



One Nation One Election 'The Constitution 129th Amendment Bill 2024'

For Prelims: Key Features of the Constitution 129th Amendment Bill 2024, [Constitution Amendment Bills](#), [Lok Sabha](#), [President](#), [Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019](#)

For Mains: Key Features of the Bill, Implications of Simultaneous Elections in India

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Why in News?

Recently, the government initiated steps towards implementing "One Nation, One Election" by introducing two [Constitution Amendment Bills](#) namely **One Nation One Election-'The Constitution 129th Amendment Bill 2024'** and the '**The Union Territories Laws Amendment Bill 2024**' in [Lok Sabha](#).

- Simultaneous elections in India, where both Lok Sabha and state assembly elections were held together, took place from 1951 to 1967.

What are the Key Features of the Bills?

- **One Nation, One Election 'The Constitution 129th Amendment Bill 2024':** The bill proposes **adding Article 82A(1-6) to the Constitution** to align the terms of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, as recommended by the [committee headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind](#).
 - **Article 82 (1-6):**
 - **82A (1)** provides for the **timeline** for the [President](#) to bring into force the proposed changes on the **date of the first sitting** of the Lok Sabha after a general election, designating this as the "**appointed date**."
 - **82(2)** states that the **terms** of all **state Assemblies elected** after the appointed date and before the Lok Sabha's full term ends **will conclude** with the Lok Sabha's term.
 - **Article 82A(3)** states that the [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#) shall conduct general elections to the House of the People and all Legislative Assemblies **simultaneously**.
 - **Article 82 A(4)** defines **simultaneous elections** as "**general elections** held for constituting the House of the People and all the Legislative Assemblies together".
 - **Article 82A(5)** gives the **ECI the option of not holding** any particular Assembly election along with the election to Lok Sabha.
 - The **ECI can advise the President** to issue an order allowing **elections for a Legislative Assembly to be held at a later date**.
 - **Article 82A(6)** states that if an **Assembly election is deferred**, the **full term** of that Assembly **will also end** with the full term of the Lok Sabha elected in the

general election.

- **Amendment to Article 83 and 172:**
 - The bill states that if the **Lok Sabha** is dissolved before the end of its full term, the **next Lok Sabha will only be for the unexpired term** — “the period between its date of dissolution and five years from the date of the first meeting”.
 - This means that **Bills pending in the House will expire**, as it happens even when the House has functioned for a full term.
 - For state assemblies, amendments proposed for Article 172, which governs the duration of state legislatures.
 - If a state assembly is **dissolved** before its term ends, **elections would be held for the remaining term of the previous assembly**.
- **Amendment to Article 372:**
 - The Bill proposes **amending Article 372** to include "**conduct of simultaneous elections**" after "**delimitation of constituencies**," expanding Parliament's power over state legislature elections.
 - The bill excluded the election of Local bodies and Municipalities.
- **The Union Territories Laws Amendment Bill 2024:**
 - The Bill aims to **amend Section 5** of the **Government of Union Territories Act 1962**, **Section 5** of the **Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act 1991**, and **Section 17** of the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019** to facilitate simultaneous elections with the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

What are the Constitutional Provisions Related to Elections in India?

- **Part XV (Article 324-329):** It deals with elections and establishes a commission for these matters.
- **Article 324:** Empowers the ECI to supervise, direct, and control the entire process of elections to the Parliament and State Legislatures.
- **Article 325:** Provides for the establishment of a single electoral roll for all elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- **Article 326:** Specifies that elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies shall be based on adult suffrage.
- **Articles 82 and 170:** Mandate the delimitation of constituencies after each census to ensure fair representation.
- **Article 172:** States that every Legislative Assembly shall have a term of five years unless dissolved earlier.

High-Level Committee Report on Simultaneous Elections

- **Formation and Purpose of the Committee:**
 - The **High-Level Committee**, chaired by former **President Ram Nath Kovind**, was formed by the central government in **September 2023**.
 - The committee was tasked with examining the feasibility of conducting **simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha**, state assemblies, and local bodies.
- **Rationale for Simultaneous Elections:**
 - The committee noted that **frequent elections create uncertainty**, while simultaneous elections would ensure stable governance and reduce disruptions.
 - Additionally, holding elections simultaneously is **expected to lower costs** and **increase voter participation**.
- **Electoral Roll Management:**
 - To streamline the electoral process, the committee suggested adopting a single electoral roll prepared by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** in consultation with **State Election Commissions (SECs)**.
 - This would minimize duplication and improve efficiency across multiple agencies involved in election management.
- **Logistical Considerations:**
 - The committee emphasized that both the ECI and SECs must undertake detailed planning and estimation for logistical arrangements to ensure smooth execution during simultaneous elections.

What are the Challenges Associated with Implementing Simultaneous Elections?

- **Infrastructure Development:** Ensuring that the **technological infrastructure is robust** enough to handle the complexities of simultaneous elections is critical.
 - This includes the effective deployment and management of **Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)** and **Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs)**.
 - In the **2024 general elections**, approximately **1.7 million Control Units** and **1.8 million VVPAT systems were deployed** across 1.05 million polling stations nationwide.
- **Legal Challenges:** Any **amendments and the process of implementing** simultaneous elections may face **legal challenges** and require judicial scrutiny to ensure compliance with constitutional provisions.
- **Regional Disparities:** Some political parties express **concerns that simultaneous elections may marginalise** regional voices and issues during national campaigns.
 - Ensuring that local issues are not overshadowed by national narratives is crucial for maintaining diverse representation.
- **Administrative Challenges:** Organizing simultaneous elections across states poses significant logistical challenges, including **managing electoral rolls and ensuring security**.
 - A comprehensive voter **education campaign** will be necessary to inform citizens about the new electoral process and its implications.

What Strategies can be Employed to Facilitate the Transition to Simultaneous Elections?

- **Legal Clarity:** Establish **clear instructions** for conducting simultaneous elections, detailing the **schedules and procedures for voter registration**.
 - Ensure that **necessary constitutional amendments** are made to facilitate the synchronization of elections **across all levels of government**.
- **Strengthening Electoral Infrastructure:** Develop a **unified electoral roll system** that serves all three tiers of government—Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, and local bodies—to reduce duplication and errors, as **recommended by the Kovind Committee**.
 - **Utilize technology** for efficient management of electoral processes, including voter verification and results tabulation.
 - **Election Commission's Recommendations (2016)** suggested changes to enhance the efficiency of the electoral process, including the use of technology for voter registration and electronic voting machines.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Initiate nationwide campaigns to inform voters about the **advantages of simultaneous elections** and its impact on their voting experience.
 - **Engage NGOs and community organizations** to disseminate information and gather public feedback on the proposed changes.
- **Capacity Building:** **Conduct training sessions for election officials** on new technologies and processes associated with simultaneous elections to ensure smooth implementation.

Drishti Mains Question

Critically analyze the implications of implementing 'One Nation, One Election' in India. Also mention the challenges related to regional representation and administrative efficiency.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in the light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct. **(2022)**

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