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One Nation One Election: A Constitutional and Legal Analysis

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ABSTRACT

In India, One Nation One Election generally means holding elections of the Lok Sabha and all the state legislative assemblies at the same time throughout India. The main purpose behind this idea is to enhance administrative efficiency, cut down election management costs, and stop frequent elections from happening very often. This idea may seem to be very practical on the surface, but it brings a lot of constitutional and legal challenges. The main concerns are the effect on the Federal structure of India, Representative Democracy and Free and fair elections.

This paper focuses on the constitutional provisions relating to the dissolution and duration of the legislatures, specifically Article 83, 85, 172, and 174 of the Indian Constitution, and examines what sort of amendments are required to make simultaneous elections legally and constitutionally viable. It also examines whether this idea stands up to the basic structure doctrine, especially to federalism and Democratic governance as articulated in the landmark judgement of Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala and S.R. Bomai v. Union of India. This paper also focuses on how this system functions in democratic countries globally to check whether this idea would realistically and practically work in India.

Finally, this study finds that while this idea could bring a lot of advantages regarding time, money, and efficiency, its implementation must be handled with care. Proper respect must be given to constitutional limits, and must make sure that the democratic ethos of our country is not compromised. A phased and carefully regulated framework is essential to synchronise elections without compromising on the principles of federalism and representative democracy.

Keywords: *Democracy, election, federalism, constitutional provision, synchronise*

I. INTRODUCTION

The conduct of elections is the most important part of Parliamentary democracy. India is the largest democratic country, and India's electoral vibrance is globally admired, but the near-

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constant cycle of elections increasingly affects governance and policy implementation.³ Today, here in India, Elections to the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies are held separately, which leads to continuous political campaigning, election expenditure, and governance disruptions. So, the idea of “One Nation One Election” has emerged as a proposed solution to streamline the election process by synchronising the election of the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies to be held simultaneously. Those arguing in favour of One Nation One Election say that it will reduce public expenditure, minimize the burden on administrative machinery and security officials, and allow the government to focus on governance rather than on perpetual electioneering. Though simultaneous elections were standard practice in India’s early decades⁴ political instability dismantled this system. So, revisiting and refining the earlier approach today could significantly enhance democratic governance without compromising the federal principles of the nation.

However, this proposal of One Nation One Election is not without controversy. The Constitution of India Grants independent tenures for the parliament and the State Legislative assemblies, with an established mechanism for its dissolution and mid-term elections if the situation demands it. Thus, the idea for holding simultaneous elections would require major changes to the constitution and related laws governing elections. This raises serious questions on how this would affect India’s federal system, the principle of democratic representation, and the autonomy of the state legislative assemblies. Apart from this, judicial interpretation, especially under the basic structure doctrine, imposes limits on parliament's ability to make amendments that would alter or affect the core principles of the constitution.

This paper seeks to examine the legal and constitutional dimensions of the idea of One Nation One Election, scrutinize the compatibility with India’s federal democratic structure, and also explore the possible modes of implementation. This aims to present a balanced view by asserting both advantages and the constitutional challenges posed by this reform.

A. Research problem

Whether the concept of One Nation One Election is compatible with the core constitutional principles of federalism, representative democracy, and free and fair election as envisaged by the framers of the Indian Constitution.

B. Research questions

³ Ashutosh Varshney, *Democracy, Development and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India* 49 (Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 1st edn., 1994)

⁴ Election Commission of India, *Report on the First General Elections in India 1951–52* (Election Commission of India 1952).

1. Does the One Nation One Election proposal violate the basic structure of the Indian Constitution, particularly federalism and representative democracy?
2. What are the different constitutional amendments and reforms necessary to implement simultaneous elections in India?
3. How has the judiciary shaped the debate around the premature dissolution and the tenure of legislative bodies?

C. Objectives

1. To check the compatibility of One Nation One Election with the basic structure doctrine.
2. To study the constitutional framework governing the tenure and dissolution of the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies.
3. To analyze the legal challenges and the Constitutional amendments required for the implementation of simultaneous elections.
4. To propose reforms for harmonizing simultaneous elections with constitutional provisions.

D. Research methodology

This study will adopt a doctrinal research method, relying on both primary and secondary data from Constitutional Provisions, Statutes, Judicial Decisions, Report of The Law Commission of India, Scholarly articles, books and government policy papers.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The idea of One Nation One Election, i.e, holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State legislative assemblies, was prevalent in the earlier constitutional practice of India. This idea was a political reality for the first two decades of India's post-independence governance. However, due to political instability, the alignment broke down.

A. Initial synchronization post-independence

After the Indian constitution came into effect in 1950, the Constitution of India provided for fixed five-year terms for both the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies under article 83(2) and 172(1) respectively, unless they are dissolved sooner.⁵ Due to this structure, this naturally led to simultaneous elections in the years 1951-52, 1957, 1962, and 1967. Thus, during these years, general elections were conducted concurrently for both the Union and

⁵ The constitution of India, arts. 83(2), 172(1)

State legislatures.

The 1951-52 general election was a massive undertaking for the Election Commission of India. The Election Commission mentioned in its report the monumental scale of logistical challenges of managing over 173 million eligible voters, many of whom were illiterate and voting for the first time.⁶ The practice of Simultaneous election was considered to be both efficient and economically viable at that time.⁷

B. Breakdown of simultaneity

For the very first time, there was a break from the process of simultaneous election after the General election of 1967, which was due to significant political instability and the rise of regional parties. Several state legislative assemblies dissolved without completing their fixed five-year term due to defection and internal dissent among them. The central government itself faced such disruptions. Thus, in 1970, the fourth Lok Sabha was dissolved in three years, and fresh elections were held in the year 1971. The fifth Lok Sabha's term was prolonged up to 1977 under Article 352 due to the declaration of Emergency, in contrast to the first, second, and third Lok Sabhas, which all served out their whole five-year terms.⁸

This early dissolution, before five years of the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative assemblies, desynchronised the election cycles of the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assembly. Furthermore, the frequent use of Article 356 has further led to the divergence of the electoral timelines. By the late 1970s, common simultaneous elections had become a thing of the past.

Lok Sabha	Last date of poll	Date of constitution of Lok Sabha	Date of first sitting	Date of expiration of term (Article 83(2) of Constitution)	Date of dissolution of Lok Sabha	Overall Term (in days) (Col 6 - Col 4)	Overall Term (approx)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
First	21-Feb-52	2-Apr-52	13-May-52	12-May-57	4-Apr-57	1787	5 years
Second	15-Mar-57	5-Apr-57	10-May-57	9-May-62	31-Mar-62	1786	5 years
Third	25-Feb-62	2-Apr-62	16-Apr-62	15-Apr-67	3-Mar-67	1782	5 years
Fourth	21-Feb-67	4-Mar-67	16-Mar-67	15-Mar-72	27-Dec-70	1382*	3 years & 10 months
Fifth	10-Mar-71	15-Mar-71	19-Mar-71	18-Mar-77	18-Jan-77	2132**	5 years & 10 months
Sixth	20-Mar-77	23-Mar-77	25-Mar-77	24-Mar-82	22-Aug-79	880*	2 years & 5 months
Seventh	6-Jan-80	10-Jan-80	21-Jan-80	20-Jan-85	31-Dec-84	1806	5 years
Eighth	28-Dec-84	31-Dec-84	15-Jan-85	14-Jan-90	27-Nov-89	1777	5 years
Ninth	26-Nov-89	2-Dec-89	18-Dec-89	17-Dec-94	13-Mar-91	450*	1 year & 3 months
Tenth	15-Jun-91	20-Jun-91	9-Jul-91	8-Jul-96	10-May-96	1767	5 years
Eleventh	7-May-96	15-May-96	22-May-96	21-May-01	4-Dec-97	561*	1 year & 6 months
Twelfth	7-Mar-98	10-Mar-98	23-Mar-98	22-Mar-03	26-Apr-99	399*	1 year & 1 month
Thirteenth	4-Oct-99	10-Oct-99	20-Oct-99	19-Oct-04	6-Feb-04	1570*	4 years & 4 months

**Mid-term polls were held. Dissolution took place before the elections.*

⁶ Election Commission of India, “*Report on the First General Elections in India 1951–52*” (1952).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ministry of Law and Justice, “*One Nation One Election*” (17 Dec, 2024).

***Extension due to the proclamation of the Emergency.*

C. Early institutional concerns and recommendations

The Election Commission of India, for the first time, formally acknowledged the complexity of staggered elections in its *Annual Report 1983*. In September 1982, the Commission recommended holding simultaneous elections to the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies of States to mitigate administrative and financial costs.⁹ This was followed by a more structured proposal by the Law Commission of India in its 170th Report in 1999 that elections can be synchronised in phases, with requisite constitutional amendments to articles 83, 172, 85, and 174. Undoubtedly, the desired goal of one election in every five years for both the Lok Sabha and the State legislative Assembly cannot be achieved overnight in the given circumstances, it has to be achieved in stages.¹⁰ The commission argued that frequent elections cause massive expenditure and disruption in governance due to repeated enforcement of the model code of conduct.¹¹ However, this recommendation of the Law Commission was not implemented due to a lack of political consensus.

D. Recent renewed interest

The idea of One Nation One Election regained its attention in the mid 2010s. Prime Minister Narendra Modi publicly advocated for simultaneous elections, citing advantages such as cost saving, administrative efficiency, and to reduce the mode of election centric governance.

In response, the NITI Aayog published a discussion paper in 2017 outlining a phased roadmap for the implementation of the idea of One Nation One Election. This paper criticised how the existing cycle of staggered election hampers policymaking, governance, and economic planning.¹²

The Law Commission of India again revisited this issue in its Draft report on Simultaneous Elections (2018), where it was argued that while the idea of One Nation One Election was constitutionally possible, but it will require a series of Amendments to few related provisions of the constitution and also a broad political consensus. Simultaneous elections can be seen as a solution to prevent the country from being in constant election mode. Thus, reducing government expenditure substantially, not diverting the already short-numbered security forces, and above all, without causing harm to the constitutional and democratic set up of the

⁹ Election Commission of India, “*First Annual Report 1983*” 81 (April 1984).

¹⁰ Law Commission of India, *170th Report on Reform of Electoral Laws* (New Delhi: Law Commission of India 1999).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² NITI Aayog, “*Analysis of Simultaneous elections: THE "WHAT ", WHY" AND "HOW" A Discussion Paper*” (2017).

country.¹³

III. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The implementation of One Nation One Election, i.e, holding of simultaneous elections to both the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies raises complex constitutional and legal questions. The structure and stability of India's electoral system are embedded in key provisions of the Constitution and supported by statutes like the Representation of People Act, 1951 and institutionally controlled by the Election Commission of India. Any reform to this must be carefully handled particularly Articles 83, 85, 172 and 174 of Indian Constitution which regulate the tenure and dissolution of these legislative bodies.

A. Article 83 and 172: fixed term with flexibility

Article 83(2) of The Constitution of India provides that the house of the people (The Lok Sabha) unless sooner dissolved, shall continue for five years from the date appointed for its first meeting and no longer.¹⁴ Similarly, Article 172(1) plays down an identical term for the state legislative assemblies.¹⁵ These provisions of the Constitution of India establish a fixed five year term but do not guarantee a full term, as they are allowed for premature dissolution, which is a fact central to the debate of simultaneous elections.

The phrase “unless sooner dissolved” has permitted calls for midterm elections, thereby causing staggered electoral cycles. In practical terms, this flexibility respects democratic accountability. However, for simultaneous elections to be constitutionally viable, this flexibility poses a significant obstacle. Bringing all legislative bodies to the same electoral cycle would require either extending or curtailing the existing term of the body, which would raise constitutional questions on voters' sovereignty and democratic legitimacy.

B. Article 85 and 174: power of the President of India and governors of the states

Article 85 and 174 of the Constitution of India confer power on the President and the Governor, respectively, to dissolve legislatures and summon sessions.¹⁶ These provisions of the constitution of India grants significant discretion in deciding the lifespan of the legislature. Any reform to synchronise elections would require constitutional amendments, so that the Lok Sabha or the state legislative assemblies would not be dissolved arbitrarily. However, such amendments would have to pass the test of the basic structure doctrine. The Supreme Court in the landmark case of *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* held that democracy and

¹³ Law Commission of India, “Draft Report on Simultaneous Elections” (Aug, 2018).

¹⁴ The constitution of India, art. 83(2).

¹⁵ The constitution of India, art.172(1).

¹⁶ The constitution of India, arts. 85, 174.

federalism form part of the basic structure, and these principles cannot be compromised even by constitutional amendments.¹⁷ Imposing uniformity in the electoral cycle may be seen as compromising the federal autonomy of the states.

C. The Representation of the People Act, 1951

The Representation of the People Act, 1951 is the cornerstone of India's electoral machinery. It provides for the conduct of election, disqualification and qualification of candidates, electoral rolls, and the model code of conduct. To facilitate simultaneous elections, substantial amendments would be required in this act. For instance, Sec 14 of the act empowers the president to notify the general elections for Lok Sabha and Article 15 empowers the Governor to notify the election to a State Legislative assembly.¹⁸ Coordinating this notification nationwide would require reworking on the said sections. Thus, amendments are to be done in RPA, 1951. Furthermore, proper safeguards are to be ensured to maintain uniformity in formation and dissolution of the legislature which in today's time happens at different timelines. In addition to this the act does not provide for synchronisation of bye-elections or midterm polls, thus we can say that without proper legislative backing an attempt to synchronize election may lead to multiple legal challenges.

D. Role of the Election Commission of India

In its 1983 Annual Report, the ECI recommended a return to the initial method of simultaneous election to both the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies, pointing out that staggered elections hampers governance due to frequent infliction of Model code of conduct. However, the role of Election Commission is limited to only recommending and administering within the framework of the constitution of India and the laws passed by the legislative bodies. It cannot unilaterally implement electoral synchronisation without enabling legislative or constitutional reforms. Parliament is empowered, under Article 327 of the Constitution, to make laws relating to elections to Parliament and State Legislatures. The State Legislatures are also competent under Article 328 to make laws relating to elections to their State.¹⁹ Thus, while it can serve as an implementing authority and adviser the burden of legal change lies with the parliament.

The constitutional and legal architecture of India provides a nuanced framework that allows both stability and flexibility in the functioning of legislative bodies. Articles 83, 85, 172 and 174 along with the Representation of People Act, 1951 and the functioning of the Election

¹⁷ *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala*, AIR 1973 SC 1461.

¹⁸ The Representation of the People Act, 1951, (ACT 43 of 1951) ss 14, 15.

¹⁹ Election Commission of India, "Annual Report 1983" 1,2 (April 1983).

Commission together shapes the functioning of the nation's electoral process. Moving towards One Nation One Election will not only require legal amendments but also a deep reconsideration of the federal principle and democratic norms. The change must be structured in such a way that they withstand constitutional scrutiny and respect the spirit of Indian democracy.

IV. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The global democratic landscape offers various models which balances federal structures with effective and efficient governance. While India longs for the feasibility of One Nation One Election, examining this practice in established democratic countries like the United States and Australia can offer valuable insights. Although both countries have federal systems, their approach to synchronised elections differ in form and impact, which sheds light on possible frameworks and limitations relevant to the Indian context.

A. United States: A staggered yet structured electoral model

The Constitution of The United States of America provides for a rigid electoral calendar at the federal level. Presidential elections are held every four years, while elections to the house of representatives occur every two years. Senate elections meanwhile are staggered with one-third of the seat contested every two years.²⁰ This kind of structured but staggered elections provides continuity but does not synchronise the federal and state-level elections.

Each state of the U.S. also maintains its own electoral schedule for gubernatorial and legislative elections. For Example, some states like New Jersey and Virginia hold off-year elections, while others coincide state elections with federal election cycles.²¹ This lack of sync may potentially be a confusion for the voters but is eventually a sign of federal autonomy and local control over electoral governance.

Despite the staggered model, The United States model benefits from institutionalised predictability. The uniform Tuesday provision i.e., holding federal election on the 1st Tuesday after the first Monday in the month of November creates a standard electoral process at the federal level. However, the U.S. also faces challenges similar to India nevertheless, the American model is underpinned by the principle of separation of Powers and individual state sovereignty, which limits the possibility of imposing synchronised elections without undermining federalism.

²⁰ The US Constitution, art I(2), I(3) , II(1).

²¹ Neal R Peirce and Jerry Hagstrom, *The Book of America: Inside Fifty States Today* 201 (W.W. Norton, New York, 1983)

B. Australis: semi-synchronised electoral model

Australia presents a more delicate model of electoral coordination. As a federation it operates under a parliamentary form of government which is somewhat similar to India's Westminster model. The federal house of representatives is elected after every three years on the other hand the senate operates on a staggered six-year term with half the seats up for election every three years.²² State elections in Australia occur independently although few states have aligned their cycle with the federal electoral cycle. This move towards harmonisation at the sub-national level is enabled through legislation and not constitutional amendments, offering a flexible yet effective method to reduce the frequency of elections.

One of the important features in Australia is the fixed term parliaments in several states. The fixed term parliaments act in various jurisdictions helps to ensure stability and predictability which is essential for coordinating election planning.²³ This legal reform has created a culture of administrative regularity while maintaining federal autonomy, thereby avoiding the legal and political tension that compulsory synchronisation might have triggered.

While no country offers a perfect model for simultaneous elections, comparative experiences provide useful frameworks. The US shows the resilience of staggered elections with strong federal norms whereas Australia illustrates the potential of partial harmonisation through legal tools. For India, the path to One Nation One Election lies not in replication but in adaptation of blending legal reforms, democratic consensus and federal respect. A judicious balance of constitutional principles and practical needs will be essential for any electoral reform in world's largest democracy.

V. REFORMS AND WAY FORWARD

India's electoral ecosystem is complex, vast and it is constitutionally entrenched. The proposal for One Nation One Election has generated significant debates, with both enthusiasm and scepticism rooted in legal, administrative and democratic concern. Recognising all these institutional bodies like the Law Commission of India and Niti Aayog has made proposals for reforms to reconcile electoral efficiency with respect to constitutional values. These recommendations seem to be a phased, legally sound and democratic path forward rather than radical overhaul.

A. Law commission proposal

The Law Commission of India in its 170th Report(1999), was one of the earliest institutional

²² Australia's Constitution arts 7, 13, 28

²³ Cheryl Saunders, *The Australian Constitution in Context* 145 (Federation Press, Sydney, 2011).

bodies to address the issue of Simultaneous elections in modern India. It acknowledges that the practice of holding elections for both the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies separately led to Perpetual campaigning, administrative fatigue and financial burden on the country. Undoubtedly, the desired goal of one election in every five years cannot be achieved overnight in the given circumstances. It has to be achieved in stages.²⁴ The report suggested that simultaneous elections would enhance governance as this would allow the government to function without constant electoral pressure. However the commission emphasised on a broad political consensus and constitutional safeguard before any such reform be undertaken.

The commission proposed two potential approaches: Aligning state elections with the general elections through constitutional amendments and reordering state elections where feasible, or alternatively, bringing about synchronization gradually through state-level legislative changes. If all the political parties cooperate, the necessary steps, some of which are indicated hereinabove, can be taken without hurting the interest of any political party. Maybe a constitutional amendment can solve the problem. Such an amendment can also provide for extending or curtailing the term of one or more Legislative Assemblies say for six months or so wherever it is necessary to achieve the said goal. However, if feasible, a more appropriate solution may be to hold elections to Lok Sabha/Legislative Assemblies simultaneously but to withhold the results of elections till after the expiry of term of the Legislative Assembly concerned - the interval not exceeding six months. This suggestion was made by the Chief Minister of Karnataka who stated: "the Election Commission could not take unilateral decisions but only in consultation with the State Governments concerned on holding simultaneous elections."²⁵

B. NITI Aayog's recommendation

NITI Aayog in its discussion paper on "Simultaneous Elections: A way forward" (2017), reiterated on similar concerns while talking on administrative feasibility. The think tank observed that frequent elections not only disrupted governance but also drained the exchequer. It estimated that the cost of conducting the 2014 Lok sabha elections alone was approximately Rs 3870 crore, excluding state election expenditure.²⁶

Niti Aayog suggested that simultaneous elections be implemented in two phases, beginning with synchronising elections in selected states whose terms are nearly expiring. States could

²⁴ Law Commission of India, "170th Report on Reform of Electoral Laws" (May, 1999).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ NITI Aayog, "Analysis of Simultaneous elections :THE "WHAT ", WHY" AND "HOW" A Discussion Paper" 14 (2017).

voluntarily pass resolutions aligning their election cycles, while parliament could enact framework legislation to facilitate uniform procedure. For the second phase constitutional amendments could standardise tenure and mandate synchronisation across all states. As a way forward, it is therefore suggested that a focused group of stakeholders comprising constitution and subject matter experts, think tanks, government officials and representatives of various political parties come together and work out appropriate implementation related details. This may include drafting appropriate constitution and statutory amendments, agreeing on a workable framework to facilitate transition to simultaneous elections, developing a stakeholder communication plan etc. As is the case with long-term structural reforms, implementing this measure would also cause some short-term pain. However, this would be a stepping stone towards improved governance and a larger initiation of “electoral reforms” – a desperately needed measure to reboot the Indian polity.²⁷

C. Need for phased synchronisation and constitutional safeguard

Given India’s federal structure and history of Mid-term dissolutions, a phased approach appears both practically and constitutionally prudent. The constitutional flexibility embedded in article 83(2) and 172(1), which states that legislature exists “unless sooner dissolved” poses a barrier to a rigid electoral calendar. Attempting to synchronise elections without addressing this clause could result in Constitutional infirmity.

Therefore a cautious approach would require:

1. **Constitutional Amendments:** To formalise a uniform cycle, constitution amendments to Article 83, 85, 172 and 174 may be necessary. Such amendments would have to withstand scrutiny under the Basic Structure Doctrine, ensuring that federalism, democratic representation and state autonomy retain intact.
2. **Legislative Reforms:** The Parliament can amend the Representation of People Act, 1951, to introduce harmonisation mechanisms such as fixed electoral windows and constructive no-confidence motions.

State Cooperation: State legislatures must be persuaded to amend their respective laws or pass resolutions voluntarily aligning with national timelines.

VI. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

India’s democracy is one of the largest and most vibrant in the world, known for its regular elections, high voter participation and very peaceful transitions of power. Yet, the frequent

²⁷ *Id.* at 36.

election cycle of elections at both the national, state and local level has begun to strain both the governance and the economy of India. Constant imposition of the Model Code of Conduct, which restricts policy announcements during election periods, often delays crucial decisions and hampers administrative continuity. This has led to the growing interest in the idea of conducting simultaneous elections, a proposal which is referred to as “One Nation One Election”.

At its core, this concept seeks to align the electoral schedules of Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assemblies so that elections are held together, ideally once in every five years. This would help to reduce election related expenditure, allow smooth governance and will ensure more focused policy making. However practically this idea is not so straight forward, it would require significant amendments to the constitution and other electoral laws, as at present time our legal framework provides different terms for different legislatures which also allows mid-term dissolutions based on political developments.

Moreover, such a change cannot come at the cost of India’s federal character and the spirit of representative democracy. The Supreme Court has made it clear in the case of *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* that the amending power of the parliament cannot amend the basic structure of the Indian Constitution. Thus, any move that appears to undermine any core principle that would touch the basic structure of the Indian Constitution would be legally and politically contentious.

A sudden shift to full synchronisation of elections could disrupt the democratic process.. Thus, a gradual and well thought-out phased manner might be more feasible. Expert bodies like the Law Commission and the Niti Aayog have recommended a phased implementation. For instance, states could be grouped into cycles so that their elections converged with national polls. Legal safeguards should also be put in place to deal with situations like early dissolutions and hung assemblies.

Ultimately, the goal should be to enhance democratic efficiency, effective governance, and cost reduction without weakening the very principles that form the foundation of the Indian Constitution. Achieving this balance would require not just legal framework but also consensus among stakeholders, political parties, judiciary, civil societies and most importantly the citizens of India.

Key Findings

1. Frequent Elections Hamper Governance and Policy Implementation: The continuous cycle of elections across India leads to administrative slowdowns as the model code of

conduct restricts policy decisions during election periods which causes delay in governance and development works.

2. **Simultaneous Elections Require Major Constitutional Reforms:** Article 83, 85, 172 and 174 of the Constitution of India provides separate tenures and dissolution mechanisms for the parliament and the state legislatures. Aligning this would need significant constitutional amendments, which involve complex legal processes.
3. **Risk of Undermining Federalism:** Synchronising elections may dilute the autonomy of state governments and centralise political control, which could potentially weaken the federal structure, which is a core component of the Constitution's basic structure.
4. **Basic Structure Doctrine Limits Reform Scope:** The basic structure doctrine established in the case of *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* limits the parliament's power to amend the constitution. This affirms that constitutional amendments must uphold essential features like democracy, federalism and free and fair elections. This doctrine imposes real limits on the extent of changes parliament can make.
5. **Phased Synchronisation Offers a Balanced Approach:** Expert bodies like the Law Commission and the Niti Aayog suggest a phased plan to bring the electoral cycle into alignment over time. This approach balances administrative efficiency with constitutional safeguards.

Political Consensus is Crucial but Difficult: Implementing simultaneous elections demands a broad political consensus, which in today's time seems to be unachievable due to ideological differences and diverse party interest and concerns about fairness and representation.

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