

One Nation One Election

What needs to be done?

- To conduct simultaneous elections in India, many amendments to the constitution of India are to be made
- Article 83 of the Constitution provides for the tenure of both Houses of the Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha)
- Article 83(2)11 provides for a term of five years for Lok Sabha, from the date of its first sitting unless dissolved earlier
- Article 172 (1) provides for five year tenure for State Legislative Assembly from the date of its first sitting.
- Article 85 (2)(b) of the Constitution of India provides the President with the power to dissolve Lok Sabha.
- Article 174 (2)(b) provision for dissolution of State Legislative Assemblies by the Governor of State is provided
- The Representation of People Act 1951, which covers various modalities of conducting elections in the country, also needs to be amended.

Challenges

- Political parties are divided on the issue of holding simultaneous elections
- It would involve arbitrary curtailment or extension of the tenure of a House — the legal propriety of which is questionable
- It would undermine federalism as well as representative democracy.
- The core problem is Parliamentary form of government in which government is accountable and can fall before it completes its term.
- Need of political consensus because it requires constitutional amendment.

Suggestions

- Law Commission of India recommended simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative.
- 79th report of the parliamentary standing committee on Law and Justice recommended two phase election schedule – one concurrent with Lok Sabha elections, the second in the mid-term of the Lok Sabha.
- Election Commission has also extended its in-principle support for the simultaneous elections.

Conclusion

- It would be a good change if it could be carried out with the proper execution of policies and rules, taking care of the rising need for good administrative staff and security.
- Proper consultations with experts and all stakeholders are a prerequisite before moving to such polls.

Why in news?

Prime Minister raised the pitch for “One Nation, One Election” and a single voter list for all polls

Pros of this move

- Money and administrative expense will be drastically cut as political parties spend a lot on elections campaigning
- Elections held at different places every few months and it hampers the developmental work.
- It will reduce wastage of time, energy and money
- Improve governance as government will have time for some constructive work
- The ruling parties will be able to focus on legislation and reforms rather than having to be in campaign mode forever.
- Law Commission also predicts a large boost in the voter turnout if this idea were to come about.
- Improve education and learning as large numbers of teachers are involved in the electoral process which causes harm to the education sector.

Cons of this move

- Large national parties would reap the economies of scale of one large election every five years, to the disadvantage of regional parties.
- Issues at the centre and the state level are lot different from each other. Hence, calls for a unique modus operando at both levels
- Judgment of the voters is likely to get affected due to simultaneous election because of the fundamental difference between national and state issues
- Loop of elections held political parties more accountable and pressurise them to actively work and contribute for the welfare of the people.
- To conduct simultaneous election, President's rule need to be imposed in some state, which goes against the ideals of democracy and federalism.