

## Simultaneous Election

### Why in news?

The Centre has decided to form a committee to examine the issue of conducting the simultaneous elections.

### What is Simultaneous election?

- The “One Nation, One Election” idea envisages a system where elections to all state assemblies and the Lok Sabha will have to be held simultaneously.
- This will involve the **restructuring of the Indian election cycle** in a manner that elections to the states and the centre synchronise.
- This would mean that the voters will cast their **vote** for electing members of the LS and the state assemblies **on a single day**, at the same time or in a **phased manner** as the case may be.

### What is the current scenario?

- Currently, elections to the state assemblies and the Lok Sabha are held separately that is whenever the incumbent government’s five-year term ends or whenever it is dissolved due to various reasons.
- This applies to both the state legislatures and the Lok Sabha.
- The terms of Legislative Assemblies and the Lok Sabha may not synchronise with one another.

### What is the history behind?

- Simultaneous elections were the norm until 1967.
- But following dissolution of some Legislative Assemblies in 1968 and 1969 and that of the Lok Sabha in December 1970, elections to State Assemblies and Parliament have been held separately.
- The idea of reverting to simultaneous polls was mooted in the annual report of the **Election Commission in 1983** and also in the report of **Law Commission** in the year **1999**.
- The recent push came ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha polls in the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) manifesto.
- NITI Aayog prepared a working paper on the subject in January 2017.
- In the Law Commission’s working paper that was brought out in April 2018, it said that at least “five Constitutional recommendations” would be required

to get this off the ground.

### What are the pros?

- It will reduce enormous **costs** involved in separate elections.
- It will reduce the burden on the **manpower** deployed.
- The system will help ruling parties **focus on governance**, instead of being constantly in election mode.
- It reduces the distractions from long-term planning and policy goals.
- It will boost **voter turnout**, according to the Law Commission.

### What are the cons?

- Holding simultaneous elections is likely to affect the judgment of voters as the national and state issues are different.
- It will **reduce the accountability** of the government to the people as the elections will be held once in five years.
- But repeated elections keep legislators on their toes and increases accountability.
- It may **curtail or extend the tenure** of State legislatures to bring their elections in line with the Lok Sabha poll dates.
- There is a serious question of what happens if the government at the Centre falls.
- There will be a blow to democracy and federalism when **President's rule** will have to be imposed in the interim period in a state. This may be due to the postponement of election in a State until the synchronised phase arrives.
- It will, in all probability, benefit the dominant national party or the incumbent at the Centre while **disadvantaging the smaller regional party** and issue.
- In a parliamentary democracy, the legitimacy of executive is responsible to the legislature would be undermined by taking away the legislature's power to bring down a minority regime by mandating a fixed tenure.

**Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express.**