

Two day National Seminar on

# EXPLORING THE FUTURE OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

One Nation, One Election and its implications  
for Governance and Federalism toward a  
Vibrant Bharat

*28 & 29 August 2025*

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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## 1. Seeing Something as Something’: Aspects of ‘One Nation, One Election

*Padma Shri Dr. Upendra Baxi*

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This paper explores the discourse on ‘One Nation, One Election’ (ONOE) through the prism of three ‘prudences’—jurisprudence, legisprudence, and demosprudence—emphasizing that while the ICSSR Seminar aims to provide a roadmap, much of it is already shaped by ongoing developments in legislative and popular domains. Central to the discussion is the 2024 High-Level Committee Report chaired by former President Ram Nath Kovind, which proposed a two-phase approach to synchronize elections for Parliament, State Assemblies, and local bodies, alongside a unified electoral roll and voter ID system. The Report, grounded in extensive consultations with political parties, experts, and civil society, highlights the economic, administrative, and governance benefits of simultaneous elections while acknowledging significant dissent rooted in federalism, the basic structure doctrine, and cultural pluralism. Philosophically, the paper engages with Wittgenstein’s concept of ‘aspect dawning’ and Cavell’s idea of ‘soul blindness’ to argue for a shift from adversarial, partisan framing of ONOE to a broader ethical and constitutional perspective. The analysis underscores how ONOE reflects both historical continuities—such as early post-independence simultaneous elections—and contemporary aspirations for stability, efficiency, and democratic renewal. At the same time, it warns of potential risks including over-centralization, misuse of electoral powers, and erosion of institutional autonomy, particularly that of the Election Commission of India. By integrating legal, political, and philosophical dimensions, this paper contends that ONOE represents a moment of ‘aspect change’ in Indian democracy—an opportunity to rethink electoral reforms within the framework of constitutional morality, inclusive governance, and respect for diversity.

## **2. Development, Sustainability and Governance in India: Role of One Nation, One Election (ONOE)**

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### **Abstract**

Development will be very short lived and self-destructive unless it is sustainable in the sense that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs (World Commission on Environment and Development: 1987). This suggests that economic, environment, migration policies, international law, and health must be systematically coordinated for sustainable economic, social and political development (Ramanathan, Link, 2004, 1999; Rogge: 2001; GCM: 2018; Dutta 2023). Development is to be truly fruitful and to be sustainable in nature with a long-term vision. Resources like land, forest, water, minerals are limited and these limited resources to be utilized most efficiently and economically to get full value benefits out of them. Development has also to give due regard to equity and social justice (Agarwal: 2004, Dutta: 2018). Development is to be delivered by multiple agencies including the state. The state has to limit itself or contract its role so that other players like market and civil society are given adequate space and scope to contribute to development. Pluralisation has been necessitated as the state alone cannot respond to the diverse needs of the development. Different actors who came into the picture for development include, under *State*, local and national governments and multilateral agencies (public sector banks and other financial agencies under dominant control of state), under *Market*, local traders, national and multinational companies, and under *Civil Society*, citizens, community based organisations (CBOs), and national and international NGOs. Thus governance as a paradigm includes real multiplicity or plurality of institutions acting in unison to influence development from different levels. In the present global context, it is natural that 'Governance' is considered as an attempt to widen the scope of public administration by stretching beyond formal governments. According to the World Bank, governance is "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development". Here, the concept of governance is concerned directly with the management of the development process, involving both the public and the private sectors. Moreover In a global economy, in

developmental debates, in developing, emerging, and advanced economies, “Governance” has become a key concept.

Therefore, to achieve sustainability in development process a proper policy needs to be framed. Moreover, the pace of development needs to be enhanced. India is a federal country and different provinces (states) have their own government. These governments are formed in different years and come to an end after its five years tenure. This election system acts as roadblock to proper implementation and timely execution of many development programmes, Moreover, expense for development programmes is being increased. Accordingly, the Union cabinet of India has approved “One Nation, One Election (ONOE)” plan, a landmark move towards synchronizing electoral processes across India as per recommendations from a high-level panel headed by former President Shri Ram Nath Kovind, Under these circumstances, this paper will discuss the concept of development through governance from sustainable perspective and the potentialities of ONOE for strengthening this process.

***Keywords:*** *Development, Sustainability, Governance, Democracy, Election.*

### 3. From Cooperative to Coordinated Federalism: Analysing ONOE's Fiscal Implications through Second-Generation Federalism Theory

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#### Abstract

This paper examines the historic One Nation, One Election (ONOE) proposal formulated by Central Government through federalism perspectives. It applies the second-generation federalism theory to analyse the potential transformation of centre-state fiscal relations in India from cooperative to coordinated federalist paradigms. Employing theoretical analysis using Wallace Oates' second-generation fiscal federalism framework, Barry Weingast's market-preserving federalism conditions, and Bridget Fahey's coordinated federalism paradigm, the research analyses constitutional amendments proposed by the Ram Nath Kovind Committee, particularly modifying certain provisions under Articles 82A, 83, and 172 alongside India's existing fiscal architecture, including GST Council operations and Finance Commission mechanisms. The analysis reveals that ONOE represents a fundamental shift toward coordinated federalism characterised by joint decision-making processes and integrated administrative coordination which can prevail post simultaneous elections both at the Union and States level. In Weingast's market-preserving conditions, reduced Model Code disruptions may strengthen common market protection and policy certainty, but unprecedented intergovernmental coordination requirements may strain hierarchical governance and subnational autonomy. States may lose midterm electoral leverage in Finance Commission and GST Council talks due to fiscal ramifications. The implementation cost of ₹7,951 crore requires direct fiscal coordination, while lower election frequency may compromise democratic responsibility for federal balance. The paper concludes that ONOE's federal trajectory depends critically on implementation design and institutional safeguards, requiring the maintenance of constitutional autonomy while enabling systematic coordination, preserving competitive elements alongside cooperation, and ensuring democratic accountability while minimising electoral disruption. The ONOE may strengthen public services delivery, policy implementations and governance through vertical transfer of power fiscally, politically and administratively. The timeline set for

2034 offers important opportunities for preparing federal adaptation and required safeguards necessitates for its effective implementations.

**Keywords:** *ONOE, fiscal federalism, coordinated federalism, second-generation federalism, centre-state relations, democratic accountability and Finance Commission*

#### **4. Negotiating Socio-Political Conscience Through Votes: Intricacies in Bridging Electoral Expectations and Electoral Practices among Youth Voters**

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#### **Abstract**

Socio-political conscience embraces electoral practices and expectations in making larger voter turnout and informed voters in a democratic republic. For a majority youth populous state, it is significant to have a high socio-political conscience for confining moral responsibility transcending the exercise of mere duty. In this backdrop, this study aims to explore the complex interplay between electoral expectations and electoral practices that shape voting trends among youth population. The study adopted an exploratory qualitative research design. The data for the study were collected from 15 news video clippings relating to first time voters in Tamil Nadu. Through textual analysis of the data, three themes were generated, they are: 1) popular aspirational homogeneity (conformity), 2) identity driven vote banks, 3) distorted opinion, 4) Moral grandstanding. Findings of the study showed that whatever the expectations the young voters have, they are not ready to cast vote for a new party due to the lack of trust regarding its sustainability. Further, analysis highlighted that voting trend among young voters are heavily influenced by the legacy of established mainstream political parties.

**Keywords:** *Socio-political conscience, Electoral practices, Electoral expectations, Identity voting, Moral responsibility*

## 5. Problems in implementing One Nation, One Election in India

*Dr. G. Gopa Kumar*

Very few democratic countries of the world have adopted simultaneous election to the national Parliament and regional Legislatures . Brazil, Indonesia, Philippines, South Arica, Nigeria are the prominent countries among them. But in few other countries, simultaneous elections take place, naturally or by design. The major benefit of this arrangement is that the costs of conducting elections can be reduced significantly for the nation as well as for the candidates and political parties. This step may appear to be simple and direct by focussing on the national elections and state elections take place along with it. Until the decline of the *one party dominance system*, India had simultaneous election .The only exception was in one state; Kerala , which elected Communist Party to power in 1957. India is hailed as the largest electoral democracy in the world .The total electorate in 2024 Lok Sabha election was 97.5 crore voters. With the presentation of the 129th Constitution Amendment Bill (2024) in the Parliament for the legislative approval of One Nation, One Election (ONOE) there emerged a big crisis and criticism about the implications of this legislation . Prior to the presentation of the Bill in the parliament, a Committee headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind made a preliminary study and called for comments and views from the representatives of the civil society. Actually, the criticism against the proposed policy began even from there itself. Now the critics strongly attribute that the intention of the main ruling party, the BJP, is to bring a *one party system* in the country and sideline all other parties, especially regional and smaller parties. Besides, they believe that the federal character of the country will be jeopardised seriously. The supporters of this proposed policy ( of the 47 parties who approached Kovind Panel , 32 parties supported the initiative including all the 26 NDA allies except Naga Peoples' Front) rejects these apprehensions and argue that the costs of conducting the election will be considerably reduced and will benefit the citizens. Besides, they argue that , there will be no policy paralysis in the country or the state, due to the absence of different cycles of Model Code of Conduct, usually declared on the eve of elections. Currently, the Bill is being reviewed by the Joint Parliamentary Committee(JPC), headed by the BJP leader P.P. Choudhary. The academics, representatives of civil society and political leaders are reflecting their views and concerns over the proposed Constitutional Amendment Bill.

## 6. One Nation, One Election: Examining Its Consequences for India's Federal Democracy

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### **Abstract**

The idea of the one nation, one election or, more simply, simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and all the Legislative Assemblies of the states is, arguably, the most important critical question in the public domain of India today, particularly after the introduction of The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024, for the same. The rationale behind this idea is that as the principles of people's participation mainly through elections and the well-being of the people happens to be the foundational principles of democracy, the all-important second part of the principle is being compromised or getting slowed down due to the cycle of frequent elections in India. Put clearly, the well-being of the people is being compromised as the frequent cycle of elections are so costly that a huge chunk of the taxpayer's money is going towards it rather than national development priorities and by lessening the efficiency of governance due to prolonged imposition of the Model Code of Conduct. It is in this context, in this paper we look into the idea of the simultaneous elections as proposed by the 29<sup>th</sup> Amendment Bill, the arguments in support of its necessity, the general criticisms levelled against it and more importantly, we attempt to examine the repercussions of the simultaneous elections for the federal democracy in India in terms of issues of contestation, accountability of elected representatives, implications for the party system, possible drive towards a sort of nationalization of political life at the cost of diversity and also the question of parliamentary democracy at level of the states and should they be wedded to the fate of the parliamentary democracy at the Union level. We conclude by acknowledging the complexity of the issue at hand but by asking fundamental questions like- are there no other ways to strengthen the governance system other than this reform of the electoral system. Or are we to consider it as a kind of 'necessary evil'?

## **7. Anchoring Democracy: The Citizen's Power in 'One Nation, One Election'**

Prof. (Dr.) Namrata Singh

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### **Abstract:**

The proposition of 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE) in India, which aims to synchronize Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly elections, represents one of the most significant electoral reforms contemplated in the nation's history. While proponents advocate for it as a panacea for policy paralysis, exorbitant costs, and governance deficits caused by a perpetual election cycle, critics raise alarms about its potential to undermine India's federal structure and voter cognizance. This essay argues that while ONOE presents formidable challenges to informed citizen choice, it simultaneously offers a pivotal opportunity for the Indian citizenry to redefine and deepen their democratic role. By analyzing the potential impacts on voter behavior and drawing comparative insights from countries like Sweden, South Africa, and Germany, this paper contends that the success or failure of ONOE in strengthening democracy will ultimately be determined not by legislative mechanics but by the proactive, informed, and assertive power of the Indian citizen.

## **8. One Nation, One Election: A Pathway to Strengthening Governance and Development in India**

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### **Abstract**

India adopted its Constitution on 26 January 1950 and became a Republic. The first general elections, held between October 1951 and February 1952, marked the beginning of India's electoral democracy. These elections were conducted for the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and the State Legislative Assemblies simultaneously. This practice continued naturally in 1957, 1962, and 1967. The idea of holding simultaneous elections, popularly known as One Nation, One Election (ONOE), seeks to conduct national and state-level elections together across the country. ONOE is envisioned as a reform to streamline governance, reduce the frequency and costs of elections, and ensure administrative efficiency. The present system poses challenges such as high expenditure, excessive diversion of administrative machinery, and governance disruptions due to the repeated imposition of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). The MCC restricts governments from announcing or implementing new development projects, causing delays in decision-making and policy execution. However, while efficiency reforms are necessary, they must not undermine India's federal fabric. Balancing national stability with state autonomy, ensuring inclusivity, and safeguarding regional voices remain critical. ONOE thus represents both an opportunity for reform and a challenge to democratic federalism. The broad objective of this paper is to examine ONOE from the perspective of governance and development. The method of the work is normative and analytical approach using reports of committees (Law Commission, NITI Aayog), and academic debates and comparative insights from other democracies with synchronized elections.

**Keywords:** *One Nation One Election, Governance, Administrative Efficiency, Development, Electoral Reforms*

## 9. One Nation, One Election: Governance Issues and Concerns

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### **Abstract**

India's democracy endures primarily because of regular elections to the Parliament, State Legislatures, and, importantly, to local bodies in both urban and rural areas. Political leadership at both the central and state levels has often called for early elections to secure a decisive majority. Naturally, this has disrupted the possibility of conducting simultaneous elections in India. The idea of ONOE, also known as simultaneous elections, proposes aligning the election cycles of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. This would allow voters to cast their ballots for both tiers of government on the same day in their constituencies, though voting could still occur in phases across the country. By synchronizing these electoral timelines, the approach aims to address logistical challenges, reduce costs, and minimize disruptions caused by frequent elections.

The paper argues that the ONOE proposal, initiated by the NDA-led government, will lay the groundwork for a complete revamping of India's democratic and electoral system by conducting simultaneous elections. At the same time, the concerns and apprehensions regarding simultaneous elections cannot be dismissed without public discourse, and it is the duty of the government to address any doubts raised by the people, political parties, and civil society organizations. The interests and concerns of regional political parties, as well as of people residing in different parts of the country—some politically apathetic or disillusioned by the petty politics of narrow and parochial-minded parties and organizations, and not associated with any political party—need to be addressed before the implementation of ONOE, especially in the context of state autonomy, governance issues, legal hurdles, financial waste, and the overall necessity of conducting elections in India.

**Keywords:** *Simultaneous Elections, Voter Fatigue, Political Apathy, State Autonomy, Governance etc.*

## **10. Governance without Disruptions: Will One Election Improve Policy Continuity?**

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### **Abstract**

The proposition of “One Nation, One Election” (ONOE) has reignited debates on the future of Indian democracy, governance, and federalism. Among the central claims advanced by its proponents is that simultaneous elections will reduce governance disruptions and enable policy continuity. This paper critically examines that assumption by situating it within India’s constitutional design, political culture, and administrative structures. Frequent elections, while costly and time-intensive, also serve as mechanisms of accountability and avenues for regional expression. Yet, they often stall policy decisions due to the Model Code of Conduct, disrupting developmental projects and governance efficiency. This study investigates whether synchronizing electoral cycles would mitigate such disruptions or merely centralize political rhythms at the expense of federal dynamism. Drawing upon comparative federal experiences (notably Germany and South Africa), the analysis highlights the trade-offs between efficiency and pluralism. It also explores whether institutional innovations—such as phased elections, staggered state synchronisation, or digital electoral management—can balance continuity with representational diversity. Ultimately, the paper argues that while ONOE may reduce administrative disruptions, policy continuity in India depends less on electoral calendars and more on structural reforms, coalition management, and robust institutions of accountability. The discussion underscores the need to rethink governance not merely in terms of electoral efficiency but through deeper democratic strengthening to sustain a vibrant Bharat.

**Keywords:** *One Nation One Election, Governance, Policy Continuity, Federalism, Democracy*

## **11. Bytes and Ballots: Digital Democracy and Civic Engagement in a Simultaneous Electoral Environment**

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### **Abstract**

This study explores the intersection of digital democracy and the proposed One Nation One Election (ONOE) policy in India. It examines how synchronized elections, when combined with digital tools such as e-governance platforms, social media campaigns, and civic literacy programs, influence voter behavior and public participation. Using a mixed-methods approach that includes surveys, content analysis, and expert interviews, the research assesses the impact of digital engagement on political awareness, voter mobilization, and representation across urban and rural populations. While digital platforms offer potential for enhancing inclusion and reducing electoral fatigue, the study also identifies challenges related to algorithmic bias, misinformation, and the digital divide. The findings highlight the need for ethical frameworks and inclusive digital infrastructure to ensure that technological advancements genuinely support democratic values in a simultaneous electoral environment.

***Keywords:*** *One Nation One Election (ONOE), digital democracy, civic engagement, voter awareness, electoral participation, digital campaigning, social media, electoral literacy, misinformation, digital divide, algorithmic influence, political communication.*

## **12. Empowering the Electorate: The Role of Civil Society and NGOs in Electoral Education in India**

*Akankshya Pani*

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### **Abstract**

This study reconnoitres the critical role played by civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in magnifying electoral education in India. It aims to:

1. Examine the nature and scope of NGO and civil society engagement in voter awareness campaigns.
2. Evaluate how well these interventions improve political literacy, especially for marginalized and first-time voters.
3. Evaluate the partnership dynamics between civil society actors and state institutions like the Election Commission of India (ECI).
4. Examine how well the youth is using their power and awareness in the election, focusing on young voters.

### ***Methodology***

Qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, employing a mixed-methodology approach. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders—including NGO officials, community leaders, and election officials—in five Indian states with varied voter turnout histories. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in rural and urban regions to capture citizen perspectives. Secondary data such as official reports, voters turnout numbers, and NGO evaluations are used.

### ***Key Findings***

The study finds that civil society and NGOs have played a contributory role in democratizing electoral participation by making electoral processes more inclusive, transparent, and accessible. Interventions such as door-to-door voter education, use of digital platforms, street theatre, and grassroots mobilization have significantly improved voter awareness in underrepresented communities, including women, youth, and tribal populations. However, the research also highlights challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of coordination with official electoral bodies, and occasional politicization of NGO agendas. The study underscores

the need for institutionalized collaboration between CSOs and the ECI to ensure higher sustainability and scalability of electoral education efforts.

This research contributes with many case studies to the evolving discourse on participatory democracy and reaffirms that a robust civil society is indispensable for fostering an informed and empowered electorate.

### **13. Inclusive Ballots: Addressing the Needs of Senior Citizens under the One Nation, One Election Reform**

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India's electoral reforms, particularly the One Nation, One Election (ONOE) proposal, seek to synchronize national and state-level elections to enhance administrative efficiency and reduce policy disruption. While promising in intent, such reforms raise critical questions about the inclusivity of the democratic processes, especially for elderly voters, a rapidly growing and often marginalized demographic. It further examines the readiness of the Election Commission of India, reviews inclusive frameworks like SVEEP and postal voting, and integrates global best practices and rights-based approaches. . The paper proposes a layered model of inclusive electoral participation for the elderly under ONOE and recommends targeted reforms to ensure democratic equity. Findings underscore the need for age-sensitive electoral planning to prevent the systemic marginalization of older adults and to uphold constitutional mandates of universal suffrage and non-discrimination.

**Keywords:** *Elderly voters, one nation one election, electoral reform, inclusive democracy, political participation.*

## 14. Strengthening Democratic Participation: Disability Rights in the Context of One Nation One Election

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### Abstract

India's shift towards 'One Nation One Election' proposes significant governance and economic reforms by consolidating elections into a unified cycle. A nation's democratic spirit is realized through the participation of every community, making inclusive electoral processes fundamental to its growth and unity. Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) represent a distinct group within society that calls for special measures, requiring the electoral system to proactively engage with them for voter registration and ensure appropriate facilities at polling stations to support their full participation in the voting process. Although constitutional and legal frameworks exist to protect their rights, persons with disabilities still face numerous challenges in exercising their right to vote, including inaccessible polling stations, the absence of assistive technologies, and insufficient voter education efforts. This paper critically examines the implications of ONOE for Persons with Disabilities highlighting the need for affirmative action by the electoral system, through a qualitative interpretive research approach. The study also proposes *4A Model of Inclusive Electoral Participation*, which emphasizes Accessibility, Awareness, Accountability, and Adaptiveness as core pillars for strengthening PwD participation in the context of One Nation One Election.

**Keywords:** *Simultaneous Election, Electoral Accessibility, Right to Vote, One Nation One Election, Persons with Disabilities*

## 15. The Carbon Footprint of Frequent Elections: Can ONOE Make Indian Democracy More Sustainable?

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### Abstract

The increasing frequency of elections in India's multi-tier democratic system generates substantial environmental externalities that remain critically understudied in contemporary scholarship. This paper presents the first comprehensive analysis of the carbon footprint associated with India's electoral processes and evaluates whether the proposed One Nation, One Election (ONOE) reform could function as a mechanism for sustainable democratic governance. Employing an innovative mixed-methods framework, the study (1) quantifies greenhouse gas emissions from current election cycles through systematic analysis of Election Commission logistics data, political party expenditure reports, and field measurements of campaign activities (2) conducts comparative case studies of electoral systems in Sweden, South Africa, and Indonesia to identify best practices in sustainable election management and (3) incorporates stakeholder perspectives through interviews with election officials, environmental experts, and a nationally representative survey of 800 voters assessing public receptivity to eco-conscious electoral reforms.

Preliminary findings indicate that India's decentralized electoral calendar generates approximately 1.2 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per election cycle, with major contributions from political campaign travel (42%), voter transportation (28%), and disposable campaign materials (19%). Modelling suggests ONOE implementation could reduce these

emissions by 35-55% through consolidated campaigning and optimized resource allocation. The study further reveals significant variations in subnational readiness for synchronized elections, with southern states demonstrating greater institutional capacity for sustainable election administration.

The research makes three key contributions: first, it establishes an original methodology for environmental impact assessment of electoral systems; second, it advances theoretical debates at the intersection of political ecology and democratic institutionalism; third, it proposes a policy framework for "Green Federal Elections" incorporating renewable energy deployment in polling stations, digital campaigning incentives, and carbon offset mechanisms. By aligning electoral reform with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 13: Climate Action and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), this study offers timely insights for emerging democracies grappling with the climate-governance nexus.

***Keywords:*** *One Nation One Election (ONOE), Election carbon footprint, Sustainable democracy, Climate governance, Electoral reform*

## **16. Financial Implications and Administrative Challenges of Frequent Elections: An Analysis of Implementing Simultaneous Elections in India.**

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### **Abstract**

The proposal for simultaneous elections commonly referred as One Nation, One Election to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies is considered to streamline India's electoral process. It is multifaceted, having potential benefits and challenges based on their implementation strategy. There are about 5- 7 elections to State Legislative Assemblies every year impacting the development and governance of the country adversely. This study analyzes the financial implications and administrative challenges of conducting frequent elections at both central and state levels, such as election expenditures, manpower requirements, and interruptions in developmental programs and governance that can delay public services. This paper also aims to provide insight into the perspective of introducing simultaneous elections to reduce the financial burden associated with frequent elections and challenges towards administration. This research is based on secondary data drawn from national-level recommendations and government reports, including the High-Level Committee report and NITI Aayog report. Findings based on this research suggest that simultaneous elections may reduce public spending, minimize governance disruptions, and decrease administrative burden. The study reveals that the implementation of simultaneous elections requires synchronization in electoral cycles, coordination between the Election Commission of India and State Election Commissions, and appropriate constitutional amendments to safeguard the legal framework of India.

**Keywords:** *Simultaneous election, financial implications, frequent election.*

## **17. Institutional Innovations and Grievance Redressal: Role of Ombudsman in Promoting Good Governance in Local Self-Government**

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### **Abstract**

An effective grievance redressal mechanism is crucial for promoting good governance, ensuring responsibility, and fostering public faith in institutions. The role of local self-governments (LSGs) in promoting participatory democracy and delivering public services has become increasingly important in modern governance. This paper, based on doctrinal research, examines the role of the Ombudsman as an institutional innovation in enhancing grievance redressal mechanisms in Local Self Institutions (LSIs) and thus to promote the goal of good governance. The primary objective is to analyse the legal and institutional frameworks underpinning the Ombudsman's role and evaluate its effectiveness in ensuring accountability, transparency, and citizen-centric governance. Using a doctrinal methodology, the study reviews statutory provisions and policy documents across jurisdictions, focusing on the Ombudsman's powers, functions, and operational challenges in LSIs. The research explores how the Ombudsman acts as a mediator between citizens and local governance structures, ensuring equitable redressal of grievances related to maladministration, corruption, and service delivery failures. Additionally, the paper addresses recent trends in appointing Ombudsmen for LSGs, emphasising the need for merit-based, transparent, and independent selection processes to ensure credibility and effectiveness. Analysis reveals that the Ombudsman significantly strengthens good governance by fostering trust, enhancing administrative efficiency, and upholding democratic principles. However, limitations such as inadequate autonomy, a deficiency of funds, jurisdictional overlaps, and a lack of awareness among citizens hinder its efficacy. This paper highlights the requirement of legal backing and public outreach to optimise the Ombudsman's role. This research contributes to the discourse on institutional mechanisms for good governance, offering insights for policymakers and scholars interested in local governance reforms.

**Keywords:** *Ombudsman, Grievance Redressal, Good Governance, Local Self Institutions.*

## **18. One Nation, One Election: Logistical Issues and Challenges in Conducting Simultaneous Elections in India**

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### **Abstract**

One Nation One Election refers to the idea of conducting elections for the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, and local bodies (Municipalities and Panchayats) simultaneously. This system aims to streamline the Indian election cycle, reducing the absolute frequency of elections and good governance efficiency. Instead of having elections multiple times across different states, voters would cast their votes for both the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies on the same day. However, constitutional challenges, political resistance, and logistical hurdles need to be addressed before its successful implementation. A balanced, phased approach, with inputs from all stakeholders, is the key to ensuring a stable, democratic electoral system in India. But at the same time all States and the Central government faces massive logistical challenges including coordinating the schedules, resources etc. Moreover, Implementing the One Nation, One Election policy would demand substantial resources, including a vast number of electronic voting machines and trained personnel to manage the extensive process efficiently. This paper tries to analyse without logical challenges how to conducting simultaneous elections in India.

**Keywords:** *Lok Sabha, State Assembly, Election, Voters, Governance, Policy, and Challenges.*

## 19. A Quantitative Exploration of Civic Education's Role in Fostering Youth Democratic Participation

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### Abstract

The study tries to understand the importance of civic education on youth participation in the democratic process through a quantitative research design. The paper explores the concepts of empowerment and civic engagement theories and tries to analyze how civic knowledge acquired through formal education influences the political and civic actions of young adults. This study is grounded in two key frameworks: Civic Voluntarism Theory, which explains that participation depends on resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment; and Empowerment Theory, which highlights how knowledge and awareness increase an individual's sense of control and involvement in public life. Together, these theories help explain how civic education can build confidence, skills, and motivation among youth to participate actively in democratic processes. As a primary research paper, a structured questionnaire will be administered to college students across institutions in Bengaluru, Karnataka, to measure their levels of civic knowledge, political efficacy, and participation in activities such as voting, campaigning, and community engagement. Data will be analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation to understand the relationship between exposure to civic education and active democratic participation. The study intends to see if students with higher civic knowledge are more likely to engage in democratic activities and express confidence in their roles as citizens. The study also highlights variations in participation based on gender and their socio-economic background. The study concludes with practical recommendations for educators, policy makers and Social Workers to strengthen democratic values and active participation through structured civic education initiatives.

**Keywords:** *Civic Education, Youth Participation, Democratic Engagement, Quantitative Research and Social Work, and Citizenship*

## 20. Inclusive Health Governance: Examining Local Government Initiatives for Women and Transgender Persons in Kerala

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### Abstract

This study examines Kerala's approach to inclusive health governance through local government initiatives targeting women and transgender persons from 2020 to 2025. Using a mixed-methods approach combining document analysis, policy review, and secondary data analysis, this research investigates how Kerala's decentralized governance system addresses health inequities through gender-responsive planning and implementation. The findings reveal that Kerala has established a comprehensive framework including the Women Component Plan allocating ₹4,661 crores (21.35% of plan outlay) and enhanced transgender welfare funding growing from ₹0.1 crores to ₹6.93 crores during the study period. Key initiatives include Mission Aardram, queer-inclusive healthcare programs, and the establishment of a dedicated Gender Reassignment Surgery unit. However, challenges persist in fund utilization, traditional gender role reinforcement, and addressing intersectional vulnerabilities. The study concludes that while Kerala demonstrates progressive policy frameworks, implementation gaps require targeted interventions to achieve truly inclusive health governance. Policy recommendations include strengthening community participation, enhancing inter-sectoral coordination, and developing comprehensive monitoring systems for marginalized populations.

**Keywords:** *Inclusive Health Governance, Decentralization, Women's Health, Transgender Health, Kerala, Local Self Government (LSG), Gender-responsive Planning*

## 21. Staggered Elections in Kerala: History and the Implications of One Nation One Election

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### Abstract

The One Nation, One Election (ONOE) initiative proposes synchronising the electoral calendar for Parliament, state assemblies, and local bodies to reduce costs, administrative strain, and governance disruptions (Bhavsar, 2023). Simultaneous elections were conducted in India from 1951-52 till 1967, but became staggered with the premature dissolution of many state assemblies in 1968 and 1969 (Dasgupta, 2023). It is important to know the history of elections and understand India's political and social context to gauge the impact of ONOE effectively.

After its formation in 1956, Kerala had its first election in 1957. However, it has a history of political instability, including many presidents' rule, which led to staggered elections being the norm, making Kerala a perfect state to study the implications of ONOE. Kerala is the first state to democratically elect a Communist party in the world, which suggests a history of strong regional politics and is also a state where local and decentralised governance (e.g., Kudumbashree, a significant women's empowerment initiative) is strong, which could be affected by ONOE. This paper explores the historical and political evolution of staggered elections. This study uses a qualitative methodology of a historical-analytical method to assess the implications of ONOE on the federal structure of India, the regional dynamics and autonomy of Kerala and its effects on women's political participation and grassroots governance.

**Keywords:** Kerala, Staggered elections, ONOE, federalism, women's political representation

## 22. Implications of ‘One Nation, One Election’ on Local Governance: Insights from Panchayat and Municipal Leaders in Kerala

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### **Abstract**

The concept of ‘One Nation, One Election’ primarily refers to the synchronization of Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections. The Ram Nath Kovind Committee has recommended a phased approach for its implementation. In the first phase, elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies would be aligned, followed by the second phase, which would synchronize elections for municipalities and panchayats with the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies within 100 days. In this context, the present study examines the implications of implementing the ‘One Nation, One Election’ scheme for municipalities and panchayats. This qualitative study was conducted among 15 elected heads of municipalities and representatives from various levels of panchayat institutions—District Panchayat, Block Panchayat, and Gram Panchayat—in Kerala, a southern state of India. Participants were identified using the snowball sampling technique. The state of Kerala have total 1200 elected bodies. This study explores the impact of One Nation, One Election system on panchayat governance, development priorities, resource utilization, citizen engagement, fiscal demands, and also examines the challenges and the way forward. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities in local governance, from the perspectives of elected representatives with respect to implementing One Nation, One Election system. This, in turn, will help ensure greater inclusivity, efficiency and sustainability in the implementation of the this scheme at the grassroots level.

**Keywords:** *One Nation One Election, Local Governance, Election*

### **23. Enhancing Electoral Literacy in Tribal and Remote Communities: NGO Interventions and Challenges in India**

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#### **Abstract**

Electoral literacy is crucial for strengthening democratic participation, especially in marginalized and geographically isolated communities. In India, tribal and remote populations often face barriers such as lack of information, language constraints, geographic inaccessibility, low education levels, and cultural disconnection from mainstream political processes. This paper examines how Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have emerged as key facilitators in bridging these gaps by promoting electoral awareness, civic responsibility, and inclusive participation.

Using secondary data from and various NGO case studies, this paper explores the nature and scope of electoral interventions conducted in tribal and remote regions. Key NGO strategies include localized voter education programs, the use of folk media and indigenous languages, door-to-door campaigns, collaboration with local leaders, and digital tools in select areas. These efforts have contributed to increased voter registration and participation, especially among women and first time voters. However, the challenges are significant. NGOs encounter logistical difficulties, limited funding, resistance due to historical mistrust of state institutions, and the complexities of aligning national electoral frameworks with diverse tribal norms and values. The study underscores the need for sustainable partnerships between the state, civil society, and local communities to institutionalize electoral literacy as a long-term developmental agenda. The paper concludes by recommending a multi-stakeholder approach that integrates education, technology, and cultural sensitivity to deepen democratic engagement in India's most underserved regions.

**Keywords:** *Electoral Literacy, Tribal Communities, Remote areas, NGOs, Marginalized Populations.*

## 24. Insights on One Nation, One Election as Fiscal Reform - a Youth-Centered Study in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

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### Abstract

The proposal of *One Nation, One Election* in India has reignited debates around electoral efficiency, governance, and public expenditure. Frequent elections are often criticized for imposing substantial financial costs and administrative burdens, particularly in a country as vast and diverse as India. Understanding how different sections of society perceive the economic impact of this reform is essential for informed policymaking. This study aims to evaluate the perceived economic costs and benefits of simultaneous elections among young adults in a semi-urban locality, focusing on aspects such as election expenditure, election fatigue, public awareness, and effective governance. A quantitative research design was employed, using structured questionnaires to collect data from young, educated voters in the Arasampalayam area of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. The survey captured individual perspectives on key issues related to the economic efficiency and feasibility of implementing simultaneous elections. The findings indicate a general awareness among respondents of the high financial and administrative costs associated with frequent elections. A majority expressed support for the economic rationale behind *One Nation, One Election*, citing its potential to reduce public spending, streamline governance, and enhance political stability. However, concerns about implementation logistics and federal autonomy were also noted. The study underscores the importance of economic considerations in the electoral reform discourse, particularly among India's semi-urban youth. While acknowledging practical challenges, the participants largely view the reform as a fiscally responsible initiative. These insights contribute to the evolving national debate on balancing democratic processes with economic sustainability.

**Keywords:** *One Nation One Election, Electoral Reform, Youth Perception, Economic Sustainability*

## 25. The Role of Political Negotiation in Coalition Formation under One Nation, One Election

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### Abstract

India, the world's largest democracy, is celebrated for its regular, free, and fair electoral processes that ensure widespread political participation. In recent years, the proposal of "One Nation, One Election" has gained prominence, advocating for simultaneous elections to streamline electoral cycles and enhance governance efficiency. While this proposition promises administrative convenience and cost reduction, its broader implications for democratic representation remain underexplored. This paper critically examines the feasibility of simultaneous elections, focusing particularly on its potential impact on coalition politics—a key feature that has strengthened Indian democracy by accommodating regional diversity and minority interests. Employing a qualitative secondary research methodology, the study analyses how unified electoral cycles may alter coalition dynamics, potentially skewing the political landscape in favour of larger national parties while diminishing the influence of smaller, regional actors. Further, the research explores how such electoral reforms could influence voter behaviour and the negotiation strategies employed by political parties in coalition formation. The findings aim to contribute to the ongoing discourse by offering nuanced insights into how simultaneous elections may reshape political negotiations, electoral inclusivity, and democratic stability in India.

## **26. Democratic Participation and Social Work Interventions Among the Scheduled Caste: A Critical Analysis of the 'One Nation, One Election' Proposal in India**

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### **Abstract**

This paper critically examines the implications of the ‘One Nation, One Election’ (ONOE) proposal on democratic participation among Scheduled Caste (SC) communities in India. While the proposed reform aims to streamline electoral Processes and reduce administrative costs, it raises critical concerns about its impact on federalism, political representation, and inclusive governance. SC communities, whose political engagement often relies on localised elections, issue-specific mobilisation, and sustained social work interventions, may face new barriers in a centralized electoral framework. Drawing on constitutional provisions and policy documents, this study explores how synchronized elections could alter the dynamics of SC representation and civic participation. The paper also highlights the evolving role of social work in supporting marginalized groups to navigate political processes and assert their rights in changing institutional contexts. By integrating legal, political, and social work perspectives, the research contributes to ongoing debates on electoral reform, participatory democracy, and social justice in contemporary India.

## 27. Families as Schools of Democracy: Reimagining Family Social Work for Democratic Deepening

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### **Abstract**

Democratic deepening extends beyond elections to encompass the cultivation of civic values, social justice, and participatory practices within everyday life. The family, as the first site of socialization, plays a crucial yet underexplored role in shaping these democratic attitudes and behaviours. This paper contends that family social work through its focus on conflict resolution, rights protection, positive parenting, and inclusive communication acts as a vital bridge between private family wellbeing and public democratic culture. Drawing on theoretical perspectives of social capital and ecological systems theory, this paper conceptually explores how strengthening family relationships can foster dialogue, trust, gender justice, and mutual respect all foundational to a vibrant democracy. By critically engaging with the current debate on One Nation, One Election (ONOE), the paper argues that macro-level electoral reforms must be balanced by investments in local civic culture and everyday democratic spaces such as families. Drawing on social capital and ecological systems theories, the paper develops an integrated model illustrating how family social work can counteract the risks of centralized electoral reforms like ONOE by strengthening local democratic capacity. It concludes by calling for policy measures and practice directions that recognize family social work as integral to India's democratic deepening, ensuring that grassroots civic vitality remains strong in the face of structural reforms.

**Keywords:** *family social work, democratic deepening, civic engagement, socialization, India, social capital, parenting, inclusion*

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