

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
PAPER CLIPPINGS

3

ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: One Nation One Election

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: Indian Express ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 7/3/21

16/7/2021
'One Nation, One Election should be debated in Parliament, not Assembly'

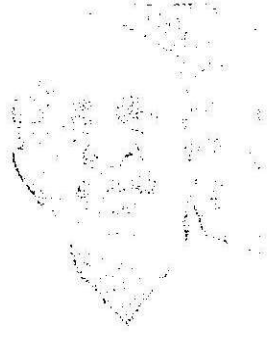
RAJU PATIL @ Bengaluru

THE debate on 'One Nation, One Election' in the State Assembly on Thursday and Friday, the first two days of the Budget Session, led to ruckus, with the Congress even terming it as "RSS agenda". Except for some speeches amid all the pandemonium, there was no debate on the issue.

Veteran leader and former Law Minister M C Nanaiah says it is a long process which has to be first discussed in Parliament and not in the State Assembly. To address most of the issues concerning the elections, the Central Government must make efforts to build consensus on bringing the much-needed electoral reforms and put an end to the "Aaya Ram Gaya Ram" culture (rampant defections), Nanaiah, who was member of the Legislative Council for five terms, feels. Excerpts from an interview:

What are your views on "One Nation, One Election"?

Earlier, elections used to be held simultaneously across the country. But thereafter, we came across a situation where elected governments in states were removed or pulled down by invoking Article 356 of the Constitution by whichever party was in power (at the Centre). We all know what is happening even now and how elected state governments are being destabilised. That is a major concern. The issue of 'One Nation, One Election' has to be discussed across the country



and there was no need to take it up for debate in the state Assembly during the Budget Session when a number of other serious issues such as rise in prices of essential commodities and fuel, the grim economic situation and farm crisis need urgent attention.

What are the challenges in implementing such a concept?

We have a federal set-up, and not a unitary government. This issue has to be first taken up by the Election Commission of India. It needs to be discussed in detail in Parliament and all states and the Centre together need to take a conscientious decision if such a thing is possible now. There have to be appropriate amendments to the Constitution. It is a long process and I think, in a federal set-up, it is impossible.

How do we address the concerns over holding elections frequently, especially by-polls, due to defections?

First, we have to bring in electoral reforms and

strengthen the Anti-Defection Law. A person elected from a particular party has to be in that party for five years and, in case of defection, they should be automatically disqualified for five years. There is a need to put an end to the "Aaya Ram Gaya Ram" culture (changing parties) that first started in Haryana. The powers under the Anti-Defection Law that are now with the Speaker have to be taken away and given to a High Court judge. It has become a political decision now. I have been saying this for many years. If we are able to tackle the issue of defections, we probably will be able to put an end to much of the maladies in the system.

The argument in favour of the "One Nation, One Election" concept is that we can save a lot of time and resources if elections are held simultaneously, and governments can focus on administration. Do you agree?

I agree with that, but if we have to reach such a situation, we have to first address the issue of defections. The Anti-Defection Law itself is defective and needs to be addressed. But nobody is prepared to do that. If that is done, we will not have defections or frequent elections or the time spent when the Model Code of Conduct is in force. Electoral reforms that we talk about are long overdue. It has to be done dispassionately. In a democratic set-up, it cannot be done by any single party. All political parties must come to a conscientious decision. The Central Government has to take the initiative to build consensus.