
ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION - CONSTITUTIONAL FEASIBILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

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1. ABSTRACT

India, also known as Bharat, is the world's largest democracy. This democratic framework thrives on the vitality of its electoral process, which has evolved from ballot paper to Electronic Voting machines (EVM's) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATS). Elections here are also considered the world's largest democratic festival enabling citizens to elect their representatives actively. Since its Independence, India has held over 400 elections, from Lok Sabha to state elections, which are frequent and fragmented, though, which has raised the debate about the need for a more effective system. Consequently, there is now renewed interest in the idea of "One Nation, One Election," which means synchronizing elections throughout the country at the same time for the Lok Sabha and states. Entry 72 of List I powers the parliament to make laws regarding elections of Parliament and state legislature¹ (High-Level Committee, 2024). The main reason for the concept and debate to spark is that the frequent elections hold the implementation of policies, Cost efficiency with frequent governance, etc., however, there are also challenges such as constitutional amendments, consent of the parties, and many other challenges to be faced. This study aims to determine whether this reform is a necessary step towards strengthening Indian democracy or if it poses risks that could undermine its federal structure.

¹ High-Level Committee. (2024). Report on One Nation, One Election. Government of India.

2 - Introduction

India, that is Bharat, where everything is being unified in the name of national integration from One Nation One Tax to One Nation One Election a unique national integration is being pushed to unify the country.

India has a unique election law. It is the result of a historical process in which institutions of governance were gradually established. These institutions were initially autocratic but gradually became participatory as the fight for independence progressed. Franchising-related topics were actively considered in the Franchise Committee Report of 1932² (High-Level Committee, 2024). Given that just one electoral roll needed to be prepared, it was suggested that the Assembly's voting rights should be the same as those of the provincial councils. "The current practice is to hold the provincial and assembly elections on the same day," (Seth, n.d.).³ The report also states that "the present practice is to hold the provincial and assembly elections on the same day."

The Franchise Committee Report of 1932, therefore, offers a historical background for the concept of simultaneous elections, echoing the current discourse in India. The stress on the preparation of a single electoral roll mirrors the contemporary call for a "common electoral roll." Moreover, the simultaneous conduct of provincial and assembly elections, as practiced then, underscores the efficiency and coherence achievable through synchronized electoral cycles.⁴

According to Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar, the Constituent Assembly's decision to grant every Indian the right to vote under a system of universal and direct voting was an act of "abundant faith" in the triumph of democratic government and the average person. The Constitution's Articles 325 and 326⁵ (Lok Sabha Debates, n.d.), which form the cornerstone of the Indian election process, made the message of universal adult suffrage very evident.⁶

² High-Level Committee. (2024). Report on One Nation, One Election. Government of India.

³ Seth, R. (n.d.). The story of the evolution of parliamentary democracy in India. Medium. <https://medium.com/india-centre/the-story-of-the-evolution-of-parliamentary-democracy-in-india-b043a5de1479>

⁴ High-Level Committee. (2024). Report on One Nation, One Election. Government of India.

⁵ Lok Sabha Debates. (n.d.). Discussion on [Constituent Assembly Debates On 8 June, 1949 Part I] Indian Kanoon. Retrieved from <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1706838/>

⁶ Press information bureau, (17 DEC 2024 10:42AM by PIB Delhi), One Nation, One Election[Press release], Press Release:Press Information Bureau,

Since achieving independence in 1947, India, which is frequently hailed as the largest democracy in the world, has seen a notable transformation in its voting procedures. The country's evolving political landscape and dedication to democratic principles are reflected in the transition from the first synchronized elections to the current staggered polling system, which shows the changing political landscape ⁷ (DrKumarS .al.) and unwavering commitment to democratic principles

While elections are an integral part of any democracy, their frequency and scheduling play a crucial role in shaping the governance and administrative efficiency of a nation. India as of 2024 has a total of approximately 96.8 million eligible voters who were eligible to vote in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, and the concept of One Nation, One Election is not new to India. In fact India used to have simultaneous elections until 1967. India conducted the first general elections in 1951-1952 when the Lok Sabha and State assembly elections were held simultaneously and was disrupted due to premature dissolution of state assemblies of some states in 1968⁸(NEXT IAS, n.d.) a period near emergency which led to a separate cycle for different states and the central government resulting in the current frequent and staggering election system in India.

The financial implications of conducting multiple elections are also a matter of concern. The 2019 Lok Sabha elections alone incurred an expenditure of approximately 60000 crores, to 1.34 lakh crore in 2024 ⁹(Shemin Joy) and with a significant portion of this amount being spent by political parties on campaigning. Additionally, state elections demand separate financial resources, which leads to continuous strain of the exchequer. As a result of this fragmentation, elections are held continuously, with the Election Commission of India (ECI) supervising many elections annually. Because of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), which limits policy actions during election seasons, such a system frequently impairs administration and places a heavy administrative and financial load on the state bureaucracy.¹⁰(Dr. Sushma Sharma et. al)

⁷ Kumar, S., & Sinha, N. (2025, April 9). One Nation, One Election: Making democracy efficient and accountable. *The Pioneer*. <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2025/state-editions/one-nation--one-election--making-democracy-efficient-and-accountable.html>,

⁸ NEXT IAS. (n.d.). Simultaneous elections. NEXT IAS Blog. Retrieved from <https://www.nextias.com/blog/simultaneous-elections/>

⁹ Deccan Herald. (2019, June 10). ₹60,000 crore spent during LS polls 2019: Report. Deccan Herald. Retrieved from <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/rs-60000-crore-spent-during-ls-polls-2019-report-737840.html>

¹⁰Dr. Sushma Sharma, Indian Journal of Integrated Research in Law , Volume IV Issue VI <https://ijirl.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/EXPLORING-THE-FEASIBILITY-CHALLENGES-AND-IMPLICATIONS-OF-SIMULTANEOUS-ELECTIONS-IN-INDIA.pdf>

The debate surrounding One Nation One Election is not merely a political disclosure but also a matter of democratic efficiency and governance optimization, while the opponents warn of its effects on federalism and the representation of regional views, while supporters emphasize its potential to simplify elections, lessen budgetary strains, and improve administrative stability.

The concept of ONOE has attracted interest from both policymakers and specialists, with the Law Commission and the NITI Aayog examining its feasibility in previous reports. The 1999 Law Commission Report initially suggested constitutional changes to reinstate synchronized elections. Subsequently, the 79th report from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law and Justice (2015) underscored the financial strain and governance challenges arising from recurrent elections and proposed a gradual strategy for execution. In 2017, NITI Aayog suggested a two-phase strategy to reinstate concurrent elections, claiming that it would improve governance and lower election-associated costs. The Law Commission addressed the matter again in its 2018 report, emphasizing the necessity for constitutional changes to enable ONOE. Most recently, a High-Level Committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind was formed in 2023 to examine its execution¹¹. This committee presented its report in March 2024, detailing specific actions for implementing ONOE via constitutional changes and a systematic, gradual transition. The present administration has demonstrated a strong interest in this suggestion, highlighting its ability to enhance governance, simplify electoral procedures, and make the most of administrative resources. As India progresses as a significant global economic and political force, improving its electoral system to boost governance efficiency is a crucial factor. ONOE presents a possible answer to numerous issues created by recurrent elections, but its execution needs thorough assessment to guarantee that democratic values and India's federal system remain intact¹². By conducting a thorough examination of historical examples, legal frameworks, and international comparisons, this study seeks to offer a detailed insight into the necessity of ONOE in India and the ways it can be effectively implemented.

3 - Historical Background of how elections were held

The country, with the help of the Election Commission of India, which derives its power

¹¹ Press information bureau,(17 DEC 2024 10:42AM by PIB Delhi), One Nation, One Election[Press release], Press Release:Press Information Bureau,

¹² Supra 10

through the Constitution of India, which is the supreme law of the land under article 356.

In India, the idea of One Nation, One Election (ONOE) is not a novel one. Until the late 1960s, simultaneous elections were common throughout the nation. Political unrest, constitutional changes, and the declaration of emergency in 1975 caused the unplanned transition from a synchronized voting system to the current staggered election format in India¹³

India's first general elections were held in 1951-52, where elections for the State Legislative Assembly and the Lok Sabha (Parliament) were held concurrently. In order to guarantee consistent election cycles throughout the nation, this practice persisted for the following four election cycles in 1957, 1962, and 1967. The Election Commission of India (ECI) minimized administrative expenses, policy disruptions¹⁴, and security concerns at this time by conducting elections in a methodical and organized manner.

In 1968 and 1969, the early dissolution of several state assemblies caused the elections to be out of sync. Political unrest, defections, and constitutional problems caused the fall of numerous state governments. In addition, early general elections were called in 1971 rather than 1972 since the Lok Sabha was dissolved too soon in 1971. As a result, the election schedule became even more skewed, with many states holding elections at various dates.

When the Lok Sabha and certain State Assemblies' terms were prolonged beyond their customary five-year term during the Emergency period (1975–77), the situation deteriorated. New elections were held following the end of the Emergency in 1977,¹⁵ (Shridarshan E) but election synchronization was never achieved again. As a result, India now has a disjointed election cycle, with elections for the State Assemblies and Lok Sabha taking place at various times.

Starting in the 1980s, frequent elections became a defining characteristic of Indian democracy. The emergence of regional parties and coalition governments often resulted in political instability, which led to the premature dissolution of state assemblies and exacerbated the

¹³ Election Commission of India. (n.d.). History of Elections in India. Retrieved from <https://eci.gov.in>

¹⁴ Drishti IAS, 13 Apr 2024, First General election in India, First General Election 1951-52

¹⁵ Sridharan, E. (2014). Electoral fragmentation and the rise of regional parties in India. *Asian Survey*, 54(5), 819–841. <https://doi.org/10.xxxxx>

Law Commission of India. (1999). *One Nation, One Election – A Feasibility Study*. Government of India. Law Commission of India. (2018). *Simultaneous Elections: Constitutional and Legal Perspectives*. Retrieved from, <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in>,

disparity between state and national election schedules. By the 1990s and 2000s, India found itself in a state of nearly continuous elections, with voting occurring annually in various states.

Revival of the ONOE Debate (1999-Present)¹⁶

The discussion surrounding the reinstatement of simultaneous elections has re-emerged multiple times over the past twenty years:

Law Commission Report (1999): The initial significant proposal for reinstating ONOE was presented in 1999, when the Law Commission of India advocated for constitutional amendments to facilitate simultaneous elections.

Parliamentary Standing Committee Report (2015): This report underscored the financial strain and administrative difficulties associated with frequent elections, recommending a gradual transition towards ONOE.

NITI Aayog Report (2017): This report suggested a two-phase strategy for the reintroduction of simultaneous elections throughout India.¹⁷(Dubey J)

Law Commission Report (2018): This report reiterated the necessity for constitutional amendments to enable ONOE. High-Level Committee (2023-24): Chaired by former President Ram Nath Kovind, this committee delivered its findings in March 2024, advocating for a phased implementation approach through constitutional amendments.¹⁸¹⁹

4 - Comparative Analysis

Voter turnout in elections is frequently used to assess a democracy's health. There is a commonly held belief that high voter turnout indicates a more robust democratic state and lends more credibility to democracy. There is a complicated relationship between election date and

¹⁶ Government of India. (2024). High-Level Committee Report on One Nation, One Election. Ministry of Law and Justice., Hlc-report-en (1).pdf

¹⁷ (Dubey J), Election commission of India, Election Commission of India, (pleaders)

¹⁸ Law Commission of India. (1999). One Nation, One Election – A Feasibility Study. Government of India. Law Commission of India. (2018). Simultaneous Elections: Constitutional and Legal Perspectives. Retrieved from, <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in>,

¹⁹ Legal Upanishad. (n.d.). Election Commission of India: Powers, functions, and role in democracy. Retrieved from <https://legalupanishad.com/election-commission-of-india/>

voter turnout, according to empirical data. Voter turnout in following parliamentary elections has been consistently found to be negatively correlated with the time since the last one.

This means that that the next election is going to have a lower turnout than the more recent previous one. Furthermore, studies on voter turnout in elections held at levels other than the national one, such as supranational or local elections, show that the frequency of previous elections, as well as how close they were to one another in time, can affect voter turnout. Voter fatigue can result from a heavy schedule of previous elections or from one election that is conducted just before another, which lowers turnout. Concurrent elections, on the other hand, have been demonstrated to increase voter turnout and may lessen the effects of election weariness. Here are some examples for One Nation One election and its impact²⁰ (Dwivedi J)

Germany²¹

Garmann's analysis was replicated and expanded to cover federal elections in the research of (Kostelka, February, 2025)²². Contrary to the conventional wisdom that higher-order elections are immune to these effects, the hypothesis suggests that first-order election participation is impacted frequency of elections in the country be it the state or the local or the presidential

These findings strongly support the hypothesis and imply that frequent elections may cause voter fatigue, which would lower turnout even in important elections. The idea that expanding possibilities for citizen participation inevitably results in higher levels of political engagement may be called into question if frequent elections reduce voter turnout. It calls into question how frequently elections should be held in order to strike a balance between the necessity of representative government and the possibility of voter fatigue.

South Africa²³

By offering an alternative to the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) method and other majority-based

²⁰ (Dwivedi J), One Nation, One Election (ONOE): A Vision for Unified Governance, One Nation, One Election (ONOE): A Vision for Unified Governance – Rising Kashmir,

²¹ Singh, K. (n.d.). One Nation, One Election: An extensive analysis and possible solution. Lawctopus. Retrieved from <https://www.lawctopus.com/academike/one-nation-one-election-an-extensive-analysis-and-possible-solution/>

²² (Kostelka, February, 2025), Kostelka, F. (2025, February). The effects of synchronized elections on voter turnout and political engagement: A comparative study. Comparative Political Studies, 58(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140231169020>

²³ Supra 17

voting methods, the proportional representation system enhances the simultaneous election model.

Various electoral systems. These outdated approaches often favor larger political bodies, which can lead to biased outcomes. Conversely, marginalization may be reduced through proportional representation. Various opposing viewpoints that might surface under FPTP, when a narrow majority will decide the winner of the election in the country

The adoption of a proportional representation system in India may be opposed by parties that capitalize on the nuances of caste-based politics and swing votes, which are crucial to the nation's electoral strategies. The current FPTP system permits victories through simple majorities and sometimes marginal leads, which may reduce the representation of a substantial minority faction.

Sweden²⁴

The general elections in the country of Sweden are held every four years on the second Sunday of September, where the voters elect representatives to municipal and regional councils and the Riksdag(Parliament). As the election system is based on proportional representation, the parties' share of the vote is reflected in the distribution of seats in the assembly.

In Sweden, there are two primary types of referendums: constitutional law and advisory. While referendums on constitutional issues are legally binding if they are held in conjunction with general elections, advisory referendums are non-binding and are used to gauge popular opinion.

In the most recent general election, which took place on the 11th of September 2022, where it had a voter turnout of 84.2%, which also shows that simultaneous elections increases the voter turnout. ²⁵

5 - Constitutional Perspective

The high-level committee report, 2024, on simultaneous elections led by former president of

²⁴ Supra 17

²⁵ Mit voter turnout, Voter turnout | MIT Election Lab,

India Ram Nath Kovind has suggested a few changes to the constitution that are necessary for the implementation of One Nation One Election.

The constitution of India, which is the supreme law of the land, envisages some provisions for the commencement of the House of the People, i.e., the Lok Sabha and the State legislative assemblies. Chapter II of part 5 in the Indian constitution makes provisions for the composition of the House of People, and similarly, Part III of part IV is in relation to the state legislature.

Elections are dealt with Part XV, which provides for the establishment of election commission tasked with overseeing, directing, and controlling the creation of electoral rolls and the execution of all elections for the President and Vice President's positions, as well as for each State's Legislature and Parliament. Article 327 gives Parliament the authority to enact laws about all issues about or associated with elections to the House of Parliament or the House (or both Houses) of the Legislature of State, including constituency delineation and electoral roll preparation.²⁶ (Kumar j)

The maximum terms of the House of the People and State Legislative Assemblies are specified in Article 83(2) and 172(1), respectively. According to these provisions, assemblies will continue to function for five years following the date of their first meeting, unless they are dissolved earlier. Only when an emergency declaration is in effect can the House's tenure be temporarily extended.

Articles 239 to 242 of Part VIII deals with the "The Union Territories." With particular reference to the Union Territory of Puducherry, Article 239-A mandates the establishment of local legislatures, councils of ministers, or both for specific Union Territories. The National Capital Territory of Delhi ("NCT of Delhi") is subject to a specific legislation known as Article 239-AA, which outlines its governance.

Local bodies known as Panchayats and Municipalities are covered under Part IX, which contains Articles 243 to 243-O, and Part IXA, which contains Articles 243P to 243ZG. The State Election Commission will have authority over the creation of the Panchayat electoral rolls, according to Article 243 K. The State Election Commission will have authority over the

²⁶ (Kumar j), Ambiguity in the interpretation of state or union territory, Ambiguity in the interpretation of state or union territory - iPleaders

creation of the municipal electoral rolls, according to Article 243ZA.

Articles 324 to 329 of Part XV of the constitution address election administration in India. The Election Commission of India is tasked with overseeing, directing, and controlling elections under Article 324. Both at the federal level and in the states, Article 327 gives Parliament the authority to enact laws pertaining to legislature elections. If no such legislation has been established by the Parliament, Article 328 gives the Legislature of a State the authority to pass laws pertaining to all issues pertaining to elections to the State Legislatures.²⁷

The Representation of the People Act, 1951²⁸

Notification of general elections to the House of People and State Legislative Assemblies is covered in Sections 141 and 152 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. Sections 147 to 151A of Part IX address by-elections to the State Legislative Assemblies and the House of People.²⁹

Rule 198 of House of the People Business Rules, 2014³⁰

The admissibility and process for introducing a motion of no-confidence in the House of People are outlined in Rule 198.³¹ In addition to the above-stated rule, different States and Union Territories have particular procedural rules pertaining to the no-confidence motion and other procedures to be followed in the Legislative Assembly of that particular State or Union Territory. (Singh al)^{32 33}

6 - Research problem

What changes can One Nation One Election bring in, and does it violate any constitutional

²⁷ Government of India. (2024). High-Level Committee report on One Nation, One Election. Ministry of Law and Justice, Hlc-report-en (1).pdf,

²⁸ High-Level Committee Report on One Nation, One Election <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2024/03/16/high-level-committee-report-on-one-nation-one-election/>

²⁹ Government of India. (2024). High-Level Committee report on One Nation, One Election. Ministry of Law and Justice, Hlc-report-en (1).pdf,

³⁰ Simultaneous Elections | Govt Accepts Advice of Kovind Committee |,

³¹ High-Level Committee Report on One Nation, One Election - INSIGHTS IAS - Simplifying UPSC IAS Exam Preparation

³² Singh, K. (n.d.). One Nation, One Election: An extensive analysis and possible solution. Lawctopus. Retrieved from <https://www.lawctopus.com/academike/one-nation-one-election-an-extensive-analysis-and-possible-solution/>

³³ Ind. Consti, Part VIII of the Indian Constitution - Article 239 to 242,

provisions, or is the centre exceeding its powers

7 – Hypothesis

India, a land of unparalleled diversity, has always thrived on the principle of unity in diversity. From ancient beliefs to the adoption of the longest written constitution, we have consistently evolved, staying true to our core values of civilization. Our democracy is a living example of resilience and coherence, which is now at the juncture where electoral reforms can redefine governance efficiency. The proposal of the One Nation, One Election (ONOE) aligns perfectly with these values, ensuring that India moves forward as a unified, robust democracy rather than being perpetually trapped in an election cycle.

Prior to 1967, when the dissolution of a few state assemblies resulted in the disruption and then started the staggered election. As a result of this change, elections are held frequently, every few months, in various parts of the country, which makes the parties and its members, aka the government, constantly be in election mode due to this model policy decisions are delayed due to the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) where the government cannot launch any welfare schemes. A detailed roadmap and strategy have been prepared by the high-level committee led by former president Shri Ram Nath Kovind, where they took the opinions of various stakeholders. On paper, it looks good, but it needs a few questions to be answered, such as what in case of a Hung Assembly, etc

The core hypothesis of this research is that One Nation One election will enhance governance efficiency, reduce financial burden, and promote long-term policy making without any violation to the nation's federal structure. Through consolidating elections into a single 5 year cycle, citizens, and mainly political leaders can focus on nation building instead of caste, electoral politics.

However, it is known that ONOE compromises principles by constraining state governments' autonomy, arguing that regional concerns risk being overshadowed by national agendas. Furthermore, the operational complexity of conducting a singular electoral process across 28 states and 8 Union Territories presents significant logistical hurdles. Despite these reservations, international precedents from nations such as Germany, Sweden, and South Africa—where coordinated electoral cycles correlate with elevated voter participation and governmental stability—indicate that ONOE could serve as a transformative initiative for India.

Consequently, this research seeks to evaluate whether ONOE represents a democratic imperative or a constitutional dilemma. Through examining historical precedents, economic ramifications, legal viability, and international parallels, the study aims to furnish a holistic assessment of ONOE's potential implications for India's democratic fabric. The analysis will determine whether synchronized elections could reconcile administrative efficiency with federal diversity or inadvertently exacerbate existing institutional challenges and majorly make sure the local issues are not forgotten as they are the main issues to be addressed still with also giving life for state parties.

8- High-level committee suggestions with constitutional changes and analysis³⁴

The High-level committee, aka The Kovind Panel, after its chairman, the former president of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind Ji, was constituted in September 2023. It was constituted to study the issues involving One Nation, One Election. It submitted its report in March 2024.

The Members of the panel were Shri Amit Shah, Shri Gulam Nabi Azad, Shri NK Singh, Dr Subash Kashyap, Shri Harish Salve, Shri Sanjay Kothari, Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Dr Nitin Chandra and Aadhiram Rangrajan (leader of opposition) (resigned). The Committee was approved by cabinet, and during the course, it took recommendations from 62 Political parties and received feedback from 47 in writing, where 32 agreed and 15 dissented in writing, and 18 leaders were interacted with in person. surprisingly, 15 parties did not give any response, of which 10 were registered and had at least one seat in the House of People, and the rest were unregistered local parties, The High level committee also took recommendations of 85 high level individuals of the country such as Justice UU Lalit (former Chief Justice of India), many retired high court and supreme court judges, Economists, Former state election commissioners, Chairman of the Bar council of India etc. The Committee also received a sample size response from 20000 citizens out of which 81% were in favour of it and the rest 19% dissented

India has 6 National Parties (Parties having state legislative assembly seats in 2 or more seats + Parliament), but it is seen that out of these, only 2 national parties are in its support, which was obviously the Bhartiya Janata Party and the National Peoples Party. The opposition was totally

³⁴ Government of India. (2024). High-Level Committee report on One Nation, One Election. Ministry of Law and Justice, Hlc-report-en (1).pdf,

against it. The report did also say that having One Nation One election would foster cooperative federalism,³⁵

The Purpose of the High – Level committee

- 1) The main goal of the HLC's establishment was to determine if synchronizing India's voting systems would be feasible. The committee's mandate covered a number of important topics:
- 2) Historical Analysis: Examining India's past concurrent election history and figuring out what caused the current unsynchronized voting cycles.
- 3) Stakeholder consultations: Getting a range of viewpoints on ONOE by speaking with political parties, election officials, legal professionals, and the general population.
- 4) Legal and Constitutional Analysis: Determining the legal laws and constitutional reforms required to enable simultaneous elections.
- 5) Implementation Framework: Outlining a methodical strategy for the gradual rollout of ONOE while taking operational and logistical issues into account.

Summary of the Report

- 1) For an aspirational India, that is Bharat, governance based on the principles of democracy is paramount. The system of elections is a central pillar of democratic governments. Since independence, our country has witnessed more than 400 elections for the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies. The Election Commission of India has set admirable standards for holding fair and free elections in the country, which is recognised universally both within the country and abroad. While the conduct of elections has been beyond reproach, the optimality of the design of its framework calls for an objective assessment from time to time. The accumulated experience of witnessing over 400 elections in more than seven decades, serves as a credible basis.

³⁵ Supra24

- 2) The Committee, after its constitution, worked on this subject for 191 days. Its members included eminent persons from diverse backgrounds with specialisation and long experience in law, political science, administration, public finance, and economics. The Committee decided to invite suggestions, viewpoints and comments from registered political parties. Experts on law such as Former Chief Justices of India and Former Chief Justices of major High Courts, Former Chief Election Commissioners of India, and State Election Commissioners were invited for interaction in person with the Committee. Expert bodies like the Law Commission of India and the Election Commission of India were also invited by the Committee. A public notice was issued in the newspapers and social media to invite suggestions and comments from citizens and organisations. Other stakeholders such as the Bar Council of India and apex business organizations like the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) were also given opportunities to place their points of view. Eminent economists of the country also interacted with the Committee.
- 3) Forty-seven political parties also responded. The 32 political parties that remained, with the exception of 15, supported the simultaneous election system as a means of conserving limited resources, preserving social peace, and promoting economic growth. Opponents of simultaneous elections expressed concerns that its implementation might be anti-democratic and anti-federal, violate the fundamental framework of the Constitution, marginalize regional parties, promote the dominance of national parties, and lead to a presidential system of government.
- 4) The Committee conducted a thorough investigation and study to resolve the problems associated with the election system's transition. The Committee gave considerable thought to every legal and constitutional argument made by various interested parties opposing the implementation of simultaneous elections. Similarly, it looked at the larger effects of frequent elections on economic growth, investment choices, the opportunity cost of postponed economic decisions, and disruptions to social cohesiveness in general, in addition to the immediate administrative and logistical costs. The Committee proposed a different enabling structure to make simultaneous elections feasible after examining the constitutional and legal concerns related to them.

The Committee reviewed pertinent election-related legal literature from both India and elsewhere. The Law Commission of India, the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law and Justice, Niti Aayog, and the Election Commission were among the expert groups whose reports were examined. India's executive summary. The Committee noted that all of the reports supported simultaneous elections and offered a number of justifications.

- 5) The Committee constituted to examine the feasibility and impact of simultaneous elections has undertaken extensive consultations with a diverse group of stakeholders, including political parties, constitutional and legal experts, election scholars, and other relevant institutions. Based on the inputs received and a thorough examination of prevailing electoral challenges, the Committee presents its recommendations and rationale for the introduction of simultaneous elections across the country.

6) Rationale for Simultaneous Elections

The Committee is unanimously of the opinion that the introduction of simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, Municipalities, and Panchayats will bring about a significant transformation in India's democratic and governance frameworks.

To facilitate this shift, the Committee proposes the following constitutional and legal amendments:

- 7) Insertion of Article 82A (Simultaneous Elections to House of the People and State Legislative Assemblies)

Sub-Article (2): Notwithstanding Articles 83 and 172 of the Constitution, State Assemblies elected after the appointed date shall dissolve concurrently with the House of the People.

Sub-Article (3): The Election Commission shall conduct simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies as per constitutional provisions, suitably adapted.

Explanation: For clarity, "simultaneous elections" refers to elections held concurrently for the Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies.

8) Insertion of Article 324A (Simultaneous Elections to Municipalities and Panchayats)

Clause (1): Parliament may enact legislation to synchronize local body elections with general elections.

Clause (2): This may include shortening or extending the tenure of local bodies as required.

Clause (3): Mid-term elections held for any local body will result in terms aligned with the next scheduled general elections.

9) Currently, electoral rolls for local bodies are maintained separately by State Election Commissions. This has led to duplication and inconsistencies. The Committee recommends an amendment to Article 325 of the Constitution to authorize the Election Commission of India to prepare a single, error-free electoral roll and unified Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC), in consultation with State Election Commissions.³⁶(Tiwari AV),³⁷

10) Phased Implementation Strategy

To ensure a smooth transition, the Committee recommends a two-phase approach:

Phase I: Conduct simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

Phase II: Within 100 days of the general elections, conduct synchronized elections for Municipalities and Panchayats.³⁸

11) Electoral Roll Standardization

Currently, electoral rolls for local bodies are maintained separately by State Election Commissions. This has led to duplication and inconsistencies. The Committee recommends an amendment to Article 325 of the Constitution to authorize the Election Commission of India

³⁶ (Tiwari AV), Simultaneous Elections: A Unified Approach, Simultaneous Elections: A Unified Approach - Chintan,

³⁷ SSB.co, One Nation One Election | Kovind Panel Recommendations

³⁸ IAS Google – Cracking IAS Academy

to prepare a single, error-free electoral roll and unified Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC), in consultation with State Election Commissions.³⁹

12) Logistical Considerations and Requirements

The Election Commission of India has submitted estimates for the required Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), Voter Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs), polling personnel, and security forces. These estimates are subject to revision once the final schedule is determined. It is recommended that the Election Commission, in collaboration with State Election Commissions, prepare a detailed and realistic logistical and financial plan.⁴⁰

III. DISTINCT AMENDMENTS IN THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA AND OTHER STATUTES⁴¹

No.	ARTICLES OF CONSTITUTION /PROVISIONS OF RELEVANT STATUTES	AMENDMENT PROPOSED
1	Article 83(2) Duration of the House of the People	The Five-year period would hereinafter be referred as the full term.(passed in parliament)
2	Article 83(3)	Where the House of People is dissolved sooner than the expiry of its full term, the period between its date of dissolution and five years from the date appointed for its first meeting shall be referred to as its unexpired term.
3	Article 83(4)	Notwithstanding anything in Article 83(2), where the House of the People is dissolved sooner than the expiry of its full term, the next House of the People constituted pursuant to elections occasioned by such dissolution, unless sooner dissolved, shall continue for such period as is equal to the unexpired term of the immediately preceding the House of

³⁹ High-Level Committee on Simultaneous Elections

⁴⁰ High-Level Committee on Simultaneous Elections

⁴¹ Proposed Constitutional amendments for simultaneous polls, (indiatv)

		the People and expiration of the term shall operate as a dissolution of the House. Explanation: The House of the People constituted in sub-article (4) shall not be a continuation of the previous House of the People. All the consequences of dissolution shall apply to the House of the People referred to in sub-article (3). The election for constituting the House of the People for its unexpired term shall be referred to as a mid-term election, and the collection held after the expiry of the full term shall be referred to as the General election. ⁴²(Khan K),
4	Article 172 (1) Duration of the State Legislature	Five-year term would hereinafter refer to as full-term
5	Article 172(3)	Where the State Legislative Assembly is dissolved sooner than upon the expiry of its full term, then the period between its date of dissolution and the period of five years from the date appointed for its first meeting shall be referred to as its unexpired term.
6	Article 172(4)	Notwithstanding anything contained in Art. 172(1), where the State Legislative Assembly is dissolved sooner than the expiry of its full term, and a new State Legislative Assembly is constituted pursuant to elections occasioned by such dissolution, then such new State Legislative Assembly unless sooner dissolved, shall continue for such period as is equal to the unexpired term of the immediately preceding State Legislative Assembly and the expiration of this period shall operate as a dissolution of the Assembly. Explanation: The State Legislative Assembly constituted as referred to in sub article (4) shall not be a continuation of the

⁴² (Khan K), Kovind panel's roadmap for 'one nation, one election' & the constitutional amendments required, Kovind panel's roadmap for 'one nation, one election' & the constitutional amendments required

		previous State Legislative Assembly and all the consequences of dissolution shall apply to the State Legislative Assembly referred to in sub article (3).
7	Article 82A (1)	The President of India may by notification issued on the date of the first sitting of the House of the People after a general election, bring into force the provision of this Article, and that date of the notification shall be called the Appointed date.
8	Article 82A (2)	Notwithstanding anything in Art. 83 and 172, all the State Legislative Assemblies constituted in any general election held after the Appointed date shall come to an end on the expiry of the full term of House of the People.
9	Article 82A (3)	Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution or any law for the time being in force, and after the expiry of the full term referred to in sub Article (1), the Election Commission shall conduct General elections to the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies simultaneously and the provisions of Part XV of the Constitution shall apply to these elections mutatis mutandis with such modifications as may become necessary and which the Election Commission may by Order specify. Explanation: The expression "simultaneous elections" shall mean general elections held for constituting the House of the People and all the Legislative Assemblies together.
10	Article 82A (4)	If the Election Commission is of the opinion that the elections to any Legislative Assembly cannot be conducted at the time of the General Election, it may make a recommendation to the President, to declare by an Order, that the election to that Legislative Assembly may be conducted at a later date.
11	Article 82A (5)	Where the elections to a State Legislative Assembly is deferred under sub-article (3), then notwithstanding anything

		contained in Art. 172, the full term of the Legislative Assembly shall end on same date as the end of the full term of the House of the People constituted in the General Election.
12	Article 324A	Notwithstanding anything in Art. 243E and 243U, Parliament may by law make provision for ensuring that the elections to Municipalities and Panchayats are held simultaneously with the General Elections, and for this purpose, make provisions as may be necessary including provisions for determination of the term of the Municipalities and Panchayats sooner than the expiry of five years from the date appointed for their first meeting, and for limiting the term of such Municipalities and Panchayats committed under a mid-term election to the unexpired period of their term until the next general elections.
13	Article 325(2)	Notwithstanding anything in sub-article (1), on and from the date notified by the President, there shall be Single Electoral Roll for every territorial constituency for election in the House of the People, Legislature of a State or to a Municipality or a Panchayat. No person shall be ineligible for inclusion in any such roll or claim to be included in any special electoral roll for any such constituency on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or any of them. ⁴³
14	Article 325(3)	On and from the date of the notification referred to in sub-article (2) above, notwithstanding anything contained in Articles 243K and 243ZA and Article 324, the electoral rolls referred to in sub-article (2) shall be made by the Election Commission in consultation with the State Election Commissions established in the States. The electoral roll prepared under this sub-article shall substitute any electoral roll prepared earlier by either the Election. Commission under Art 325 or the State Election Commissions: under Art. 243K and Art. 243ZA. On and from the date of the notification referred to in sub-article (2) above, notwithstanding anything contained in Articles 243K and 243ZA and Article 324, the electoral rolls referred to in sub-

⁴³ Proposed Constitutional amendments for simultaneous polls, (indiatv)

		article (2) shall be made by the Election Commission in consultation with the State Election Commissions established in the States. The electoral roll prepared under this sub-article shall substitute any electoral roll prepared earlier by either the Election. Commission under Art 325 or the 15 State Election Commissions: under Art. 243K and Art. 243ZA. ^{44 45}
15	Section 17 of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019	In order to achieve the simultaneous elections, the Government of India shall prescribe an Appointed date (as given under the Serial number 7 of Table number 1). The General Elections held after the Appointed date will be simultaneous with the elections of the State Legislative Assemblies. For the same, an amendment to Section 17 of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019 shall enable the following: <i>“Legislative Assembly, unless sooner dissolved, shall continue for five years from the date appointed for its first meeting and no longer and the expiration of the said period of five years shall come to end with the expiration of the full term of the House of the People”⁴⁶</i> ^{47 48}

9 - Pros and Cons⁴⁹

Pros

A. Effects of the Model Code of Conduct on Governance and Development Programs

⁴⁴ Proposed Constitutional amendments for simultaneous polls, (indiatv)

⁴⁵ Proposed amendments for simultaneous polls, Yearbook Web Desk PUBLISHED: MARCH 18 , 2024 11:53 AM IST...

Read more at: <https://www.onmanorama.com/news/india/2024/03/18/proposed-amendments-for-simultaneous-polls.html>

⁴⁶ Government of India. (2024). High-Level Committee report on One Nation, One Election. Ministry of Law and Justice, Hlc-report-en (1).pdf

⁴⁷ Government of India. (2024). High-Level Committee report on One Nation, One Election. Ministry of Law and Justice, Hlc-report-en (1).pdf

⁴⁸ Proposed Constitutional amendments for simultaneous polls,

⁴⁹ Desai, K. (n.d.). Simultaneous elections (One Nation One Election): Brief note on the “what,” the “why,” and the “how” of simultaneous elections. SPMRF. Retrieved from <https://spmrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Note-on-Simultaneous-Elections.pdf>

The MCC is applicable nationwide during general Lok Sabha elections, and it is applicable throughout each State during Assembly elections. In practice, everything is essentially put on hold until the model code is relevant and implemented in the region where it is used, except regular administrative tasks, other development programs, welfare programs, capital projects, etc. According to NITI Aayog's analysis, it would be reasonable to anticipate that the Model Code of Conduct would be applicable for at least four months each year in some or other parts of the nation, assuming that the average period of operation is two months for a State Assembly election.

B. Massive Recurring expenditures incurred by Government and Political Parties

Since elections keep on happening now and then, Government of India (bears 100% cost of Lok Sabha and 50% cost of Vidhan Sabha) and State Governments (50% cost of Vidhan Sabha elections and 100% cost of third tier) have to keep spending⁵⁰ budgets regularly. As elections happen frequently in some State Assembly, or the other, political parties particularly worry about need to keep inflow of funds and contributions continued. News reports have pegged the cost of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections to a staggering INR 60000 crores, which is almost 2X of what was spent in 2014 (unofficial estimates of money spent by candidates and parties). This whole cycle of raising and spending money in elections is often blamed as one of the key drivers for corruption and black-money in the country.

C. Impact on Policy Making and Governance

The most visible impact of frequent elections is that Governments and political parties remain in perpetual “campaigning” mode. Electoral compulsions change the focus of policy making. “Short-sighted”, “populist,” and “politically safe” measures are accorded higher priority over “difficult” structural reforms, which may be more beneficial to the public from a longer-term perspective. This leads to sub-optimal governance and adversely impacts the design and delivery of public policies and developmental measures. Frequent elections, therefore, crowd the Government’s risk-taking capabilities and incentivize it to opt for a safer status-quoist approach instead. Getting out of this “permanent election mode” is therefore a huge structural change in mindset that could potentially provide much needed space to Governments to focus

⁵⁰ Manorama Yearbook, Proposed Constitutional amendments for simultaneous polls,

on long-term transformational measures without worrying about the next impending election.

D. Increased Voter Turnout:

In a sequential election, there's a chance that more people will show out to vote. Because voters may sense the impact they make, there may be significant levels of engagement if residents are asked to vote for multiple representatives at the same time.

E. Uniformity in Political Landscape:

These elections cause the political moment to be more aligned, getting voters to discuss national and state problem at the same time. This can assist in synchronising objectives of states with national goals and thus be of influential help in creating a much coordinated approach to governing.⁵¹(Debroy e.t a.l)

Cons

Constitutional Obstacles: The Indian Constitution permits separate polls for the general elections of the Assemblies and the Lok Sabha. Only if significant constitutional amendments can be accomplished can the idea of holding simultaneous elections be implemented, and as everyone knows, political scandals and legal issues will always have a negative impact.

Diverse Political Contexts: There are notable differences in the political climate, social and economic issues, and developmental requirements between India's states. The date of the election may not be sufficient to address the group's sentiments, which would defeat democracy's goal.

Logistical Challenges: There are clear organizational difficulties that make generalizing elections extremely difficult, particularly in a nation the size of India. In order to ensure that the foundation, security, and other facilities needed to carry out such a large voting process are all ready, synchronization would require extremely meticulous planning.⁵²(Debroy e.t a.l)

⁵¹ Debroy, B., & Desai, K. (2017). NITI Aayog report on One Nation, One Election. NITI Aayog. Retrieved from <https://www.studocu.com/in/document/university-of-delhi/ma-political-science/niti-ayog-report-2017/89282217>

⁵² Debroy, B., & Desai, K. (2017). NITI Aayog report on One Nation, One Election. NITI Aayog. Retrieved from <https://www.studocu.com/in/document/university-of-delhi/ma-political-science/niti-ayog-report-2017/89282217>

Impact on Local Issues: By holding elections concurrently, national issues will strengthen their support for local issues, which is likely to lead to a uniformity of national political discourse. Voters who are especially concerned about state concerns may change their minds as a result.⁵³

10- Questions to be answered

- 1) With the country being at high inflation, can the Election Commission manage One Nation One election with the budget?
- 2) How will the government ensure local issues will be addressed?
- 3) What best practices can India implement to guarantee the success of ONOE from nations like South Africa, Sweden, or Germany?
- 4) How can regional parties' demands be addressed while maintaining equitable representation in a synchronized electoral system?
- 5) How can ONOE improve the electoral landscape away from short-term populist measures and toward one that is more issue-based and policy-driven?

11 - Conclusion

While elections symbolize the heartbeat of democracy, their frequent and fragmented nature leads to governance disruptions, policy paralysis, and financial burden. The idea of One Nation One election is not just about administrative efficiency; it is about reclaiming stability, focus, and national cohesion in our democratic processes. Ultimately, democracy thrives not just on elections but on good governance and accountable leadership. If implemented thoughtfully, ONOE is the next big leap in India's democratic evolution

⁵³ Desai, K. (n.d.). Simultaneous elections (One Nation One Election): Brief note on the “what,” the “why,” and the “how” of simultaneous elections. SPMRF. Retrieved from <https://spmrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Note-on-Simultaneous-Elections.pdf>