

One Nation, One Election

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I. INTRODUCTION

The idea is about structuring the Indian election cycle in a manner so that elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies are synchronised together so that the election to both can be held within a given span of time.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

The objective of this research paper is to analyze and initiate a discursive study on the ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION theory put by the Indian government. It is to coordinate the national elections at all levels of government. It seeks to reduce election frequency and establish a more effective and coordinated electoral process by holding elections for the federal government, state governments, and municipal entities all at once.

III. THE BACKGROUND

On Constitution Day (November 26), the Prime Minister of India delivered a video conference to the 80 All India Presiding Officers Conference's concluding session in Kevadiya, Gujarat. In addition to advocating for "One Nation, One Election," which would create a single voter list for all elections, he urged the presiding officers to make the language in the statute books more palatable and make it simpler to eliminate unnecessary regulations. Additionally, he thanked India for its efforts in the battle against terrorism as well as the security forces. That day commemorated twelve years since the terrorist assaults in Mumbai.

IV. INDIA'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM

In our country, elections are planned by Election Commission for centre and state whereas by State election commission for local bodies. In which direct elections take place for the members of Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha and Panchayats or Municipalities.

V. MEANING OF ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION

One Nation, one election comes with various proposals but the major proposal is to combine the electoral roll for state and centre and to conduct simultaneous elections of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha or of Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha and local bodies (Panchayats or Municipalities).

VI. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

Helps control party and election spending, for example, while simultaneously saving the public purse. Lessen the workload for the security apparatus and administration.

Make sure that government programs are implemented on time, and make sure that the administrative apparatus is working on development rather than campaigning.

Fix the issue with the way the current government is being run. It is frequently observed that ruling politicians postpone making tough long-term decisions that could ultimately benefit the country in the long run in order to obtain short-term political advantage from a particular assembly election.

Give all parties involved—political parties, the Election Commission of India (ECI), paramilitary forces, and citizens—more time to prepare for the elections that take place every five years.

Crony capitalism can be controlled using this election process.

Social fabric also gets disturbed due to casteism, communalism and regionalism.

Other factors may be logistical reasons of election commission and can into better proportion of voters.

VII. HOW DID OTHER COUNTRIES SOLVE THIS PROBLEM

In the most democratic countries like United States of America and United Kingdom, the elections are held in a synchronized manner in order to ease the election process and reduce the burden of public.

USA, which is a presidential and a federal state, conducts its elections on a special election day in the month of November (Tuesday after 1st Monday) every even year.

On the other hand, UK, which is a unitary and parliamentary state, conducts its elections in the month of May (1st Thursday) except the election of House of Commons.

VIII. INDIA'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM DURING 1952-67 AND CHANGES AFTER 1967

After the first government (Interim) of 1947, elections were conducted in the years 1951-52 for Vidhan Sabha, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, President and Vice President which happened in a regular (symmetrical) manner till 1967.

The symmetrical order of elections after 1967 were disturbed. There were 2 reasons for the disturbance of the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections, due to majority crisis and due to PM's Choice. There were 2 reasons for the disturbance of Rajya Sabha elections, due to CM's choice, Majority crisis and by using of centre's power of President rule (Article 356).

IX. HISTORY OF DEMAND OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

1955: In its 14th report, the Law Commission of India suggested holding concurrent elections for the State Legislative Assemblies and the Lok Sabha (lower house of Parliament).

1967: The government-appointed Swaran Singh Committee suggested that the Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections be held at the same time.

1971: The possibility of holding elections simultaneously was further considered in the Parliament, and certain political parties backed it.

1999: In its 170th report, the Law Commission of India once more advocated for holding the Lok

Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies' elections concurrently.

Recently Occurring Events:

2014: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposal to hold elections concurrently during his campaign for office rekindled interest in the notion.

A report was submitted in 2015 by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law, and Justice.

2015 saw the submission of a report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law, and Justice that suggested simultaneous elections be held in India.

In favour of simultaneous elections, the Election Commission of India presented a proposal to the Law Ministry in 2017.

In order to get input from the general public, the Law Commission of India published a draft white paper titled "Simultaneous Elections - Constitutional and Legal Perspectives" in 2018.

2019: A motion in favor of holding elections simultaneously was approved by the 17th Lok Sabha.

X. CONCERNS REGARDING SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

When you take into account the customs and traditions that India's Parliamentary system adheres to, the synchronization is a significant issue.

The Lower House is the body to which the government is accountable. If the government were to fall before the end of its term, an election would then need to be held.

It is challenging to persuade and unite all the political parties around the concept.

Because the ECI must offer two sets (one for the election to the Legislative Assembly and the other for the Lok Sabha), the needs for Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs) will increase in order to hold simultaneous elections.

Additionally, there will be a need for more poll workers and for improved security measures.

Some opposition leaders feel that federalism could be in danger. They feel that it could destroy the quasi-federal nature of our country and this can push the country towards Presidential system (one nation – one leader).

XI. HOW REAL ARE THESE CONCERNS?

Constitutional Challenges: Implementing simultaneous elections may require amendments to the constitution or various state laws. Changing the terms and tenure of state governments to align with the central government could raise constitutional issues and require significant legal and political consensus.

Political Imbalance: Synchronizing elections could result in an imbalance of power between national and regional parties. Smaller regional parties might feel disadvantaged as simultaneous elections could overshadow state-level issues, leading to a more centralized political discourse.

Some feel it can be dangerous but there are some opposite facts.

After 2019 Lok Sabha elections, BJP lost in many states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan etc which clearly shows that one centre great leader(Here, Honourable Narendra Modi) can't influence each and every election.

XII. WHAT ALTERNATIVES DO WE HAVE?

There can be following options : No change in current process; simultaneous elections of Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha and Local bodies; simultaneous elections for Local bodies and Vidhan Sabha and separate for Lok Sabha; simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha and separate for Local bodies; all elections in 2.5 years or synchronized elections every year.

XIII. WHAT IS THE BEST ALTERNATIVE?

A proper consensus should be taken in reformation process to avoid trust deficit in opposition parties and in public too. First step can be conducting elections yearly then second step can be conducting Vidhan Sabha and Local Bodies elections simultaneously in every state. Lastly, with gradual change we can think of conducting Lok Sabha,

Vidhan Sabha and Local Bodies elections simultaneously.

A gradual process of 10-15 can be taken for the above requirements.

XIV. HOW CAN THIS ALTERNATIVE BE IMPLEMENTED?

We need to do at least 4 to 5 amendments. In the Constitution, representing of people's act 1951, Lok Sabha Business rules and in Vidhan Sabha Business rules. And, with the passage of time, society need to develop the political culture and political socialization.

XV. AMENDMENTS REQUIRED IN THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAWS

Reformation needs to be done on the following :

- Dissolution of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha(Article 85, Article 174)
- Elections and representatives for remaining period of 5 years(Articles 83 and 172 like
- Articles 243E/U)
- No Confidence Motion (Rule no. 198 of Lok Sabha Business rules)
- Anti-Defection Law
- Election Commission and state election commission(Articles 324, 243 K and 243 2A)
- Temporary terms for the conduct of smooth and simultaneous elections

The Representation of People Act 1951, which covers various modalities of conducting elections in the country, also needs to be amended.

XVI. CONCLUSION

Elections are held at different places every few months and it hampers the developmental work. Therefore, it's a must to have a deep study and deliberation on the idea in order to prevent the impact of the model code of conduct on development works every few months.

There needs to be a consensus on whether the country needs one nation, one poll or not. All political parties should at least cooperate in debating this issue, once the debate starts, the public opinion can be taken into consideration. India being a mature democracy, can then follow the outcome of the debate.

‘One India One Election’ would be a good change if it could be carried out with the proper execution of policies and rules, taking care of the rising need for good administrative staff and security.

A focused group of constitutional experts, think tanks, government officials and representatives of political parties should be formed to work out appropriate implementation related details.

Elections in India are celebrated as festival and if they happen once in every 5 years all together throughout the country then it would be Maha-Festival.

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