



NORTH EAST CATHOLIC RESEARCH FORUM  
C/O NEIRBC Secretariat, Inspiration Building,  
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In response to the High-Level Committee invitation for comments on the possibility of 'One nation, one election', the North East Catholic Research Forum hereby submit reasons for not supporting the proposed ONOE

1. **The invitation for opinion:** This Forum feels that the notification for inviting opinion is not widespread enough so as to draw the attention of India citizens. It was given in a form of a small advertisement that appeared in some sections of the media. Besides, the timeline allowed for opinion filing is too short for an issue as important as this, an issue which will ultimately determine the course of India's democratic processes. We are, therefore, tempted to doubt the seriousness of the Committee.
2. **The Economics of the proposal:** While there is no denying that repeated elections in a country drains resource, India has been smoothly following the practice of holding elections in different states at different times since independence, even when India was a poor country. Today, India is one of the leading economies of the world, therefore, we see no reason why the country should explore ONOE giving cost as main concern. We feel it is worth the risk taken as long as it strengthens our democratic institution. To quote Prof. Arun Kumar "repeated elections have a cost, but the benefits of enhanced democracy that they trigger are far greater" - In his book: "*Understanding the Black Economy and Black Money*".
3. **One Parliamentary election already a good practice:** India's parliamentary election is one of the most admired and acclaimed democratic exercise in the world. Separate elections for the state assemblies further strengthen the federal character of this country. The parliamentary elections every five years are already manifestation of 'one nation, one election'.
4. **More scope for foul play and manipulation:** One of the principal reasons why elections in country are spaced into different phases is to ensure fool proof security for a free and fair voting. Many times, the government of India find it difficult in deploying adequate security personnel, particularly in states where the law and order situation is not very good. Such being the experience even when elections to various state assemblies were held in different times, one can imagine the state of affairs when the country goes for poll at one go. The massive population of this country is simply not possible for the security strength to cover at one time. Therefore, when security is inadequate, it is certain vested interest elements, including, militants, insurgents and Left wing extremists will always try to manipulate the election process.
5. **Side-lining of local issues:** The biggest plus point of the present system is, that it allows the voter to judiciously chose between nationally relevant issues and those having local attentions. Therefore, the voter enjoys the freedom to vote according to his/her choice in the parliamentary and assembly elections. In the event ONOE, such freedom to decide based of due diligence shall be denied.



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6. **Pushing the country to Presidential form:** ONOE is likely to push the country to a Presidential form of government, at least in practice. It will defeat the very federal structure of our country, which the constitution solemnly enshrines. A party in power which is not uncommon in this country. A time will come when the unity in diversity, which is the strength of India, may be diluted. The call for 'one religion, one culture' may assume threatening proportion, directly imparting the wellbeing and identity of tribals, dalits and adivasis.
7. **End to balance of power:** In the present scheme of things, there is enough scope for balancing power. The dictatorial nature of any party in power in the centre could be counter-checked through state elections. The taunting regime of one ruling party is tamed with different electoral result, which is most healthy for a democratic country like India. Introduction of ONOE will most certainly neutralise time tested and proven practice of democracy in a huge and diverse country like India.

We therefore, humbly submit that in the interest of every Indian citizen, particularly the less privileged and neglected section, ONOE should not be adopted.

**Media Cell,**  
North East Catholic Research Forum

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