move the nation towards presidential form of the government. As per them the designs of the current establishment seem to be aimed at turning India into a one-party system.

### Merits of One Nation - One Election

There are sound reasons to think about the idea of ONOE. It has following benefits-

#### 1. Streamlining Governance Efficiency through ONOE

In the current Indian political landscape, the frequent occurrence of state elections, averaging 5 to 7 annu-

ally, keeps the ruling party at the Centre constantly on edge. While this may not pose a significant challenge for the opposition, it proves to be a substantial distraction for the governing party, impeding their ability to focus on policy formulation, execution, and effective governance. Moreover, the necessity to tailor distinct strategies to address regional issues, often at odds with national policies, further exacerbates this challenge. This perpetual election cycle allows the central government a mere window of effectiveness, typically lasting between three to three and a half years. Transitioning to a system of One Nation One Election (ONOE) would alleviate this burden, affording leaders the time and energy necessary for more sustained and impactful governance.

#### 2. Realizing Cost-Efficiency Benefits

The electoral process in India is not only arduous but also exorbitantly expensive. The Election Commission of India reported an estimated expenditure of Rs 3,870 crore for conducting the 2014 Lok Sabha elections alone, while the 2015 state elections in Bihar purportedly cost around Rs 300 crore. Unofficial sources suggest that the actual expenses far exceed these figures, with an estimated Rs. 30,000 crore reportedly spent solely on the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. Additionally, political parties reportedly expended Rs 5,500 crore in the recently concluded Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, as per the Centre for Media Study.<sup>21</sup> Clearly, elections impose a substantial financial burden on both political parties and candidates alike. Adopting the ‘One India, One Election’ model presents an opportunity to alleviate this financial strain, redirecting these substantial

17. Election Commission backs proposal for simultaneous polls to Lok Sabha assemblies, <https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/election-commission-backs-proposal-for-simultaneous-polls-to-lok-sabha-assemblies/277918/> 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016. (last visited Oct.11, 2024).

18. Desh Deshantar, *Rajya Sabha TV*, 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017, <https://www.Youtube.com>. (last visited Oct. 15, 2024).

19. Simultaneous-polls-would-benefit-national-parties-experts, [http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/-116102700782\\_1.html/27<sup>th</sup>](http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/-116102700782_1.html/27th) October 2016, (last visited Oct. 19, 2024).

20. PRAVEEN CHAKRAVARTY, Nudging The Voter In One Direction?, <http://www.idfcinstitute.org/knowledge/publications/op-eds/concurrent-elections-concurrent-winners/> 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016, (last visited Oct. 22, 2024).

21. Narendra-Modi-May-Not-Wait-Till-2019-for-General-Elections-will-india-hold-dual-polls-with-states-in-2018 <http://www.firstpost.com/politics/-3473100.html>, (last visited Oct.24, 2024).

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sums towards meaningful public welfare initiatives, rather than being consumed by the electoral process.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. Enhanced Time Management

A significant portion of the political calendar in India is consumed by preparations for impending state elections, consuming nearly half of the year. This burden is particularly burdensome for the ruling party at the Centre, which expends considerable time and resources devising strategies and scrutinizing the actions of opposition parties. Rather than engaging in perpetual electioneering and blame games, this time could be more productively allocated towards constructive policy critique and formulation. The implementation of One Nation One Election (ONOE) offers a promising avenue for optimizing the utilization of time by political parties, freeing them from the constant cycle of electoral campaigning.

### 4. Mitigating Vote Bank Politics In India

Where the right to vote is not mandatory, political parties often find themselves in positions of power despite securing only a modest percentage of the total votes cast.<sup>23</sup> This dynamic incentivizes segmented politics, wherein policies are tailored to appease specific voting blocs, often at the expense of broader societal interests. The fear of losing voter support often leads politicians to prioritize short-term gains over the enactment of long-term, beneficial policies. However, the adoption of simultaneous elections would compel all political parties to articulate their stances on national and regional issues concurrently. This would curtail the practice of espousing contradictory agendas at different electoral levels, fostering greater transparency and accountability in political discourse.

### 5. Impeding Policy Formulation

In the formulation of policies, the paramount consideration should be the national interest and the welfare

of the marginalized and vulnerable segments of society. However, the constant cycle of elections compels policymakers to prioritize winning votes over substantive policy objectives. The perpetual nature of elections incentivizes political agendas that yield immediate electoral benefits, rather than policies with enduring societal impact. Embracing simultaneous elections would afford policymakers the opportunity to devise policies with long-term ramifications, unencumbered by the exigencies of electoral politics.

### 6. Model Code of Conduct and Policy Stagnation

The enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) upon the announcement of election schedules by the Election Commission engenders a period of stringent regulatory constraints for political parties, contesting candidates, and incumbents. This code dictates a set of guidelines encompassing permissible and prohibited activities during the electoral process.<sup>24</sup> Throughout the duration of Lok Sabha elections, the MCC applies nationwide, while during Legislative Assembly elections, it extends to the entire state. Consequently, apart from routine administrative functions, development projects, welfare initiatives, and infrastructure endeavors often experience significant delays until the cessation of the model code's applicability.<sup>25</sup> Available data indicates that the imposition of the model code has impeded developmental projects in various states, resulting in substantial delays in nearly 30-40% of developmental activities.<sup>26</sup>

### 7. Curbing Malpractices

Instances of casteism, communalism, corruption, and factional politics pervade electoral contests with alarming frequency. Simultaneous elections offer a viable mechanism for mitigating these vices by consolidating electoral cycles. This consolidation ensures that these malpractices surface only once or twice every

22. Pibmumbai, [http://pibmumbai.gov.in/English/PDF/E2014\\_GE1.PDF/March9,2014](http://pibmumbai.gov.in/English/PDF/E2014_GE1.PDF/March9,2014), (last visited Oct. 25, 2024).

23. Pibmumbai, [http://pibmumbai.gov.in/English/PDF/E2014\\_GE1.PDF/March9,2014](http://pibmumbai.gov.in/English/PDF/E2014_GE1.PDF/March9,2014), (last visited Oct. 20, 2024).

24. Model code of conduct for the guidance of the political parties and candidates, <http://documents.gov.in/UA/992.pdf>, (last visited Oct. 26, 2024).

25. Bibek Debroy and Kishore Desai, ANALYSIS OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS: THE "WHAT", "WHY" AND "HOW", [http://www.thehinducentre.com/multimedia/archive/03226/Note\\_on\\_Simultaneo\\_3226067a.pdf](http://www.thehinducentre.com/multimedia/archive/03226/Note_on_Simultaneo_3226067a.pdf), (last visited Oct. 28, 2024).

26. How do elections affect the economy ? An analysis of key economic variables shows that economic activity slows down ahead of an election Last Published: Mon, Apr 14, 2014, <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/RRDNEebSEiPE-CEiclpqZmM/How-do-elections-affect-the-economy.html/>, (last visited Oct. 29, 2024).

five years, compelling political parties to articulate cohesive national and regional agendas that are inherently consistent with each other.

## 8. Optimizing Human Resources

The logistical demands associated with conducting elections in India necessitate a substantial allocation of manpower and resources during both Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections. Simultaneous elections obviate the need for repetitive deployments of security personnel and election staff. Similarly, the logistical burden of transporting Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), polling materials, and establishing polling stations is significantly reduced when elections are synchronized. This streamlining of electoral processes enables more efficient utilization of manpower and resources, minimizing redundancy and enhancing operational efficacy.

Undoubtedly the benefits of ONOE cannot be denied but the feasibility and possibility of conducting the same is a big challenge. Before discussing the possibility of conducting ONOE in India it will be useful to discuss the election model of those democratic countries of the world which are similarly placed to Bharat.

## Constitutional Framework for One Nation - One Election

The implementation of the One Nation One Election (ONOE) project proposed by the Government of India necessitates significant changes to the Constitution of India to streamline the electoral process and synchronize the terms of various legislative bodies. Below are the key provisions or articles of the Constitution that would be impacted or need to be amended:

### 1. Article 83 (Duration of Houses of Parliament)

- Amendment required synchronizing the terms of the Lok Sabha (House of the People) with the terms of state legislative assemblies. Currently, the Lok Sabha's term is five years, but the terms of state legislative assemblies vary.

### 2. Article 172 (Duration of State Legislatures)

- Similar to Article 83, amendments are needed to align the terms of state legislative assemblies

with the Lok Sabha, facilitating simultaneous elections.

### 3. Article 324 (Election Commission of India)

Amendments may be necessary to empower the Election Commission of India (ECI) with additional responsibilities and authority to conduct synchronized elections efficiently. This may include changes in the scheduling, planning, and oversight of elections at both the central and state levels.

### 4. Article 356 (Provisions in case of failure of constitutional machinery in States)

- Modifications may be needed to ensure that in case of the dissolution of a state assembly due to the imposition of President's rule under Article 356, it does not disrupt the synchronized election cycle.

### 5. Article 368 (Power of Parliament to amend the Constitution and procedure thereof)

- Given the magnitude of changes required, amendments to Article 368 itself may be necessary to facilitate the process of amending other provisions of the Constitution related to ONOE. This might involve specifying special procedures or majority requirements for ONOE-related amendments.

### 6. Schedule II (Provisions as to the President and the Governors of States)

- Amendments may be necessary to ensure that the terms of the President and Governors align with the synchronized election cycle, as their roles are intertwined with the dissolution and convening of legislative bodies.

### 7. Schedule X (Provisions as to disqualifications on ground of defection)

- Possible amendments might be needed to address issues related to defections and anti-defection laws in the context of synchronized elections to prevent political instability and ensure the integrity of the electoral process.

In essence, the implementation of the One Nation One Election project in India would require a comprehensive set of constitutional amendments to harmonize the electoral cycles of various legislative bodies, empower



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election authorities, and address procedural intricacies to uphold the democratic principles enshrined in the Constitution.

## Findings

- To maintain governance and development continuity and to be in line with the intentions of the Constitution, it is necessary to synchronize the elections of all three organizations.
- Finding common ground in a country the size of India—which has 2088 registered political parties, 59 state parties, and seven national parties—is one of the toughest obstacles.
- The adoption of simultaneous elections, also referred to as “One Nation, One Election,” would have significant effects on society, the economy, and politics.
- A single voter list would need to be created, a unified electoral legislation would need to be implemented, and the same polling places would need to be assigned for all election levels.

## Suggestions

- We ought to take a cue from other nations that have successfully had simultaneous elections, such as Sweden, South Africa, and Indonesia.
- Due to the vast number of Local Bodies, it would be both difficult and impossible to synchronize the third-tier election timetables with those of the House of the People and State Legislative Assembly elections.
- It is imperative to have an extensive consultative approach that involves inviting suggestions and having face-to-face interactions with all stakeholders.
- These consultations would not only highlight the diversity of issues at hand but also give political parties, experts, citizens, and other stakeholders a chance to voice their opinions and provide comments for the government to take into consideration.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the discourse surrounding constitutional amendments and the implementation of “One Nation -

One Election” in India, demands a comprehensive legal inquiry to navigate its intricacies. This paper has delved into various facets, ranging from the historical context of the Indian Constitution to the contemporary challenges posed by simultaneous elections. Through a critical analysis of constitutional provisions and scholarly perspectives, it has been elucidated that while the concept of synchronizing elections holds potential benefits in terms of efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and political stability, its implementation necessitates careful consideration of constitutional integrity, federal principles, and democratic values.

The paper highlighted the constitutional mechanisms that would need to be amended or reinterpreted to accommodate the proposal, emphasizing the need for a nuanced approach to preserve the essence of democratic governance. Moreover, stakeholder consultations, consensus-building, and rigorous legal scrutiny in formulating any amendments or policy frameworks related to electoral reforms.

In essence, the journey towards implementing simultaneous elections requires a judicious blend of legal scholarship, political pragmatism, and public discourse. While the vision of synchronized elections may offer certain advantages, its realization must be underpinned by a robust legal framework that safeguards the foundational principles of the Indian Constitution. Thus, this paper serves as a foundational step in initiating a rigorous legal inquiry into the constitutional amendments necessary for the realization of “One Nation - One Election” in India.

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