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Electoral Cycles and Constitutional Equilibrium: Federalism, Accountability, and the Limits of Synchronization in India

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ABSTRACT

The proposal of “One Nation, One Election” (ONOE) seeks to synchronize elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies in India, aiming to reduce the frequency of elections and promote administrative efficiency. This paper critically examines the constitutional, federal, and democratic implications of implementing simultaneous elections within India’s parliamentary framework. While proponents argue that ONOE may reduce electoral expenditure, mitigate voter fatigue, and ensure governance stability, critics raise concerns regarding its compatibility with the federal structure, the principle of political accountability, and the doctrine of free and fair elections as part of the Constitution’s Basic Structure. Through doctrinal analysis and comparative study, the paper evaluates the constitutional amendments required for synchronization, particularly concerning Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 356 of the Constitution of India. It further examines how synchronized electoral cycles may affect voter engagement, regional party representation, and the balance between national and state political narratives. Drawing comparative insights from jurisdictions such as South Africa, Germany, and Sweden, the study highlights the structural and contextual differences that shape the feasibility of simultaneous elections. The paper argues that while ONOE may offer administrative efficiency and financial savings, it poses substantial constitutional and democratic challenges, especially in relation to federalism and accountability. Any reform in this

direction must therefore be carefully structured to preserve constitutional balance, democratic representation, and the autonomy of states.

KEYWORDS

One Nation, One Election; Simultaneous Elections, Federalism, Basic Structure Doctrine, Political Accountability, Electoral Reform, Constitutional Amendment, Democratic Representation, Voter Engagement, Governance Stability

INTRODUCTION

To operate the governmental system, it is essential for the citizens to choose their representatives. Elections are organized to enforce this principle of democracy. If explained in plain terms, the method of selecting your public representative is termed as election.

There is no precise definition of the expression simultaneous election. Numerous terminological explanations of Simultaneous General Elections have been offered by scholars. Sugato Dasgupta et al., define “Simultaneous General Elections as General Elections that are organized at the same time for multiple categories of elections together”¹. Shugart gives a more detailed view.

According to him, “Simultaneous General Elections are general elections held at the same time to choose office holders at the national and regional levels, concerning parliamentary candidates and presidential candidates for nations having a presidential system of governance”.² On the basis of these explanations, it may be inferred that simultaneous general elections comprise several different elections together, both distinct in range and offices filled.³

Direct involvement of the citizens in managing the system is not

¹ Sugato Dasgupta, et.al., Coordinated voting in sequential and simultaneous elections: some experimental evidence, *Experimental Economics* 11 (2007), pp. 315 – 335.

² Matthew Soberg Shugart, The Electoral Cycle and Institutional Sources of Divided Presidential Government, *The American Political Science Review* 89 (Juni 1995), pp. 327 – 343.

³ Satrio Alif Febriyanto, Fitra Arsil, and Qurrata Ayuni; Models of Simultaneous Elections around the World: The Influence of Government Systems on Election Implementation Methods, 175-186 at p. 177 in W. Waluyo et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference for Democracy and National Resilience (ICDNR 2023)*, *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 795, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-148-7_16

feasible in any democracy. Hence, to simplify democracy, the representative of the people is chosen. Under the established regulations, free and impartial elections are carried out under the oversight of an independent body.⁴ People take part in these elections. And elect their public representative by casting votes. This procedure is known as the electoral process.

Federal democracies, which are often marked by the existence of national and subnational governing tiers, encounter a particular challenge of repeated elections. In recent decades, India is also dealing with the same concern with numerous state assembly elections being conducted⁵. These recurring elections involve substantial expense in terms of finances and administrative effort and also create inconvenience to citizens, political parties and the government⁶. This has initiated a discussion for adoption of 'One Nation, One Election' simultaneous elections⁷.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research paper aims to achieve the following purposes:

- 1. To Study the Historical Background:** By reviewing the historical development of Indian electoral procedures, we intend to trace the origins of ONOE and understand the factors that resulted in its proposal.
- 2. To Evaluate the Constitutional Dimensions:** Examine the constitutional structure regulating elections in India, and assess the legal complexities involved in enforcing ONOE.
- 3. To Analyze Implications for Political Parties:** Examine how ONOE might influence the approaches, funding, and functioning of political parties in India, both at the national and regional tiers.
- 4. To Assess Federalism and ONOE:** Consider the possible impact of ONOE on India's federal framework, taking into account states' autonomy, coordination issues, and the equilibrium between central and state authorities.

⁴ INDIA CONST. art. 324; Mohinder Singh Gill v. Chief Election Comm'r, (1978) 1 S.C.C. 405 (India).

⁵ LAW COMM'N OF INDIA, 170TH REPORT ON REFORM OF THE ELECTORAL LAWS (1999).

⁶ NITI AAYOG, ANALYSIS OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS: THE 'WHAT', 'WHY' AND 'HOW' (2017).

⁷ PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMM. ON PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, LAW & JUSTICE, 79TH REPORT ON FEASIBILITY OF HOLDING SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS TO LOK SABHA AND STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES (2015).

- 5. To Reflect on Democratic Consequences:** Study the possible effects of ONOE on democratic representation, voter participation, and the protection of democratic values in India⁸.
- 6. To Derive Lessons from International Comparisons:** Review examples of countries that have adopted ONOE or similar changes to draw conclusions and identify best practices.
- 7. To Examine Challenges and Issues:** Investigate socioeconomic inequalities, technological infrastructure difficulties, and potential misuse concerns related with ONOE.
- 8. To Emphasize the Merits and Benefits:** Point out the potential advantages of ONOE, including simplified election procedures, decreased expenditure, and continuity in governance.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a doctrinal and analytical research methodology. It primarily relies on the examination of constitutional provisions, judicial precedents of the Supreme Court of India, Law Commission reports, Parliamentary Committee reports, and official documents relating to electoral reform. The research also incorporates comparative constitutional analysis by examining electoral models in selected democracies practicing synchronized elections. Secondary sources including scholarly books, journal articles, and democratic theory literature have been used to assess the broader implications of ONOE on accountability, federal balance, and representative democracy. The approach is qualitative and normative, focusing on constitutional interpretation and institutional design rather than empirical statistical modeling.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN INDIA

Indian democracy is the biggest democracy in the world. The Constitution of India lays down certain fundamental provisions regarding elections⁹. Elections are carried out in India under the provisions of Article 324 to Article 329 mentioned in Part 15 of the Constitution.

⁸ B.R. Ambedkar, Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII (Nov. 4, 1948).

⁹ H.M. SEERVAI, CONSTITUTIONAL LAW OF INDIA vol. 2 (4th ed. 1996).

THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA: MANDATE AND FUNCTIONS

Elections in India are conducted under the supervision of the Election Commission. The Election Commission is an autonomous body which was constituted on 25 January 1950¹⁰. It is the primary duty of the Election Commission to conduct free and impartial elections in India. The Election Commission comprises a Chief Election Commissioner and two other Commissioners. All have a term of 6 years¹¹.

NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

The Election Commission has been established under Article 324 of the Constitution of India. The Election Commission is also referred to as the Election Commission. Elections to the President, Vice President, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and Legislative Assemblies in the country are supervised and conducted under the authority of the Election Commission.

CLASSIFICATION OF ELECTIONS IN INDIA

There are two kinds of electoral process followed in India. Direct elections and indirect elections. Under direct election, the people directly select their representative. Like in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections, it directly chooses its MP and MLA.

Under the indirect system, the President, Vice President, Rajya Sabha and Legislative Council are chosen in the country. The President, Vice-President and Rajya Sabha MPs are not directly elected by the people. People's representatives elected by the people choose them. Therefore it is placed in the category of indirect.

DIRECT ELECTIONS IN INDIA: A THREE-TIER DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE

Lok Sabha Elections: Lok Sabha elections are also termed general elections in India. Electoral constituencies are decided on the basis of population from each state of the country. The citizens elect one representative from each constituency. In the existing system, there are 545 Lok Sabha seats in the country. The Lok

¹⁰ The Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, No. 11 of 1991, INDIA CODE (1991).

¹¹ The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Conditions of Service) Act, No. 11 of 1991, § 4.

Sabha elections are conducted under the supervision of the Election Commission.

Assembly Elections: Like the Lok Sabha, the number of constituencies in each state is determined. These regions are fixed on the basis of population. People elect the MLA from their constituency. Like the Lok Sabha, the assembly elections are also conducted under the supervision of the Election Commission.

Urban body elections: Urban body elections are organized under the authority of the State Election Commission. Through these elections, the citizens choose the corporator for their city or locality.

THE CASE FOR ELECTORAL SYNCHRONISATION: ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF MULTIPLE ELECTIONS

Elections are regarded as the greatest festival of democracy. If we observe the elections conducted in the country, we notice that every year elections are organized in one or another state. Because of this continuity of elections, the country remains in a constant electoral phase. This not only influences the administrative and policy decisions but also imposes a substantial load on the treasury of the nation. According to an estimate, more than 60 thousand crore rupees were expended in the recently conducted 17th Lok Sabha elections and the country remained in election phase for nearly three months¹².

A similar condition exists in various states of the country almost throughout the year. In such a scenario, the concept of 'One Nation One Election' may relieve these circumstances.

EMERGING TRENDS IN ELECTORAL REFORMS

The One Nation, One Election or ONOE proposal was approved by the Union Cabinet in September 2024 according to recommendations submitted by the high-powered panel chaired by former president Ram Nath Kovind¹³. The committee's report extends to 18, 626 pages and advocates for conducting Lok Sabha and state assemblies' polls together as part of the initial phase. The high level panel obtained more than 20000 responses out of which 81 per cent have endorsed the above proposal. The 2019 elections allegedly cost nearly Rs. 60,000 crore, underlining the

¹² ASS'N FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORMS, ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE INCURRED BY NATIONAL AND STATE POLITICAL PARTIES FOR LOK SABHA 2019 (2020).

¹³ HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE ON SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS, REPORT (2024) (Chair: Ram Nath Kovind).

economic consequences of staggered polls.

Recent political discussion indicates serious apprehensions from opposition parties regarding:

- Possible removal of regional parties along with the federal structure
- Democratic concerns that strengthen the constitution
- Impact on state autonomy as well as local governance

These alterations would require amendments to Articles 83, 85, 172, 174; and Article 356 relating to President's Rule¹⁴. More importantly, the initial phase that would include the execution of the reform in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies does not necessarily require state ratification of the Constitution.

ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION AND DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Normative Theories of Political Accountability

Political accountability streamlines the functioning of governance by guaranteeing that representatives of the people remain in constant contact with their voters / principals. It is reinforced by periodic elections because citizens can replace their representatives based on performance achievement or lack, corruption cases, etc. Other scholars including Robert Dahl have observed that a central feature of democracy is the conduct of elections through which citizens are able to vote in, or vote out representatives who will determine governments' actions¹⁵. In the system operating in the present setting of India, staggered elections provide several check points across the tiers of governance so that voters can assess their leaders regularly¹⁶. The ONOE model though more efficient and productive in facilitating policy execution by separating policy matters from the politics of polarized elected representatives would lessen the regularity of such check-points and therefore reduce the opportunities of voters holding their representatives accountable on these policies¹⁷.

¹⁴ M.P. JAIN, INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW 845–872 (8th ed. 2018).

¹⁵ ROBERT A. DAHL, POLYARCHY: PARTICIPATION AND OPPOSITION 1–16 (1971)

¹⁶ Guillermo O'Donnell, Horizontal Accountability in New Democracies, 9 J. DEMOCRACY 112 (1998).

¹⁷ JOHN HART ELY, DEMOCRACY AND DISTRUST: A THEORY OF JUDICIAL REVIEW 73–104 (1980).

Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski & Susan Stokes, Elections and Representation, in DEMOCRACY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND REPRESENTATION 29 (1999).

Electoral synchronization and its effect on political oversight

Under the ONOE arrangement of voting it is a possibility that the voters' electoral events for national and state level representatives will occur simultaneously, possibly reducing voters' ability to distinguish between national and state spheres. It is argued that national parties may dominate the electoral discourse while marginalizing local concerns that regional parties generally represent effectively¹⁸. Hence, state level accountability may weaken for the simple reason that people are more inclined to focus on national rather than state-based narratives. In the same manner, it is possible that synchronized elections might decrease the frequency with which representatives are required to engage with their electorate through campaigns and campaigns, which may lead to complacency. Frequent elections presently compel politicians to remain attentive with their voters because any sign of an early poll, politicians would need to address local concerns. ONOE might reduce this pressure resulting in reduction of accountability mechanisms and systems.

Comparative analysis of accountability frameworks across democracies

South Africa, Germany and Sweden are among the nations that practice synchronized elections. These states offer useful perspectives into how simultaneous elections may influence political accountability:

- In South Africa, polls to the National Assembly and the provincial legislatures are conducted together every five years. On one side, this arrangement assures stability; however, some argue that it reduces the scope of the provincial governments' accountability, as national matters dominate the electoral agenda¹⁹.
- Germany conducts its Bundestag and state legislature at separate timings but the Chancellor in Germany is chosen at the same time as the Bundestag. Here accountability is preserved at a considerably high level due to the clear federal structure and coalition politics, where each state has representation²⁰.

Elections in Sweden are organized to be national and local simultaneously every four years. While this method has improved administrative efficiency there are several arguments which suggest that it weakens local representation since the voters

¹⁸ Louise Tillin, *Remapping India: New States and Their Political Origins* 45–90 (2013).

¹⁹ Christina Murray & Richard Simeon, *Multi-Level Governance in South Africa*, 5 *PUBLIUS* 63 (2003).

²⁰ Donald P. Kommers & Russell A. Miller, *The Constitutional Jurisprudence of the Federal Republic of Germany* 35–58 (3d ed. 2012).

largely concentrate on the national outcomes²¹. These experiences demonstrate that coordinated election cycles may enhance governance stability at the national level although it raises the risk of weakening local responsibility and accountability towards the citizens.²²

Federalism, electoral cycles, and political accountability in India

The governing structure of India is considerably centralized and places significant focus on the autonomy of individual states. There is no uncertainty that regional parties perform an essential role of representing regional interests particularly where there is regional ethnic, linguistic, and/or economic background. Under ONOE, it may be anticipated that dominant national parties could overshadow regional demands and diminish the state's influence in politics and responsibilities.

Moreover, the likelihood of extended presidential rule in states when governments fall mid term under ONOE opens a serious concern of governance gap. Such intervals could further weaken accountability to some extent, as appointed authorities may function in place of elected representatives during those periods as administrators.

VOTER TURNOUT AND POLITICAL AWARENESS IN AN ONOE REGIME

The Concept and Scope of Voter Participation

This is a structure of elements describing the citizens' involvement in a voting procedure, including voter turnout, political awareness and engagement in electoral campaigns. Voter turnout is another measure of the society's democracy since it indicates the degree of motivation voters possess towards leadership selections²³.

²¹ Torbjörn Bergman & Kaare Strøm, Sweden: Democratic Stability and Change, in THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS (2006).

²² The comparison of electoral accountability in Germany, Sweden, and South Africa reveals diverse impacts of synchronized elections. Germany's federal system allows for separate elections for the Bundestag and state legislatures, enhancing local accountability (Lok Sabha Secretariat, 2020). Sweden conducts simultaneous elections every four years, which can overshadow local issues despite promoting transparency (Raghavan, 2022). In South Africa, concurrent elections for the National Assembly and provincial legislatures raise concerns about the accountability of provincial governments (Iyer, 2020). These cases illustrate that while synchronized elections may improve governance stability, they can also diminish local representation.

²³ Amartya Sen, Democracy as a Universal Value, 10 J. DEMOCRACY 3 (1999).

The significance lies in the reality that interaction with various Election Commission and political parties voter participation is affected by the regularity of elections, the relevance of electoral concerns and political rivalry. Staggered elections at present provide the citizens with multiple opportunities to vote at different levels of government, which may enhance overall turnout²⁴.

ELECTORAL CONSOLIDATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC MANDATE FORMATION

Proponents of ONOE suggested that the proposed arrangement has the capacity of removing what may be called election fatigue which might negatively influence the voters' turnout. ONOE could combine electoral campaigns which are usually organized at separate periods into a single phase and thereby enhance public consciousness of the electoral procedure and also assist to lower campaign expenses for the contesting politicians.

Conversely, critics have contended that simultaneous elections could actually produce adverse consequences. Voters in a context of synchronized election may end up being overwhelmed by numerous candidates or issues that might be presented for voting, and consequently refrain from voting or vote improperly, particularly the less aware or lower information voters. The mere concern that one is being faced with the responsibility of casting votes for representatives at several tiers of government at one time implies that the likelihood of a greater proportion of invalid votes and less informed voting is considerably high.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF VOTER ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTRIES WITH SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

This is a framework of attributes describing the citizens' involvement in a voting procedure, including voter turnout, political awareness and engagement in electoral campaigns. Higher voter turnout is an indication of a developed democracy because it reflects that people will take part in the processes influencing them.

The significance lies in the fact that in interaction with various Election Commission and political parties voter participation is affected by the regularity of elections, the relevance of electoral matters and political competition. Staggered elections at present provide the citizens with multiple opportunities to vote at different levels of government, which may enhance overall turnout.

²⁴ Arend Lijphart, Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma, 91 AM. POL. SCI. REV. 1 (1997).

POSSIBLE IMPACTS OF ONOE ON THE VOTING PUBLIC

Supporters of ONOE suggested that the proposed arrangement has the capability of removing what may be described as election fatigue which might adversely influence the voters' turnout. ONOE could combine electoral campaigns which are generally organized at different periods into a single phase and thereby enhance public awareness of the electoral procedure and also assist in reducing campaign expenses for the contesting politicians²⁵.

On the contrary, critics have contended that simultaneous elections could actually produce adverse consequences. In a synchronized election, the voters might be overwhelmed by numerous candidates along with issues making it difficult to cast an informed vote and therefore less informed or first time voters may withdraw. The mere concern that one is being faced with the responsibility of casting votes for representatives at various tiers of government at one time implies that the likelihood of a greater proportion of invalid votes and less informed voting is considerably high.

CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITS: BASIC STRUCTURE AND ELECTORAL DESIGN

The proposal for simultaneous elections must be evaluated against the doctrine of Basic Structure, which places substantive limits on Parliament's amending power under Article 368. In *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala*, the Supreme Court held that while Parliament possesses wide powers to amend the Constitution, it cannot alter its basic structure or essential features.²⁶ This decision transformed Indian constitutional law by introducing a substantive judicial check on constitutional amendments.

Subsequent decisions have clarified that democracy, federalism, rule of law, judicial review, and free and fair elections form part of the Constitution's Basic Structure.²⁷ If simultaneous elections require constitutional amendments that distort these essential features, such amendments may be susceptible to judicial review.

In *Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain*, the Supreme Court explicitly held that free and fair elections are an essential feature of democracy and therefore part of the Basic Structure.²⁸ Any reform

²⁵ Election Commission of India, Annual Report 2019–20.

²⁶ *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala*, (1973) 4 SCC 225.

²⁷ *Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain*, 1975 Supp SCC 1; *Minerva Mills Ltd. v. Union of India*, (1980) 3 SCC 625.

²⁸ *Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain*, 1975 Supp SCC 1.

that restructures electoral cycles must therefore be tested against whether it strengthens or weakens the structural integrity of electoral accountability.

If ONOE reduces periodic electoral accountability by elongating the distance between opportunities for public evaluation of governments at different tiers, a constitutional question arises whether such restructuring indirectly affects the democratic core of the Constitution.

Federalism in India, though not strictly symmetrical, has been recognized as part of the Constitution's Basic Structure. In *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court affirmed that federalism is a foundational constitutional principle and that misuse of Article 356 is subject to judicial review.²⁹ The Court emphasized that States are not mere administrative units but constitutional entities with independent political existence.

The implementation of ONOE may require extended use of Article 356 in situations where a State Assembly is dissolved mid-term but national synchronization must be preserved. Such structural compulsion could risk normalizing President's Rule for administrative convenience, a result that would conflict with the federal safeguards articulated in *Bommai*.³⁰

If synchronization results in frequent curtailment or extension of State legislative tenures to align with national cycles, the equilibrium between Union and States may be constitutionally disturbed, raising concerns under the Basic Structure doctrine.

BENEFITS AND ADVANTAGES

A. Simplifying Election Procedures The implementation of 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE) presents possible advantages in simplifying electoral procedures. This section will examine:

1. **Efficiency Improvements:** Study of how ONOE may result in more efficient election administration, lowering the organizational burden linked with frequent polls.
2. **Reducing Voter Exhaustion:** Discussion on how simultaneous elections might lessen voter exhaustion, as voters are not repeatedly involved in election-related processes.

²⁹ *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, (1994) 3 SCC 1.

³⁰ *Id.*

3. **Strengthening Voter Awareness:** Analysis of how ONOE may enhance voter awareness and participation, as elections are conducted at fixed and foreseeable intervals.

B. Lowering Expenditure ONOE has the possibility to generate considerable financial savings. This sub-section will concentrate on the economic benefits:

1. **Expense Reduction:** Study of how ONOE may substantially lessen the monetary strain on the government, political parties, and other stakeholders by combining election costs.
2. **Efficient Use of Resources:** Discussion on how synchronized elections may require more effective resource distribution, including the use of administrative machinery and security personnel.
3. **Clarity in Funding:** Analysis of how lowering expenses may contribute to improved transparency in campaign funding and election spending.

C. Governance Stability The stability of governance is an important benefit linked with ONOE. This section will assess:

1. **Stable Administration:** Study of how simultaneous elections may result in more stable and continuous governance, decreasing interruptions caused by repeated elections.
2. **Policy Execution:** Discussion on how governance stability may support long-term policy formulation and execution, as governments enjoy longer durations.
3. **Economic Advantages:** Analysis of the possible economic gains of stable governance, including consistent economic progress and development.

By outlining the benefits of ONOE in relation to simplifying electoral procedures, lowering expenditure, and securing governance stability, this section seeks to present a comprehensive understanding of the constructive results that may be attained through the implementation of this electoral reform in India.

KEY CHALLENGES OF THE "ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION" PROPOSAL, ALONG WITH SOME OFFICIAL DATA:

This, of course, brings the challenges of One Nation, One Election into perspective and as such should not be seen as indispensable

goals of press freedom.

1. **Breach of Constitutional Framework:** Simultaneous elections may require encroachment upon the federal character of the Constitution of India which contemplates distinct electoral tenures for the Union and the States³¹.
2. **Encroachment on Election Commission's Powers:** The proposal might practically place the Election Commission of India as the body entrusted with supervising free and fair elections in India in jeopardy.
3. **Basic Structure Principle:** Free and fair elections are also safeguarded by the Supreme Court under its Basic Structure Doctrine, which could be susceptible to simultaneous elections³².
4. **Operational Difficulties:** The coordination of conducting another general election across a vast portion of the country also involves numerous issues such as deployment of resources and security concerns.
5. **Effect on Federalism:** Alignment of state electoral cycles with national ones may lessen the state's autonomy and cause the federal structure itself to undermine federalism³³.
6. **Dissolution Issues:** Disturbance with mid-term dissolution of assemblies could in a manner compel synchronization with the election cycle, thereby creating governance difficulties.
7. **Voter Uncertainty:** In certain instances, it may make it harder for voters to separate national from state matters, and this can result in incorrect voting choices.
8. **Possible Legal Disputes:** A significant constitutional issue that may emerge as a challenge to ONOE relates to its legal feasibility in most courts concerning federalism and representative democracy.
9. **Danger of Single-Party Control:** The issues of coordination and candidate nomination may be resolved more conveniently by large national parties than by smaller or regional parties and this could lead to a decline in the political diversity of the country³⁴.

CONCLUSION

The debate surrounding One Nation, One Election represents a critical moment in India's constitutional evolution. While the proposal promises administrative efficiency, financial prudence, and governance continuity, it simultaneously raises significant

³¹ S.R. Bommai v. Union of India, (1994) 3 S.C.C. 1 (India).

³² Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain, (1975) Supp. S.C.C. 1 (India)

³³ State of W.B. v. Union of India, A.I.R. 1963 S.C. 1241 (India)

³⁴ Rajni Kothari, The Congress 'System' in India, 4 ASIAN SURV. 1161 (1964).

concerns about federal autonomy, voter differentiation between national and state issues, and the dilution of periodic democratic accountability. The synchronization of electoral cycles would require substantial constitutional amendments and careful institutional safeguards to prevent excessive centralization or misuse of emergency provisions such as Article 356.

India's constitutional design reflects a delicate balance between stability and accountability, unity and diversity. Any electoral reform must therefore uphold the Basic Structure of the Constitution, preserve federal equilibrium, and protect the core democratic principle that governments remain continuously answerable to the people. ONOE, if implemented without adequate safeguards, risks altering this balance. Conversely, if carefully structured within constitutional limits, it may offer limited administrative benefits without undermining democratic fundamentals. The challenge lies not merely in synchronization, but in preserving the constitutional spirit while pursuing reform.