

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q1

Examine the need for electoral reforms as suggested by various committees, with particular reference to "one nation - one election" principle.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · GS II · 10 marks · Indian Constitution

Indian Constitution - historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Core demand of the question

- State why committees have asked for electoral reform
- **Name the main heads:** money, crime, inner-party democracy, Model Code and technology
- Examine "one nation, one election" as one proposal, not the whole reform
- Give federal and democratic costs as well as the claimed gains

Revision summary

Tarkunde, Goswami, **Law Commission** 170/255 and the **Election Commission** have long asked for ceilings on party spend, faster petitions, and inner-party democracy.

Candidate spend is capped; party spend is not, which is why money still dominates the poll.

ADR disclosure and Lily Thomas reduced opacity and the conviction cushion; they did not end criminalisation.

ONOE, as framed by the Kovind committee, promises one Model Code freeze, lower cost and less policy freeze.

- **Federal cost:** truncated Assemblies, President's Rule risk, and nationalisation of State polls.

Simultaneity is not a substitute for audited party finance and a statutory Code.

Reform that works is a package, not a single polling date.

Introduction

Indian elections are legal, large and still expensive. From the **Tarkunde** and **Dinesh Goswami** exercises through the **Law Commission** and the **Election Commission's** own notes, the unfinished list has been money, muscle, inner-party democracy and a Code that can postpone a transfer but cannot unseat a candidate. **One nation, one election** is one item on that list. It is not a substitute for the rest.

Body**Why reform is still asked**

Committees have not been asking for a new polling date. They have been asking for a cleaner poll.

- **Peg:** Section 77 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, caps what a **candidate** may spend; it does not capture what a **party** spends on the same campaign.
- **Peg:** Criminalisation continues even after **Association for Democratic Reforms** forced disclosure of assets and pending cases, and even after **Lily Thomas v. Union of India** struck down the three-month cushion for convicted sitting members.
- **Peg:** Paid news, dummy candidates, and parties that never hold inner elections were already flagged in the **Law Commission's 170th Report**; the Model Code cannot, by itself, unseat anyone.
- **Peg:** Voter ID, EVM-VVPAT and the EPIC roll improved the count; they still do not tell the voter who funded the campaign.

One nation, one election

Simultaneous polls are a calendar design with real fiscal appeal and a real federal cost.

- **Peg:** The **Kovind High-Level Committee** (2024) argued that Lok Sabha and Assembly elections on a shared clock would freeze the Model Code once instead of several times, and would use security and school buildings once.
- **Peg:** India is not a presidential republic with a single election day; in **S.R. Bommai v. Union of India** a State government's majority is tested on the floor, not dismissed by a remote calendar.
- **Peg:** If an Assembly collapses, forcing it onto the Union's clock means a truncated House or a spell of **President's Rule** - a constitutional invention, not mere housekeeping.
- **Peg:** A simultaneous poll can turn every Assembly contest into a referendum on Delhi; hung Houses and no-confidence votes would still need a mechanical fix the Constitution does not presently give.

Package, not a date

Committees that liked a common calendar still put criminality, money and inner-party democracy first.

- **Peg:** One nation, one election without audited **party accounts**, a statutory core of the Model Code, and faster election petitions is a change of date.
- **Peg:** If simultaneity is still wanted, it needs **State consent** rather than a Union whip on every Assembly's life.

Flow diagram

Committee agenda -> Money and crime
 Committee agenda -> Party democracy
 Committee agenda -> ONOE calendar
 ONOE calendar -> Federal cost
 Money and crime -> Cleaner vote
 Party democracy -> Cleaner vote

Conclusion

- **Electoral reform is a cluster:** money, crime, parties and the Code. One nation, one election may cut cost and Model Code fatigue. It cannot, by itself, clean politics, and it must not flatten the federal clock.

Facts & figures

Law Commission of India (170th Report)

Recommended simultaneous elections as one item among criminalisation, false affidavits and party regulation.

Law Commission of India (255th Report)

Returned to electoral reform, including criminalisation and the need to regulate party finance and inner-party democracy.

Kovind High-Level Committee, 2024

Proposed a common electoral calendar for Lok Sabha and Assemblies, with a constitutional mechanism if a House falls mid-term.

Section 77, Representation of the People Act, 1951

Caps a candidate's election spend; party expenditure sits largely outside that ceiling.

Lily Thomas v. Union of India

Struck down the provision that let sitting legislators keep their seats for three months after conviction.

S.R. Bommai v. Union of India

Floor test, not a remote calendar, decides whether a State government has lost majority.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2024/examine-the-need-for-electoral-reforms-as-suggested-by-various-committees-with-particular-reference-to-one-nation-one-election-principle/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com