
**EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF ELECTORAL DESIGN ON DEMOCRATIC
REPRESENTATION: A STUDY OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS IN INDIA**

*Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Academic Requirement of the Degree of
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DECLARATION

I, Mr. Vyshak Manikanta. S, do hereby declare that this dissertation titled '**EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF ELECTORAL DESIGN ON DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION: A STUDY OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS IN INDIA**' is the outcome of bona fide research undertaken by me in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Laws (LL.M.) for the academic year 2023-24, at the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bangalore, under the guidance and supervision of Ms. Jasmine Joseph.

I declare that this dissertation is my own original work and all sources used have been properly acknowledged and cited. I further declare that I have not used any generative artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process.

I also declare that this work has not been submitted either in part or in whole for any Degree or Diploma at any other university.

Date: 29.07.2024

Place: Bengaluru

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation titled **‘EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF ELECTORAL DESIGN ON DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION: A STUDY OF SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS IN INDIA’**, submitted by **Vyshak Manikanta. S (ID M23098)** at the National Law School of India University, Bangalore, in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Laws (LL.M.) for the academic year 2023-24, was undertaken under my supervision.

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BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Indian political landscape is marred by frequent conduct of elections for the parliament, state assemblies and other local bodies. The Election Commission of India, operates on a war footing in order to ensure that elections to the state Assemblies and to the Parliament take place within the timelines stipulated by the Constitution. The difference between the tenures not only exists between the state assemblies and the Parliament and but also between state assemblies inter se. This difference arises because of the conduct of elections at different times. To mitigate the issue of the burden to conduct elections frequently, the concept of Simultaneous Elections in India was brought about with the aim to synchronize the conduct of Lok Sabha Elections and elections to the state assemblies.

Supporters of simultaneous elections have often argued that synchronization would reduce the frequency of electoral cycles and thereby minimize disruptions to governance and policy-paralysis that are often a direct consequence of frequent elections. Simultaneous elections is a reform that seeks to redress the substantial financial burden of recurring elections and reduction of administrative difficulties and repeated deployment of security forces. Further, Simultaneous Elections are touted to prevent policy paralysis, enhance policy continuity by mitigating delays caused by repeated the imposition of Model Code of Conduct and also reduce the influence of elections on policy decisions and allocation / distribution of resources.

At the other end of the spectrum, the proposal for simultaneous elections has been met with stern opposition. It has been argued that, if such a measure was to be implemented, national issues will override local issues. There are fears that Simultaneous Elections would afflict an irreparable damage on India's federal fabric and thus be violative of the Doctrine of Basic Structure. These issues can be examined when the manner in which simultaneous elections will be conducted is made known. However, there has been no comprehensive analysis of the deeper first order implications of the simultaneous elections model. By first order implications, for the purpose of this study I shall mean specifically, the impact of simultaneous elections on the concept of democratic representation.

The principal aim of the current research is to investigate the implications of simultaneous elections on democratic representation in India. The study shall navigate the relationship between democratic representation, elections and study simultaneous elections as a method of conducting elections to examine the impact of such a measure on democratic representation, within India's

electoral framework. Democratic representation is contingent upon elections / electoral processes as fundamental mechanisms for protecting the voice of citizens and to enhance government accountability. The study seeks to understand whether holding elections simultaneously in India would augment or diminish democratic representation in India, drawing from the existing literature and lessons from the experiences of other democratic states around the globe. By examining how synchronized elections have affected representation in other countries, the research intends to shed light on how such a reform will influence voter turnout, voter engagement and the quality of democratic representation in the world's largest democracy.

In this study I will bring to the fore the meaning and concept of democratic representation and briefly introduce some of the theories predicated on this concept. Thereafter, I shall introduce elections as a method of ensuring democratic representation. Here, the endeavour is to introduce factors that affect elections in general and thereafter draw a relationship between voting and representation. Some scholars have called for representation beyond mere electioneering. Although such arguments are intriguing, I have refrained from examining the argument to relay focus on the impact of electoral design on democratic representation and identify some direct, observable and replicable implications of electoral design on such representation. I use these implications as metrics for determining the extent and quality of representation in the subsequent sections. The Chapter on electoral design segues into an introduction of Elections and Representation in India followed by an examination of a specific form of electoral design, i.e., simultaneous elections. After alluding to the existing debates between scholars proposing and opposing simultaneous elections, I identify democratic representation as an ideal goal of any democracy and analyse whether simultaneous elections whittles down or augments representation, drawing heavily from the experiences of other countries and the literature available.

This study being non-empirical, relies on extensive survey of literature and secondary data available in such literature to establish the findings. I have emphasized and restricted the scope of the study to Parliamentary Democracies and the potential implications for India.

1. REPRESENTATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

The concept of 'Representation' is cardinal to governance mechanisms and administration systems. Representation is more often construed to be a common feature of democratic institutions alone. However, representation also finds place even in non-democratic institutions, although it continues to serve as a central feature of democracies. In this chapter, I explore the meaning and the purport of 'representation' and attempt to offer a nuanced understanding of the concept of

representation.

1.1. Meaning and Purport of Representation

The concept of representation is said to imply making something present, which was “*not present literally or in fact*”.¹ In the view of contemporary theorists ‘Representative Government’, is perceived to be a “mix of aristocracy and democratic authorization”.² ‘Representation’, both as a ‘means’ and as an ‘end’ has become essential in contemporary politics. The need for representation in achieving any form of general public opinion especially in a world that is no longer homogenous is strongly advocated for by democratic theorists. Robert Dahl³, building on the foregoing conception of representation, has stated that, representation is a continuous attempt to seek a balance between or marry the aristocratic principle of elite competence and the democratic ideal of mass participation. Representation, has therefore been viewed as, the relative weight attached to these seemingly competing conceptions.⁴

This gives rise to two divergent concepts of representation. One being the trustee conception, drawn from the idea of elite competence, as propounded by Edmund Burke,⁵ where the representative is expected to act in accordance with his own judgment of public good, irrespective of the expressed will of the constituents. The other, modern and widely accepted approach is that of the delegate conception of representation, in which the representative is understood to be obligated to advance the wishes of the constituents.

The debate between Mansbridge and Rehfeld on what representation means, is valuable to understand the concept and its expanse. Jane Mansbridge⁶ has developed an interesting argument seemingly building on Hanna Pitkin’s idea of representation ‘as a single highly complex concept’. Pitkin’s argument posits that representation would necessarily entail a promotion of the myriad interests of the represented, where the represented are capable of individual choice and judgment but do not object to what is done in their name, while the representative acts in furtherance of the interests of the represented.⁷

¹ Hannah Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (University of California Press 1967).

² Nadia Urbinati and Mark.E. Warren, ‘The Concept of Representation in Contemporary Democratic Theory’ (2008) 11 *The Annual Review of Political Science* 387.

³ Robert Dahl, *After the Revolution: Authority in a Good Society* (Yale University Press 1970).

⁴ Edmund Burke, *Burke’s Politics* (Ross Hoffman and Paul Levack eds, 1959).

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Jane Mansbridge, ‘Clarifying the Concept of Representation’ (2011) 105 *The American Political Science Review* 621.

⁷ Pitkin (n 1).

Mansbridge carries this conception forward to argue that the trusteeship model of representation is inadequate and dismisses the same as being overly simplistic, calling for replacing the same with what she has termed as a 'selection model' of representation. She states that the Burkean trusteeship model obscures the very essence of representation as it suggests an abdication of responsibility on part of the voter rather than the voter's use of his power to select the representative of his choice and to represent the interests of the voter as an agent of the voter. It appears that the selection formulation of representation based on the agency model is a more plausible and accepted conception of representation. I find myself convinced with the model of representation, where the voter is emboldened and the voter's agency is enhanced by a self-motivated elected representative, who can pursue the interests of the voters in furtherance of the mandate bestowed on him. Unlike other traditional conceptions, the voter does not forego power by electing a representative.

While I agree with Mansbridge on the model of representation he advances, I propose an understanding of representation, in terms of its constituting elements and scope, that is slightly distinct from the one proposed by Mansbridge. As stated above, Mansbridge illustrated representation as a single complex concept. However, Mansbridge does not provide for the several varying forms of representation that may be there. It would not be correct to treat representation simply as complex whole. Credence is lent to this formulation by Andrew Rehfeld⁸, who has made a careful distinction between a representative as an individual, representation as the function of representatives and representative in the adjectival sense used to denote the common features among the people. Rehfeld argues that the acknowledgement of the distinction and understanding representation in its varied forms would aid in attempts to understanding the relationship between representation and its other forms, rather than treating representation as a singular irreducible conception.

Rehfeld has emphasised on distinguishing the study of political representation from that of representative government.⁹ Even when there is no representative government, political representation may be prevalent. Rehfeld's illustrating example of the Libyan delegation to the United Nations which declared that the constituency that the delegation represented had undergone a metamorphosis from Kadaffi's regime to the people of Libya, such a shift in representation cannot be explained by elections or any democratic process for that matter. Especially in the International arena, such events are not uncommon and hence, warrants a fluid

⁸ Andrew Rehfeld, 'The Concepts of Representation' (2011) 105 *The American Political Science Review* 631.

⁹ Andrew Rehfeld, 'Towards a General Theory of Political Representation' (2006) 68 *Journal of Politics* 1.

understanding of representation to ensure that straitjacket definitions do not restrict the explanation of varied phenomena of representation whether such representation is through democratic institutions or without them.

Therefore, Representation as a concept is not merely restricted to democracies alone and it would be incorrect to assume that representation would necessarily entail a formally elected government. Thus, representation transcends democratic institutions and can be used to study both democratic and non-democratic institutions. Within this broad conceptual framework of representation, I seek to introduce the relationship between democracy and representation, and consequently, explore features that contribute, both qualitatively and quantitatively to augment representation in a democracy.

1.2. Democracy and Representation:

Nadia Urbinati and Mark E Warren argue that representation is essential to achieve democracy.¹⁰ Nadia Urbinati¹¹ posits that democratic representation rests on a mutual relationship which is characterized by circularity between the state and society, thereby specifically linking the citizenry with the legislative institutions. This concept of circularity emphasizes a process of mutual feedback between the representatives and their constituents. The relationship between the voters and their representatives, has later been termed as a diarchy by Urbinati. Her views have formed the basis of understanding the relationship between representation and democracy.

On the one hand, the power of decision is wielded by representatives when carrying out legislative duties, while the citizens exercise the power vested in them through participation in elections held periodically. However, while representatives regularly exercise their decision-making power in the legislative assemblies, citizens primarily exercise their power through periodic voting. The circularity becomes evident as citizens consistently exercise the power to judge the decisions made by the elected representatives in pursuance of their legislative duties.

How does representation manifest in practice? Section 24¹² of the Australian Constitution provides an early illustration of the practice of representation. It enjoins the amalgam of three broad principles, of representative democracy, i.e., direct popular elections, representatives empowered by the enfranchisement of electors and the existence of an electoral system which has the authority not just to select their representatives but also confer, legislative functions on the

¹⁰ Urbinati and Mark.E. Warren (n 2).

¹¹ Nadia Urbinati, *Representative Democracy: Principles & Genealogy* (The University of Chicago Press 2006).

¹² Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900.

representatives so elected by the people.¹³

While the Australian Constitution is unique for its explicit provision for representative democracy, most modern democracies enjoin the concept of representation in spirit and practice to differing degrees, although the term may not find place in the Constitution. The core of Representative Democracy lies in the aggregation of citizens' individual preferences through a "competitive process".¹⁴ It is perceived to be a competitive process because its methods are focused on selecting leaders which is more workable than direct popular participation in politics. Those who are once selected through the competitive process are allowed to govern until the set cycle of this "competitive process". More often, citizens casting votes in order to select the leaders who would constitute this competitive process.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, has categorically held that India is a Representative Democracy.¹⁵ The Apex Court has also held that the essence of a responsible government in a representative democracy would be indicative of a government by the people.¹⁶ It has further opined that representative democracy would warrant that the sovereign power to choose their representatives vests in the people while the exercise of such power for governance and administration, is exercised by the representatives chosen by the people to carry out such functions on their behalf.¹⁷ Yet, there is a palpable lack of clarity as to what entails 'representation' and what makes a government, truly 'representative'.

Pitkin suggested that political representatives in constitutional democracy should carry certain features: they should possess the authority to act, their act should be in a manner that it furthers the interests of the people they represent and that they should be accountable to the people they represent for the actions they perform.¹⁸ As a result, the ordinary people do not really have a pivotal role in the policy making process, for once they have elected their representatives, it is the elected representatives who ought to carry the burden of political performance. As seen above, this formed the basis for Mansbridge's understanding of representation as well.

1.3. Prominent Theories of Democratic Representation:

¹³ Faigenbaum, Jacob Isaac and Peter Hanks, *Faigenbaum and Hank's Australian Constitutional Law* (1980).

¹⁴ Oliver Escobar, 'Pluralism and Democratic Participation: What Kind of Citizen Are Citizens Invited to Be?' [2017] *Contemporary Pragmatism* 416.

¹⁵ *Kuldip Nayar v Union of India* (2006) 7 SCC 1.

¹⁶ *S.R. Chaudhuri v. State of Punjab & Ors.* (2001) 7 SCC 126.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ *Urbinati and Mark.E. Warren* (n 2).

For Truman and Dahl, who are pluralist democratic theorists, democracies primarily served the purpose of collecting a common political agenda as an end goal of individual citizens, through the process of voting¹⁹. Pluralistic Democratic theorists acknowledge the fact that competing groups with different interests exist in the society. These conflicts are resolved and the differences are accommodated by the leaders of these competing groups who bargain with each other.²⁰

Against the advocates of representative democracy and pluralist democratic theorists are Participatory Democrats. Their major concern is that both representative democracy and pluralistic democracy make the elected representative rulers more powerful since the “aggregation” is only a means through which the real individual preferences of individual citizens are subsumed, ignored or excluded.²¹ The Supreme Court of India, in a recent case, held that India was a representative democracy with some features of a participatory model.²²

On the other hand some authors posit that the very concept of representation is not compatible with participation in a democracy where the citizens can actively participate in politics and exert influence over public affairs. Barber asserts that representation primarily involves political participation through voting alone. Rather than questioning the conditions under which representation can align with democratic principles, participatory democrats such as Benjamin Barber²³ have accepted Schumpeter's assumption and argued that representative systems inevitably lead to oligarchy, where elected officials hold exclusive political power. This critical perspective has been cited as contributing to political apathy, suggesting that if representative democracy is inherently contradictory, efforts to democratize such institutions may seem futile. Therefore, the implication of this radical argument is that true democracy requires dismantling existing representative governments and starting anew to ensure genuine democratic participation and accountability. This conception restrains the possibility of coexistence of representation and participation.

Deliberative Democracy relies upon the strong foundations of ‘reason’. “Inclusive political judgement” forms the backbone democracy for deliberative democratic theorists²⁴. There are

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Oliver Escobar (n 14).

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *Rajeev Suri v. Delhi Development Authority*, 2021 SCC Online SC 7.

²³ Benjamin Barber, R, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (20th edn, University of California Press 2003).

²⁴ Urbinati and Mark.E. Warren (n 2).

representatives, and there are citizens, the former ought to offer reasons for the decisions they make and the actions they undertake to the citizens. These ‘reasons’ find themselves in an aisle if they aren’t accepted by free and equal citizens. The mere presence of ‘reasons’ means nothing if it remains inaccessible. The reasoning achieved and the accessibility to it ought to be binding upon its participants at least for some time²⁵.

Political representation, or representation simpliciter emerges as a relational concept, assuming various forms and applicable to democratic and non-democratic institutions alike. It would be incorrect to assume that representation is applicable merely to democratic institutions / societies and also to equate representation with representative democracy, as the Apex Court has tended to do.

However, it is pertinent to recognize that no granular feature can be singled out as an indispensable tenet of a representative government. Therefore, representative government encompasses a broad array of political frameworks, each characterized by numerous distinguishing features. No singular criterion within this spectrum is indispensable to definitively establish the existence of a representative government.

2. ELECTIONS AS A METHOD FOR ENSURING REPRESENTATION

In this chapter I attempt to bring to the fore the relationship between elections, voting representation. I attempt to examine elections as a tool of guaranteeing representation. I note that there are some authors who assert that the time has come to move beyond elections for studying and expanding representation. Despite such arguments by noteworthy theorists, I argue that elections remain fundamental in ensuring representation and that electoral design continues to have a pervasive impact on representation.

2.1. Elections, Voting and Representation

Direct Democracy, a form of government in which decision making is vested in the entirety of the electorate, has long been established to be simply impractical²⁶. Any democratic government therefore, functions through representatives who are chosen by the people via periodic elections. This is said to ensure accountability and representation. Whether or not periodic elections ensures

²⁵ Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, ‘What Deliberative Democracy Means’ in Ricardo Blaug and John Schwarzmantel (eds), *Democracy: A reader* (2nd edn, 2016).

²⁶ Webb and others, ‘Election’, *Britannica* (2024) <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/election-political-science>. Accessed 21 July 2024.>.

accountability is a broad question which shall not be considered in this chapter.

Bernard Manin²⁷ sought to answer whether the simple act of voting would enforce representation, while deriving the understanding of 'Representation' from Pitkin. For Pitkin, 'Representation' means to act in the best interest of citizens based on which they also ask whether democratic governments are representative in nature because the representatives are elected. From this lens, democratic representation can be viewed in two dimensions: one, the "mandate" view wherein the elections are believed to serve the ends of choosing good policies or choose political representatives who would ensure good policies and the other, the "accountability" view wherein elections operate as a means to fix accountability on the previously elected representatives for the actions they have carried out in the past. Manin concludes that both the "mandate" and the "accountability" are imperfect and have their own flaws, for it is possible that certain incentives which the political representatives seek might deviate them from the "mandate" and mere "accountability" does not ensure representation when the information that the voters have is not complete.

Nadia Urbinati²⁸, has explored populism as it manifests within the framework of representative democracy, diverging from conventional views that position populism in opposition to representative systems. Instead, she argues that populism emerges from within representative democracy, seeking to establish its own version of legitimacy through the creation of a distinctive "representative people" and governance structure. When in power, populism reframes elections not as mere democratic processes but as affirmations of majority will and leadership, effectively transforming them into instruments of legitimization akin to plebiscites or acclamations.

Building on her diarchic theory, Urbinati highlights populism as a facet of broader elite formation and substitution dynamics within democratic societies, challenging previous understandings that categorize it solely as a protest movement or narrative. She conceives democracy as a governance system where "will" and "opinion" interact influentially yet independently. The will is expressed through voting rights and electioneering processes, whereas the opinions are relating to political judgments and processes.

Representative democracy, in this scheme, separates the moments of popular will formation and political judgment, fostering an environment where political decisions are informed by

²⁷ Bernard Manin, Adam Przewoski and Susan C Stokes, 'Elections and Representation', *Cambridge Studies in the Theory of Democracy* (Cambridge University Press 1999).

²⁸ Nadia Urbinati, *Democracy Disfigured* (Harvard University Press 2014) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wpndf>. Accessed 17 July 2024.>.

deliberative processes over time rather than immediate reactions. Unlike direct democracy, which collapses the distinction between will and judgment, representative democracy preserves this temporal separation, thereby enabling the formation and refinement of public opinion and rhetoric through institutions like free media and regular elections. Thus elections are and remain a central feature of representative governments.

2.2. Factors that impact Representation in a Democracy

Elections are indispensably ingrained in the modern democratic practice. Elections are often considered as the essence of democracy.²⁹ This foundational concept, encounters substantial debate and critique in the form and manner of practical application for ensuring a better representation. The existing literature does not suggest that a singular system triumphs and achieves better representation in elections than any other.

However, several authors have contributed to the debate on the fundamental issues that affect representation. It is pertinent to briefly allude to the issues that affect democratic representation. The first and the most foundational issue is the definition of the electorate, or the ‘demos’ which is entitled to exercise the ‘electoral agency’.³⁰ This may extend to debates surrounding the voting rights of those who are ‘affected’ by the decisions of the government or to limit it persons to whom the law of the land is directly applicable to.³¹ This debate of the enfranchisement of the demos and some authors have also favoured voting by proxy for cognitively disabled citizens, while some have rejected the idea of substituted voting.³²

Another feature of democracy that has an extensive impact on representation is the nature, design and structure of electoral institutions. Researchers have had longstanding debates about electoral structures and rules.³³ Several authors have also conducted extensive studied regarding reservation of seats of elections and electoral quotas for ensuring representation of minorities and disadvantaged groups, including ethnic / indigenous minorities and women.³⁴ Interestingly, divergent views emerge on the limitations of electoral representation. Scholars have often sparred

²⁹ B Boundou and Haggrot MC, ‘Electoral Representation Revisited: Introduction’ (2022) 26 Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy 629.

³⁰ A Bengston, ‘Where Democracy Should Be: On the Site(s) of All the-Subjected Principle’ (2021) 28 Res Publica 69.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*

³³ Wilson J L, *The Price of Democracy: How Money Shapes Politics and What to Do About It* (Harvard University Press 2020).

³⁴ Cage J, *The Price of Democracy: How Money Shapes Politics and What to Do About It* (Harvard University Press 2020).

over whether electioneering and electoral processes must be complemented with other non-electoral apparatus for fostering better representation. This includes the idea of townhalls, mini-publics and select legislative chambers.³⁵

Some theorists have discussed several models of participation so as to ensure that the interests of those who are unable to exercise electoral agency are protected. This includes, the interests and welfare of future generations and that of animals.³⁶

2.3. Representation beyond Elections:

As seen above, enfranchisement, elections and electoral design have a considerable impact on representation. However, elections do not guarantee representation. Several authors have argued that universal suffrage and elections are not sufficient to guarantee representation.

Sofia Nasstrom³⁷, has examined a framework which moves beyond conventional electoral processes to explore a broader tenet of democratic representation. It has been argued that while electoral competition faces significant skepticism as the sole embodiment of popular will, she proposes a new framework of serves both critical and constructive purposes. I also assert that such an endeavour will discern and help identify what exactly constitutes democratic representation when detached from electoral mechanisms. In order to achieve such a representation beyond elections, first, democratic principles and actual governance in democracies must be distinguished. This, may in turn open avenues for experimenting with new forms of representation within, across, and beyond traditional constituencies. Thus Nasstrom advocates for a broader understanding of democratic representation that transcends electoral processes, emphasizing equality and collective empowerment as fundamental principles.

Rosanvallon has advanced that despite initial democratic milestones, the historical trajectory of elections has been marked by persistent disillusionment rather than anticipated societal transformation.³⁸ Universal suffrage, he argues, has failed to fulfil the basic expectations of ensuring citizen welfare and optimal governance. This failure has not been addressed for over two centuries, although many societies have engaged in continual exploration and experimentation with electoral reforms and participatory measures aimed at remedying deficiencies and enhancing

³⁵ Abizadeh A, 'Representation, Bicameralism, Political Equality and Sortition: Reconstituting the Second Chamber as a Randomly Selected Assembly' (2021) 19 Perspectives on Politics 791.

³⁶ Cristina Lafont, *Democracy Without Shortcuts: A Participatory Conception of Deliberative Democracy* (Oxford University Press 2020).

³⁷ Sofia Nasstrom, 'Democratic Representation Beyond Election' (2015) 22 Constellations 1.

³⁸ Pierre Rosanvallon, *Good Government Beyond Elections* (Harvard University Press 2018).

democratic efficacy and thus enhancing representation.

Amendments to the electoral system, initiatives towards ensuring representative diversity, and reinforcement of citizen participation through direct democratic mechanisms, and the imposition of limits on the exercise of powers by political offices, have proven to be inadequate despite some success.³⁹ He asserts that issues such as financial influences in campaigns, party dominance over electoral processes, and growing concerns over misrepresentation continue to undermine democratic integrity. An alternative conception of permanent democracy has been proposed where citizens transcend episodic electoral participation and instead embrace ongoing responsibility for governance oversight.⁴⁰ This is paradigm shift that is now being advocated as the process by which representatives are placed under scrutiny and accountability through principles designed to justly regulate relations between the governed and their representatives. This is a form of post electoral activism and introduces the idea of democratic oversight thus encouraging active citizen engagement beyond periodic voting.

2.4. Electoral Design and Democratic Representation

As seen from Section 2.2. above, electoral design indeed has a pervasive impact on representation. While it is true from Section 2.3., that factors that not relating to the electoral processes also have an impact on elections, here, the author shall study the impact of electoral design on democratic representation.

Several studies have been conducted to examine in the impact of electoral design from differing perspectives. Becher conducted a study to investigate the impact of electoral institutions and design on two crucial aspects of representation: policy responsiveness and legislative quality. Often, these tenets are analysed independently.⁴¹ Analysing proportional electoral systems Becher advances that such systems may better align policy outcomes with public preferences in comparison with majoritarian systems. However, he cautions that this advantage could potentially come at the cost of diminishing the caliber of legislators.⁴² After conducting an empirical evaluation of the trade-off between the electoral systems leveraging the electoral reforms in 20th century Switzerland, Becher addresses issues of endogeneity by utilizing variations in reform

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ Michael Becher and Irene Menendez Gonzalez, 'Electoral Reform and Trade-Offs in Representation' (2019) 133 *American Political Science Review* 694.

⁴² *ibid.*

intensity linked to administrative constraints and voter preferences data.

It was observed by Becher, that the increased intensity of proportional reform enhanced the policy congruence between legislators and the electorate but simultaneously reduced legislative effort. He further corroborates the findings of his study with evidence from the functioning of the contemporary European Parliament which supports the understanding that while proportional systems may improve policy alignment, they may also impact legislative quality negatively.⁴³ Becher's study illustrates that any alteration in electoral design may not only impact representation, either positively or negatively, but can also cause an appreciable adverse effect and a positive impact on representation, simultaneously.

Ferland has focused on the relationship between electoral system and representation in the specific context of the congruence between the interests and ideological preferences of the citizens and their representatives.⁴⁴ Ferland has argued that electoral systems determine composition, size and ideology of political parties, the nature of government and also impacts how votes of the citizens translate into seats.⁴⁵ It emerges that proportional electoral systems typically offer a representational advantage over majoritarian systems in terms of legislative congruence this advantage does not necessarily extend to congruence of policies.⁴⁶ From the foregoing, it can be inferred that electoral systems have a definite impact on ideological congruence, and consequently upon representation at different stages of the electoral process.

However, this does not mean that findings of the aforesaid studies are exactly replicable in all representative democracies. Studies conducted on the electoral framework of Ireland significantly reflect that despite Ireland's proportional representation system, the idea of a single transferable vote has developed a politician-party-voter relationship emphasising on constituency based politics, that influences the democratic nature and political dynamics of the country.⁴⁷ It appears that while the general elections have fostered a conservative political climate where representative impulses frequently overshadow the party system's capacity for coherent, disciplined policymaking.

Ferland has argued that Proportional representation proffers legislative coherence, researchers in

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Benjamin Ferland and Matt Golder, *Citizen Representation and Electoral Systems* (Oxford Research Encyclopedias 2021).

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ R Kenneth Carty, 'The Electoral Framework and the Politics of Representation' in David M Farrell and Niamh Hardiman (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Irish Politics* (2021).

Ireland have provide contradictory findings as a consequence of electoral structure and design. While it is clear that institutional arrangements can profoundly affect representation, it is equally pertinent to note that political circumstances and minor differences between electoral processes followed in different geographic regions would mean that results observed in one geographic area may not be replicable in other regions in terms of policies and political decision making.

It is pertinent to identify context-independent factors for ensuring that replicable and objective metrics which can be employed in a variety of circumstances, and yet reflect similar findings. Douglas Amy studies the American elections to argue that many issues that affect and plague the system of representation to America, is traceable to the electoral system itself. Although Douglas argues in favour of the proportional representation system, he bases the argument on increase in voter choice, voter turnout, fair representation and enlivening political debate.⁴⁸ Further, arguments have been made in favour of ensuring representation of minorities and elimination of wasted votes so as to ensure that the will of the general public is better reflected. These metrics are more universal, easily replicable and are direct observable implications of electoral design, rather than policy congruence or political decision-making.

3. ELECTIONS IN INDIA

In this section I explore the conduct of elections and electoral system in India. I argue that the current electoral design has not sufficiently achieved the level and kind of representation that the founding fathers conceived. Thereafter I allude to the concept of simultaneous elections in India and some of the debates surrounding simultaneous elections.

3.1. Elections and Representation in India

The Indian electoral system is said to have been designed on the premise of fair representation and to foster an inclusive and equitable democracy.⁴⁹ Yet, there have been several deficiencies in the Indian electoral system. Research suggests that minorities and marginalised classes and groups are inadequately or inappropriately represented despite frequent timely conduct of elections and several provisions for their representation. Some have called for an alternative electoral design in order to augment representation. These authors have discussed proportional representation instead

⁴⁸ Douglas J Amy, *Real Choices/New Voices: How Proportional Representation Elections Could Revitalise American Democracy* (Columbia University Press 2002).

⁴⁹ Raj Sekhar Vundru, 'Which Electoral System Ensures Real Representation?' (2019) 5 *Journal of Social Inclusion Studies* 19.

of the first past the post system while some have also suggested a two round system.⁵⁰

Electoral framework in India was inherited from the British and is based upon the British Parliamentary Democracy.⁵¹ India's electoral framework is said to have functioned with relative integrity until the fourth general election in 1967. However, it is often argued that by the fifth general election in 1971, and increasingly through the 1980s, distortions emerged, such as vote manipulation and intrusion of anti-social elements into politics.⁵² While this deterioration prompted the Election Commission of India to advocate for reforms to restore fairness in elections, it reiterates the assertion that representation becomes a casualty.

Kumar⁵³ has explored the landscape of electoral politics in India since 1962. He has carried out a detailed critique of the prevailing model of representation in India. On a systematic study of the electoral outcomes in the Lok Sabha elections, he craftily distinguishes between bipolar and multipolar states. However, he concedes the absence of consistent trends or enduring patterns that could reliably inform definitive conclusions on a study of the trends. Instead, electoral outcomes in India appear profoundly influenced by dynamic political realities external to electoral mechanics. This phase-wise approach underscores the multifaceted nature of India's electoral landscape, challenging simplistic interpretations and emphasizing the intricate interplay of local, regional, and national factors in electoral outcomes. But none of the studies thus far have comprehensively examined the potential impact of simultaneous elections in India. Before, I proceed to do that, it is pertinent to first understand, what simultaneous elections actually mean to India and the preliminary arguments made with regard to simultaneous elections.

3.2. Simultaneous Elections in India: Concepts and Fears

The Election Commission of India in the year 1982-1983 officially put forth the idea of simultaneous elections in India for the first time. The Annual Report of the first Election Commission of India (ECI) noted that the ECI had placed its recommendation before the House of People and the Legislative Assemblies of the States. Prevention of administrative disruptions, avoiding the frequent need for police personnels to manage elections which would otherwise dilute their presence in daily duties, promotion of substantial economy through simultaneous revision of electoral rolls, prevention of delayed developmental projects due to shifting of focus

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ Ramesh R, 'Historical Perspectives of the Electoral Reforms in India', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (2011).

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ Sanjay Kumar, 'Is There a Crisis of Representation?', *Elections in India: An Overview* (Routledge 2022).

towards the elections, duplication of expenditures by political parties and candidates were the primary reasons stated by the ECI for recommending the conduct of simultaneous elections. ECI was so in favour of simultaneous elections that it proposed to introduce it as a convention if not through a legislation. It had opined that simultaneous elections had worked perfectly in India before 1967. But the premature dissolution of several Lok Sabhas and Legislative Assemblies of the States and invocation of Article 352 and 356 of the Constitution of India had disrupted the conduct of elections simultaneously.

The 170th Law Commission of India on Electoral Reforms also concluded that simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and all the Legislative Assemblies should be conducted. It even suggested a constitutional amendment to that effect. The proposal to introduce simultaneous elections in India is therefore not of recent times.

Although no straight-jacket definition can be derived for ‘Simultaneous Elections’, it is understood to be elections which are held together to elect the office holders at both national and regional levels.⁵⁴ In parliamentary democracies, the conduct of simultaneous elections could be of different types: “National, Regional and Local Simultaneity” where all the national and regional elections and sub-regional elections are conducted on the same day, “National and Regional Simultaneity” is a process by which elections in the district level are conducted on different days whereas the National and Provincial elections are conducted on the same day, “Provincial and District/City simultaneity” where the elections at the National level are held on a different day whereas all the other elections are held on the same day, “provincial simultaneity” where only elections at the provincial levels are conducted simultaneously. Similarly simultaneous elections could also be conducted only at the district or the city level.

A discussion paper by the members of NITI Ayog in the year 2017 put forth that Simultaneous Elections in the Indian context simply means the conduct of elections for Lok Sabha and the State Assembly “on a single day and at the same time” and hence “synchronised together”⁵⁵. The discussion paper further suggested that a phase-wise synchronization of elections would be best suited for the Indian scenario since the tenures of the State Assemblies would not end at the same time. Adoption of “constructive vote” and fixed terms for both the Lok Sabha and the State

⁵⁴ Febriyanto SA, Arsil F and Ayuni Q, ‘Models of Simultaneous Elections around the World: The Influence of Government Systems on Election Implementation Methods’ (2023) Proceedings of the International Conference for Democracy and National Resilience (ICDNR 2023) Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 176

⁵⁵ Bibek Debroy, Kishore Desai, Analysis of Simultaneous Elections: The “What”, “Why”, and “How” (2017) Discussion Paper 2017, <https://www.thehinducentre.com/multimedia/archive/03226/Note_on_Simultaneo_3226067a.pdf> accessed 27 June 2024

Assemblies was suggested in order to sustain the simultaneity of the electoral cycles. However, Eesha Shrotriya and Shantanu Pachauri⁵⁶ in their paper have criticised these suggestions on the ground that it assumes a “domino-like effect” that adoption of constructive voting would ensure that the State Assemblies have a fixed term and that fixed term would aid in preserving the simultaneity of the elections. The concept of simultaneous elections has been criticised by researchers who believe that conduction of simultaneous elections can dilute the regional issues.

Simultaneous Elections, is alternatively referred to as “One Nation, One Election”. The need for One Nation, One Election has been emphasized by several authors. Nivedha Parthasarthy⁵⁷, argues that with simultaneous elections the turn outs of voters would increase. She aligns herself with the suggestion put forth Bibek Debroy and Kishore Desai to the extent that voting should be carried out in a constructive manner. She suggests that “constructive no confidence” must be adopted to ensure that there is continuity of the incumbent government. Dr. A. Shaji⁵⁸ George argues that simultaneous elections reduce the costs on logistics and administration, ensure that the frequency of personnels deployed for security and law enforcement is reduced and curb administrative and governance disruptions. Simultaneous elections would also allow the provinces/states to focus more on administration and governance instead of elections. Implementation of policies and development strategies would be comparatively more efficient since simultaneous elections would prevent frequent invocation of Model Code of Conduct.

Interestingly, academicians such as Dr. Tiranjan Raj⁵⁹ have argued that simultaneous elections in India should not be called as “One Nation, One Election” since the same would run contrary to the basic federal character of the country. The introduction of simultaneous elections in India would result in the Central Government ignoring the issues of the states or provinces. The fear that simultaneous elections would result in the suppression of regional parties and interests is also expressed by Nivedha Parthasarthy⁶⁰. She also argues that it would reduce political accountability since the dissolution of the elected assemblies would not be comparatively easier.

Studying the possibility of implementation of simultaneous elections in India Basoya⁶¹, has made

⁵⁶ Eesha Shrotriya and Shantanu Pachauri, “Simultaneous Elections and Flexible Legislative Terms: A Constitutionally Preferable Approach” (2020) 5 Indian Law Review 106

⁵⁷ Parthasarathy, N, “One nation one election – a critical analysis” (2023) 4 DME Journal of Law 56

⁵⁸ Dr. A Shaji George, “One Nation, One Election: An Analysis of the Pros and Cons of Implementing Simultaneous Elections in India” (2023) 2 Partners Universal International Research Journal 40

⁵⁹ Dr. Triranjan Raj , “Prudence of Simultaneous Elections in India” (2019) 12 Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry

⁶⁰ Parthasarathy, N (n 55)

⁶¹ Ekta Basoya, “One Nation, One Election Analyzing the Impact on Indian Polity” (2023) 10 Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research 245

an attempt to identify the complex challenges that plague the measure. While there are fears that simultaneous elections may potentially undermine federal principles by homogenizing state-level issues and diluting regional autonomy in electoral matters. It is pertinent to study the potential impact on voter turnout, engagement and fair representation in the democratic process. While there are issues concerning federalism, governance effectiveness, etc., I focus on the impact of simultaneous elections on democratic representation in the following section.

4. SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION

There have been several arguments for and against the conduct of simultaneous elections in India. However, it is pertinent to draw from the research conducted in other countries, in order to suitably analyse the impact of simultaneous elections on democratic representation. Here, I argue that, despite some concerns, on the whole, simultaneous elections have shown to augment and enhance representation based on objective studies.

4.1. Simultaneous Elections and its impact on Democratic Representation

India had simultaneous elections to the Parliament and the Legislative Assemblies for four terms from 1950. However, studies about voter behaviour between 1950 and 1970 may not give rise to accurate, replicable and observable implications. Two reasons may be cited for this. Firstly, India was a nascent democracy, still attempting to come out of the shackles of the British Raj and secondly, there was only one political party which was also a pioneer of the Independence movement. Therefore, I study the experience of other countries in which simultaneous elections have been held, so as to identify and discern the potential ramifications of introducing simultaneous elections on representation in India.

While studying the various forms that simultaneous elections may assume, Satrio⁶², has further differentiated the forms that such elections take in Presidential and Parliamentary Democracies. Like in India, the most pervasive argument made in favour of simultaneous elections, across the world, is efficiency in electoral administration. The objective of simultaneous elections, appears to differ in Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies. Typically, in Presidential Democracies, simultaneous elections are conducted for achieving congruence between the executive and the legislature.⁶³ This congruence allows policy consistency and predictability and promotes a unified leadership. Such an impact on Parliamentary Democracies is not desirable and especially so, in a

⁶² Febriyanto SA, Arsil F and Ayuni Q (n 52)

⁶³ Ibid.

Federal state such as India. Nevertheless, simultaneous elections in Parliamentary Democracies have led to an advancement of efficiency without driving governmental policies towards mere uniformity.⁶⁴ Thus, simultaneous elections in Parliamentary Democracies have augmented efficiency while preserving diversity of policy-making.

Research conducted on the German experience when elections to the Parliament coincided with other elections have revealed interesting findings. Having delved into the electoral ramifications of concurrent elections, particularly exploring horizontal concurrency and the combination of different electoral systems, Rudolph and Leininger⁶⁵ assert that it may be relatively easier for the incumbents to leverage their support base to drive higher turnout for concurrent elections, thereby influencing the electoral outcomes. Concurrent elections, it is argued, enhances voter turnout and reshape the electorate's composition, influencing electoral results, by driving larger participation even to elections that may be considered less important by the electorate.⁶⁶ Interestingly, it was seen that center-left parties tend to benefit slightly more. Although that may sound alarming, it was also seen that notable gains were observed across the political spectrum, affirming theoretical expectations of turnout-driven effects. Although voter decision is a complex arena, driven by a complex web of factors, the fact that there was an observable increase in voter turnout and that on the whole, all parties benefitted with concurrent elections, demonstrates a direct potential ramification of simultaneous elections. It not only increases voter turnout, encouraging more of the electorate to participate in the elections, but also reflects that the votes are distributed across the political spectrum, thus reflecting better representation.

While it is seen that more people turnout to vote when elections are conducted simultaneously, do simultaneous elections have an impact on the level of information available to voters is a pivotal question that needs to be addressed. Hummel and Knight⁶⁷ have carried out a comprehensive analysis of the impact of sequential and simultaneous elections on the level of information that may be available to voters and the impact on voting behaviour. Two models were studied for the purpose, one being the simultaneous election model and the other was the sequential election model. The study found that neither system achieves the ideal benchmark of all-public information welfare.

⁶⁴ José Antonio Cheibub, Fernando Limongi, "Democratic Institutions and Regime Survival: Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies Reconsidered" (1998) 5 *Annual Review of Political Science* 151

⁶⁵ Lukas Rudolph, Arndt Leininger "Coattails and Spillover-Effects: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from Concurrent Executive and Legislative Elections" (2021) 70 *Electoral Studies*

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Patrick Hummel and Brian Knight, "SEQUENTIAL OR SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS? A WELFARE ANALYSIS." (2015) 56 *International Economic Review* 851

However, simultaneous voting system appears to offer the advantage of giving equal weight to information and preferences from all states at once. Simultaneous voting system may confer an advantage to the marginal frontrunner. However, simultaneous elections have also been seen to confer a significant advantage to the perceived frontrunner. Studying the 2004 Democratic Presidential Primary in the United States, the study suggests that while the simultaneous system generally performs better than the sequential system in terms of welfare, the difference in outcome of the elections is marginal.⁶⁸ Hence, simultaneous elections ensure equal information treatment to the entire electorate. One observable drawback is that it may skew the voters in favour of the frontrunner. However, as seen earlier, simultaneous elections benefit political parties overall and fears of the frontrunner garnering more votes, is a natural consequence of larger voter participation and equal information treatment. Moreover, it is also seen that in terms of welfare of citizens, the simultaneous elections is said to triumph other models.

Additionally, there are fears that simultaneous elections may influence the voters and that as a result, coordinated voting patterns may be observed. Dispelling these assumptions, Sugato Dasgupta's⁶⁹ study to investigate the voting behaviour under conditions where voters face a payoff externality was studied. The payoff externality infused was as follows: regardless of a voter's personal preference, each voter's payoff increases if they support the alternative that gains a majority of votes. The study indicates that when information level is "low", sequential voting systems, counter-intuitively tend to support and facilitate coordinated voting. The choice of the voters aligned with their choices to support the alternative likely to secure majority support. However, under conditions where the level of information is "high", the voting behaviour becomes independent of the election structure. Therefore, even if the simultaneous elections do not directly contribute to an increase in the decision making capacity of the voters, the study referred to herein dispels notions that simultaneous elections lead to coordinated voting.

Democratic representation, must not just be measured in terms of enfranchisement, voter turnout and voting behaviour. Fair representation of minorities and disadvantaged sections forms an indispensable ingredient democratic representation. In a recent study with regard to the impact of the Indonesian Elections of 2019, where the Indonesian Presidential Elections and Legislative Elections were held together, Luky Sandra Amalia, et. al⁷⁰ examine the impact of simultaneous

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

⁶⁹ Dasgupta S and others, "Coordinated Voting in Sequential and Simultaneous Elections: Some Experimental Evidence." (2007) 11 *Experimental Economics* 315

⁷⁰ Amalia L Sandra, Budiatri A Putri and Ekawati E, "Simultaneous Elections and the Rise of Female Representation in Indonesia" (2018) 40 *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 50

presidential and legislative elections on women's representation in Indonesia's People's Representative Assembly based on the results of the 2019 elections. The study reveals that the introduction of simultaneous elections correlates significantly with an increase in the proportion of women elected to the People's Representative Assembly.

Nearly 21% of all members elected to the Assembly were women.⁷¹ This suggests a positive relationship between presidential election outcomes and legislative success for women candidates and thus reflects the role of simultaneous elections in improving the democratic representation of women. It is also seen that simultaneous elections facilitated women candidates by providing an easier access to voters who supported the winning presidential candidate but remained undecided on legislative candidates. Therefore, simultaneous elections demonstrably reduce the barriers of entry into the echelons of democratic offices and provide a better platform for women and the under-represented sections of the society. Better electoral outcomes of female candidates but would enliven the representational prospects for women. Freeing barriers of entry and better prospects of electoral success will further induce minorities, tribals and representatives of other disadvantaged groups to contest and win elections. This would necessarily entail a more meaningful democratic representation.

On the other hand, the impact of frequent elections must also be studied to analyse if simultaneous elections influence representation. Indisputably, frequent elections cause excess stress on the exchequer. It also paralyses policy making and hampers governance. Frequent conduct of elections impacts participation of citizens in elections. Overall, the frequency of elections, encompassing votes for the parliament, the assembly, etc., reduces voter turnout significantly, even in elections to crucial democratic positions, and also diminish the effectiveness of electoral campaigns and mobilisation efforts of political parties.⁷² Traditional voting theories and past voter turnout data suggest that there exists a negative relationship between the frequency of elections and voter turnout.⁷³ That is, with the overall rise in the frequency of elections for various elected / legislative offices, there is an significant observable reduction in voter turnout. Frequent elections thus mitigate representation, simply because lesser number of people turn out to vote.

In Italy, a study was conducted to examine the voting behaviour of the people in the early 2000s. The study conducted to examine the impact of concurrent elections in multi-tiered governments on turnout of voters and voting behaviour revealed that voter turnout increased by ten percentage

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² Kostelka F and others, "Election Frequency and Voter Turnout" (2023) 56 *Comparative Political Studies* 2231

⁷³ *ibid.*

points when municipal and provincial elections were held together.⁷⁴ The opponents of Simultaneous elections in India argue that it may threaten the Federal fabric of the Nation, as local issues lose prominence and may be overshadowed by national issues. Contrary to popular conceptions, the case study of Italy indicated that mayoral elections took prominence over the provincial elections, to influence voter behaviour.⁷⁵ This means that local issues in fact, took precedence over larger provincial issues. This finding, being subjective may not be applicable to the Indian political scenario. However, it drives the larger argument that voter behaviour is not only contextual but also dependent on a wide milieu and complex web of factors and hence, the conclusions drawn by many that it will overshadow local issues or that simultaneous elections will irreparably damage the Federal fabric of India, appears to be unfounded.

Thus, quantitative studies clearly support the arguments made in favour of the conduct of simultaneous elections. Another factor that may be of importance while considering the impact of simultaneous elections, is the impact of such an electoral design on democratic participation and quality of electoral decision making. Anderson⁷⁶ asserts that on one hand, clustering elections enhances overall voter turnout by reducing the frequency of elections and also contributing to streamline campaign seasons, thereby lowering administrative costs and increasing voter engagement. These assertions have been uniform across various studies and is also discernible from the foregoing paragraphs. Interestingly, it is also observed that such consolidation has encouraged broader civic participation across various levels of government.

This would entail automatically that, representation is augmented by conduct of simultaneous elections. However, studies also warns against reduced voter attention and information to lower salience offices.⁷⁷ As seen above, that voter behaviour is context dependent and is reliant on several subjective considerations. Yet, as an abundant caution, local elections at the municipal level and for the panchayats may be kept separate and outside the purview of simultaneous elections. Thus, the model of simultaneous conduct of elections where only the elections to the Parliament and the Legislative Assemblies of the states are held together, may mitigate the ill effects of simultaneous elections on voter behaviour, if any. Further, such an endeavour would mitigate the possibility of imbalance in electoral attention and preserve representation. Elections to offices for which media and public attention may be immense, such as elections to the

⁷⁴ Emanuele Bracco, Federico Revelli, "Concurrent elections and political accountability: Evidence from Italian local elections," (2018) 148 *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 135

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ David Andersen, "Crowded Out: The Effects of Concurrent Elections on Political Engagement, Candidate Evaluation, and Campaign Learning in the United States" [2023] *Journal of Representative Democracy*

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

Parliament and the State Assemblies from that of local elections would ensure that local issues continue to remain pertinent and broad national issues do not have an all pervasive sweep over the specific local contests.

Now that studies of experiences of democracies across the world have been referred to, it is also pertinent to briefly allude to the impact of conducting national and state elections at different junctures since 1971. Nikolenyi⁷⁸ has relied on established theories from comparative electoral literature, and predicts that separate elections for different levels or branches of government reduce turnout compared to concurrent or simultaneous polls. The findings of the study strongly support the expectation of increased voter turnout in the Indian context as well. Electoral decentralization, thus appears to diminish the incentives for citizens to engage in the democratic electoral process and thereby having an adverse impact on democratic representation as well.

CONCLUSION

Representation is at the epicentre of most democracies. And yet, representation is a broad concept that transcends democracies. It is also a common feature of non-democratic institutions. Much of representation is predicated on an interactive, complementary relationship between the state and its citizenry. Representation and representative government encompass a wide range of characteristics with unique features. It must be acknowledged that representation also transcends elections. Nevertheless, elections remain fundamental tool to guarantee representation and so long as elections remain thus, factors such as enfranchisement, application of laws and electoral design impact representation. Among the factors that influence representation, electoral design is identified as a central feature having a pervasive impact on representation. Particularly electoral design influences voter enthusiasm, participation and turnout. It is also seen to influence and aid or thwart representation, placate or infuse further barriers for entry into politics and the like. It may also influence policy coherence and politics of the region. The objective, direct and generalisable metrics developed are independent of influence from local politics and geographic location. Simultaneous elections increase and augment the magnitude of representation in general and I portend that India will benefit from taking steps to adopt the simultaneous elections model.

Future research should focus on the implications of simultaneous elections on the Doctrine of Basic Structure, specifically, the concerns surrounding the adverse impact on federalism, and other

⁷⁸ Csaba Nikolenyi, "Concurrent Elections and Voter Turnout: The Effect of the De-Linking of State Elections on Electoral Participation in India's Parliamentary Polls, 1971-2004." (2010) 58 *Political Studies* 214

constitutional implications. Studies on the implications of simultaneous elections on regional parties should be carried out more comprehensively.

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