



Reality check: On simultaneous polls

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Simultaneous polls pose too big a legal and logistical challenge to be implemented now

Chief Election Commissioner O.P. Rawat's view that it is not possible to hold simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies soon is a realistic assessment of the humongous task ahead of the Election Commission before it can embark on such an ambitious venture.

In addition to the basic requirement of a legal framework under which the extension or curtailment of the term of any Assembly is constitutionally permissible, simultaneous elections would demand a massive increase in the number of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) units. Moreover, ensuring the availability of VVPATs everywhere poses a logistical challenge.

- The crux of the argument in favour of the concept is that the country is perpetually in election mode, resulting in a lack of adequate focus on governance.
- The second contention is that scattered polling results in extra expenditure.

The question before India is, in order to address these two issues, can legislature terms be curtailed without undermining representative democracy and federalism.

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