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Decoding 'One Nation, One Election': A Comprehensive study of its Political, Legal and Administrative Perspectives

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Abstract: Democracy is one of the essential components of the Indian Constitution and one of its inalienable qualities. Elections are the means by which the people are represented in Parliament and state legislatures, as the Constitution envisions democracy. The system is based on the promise to hold free, fair, and frequent elections. In democracy free and fair elections that are held on a regular basis using universal, equal, and secret suffrage can the people of any state express their will and give the government its authority.

In modern India, the "One Nation, One Election" (ONOE) idea has emerged as one of the most important and contentious electoral reform discussions. In order to cut down on electoral expenses, lessen the disruptions brought on by frequent elections, and improve governance stability, it promotes the synchronization of elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. Politically speaking, ONOE is viewed as a reform that will increase efficiency and stability, but it also raises questions about how it may jeopardize federal balance, electoral responsibility, and regional representation. Legally, it faces significant constitutional obstacles, including as changes to clauses pertaining to legislative tenure, assembly dissolution, and federal protections. In terms of administration, Administratively, the proposal calls for the Election Commission of India to coordinate in a way never seen before, as well as extensive logistical planning, staff deployment, security measures, and infrastructure such as electronic voting machines (EVMs) and VVPATs.

Decoding ONOE from three main angles political, legal, and administrative is the goal of this research Paper. In terms of politics, the discussion centers on electoral accountability, representation, and stability. The matter is legally complicated by constitutional clauses and modifications that would be required for its execution. ONOE presents administrative problems related to electoral infrastructure, logistics, and institution capacity to carry out such a massive exercise. This paper also examines some contemporary countries that follow the one nation, one election process. Although ONOE provides cost-effectiveness and continuity of administration, the study comes to the conclusion that it also runs the risk of centralizing power and undermining India's federal democratic spirit. If it were pursued, successful implementation would necessitate a consensus-driven strategy, phased synchronization, and constitutional protections.
Keywords: One Nation One election, Indian Constitution, Election commission of India, Electoral reforms, Federalism, Political Stability, administrative perspective, legal perspectives, comparative perspective.

Introduction - Elections are the lifeblood of democracy, inseparable from its functioning and survival. They provide the primary occasion for citizens to engage in politics and act as a discovery process to determine who will temporarily govern. More than a means of selecting leaders, elections serve as a crucial check on state power, ensuring accountability and preventing arbitrary rule. They are a vital mechanism for removing ineffective or corrupt leaders and enabling the possibility of better governance. By facilitating the peaceful transfer of power, elections protect the rights of both majorities and minorities while reinforcing democracy's central principle of limiting government authority (Chadah, Sapna. 2024).

Frequent elections are held at several levels, including the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, Panchayats, and Urban Local Bodies, in India, the largest democracy in the world. Strong democratic participation is guaranteed, but there are drawbacks as well, such as increased costs, problems with governance, and administrative stress. By coordinating elections for the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies, the One Nation, One Election (ONOE) concept seeks to streamline governance and lower election frequency.

The One Nation, One Election proposal seeks to

synchronize elections to the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, and local bodies, thereby reducing the frequency of polls across India. The 2024 High-Level Committee Report, endorsed by the Union Cabinet on 18th September 2024, outlines a clear roadmap for its implementation. Advocates believe the reform will cut down on election-related costs, minimize administrative disruption, and ensure greater policy stability and continuity. Positioned as a transformative step in India's democratic journey, the proposal calls for careful debate and broad consensus to balance efficiency with the federal spirit of governance.(PIB.GOV.in)

The goal of this paper is to decipher ONOE from three main angles: administrative, legal, and political. Stability, representation, and electoral accountability are the main political points of contention. Legally, the matter is complicated by constitutional clauses and modifications that would be required to put them into effect. Administratively, ONOE presents difficulties with electoral infrastructure, logistics, and institution capacity to carry out such a massive exercise.

The paper seeks to offer a comprehensive knowledge of the potential and difficulties of ONOE by examining these characteristics. In order to determine if India can actually implement such a change without compromising its federal and democratic spirit, it also compares examples from other democracies.

Objective of the study:

1. To trace the historical background of simultaneous elections in India.
2. To Comprehensive study of its Political, legal, and Administrative Perspectives.
3. The study seeks to examine the comparative experiences of other democracies and the assess Indian scenario, while identifying the way forward that is relevant to India.

Methodology: The study is to identify and find Decoding "One Nation, One Election": A Comprehensive study of its Political, legal, and Administrative Perspectives. The methodology involved is the collection of secondary data from the sources like e-book, journal articles, research paper, many online sources the Election commission of India, constitution of India's website, many cases, NITI Aayog, law Commission of India, IDFC institute view point, India's website iipa.org.in,pib.gov.in, and various Acts related to one nation one election was analyzed.

Historical Background of Simultaneous Elections in India: The concept of simultaneous elections is not new to India; in fact, it was the norm during the first two decades after independence. Elections to the Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies were conducted together in 1952, 1957, 1962, and 1967. This synchronization was largely due to the stability of governments both at the Union and state levels, as most legislatures completed their full five-year terms.

However, the cycle was disrupted beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when premature dissolutions of some state assemblies and later the Lok Sabha led to desynchronized electoral schedules (Yadav, 2017). For instance, the Fourth Lok Sabha (1967–1970) was dissolved before the completion of its tenure, and several states such as Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar witnessed political instability with frequent changes in government. This resulted in mid-term elections being held at different times, breaking the synchronization that had existed earlier (Kumar, 2019).

By the late 1970s, the staggered electoral cycle had become the norm. As a result, India has since experienced almost continuous elections somewhere in the country. While this ensured democratic accountability, it also created the phenomenon of "permanent campaigning," wherein political parties and governments remain in election mode throughout the five-year term (Palshikar,S.& Yadav, y. 2018). The idea of restoring simultaneous elections re-emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, with the Election Commission of India occasionally recommending the need to reduce the frequency of polls to ensure administrative efficiency. The issue gained renewed attention under the Law Commission of India's 170th Report (1999), which suggested exploring mechanisms to realign election cycles (Law Commission of India, 1999).

In the 21st century, the debate intensified when the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice (2015) recommended holding simultaneous elections to reduce costs and ensure stability. The NITI Aayog Discussion Paper (2017) further provided detailed analysis and possible models for implementing the idea (NITI Aayog, 2017). Recently, the Government of India constituted a High-level Committee on One Nation, One Election (2023) under former President Ram Nath Kovind to explore its feasibility in contemporary India.

Thus, the historical trajectory shows a transition from synchronized beginnings (1952–1967) to disrupted cycles (post-1970s), followed by revived debates in the 21st century. This historical perspective is crucial to understanding the current discourse: while simultaneous elections are not alien to India, restoring them requires navigating the complexities of political, legal, and administrative realities.

Political Perspectives of One Nation, One Election: The "One Nation, One Election" (ONOE) plan, which calls for synchronized elections for the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies, is now the subject of discussions in India's political landscape. Even though India held simultaneous elections from 1951 to 1967, electoral cycles became fragmented as a result of the emergence of regional parties and growing political diversity (CDPP 2025). Multiple levels of government hold periodic elections under the Indian electoral system, which is frequently referred to as the largest democratic exercise in the world. In India, assembly elections are held in one or more states annually

in addition to the constitutionally required Lok Sabha elections every five years. This regular election cycle has generated discussions about the effectiveness of governance, the cost of the system, and the ongoing shift in political attention to campaigning. In this regard, the One Nation, One Election (ONOE) plan has become a noteworthy reform concept. The political element of one nation, one election is perhaps the most controversial. Although the concept seems appealing in theory, there is much debate over how it will affect democracy, representation, government, and party politics. This section examines the claims made by ONOE's proponents as well as the objections made by its detractors.

a) Stability vs. Diversity: Political stability is one of the main justifications for ONOE. Proponents contend that regular elections cause governance to become fragmented since state and federal administrations are frequently in "campaign mode," resulting in populist measures rather than long-term developmental plans. Election synchronization would guarantee elected administrations a set term to implement programs free from frequent electoral disruptions.

Critics point out that diversity could be sacrificed for stability. The multiparty structure of India's political system is typified by the vital role regional party's play in representing local desires. Because voters may synchronize their selections at the state and national levels, simultaneous elections may disproportionately favor national parties, undermining regional representation.

National vs. Regional Parties: The balance between national and regional parties is anticipated to be impacted by ONOE. The "coattail effect" refers to the tendency for voters to favor the same party for both national and state polls when they are held together, according to evidence from previous elections. Larger national parties like the Congress and the BJP would probably gain from this, while smaller, regional players would have less electoral room. For example, regional issues were overshadowed by the national storyline in 2019 when Lok Sabha and certain state elections were held at the same time. This suggests that ONOE may erode India's federal fabric by concentrating politics around national agendas. According to regional parties, this goes against the democratic ideal of political pluralism. (ECI 2019)

C) Electoral Fatigue And Participation: Additionally, proponents contend that ONOE can lessen "electoral fatigue." Regular elections force voters to comply with repeated demands and necessitate ongoing political party mobilization, which can occasionally result in voter indifference. By making voting easier, synchronization may increase voter turnout by combining elections into a single cycle. (NITI Aayog 2017)

However, this optimism is complicated by comparative evidence. For instance, simultaneous elections in Indonesia in 2019 showed that ballots featuring too many competitions at once can overload voters, causing confusion and possibly a drop in turnout in some areas (Aspinall, E.& Berenschot,W(2019). This implies that even if ONOE might lessen weariness, it might unintentionally put up new obstacles to active engagement

d) Voter Behavior and Accountability: Voter Conduct and Responsibility How ONOE would influence voter behavior is another political factor to take into account. According to research by the IDFC Institute (2017), voters are 77% likely to select the same party at both levels when elections are held concurrently. This implies that voters may become confused about the differences between state and federal issues as a result of ONOE.

This lessens accountability even though it might increase stability. The performance of the nation can be used to evaluate state governments, and vice versa. As a result, ONOE runs the risk of weakening state-level issue based voting, where governance issues like local infrastructure, health, and education merit separate consideration.

e) Policy Continuity vs. Populism: Governments are encouraged to implement short-term populist policies like farm loan exemptions, subsidies, and ad hoc giveaways by frequent elections. By lowering the number of elections, ONOE may offer a steady five-year policy window that would allow governments to give structural changes and long-term governance top priority.

Regular elections, however, also serve as a "report card" system, enabling people to hold governments more regularly responsible. Stopping this loop could make it harder for people to hold ineffective governments accountable, which would make democracy less responsive.

f) Political Consensus vs. Federalism: Lastly, widespread political agreement is essential to ONOE's success. Although the Center's ruling party frequently backs the plan, opposition parties and numerous state governments are dubious because they see it as a step toward centralization that compromises state sovereignty. Without cooperative federalism, any attempt to impose ONOE may exacerbate political polarization and raise concerns about legitimacy and democratic consent

Since it has a direct impact on the composition of India's representative democracy, the equilibrium between national and regional political forces, and the accountability procedures that come with regular elections, the political aspect of One Nation, One Election (ONOE) is arguably the most contentious.

In India, holding elections is incredibly costly. The 2019 Lok Sabha elections were the most costly in Indian history, with estimates from the Election Commission of India (ECI) putting the total cost close to ₹ 60,000 core. Political parties invest a lot of money in mobilization, advertising, and campaigning. Elections held simultaneously would lessen the frequency of these expenses, which would be

advantageous to political parties and the state coffers.

The claim that frequent elections impair governance is one of the most compelling justifications for ONOE. Election campaigns and code-of-conduct regulations sometimes deter political leaders and officials from implementing policies (Mehta, 2019). Governments could focus on governance instead of ongoing electoral mobilization if there was a single.

Legal perspectives of One Nation, One Election: If "One Nation, One Election" were to be adopted in India, there would be serious legal and constitutional issues. Legally and constitutionally, its implementation would necessitate striking a careful balance between the values of the federal government and the democratic benefits. Furthermore, putting such a system into place would require a huge amount of administrative and operational work. It involves more than just striking a balance between the incentives for federalism and democratic discussion (Singh.P.Aditya & Srivastava. Ambar 2024)

One of the most hotly contested election changes in modern Indian politics is the One Nation, One Election (ONOE) idea. Although its administrative and political aspects garner interest, the legal and constitutional viewpoint is most important since it establishes the reform's viability and validity. But the laws as they stand now permit early dissolutions, which cause election cycles to be spaced out. Therefore, it becomes relevant to investigate if ONOE is constitutionally justified, legally feasible, and democratically desired from the standpoint of a research paper.

a) Constitutional provisions and challenges: Constitutional Structure and Difficulties the Indian Constitution provides for both flexible dissolution procedures and set terms for legislatures. Unless dissolved early, the Lok Sabha's term is set at five years under Article 83(2). The same is required of State Legislative Assemblies under Article 172(1). The president and governors, respectively, are authorized by Articles 85 and 174 to dissolve legislatures before the end of their terms. If a state's constitution fails, Article 356 permits dissolution.

These clauses emphasize how political unrest and early dissolutions have broken the cycle of simultaneity, which was the norm in the early years following independence. The implementation of ONOE is also legally problematic since it necessitates constitutional revisions under Article 368, some of which would require acceptance by half of the states.

b) Amendments and legal reforms: Legal Reforms and Amendments Are Needed Important changes would be required in order to switch to ONOE Modifying Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 356 to guarantee legislatures' fixed and coordinated terms. To simplify the simultaneous holding of elections, the Representation of the People Act, 1951, was revised. To prevent defections that might topple governments, the Tenth Schedule should be strengthened. Putting in place safeguards against instability in the middle term, such constructive votes of no-confidence. ONOE is not only a legal but also a political barrier because these reforms would need federal collaboration and parliamentary consent. Obstacles to Amendment Because ONOE must be ratified by half of the states; it is a strong legal reform that may encounter political opposition.

c) Judicial Interpretation and legal Safeguards: Indian courts have ruled repeatedly that the fundamental framework of the Constitution includes free and fair elections. In Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973), the Supreme court established the basic structural idea. It was decided in Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain (1975) that democracy requires free and fair elections. In S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994), the fundamental structure of federalism was confirmed. Therefore, any transition to ONOE must not jeopardize voter choice, electoral equality, or federalism. From a seminar standpoint, this judicial position guarantees that reforms must be both constitutionally harmonious and legally sound. Judicial Review: Under the basic structure theory, any constitutional amendment that would allow ONOE would probably be subject to court review.

d) Committee and Law Commission Recommendations : A number of expert bodies have supported ONOE from a legal and policy perspective. In order to lessen frequent disruptions, simultaneous elections were suggested in the 170th Law Commission Report (1999). According to the Law Commission Draft Report (2018), ONOE is preferable but necessitates constitutional changes. Former President Ram Nath Kovind's High-Level Committee Report (2024) offered a constitutional path for ONOE, recommending legal protections and progressive implementation. According to these assessments, ONOE is legally feasible as long as reforms are implemented with caution to maintain the balance of the constitution.

e) President's Rule and the Power of Dissolution : Articles 85 and 174 of the Constitution give the President (on the recommendation of the Cabinet) and the Governors the authority to dissolve legislatures, while Article 356 permits the President's Rule in the event that a state's constitution fails. India's parliamentary democracy is inherently flexible as a result of these laws. Under ONOE, synchronization would necessitate either: limiting dissolution by means of procedures like a constructive vote of no-confidence, requiring shortened terms so that just the remaining portion of a cycle is covered by midterm elections. Prolonged President's Rule to keep everything in sync may undermine representative democracy, while limiting dissolution can be interpreted as curtailing the legislative ideal of accountability.

f) Federalism and State Autonomy: The Indian Constitution is federal in spirit but unitary in tilt, often described as a quasi-federal system. The Supreme Court, in S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994), affirmed that

federalism is part of the Constitution's basic structure, meaning it cannot be diluted through constitutional amendments. ONOE raises concerns in this regard because it would require all states to follow a centrally fixed election calendar, thereby limiting their constitutional autonomy to have independent legislative cycles.Moreover, under Article 368(2), any amendment that affects the powers of state legislatures must be ratified by at least half of the states. This makes ONOE not only a legal but also a political challenge, since states governed by opposition parties may resist synchronization on grounds of federal balance. Without their cooperation, ONOE risks being seen as undermining India's federal democratic ethos.

The legal justification for One Nation, One Election (ONOE) rests on constitutional and democratic principles. It promotes stability of governance by allowing legislatures to complete their terms, ensures equality before law (Article 14) by providing a level playing field, and strengthens electoral management (Article 324) by easing the burden on the Election Commission. Moreover, it upholds constitutional morality by reducing frequent disruptions to policy and governance, while fostering federal harmony through synchronized electoral cycles without undermining state autonomy.

The legal justification for One Nation, One Election (ONOE) appears sound, yet it is not without significant challenges. From a constitutional perspective, critics highlight federal concerns, warning that synchronizing state elections with national polls might undermine the autonomy of states and weaken the federal balance envisioned by the Constitution. Moreover, there are basic structure risks, since frequent dissolutions, emergencies, or forced synchronization could be seen as interfering with the principle of free and fair elections, which the Supreme Court has upheld as integral to democracy. In addition, ONOE faces amendment hurdles, as constitutional changes under Article 368 would not only require a special majority in Parliament but also ratification by at least half of the state legislatures, making consensus politically difficult. Finally, any such constitutional amendment would be subject to judicial review, and could be struck down if found to compromise the basic structure of the Constitution.

Thus, while ONOE is legally feasible and potentially transformative, it demands careful balancing of constitutional morality, federalism, and democratic safeguards with the practical requirements of electoral reform.

Administrative perspectives of one Nation One Election: One Nation, One Election's (ONOE) administrative component is just as important as its political and legal components. The ability of India's electoral apparatus to carry out such a massive coordinated operation is crucial to the success of ONOE, even in the event that political agreement is reached and constitutional reforms are implemented. As the constitutional authority charged with overseeing, directing, and controlling elections, the Election Commission of India (ECI) will have to deal with previously unheard-of logistical, resource, and coordination difficulties.

a) Election Commission's Institutional Capacity: The Election Commission of India's (ECI) Function was created in accordance with Article 324 of the Constitution with the responsibility of guaranteeing free and fair elections. In 2019, it successfully oversaw one of the biggest democratic elections in history, with over 900 million votes. However, in order to implement ONOE, the ECI would have to hold simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and every State Legislative Assembly nationwide, which would affect almost 1.4 billion people over the course of the next ten years. This requires: its institutional capacity expansion, enhanced infrastructure for technology, improved communication between the federal government and the states.

b) Logistical and resource challenges: Facilities: VVPATs and EVMs Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs) and Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are now used in elections in India. According to the ECI, twice as many EVMs and VVPATs would be required for simultaneous elections. About 2 million EVMs were in operation as of 2019; ONOE might need 4–5 million machines (NITI Aayog 2017) this brings up questions about maintenance, testing, storage, and purchase. To provide transparency and stop tampering, secure storage between states would be required. The Use of Personnel Large numbers of poll workers from local administrations, schools, and government agencies must be deployed during elections. For the Lok Sabha elections in 2019, almost 11 million officials were sent out. Elections held simultaneously might necessitate twice as many staff, which would put pressure on administration and governance.

c) Optimal use of Security forces: Plans for Security State police and central paramilitary troops must be deployed to maintain law and order during elections. Elections held at the same time would necessitate an unprecedented level of national security deployment. Security forces may become overworked and less able to handle regional law and order issues as a result. Communication and Transportation There would be logistical obstacles if EVMs, ballot units, security personnel, and election professionals were all transported throughout India at the same time. Monitoring and coordinating operations across states and districts would require efficient communication systems.

Simultaneous elections would require large-scale deployment once in five years, reducing strain on security forces and ensuring better preparedness.

d) Cost Efficiency in Administration and continuity in Governance and policy implementation: Recurring expenses for voter awareness campaigns, polling station setup, staff training, ballot paper production, and EVM preparation are associated with repeated elections.

Simultaneous elections, according to NITI Aayog (2017), will significantly lower ongoing administrative expenses. Justification: By redirecting savings to developmental initiatives, governance could become more economical.

Consistency in Governance and the Execution of Policies During elections, the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) takes effect, prohibiting governments from introducing new plans or initiatives. The MCC is frequently imposed, which delays development projects and breaks policy continuity (Law Commission of India, 2018). Justification: ONOE makes sure that governance and the implementation of policies go forward without frequent hiccups.

e) Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Better Voter Experience and Awareness: Frequent elections overburden institutions such as the Election Commission of India (ECI), which has to continuously manage the electoral cycle. ONOE would allow the ECI to concentrate resources, improve planning, and enhance the quality of electoral management (ECI, 2015).Administrative machinery has to repeatedly conduct voter awareness campaigns, update electoral rolls, and manage logistics. Justification: A single synchronized election would allow comprehensive planning, better voter facilitation, and more efficient use of technology (Kashyap, 2015).

f) Central and State Administrative Coordination : The Union government, state governments, and local administrations must coordinate in a way never seen before in order to hold synchronized elections. Among the difficulties are: coordinating election dates in states with varying political cycles. Handling disagreements over fairness between the opposition and ruling parties. Ensuring the impartiality of the local government throughout the elections.

Possible Models for Administration In light of the difficulties, committees and academics have suggested substitute approaches for putting ONOE into practice: The Two-Phase Model Half of the states and the Lok Sabha will be elected in the first cycle. Two and a half years later, elections were held in the other half of the states. By doing this, frequency is decreased without achieving complete national synchronization. (a) Pilot Initiatives Before implementing ONOE nationwide, pilot projects should be implemented in a few states to assess administrative viability. Harmonization in Phases Using constitutional modifications to lengthen or shorten assembly terms, gradually synchronize election schedules over a ten-year period. Complete synchronization should be put into place after cycles converge.

An overview of the administrative issues even while ONOE promises efficiency, the administrative viewpoint shows that before India's electoral apparatus can handle synchronized elections; it needs to undergo a substantial overhaul. Despite their competence, the ECI would need greater financial resources, Reorganization of institutions, improved cooperation between governments, and adoption of cutting edge technology. Without these, there is a chance that electoral fraud will erode public confidence in democracy. From an administrative standpoint, ONOE provides convincing arguments, including less work for civil workers, financial savings, and effective use of security personnel, continuous governance, and better election management. Before deployment, however, issues including extensive logistical coordination, the requirement for more EVMs/VVPATs, and handling staggered voting in a large democracy like India must be resolved.

Comparative international Experiences of One nation One Election: According to the high-level panel's findings, a thorough comparative study of nations with comparable electoral systems was conducted in order to comprehend how they handled holding simultaneous elections. (NDTV WORLD 2024) Understanding several models from other countries conducting unified, simultaneous polls was intended to help maintain election fairness and transparency as well as to teach and implement the finest international practices.

Indonesia: On February 14, 2024, Indonesia will witness one of the largest democratic exercises in the world. Citizens will head to the polls to elect the President and Vice President, members of the national and sub national legislatures, the Regional Representative Council and leaders across 38 provinces as well as 514 regencies and municipalities. To make this possible, the nation has prepared a staggering 823,236 polling stations 820,161 within the country and 3,075 abroad ensuring that every eligible voter, from bustling Jakarta to distant overseas communities, has the chance to participate. 40 parties first registered with the general Election Commission (KPU) for the national elections in 2024. Six local political parties and eighteen national parties will contest among them (IFES 2024). Known as the largest single-day elections in the world, Indonesia successfully held simultaneous elections in which voters choose a new president and vice president, a parliament, and MPs from 20,000 administrative positions spread around the nation. A regional senator to advise the national parliament, national, provincial, and regency MPs, as well as the presidential and vice presidential candidates each voter selected on five ballots (Chadah Sapna 2024).

South Africa: One of the best illustrations of synchronized election cycles in a constitutional democracy is South Africa. Every five years, the nation holds elections for the nine Provincial Legislatures and the National Assembly (Parliament) on the same day. According to the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution, elections must be held concurrently within 90 days of the end of the National Assembly's and the province legislatures' respective five-year terms (IEC 2019). Following the end of apartheid in 1994 and South Africa's transition to a constitutional democracy, this synchronization model was developed. Each political party submits a list of candidates in numbered

order of preference before to the election. The number of votes cast in the election determines how many seats in Parliament are given out. As a result, a party that receives 10% of the vote also gets 10% of the seats. The first 20 members of a party's party list become MPs if the party wins 20 seats. 76 the number of representatives from each party list who shall serve in the legislature is determined by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), which was created by the IEC Act of 1996.

Sweden: Sweden is a parliamentary democracy, meaning that only parliamentary elections are held there rather than presidential ones. The proportional election system is used in Sweden. Based on their percentage of the vote, the political parties are given a certain number of seats in the elected legislature. County Council and Municipal Council elections are held simultaneously in their system for the Parliament (Riksdag). While elections to the Municipal Assemblies take place on the second Sunday of September once every five years, these elections take place on the same day every four years. Depending on how many votes each party obtained, the Election Authority allots seats proportionately following an election. Predictability and voter convenience are therefore guaranteed. Only extraordinary elections are undertaken in the event of an early dissolution of parliament, and the following regular cycle is unaffected (Petersson, O. 2016) India should learn from Sweden's example that stability and accountability can be balanced by combining fixed terms with exceptional elections. In order to reduce premature dissolutions and maintain democratic flexibility, India could adjust this by implementing measures like constructive votes of no confidence.

Indian scenario: India, with over 968 million voters, conducts elections at multiple levels Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state assemblies, and local bodies. To reduce the frequency, costs, and disruptions caused by staggered elections, the ONOE proposal seeks to synchronize election cycles across all tiers of government.

A High-Level Committee (2024) chaired by former President Ram Nath Kovind recommended implementing simultaneous elections in two phases one is Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections held together. Another one Local body (panchayat and municipal) elections conducted within 100 days of the general elections.

A common electoral roll will be prepared for all elections, and Parliament will need to pass three Bills, including constitutional amendments, to implement the reform. In essence, ONOE envisions synchronized elections for Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and local bodies to streamline governance, reduce costs, and enhance efficiency One Nation, One Election (ONOE) proposes holding simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and possibly local bodies, so that citizens cast votes for representatives at different levels of government around the same time.

The idea arises from concerns over High electoral expenditure on security, personnel, and logistics. The frequent enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, which slows governance. Social tensions (caste, religion, communal) that get heightened during repeated elections. Currently, India faces a staggered election cycle for example, in 2024, Lok Sabha polls were held between April–June, but only three states went to the polls simultaneously; others like Karnataka, Rajasthan, Telangana, Haryana, and J&K held elections at different times. This results in some election being held almost every six months across the country, including Panchayati Raj institutions (2.63 lakh panchayats). Because elections to local bodies are a State subject under the Constitution, aligning them with national and state elections is very difficult. Thus, ONOE primarily envisions synchronizing Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections in the same year, even if not on the exact same date.

In short, ONOE seeks to reduce frequency, cost, and disruptions of elections by synchronizing polls for the central and state legislatures, while the inclusion of local bodies remains a practical challenge.

India's current system of frequent elections covering Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, municipal bodies, panchayats, and bye-elections creates a heavy burden on financial, administrative, and human resources. The constant imposition of the Model Code of Conduct disrupts governance, slows policy implementation, and hampers development initiatives. To address these challenges, stakeholders have suggested the idea of simultaneous elections (One Nation, One Election), where elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies (and possibly local bodies) would be held together in a synchronized cycle. This reform aims to reduce costs, minimize administrative strain, and ensure smoother governance by ending the cycle of recurrent elections.

Way Forward: The way forward is calculated, consensus-driven reform rather than hurried execution. The pursuit of ONOE must strike a balance between unity and federalism, efficiency and inclusion, and governance and representation. India might examine ONOE as a feasible route to bolstering its democratic framework without sacrificing its variety by integrating legislative protections, political agreement, and administrative readiness.

Constitutional Safeguards: Constitutional Protections Amendments to the constitution are necessary for ONOE to be implemented, especially to Articles 83, 172, and 356 that deal with the term and dissolution of legislatures. In order to protect democracy and federalism, such modifications must adhere to the Supreme Court's fundamental structure theory. Legislative terms should not be arbitrarily extended or shortened; hence, strong safeguards should be constructed.

Strengthening the Election Commission: The Election Commission's Strength Significant capacity-building is needed for the Indian Election Commission and State

Election Commissions. Simultaneous elections will require a large workforce, sophisticated monitoring systems, and financial stability. For the electoral process to remain impartial and credible, these institutions must be strengthened.

Integration of Technology: Strong technology is needed to conduct simultaneous elections on a wide scale. Transparency and efficiency will be guaranteed by increasing the use of voter verifiable paper audit trails (VVPATs), electronic voting machines (EVMs), and digital voter databases, also online voting system. Advanced training programs for employees and a secure IT infrastructure are also essential for preventing mistakes and security threats.

Common Electoral Roll: The Common Electoral Roll One important administrative change is the creation of a single voter list. Currently, State Election Commissions keep separate lists for local body elections, while the Election Commission of India compiles rolls for Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. If constitutional and statelevel issues are resolved, a single, shared electoral roll would eliminate duplication, cut expenses, and increase voter database accuracy.

Consensus Building: Developing Consensus A broad political consensus is necessary for electoral reforms to be successful. Regional parties worry about the loss of political autonomy at the state level, whereas national parties frequently support ONOE due to its efficiency. To guarantee inclusivity and legitimacy, the next step is to consult widely with all relevant parties, including the Parliament, state assemblies, the Election Commission of India (ECI), state election commissions, and civil society.

Conclusion : The proposal of One Nation, One Election carries undeniable merits in terms of cost savings, administrative efficiency, and simplified electoral management. However, its adoption is fraught with serious hurdles, particularly constitutional and federal challenges. Implementing such a reform would require major amendments to Articles 83 and 172 of the Constitution, along with broad political consensus, which appears nearly impossible in India's polarized polity. More critically, aligning elections risks undermining the federal balance, diminishing the autonomy of states, and marginalizing local and regional issues in favor of national narratives. This could affect smaller parties, distort voting behavior, and weaken the representative nature of Indian democracy. While voter education campaigns might mitigate some of these risks, the challenges are structural and profound, raising questions about the harm to India's democratic ethos and institutional safeguards. Therefore, a meaningful transition strategy, coupled with sustained voter engagement and consensus-building, would be necessary to make the model compatible with India's democratic framework. Yet, given the enormity of the changes required and the deep political divides, achieving such reforms appears unlikely. The real test lies in balancing efficiency with the protection of federalism and democratic diversity, which remain the bedrock of India's political system.

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