


POLITICAL TODAY

Empowering Minds for a Better Future

An Academic Endeavour by the Students of
Department of Political Science 2024-2025



Edition: June' 24



"Young people must take it upon themselves to ensure that they receive the highest education possible so that they can represent us well in the future as future leaders."

-Nelson Mandela





Mentor



Prof. Rachana Srivastava,
Principal
Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya
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Patron



Head
Dr Ashish Sonker

Asst Prof
Dr Anu Singh

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Dr Saroj Upadhyay






Acknowledgement

As we present the first edition of "Political Today" we, the students of Dept of Political Science, would like to express our sincerest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to creating this comprehensive issue. We start by thanking Prof. Rachana Srivastava, Principal, V.K.M.P.G College, Dr. Ashish Kumar Sonkar, Head of the Political Science Department, and the faculty Dr Anu Singh, Dr Saroj Upadhyaya, Dr Gautam Bharti and Ms Praveera Sinha for helping us make this project possible.

Our ambitious project is the first step towards exploring Political Science beyond our classrooms. And we are deeply grateful to all the students who have provided thought-provoking ideas, articles and essays. We look forward to more creative endeavours as a team.

It has only been through their support and proactive participation that Political Today has come into existence.



Preface

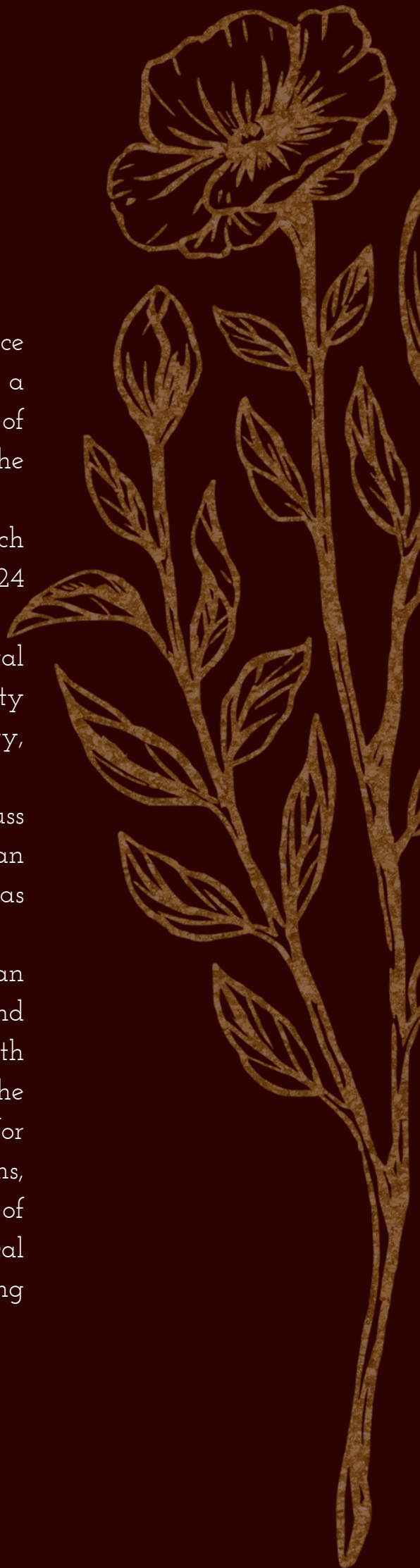
The students of the department of political science are pleased to present - "Political Today" which is a bi-annual magazine that will try to cover issues of national and international importance in the political arena.

The first edition of June 2024, shall cover a much debated issue of national importance- The 2024 General Elections.

In the light of the ongoing Lok Sabha General Elections- we have decided to discuss the feasibility of one nation one election, it's history, practicality, relevance and possibility.

Through this publication we have tried to discuss the problems of election, and have also made an attempt to bring the voice of students to light as well.

We begin with an overview of the Indian electoral system, tracing its evolution and highlighting the complexities that come with managing the largest democracy in the world. The subsequent articles delve into the arguments for and against some proposed electoral reforms, poetries to throw light on the dire condition of electoral processes in India, and a statistical analysis of the governmental Manifestos, leading to the conclusion and our message to the readers.



A Message from the Principal's Desk



It is with great pride and pleasure that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Department of Political Science on the publication of this special edition of 'Political Today'. This Edition, which focuses on the multifaceted aspects of India's political processes leading up to the 2024 General Election, could not be more timely or relevant.

As we stand at the threshold of a crucial electoral period, it is imperative for each of us to deepen our understanding of the democratic processes that shape our nation. Elections are the cornerstone of any democracy, and their effective functioning is essential for the representation and realization of the people's will. This edition of Political Today provides an invaluable platform for exploring these dynamics in detail, encouraging critical thought and informed participation.

I am particularly pleased to see the focus on youth participation in the political process. As the torchbearers of tomorrow, it is essential for our young minds to be actively engaged and informed about the electoral system and its significance.

I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the Teachers of the Department, Editorial Team, Contributors, and all those who have worked tirelessly to bring this publication to life. Your hard work and commitment, both are truly reflected in the quality and depth of this magazine.

To our readers, I encourage you to immerse yourselves in this edition of Political Today. May it serve as a source of knowledge, inspiration, and a catalyst for active participation in the democratic process.

Best wishes,
Prof Rachna Srivastava
Principal
Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya

Department of Political Science



Dr. Ashish Kumar Sonkar
Head of the Department
Department of Political Science



Dr. Anu Singh



Dr. Saroj Upadhyay



Dr. Gautam Bharati



Ms Praveera Sinha



A Note From the Editor-in-Chief

-Aadya Tiwary

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you to the latest edition of Political Today, the bi-annual magazine of the Department of "Political Science". I am honoured to introduce our first issue, dedicated to a theme of profound significance in contemporary Indian politics: The 2024 General Elections.

The concept of and reforms associated with Election have been discussed previously through debates, discussions and seminars hosted by the Department of Political Science. Its feature in our bi-annual magazine is an extension and conclusion to all the brainstorming that went into this theme and the impact that it left on the students.

As the largest functioning democracy, the Indian electoral processes don't just possess the potential to transform the domestic political landscapes, but leave a significant impact on contemporary world affairs. Hence, it is both timely and pertinent for us, as political science enthusiasts, to delve into its various dimensions.

In this edition, we explore the multifaceted aspects of this theme through insightful and critical writings by the teachers and students of the Political Science Dept. Our contributors have worked diligently to present a balanced perspective, examining the historical context, the potential benefits, and the challenges associated with implementing sweeping electoral reforms and evolving with time. And I extend my deepest gratitude to them. The politics of a nation significantly impacts the very fabric of its socio-economic structure and it is imperative that we, as future leaders and informed citizens, engage with such topics thoughtfully and rigorously. The team behind "Political Today" aims not only to inform but also to inspire critical thinking and constructive debate among our readers.



Through this bi-annual magazine, we aspire to cover issues of both National and International importance.

As we move forth on this endeavour to create political literacy the words of Dr B.R Ambedkar must resonate deep within our hearts-

"The progress of any society depends on the progress of the individual and the progress of the individual is dependent on political participation."

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our editorial team, writers, and all contributors for their hard work and dedication in bringing this edition to life. Your passion and commitment to the field of political science are truly commendable.

I hope you find this issue of Political Today both enlightening and engaging. May it serve as a catalyst for informed discussions and a deeper appreciation of the complexities of our political system.

Warm regards,

Aadya Tiwary

Editor-in-Chief

Political Today, Dept of Political Science

M.A Final (2024-25).

Editor's Note



The 2024 elections are not just another electoral cycle; they represent a critical juncture in our democratic journey. As our nation finds itself at a crossroads, with the choices we make poised to shape the course of our future in profound ways. This edition of our magazine delves into the multifaceted dynamics of this pivotal election, aiming to provide our readers with a comprehensive understanding of the stakes, the players, and the issues at hand.

We aim to go beyond the headlines, offering in-depth features that highlight the human stories behind the statistics and political rhetoric.

Working as an editor for Political Today Magazine 2024 was a dynamic and challenging experience. I oversaw a team dedicated to delivering accurate, balanced, and engaging political content. Our focus was on timely coverage, rigorous fact-checking, and presenting diverse viewpoints. We prioritized audience engagement through clear writing and compelling visuals. Navigating the fast-paced, often unpredictable political landscape taught me resilience, enhanced my editorial expertise.

It was a rewarding role that significantly contributed to my professional growth.

As you navigate through this edition, we hope to inspire informed dialogue and thoughtful reflection. Your vote is your voice, and in 2024, every voice matters more than ever. Join us as we embark on this crucial journey together.

Sincerely,

Aarohi Sharma

Editor, Political Today

(M.A Final 2024-25)



Editor's Note



This special issue of Political Today is dedicated to the 2024 Indian General Election, a crucial event for the world's largest democracy. Here, we take an in-depth look at the key contenders vying for power, their campaign strategies, and the issues that are likely to shape the electoral landscape. Our team has made sure to be unbiased and present you with the facts that could help you make informed decisions.

This special edition of Political Today is our way of putting forward what is going on in the country and what the citizens desire the most from the government. We have tried our best to cover the Satisfactions and the dissatisfactions of the people and have presented it to extend the view of a voter as well as of the government.

We hope this brings the awareness we want to strive for.

Sincerely

Saloni
Editor, Political Today
M.A Final (2024-25)



Digital Editors and Designing Team

Arranging ideas on pages and washing them with colours and illustrations is a task both daunting and exciting. Jaishree Singh, a proud student of the Department of Political Science has attempted to bring an artistic flair to the rich thought streams of political science. She attempts to encapture the essence of those ideas and trap them on paper in a way that they breathe and pulse. The design aims to breathe life into the ideas the students have woven into their words. Cool and warm tones dance in harmony in her designs.

-Jaishree Singh
M.A Final (2024-25)



Getting a chance to design the magazine of the Department of Political Science is an opportunity that gives me immense pleasure and satisfaction. I, Menaka Khomdram, am a student of the Department of Political Science who tried to enliven the letters and words contained in the magazine while trying to make it more eye-catching in an attempt to capture the attention of the readers. As you flip through the next pages of the magazine, you will read a variety of articles highlighting the various burning political issues of the present times. I hope you take the time to read what the contents of the magazine have to offer. There is so much to read, so much to ponder, and a necessity to know much more as we all are still learning.

-Menaka Khomdram
M.A Final (2024-25)



Our bi-annual magazine covering the 2024 General Elections, gives an elaborate analysis of the pros and cons of the concept reflecting the current political scenario of India. Through insightful analysis and impassioned advocacy, we strive to empower our readers to shape a brighter tomorrow. Join us in the pursuit of knowledge, empathy, and positive change.

-Nivedita Mishra
Student Representative
B.A III Political Science (Hons)
(2024-25)

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Theme Of The June '24 Issue - An Introduction

The Government of India recently constituted a high-level committee headed by the former President of India Ram Nath Kovind to examine the issue of simultaneous elections. This announcement triggered a wide debate in the national discourse. While supporters of this idea list out several benefits arguing its case. On the other hand, critics argue That simultaneous elections may impair the federal structure of India. One Nation one Election—from Concept to Reality.

The supporters point out that simultaneous elections will rid India of being in an election mode permanently. This will give Governments and political parties the much-needed space to prioritize structural measures. Simultaneous elections are seen as a fundamental reform to transform the quality of governance. This will also. Lead to significant savings in public expenditure on recurring elections, reduced deployment of security forces and government officials and reduced disruption to development projects due to frequent imposition of the Model Code of Conduct. The disadvantages cited are that simultaneous elections can influence voter behaviour in a manner that voters may vote on national issues even for state assemblies or urban/panchayat elections. Benefiting large national parties and marginalizing regional parties. The dominant focus in this debate for and against One Nation, One Election revolves around the what and why or why not of simultaneous elections. Another important question is about the how of simultaneous elections. If a decision to implement simultaneous elections is taken, then how will the implementation happen? Will that be sustainable in the long run? There are other questions too, like will ONOE be a threat to the federal system? Will it have an impact on the power dynamics between the centre and the state?

Will it curtail the power of state assemblies and chief ministers? What is the solution to the mid-term dissolution of government? How it will impact voting behaviour? And what will be the fate of the regional parties? All these questions and many more should be raised and found answers to. For this, a national-level seminar is proposed by VKM. This debate has several aspects besides the political one- economic, legal, regional parties and their narratives etc.

The ONOE debate is one of the many controversial topics that have gained public attention in the light of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, and the students of the Political Science department have done a phenomenal job in expressing their views on the same.

I warmly welcome this initiative by the students of MA Final (2024-25) and give them my blessings for the same.

Best of Luck!

Ashish Kumar Sonker

HOD, Dept of Political Science

Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya

One Nation One Election: Concept, Challenges and Way Forward

-Akansha Singh

The idea of **One Nation One Election (ONOE)** refers to a proposal of simultaneously holding the General election (Lok Sabha election) and various State elections within a specified period, in the Indian electoral system. The first few elections in Independent India were held likewise, until the dissolution of certain State governments in the 1960s. Ever since, there have been recurrent demands for the actual implementation of this proposal. Very recently, a high-level committee under former President Ram Nath Kovind has sought to actualize this idea and transform the electoral system. The Union government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a strong advocate of ONOE.

There are varieties and combinations of the system of ONOE that are held in various countries. For example, the elections to the national as well as provincial assemblies are held simultaneously while local or municipal elections are scheduled for a later date. Elections in India are sought to be held on similar lines, within specific intervals and periods. However, given the demographic structure of India and the nature of the electoral process itself, implementing ONOE is a humungous task, with various legal, constitutional, and miscellaneous problems.

CHALLENGES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF “ONOE”

Premature dissolution of State governments: One of the major and foremost challenges to implementing ONOE is that the state governments that would

have been newly elected or those which would have completed half of their tenure (of five years), from the date of implementation of ONOE, would have to be dissolved. It would be a severe blow to the state's autonomy and the electorates' democratic choices.

Also, it would lead to the suspension or disruption of any governmental policy undertaken by that State. Therefore, it is detrimental to the federal nature of the Indian government.

Logistical challenges: Managing the task of conducting the largest democratic exercise in the world is quite arduous and challenging. Since India is a large country with the highest population, managing the electorate, the voting machines, the deployment of security personnel, and other resources would be very difficult. Our past experiences have shown that voter turnout has been low in India due to factors like illiteracy and urban apathy. Even in the ongoing General elections, it has been difficult to obtain an overall voter turnout of more than 50% in several States. In such a scenario, it would be difficult to implement ONOE.

Overlooking regional and local interests: The highly linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity of India is what makes it a vibrant and thriving democracy. Simultaneous elections will undermine the frequency of voting duty that keeps the electoral system alive. Moreover, the issues of the centre and the states or regions may highly vary. That is why it becomes necessary to have state elections so that regional issues and demands are heard and met.

Further, it is a huge loss for regional parties if ONOE is implemented because there are high chances that it would lead to one party's dominance or the victory of the same party, both at the centre and the states, thereby reducing the choices of the voters and their ability to experiment with different governments.

Constitutional amendments: For realising the goal of simultaneous elections, various constitutional amendments are needed, such as amending Article 83 relating to the duration of Houses of Parliament, Article 85 relating to the dissolution of Lok Sabha by the President, Article 172 relating to the duration of the state legislatures, Article 174 relating to dissolution of the state legislatures, and Article 356 relating to the imposition of President's Rule in states.

The Way Forward

The idea of one nation one election looks very promising due to several factors and reasons given by its supporters. The advocates of ONOE say that one of the foremost reasons why it should be implemented is that it saves a lot of time and resources and further leads to better and stable governance. They argue that it would lead to reduced costs of elections and security personnel because in India huge amounts of money are spent on elections and every time one or some other State is involved in the process of election leading to frequent disruptions. Also, there is high ambiguity in electoral rolls, so implementing ONOE would mean that the same list can be used at every election which will significantly reduce the time and cost of updating the electoral rolls. Thus, it would enable the parties and leaders to focus on real issues rather than on propaganda and campaigning. It is also believed that there would be continuity in major policy decisions

as there would be no disruptions and diversion from real issues due to frequent elections. Finally, simultaneous elections seek to simplify the gigantic Indian electoral process making it more efficient and organised. Hence there is strong insistence on "ONOE" and in recent times the necessity of its implementation has intensified.

However, the stakeholders need to understand that actualizing this proposal into reality is a task in itself, fraught with various challenges that have been discussed above. A study reveals that there won't be much difference in electoral expenditures if simultaneous elections are held as it would mean more resources and personnel for the smooth conduction of elections. Even the Election Commission and the NITI Aayog reveal conflicting figures about costs associated with simultaneous elections. The idea looks very encouraging and optimistic in the long run, but all issues and all people have to be taken into consideration before heading forward. For any reform in this direction, a major step must be to curb the influence of money and muscle power in Indian elections. There shall be strict limits to the usage of money in elections and defaulters should be punished accordingly. Further, constitutional amendments such as in the Representation of the People Act 1951 and Rules of Procedure of Lok Sabha and State Assemblies are required. Moreover, investment in electoral infrastructure and technology such as ensuring an adequate supply of **EVMs and VVPAT** machines, polling booths, and trained security personnel is needed, and finally creating awareness among voters about the advantages and challenges of simultaneous elections and voter education to enable them to exercise their vote without confusion or inconvenience is the need of the hour.

**-Akansha Singh
M.A Final (2024-25)**

भैया, pure भ्रष्टाचारी है हम ।

—सिमरन कुमारी

BA Political Science Hons (2024-25)

भैया, pure भ्रष्टाचारी है हम ।
भगवान हमे तभी याद आते है, जब मन्त्रत मांगनी होती है।
रोज पूजा तो filmstars की ही करते है हम।
चढ़ावा मंदिरो मे कम, नेताओ और अफ़सर को ही चढ़ाते है हम ।

दहेज देना पाप है, upsc के exam मे लिख कर अधिकारी बन जाते, पर जब लेने की बारी आती है, तो
gift है बता कर इठलाते है हम।
भैया, pure भ्रष्टाचारी है हम॥
नवरात्रि के नौ दिन कन्या पूजन करते है जहाँ, वही दसवे दिन news, आखबर बलात्कार की खबरो से
भरी पाते है हम।
व्यक्ति पूजा बड़ी शान से करते है, पर राष्ट्र पूजा को क्यू, सांप्रदायिक बताते है , हम।

जंतर मंतर पर दामिनी और निर्भया को नयाय , दिलाने के लीय आंदोलन करते है, पर बहन बेटियों को
कराटे की शिक्षा देने के बारे मे क्यू नही सोच पाते है हम।
लाल किले से महिला सशक्तिकरण की बात बड़ी आसानी से कर जाते है , और उसी दिन बिल्किस् बानो
की अपराधियों को रिहा कर उसे मिठाई खिला जशन भी मानते है हम।
भैया pure भ्रष्टाचारी, है हम ॥

आतंकवादियो की मानवाधिकार की चिंता रहती है हमे ,
सैनिको के भी होते है मानवाधिकार , ये अक्सर भूल जाते है हम।
भैया, शादी तो दूसरे धर्म वालो से कर सकते है, पर वन्दे मातरम् बोलने वक़्त धर्म की आड़ मे छिप जाते है
हम॥

खुद को देशभक्त कहने मे शरमाते है, पर खुद को secular है बता कर घमंड से फूल भी जाते है हम।
Whatsapp और facebook पर बड़ी बड़ी बाते करते है, पर जब करने की आती है बरी तो भीड़ मे कही
गुम हो जाते है हम।
भैया pure भ्रष्टाचारी है हम॥

योग को सांप्रदायिक बताते, पर भोग को secular ही पाते हम।
लड़ते रहते है, मंदिर मस्जिद के नाम पर, मजदूरी की चादर ओढ़ सो जाता है, हमारा भारत।
Status और पैसों को पाते है ईमान, पर भारी हम,
तभी तो ऐसे वैसे नही।
भैया, pure भ्रष्टाचारी है हम॥

The Pros and Cons of Simultaneous Elections : A Comparative Study

-Jaishree Singh (MA Political Science)
Menaka Khomdram (MA Political Science)

*"Somewhere inside all of us is the power
to change the world"*

-Roald Dahl

ELECTIONS, the act of choosing people's representatives who will hold the power to determine a nation's future, is the giant foundation on which democracy stands, without which democracy itself will lose its existence. So what if this very foundation got cracked? What impact will it have on democracy and the people? Democracy by then will collapse completely due to the crack in its foundation.

In a country with a population as diverse as India, elections to the houses of parliament and state assemblies are an eventful affair that involves detailed dispersal of duties and enormous funding. While acknowledging its importance, we should also realize the difficulties associated with it as it is a tedious task that involves the distribution of resources, disposition of security and civil staff, and disturbance in administrative functions. For the last 30 years, there has not been a single year when elections are not conducted in India which worsens the situation. To address these issues various chief election commissioners of the National Election Commission have recommended going back to the simultaneous elections before 1967. "One Nation One Election" is a proposal under consideration by the Government of India in this regard. A high committee has been formed under the leadership of former President Shri Ram Nath Kovind to review its implementation.

This paper will explore the advantages that inspired the proposal while analysing the challenges that might arise in its execution, followed by some suggestions that could facilitate its ease of implementation.

SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

Occupation of offices of President, Vice President, Upper House, Lower House and State Assemblies is determined through elections that occur on a set interval or tenure of 5 years. After independence in 1947 elections to Legislative Assemblies and State Assemblies were conducted simultaneously which continued till 1967 after which several state assemblies faced dissolution breaking the chain of simultaneous elections. The proposal of simultaneous elections thus implies that elections on all three tiers of government, the centre, state and local will occur on the same day so that resources and time are utilised sustainably.

PURPOSE OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTION

The proposal of simultaneous elections aimed at resolving the following issues rampant in India due to the current electoral system.

1. Model code of conduct and its impact on governance: While the model code of conduct is in operation, programmes and welfare policies will have to be put on hold disturbing the governance of the country. Simultaneous elections will reduce the disturbances.

Unnecessary expenditure: For conducting elections the government have to spend a huge amount of money. According to the ECI Pocketbook(2015-2016), the government spent Rs.1115 crores in the 2009 Lok Sabha election.

3. Security issues: Elections demand a lot of armed forces for smooth and secure elections which could have been deployed for other security purposes.

4. Public Life: It disrupts public life by hampering daily activities, blocking roads, increasing traffic etc. Simultaneous elections will improve this situation to a great extent.

5. Reduce polarization of social issues: Parties keep polarizing different social groups during elections to gain voters. Frequent elections keep these issues at the forefront hence it can be reduced through simultaneous elections.

DISADVANTAGES OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

1. Regional parties: In simultaneous elections, it will be difficult for regional parties to compete with the national parties in terms of budget and campaign, they will suffer because of this.

2. Lack of accountability: Frequent elections keep the parties alert to fare well in the next elections. But with simultaneous elections once 5 years, parties might act irresponsibly towards people.

3. Impact on voting behaviour: According to Praveen Chakravarty's analysis, 77% of Indian voters voted for the same party at both centre and state elections if elections are happening within six months or less. This will only worsen if elections are happening on the same day.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the One Nation One Election proposal is a mammoth task with several challenges and roadblocks on the way.

1. Constitutional amendments: Constitutional amendments needed to be made to make the implementation of ONOE extremely complex. Several articles of the constitution need to be amended to adopt the proposal.

2. Consensus among political parties: To make such a fundamental change in the electoral system, attaining consensus among political parties will be required which in itself is a very tedious task.

3. Hung assemblies and No- confidence motion: If no party is able to prove its majority or in case of No- confidence motion, elections have to be conducted again which would not be possible in case of simultaneous elections.

4. Lack of awareness: If people are not aware and do not exercise their voting rights wisely, it will lead to their manipulation by politicians for their benefit.

5. Financial challenges: The Election Commission needs to increase the resources at its disposal for conducting elections. These include the Electronic Voting machines balloting units, surveillance cameras etc. Financial resource allocation is an important challenge in the implementation process.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Following suggestions can be adopted for smooth functioning of the proposal.

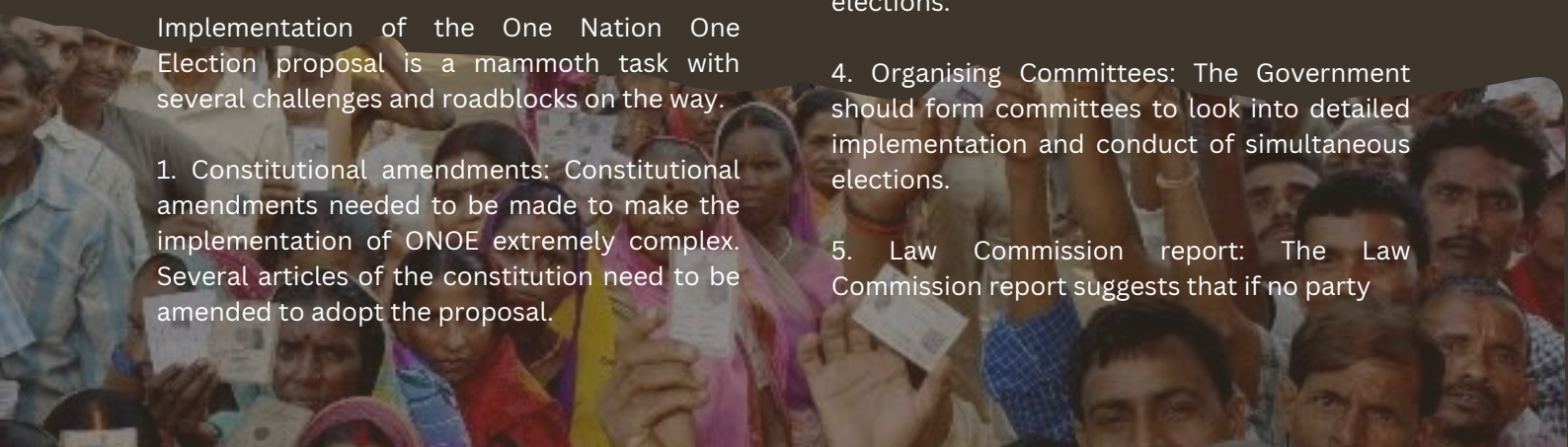
1. Debates and discussions: The ECI and the governments should initiate rounds of debates and discussions regarding its implementation. A discussion platform would help ECI to take issues into consideration and work out a negotiation.

2. Phased transition: Instead of a direct transition that would prove chaotic and confusing for the voters the transition should happen in phases.

3. Awareness programmes: Conducting awareness programmes would prove beneficial for the smooth conduct of simultaneous elections.

4. Organising Committees: The Government should form committees to look into detailed implementation and conduct of simultaneous elections.

5. Law Commission report: The Law Commission report suggests that if no party



can secure the majority, then all party meetings should reach a solution. If this fails too it proposed mid-term elections but only for the remaining duration of the term. In place of a confidence motion, it proposed a “constructive non-confidence vote” which entails that a no-confidence motion against a government will be passed only if there is faith in an alternative government.

Conclusion

The current electoral system in India is rampant with issues of corruption. The frequent elections keep the security and civil staff from performing their duties and keep them involved in the task of elections. Model Code of Conduct acts as a barrier to developmental projects. Frequent elections result in huge expenditure by the government. To address these issues various authorities including the Election Commission of India, NITI Aayog, and the Law Commission recommended transitioning to a “One Nation One Election” system.

We should also consider the fact that simultaneous elections could lead to issues of lack of accountability, adverse impact on voting behaviour, the dominance of national parties on regional parties and so on. Hence careful considerations need to be made to develop a framework that would address these issues while sticking to the issues of democracy.



-Jaishree Singh &
Menaka Khomdram
MA Final (2024-25)

One Nation One Election- The Future of Indian Federalism

-Pravarshi Singh

"India that is Bharat, Shall be a Union of States"

This meticulously debated line, enshrined in Article 1 of the Indian Constitution, encapsulates the foundational essence of Indian federalism. Since its inception, this line has been subject to extensive debate and scrutiny, embodying the delicate balance between unity and diversity within the Indian polity. Crafted with precision by the framers of the Constitution, including "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar", this line reflects a profound commitment to fostering a cohesive yet pluralistic nation. Its inclusion marks a deliberate departure from the term "Federation" to emphasize the indivisible unity among diverse states while acknowledging their distinct identities and autonomy.

In essence, this line embodies the spirit of Indian federalism, reaffirming the unity of the nation while respecting the diversity of its constituent states. This article explores how the One Nation One Election proposal could affect Indian federalism. ONOE suggests holding all national and state elections simultaneously to streamline governance and cut costs. Through this article, we will try to find the potential effects on elections, party dynamics and federal principles.

Background

The 'One Nation, One Election' proposal, henceforth called ONOE, is an innovative idea that centers on conducting all elections, ranging from local to national levels, at the same time to achieve greater efficiency and reduce costs. However, some concerns have been raised regarding its impact on India's federalism, which is characterized by states having significant autonomy.

The proposal could potentially alter the balance of power between the central and state governments and may also limit the ability of regional parties to influence politics at the state level. Despite these concerns, supporters argue that this proposal will ultimately lead to more cohesive governance and better decision-making across the country.

As the ONOE proposal is being considered in India, the potential impact on federalism must be thoroughly analyzed. It is crucial to assess the ramifications of this proposal on the autonomy of states and their ability to conduct elections independently. The article will analyze how such a move may affect political competition and representation at various levels.

Historical Context:

1. Period of stable simultaneous election: 1951-1952- The newly democratic India held its first general election both to the General Assembly. (Lok Sabha) and State Assemblies. This continued until the late 1960s, when unstable non-Congress State governments began to fall, leading to midterm elections and thus, disrupting the pattern of joint elections to the Lok Sabha and the states, which led to the elections of Lok Sabha and State assemblies separately in December 1970.



2. **Indira Gandhi regime and fresh election:** In 1970, the Lok Sabha was prematurely dissolved under the Indira Gandhi regime and fresh elections were called in 1971. The term of the fifth Lok Sabha was extended until 1977 under Article 352. Since then, elections for the center and state have been held separately.

3. **Period of late 1980's and 1990's:** The simultaneous poll calendar was further derailed as the Lok Sabhas formed after elections in 1977, 1980, 1989, 1996, 1998, and 1999 were all prematurely dissolved. A similar situation happened in several state assemblies.

4. **Setup of committees;**

1. The first Annual Report of the Election Commission of India in 1983: It proposed the idea of conducting simultaneous elections for the **Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies**. The report put forth several compelling reasons for this proposal

- **Cost Savings:** Avoided redundant administrative expenses incurred in separate elections.
- **Minimizing Disruption:** Simultaneous elections would reduce the disruption caused by deploying a large number of civilian and police personnel for extended periods during elections.
- **Enhancing Governance:** Simultaneous elections would help maintain a more stable administrative setup, preventing the sidelining of regular government functions and developmental work during election periods.

2. The 170th Report of the Law Commission of India in 1999: Also endorsed the concept of simultaneous elections.

3. In 2015, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law, and Justice: in its 79th

Report, suggested the adoption of simultaneous elections as a means to achieve long-term good governance.

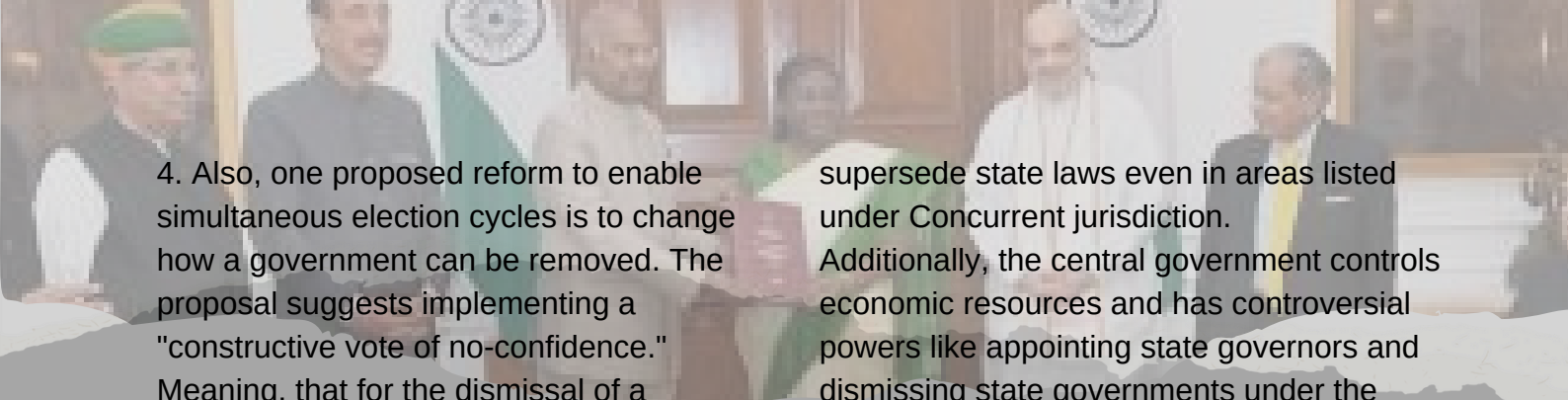
4. **Federalism and ONOE:**

Federalism is a system of government where power is divided between a central authority and regional governments. In a federal system, each level of government has its own set of powers and responsibilities. This helps maintain a balance of power and allows for local autonomy.

As for ONOE, it refers to the idea of holding all the elections in the country, from local to national, simultaneously. The aim is to reduce the frequency of elections and streamline the electoral process. Proponents argue that it can save time, and resources, and ensure better governance. However, there are concerns about its feasibility and potential implications.

Potential Impact on Indian Federalism:

1. Simultaneous elections risk diminishing the essence of Indian federalism by diminishing independent arenas for expressing regional identities, addressing regional concerns, and shaping regional policies.
2. The implementation of simultaneous elections may homogenize the varied landscape of political dynamics throughout India and weaken the self-governance capabilities of state administrations.
3. The consolidation of election schedules might pose a threat to democratic principles by limiting voting opportunities and skewing the political landscape in favour of the ruling party through modifications to "no confidence" regulations.



4. Also, one proposed reform to enable simultaneous election cycles is to change how a government can be removed. The proposal suggests implementing a "constructive vote of no-confidence." Meaning, that for the dismissal of a government, an alternative party or coalition must demonstrate that it has enough support to form a new government and gain the confidence of the relevant legislative body. Hence, the current government could only be replaced if there is a viable alternative ready to take its place.

5. Simultaneous elections may flatten the diversity of political cultures across India and weaken the connectedness of voters to their state governments – as distinct from the national government.

Challenges to States' Autonomy

Indian federalism is complex. Although we consider ourselves a federal or semi-federal nation, the central government holds significant control over the states in their functioning. While the Constitution divides powers between the Centre and the States, it also allows for "extraordinary circumstances" where Parliament can legislate on state matters without it being illegal. This raises questions about the autonomy of Indian states.

If ONOE is implemented, the question of state autonomy will be raised. Schedule 7 of the Indian constitution deals with the division of power between the Centre and the State, the model for Indian federalism is thus, often called as 'Centralized federalism'.

The central government holds significant authority over the states, especially regarding crucial matters like redrawing state boundaries. It has more subjects under its jurisdiction compared to the states, and its laws

supersede state laws even in areas listed under Concurrent jurisdiction.

Additionally, the central government controls economic resources and has controversial powers like appointing state governors and dismissing state governments under the president's rule. However, India's federal system isn't entirely skewed towards the Centre. Thus this raises the question that if one election is implemented then states might lose control over their autonomy.

Impact on Regional Representation

"ONOE" could reduce the visibility and influence of smaller regional parties nationally. It might also sideline regional issues in favour of national concerns, potentially neglecting the specific needs of certain regions. Overall, it might make it harder for regional voices to be heard and represented effectively in the government. Implementing the "One Nation, One Election" system could potentially impact regional representation in several ways- First, smaller regional parties might find it challenging to compete on a national scale, potentially diminishing their influence and representation in the central government. Secondly, focusing elections at both state and national levels concurrently might divert attention and resources away from regional issues and concerns, leading to a neglect of specific regional interests in policymaking. Moreover, regional diversity and distinct identities might be overshadowed by national political narratives, potentially marginalizing the voices of certain regions within the broader political landscape. Overall, while "ONOE" aims for administrative efficiency, its impact on regional representation could pose challenges to the diverse fabric of Indian democracy and the equitable representation of all regions and communities.

Implementing One Nation One Election
Implementing ONOE in the whole of India needs perfect planning and careful coordination in this one must look at three important and careful measures that will help in implementing it.

Constitutional amendments: Some potential amendments could include:

1. Synchronization of election cycle: Amendments to Article 83 and Article 172 to synchronize the terms of the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies to facilitate simultaneous elections.
2. Extension of the term of state legislative assembly: Amendment to Article 172 to extend the term of state legislative assemblies to match the five-year term of the Lok Sabha.
3. No-confidence motion modification: Amendments to the relevant provisions regarding no-confidence motions (such as Article 75 and Article 164) to introduce a constructive vote of no-confidence mechanism.
4. Financial Provisions: Amendments to Articles related to financial matters (such as Article 110 and Article 202) to ensure adequate funding for simultaneous elections.

Logistical Challenges:

1. Infrastructure: Upgrading and expanding election infrastructure across the country to accommodate the increased scale and complexity of simultaneous elections.
2. Voter Education: Conducting extensive voter education campaigns to inform citizens about the changes in the electoral process.
3. Security: Ensuring adequate security arrangements for polling stations, candidates, and voters across all states simultaneously to prevent any disruptions or security threats during the electoral process.
4. Political Coordination: Coordinating

political parties and candidates at the national and state levels to align their campaign schedules, messaging, and strategies effectively.

5. Legal Framework: Developing and implementing a robust legal framework to address potential conflicts, discrepancies, or challenges arising from simultaneous elections, including provisions for dispute resolution and electoral integrity.

Political Consensus:

Achieving political consensus on (ONOE) would be crucial for its successful implementation-

1. **All-party consultations:** Hold extensive consultations with all political parties to discuss the merits, challenges, and implications of ONOE. This would provide an opportunity for parties to voice their concerns and suggestions, fostering a sense of inclusivity in the decision-making process
2. **Public discourse and awareness:** Engaging in public discourse through media, debates, and awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the concept of ONOE and its potential impact on governance and democracy. Building public support can exert pressure on political parties to reach consensus
3. **Compromise and flexibility:** Recognizing that different parties may have varying interests and concerns regarding ONOE, fostering a spirit of compromise and flexibility in addressing these differences is essential. Political leaders should be willing to negotiate and make concessions to reach a consensus that serves the broader interests of the nation.
4. **Gradual implementation:** Consider a phased or gradual implementation of ONOE to address concerns about its feasibility and impact. Starting with a pilot project or implementing ONOE in select states initially could help alleviate apprehensions and build confidence among stakeholders.

5. Leadership and statesmanship: Political leaders demonstrate statesmanship and leadership by prioritizing the national interest over partisan considerations. Emphasizing the potential benefits of ONOE in terms of cost savings, administrative efficiency, and better governance can rally support across party lines

By fostering open dialogue, promoting public awareness, accommodating diverse perspectives, and demonstrating political will, achieving political consensus on ONOE becomes more feasible, paving the way for its successful implementation.

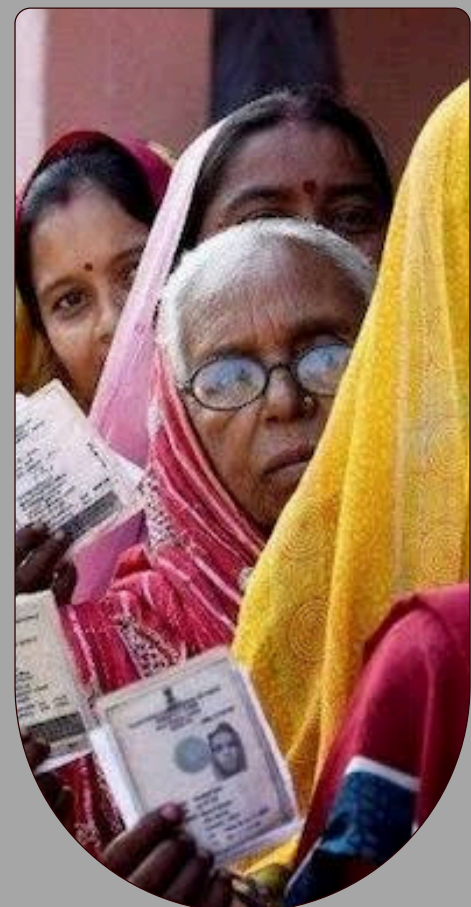
One Nation One Election- Its benefits and challenges

Advantages-

- Polling is expensive but organising state assembly and Lok Sabha elections simultaneously may reduce that cost.
- Besides, simultaneous elections may save time and the government can get five stable years to focus on governance instead of winning polls.
- To ensure that a state government does not fall without an alternative, the Law Commission recommended that a no-confidence motion against a government should be followed by a confidence motion so that if the Opposition doesn't have the numbers to form an alternative government, the regime in office cannot be removed.

Challenges and Concerns-

- Electronic voting machines (EVMs) which have a life span of 15 years, would only be used three times under the One Nation One Election proposal. To implement the new election rules, five articles in the Constitution and Representation of the People Act (1951) would have to be amended. Every recognised state and national party would have to agree to the change.



No proposal made a provision for hung legislatures or the premature dissolution of governments.

-If the Centre will continue to have the power to dismiss the state government (under Article 356), there cannot be the One Nation One Poll rule eligible.

-Voters may end up voting on national issues even for state polls which would benefit larger national parties and marginalized regional parties.

-Under this rule, a wave of one person or one issue may give unbridled power to rule.

Conclusion:-

The future of Indian federalism and the implementation of "One Nation, One Election" (ONOE) are intertwined with the complex dynamics of governance, democracy, and regional diversity in India. While ONOE presents potential benefits such as cost savings, efficiency, and political stability, its successful implementation requires careful consideration of India's federal structure, regional disparities, and democratic principles. The evolution of Indian federalism must navigate the delicate balance between central authority and state autonomy, ensuring that the diverse needs and aspirations of different regions are adequately represented and addressed. ONOE could catalyze enhancing governance effectiveness, streamlining electoral processes, and promoting political stability, but it must be implemented in a manner that upholds the principles of democratic governance, transparency, and inclusivity.

Moving forward, meaningful dialogue, consensus-building, and collaboration among political stakeholders at the national and state levels are essential to shape the

future of Indian federalism and realize the potential benefits of ONOE. By embracing innovation, adaptation, and inclusive decision-making, India can strengthen its federal structure, enhance governance efficiency, and uphold the democratic ideals enshrined in its constitution.



Pravarshi Singh
M.A Final (2024-25)

The Impact of ONOE on Voting Behaviour

-Nivedita Mishra

The concept of “One nation, One election” or simultaneous elections within the whole country has become a subject of debate and discussion in the political landscape of India. While the implementation and execution of the idea are subject of a greater discussion, we can agree that in the end, all we really want is the welfare of our nation.

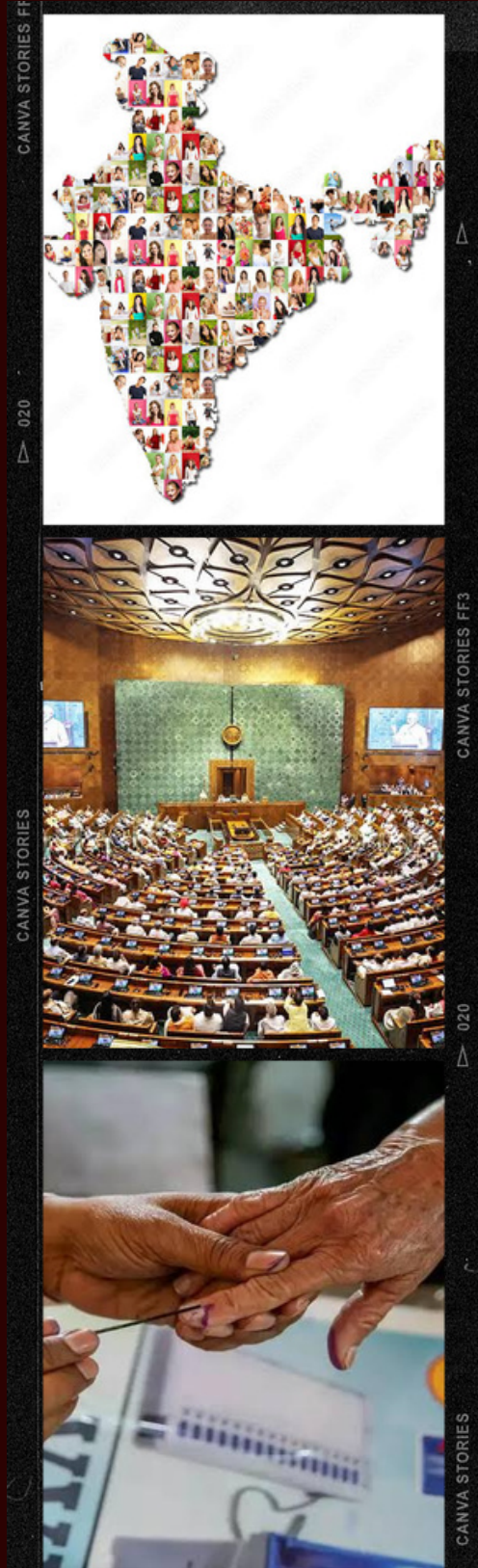
Ever since this concept has re-emerged as a part of discussion political parties all across the country have been actively advancing their arguments. On one hand where some are calling this concept a revolutionary step in Indian politics on the other, it is also being criticized as an abuse of power and attack on the unity and integrity of India.

While proponents argue for its efficiency and cost-effectiveness, its impact on the voting behaviour of citizens remains a critical aspect of examination.

Impact of ONOE on the Voting Behaviour

The suggested electoral reform has the potential to lead to both positive and negative results-

- First, the consolidation of elections might lead to **increased voter turnout**. With multiple elections held simultaneously, citizens are more likely to participate as they can cast their votes for different levels of government in a **single trip to the polling booth**.
- Secondly, This convenience could translate into a higher engagement of voters, contributing to a healthier democratic process.



However, the flip side of this argument- "One Nation, One Election" could dilute the focus on local issues.

When national and regional elections are held concurrently, local concerns might be overshadowed by larger political narratives. Consequently, voters might prioritize national agendas over regional or municipal issues, potentially leading to skewed electoral outcomes and neglect of grassroots matters.

Moreover, the synchronization of elections could influence voter behaviour regarding party allegiance.

In a multi-phased election system, parties often strategize differently for each election cycle, targeting specific demographics and regions. With a unified election schedule, parties may adopt more uniform campaign strategies, emphasizing broader ideologies rather than nuanced regional interests. This could reshape the dynamics of party competition and alter voter perceptions of political parties.

Additionally, the timing of elections can impact voter turnout and preferences. For instance, if the national government's performance is perceived favourably closer to the election date, it could positively influence the electoral prospects of affiliated parties across all levels of government.

Conversely, if there is dissatisfaction with the ruling party, it might have a cascading effect on its electoral fortunes at all levels.

Furthermore, the implementation of "One Nation, One Election" could necessitate changes in electoral laws and administrative procedures. This could lead to alterations in voter registration processes, polling booth locations, and campaigning regulations, potentially affecting voter accessibility and information dissemination. Consequently, citizens might need to adapt to these changes, which could influence their voting behaviour and choices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the concept of "One Nation, One Election" aims to streamline the electoral process, its impacts on voting behaviour are multifaceted. While it might enhance voter turnout and simplify logistical aspects, it could also dilute the focus on local issues, reshape party competition dynamics, and necessitate adjustments in electoral procedures. Thus, careful consideration of these factors is imperative before implementing such a significant electoral reform.

Nivedita Mishra

B.A Pol Science (Hons) 2024-25



भारत में ऑनलाइन मतदान

संध्या कुमारी

M.A Final (2024-25)

आज के डिजिटल युग में प्रौद्योगिकी ने हमारे जीवन के लगभग हर पहलू में प्रवेश कर लिया है और हमारे संचार, काम करने और पहुंच के तरीके को बदल दिया है। लोकतंत्र का एक महत्वपूर्ण पहलू मतदान पर निर्भर होकर काफी हद तक अपरिवर्तित बनी हुई है। जैसा कि दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा लोकतंत्र भारत तकनीकी प्रगति को अपनाता जारी रखता है। ऑनलाइन मतदान की क्षमता मौजूदा चुनावी प्रणाली के सामने आने वाली विभिन्न चुनौतियों का समाधान करने के लिए एक आकर्षक समाधान के रूप में उभरती है।

जैसे- नई दिल्ली :- बचपन से ही व्हीलचेयर पर रहने वाले 36 वर्षीय निपुण मल्होत्रा कहते हैं, "मेरे लिए गुप्त मतदान कभी भी गुप्त गतिविधि नहीं रही।" पोलिंग बुथ पर पहुंचना और EVM पर, बटन दबाना निपुण के लिए हमेशा चुनौतीपूर्ण रहा है।

एक दिव्यांगता अधिकार अधिवक्ता और निपमैन फाउंडेशन के संस्थापक कहते हैं, "लोकसभा चुनावों में से एक चुनाव में मैं अपना वोट डालने के लिए गुरुग्राम स्थित राष्ट्रीय मीडिया केन्द्र गया। एंटी गेट पर कुछ सीढियां थी, लोगो को मुझे मेरी व्हीलचेयर, समेत उठाना पड़ा। पोलिंग बुथ में मैं EVM मशीन पर बटन तक भी अपना हाथ नहीं बढ़ा सका, मुझे बटन दबाने और वोट देने के लिए किसी की मदद लेनी पड़ी।"

निपुण अकेले नहीं है, अगामी लोकसभा चुनाव में कम से कम 88.4 लाख दिव्यांग लोग मतदान करने के लिए पात्र हैं।

पैरा आर्चर और अर्जुन पुरस्कार विजेता शीतला देवी, भारत के चुनाव आयोग (ECI) की राष्ट्रीय दिव्यांगजन (PWD) आइकन होंगी। दिव्यांग लोगों के लिए चुनाव को सुलभ बनाने के लिए, भारत निर्वाचन आयोग पांच सूत्री दिशानिदेश लेकर आया है:

1. 85 वर्ष से अधिक आयु के मतदाता और 40%. बेंचमार्क दिव्यांग व्यक्ति के घर से मतदान कर सकते हैं।
2. मतदान केन्द्रों पर वॉलंटियर्स और, व्हीलचेयर तैनात रहेंगे।

3. दिव्यांग व्यक्तियों और बुजुर्गों के लिए परिवहन सुविधाएं उपलब्ध होंगी।

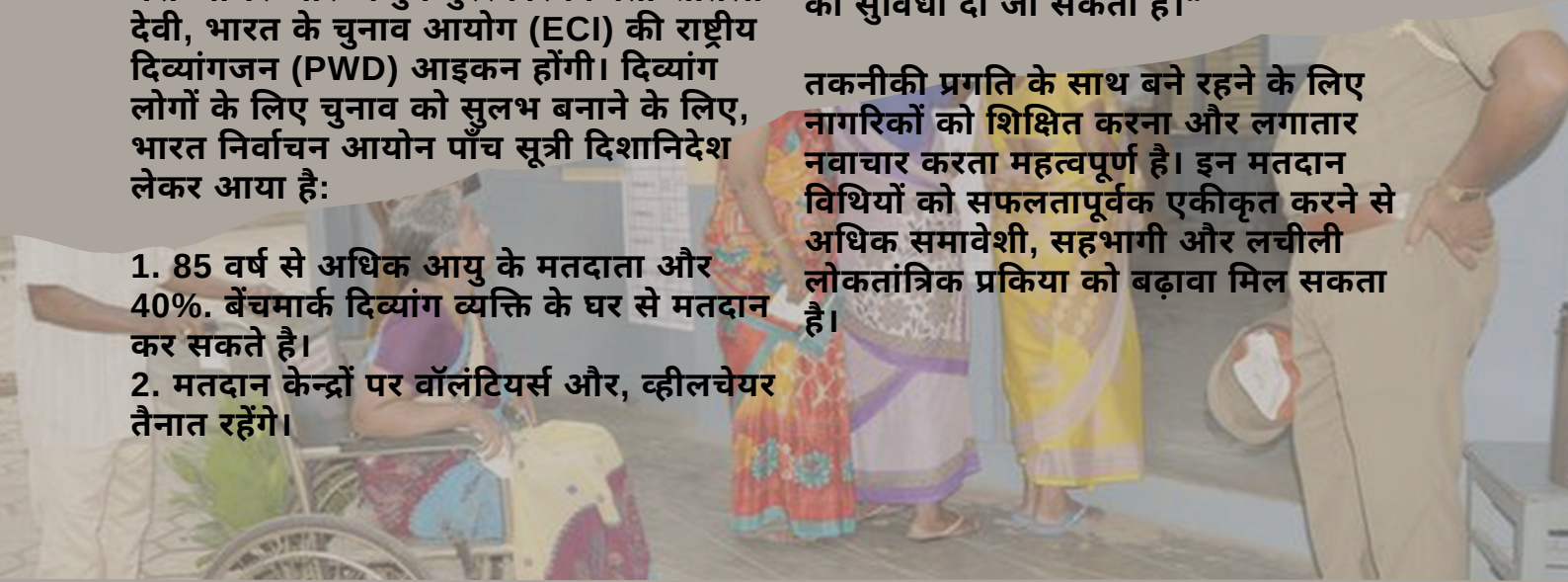
4. मतदान केन्द्रों पर विशेष सुविधाओं का लाभ उठाने के लिए सक्षम एप उपलब्ध है। ECI के अनुसार - सक्षम एप मतदान केन्द्रों के बारे में जानकारी प्रदान करता है, जिसमें स्थान और मतदान केन्द्र पर उपलब्ध सुविधाएं और मतदान अधिकारियों के सम्पर्क विवरण शामिल है। एप दृष्टिबाधित लोगों के लिए आवाज सहायता प्रदान करता है, इसमें सुनने में अक्षम लोगों के लिए टेक्स्ट-टू-स्पीच और बड़े फोंट और उच्च - कंट्रास्ट रंगों जैसी अन्य सुविधाएं भी होंगी।

5. स्कूलों में स्थायी सुनिश्चित न्यूनतम सुविधाओं पर जोर, ढालों को चुनाव प्रक्रिया का अहार।

समाचार एजेंसी प्रेस इस्ट ऑफ इण्डिया के साथ एक इंटरव्यू में, भारत के श्री मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त टीएस कृष्णमूर्ति ने सुझाव दिया कि शुरुआत में वरिष्ठ नागरिकों, शारीरिक रूप से अक्षम व्यक्तियों और वर्दीधारी

सेवाओं के सदस्यों की ऑनलाइन मतदान सुविधा प्रदान की जाए। उन्होंने कहा, "हालाकि ऐसे देश हैं जहां इंटरनेट वोटिंग की अनुमति है, हमें राजनीतिक दलों की सहमति से इसे जारी रखना होगा (भारत में)। जिस बात पर उन्हें आपत्ति हो, उसे पेश करने का कोई मतलब नहीं है। लेकिन मेरी भावना यह है कि कम से कम शुरुआत में वरिष्ठ नागरिकों और दिव्यांग लोगो और वर्दीधारी सेवाओं में शामिल लोगो को इंटरनेट वोटिंग की सुविधा दी जा सकती है।"

तकनीकी प्रगति के साथ बने रहने के लिए नागरिकों को शिक्षित करना और लगातार नवाचार करता महत्वपूर्ण है। इन मतदान विधियों को सफलतापूर्वक एकीकृत करने से अधिक समावेशी, सहभागी और लचीली लोकतांत्रिक प्रक्रिया को बढ़ावा मिल सकता है।



An Analysis on the White Paper

-Saloni (MA Political Science)

The Government of India presented a White Paper right before the beginning of Lok Sabha elections accusing the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance of leaving the economy in "bad shape, nay crisis" after 10 years of the Manmohan Singh government. The document claimed the UPA inherited a "healthy economy" from the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government but left the Narendra Modi administration a "non-performing" economy.

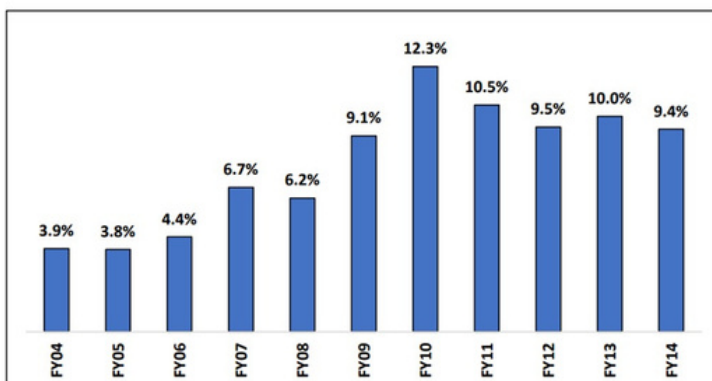
The White paper talks about how the economy was bleeding in 2014 and how it has grown and is developing in 2024. It referred to a number of scams and corruption cases that marked the 10 years of the UPA government, including the 2G and Coalgate scandals, as well as economic concerns like double-digit inflation, the foreign exchange crisis, and a "policy paralysis" that affected investment.

What is in The White Paper?

Now before understand if we could actually rely on it, we need to understand what does The White Paper actually says and talks about.

The very first thing that the BJP government has accused the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance is the double-digit inflation. Inflation raged between 2009 and 2014 and the common man bore the brunt. High fiscal deficits for six years between FY09 and FY14 heaped misery on ordinary and poorer households. Over the five-year period from FY10 to FY14, the average annual inflation rate was in double digits. Between FY04 and FY14, average annual inflation in the economy was 8.2 per cent (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Inflation trend in UPA years



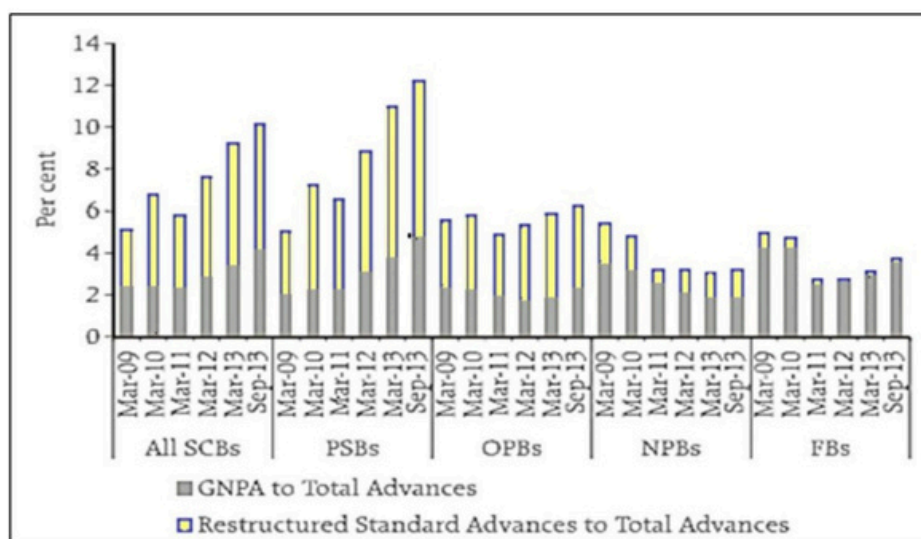
Source: International Monetary Fund

If we see the chart mentioned above, we'll see that inflation in FY10, FY 11 and FY13 was in double digits and this was a dire situation for any earning individual.

Thus, this resulted in clear erosion of saving of the middle class making them live on cheque to cheque bases.

Another very important things that the BJP government has talked about in the white paper is the Mismanagement of the banks When the Vajpayee-led NDA government took office, the Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio in Public Sector banks was 16.0 per cent, and when they left office, it was 7.8 per cent. In September 2013, this ratio, including restructured loans, had climbed to 12.3 per cent largely because of political interference by the UPA government in the commercial lending decisions of public sector banks (Chart 2). Worse, even that high percentage of bad debts was an underestimate.

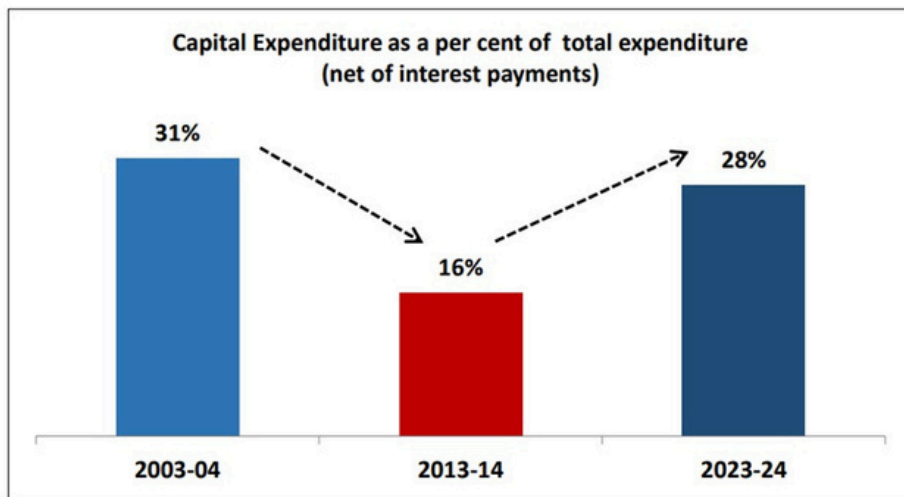
Chart 2: Rise in Non-Performing Assets during the UPA years



Source: Chart 2.13, Financial Stability Report, Reserve Bank of India, Issue No. 8, December 2013.

And we need to understand that when we are taking about the stats given by the Congress government at that time they have yet now added the bad loans in it which when added will shot up this percentage to 19% and 19% if loans not being paid is a very high number for any economy and for a developing economy like India it looked like a suicide mission. And it would be stupid of anyone to say that it was not the governments mistake what they could have done then they are simply being utopian and biased toward the government as why was it possible for the previous Atal Vajpayee's government to get this same digit down to as 7.8 per cent and then the very next government shot this up to 19 per cent. This simply means that there was some significant changes that they needed to adopt and they failed to do so.

Another very important thing mentioned by the BJP government in the White Paper is the huge amount to debt taken by the government during there year and when we say debts its not really a bad thing because government needs money to actually run and to generate any capital but the problem here with this is the Not only did the UPA Government borrow heavily from the market, but the funds raised were applied unproductively. This aspect is evident when we evaluate the quantity, quality and timing of the expenditure by the government during 2004-2014. Capital Expenditure, which finances public investment in infrastructure, was deprioritised in those 10 years, thereby creating long-term constraints for the economy and compromising its growth potential. As shown in Chart 3, capital expenditure as a per cent of total expenditure (excluding interest payments) halved from 31 per cent in FY04 to 16 per cent in FY14. The economy remained supply-constrained during the UPA government's tenure. Combined with the consistent boost to aggregate demand from excessive deficits, it resulted in higher inflation, higher current account deficit and an overvalued currency, all of which climaxed in 2013 when the Indian rupee buckled under the weight of such imprudent policies. Public expenditure was geared towards short-term populist measures.



Source: Budget documents

When we look at these figures we tend to think that yes maybe the Congress has really done nothing for the economy of the country and all the burden has fell on the current BJP government but is it really true? To some extent, maybe, it true, there were certain schemes and parameters adopted by then government were not right and the burden to address these issues fell on the current government but Is the current government when presenting these stats has really been unbiased and presented us with hard hitting facts?

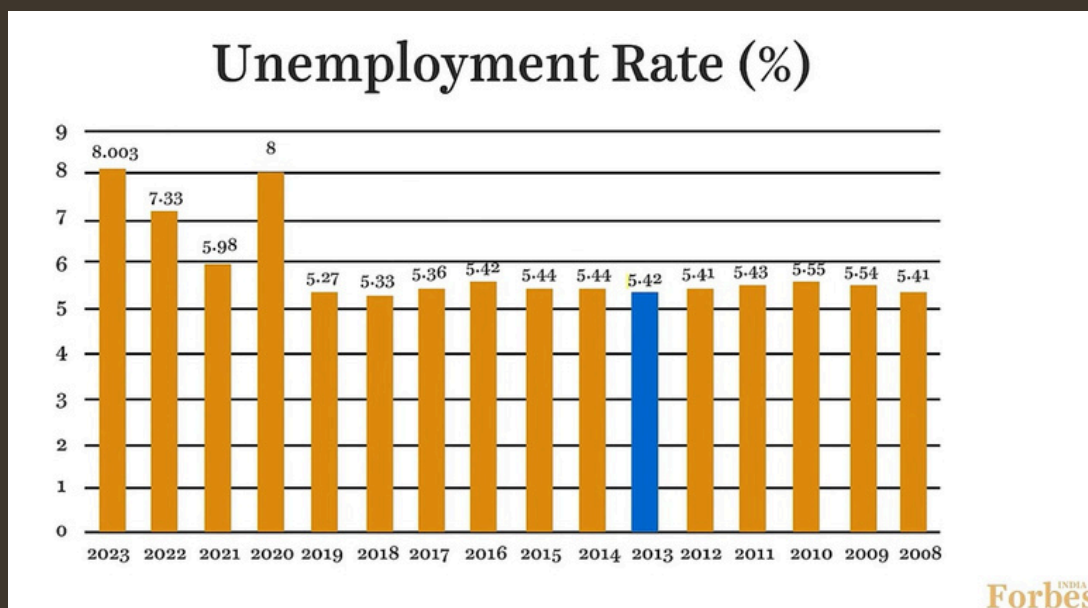
The Black paper

As the BJP released there White Paper mentioning how they have developed and have pushed the economy out of the shambles that congress put it into, Congress also released a paper titled "10 saal anyay kaal," the 54-page document of the Congress focuses on issues like unemployment, inflation, subversion of institutions, farmers' distress, and alleged injustices against women and minorities, among others. The 'black paper' also alleged that India has become "electoral autocracy" and cited the V-Dem institute, hitting out at the government over the Manipur issue as well as border situation with China.

"Whenever PM [Narendra] Modi presents his views in Parliament, he hides his failures. At the same time, when we speak about the failures of the government, it is not given importance. Therefore, we thought of bringing out a black paper and tell the public about the failures of the government," Mr. Kharge told reporters at a press conference at his official residence.



Just like BJP Congress has also has given us some important indicators that the current government has missed or we could say must have ignored conveniently For instance when the BJP government took the most important indicators of the economy and put forward the view that our current economy is booming it somehow missed one the most important indicator of a healthy economy the employment ration. And it is when the Prime Minister himself promised to give 2 crore jobs every year and yet we are at the highest in the unemployment rate in the last 45 year. And we could see this in the given data.



And just like this there are number of other issues mentioned by the Congress government in their Black Paper.

Thus, the question arises here is who do we actually trust and give the power to?. To answer this We cannot tell you as a responsible citizen of the country it is your duty to actually understand what you need and vote the party that you could resonate with the most along with there back record the best we could do for you is to present you with unbiased reliable data that would help you make the decision.

-Saloni
M.A Final (2024-25).

Ending With a Hope- Moving Towards the India We Aspire to Be

-Aadya Tiwary

Election, one of the greatest celebrations in the World's Largest Democracy is underway in India. As India embraces the 77th year of her Independence, the 2024 General Elections come bearing new promises and dreams. They bring with them a Review Report of what all we have gained so far, and they also come with a checklist of what we, the youth, should aim to achieve. Which also brings with itself debates and discussions on reforms, some of which have been discussed in the articles before.

India is not just 77 years old today, India is also 15 Presidents, 14 Prime Ministers, 106 constitutional amendments, 3 national emergencies and 127 space missions old. And it shall also turn 18 General Elections old this June.

And we do need to realize how far we have come to understand what we are yet to achieve and more importantly, what are the demands that we should make from our leaders in the coming elections.

India has fought four major wars, and it has also fought numerous smaller battles since 1947. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and many other Prime Ministers since, have tried their best to secure the position of India as a nuclear-armed state for many years.



The dream only became a reality in 1998 when Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister of India, and Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam was the chief of DRDO, India. It was under their leadership that a series of five nuclear test explosions, also known as the Pokhran 2 Testing, successfully took place. The main objective of that testing was to give India the capability to defend itself in the international arena. While India swore to maintain a No-First-Use policy for nuclear weapons, it couldn't be threatened by a nuclear power anymore. This strategic defence move helped India maintain its sovereignty in the face of global instability. India is faced with some similar challenges today. Threatened with global sanctions by so-called international "Hegemons" in the economic arena and expansionist policies of our ambitious neighbours in the South-Asian Politics, what we need is a leader who will guide us through these trying times and preserve our sovereignty.



Apart from this India also needs a leader who helps her achieve milestones in healthcare and education. Making the Right to Education a Fundamental Right in 2002 and enforcing the NEP in 2020 to revolutionize education, by prioritizing education in the mother tongue and introducing flexible curricular structures to allow students to make their creative subject combinations in higher studies, shows the constant commitment of our leaders towards securing the best education possible for the leaders of tomorrow.

In 1947 the average life expectancy of an Indian was 32 years, and today in the year 2024, our average life expectancy has climbed up to 70 years. This is one of the greatest achievements of India in the healthcare sector among other milestones that we have, such as India being declared 100% free of the Polio Virus in 2014, and India's war against the COVID Pandemic, shall always be remembered as a historic milestone, and a lesson for the Healthcare sector.

While there are many such achievements that we have accomplished thus far, there are certain things we still need to work on as a nation.

Through this conclusive article, I will shed light on some lesser discussed issues of today-

Have you ever heard of the World Happiness Index?

It is a report publication that ranks countries on a parameter called Happiness. Happiness might sound very vague as a criterion to judge a nation on, but the index is published every year keeping many aspects such as job and food security, health security, employment rates, and literacy rates among other things in mind.

And it might come as a shock but this year India ranked 126 out of 143 countries on the World Happiness Index. This is not just alarming but also threatening, considering the people of our country are not happy. A happy nation is a healthy nation, a strong nation, and a developing nation, and we need that today. That, according to me, is what an ideal government should strive to achieve.

Bharat, a land where elements of nature are worshipped, trees are revered, rivers are given the status of "prandayini" and "mata" where "dharti", the soil, is worshipped. That country where all elements of nature are seen as gifts from the gods, has been subjected to extreme water pollution, soil pollution, deforestation, floods and droughts. The heatwave that we are experiencing today, is also a result of the extreme climate degradation that has been brought about by us. Irrespective of what initiatives other countries take to reverse the Climate Crisis, India needs to take a firm stand today, both in its domestic and international approach. We still depend on rainwater for our agricultural needs, while floods and droughts can lead to severe crop failures, we cannot take risks when it comes to the climate. India needs to go back to its roots and learn to respect nature. As the father of our nation said-

"The world has enough for everyone's needs and not for anyone's greed"

Apart from this, another imminent threat that India is faced with today is the problem of brain drain. Brain drain is the migration of highly skilled and educated people from one country to another country in search of better job opportunities and working conditions. When a politician of Indian origin becomes the Prime Minister of Britain, we all feel proud. When Sundar Pichai, an IIT Kharagpur graduate, Satya Nadella, a graduate of Manipal University, and many others leave India to join leading multinationals to make their names abroad, we all feel proud. But have you ever wondered why such talented minds leave our country? It is not because the “American Dream” is so fascinating, but it is because we, as a people, are not able to provide our younger minds with the right infrastructure to make and achieve “The Indian Dream” in their homeland.

80,000 seats for 7 lakh medical aspirants and almost no government job opportunities for Computer Scientists and Software engineers in India will always lead to job insecurity. Imagine what wonders these sharp minds could do if they were given the infrastructure here itself. This is what we must demand from our leaders today.

While these are just a few ideas that I could conjure, I believe that this magazine and all the articles in it, should act as a medium for us to challenge our existing beliefs and aim towards bringing a leadership that asks real questions, makes real promises, and ensures real development.

And the best step that we can take towards electing a leadership that does all these things, is to step out of our houses this 1st of June and vote for change.

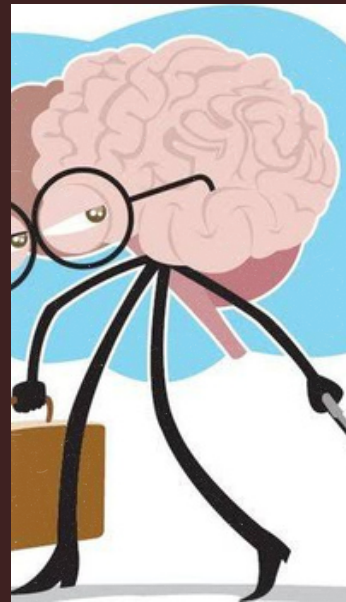
Thank you, to all the readers who stuck with us till the end, we look forward to bringing more quality content to you in the future and inspiring awareness through creativity.

Signing Off

Aadya Tiwary

Editor-in-Chief

Political Today (Jun'24)





Thank You!

