

EVA STALIN IAS ACADEMY – BEST IAS COACHING IN CHENNAI

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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS → 23 JULY 2022 → THE HINDU:

SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS:

• History of Simultaneous Elections:

- At least since 1983, when the Election Commission originally put out the concept. On the other hand, concurrent elections persisted as the rule in India until 1967.
- The first national elections for the House of People (Lok Sabha) and the State Legislative Assemblies took place in 1951–1952.
- This pattern was replicated in the three general elections that followed, in 1957, 1962, and 1967.
- In 1968 and 1969, a number of legislative assemblies were prematurely dissolved, breaking the pattern.
- The Lok Sabha was prematurely dissolved in 1970, and fresh elections were held the following year. The First, Second, and Third Lok Sabhas consequently had respective terms of five years.
- Separate elections for the Lok Sabha and many State Legislative Assemblies have been held, breaking the cycle of simultaneous elections as a result of early dissolutions and extensions of terms in both the Lok Sabha and various State Legislative Assemblies.

• Advantages of Simultaneous Elections:

- The nation conducts at least one election per year, with each state holding its own, according to a report by the NITI Aayog. In that document, NITI Aayog made note of the numerous direct and indirect effects of holding multiple elections.
- **Financial expenditures** associated with elections are incalculable; for a state the size of Bihar, direct costs are estimated to be over Rs 300 crore. However, there are additional monetary expenses in addition to unquantifiable economic effects.

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- Every election, election duty and related activities prevent government apparatus from performing its usual duties.
- The election budget excludes these millions of man-hours in costs.
- **Policy impasse:** The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) has an effect on government officials because no new significant policy can be announced and put into effect after the elections are called.
- **Costs Associated With Constantly Deploying and Moving Security Officers:** The constant deployment and transfer of security professionals comes at a significant and evident expense.
- The cost to the government of diverting these soldiers from critical areas, as well as the weariness and sicknesses that come with frequent cross-country deployments, is bigger and hidden.

• **Cons of Simultaneous Elections:**

- In order to align election dates with the national deadline, simultaneous elections would require arbitrarily shortening or lengthening the current legislators' terms of office.
- A decision like this would jeopardise both democracy and federalism.
- **Simultaneous Elections are Against the Spirit of Democracy:** Because it creates an unnatural election cycle and restricts voter choice, some people think that forcing simultaneous elections is against the spirit of democracy.
- **Regional Parties at a Disadvantage:** In simultaneous elections, inhabitants of a region are more inclined to vote for the leading party in the centre, putting regional parties at a disadvantage.
- **Reduced Accountability:** Politicians are held more accountable and on their toes when they must campaign for voters more frequently than once every five years.

• **Conclusion:**

- Amendments to the constitution and other laws would almost certainly be necessary if there were simultaneous elections.
- But care must be taken to avoid undermining the fundamental principles of democracy and federalism.
- The Law Commission has suggested a solution in this regard, namely classifying states according to how far away the subsequent general election is, holding the State Assembly elections simultaneously

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with the subsequent Lok Sabha election, and holding a second round for the remaining States 30 months later.

- However, there is no assurance that mid-term elections won't be necessary.

