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ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION: REFORMING DEMOCRACY OR CHALLENGING FEDERALISM

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I. ABSTRACT

The concept of "One Nation, One Election" has become a focal point of India's electoral reform discourse, promising efficiency, cost reduction, and streamlined governance. Proponents argue that synchronized elections would alleviate the financial burden of recurring polls and reduce policy paralysis caused by the frequent imposition of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). However, this paper critically evaluates these claims, uncovering the economic, constitutional, and socio-political complexities associated with the idea. While the reduction in election-related expenses is a key argument, this paper highlights the hidden costs of implementation, including constitutional amendments, infrastructural investments, and potential disruptions to India's federal structure. Moreover, simultaneous elections may lead to governance stagnation, as nationwide enforcement of the MCC could delay critical policy decisions for extended periods. The socio-political implications are equally significant. Synchronizing elections risks overshadowing regional issues and weakening the representation of diverse voices in India's pluralistic democracy. This paper explores these concerns while drawing lessons from international practices to propose innovative solutions, such as phased synchronization or hybrid models, to mitigate potential risks. This study ultimately argues that while the idea of "One Nation, One Election" offers administrative and financial efficiency, its impact on federalism, governance, and democratic diversity cannot be overlooked. A gradual and carefully planned approach, involving robust stakeholder consultation and pilot programs, is essential to balancing the promise of efficiency with the principles of inclusivity and representation. By critically examining

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these facets, this paper provides a comprehensive foundation for reimagining India's electoral framework in a sustainable and democratic manner.

II. KEYWORDS

Electoral Reforms, Democratic Federalism, Election Synchronization, Policy Paralysis.

III. INTRODUCTION: CONTEXTUALIZING THE DEBATE ON ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION

The idea of "One Nation, One Election" is a transformative proposition aimed at conducting simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies in India. Rooted in the early practices of India's democratic history, simultaneous elections were once the norm until they were disrupted in 1967 due to the premature dissolution of some state assemblies.

Since then, the country has adopted a fragmented electoral process, with elections occurring almost every year in some parts of India. This situation, while reflective of India's federal structure, has often led to debates about the economic burden, policy stagnation, and governance inefficiencies caused by frequent electoral cycles. Advocates of simultaneous elections argue that they can significantly reduce the logistical and financial strain on the Election Commission, administrative machinery, and security forces.

Moreover, proponents highlight the potential for ensuring policy continuity and stability, as governments would not be perpetually in campaign mode. From an economic perspective, the costs associated with frequent elections include campaign expenditures, deployment of personnel, and disruption of public services that can be minimized through synchronization. It is posited that such a reform could create a streamlined electoral system, allowing governments to focus more on governance and long-term development. However, the proposal is not without challenges and criticisms. Critics assert that simultaneous elections could undermine India's federal structure by prioritizing national narratives over regional issues.

Regional parties and state governments fear that synchronized elections might dilute their unique identities, as voters may favor national-level concerns over local priorities. Additionally, constitutional hurdles, such as managing mid-term dissolutions, no-confidence motions, and realigning election schedules pose significant challenges to implementing this idea. Questions also arise regarding voter engagement and the risk of centralizing political power in a diverse democracy like India.

The debate over "One Nation, One Election" transcends administrative efficiency and delves into broader questions of democracy, federalism, and representation. Is the idea a step toward modernizing India's electoral framework, or does it risk undermining the pluralistic and federal ethos of the country? This research aims to critically analyze the concept, explore its implications, and propose innovative solutions to address the challenges it poses. By examining historical precedents, constitutional dimensions, economic implications, and social dynamics, this paper seeks to provide a nuanced perspective on a topic that has the potential to redefine India's democratic structure.

IV. HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

The concept of simultaneous elections, or "One Nation, One Election," traces its roots back to India's initial electoral framework post-independence. From 1951 to 1967, India successfully conducted simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and the State Legislative Assemblies. However, this synchronization was disrupted due to the premature dissolution of certain state assemblies and the Lok Sabha in the mid-1960s.

For instance, the dissolution of the fourth Lok Sabha in 1970, coupled with subsequent state-level electoral disruptions, dismantled the uniform electoral calendar. The political instability of the time highlighted the fragility of aligning elections in a dynamic and diverse federal structure.²

² Election Commission of India, Handbook for Returning Officers (2022).

The idea resurfaced prominently in recent decades, particularly with the 79th Report of the Law Commission of India (1999), which recommended the revival of simultaneous elections to enhance governance stability and reduce financial strain.³ The NITI Aayog's 2017 discussion paper further emphasized its feasibility, outlining potential constitutional and operational strategies.⁴ Despite these recommendations, the debate remains unresolved due to its complex implications for federalism and democracy.

In a comparative context, simultaneous elections are a feature in several nations, albeit under varying political frameworks. For example, Sweden aligns national, regional, and local elections on the same day to enhance administrative efficiency and voter turnout.⁵ However, Sweden's homogeneity and unitary system make it vastly different from India's diverse federal structure. Similarly, South Africa conducts unified elections for its national and provincial legislatures but operates within a centralized governance model that lacks the complexities of India's decentralized polity.⁶

Indonesia offers another instructive example, where elections for the president, regional legislatures, and local councils are synchronized to streamline governance. Yet, challenges such as voter fatigue and administrative inefficiencies remain significant.⁷ In contrast, the United States deliberately separates federal, state, and local elections to ensure a clear delineation of issues and maintain a robust federal balance.⁸ These global practices illustrate that while simultaneous elections may offer logistical and financial benefits, their success hinges on the political and administrative structures in place. In India's case, its federal diversity, regional disparities, and electoral vibrancy necessitate a more nuanced and phased approach, rather than a blanket synchronization.

³ Law Commission of India, 79th Report on Reform of Electoral Laws, 1999.

⁴ NITI Aayog, Discussion Paper on Simultaneous Elections: Prospects and Challenges, 2017.

⁵ Anders Sundell, "Simultaneous Elections and Voter Turnout in Sweden," *European Political Science Review*, Vol. 6, 2014.

⁶ Richard Calland, *The Zuma Years: South Africa's Changing Politics*, 2013.

⁷ Thomas Power, "Challenges of Democracy in Indonesia's Simultaneous Elections," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 59, 2019.

⁸ Thomas E. Mann, *The Dynamics of Federal Elections in the United States*, 2018.

V. RE-EXAMINING THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

The economic justification for “One Nation, One Election” is primarily based on the assumption that synchronized elections would reduce electoral expenditure. However, this argument requires critical evaluation to reveal both its strengths and underlying complexities. India’s elections are globally recognized for their scale and expense. For instance, the 2019 Lok Sabha elections cost the Election Commission of India (ECI) approximately ₹60,000 crores, making it one of the most expensive electoral exercises globally.⁹

Proponents of simultaneous elections argue that consolidating election schedules would significantly reduce costs incurred on logistics, deployment of security forces, and polling personnel.¹⁰ However, such an assumption neglects the substantial initial investment required to implement this shift. The procurement of additional electronic voting machines (EVMs) and voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) machines which was estimated to cost around ₹5,000 crores¹¹ Along with increased workforce training and expanded polling infrastructure, it would likely offset much of the projected savings.

Frequent elections are often criticized for diverting governance toward short-term populist measures instead of long-term policies. The imposition of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during elections restricts policy announcements and development projects, slowing governance. Synchronizing elections could mitigate this disruption to some extent. However, the simultaneous enforcement of the MCC nationwide could lead to a complete policy freeze for months, exacerbating governance delays at a national level.¹²

The feasibility of simultaneous elections requires amendments to Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 356 of the Constitution. Beyond the financial costs of these amendments, there are

⁹ Election Commission of India, General Election Expenditure Report 2019, accessed December 2024.

¹⁰ Law Commission of India, 255th Report on Electoral Reforms, March 2015, p. 31.

¹¹ S.Y. Quraishi, *The Great March of Democracy: Seven Decades of India’s Elections* (Penguin, 2019), p. 220.

¹² *Ibid.*

significant political costs, including the risk of disrupting the federal balance and triggering legal disputes. The cost of consultations with stakeholders, as well as potential mid-term re-election expenses for states in cases of legislative instability, further complicates the economic narrative.

Frequent elections empower regional parties and enable grassroots concerns to find national representation. Simultaneous elections might overshadow such voices by prioritizing national over regional issues.¹³ While this cost may not be financial, it has far-reaching implications for India's pluralistic democracy. Thus, while the prospect of synchronized elections appears economically appealing on the surface, the hidden costs both financial and systemic are challenging its viability. A phased implementation, tested regionally, might be a more prudent approach to balance efficiency with democratic diversity.

VI. GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES AND THE POLICY GRIDLOCK DEBATE

The implementation of "One Nation, One Election" has often been justified on the grounds of eliminating governance disruptions caused by frequent elections. While proponents argue that simultaneous elections can mitigate policy gridlock, this claim warrants deeper scrutiny. In India, the model of staggered elections ensures that governments are periodically held accountable to the electorate. This system, however, is said to hinder long-term policymaking, as political parties focus on short-term, populist measures to secure votes in the next state or parliamentary election.

Frequent imposition of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) by the Election Commission during elections further delays the announcement or implementation of major policy decisions, affecting economic projects and administrative efficiency. For instance,

¹³ Anil Swarup, "Reconsidering 'One Nation, One Election': Costs Beyond Economics," *The Hindu* (December 10, 2023).

infrastructure development and welfare schemes often experience stagnation during prolonged election periods.¹⁴ However, the counterargument is equally compelling.

Synchronizing elections across the country may create a “policy vacuum” in scenarios where governments are rendered lame ducks for an extended period before elections. Moreover, tying local and state elections to the national cycle could undermine the ability of voters to address state-specific concerns, which are often distinct from national issues. A significant concern lies in the feasibility of maintaining stable governments.

For instance, if a state government collapses mid-term under the simultaneous election model, would the state remain under President’s Rule until the next synchronized election cycle? Such situations could lead to an erosion of federal principles, with the central government wielding disproportionate influence over states.¹⁵ Additionally, simultaneous elections might shift the focus of political campaigns toward national issues at the expense of local governance priorities. This shift could reduce voter engagement with regional and state-level issues, thereby diminishing the autonomy of state governments in addressing localized problems.

Critics also highlight that by aligning state elections with national elections, larger political parties with greater resources and nationwide reach might dominate the electoral narrative. This could marginalize regional parties, potentially impacting political diversity and the representation of smaller states.¹⁶ Thus, while the policy gridlock argument presents a valid critique of staggered elections, the proposed solution of simultaneous elections introduces complex governance challenges.

A nuanced approach, such as clustering regional elections or improving administrative mechanisms to reduce MCC disruptions, might strike a better balance between governance efficiency and democratic accountability.¹⁷

¹⁴ Election Commission of India, *Model Code of Conduct Manual* (2019).

¹⁵ Basu, Durga Das, *Commentary on the Constitution of India*, 9th ed. (LexisNexis, 2020).

¹⁶ Chhibber, Pradeep, and Irfan Nooruddin. *Party Politics in India’s Federal System* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

¹⁷ Election Commission of India, *Simultaneous Elections Discussion Paper* (2018).

VII. CONSTITUTIONAL AND FEDERAL DILEMMAS

The proposal for “One Nation, One Election” raises significant constitutional and federal challenges, as it aims to restructure India’s electoral process to synchronize Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections. While the concept promises efficiency, it faces legal and practical hurdles rooted in India’s federal and constitutional framework. India’s Constitution establishes a federal structure where states have autonomy to govern themselves.

The introduction of simultaneous elections could potentially undermine this autonomy by centralizing electoral timelines. If a state government dissolves prematurely, aligning its elections with the national cycle could require overriding its constitutional right to self-governance. The Supreme Court has consistently upheld the sanctity of the federal structure, emphasizing that states are co-equal constituents in India’s democracy.¹⁸

Implementing simultaneous elections would necessitate amendments to several constitutional provisions, including Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 356. For instance, Article 83 sets the tenure of the Lok Sabha, and Article 172 does the same for State Assemblies. Harmonizing these terms would require either extending or curtailing the tenure of existing legislatures, a move that could be seen as undermining the democratic mandate of elected representatives.¹⁹

In a scenario where a state assembly or the Lok Sabha is dissolved before completing its term, a synchronized electoral cycle would require either immediate elections for the dissolved body or the imposition of President’s Rule under Article 356. This raises concerns about the misuse of Article 356 as a tool to manipulate election timings, thereby weakening democratic institutions.²⁰

The judiciary would likely play a pivotal role in adjudicating the legality of simultaneous elections. In the *S.R. Bommai* case, the Supreme Court stressed that federalism is a basic

¹⁸ *State of West Bengal v. Union of India*, AIR 1963 SC 1241.

¹⁹ Constitution of India 1950, Articles 83 and 172.

²⁰ *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, (1994) 3 SCC 1.

feature of the Constitution.²¹ Any attempt to centralize elections could invite judicial scrutiny for violating this principle. Additionally, achieving political consensus among diverse political parties with regional priorities remains a formidable challenge. Simultaneous elections may also dilute the representation of regional issues, as voters might prioritize national narratives over state-specific concerns. This could marginalize regional parties and erode the federal spirit of governance.

In conclusion, while “One Nation, One Election” offers efficiency, its implementation risks constitutional violations and federal imbalance. A phased approach with adequate safeguards is necessary to preserve India’s democratic ethos.

VIII. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

India’s diversity is its greatest strength but also its most significant challenge when it comes to implementing policies like "One Nation, One Election." The social and cultural implications of simultaneous elections must be critically analyzed to ensure that such a reform does not undermine the democratic ethos of the nation. Simultaneous elections risk overshadowing local issues with national concerns, diluting the political plurality that India’s federal system fosters.

Regional parties, often the voice of localized communities, may struggle to compete with larger national parties dominating the narrative. For instance, in states like Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, where regional identities significantly influence electoral outcomes, synchronized elections may marginalize regional aspirations and reduce their representation at the national level.²²

Voters tend to differentiate between state and national elections, often voting for different parties based on the context. Simultaneous elections could blur this distinction, leading to the "nationalization" of elections, where state-level concerns are overshadowed by

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Jaffrelot, *Christophe. India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Castes in North India.* Columbia University Press, 2003.

broader national campaigns. Studies from countries with synchronized elections show that voters are more likely to align their choices across levels, which could reduce the accountability of state governments.²³

India's literacy levels and digital penetration are uneven across regions, which may impact voters' understanding of simultaneous elections. The complexity of voting for multiple representatives simultaneously could confuse first-time and less-educated voters, particularly in rural areas. Ensuring widespread voter awareness and education programs would be essential to minimize this risk.

IX. RISKS OF CENTRALIZATION VS. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYNCHRONIZATION

The proposal of "One Nation, One Election" aims to synchronize elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, offering governance efficiencies but also presenting challenges to India's federal structure. While the idea promises systemic benefits, it carries the risk of shifting India's balance of power toward centralization. Synchronizing elections can reduce administrative and financial costs.

According to the Election Commission of India (ECI), the cumulative expenses of conducting staggered elections in different states often strain resources.²⁴ A single synchronized election can optimize manpower and reduce the repetitive deployment of security forces. It can also mitigate the frequent enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), which disrupts governance and delays developmental initiatives.²⁵

Additionally, synchronized elections could alleviate voter fatigue caused by frequent polls. With fewer electoral cycles, citizens might focus on the broader implications of governance, thereby increasing voter turnout and enabling more informed decision-making. From a governance perspective, simultaneous elections ensure greater policy

²³ Sartori, Giovanni. *Comparative Constitutional Engineering*. Macmillan, 1997.

²⁴ Election Commission of India, "Expenditure Report," 2023.

²⁵ Law Commission of India, "170th Report on Electoral Reforms," 1999, pp. 42-44.

continuity by eliminating the tendency of governments to prioritize populist measures over substantive reforms during election cycles.

Despite these advantages, simultaneous elections raise concerns about undermining India's federal structure. The Constitution of India envisages autonomy for state governments to cater to their distinct socio-political contexts. Synchronization risks centralizing electoral narratives around national issues, thereby sidelining regional priorities. This could weaken smaller, regional parties and erode the pluralistic character of Indian democracy.

Moreover, synchronization poses a constitutional challenge. Articles 83, 85, 172, and 174, which define the tenure of legislatures, would need amendments to align terms.²⁶ The question of how to address the premature dissolution of assemblies or Lok Sabha remains unresolved, potentially leading to governance voids or legal ambiguities.²⁷ Politically, synchronized elections may benefit larger national parties at the expense of regional entities, leading to an imbalance in power distribution. This dominance risks reducing the diversity of political representation in states and Parliament.

To address these challenges, a phased synchronization model could be explored, clustering states into regional groups while maintaining staggered timelines. This approach would preserve the federal ethos while reaping the benefits of reduced electoral costs and administrative efficiency.

Additionally, institutional safeguards, such as independent oversight bodies, could ensure that synchronization does not dilute regional autonomy. Ultimately, achieving harmony between governance efficiency and democratic plurality requires collaborative dialogue among stakeholders, backed by constitutional safeguards and innovative electoral reforms.

²⁶ Constitution of India 1950, Articles. 83, 85, 172, and 174.

²⁷ M.P. Singh and Rekha Saxena, *Federalizing India in the Age of Centralization*, Oxford University Press, 2019, pp. 162-165.

X. TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS FOR ELECTION REFORMS

Technological advancements offer immense potential to enhance India's electoral process's efficiency, transparency, and inclusivity, particularly in the context of simultaneous elections. By leveraging modern tools such as blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI), and biometric systems, election reforms can address logistical challenges and voter concerns while ensuring the sanctity of democracy. Blockchain technology, characterized by its decentralized and tamper-proof nature, can transform the voting process.

It can create a secure and transparent ledger for votes, ensuring that once a vote is cast, it cannot be altered or manipulated. Blockchain-based systems can also facilitate remote voting, allowing greater participation, particularly for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and citizens in distant areas. Estonia, for instance, has successfully implemented blockchain-based e-voting, setting a precedent for countries like India to adopt such technology.²⁸

Artificial intelligence can streamline the voter registration process by identifying and removing duplicate or ineligible entries from electoral rolls, thus minimizing errors and potential fraud. Furthermore, AI-powered tools can analyze election trends, detect abnormal patterns that may indicate malpractice, and ensure compliance with election laws. AI-driven surveillance can also monitor polling booths, identifying anomalies in real-time.²⁹ Biometric verification systems, such as fingerprint or iris scanning, can authenticate voters, reducing instances of impersonation and bogus voting.

India's Aadhaar system provides an existing infrastructure that could be integrated with electoral rolls for seamless and accurate verification.³⁰ E-voting platforms can simplify the voting process, enabling citizens to cast their votes remotely, thereby increasing voter

²⁸ A. Trechsel, *E-Voting and Democratic Governance: A Comparative Study*, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

²⁹ Artificial Intelligence and election integrity in 2024, CARNEGIE COUNCIL FOR ETHICS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (2024), <https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/media/article/artificial-intelligence-election-integrity-2024> (last visited Jan 22, 2025).

³⁰ Government of India, *Aadhaar and Its Integration with Electoral Processes*, Ministry of Electronics and IT Report, 2018.

turnout. While cybersecurity concerns remain, implementing multi-layered security protocols, such as encryption and two-factor authentication, can mitigate risks. Pilot programs in urban areas could serve as testing grounds for eventual nationwide adoption.

Data analytics can optimize resource allocation during elections. For instance, analyzing historical voter turnout data can help allocate personnel and electronic voting machines (EVMs) more effectively. Predictive analytics can also anticipate logistical challenges, ensuring smoother execution of simultaneous elections.³¹ By integrating these technologies, India can address the logistical complexities of simultaneous elections while safeguarding its democratic ethos. However, such reforms must be accompanied by robust cybersecurity frameworks and public awareness campaigns to ensure trust in the electoral process.

XI. A BALANCED WAY FORWARD

The concept of "One Nation, One Election" (ONOE) promises to reduce electoral expenses, streamline governance, and improve administrative coordination. However, concerns surrounding federalism, regional representation, and constitutional barriers necessitate a balanced approach that integrates inclusivity, adaptability, and robust safeguards. A phased synchronization model offers a feasible solution. Under this model, elections can be synchronized regionally over a few years rather than mandating a nationwide single-day election.

For instance, state elections can be grouped into clusters (geographically or thematically), with intervals of two years. This phased approach ensures that regional concerns are not overshadowed by national issues and provides adequate time to address logistical challenges. The idea aligns with India's federal structure by allowing states to address local priorities while fostering electoral efficiency.

³¹ Election Commission of India, *Using Data Analytics for Election Management: A Study*, 2020.

Constitutional amendments are necessary to implement ONOE. Articles 83 and 172 of the Indian Constitution, which define the tenure of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies respectively, must be amended to enable synchronization without disrupting existing democratic frameworks.³² Furthermore, provisions in the Representation of the People Act, of 1951, must address scenarios such as mid-term dissolutions, no-confidence motions, and by-elections to ensure democratic stability.³³ For example, if a state government dissolves prematurely, elections should be held for the remainder of the term rather than synced arbitrarily with the national cycle. Technological interventions are vital to streamlining electoral processes.

Blockchain technology can secure voter records, while Artificial Intelligence (AI) can assist in real-time monitoring and logistical planning.³⁴ These innovations can enhance efficiency, ensure transparency, and build voter confidence. Moreover, a robust voter education program must accompany technological reforms to ensure public participation and trust.

Achieving ONOE also demands political and public consensus. Engaging regional parties, state governments, and civil society organizations in structured consultations can mitigate apprehensions about centralization. Lessons from global practices, such as South Africa's synchronized elections or Germany's federal governance model can guide India in designing a tailored solution.³⁵

Finally, implementing ONOE must include periodic impact assessments to evaluate its effects on voter turnout, governance, and democratic values. This adaptable, inclusive approach respects India's federal diversity while addressing the inefficiencies of fragmented elections, ensuring that ONOE strengthens rather than undermines India's democracy.

³² Constitution of India 1950, Articles. 83 and 172.

³³ Representation of the People Act, No. 43 of 1951, §§ 14-15 (India).

³⁴ K. Sharma, *Blockchain Technology and Indian Elections: The Future of Democracy*, 15 Int'l J. Tech. & Pol. 23, 25 (2021).

³⁵ Law Commission of India, *170th Report on Electoral Reforms* (1999).

XII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The concept of "One Nation, One Election" offers a transformative potential to enhance India's electoral system by reducing administrative costs, mitigating voter fatigue, and fostering policy continuity. However, its implementation raises significant constitutional, political, and logistical challenges that must be critically addressed to uphold the principles of democracy and federalism.

Constitutionally, simultaneous elections necessitate amendments to Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 356 of the Indian Constitution, which govern the tenure of legislatures and provisions for premature dissolution.³⁶ Such amendments risk undermining state autonomy, a cornerstone of India's federal structure, and could disrupt the electoral calendar in cases of mid-term dissolutions or no-confidence motions.³⁷ Without robust legal frameworks, these changes may centralize power, weaken regional representation, and diminish the diverse priorities of Indian states.³⁸

Economically, while the reduction in election costs is a compelling argument, it must be juxtaposed against the hidden costs of legal reforms, public awareness campaigns, and administrative overhauls.³⁹ Furthermore, aligning national and state elections could shift voter focus away from local issues, potentially homogenizing diverse political landscapes and weakening grassroots democracy.⁴⁰

To address these challenges, a hybrid model of phased regional synchronization could be introduced. In this approach, state elections are grouped into clusters based on geographic or demographic factors and conducted within a fixed time frame, separate

³⁶ Constitution of India 1950, Articles. 83 and 172.

³⁷ Election Commission of India, *Simultaneous Elections: Constitutional and Legal Perspectives* (2018) 12.

³⁸ Granville Austin, *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation* (Oxford University Press, 1999) 256-257.

³⁹ D.D. Basu, *Introduction to the Constitution of India* (23rd ed, LexisNexis, 2018) 214.

⁴⁰ S.Y. Quraishi, *The Great March of Democracy: Seven Decades of India's Elections* (Rupa Publications, 2019) 153-155.

from national elections.⁴¹ This model would preserve regional priorities while partially achieving the economic and administrative benefits of synchronization.

Technological advancements such as blockchain-based electoral rolls, AI-driven logistical planning, and e-voting systems could complement these reforms.⁴² Blockchain technology, in particular, could enhance transparency and reduce the scope of electoral fraud.⁴³ Additionally, AI could improve resource allocation, ensuring smoother execution of synchronized elections.

Recommendations include initiating a broad-based consultation process involving all stakeholders, including political parties, state governments, constitutional experts, and civil society organizations. The Election Commission of India must lead this effort, ensuring inclusivity and transparency.⁴⁴ Phased implementation and rigorous pilot testing are necessary to mitigate risks and address unforeseen challenges.

Public awareness campaigns are also crucial to educate voters and gain their trust in the proposed reforms. In conclusion, while "One Nation, One Election" is a promising vision, its execution must prioritize inclusivity, innovation, and federal balance. Only through a cautious and consultative approach can India achieve electoral reforms that uphold its democratic integrity and diversity.

⁴¹ N Gopaldaswami, 'Reimagining Simultaneous Elections' (2020) 18(3) *Indian Journal of Public Affairs* 45-47.

⁴² R. Narasimhan, 'Blockchain Technology and Electoral Reforms' (2021) 12(4) *Indian Journal of Governance* 33.

⁴³ J. Fisher, 'How Blockchain Can Revolutionize Electoral Processes' (2020) 21(2) *Global Governance Review* 76.

⁴⁴ Election Commission of India, *Strategic Plan 2022-2027*, <<https://eci.gov.in>>, accessed 31 December 2024.