Simultaneous Elections

Why in news?

\n\n

The prime minister has suggested that the nation hold all elections to state and central legislatures all together, once every five years.

\n\n

What are the advantages?

\n\n

\n
- Simultaneous elections would save resources, both of the government on polling arrangements and of political parties that end up spending huge fortunes on poll campaigns.
\n
- It will keep alive the enthusiasm of voters.
\n
- Business of governance at the Centre could improve by not having to worry about how a measure proposed by the Centre would affect the outcome of a proximate state poll.
\n
- Simultaneous elections will also avoid repeated enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), a set of legally binding dos and don’ts for the Union/State governments, political parties and candidates, that on repeated enforcement impacts effective governance.
\n

\n\n

Why it is against democratic values?

\n\n

\n
- The idea of holding simultaneous state and central elections is not practical without constricting extant democratic space.
\n
- India started off with simultaneous elections to state assemblies and

Parliament. These elections diverged as a result of political developments that terminated the life of certain legislatures before their full term, starting with the dismissal of the Communist government of Kerala two years into its term in 1959.
\n
- Sometimes, a government could lose the confidence of the House because of serious differences of opinion within the ruling party or a realignment of political forces. Such developments are disruptive from a point of view of the expected full tenure of an elected House.
\n
- However, such developments **also reflect political conflicts that are integral to democracy** in its current stage of evolution in the country.
\n
- If we wish to curtail the natural evolution of democracy and force assemblies to go along with governments that have lost real legitimacy till the next round of elections turn up, that would be a bad idea.
\n
- It is simpler and healthier to resolve that each level of government would function without worrying too much about how its working would impact elections to other levels.
\n

\n\n

Why separate elections are desirable?

\n\n

\n
- Holding simultaneous elections to Parliament and assemblies, however, has ramifications that go far beyond issues of funding and logistics.
\n
- In a way, it would give governments immunity from the everyday pressures of public opinion. The present practice of an election in some state or the other every year or so often forces governments to reconsider their plans and policies.
\n
- Given the federal nature of the Indian union and the diversity of the country, this need not be a bad thing, though it could be argued that governance is affected.
\n
- Electoral reforms are crucial to combating corruption but these also need to be done in a manner that does not tamper with the basic structure of India’s parliamentary democracy that was set in place after an intensive debate in a very distinguished constituent assembly.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Category: Mains| GS-II| Elections

\n\n

Source: The Economic Times

\n\n

Author: Shankar IAS Academy Chennai. Top UPSC Coaching Academy

\n