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One Nation, One Election:
An Analysis from Layman's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

India faces a complex electoral landscape with frequent state and national elections. Recently, both the President and Prime Minister endorsed the concept of One Nation, One Election (ONOE) to synchronize electoral cycles, which was last practiced until 1967. However, implementing simultaneous elections today presents significant challenges. This study employs a cross-sectional design to examine the perspectives of Mangaluru city residents on the One Nation One Election (ONOE) policy. Through stratified random sampling, 105 respondents were selected to explore their attitudes, focusing on the policy's implications and feasibility from the citizens' viewpoint. There has been much discussion on the attempt to synchronize India's election procedures, especially concerning how it may affect the country's federal system. This study explores the difficulties, worries, and possible repercussions of the plan, offering insights into the intricate connection between federalism and electoral synchronization.

Keywords: One Nation-One election, General elections, Democracy, Voting Rights, Simultaneous elections.

I. INTRODUCTION

The "One Nation-One Election" (ONOE) idea advocates holding national elections simultaneously for the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament, state legislative assemblies, and municipal administrations. By lowering the number of elections and decreasing the expenses and disturbances they cause, this concept seeks to simplify the electoral process. However, it's crucial to consider the effects and difficulties of putting such a system in place[3]. One of the primary claims in support of ONOE is that it might lessen the cost involved in holding several elections. India currently has elections at several levels every year, which results in high expenses for labor, security, and logistics. Proponents assert that substantial savings may be realized by combining all elections into one event, enabling resources to be distributed

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[3] Bairagi, A., 2022. One Nation One Election in India: A Contemporary Need vis-a-vis a Matter of Mere Discussion. Issue 2 Int'l JL Mgmt. & Human., 5, p.1726.
https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/ijlmhs16&div=151&id=&page=

more effectively to public welfare and development initiatives.[4] Moreover, ONOE can improve political stability by lessening the never-ending cycle of election campaigns. Politicians in the current system frequently focus on electoral politics, which takes focus away from governance and the execution of policies. Election synchronization could give elected officials more uninterrupted time to perform their tasks and fulfil pledges made during the campaign, free from the interruption of campaigning. ONOE may boost voting turnout by reducing voter fatigue. There will be several elections held in a year, which could cause voter apathy and decrease turnout. ONOE could boost the democratic process by increasing public interest and engagement by holding all elections at the same time.[5]

There are several difficulties and possible negative effects associated with implementing ONOE. The logistical challenges of pulling off such a large-scale election exercise are among the primary worries. Thorough planning and coordination would be necessary to manage elections across several locations with differing degrees of infrastructure and logistical capabilities. Any oversights or operational blunders could damage the electoral process's reputation and doubt its impartiality[6].

(A) **Literature Review:**

Discussing "One Nation-One Election's effectiveness is essential. Its implementation is still lacking even after being proven. Resolving administrative issues has the potential to revolutionize the Indian election system if implemented correctly and in compliance with regulations. Deliberation and the final change are worthwhile even though immediate adoption may be difficult[7]. India, the world's largest democracy, has difficulties with its electoral process, particularly because of multi-cornered races and narrow victory margins—winners frequently receive only 30–35% of the total vote. Researchers suggest two-stage election procedures, where a second round is undertaken if no candidate gets 50% of the vote in the first round, to address these problems. One such change is to replace the current first-past-the-post system. Furthermore, promoting simultaneous elections for the Union and state legislatures seeks to improve electoral stability and save election costs, enabling governments to operate efficiently

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[4] Willnat, L. and Aw, A., 2009. Elections in India: One billion people and democracy. In The Handbook of Election News Coverage around the World (pp. 124-141). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203887172

[5] Strömbäck, J. and Kaid, L.L., 2009. A framework for comparing election news coverage around the world. In The handbook of election news coverage around the world (pp. 1-18). Routledge. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203887172-1

[6]Bhatnagar, A., Issue of 'One Nation, One Election' in Indian Perspective.
 https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d51f/749733ce735dfc4dadda5024dbd6653ece44.pdf

[7] Bansal, M., 2019. The Concept of One Nation One Election: An Analysis from Indian Perspective. Think India Journal, 22(4), pp.3077-3084.
https://thinkindiaquarterly.org/index.php/think-india/article/view/9479#google_vignette

without frequent disruptions from elections[8]. Political and economic stability are promoted by synchronized elections, which also improve government focus and offer cost savings. However, there are dangers such as diminished accountability and loss of regional autonomy. In general, synchronized elections are advantageous; nonetheless, they would require supplementary reforms to address issues with local representation and government accountability[9]. The elaboration highlights ONOE's multifaceted nature and implementation complexities. Addressing logistical hurdles, fostering consensus, and engaging in dialogue are crucial. By considering legal implications, balancing governance, tackling socio-economic gaps, and collaborating with stakeholders, India can achieve an efficient and inclusive electoral system while upholding democratic values

India adopted a "one election" system, or concurrent elections at the federal and state levels, up to 1967. This strategy consolidated electoral procedures and synced Lok Sabha and state legislative assembly votes, promoting administrative efficiency. Elections were held at the end of a five-year term that was set in stone. The system was designed to preserve continuity of governance, even if governors had the authority to dissolve assemblies under certain situations. Although the practice was intended to simplify political and governance procedures, political and logistical issues forced its discontinuation in 1967, and subsequent national and state elections were held separately[10]. India's election studies show progress compared to other developing nations but lag behind those of developed countries. While advancements are evident, there's room for improvement in terms of quantity and quality[11]. There is no reason to dismiss the ONOE proposal outright. Instead, it should be carefully re-engineered to ensure it is both workable and, more importantly, palatable[12].

When the people run the government, democracy flourishes, and free and fair elections are crucial to this. India's frequent elections impede progress because of the code of conduct. According to the 2015 Parliamentary Standing Committee report, the One Nation One Election (ONOE) proposal seeks to synchronize elections for the Lok Sabha, legislative assemblies, and

[8] Singh, B.P., 2013. Electoral Reforms in India–Issues and Challenges. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, 2(3), pp.1-5.

[9] George, A.S., 2023. One Nation, One Election: An Analysis of the Pros and Cons of Implementing Simultaneous Elections in India. Partners Universal International Research Journal, 2(3), pp.40-60. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8348173

[10] Lijphart, A., 1996. The puzzle of Indian democracy: A consociational interpretation. American political science review, 90(2), pp.258-268. https://doi.org/10.2307/2082883

[11] Norio, K., 2007. Election Studies in India. Institute of Developing Economies. https://core.ac.uk/reader/288456890

[12] Kaushik, A.K. and Goyal, Y., 2019. The desirability of one nation one election in India: Simultaneous elections. The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies, 44(1/2), pp.110-120. https://www.proquest.com/openview/c00abb2b51aa7d51695b3c55615dd36b/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=22044

municipal councils, potentially saving millions of dollars and improving efficiency[13].

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

(A) The Constitutional Provisions, Electoral Reforms and Democratic Governance In India

Several constitutional reforms are needed to carry out the "One Nation-One Election" concept in India, which calls for concurrent elections for the State Legislative Assemblies and the Lok Sabha (House of the People). The principal modifications pertain to:

- ✓ **Article 83:** This article governs the duration of the Houses of Parliament.

- ✓ **Article 85:** This article deals with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha by the President.

- ✓ **Article 172:** This article relates to the duration of State Legislatures.

- ✓ **Article 174:** This article addresses the dissolution of State Assemblies.

- ✓ **Article 356:** This article deals with the President's rule in States.

- ✓ **The Representation of the People Act, 1951:** Amendments to this act are also necessary to facilitate the new election framework.

(B) Arguments and Modifications

Legislature Tenure Adjustment: Changing the elected bodies' existing tenure is the main obstacle to adopting simultaneous elections. The Lok Sabha and State Assemblies have five-year terms unless they are dissolved sooner by the President or State Governors, respectively, according to Articles 83(2) and 172(1). To have simultaneous elections, the terms of these bodies would need to be changed, which would entail amending the constitution. Modification to Articles 83 and 172: By possibly changing the periods of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies beyond the present clause "unless sooner dissolved," these revisions would permit synchronization of the election dates. While a Constitution Amendment Bill in the Rajya Sabha examined the viability of simultaneous elections, a private member bill in the Lok Sabha proposed changes to these articles[14].

The purpose of Article 356 and Article 174 is not to enable the synchronization of elections. Article 356 provides for the imposition of President's rule in a state[15]. As a result, additional

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[13] Kumar, V., One nation one election: Indian perspective. International Journal of Political Science and Governance 2023; 5(1), pp.165-168 https://www.journalofpoliticalscience.com/uploads/archives/5-1-44-914.pdf

[14] Bhagat, P. and Pokharyal, M.P., 2020. CONCEPTUAL REFORMS ONE NATION–ONE ELECTION. Ilkogretim Online, 19(4), pp.3929-3935. 10.17051/ilkonline.2020.04.764802

[15] Khuntia, S. and Narasaiah, R., 2024. An Analysis of Article 356 in Coalition Era of Indian Politics. Indian Journal of Public Administration, 70(2), pp.285-298. https://doi.org/10.1177/00195561231221822

clauses may be added to Article 172 modifications to allow State Legislative Assemblies to change their terms as needed[16]. Representation of the People Statute, 1951: To modify the procedures for declaring elections for the State Assemblies and Lok Sabha, this statute would need to be amended. This might entail a temporary solution to first align election calendars if not a long-term adjustment[17].

(C) Scope and Implications of "One Nation-One Election (ONOE):

The electoral system and democratic governance in India would be significantly impacted by the execution of the "One Nation-One Election" (ONOE). With the potential to change the democratic structure of the country, this transformative electoral reform seeks to simplify the voting process, lessen administrative burdens, and coordinate elections at all levels of government. However, careful planning is required to overcome logistical, legal, and administrative obstacles—such as managing India's federal system and fostering political agreement among stakeholders—to carry out ONOE successfully. Moreover, ONOE signifies a significant shift in the democratic paradigm, raising debates over the foundations and workings of India's democracy. It also emphasizes how critical it is to overcome socioeconomic disparities to guarantee fair access to the political system. By learning from both domestic and foreign electoral reform experiences, policymakers can maximize ONOE's implementation while preventing mistakes in the past. Open dialogues and pilot programs are useful instruments for evaluating and improving the ONOE idea, encouraging consensus-building among a variety of stakeholders. In the end, the ONOE controversy sparks crucial conversations about the nature of democracy and pushes for a closer look at democratic ideals and objectives to better meet India's more expansive democratic ambitions.

(D) Challenges of ONOE:

There are several obstacles to "One Nation-One Election" (ONOE) implementation that need to be properly considered. First, to manage resources, establish the balance of power between the federal and state governments, and coordinate elections, considerable legal and constitutional amendments—possibly including alterations to the Indian Constitution—are needed. To ensure that ONOE respects India's different regional identities while promoting national unity, it is imperative to strike a balance between centralized governance and regional autonomy. Thirdly, socioeconomic discrepancies in voting access must be addressed for the

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[16] Khare, S., 2022. One Nation One Election in India. Issue 3 Int'l JL Mgmt. & Human., 5, p.1309. https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/ijlmhs17&div=98&id=&page=

[17] Rajeev, S., 2020. Thematic analysis on the Indian Representation of People's Act, 1951. International Journal of Human Rights and Constitutional Studies, 7(3), pp.209-232. https://www.inderscienceonline.com/doi/abs/10.1504/IJHRCS.2020.109252

election process to be inclusive and equitable. Fourthly, careful planning and infrastructure development are necessary to navigate the complexity of implementation, including logistical, administrative, and technological problems. Additionally, to adjust ONOE to India's varied socio-political landscape and evaluate its viability through pilot projects, a progressive, stepwise strategy could be required. Ultimately, cultivating cooperation among various stakeholders, including political parties, governmental entities, and civil society organisations, is necessary to address concerns and secure backing for ONOE. As ONOE seeks to improve efficiency while maintaining the integrity of India's democratic processes, maintaining democratic values like fair representation and accountability is crucial. There are several difficulties in putting the One Nation One Election (ONOE) policy into practice. For the betterment of the country, leaders of both the opposition and the ruling party must put aside their vested political interests. With 28 states and 8 union territories, each with its own distinct culture, language, religion, and caste, India is a country rich in diversity. However, it is important to take this into account to prevent upsetting the feelings of its citizens, who are the real cornerstone of democracy. Notwithstanding these challenges, the ONOE policy has many advantages. Our leaders need to be resolute in their efforts to carry out this agenda and fundamentally alter the Indian electoral system[18].

III. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Responses to the survey were gathered from 105 individuals with various backgrounds. The purpose of the survey was to obtain opinions from a wide range of respondents to guarantee a thorough grasp of the subject matter. A balanced sample of age groups, marital statuses, educational backgrounds, and professional fields was offered by the participant responses. Understanding the viewpoints of a wide range of social groups and deriving conclusions from the survey data that may be applied generally depend on this diversity.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	51	48.6
Male	54	51.4

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[18]Pandit, S., One nation one election: Challenges in the Indian government system. International Journal of Political Science and Governance 2023; 5(2): 206-209 https://doi.org/10.33545/26646021.2023.v5.i2d.281.

Age (in Years)		
18-25	9	8.6
26-35	50	47.6
36-45	27	25.8
46-59	17	16.2
60 and above	2	1.9
Marital Status		
Married	65	61.9
Unmarried	40	38.1
Educational Qualification		
Doctorate/Researchers	30	28.6
Graduate	28	26.7
Postgraduate	44	41.9
Undergraduate	3	2.9
Occupation		
Government Sector	8	7.6
Private Sector	75	71.4
Retired/Others	4	3.8
Self-Employed	11	10.5
Student	7	6.7
Source: Primary data		

Factors	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	St.

					Deviation
Potential Benefits, Challenges, and Implications of Implementing ONOE	105	4.00	20.00	16.9429	3.28408
Constitutional Provisions on ONOE	105	7.00	30.00	24.7048	5.11018
Electoral Reforms and Democratic Governance	105	8.00	25.00	19.6857	3.98631
Perspective of a Common Citizen	105	5.00	25.00	20.6476	3.61083
Total Score	105	27.00	100.00	81.9810	14.26128

Source: Computed by Author

Table 2: Mean scores and Std. Deviation of the items used

The research endeavours to investigate patterns, associations, and possible revelations pertinent to the study's goals through the examination of gathered data. The study conclusions are more robust and applicable because of the respondents' diverse demographic area, which guarantees that the findings represent a wide range of experiences and opinions. Based on the data, it appears that respondents strongly agree that "One Nation, One Election" (ONOE) will result in more efficiency in governance overall, cost savings, and improved coordination between government levels. Although there is a noteworthy degree of confidence in the constitutional provisions that underpin ONOE, worries exist over the difficulties presented by the cultural and linguistic variety of India as well as possible threats to federalism. A widespread consensus across various groups is indicated by the fact that the majority of demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, educational attainment, and occupation) do not significantly affect the overall perception scores. The respondent's favourable tendency towards ONOE is indicated by the comparatively high mean scores obtained across all sections and components.

Potential Benefits, Challenges, and Implications of Implementing ONOE: Strong support for implementing "One Nation-One Election" (ONOE) is evident from the survey responses. Positive attitudes toward increased governmental cohesiveness and efficiency are shown in the large majority's (56.2% strongly agree, 29.5% agree) belief that ONOE will strengthen cooperation between various levels of government (Mean = 16.9429, SD = 3.28408). The

financial benefits are also well accepted; 46.7% strongly agree and 35.2% agree that holding elections at the same time will save a substantial amount of money; this shows that there is broad agreement on the economic benefits with little disagreement (2.9% strongly disagree, 2.9% disagree). Furthermore, by supporting stable administration with low levels of dissent and decreasing election cycles, 54.3% strongly agree and 25.7% agree that ONOE will promote democratic ideals (3.8% strongly disagree, 2.9% disagree). However, the cultural and linguistic variety of India presents substantial hurdles to ONOE, as agreed upon by 35.2% and 45.7% of respondents, respectively, underscoring the necessity for careful planning to handle these issues. Overall, the results show strong support for ONOE while highlighting real-world obstacles and the necessity of careful execution to guarantee its success.

Constitutional Provisions on ONOE: There is general agreement for ONOE, as seen by the large majority of responses (33.3% agree, 50.5% strongly agree), with very few disagreeing (2.9% strongly disagree). With a mean score of 24.7048, a standard deviation of 5.11018, and a low strong disagreement of 1.9%, the respondents consider that ONOE respects the federal structure of India in equal amounts (41.9% strongly agree, 41.9% agree). Additionally, 44.8% strongly agree and 34.3% agree that ONOE addresses fairness and representation concerns, with minimal dissent, suggesting enhanced equitable political representation. The belief that ONOE enhances accountability and political stability is also strong, with 43.8% strongly agreeing and 33.3% agreeing. Finally, a significant number of respondents (41.0% strongly agree, 33.3% agree) feel that the constitutional framework under ONOE sufficiently safeguards states' rights, despite some neutrality (18.1%). Overall, the survey indicates robust support for ONOE, with respondents recognizing its potential for improved governance, cost savings, democratic strengthening, and respect for federal principles while acknowledging challenges related to diversity.

Electoral Reforms and Democratic Governance: The survey data provide a thorough analysis of the effects of the proposed "One Nation-One Election" (ONOE) program and electoral reforms. With 46.7% agreeing and 35.2% strongly agreeing that election reforms have improved fairness and transparency, a sizable majority of respondents (Mean = 19.6857, SD = 3.98631) hold this opinion. Opinions on corruption are more divided: 20.0% are neutral, while 41.0% agree and 23.8% strongly agree that reforms have tackled corruption. With 41.9% agreeing and 33.3% strongly agreeing that reforms have strengthened faith in democratic outcomes, there is a high level of confidence in the dependability of election results. Strong support exists for streamlining India's voting process through ONOE, with 35.2% agreeing and 49.5% strongly agreeing. On the other hand, there are worries about the possible threats to

federalism; 34.3% of respondents agree, and 27.6% strongly agree, that ONOE might erode federal ideals. Although some respondent's express worries about upholding federalism and adequately combating corruption, the data generally demonstrates strong support for electoral reforms and ONOE's ability to streamline the voting process and improve confidence and transparency.

Perspective of a Common Citizen: The survey results highlight the possible advantages of "One Nation-One Election" (ONOE) as well as its drawbacks. A streamlined electoral process will improve public knowledge and involvement, according to the majority of respondents (47.6% strongly agree, 41.9% agree) (Mean = 20.6476, SD = 3.61083). Furthermore, 36.2% and 44.8% of respondents agree and strongly agree that ONOE would lessen the frequency of political campaigns, which would minimize disruptions. There is also considerable evidence to support the possibility of increased governance efficiency: 45.7% strongly agree and 38.1% believe that ONOE would simplify government and benefit citizens. On the other hand, there are worries: a substantial amount of people—41.0% agreeing and 29.5% strongly agreeing—that ONOE could overshadow local issues with national politics. In addition, 45.7% of respondents agree and 37.1% strongly agree that maintaining state autonomy and guaranteeing equitable representation should be ONOE's top priorities. Overall, the data raises serious concerns about the possible disregard for local issues and the maintenance of state autonomy, even though it also demonstrates strong support for the advantages of ONOE in terms of streamlining the electoral process, lowering campaign disturbances, and improving governance efficiency.

IV. FINDINGS

The study indicates that respondents favour the possible advantages of "One Nation-One Election" (ONOE) and strongly support its adoption. Respondents demonstrated faith in ONOE's institutional and legal framework and in the constitutional provisions that support it. Remarkably, there was general agreement amongst several groups regarding demographic criteria such as gender, age, marital status, education, and occupation that did not significantly affect overall perception scores. Although there was general acceptance, reservations were expressed about the difficulties presented by India's federalism and cultural diversity. For ONOE to be implemented successfully, several issues must be resolved.

V. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are key for implementing "One Nation-One Election" (ONOE):

To meet the problems presented by India's cultural and linguistic variety, measures that guarantee the autonomy and representation of many states and regions must be developed. Educate the public through public awareness efforts on the possible advantages of ONOE and resolve any misconceptions or issues. Ensure that ONOE thoroughly considers the division of authority and duties between the federal and state governments to uphold and strengthen the federalist ideas found in the Indian Constitution. Lastly, carry out ongoing research and assessment to track the application of ONOE and evaluate its effects on political culture, democracy, and governance. This will help policymakers make the right choices and modifications.

VI. CONCLUSION

The idea of "One Nation One Election" promises to save costs and streamline the voting process, but putting it into practice will present serious obstacles and unintended effects. Policymakers should carefully consider the benefits and drawbacks of ONOE before implementing any reforms, making sure that the guiding values of democracy, federalism, and inclusivity are upheld. The ultimate objective needs to be to fortify the election system and augment democratic involvement while honoring the heterogeneous socio-political circumstances of India.

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