



EDITORIAL: THE HINDU

GENERAL STUDIES 2: POLITY

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TOPIC: ELECTION

ONE NATION ONE ELECTION AND REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024

1. Introduction of Article 82(A):

- A new Article 82(A) will be inserted into the Constitution to synchronize elections across the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- This article will fix the tenure of the Lok Sabha and ensure alignment with State Assemblies.

2. Mid-Term Election Provision:

- In case of premature dissolution of the Lok Sabha or any State Assembly, mid-term elections will only fill the remainder of the original five-year term.
- This approach ensures adherence to synchronized electoral cycles.

3. Amendments to Articles 83, 172, and 327:

- These articles are amended to facilitate simultaneous elections.
- The amendments will take effect after the 2029 general elections, paving the way for synchronized polls starting in 2034.

4. Changes for Union Territories:

- The Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, aligns the tenure of Union Territory Assemblies with that of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, ensuring nationwide synchronization.

Benefits of One Nation, One Election (ONOE)

1. Administrative Efficiency:

- Conducting simultaneous elections reduces the administrative burden on the Election Commission and state machinery.
- Frequent deployment of security forces for elections is minimized.

2. Reduction in Election Fatigue:



- Repeated elections cause voter fatigue and disrupt governance.
- ONOE reduces the frequency of election campaigns, allowing uninterrupted governance.

3. Cost Effectiveness:

- Combined elections reduce the financial costs of conducting separate polls at frequent intervals.

4. Streamlined Governance:

- A synchronized cycle ensures focused implementation of policies without the disruptions caused by the Model Code of Conduct.

Challenges to Representative Democracy

Understanding Representative Democracy

- **Core Principles:**
 - Representative democracy depends on elected officials making decisions on behalf of the people.
 - It emphasizes a balance between majority rule, minority rights, and institutional stability.
- **Periodic Elections:**
 - Elections at regular intervals are essential for ensuring accountability, transparency, and citizen engagement.

Global Trends in Representative Democracy

- **Findings from Pew Research Center (2024):**
 - Citizens across 24 countries, including India, expressed dissatisfaction with representative democracy.
 - Alternatives like direct democracy, expert-led governance, and authoritarian systems gained traction in some regions.
 - Frustration with inefficiency led to 15%-17% support for military rule in certain nations.

Concerns with the ONOE Process

1. Inadequate Public Consultation:



- A short feedback window (January 5-15, 2024) limited meaningful public engagement.
- Citizens and experts lacked sufficient time to deliberate on the complex implications of ONOE.

2. Absence of Explanatory Notes:

- The Bill did not include detailed background information or justifications for proposed changes.
- Lack of clarity hindered informed public participation.

3. Binary Framing of Questions:

- The consultation process relied on simplistic 'yes/no' responses.
- This approach potentially pre-determined the outcome and ignored nuanced opinions.

Implications of ONOE on Representative Democracy

1. Centralization vs Federalism:

- Synchronizing elections could centralize power, diminishing state-specific electoral issues.
- Regional diversity and federal principles may be overshadowed by national-level priorities.

2. Inclusivity and Participation:

- Rushed implementation undermines democratic inclusivity and stakeholder engagement.
- A comprehensive consultation process is essential for diverse perspectives to be considered.

3. Electoral Accountability:

- Frequent elections allow citizens to evaluate and hold governments accountable.
- Simultaneous elections may reduce these opportunities, weakening governmental accountability.

Conclusion

1. India's Democratic Fabric:



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- The strength of Indian democracy lies in its inclusivity, participatory mechanisms, and accountability structures.
- Reforms like ONOE must balance administrative efficiency with the principles of representative democracy.

2. The Path Forward:

- A well-structured and inclusive approach to electoral reforms is critical to maintaining public trust.
- Transparent dialogue and stakeholder engagement can ensure ONOE reflects the diverse aspirations of the nation.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/one-nation-one-election-and-representative-democracy/article69040593.ece>

