

LOK SABHA STUDY GUIDE

ONE NATION ONE ELECTION



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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Members of the Lok Sabha,

We the Executive Board of the Lok Sabha are pleased to announce the important responsibilities entrusted to you in research. Your role as a MP will involve conducting in-depth research on legislative issues that directly affect youth policy, education, employment and social care. It is necessary to delve into the existing laws, analyse their effectiveness and propose the necessary changes or new laws to solve the most pressing problems facing the youth of our country. Effective collaboration with MPs in the preparation of committee reports and policy recommendations based on thorough research is also essential.

The purpose of this Indian Youth Parliament is to gather diverse perspectives on legislative issues and ensure broad input into proposed legislation and government policies. This includes following voting protocols on motions, amendments and legislative matters. Adherence to these standards ensures that Parliament operates efficiently and respectfully. Your dedication and expertise will be invaluable in shaping policies that will positively impact our nation's youth. If you have any questions or need further clarification on your obligations, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to your contribution to the advancement of our agenda.

Regards,
Varun Sinha - Speaker
Naisha Chhabria - Deputy Speaker

WHAT IS THE LOK SABHA?

The Lok Sabha is the lower house of India's bicameral Parliament. It is also known as the House of the People, as it is composed of representatives who are directly elected by the people on the basis of the Universal Adult Franchise.

The maximum number of members in the Lok Sabha is 550 out of which 530 members are elected from the states and 20 members from Union Territories. These members are elected for a term of five years, which may be extended only under a national emergency.

The Lok Sabha holds special importance in several matters in the parliament. The Council of Ministers is directly answerable to the members of the Lok Sabha including its opposition members. The Lok Sabha also has the power to generate a money bill which cannot be generated in the Rajya Sabha. Along with this, a Vote of No-confidence can only be raised in the Lok Sabha.

The Lok Sabha derives its powers from the Constitution of India. The Articles it derives its powers from:

- Constitutional Powers - Article 368
- Legislative Powers - Article 107
- Executive powers - Article 75[3]
- Judicial Powers - Article 61

ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION

One Nation, One Election (ONOE) means conducting the Lok Sabha and all Vidhan Sabhas' (state legislative assemblies) elections together, once in five years.

Elections to the House of the People and Legislative Assemblies of States were mostly held simultaneously from 1951 to 1967, after which this cycle was broken.

One Nation, One Election aims to examine the practicality and implications of having simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. It helps to reduce election expenses, maintain the stability of the government, and ensure policy consistency.

Simultaneous elections will not only keep voters' enthusiasm alive but will also result in huge savings to the government budget by avoiding the repetition of administrative efforts. It is also expected to control the expenses of political parties. Simultaneous elections will avoid repeated enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct which is a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for the conduct of political parties and candidates during elections, which affects administrative actions by the government.

The First step includes elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies will be held simultaneously. Followed by, elections for Municipalities and Panchayats which will be synchronised with those for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, ensuring that Municipalities and Panchayats elections take place within a hundred days of the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies elections.

Suggestions by the Election Commission of India (ECI)
The ECI suggested measures for the conduct of simultaneous elections, which include:

- The term of the Lok Sabha would normally commence and expire on a particular date (not the date on which it completes five years from the date of its first sitting);
- The terms of all state legislative assemblies should also come to an end on the date on which the term of the Lok Sabha expires.

HISTORY

The Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies elections were held simultaneously until 1967. Due to the emergence of more states and the dissolution of state assemblies before their terms in 1968 and 1969, this cycle was broken. Since then, the government has tried to make efforts to implement the One Nation, One Election. After which, the polls were held separately, leading to an almost unbroken electoral cycle.

The year 1969 brought along further complications. The Indian National Congress, the party in power with a clear majority, was split into two different factions: the Indian National Congress Restitutions, led by Indira Gandhi having more than 400 supporters, and the Indian National Congress Organization. The 1971 elections gave the organisation its first defeat, as Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister for the second time. They regained many seats lost in the previous 1966 general elections.

The Allahabad High Court found inconsistency in the results of the 1971 elections. Instead of resigning, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency. From 1975 to 1977, there was an emergency lasting 21 months, which called for the suspension of democracy.

PM Indira Gandhi cited internal and external threats to the country. She arrested many opposition leaders. Sanjay Gandhi, the PM's son, gained prominence as a politician.

On March 21, 1977, Smt. Indira Gandhi withdrew the emergency and announced general elections. The Indian National Congress was driven out, and the Janata Party, led by Shri Morarji Desai, gained an absolute majority in parliament. He became the first non-Congress prime minister of India.

The next decade witnessed Indira Gandhi regaining power, and after her assassination in 1984, her son Rajiv Gandhi took up power. State-level parties started making their appearance after the dominance of Congress.

The concept of One Nation, One Election was first formally proposed by the Election Commission of India in 1983. This proposal suggested that conducting simultaneous elections could reduce the frequency of elections and the associated costs.

A social historical account of the politics of cooperation or the lack of the same in the U.K., with particular reference to the process of electoral reform. The political scenario also changed in the nineties, when no one party in the Lok Sabha was able to get a majority. During this period, not only did the BJP grow, but the formation of many coalition governments took place; such as the National Front, the United Front, and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The initiatives that were taken in the electoral reforms during this period were electronic voting machines, the prevention of some kinds of fraud in the elections, and the Model Code of Conduct for free and fair elections.

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee (former PM) supported simultaneous elections. He mentioned the idea in 1999, explaining its potential benefits.

In 2014, PM Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party made a strong pitch for a One Nation, One Election. The government has frequently spoken about its intention to implement it and is still doing so. The General Elections in the year 2014 were historical for several reasons, primarily highlighted by the triumph of the BJP led by Shri Narendra Modi. In the polls, the BJP got 282 seats out of 543 seats in Parliament and for the first time in three decades, one party had conquered the majority.

The Niti Aayog released a paper in 2017 discussing the feasibility of simultaneous elections. This paper also offered a plan for its implementation. The Law Commission of India released a draft working paper outlining the legal and constitutional aspects of simultaneous elections.

The BJP continued to march towards centralised power in the 2019 general elections, winning 303 parliamentary seats. These elections saw a good turnout of people in the polls, heavy utilisation of social networks in campaigns, and major emphasis on matters such as security and development.

BILLS AND ACTS IN FAVOUR:

Election Commission Report (1983) -

The Commission recommended holding simultaneous elections to the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies of States. The Commission suggests that if passing a new law for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies isn't possible, an alternative could be establishing this practice through agreement or tradition. They believe there's no rush to implement simultaneous elections immediately. Before 1967, holding elections simultaneously worked well, suggesting it could be beneficial to return to this practice.

The Law Commission (170th Report 1999)-

The commission is in its measure for improving the electoral system stated that we must go back to the past, where the elections to the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha were held simultaneously. The aim of having elections once every five years has been disrupted. Initially, elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies were held simultaneously every five years. However, this changed gradually due to reasons such as the early dissolution of State Assemblies under Article 356 of the Constitution.

This led to frequent separate elections for State Assemblies and the Lok Sabha. The schedule for these elections became irregular, with elections occurring almost every year. The goal now is to return to a system where elections for the Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies are held simultaneously once every five years

The 79th Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee (2015) also favoured the idea of simultaneous elections, which was repeated by a NITI Aayog paper in 2017 -In its 79th Report on the 'Feasibility of Holding Simultaneous Elections to the House of People (Lok Sabha) and State Legislative Assemblies,' submitted in December 2015, the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law, and Justice recommended an alternative and practical approach to conduct simultaneous elections in two phases.

REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Streamlined Election Process

Conducting elections simultaneously simplifies the complex scheduling of elections at different levels, making it more organized and efficient.

2. Consistent Governance

Having synchronised elections for central and state governments can lead to more stable and consistent policy implementation, reducing interference caused by frequent electoral cycles. The government can hence focus more on governance than being in an election mode.

3. Efficient Use of Resources

Elections in general lead to expenditure in terms of manpower, infrastructure to be created, polling personnel, and time. Simultaneous elections minimise this avoidable expenditure and allow the usage of resources at their maximum capacity.

4. Administrative Problems

During elections, whether for the Lok Sabha or the state legislative assemblies, the entire administrative set-up throughout the country slows down considerably, and all other normal functions and activities of the government are pushed back. This creates a lot of hardships and suffering for the common man. One election can help resolve such issues.

5. Minimising Disruption

Frequent elections can disrupt governance and developmental activities. Simultaneous elections reduce this disruption by streamlining the electoral process. The Model Code of Conduct, which refers to a set of guidelines and principles that candidates, political parties, and election officials who are expected to follow these guidelines during the electoral process. These guidelines aim to ensure fairness, transparency, and integrity in elections.

6. Keeping a check on political parties

One Nation, One Election makes it easier to keep a record of the expenses of political parties effectively. It also reduces candidates' chances to use unaccounted money or black money during their campaigning process.

7. Increases Voter Participation

Repeated elections can lead to fewer voters present, but they will also lead to much less engagement. Conducting a single election is much easier for both the government and the voters. Both of them remained well involved in the election process.

8. Increase in the GDP Rate

According to the High-Level Committee report initiated by former President Ram Nath Kovind, holding simultaneous elections for both the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies could lead to increased GDP growth compared to periods when elections are not held simultaneously.

BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTATION

1. Cost Effective

Conducting frequent elections for a nation with India's population is an incredibly costly as well as a resource-intensive procedure. This surge in costs is due to the spike in the number of eligible voters and evolving campaign strategies and expenditures to maintain a social media presence. Synchronisation of elections would drastically reduce expenditure on campaigning as well as allocation of security and administration personnel, allowing political parties to utilise their resources more efficiently.

2. Political Stability

Lakhs of government officials and security personnel are posted on election duty 2-3 months before the polling. This puts a pause on their ability to perform their usual official duties/services for the public. Simultaneous elections would require a less frequent diversion of focus from core responsibilities.

3. Increased Voter Participation

Simultaneous elections will increase voter turnout because it proves easier for people to cast many ballots at once. It eases concerns for voters regarding missing names from electoral rolls due to constant updating. The reduction in election-related disruptions (e.g. road closures) can have positive economic effects by providing stability and allowing everyday business to happen smoothly, keeping a high potential voter turnout.

4. Efficient Resource Allocation

Political parties and candidates can allocate their resources, including time and manpower, more efficiently when elections are held together, optimising their campaigns.

5. Enhanced Policy Focus

Politicians and governments can focus more on governance and policy-making rather than being constantly preoccupied with election campaigning, potentially leading to better governance outcomes

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DRAWBACKS OF IMPLEMENTATION

1. Complications in the Constitutional Framework

The introduction of simultaneous elections is against the basic structure of the Constitution since the requirement for dissolution of state legislative assemblies before their said term, which comprises elected representatives, would be against the will of the people. It would also require several amendments to the Constitution.

2. Undermines Federalism

Conducting elections simultaneously for the Lok Sabha and all state assemblies would result in national issues ignoring regional and state-specific issues. National political parties would have an advantage over regional parties on account of this system. This would undermine the federal spirit of our country, which has been declared a basic structure of the Constitution.

3. Misuse of Government Machinery.

The use of government machinery is strictly prohibited during election time, but in reality, the ruling party uses the government machinery for advertisement and other purposes to get votes from people. It gives an unfair advantage of resources to the ruling party and their candidates.

4. Reduced Accountability

Longer election cycles may reduce the frequency at which voters can hold governments accountable for their actions, potentially leading to smugness among elected representatives.

5. Inability to deal with Hung Parliament/Assembly

One of the issues put forward by political parties was that no provisions have been made to solve the problem of hung parliament/assembly in case simultaneous elections are held. In case a solitary political party or a coalition formed before the election lacks a sufficient number of elected members to attain a majority in the legislative house or assembly.

6. Political Agreement

It is hard to agree with all political parties and stakeholders, given the diversity of the political landscape in different states.

7. Amendments to the Constitution

This proposal would require fairly large-scale changes to the Constitution, including the provisions on the duration of the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

TIMELINE

1951:

Given the vast and diverse population of mostly illiterates, India's first general elections were a great challenge. The first general elections in 1951-52 were held simultaneously with the Vidhan Sabha polls, and this continued for the next three rounds of Lok Sabha polls (1957, 1962, and 1967). The parties contested for 489 seats, and the Indian National Congress won 364 seats while the Communist Party of India won 16 seats, and became the main opposition party.

1969:

The Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, was expelled from the Indian National Congress for violating party discipline. This happened due to growing differences over the Presidential Elections in 1969, after the death of Zakir Hussain. When Gandhi was expelled, she took with her over 400 Congress supporters and formed a faction named Congress (R), where R stood for Requisitionists.

1971:

The 1971 general elections marked a break from the earlier process of simultaneous polls. The elections were originally supposed to take place in 1972, but Prime Minister Indira Gandhi chose to advance the dates by an entire year. This separated the national and state schedules since the terms of many legislative assemblies were not completed.

The Indian National Congress (R) won the majority, while the Indian National Congress (Organization) lost more than half their seats.

1975:

There was a period of emergency between 1975-1977 for 21 months, as declared by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This entails a suspension of democracy as well as the right of Fundamental Rights.

1977:

On 21 March 1977, Smt. Indira Gandhi suspended the national emergency and announced general elections. These elections gave the nation the first non-Congress Prime Minister, as Shri Morarji Desai was contesting from the Janata Party.

1983:

The Election Commission of India's first annual report recommended holding simultaneous elections to the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies of States, stating various reasons. The Government of India decided that the proposal for holding elections to the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies, simultaneously need not be proceeded with for the present.

1999:

The 170th Report of the Law Commission of India to improve the electoral system emphasized its goal of one election every 5 years. It suggested a constitutional amendment to allow the government to fulfill its goal.

2013:

President Pranab Mukherjee advocated One Nation, One Election. He said with various elections at different times the normal activities of the government stop due to the code of conduct.

2014:

The general elections of the year 2014 were historical for several reasons, majorly highlighted by the triumph of the BJP led by Shri Narendra Modi. The Bharatiya Janata Party "will seek to evolve" a system for "holding Assembly and Lok Sabha elections simultaneously" through discussions with other parties. According to the 2014 Bharatiya Janata Party manifesto, the Bharatiya Janata Party argued that while maintaining stability for state governments, it would save election costs for the government and political parties. A committee chaired by Dr. E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan (a member of the Congress) presented its 79th Report on 'Feasibility of Holding Simultaneous Elections to the House of People and State Legislative Assemblies to the Rajya Sabha in 2015 and laid the Report on the Table of the Lok Sabha the same day.

2018:

President Ram Nath Kovind had made a strong pitch for debate and consensus among all parties on simultaneous polls while addressing a joint session of Parliament. He stated that One Nation, Simultaneous Elections was the need of the hour and it would accelerate the development of our nation, thereby benefiting the citizens.

2019:

Bharatiya Janata Party leader Shri Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, a former Rajya Sabha MP, was tasked by the party's leadership with raising awareness about the concept of "one nation, one poll" and evaluating the idea. A two-day seminar was organised, and a report was submitted to the Prime Minister.

2020:

During the All India Presiding Officers Conference, Prime Minister Narendra Modi advocated a One Nation, One Election system and a single voter's list, saying that elections taking place every few months hinder development.

2023:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi appointed a commission to look after the issue of One Nation, One Election. A committee under the headship of former President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, was formed to look into the feasibility of simultaneous polls to state assemblies and the Lok Sabha.

2024:

The High Level Committee on Simultaneous Elections, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, submitted its report. The report, comprising 18,626 pages, was worked on for 191 days. It recommends a 2-step approach. Simultaneous elections will be held for the House of the People and the state legislative assemblies. Elections to the Municipalities and the Panchayats will be synchronized with the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies in such a way that Municipalities and Panchayat elections are held within a hundred days of holding elections to the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies.

KEY PLAYERS AND THEIR TAKES

1. High Level Committee

The Union government put together a panel of 7 members led by former President Ram Nath Kovind to ‘examine and make recommendations for holding simultaneous elections’ in the Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local governing bodies.

The members include

Former President Ram Nath Kovind

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah
- Former Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad
- Former Finance Commission Chairman NK Singh
- Former Lok Sabha Secretary General Subhash Kashyap
- Senior Advocate Harish Salve

The panel held on March 10, 2024, and submitted its report to President Droupadi Murmu, pitching for simultaneous polls across the country. The Report, comprising 18,626 pages, is a result of research work of 191 days, since its constitution on 2 September 2023.

The committee recommends simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies and the elections to the Panchayats and Municipalities to take place within 100 days of these elections.

2. Bharatiya Janata Party

Bharatiya Janata Party supported the concept of simultaneous elections and emphasised that simultaneous elections worked extremely well between 1952 to 1967. 'One Nation One Election' is a key electoral pledge of the party. PM Narendra Modi has consistently supported the adoption of One Nation One Election to cut down on the time and money spent on elections. The Bharatiya Janata Party argues that holding separate Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections leads to unnecessary spending.

Simultaneous elections will enable the government to concentrate on governance rather than being focused on the elections. It will reduce disruptions in daily life by decreasing the number of political rallies. The repeated enforcement of the moral code of behaviour, which had been hampering progress for months, will no longer be a problem. Bharatiya Janata Party leaders believe that simultaneous elections will allow all national issues to be addressed. The Bharatiya Janata Party has argued that holding the Lok Sabha and state Assembly elections separately wastes money and also interferes with governance.

According to them, elections should last only three to four months, allowing the government to then spend the next four and a half years developing the blueprint and working for the country's growth.

They emphasised the economic burden of frequent elections, with States facing the Model Code of Conduct 3-4 times in five years and the allocation of security forces from their usual duties. The Party proposed a unified electoral system with one voter ID card for all three tiers of government. One election for all bodies is in the national interest for economic, administrative, and democratic reasons. Supporting their case, the Party provided an example from the state of Maharashtra, where 307 days were lost due to the Model Code of Conduct in a specific year.

a) *Narendra Modi*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi says that the implementation of the One Nation One Election is a commitment of his government to the benefit of the nation. He has repeatedly persuaded the implementation of 'One Nation, One Election' to save time and money spent during the polls.

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In June, soon after returning to power, PM Narendra Modi met leaders of various political parties having representation in Parliament to explore possibilities of holding Lok Sabha and assembly elections together. Enthusiastic about the benefits of implementing the committee's recommendations, assuring that the country would gain significantly from the initiative. Shri Narendra Modi took into consideration the extensive discussions and suggestions put across by various individuals and groups regarding this proposal.

b) Amit Shah

Home Minister Amit Shah emphasised that the Modi government in its next term will also implement One Nation One Election as the time has come for the elections to be held simultaneously in the country. The senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader further said the simultaneous elections will also bring down costs. He stated that, “The idea of One Nation One Election is not something new. In this country, One Nation One Election was followed for two decades.” Home Minister Amit Shah's party explicitly believes that in a progressive democracy like India, elections should be held at a fixed time and for a fixed duration. It would be a major task for people's representatives to carry out their duties effectively.

3. Indian National Congress

The Indian National Congress opposed the idea of One Nation, One Election, implementing simultaneous elections would result in “substantial changes to the basic structure of the Constitution”. They asserted that it would go against the concept of federalism. Along with this, the argument that the cost of conducting elections is extremely high seems unjustified. They felt that people would consider this small amount as the cost of free and fair elections to keep the status of democracy. Further, they stated that there is no place for the concept of simultaneous elections in a country that has adopted a Parliamentary system of government.

The Congress rejected the idea of conducting concurrent elections in India, on the grounds of it being an “undemocratic” practice and called for the dissolution of the High-Level Committee formed to examine it.

The party further explained that the concept of simultaneous elections is an assault on the Constitution and Federalism. President of Congress Maillikarjun Kharge expressed his concerns regarding the “biased” composition of the Committee because it lacks representation from opposition parties and leads numerous State Legislative Assemblies. Party Leader P Chidambaram said that the BJP supports One Nation One Election to divert focus from pressing issues and are creating a false narrative.

The committee welcomed suggestions from the public for making appropriate changes in the existing legal and administrative framework to allow simultaneous elections to take place.

15 political parties, including the Congress, strongly opposed the idea and claimed it could and would violate the basic foundation of the Indian Constitution. They labelled the concept as “anti-democratic”, and “anti-federal” and said it would marginalise regional parties and result in the composition of a presidential form of government.

4. Shiv Sena

The parties split into two factions: Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena led by Shri Eknath Shinde and Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray [UBT]) led by Shri Uddhav Thackeray.

The Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena expressed its “full support” for the concept of simultaneous elections. They highlighted the impact of frequent elections on the economy and development, persuading synchronised elections across all States. They emphasised the financial burden, administrative burden, and deployment challenges during elections, stating that simultaneous elections would resolve these issues, leading to an increased focus on governance. According to them, the ECI spent Rs. 10,000 crores on the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the smooth and fair functioning of which is conducted by spending the money of the public through government coffers. The entire government workforce, teachers as well as other administrative and law enforcement officials must be involved in the process. Such high expenditure of money and resources can be reduced if all elections are held simultaneously.

However, Shri Uddhav Thackeray, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief, said that the "one nation, one party" plan of Bharatiya Janata Party would never be accepted. "One nation, one law can be understood. But we will never accept one nation, one party plan of the Bharatiya Janata Party."

5. Communist Party Of India

The Communist Party of India (CPI) stated that they disapprove of holding simultaneous elections. They expressed their concerns regarding the same and stated that the proposal for simultaneous elections is restrictive of democracy and state rights. Along with this, they think of it as an attempt to cut back on the diversity of opinion by enforcing uniformity and pushing the country towards rule by one party.

The CPI holds the view that the One Nation One Election system of election aims to centralise political power and influence ,when the fundamental idea of a federal governmental setup is to decentralise power and distribute it between central, state and local governing bodies. The loss of autonomy of State Legislative Assemblies has been mentioned as a drawback by this party, as has the amendment of several articles in the Constitution of India.

6. All India Trinamool Congress

All India Trinamool Congress disapproved of the concept of holding simultaneous elections and questioned the constitutional and structural implications of One Nation, One Election. They stated that this would be against the federal structure of the Indian Constitution as well as the basic electoral principles. They also stated that forcing Vidhan Sabha to go for premature elections would be unconstitutional and ultimately lead to state issues being ignored. The party also had an interaction in person with the High-Level Committee on 6th February 2024.

Smt Mamta Banerjee questioned the committee's plan to synchronise the election. She mentioned that the first general elections were simultaneously held however now the system is matched with unfamiliarity, forcing states with pending elections into premature polls would violate the trust of the people who elected their Vidhan Sabha representatives.

7. Aam Aadmi Party

The Aam Aadmi Party opposed the idea of One Nation, One Election asserting that the implementation of simultaneous elections would undermine democracy, the basic structure of the Constitution, and the federal nature of the country. It argued that the proposal would “institutionalise a Presidential form of government which cannot be dislodged by a vote of no-confidence.” It added that the cost sought to be saved by holding simultaneous elections is 0.1% more than the Central government's annual budget.

The AAP further stated that the principles of the Constitution and democracy should not be sacrificed for "narrow financial gains" and administrative convenience. The Aam Aadmi Party believes that simultaneous elections would favour national parties, putting smaller, regional parties at a disadvantage.

They strongly believe that the Bharatiya Janata Party should not be allowed to implement the ‘One Nation, One Election’ system in the country as only during election time do political parties give into the demands of the people. Shri Arvind Kejriwal stated that if all elections are synchronised, political leaders will go before voters only 6 months before polls.

CASE STUDIES

‘One Nation, One Election’ has been a heated debate among politicians, policymakers and academicians. While many people agree with it, several things need careful consideration before implementation, especially regarding challenges associated with it could be developed into a standard framework. This concept has forever been deemed impossible for India, due to its status as the world’s largest democracy, giant population and sheer size. In this case study, we examine how other countries conduct simultaneous elections smoothly and efficiently.

1. THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A good example, though not exactly proportionate to the Indian scale, would be South Africa. The world’s largest democracy, India, is the seventh biggest in terms of area, whereas South Africa is the 24th.

Provincial and National elections are held simultaneously every five years in South Africa. The African country has nine provinces. Separate voting papers are provided to voters to cast ballots for the national and provincial legislatures.

In South Africa, voters cast their ballots for both the National Assembly and Provincial Legislatures simultaneously. However, municipal elections are held separately from provincial ones in a five-year cycle.

South Africa's electoral system is based on a proportional representation (PR) framework for choosing members of parliament and provincial legislatures.

The national Parliament has 400 MPs, but the makeup of the nine provincial legislatures varies, ranging from 30 to 90 seats depending on the population of the province.

The execution of these elections is entrusted to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), a body responsible for the overall administration of the electoral process, to maintain its integrity and impartiality. The role of the IEC is very similar to that of the ECI.

South Africa's electoral process, however, is very different from India's.

2. THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN

The Scandinavian nation of Sweden is an economic and innovation powerhouse. It is not too well known that elections to Sweden's county and municipal councils occur simultaneously with the general elections, every four years. The electoral system in Sweden is proportional, which means that the parties are given several representatives in the elected assembly that are proportional to their share of the vote.

Elections to the Swedish Parliament, municipal councils, and county councils have been held simultaneously since 1970. Previously, a closed list system was used – that is, candidates were elected in the order in which their names appeared on their party list. The semi-open list system was piloted in seven municipalities in 1994 and then in the elections to the European Parliament in 1995. The system was introduced across the whole country in 1998 for municipal, county/regional, and Parliamentary elections. A semi-open list system is used. Voters choose a party list but also have the option of casting a personal vote for a particular candidate from that party list, by marking an 'X' next to his/her name on the ballot paper.

3. THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

The Republic of Indonesia hosts the world's biggest single-day election. Indonesians choose a new president and vice president, a parliament, and lawmakers among 20,000 administrative posts across the country.

There are roughly 205 million registered voters and turnout in past elections has been about 75%, according to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, a U.S.-based organization that provides technical support for elections.

Voters have a six-hour window to cast their ballots. Indonesia has three time zones and the first polls are in the east. Voting booths will be overseen by election officials, party members and independent observers to safeguard against manipulation. Polls must be closed nationwide before counting can begin.

Voters cast a secret ballot and dip fingers in indelible ink to prevent duplicate voting.

While an official vote count by the poll body lasts late into election night, quick counts by independent survey agencies provide an early indication of the result.

Political parties need 4% of votes to qualify for the national parliament. A presidential candidate needs more than 50% of votes cast overall and at least 20% of votes in more than half the country's provinces to win.

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