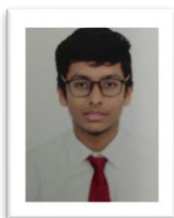


# Should the Indian Government Follow Simultaneous Elections?



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## Abstract

This article deals with the impact of the simultaneous election and the challenges which the Modi's government and the election commission of India have to face to bring the pro-active reforms in the elections law by implementing simultaneous elections in India. This study also focused on to analysis the factors responsible for implementing simultaneous elections in India. As the simultaneous election is a new term for India, Researcher used a questionnaire to know about the perception of Indians regarding simultaneous elections with the help of factor analysis and the SWOT analysis. The study reveals various factors of simultaneous elections and discussed more about its benefits rather than challenges.

**Keywords:** Simultaneous Election, Election Process in India, General Election, Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha, Election Commission, SWOT Analysis

## Introduction

An election is a formal and organized process in which people vote to choose a person or group of people to hold a political office or other position. Elections are one of the most fundamental requirement to operationalize democracy so the way in which it should be conducted holds utmost importance. Elections are the means towards the end of serving people, it should not become an end in itself. India is world's largest constitutional democracy. The Indian constitution gives right to the people, to elect and appoint the representatives of their choice to handle administrative decisions as the members of government bodies.

At present four types of elections held in Indian Scenario. First one is General elections that conducted for electing the members of Lok Sabha, i.e. the lower house of the parliament. The members elected during these elections are called MP's (Member of Parliament). These members include the Prime Minister and the cabinet. The elections of the Lok Sabha held every 5 years. Second is the state government election, held to elect members of legislative assembly or Vidhan Sabha of each state. These members are also called the MLAs. This election is also organized every five years. Third category of elections held to the respective Gram Panchayat/ Nagar Panchayat/ Nagar Palika/ Mahanagar Palika through which people elect their local level leaders who take decision at those respective levels. Last but not the least are the presidential elections that includes the elected members of the houses (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha), state legislatures (Vidhan Sabha), are assigned the task of electing the President of India. President serves for a period of 5 years.

Addressing the Niti Aayog Governing Councils third meeting, Prime Minister Narendra Modi showed his inclination in favor of conducting simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the state assemblies and adopting a January-December fiscal year. The term simultaneous election is defined as structuring the Indian election cycle in such a manner that the elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies are synchronized together. In this scenario, a voter would be able to his vote for electing the members of Lok Sabha and State Assembly on a single day and at the same time. One must keep in mind that simultaneous elections does not mean to held the voting for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies across the country on a single day only. Like the existing practice this can be also conducted in phase wise manner which provides the voter privilege to cast vote for both Lok Sabha and State Assembly on a single day and at the same time. Election Commission said that it can hold simultaneous elections in India but the question is whether it is desirable or not. Few political parties are in favor said that it will save money, it will cast fewer

disruptions while other skeptical and also the politics since regional parties could take a hit. parties argue that logistics is an issue

Therefore the researcher used the questionnaire to know about the perception of Indians in order to analyze the major factors responsible for holding the simultaneous elections in India. Furthermore, SWOT analyses is used to analysis the positive and negative sides of simultaneous elections in India. This study has been divided in four parts: one is introduction, second is Literature reviews, Next one is research methodology and last one is Data analysis.

#### **Review of Literatures**

The empirical studies that analyses the factors of simultaneous elections and the effect of simultaneous election in India are still quite limited and eccentric. Zeynep B. Irfanoglu, Shakun D. Mago and Roman M. Sheremeta (2010) compared the sequential and simultaneous multi-battle election contests. The study revealed substantial evidence of a "New Hampshire effect" in the sequential contests, i.e. the winner of the first battle wins the overall contest with much higher probability than the loser of the first battle. However, contrary to theory, sequential contest generate substantially higher expenditure than simultaneous contest. This is mainly because losers of the first battle do not decrease their expenditure in the second battle; and winners of the first battle substantially increase their expenditure in the second battle, instead of decreasing their expenditure as predicted. Therefore the simultaneous elections was found much better than sequential.

Battaglini et al. (2007) studied sequential and simultaneous voting and found that "a sequential voting rule aggregates information better than simultaneous voting and is more efficient in some information environments, but sequential voting is inequitable because early voters bear more participation costs."

Bibek Debroy and Kishore Desai analyzed "WHAT", "WHY" AND "HOW" SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS. They suggested that a focused group of stakeholders comprising constitution and subject matter experts, think tanks, government officials and representatives of various political parties come together and work out appropriate implementation related details. This may include drafting appropriate constitution and statutory amendments, agreeing on a workable framework to facilitate transition to simultaneous elections, developing a stakeholder communication plan etc. As is the case with long-term structural reforms, implementing this measure would also cause some short-term pain. However, this would be a stepping stone towards improved governance and a larger initiation of "electoral reforms" – a desperately needed measure to re-boot the Indian polity.

Norio KONDO (2007) studied the voting behavior in India up to the present time. The study revealed that in a very heterogeneous country like India, a party may be based on some specific ethnic groups, but it also must articulate and integrate other ethnicities in order to grow. In order to articulate and integrate other ethnicities, one effective strategy is to

take moderate policy and distribute patronage or interests to other ethnic groups. Conversely, if an ethnicity-based party takes a radical and disintegrative policy with no patronage to be distributed, it cannot attract the support of other ethnicities. Thus, the electoral process in a heterogeneous country has two effects on the party system: (1) differentiation on the basis of a particular ethnic as well as a socio-economic situation and (2) an integrative effect. These two effects interact with each other at the State level, and this leads to the fluctuating but basically stable party system in the State.

The Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice chaired by Dr. E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan, December 2015, submitted its report on the "Feasibility of Holding Simultaneous Elections to House of People (Lok Sabha) and State Legislative Assemblies". They told about various benefits of simultaneous elections to India as well as the challenges to Indian economy. Therefore, the committee asked the election commission to conduct the elections in two phases, like in case of general elections of 2019, the committee recommended to have two phases, Phase I is to be in sync with that of the Lok Sabha elections i.e April – May 2019. Phase II is somewhat mid-way in the term of the Lok Sabha i.e 30 months after Phase I around October – November 2021. Thereafter, it is visualized to conduct elections every 2.5 years in the country once the entire electoral sequences of Lok Sabha and all State Assemblies are harmonized by December 2021. The Committee also commended that bye-elections should be conducted to all seats that become vacant during a year during a scheduled time period.

#### **Need of the Study**

The major reflection of previous studies discussed many of the challenges or issue to hold the simultaneous election in India but no one has focused on the public views or the voter's views to conduct the simultaneous elections in India. Furthermore the reasons to adopt the simultaneous elections in India has not been analyzed yet practically. . Thus, in order to address this research issue, present study is designed and carried out in context of India.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

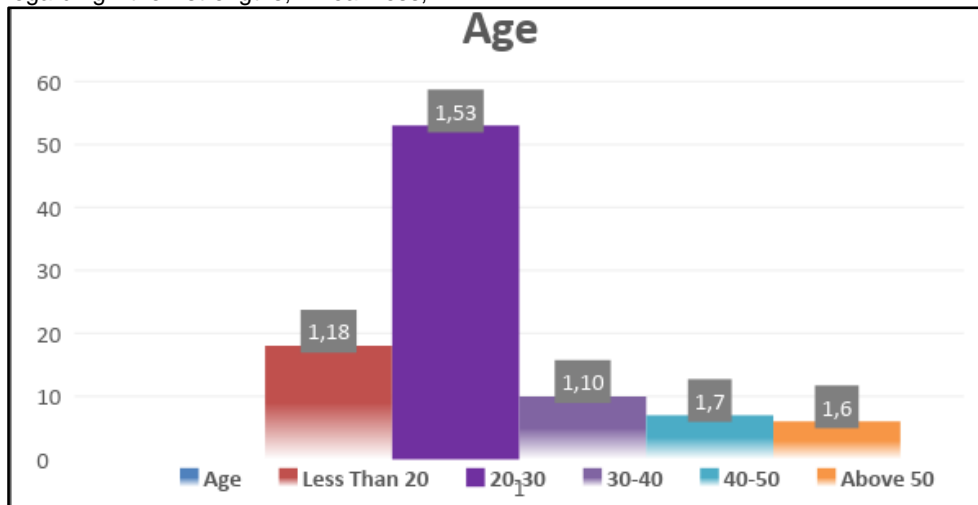
1. To analysis the factors responsible for holding simultaneous elections in India.
2. To know the perception of Indian regarding the benefits and challenges of simultaneous election in India.

#### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The study presents the information gathered through primary source. The online questionnaire has been prepared and send to 175 Indians including professionals, Businessman students, members of political parties etc. Out of 175 Indians, only 94 Indians has responded to the researcher. Therefore the questionnaire analysis consists of the perception

of 94 Indians regarding the factors responsible for holding the simultaneous election in India. In addition, their views regarding the strengths, weakness,

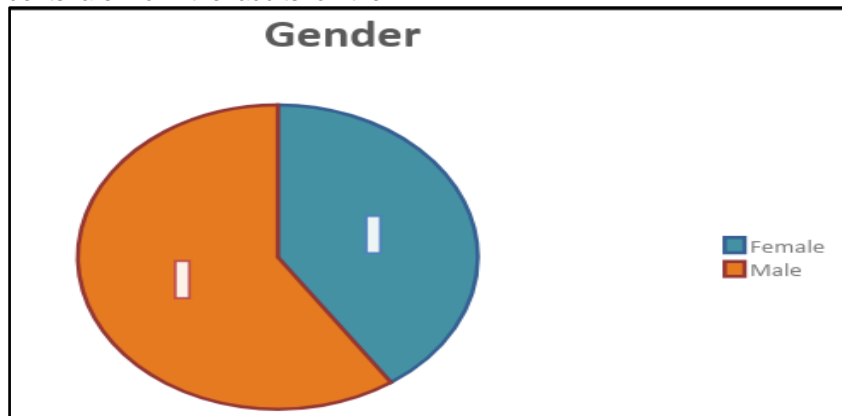
opportunities and treats of simultaneous elections have also been analyzed.



**Figure 1: Age group of Respondents**

The figure 1 above graph have been shown the age of 94 respondents in which 18 respondents are in the age of less than 20 group, 53 respondents are of the 20-30 age group and so on. The maximum no. of the respondents are from the adults or the

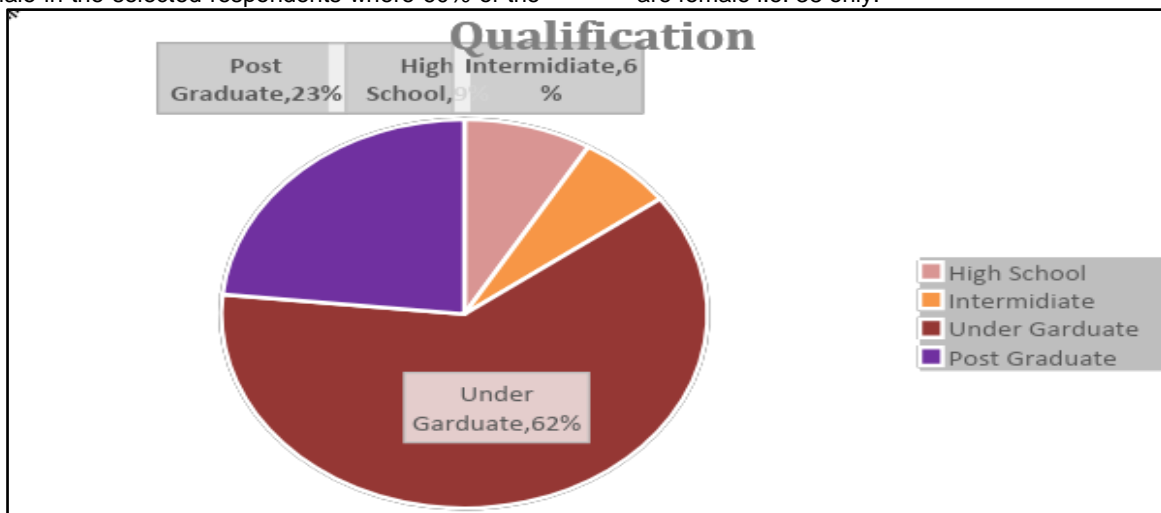
younger age group (20-30) i.e. 53 and 18 respondents of less than 20 age while in the age of above 50, minimum Indians i.e. only 6, have responded to this questionnaire.



**Figure-2: Gender of Respondents**

The figure 2 has shown the ratio of male and female in the selected respondents where 60% of the

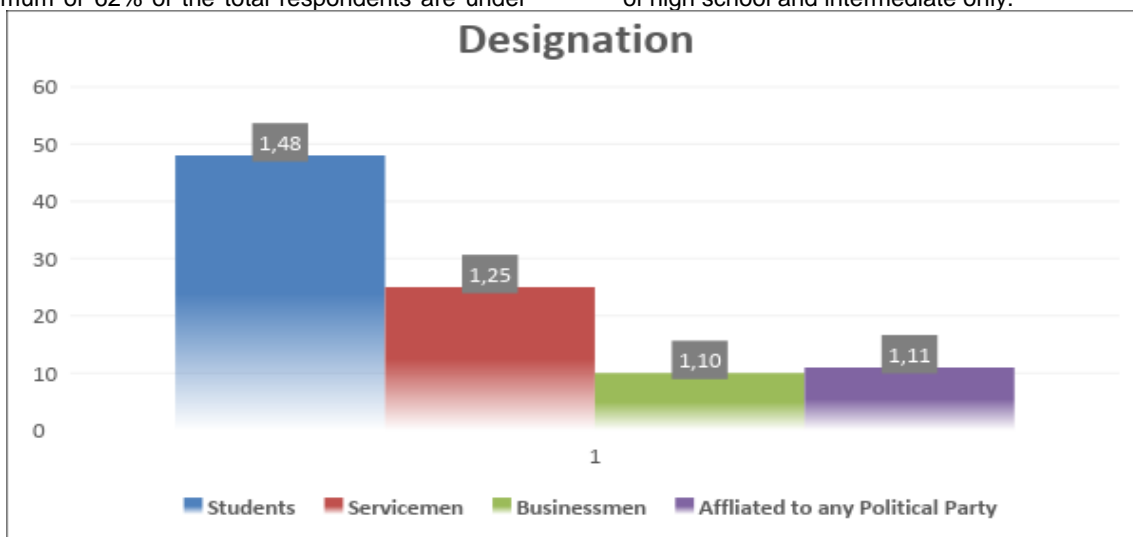
total respondents are male i.e. 56 and remaining 40% are female i.e. 38 only.



**Figure-3: Qualification of Respondents**

In figure 3, the ratio of qualification of all the respondents has been shown. It presented that the maximum or 62% of the total respondents are under

graduate and 23% respondents are post graduate i.e. 58 and 22 respectively. The remaining ratio, 15 % is of high school and intermediate only.



**Figure-4: Designation of Respondents**

In the above figure, the designation of all the respondents have been presented. It reveals the maximum no. of the total respondents are students

and serviceman i.e. 48 and 25 respectively while the members of political parties are 11 and rest of the respondents are businessman.

**Table-1: The Factors of Simultaneous Election in India**

What are The Important Factors Responsible To Conduct The Lok Sabha And State Assembly Elections Simultaneously			
S. No.	Factors	Weightage Mean	Rank
1	District Size	15.27659574	10
2	Constitutional Amendments	19.89361702	9
3	Fiscal Deficit	21.46808511	5
4	Imposition of model code of conduct	24.53191489	4
5	Increasing number of multistate parties	25.40425532	1
6	Legal Amendments	25.10638298	2
7	State Legislative Salaries	24.55319149	3
8	Partisan control in states	22.65957447	7
9	To initiate new projects	22.0212766	6
10	Poor quality of governance	21.36170213	8

**Source:** Own Computation based on the Reponses through online questionnaire

As per the perception of 94 respondents of different age group, table 1 has revealed that increasing number of multistate parties, Legal Amendments, State Legislative Salaries, imposition of

model code of conduct, fiscal deficit and Partisan control in states are the best or major six reasons to hold simultaneous election in India.

**Table-2: Strengths of Simultaneous Elections in India**  
**What are the Strength of conducting simultaneous elections**

S. No	Strengths	Weightage Mean	Rank
1	Reducing the government expenditures	28.74	10
2	Reduce use of black money	28.06	11
3	Reducing party election expenses	27.66	12
4	Cuts down policy Paralysis	29.00	9
5	Lessor disruption of normal public life	31.23	7
6	Voting will increase as migrant workers will have to come home only once	31.70	5
7	Frequent deployment of polices and government staff will be avoided	34.47	2
8	Politician will spend more time on governance instead of campaigning for most of the time	35.13	1
9	Reduces burden on crucial manpower	34.45	3
10	Reduction in the public holidays	32.81	4
11	More time for the development work and initiate new projects	30.83	8
12	Reduces the burden on the delivery of essential services	31.32	6

**Source:** Own Computation based on the Reponses through online questionnaire

The table 2 has presented many of benefits or the strengths of simultaneous elections in India. It revealed that politician will spend more time on governance instead of campaigning for most of the time, frequent deployment of polices and government staff will be avoided, public holidays, burden on the

delivery of essential services and the crucial manpower burden will be reduced, voting will increase as migrant workers will have to come home only once and Reduces etc. are the major benefits to Indians after implementing the simultaneous elections in India,.

**Table-3: Weaknesses of Simultaneous Elections in India**  
**What are the weaknesses of conducting simultaneous elections**

S. No	Weaknesses	Weightage Mean	Rank
1	Large scale purchase of EVM	8.70	6
2	Administrative and security infrastructure needs to be secured	10.04	1
3	The political parties may become lethargic	9.45	4
4	Accountability of political parties will increase	9.62	2
5	Misuse of Article 356	9.47	3
6	The interaction of the political parties with public will reduces as the election will held only once in 5 year	9.19	5

**Source:** Own Computation based on the Reponses through online questionnaire

The table 3 has shown very few weakness of simultaneous elections in India. The simultaneous election in Indian will needs to secured the

administrative and security infrastructure, accountability of political parties will increase and the article 356 may be misused by different members.

**Table-4: Opportunities from Simultaneous Elections in India**

What are the oppotunities provided by the simultaneous elections			
S. No	Opportunities	Weightage Mean	Rank
1	One nation one election	7.11	3
2	Political Consensus	7.76	1
3	Better utilization of security forces	7.50	2
4	Stability and economic development	6.85	5
5	Foremost stability in governance	6.93	4

**Source:** Own Computation based on the Reponses through online questionnaire

In the above table, the oppotunities to India from simultaneous elections have been discussed

where Political consensus, Better utilization of security forces and One nation one election are the main opportunities to India.

Table-5: Treats of Simultaneous Elections in India

What are the threats for the simultaneous elections			
S. No	Threats	Weightage Mean	Rank
1	Diversity	11.15	7
2	Unpredictability in term	12.28	3
3	Administrative Challenges	12.06	4
4	Local and national issues may get mix-up and distort priorities	13.05	1
5	Conflict with constitutional and democratic process	12.89	2
6	Constitution may be misused if parliament or assembly is prematurely dissolved	11.97	5
7	Voters may not differentiate between Lok Sabha and State Assembly	11.76	6

Source: Own Computation based on the Responses through online questionnaire

The table 5 has represent the challenges to India after holding the simultaneous election. The mix up of Local and national issues and distort priorities,

conflict with constitutional and democratic process, unpredictability and administrative challenges are the major issues of simultaneous election in India.

### Should the India adopt simultaneous elections?

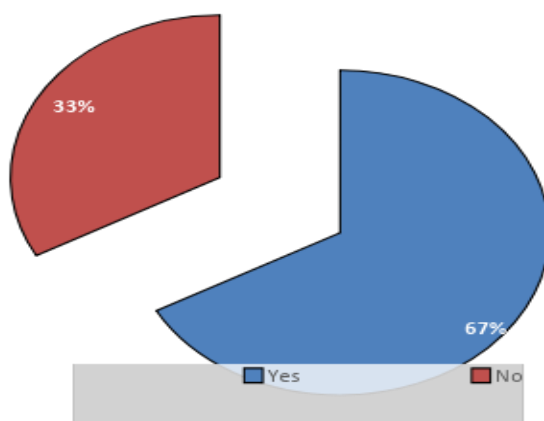


Figure-3: Qualification of Respondents

At last, the choice of respondents to adopt the simultaneous election has been asked. Where 67% of total respondents' i.e. total 63 respondents are agreed with this proposal of P.M. Narendra Modi and remaining 33% i.e. 31 respondents are agreed with this proposal.

#### Conclusion

In order to understand the reasons and SWOT analysis of simultaneous elections in India, this study primary focused on the four types of election held in India at present, thereafter simultaneous election was discussed. After reviewing the available studies, researcher found so many positive and negative points of simultaneous election in India but no study was found to work on the perception of Indian regarding simultaneous elections. Therefore, this study is carried out to fulfill such gaps. The researcher has send the online questionnaire to 175 Indian out of which only 94 Indian have responded to him. As per the responses of total respondents of different age group and designations the major 10 factors have been discussed. In addition SWOT analysis is done to know its impact. At last the choice of Indian to conduct to simultaneous elections was

asked and 67% of the total respondents have given their acceptance for conducting simultaneous elections in India. Therefore, it is suggested to hold the simultaneous elections in India in spite of few challenges of it. It will help to make one election one India and to grow significantly.

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