Polity & Governance · GS - II

‘Simultaneous election to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering but it will reduce the government’s accountability to the people’ Discuss.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2017	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Election expenditure; governance continuity; federalism; voter accountability; electoral synchronisation; constitutional safeguards

Model Answer

Introduction

Simultaneous elections propose holding Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections together or in synchronised cycles. The proposal seeks to reduce electoral costs and repeated disruptions but raises concerns about accountability and federalism.

Potential Benefits

- **Reduced expenditure:** Political parties and governments may spend less on repeated election campaigns and election administration.
- **Governance continuity:** Fewer Model Code of Conduct periods could reduce interruptions in policy implementation.
- **Administrative efficiency:** Security personnel and election officials could be deployed more efficiently.
- **Reduced political campaigning:** Governments may devote more time to administration rather than continuous electoral mobilisation.

Concerns and Challenges

- **Accountability:** Regular elections enable voters to assess government performance. Longer intervals between elections may weaken immediate electoral pressure.
- **Federalism:** State-specific issues may be overshadowed by national narratives.
- **Premature dissolution:** Hung legislatures or loss of confidence could disrupt synchronised cycles.
- **Constitutional complexity:** Tenures and dissolution provisions would require careful legal and constitutional arrangements.
- **Voter choice:** National and State elections involve different issues that may become conflated.

Way Forward

Build cross-party consensus, examine constitutional implications, preserve legislative accountability and develop arrangements for premature dissolution without undermining democratic mandates.

Conclusion

Simultaneous elections may reduce costs and administrative disruption, but these benefits must be weighed against federal diversity and democratic accountability. Electoral reform should strengthen, not weaken, representative government.

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