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A BETTER ELECTION MODEL

ANYTIME VOTING
INDEFINITE TERMS
MULTIPLE VOTES
TRUST BASES



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A Better Election Model

For a Better Democracy

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Introduction

1. It has been over seven decades since we became a sovereign independent nation, espousing democracy as our political system. In these seven decades the world has changed greatly, advancing from paper age to electronic age. Taking advantage of these advances, we have made our lives simpler and better in many areas, such as in communications, banking, commerce, education, healthcare, hospitality, entertainment, and even agriculture. But we have left out one important area behind in the paper age. It is the election process. The use of electronic voting machines is a small step in bringing the election process into the electronic ave. But, there is much more that can be and should be done to make the election process better.

2. With the five year election cycle, and the FPTP (First Past The Post) method to determine the winning candidate, the current election model is quite rudimentary. It engenders a lose and uneasy, rather than strong and healthy, relationship between the voters and leaders. It has many shortcomings that undermine the spirit of democracy, which we shall discuss in detail.

3. We present here a new, sophisticated and better election model, which is designed from the ground up taking advantage of the advances of the electronic age, to replace the current rudimentary model. This model makes participating in the election process meaningful, simpler and better for everyone, the voters, the leaders, the political parties, the election commission and the governments, in many ways. It makes the relationship between all these constituents of democracy also much stronger and healthier.

* * *

4. The relationship established by the current election model between leaders and voters is not symmetric. Leaders get to decide the fate of the voters every single day, but voters get to decide the fate of the leaders only once in five years. Voters do not know what leaders would do, and leaders do not know what voters think of them till the next election. There is no mechanism for voters to express their approval or disapproval of the policies or actions or performance of the leaders and the governments on a *regular* basis. There is also no mechanism to express approval or disapproval of each *individual* policy or action. Voters have to accept or reject the leaders and parties as a whole.

5. Voters, in this rudimentary model, are forced to choose from just two or three candidates thrust on them by the political parties. A vote for anyone else, essentially, becomes a wasted vote. Only politicians capable of winning the election

by hook or crook, with money power, muscle power and party support appear on the scene, and others, no matter how capable, knowledgeable, innovative, honest and committed they are, will not even have their names heard. People often have to vote the same leaders and parties whom they have rejected in the previous election, into power in the next election.

6. Voters are forced, in this rudimentary model, to choose just one leader to address all their issues, concerns and problems. But it is not possible for a single individual leader to be conversant with every single issue or problem. In a good democracy, it should be possible for each voter to support multiple leaders who are experts on various issues.

7. Minorities are not represented in proportion to their numbers in the current model. The 'reserved constituencies' solution is very crude and rudimentary, and we need something better.

8. Parties could lose a disproportionately higher number of seats for losing a small percentage of votes, and could gain a disproportionately higher number of seats for gaining a small percentage of votes, in the current model. It creates an unfairly advantageous or disadvantageous position for the political parties. And more importantly, it undermines the spirit of democracy, which calls for the elected leadership to be an accurate reflection of the choices of the electorate.

9. This rudimentary process forces the parties, the election machinery and the government waste a lot of time, money, resources and effort every five years. It causes a lot of disruption to the public life. Government programs and projects face an uncertain future every five years.

* * *

10. The better election model that we present here, which we call 'belmodel' for short, addresses many of the shortcomings like these, of the current model. It introduces certain unique and novel features that are not found in the commonly known election models, described in such resources as the *Hand Book on Electoral System Design* prepared by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).

11. This new model is scalable and can be implemented in larger as well as smaller contexts. It can be implemented at the national level, state level, and local bodies level, independently from each other.

12. In the next few sections of this article, we present in detail this new model, its benefits and ideas for its implementation.

The Model

1. The new election model described here, which is simply called 'Better Election Model', or 'BelModel' for short, has four key features: 1) Anytime voting, which replaces the current once-in-five-year elections 2) Indefinite Terms, which replace the current five-year fixed terms, 3) Multiple Votes, which replace the single vote per voter and 4) Trust Bases, which replace geography-based constituencies.

2. In this model, Parliament is called National Leadership Council (NLC) and a Member of Parliament is called National Elected Leader (NEL). State Legislatures are called State Leadership Councils (SLC), and a Member of Legislative Assembly is called State Elected Leader (SEL). Similar leadership councils exist also at local levels.

3. In this model, leaders who aspire to be part of the leadership councils declare their candidacy by registering themselves with the election commission. They can do so at any time without having to wait till the next election, as there are no once-in-a-few-years elections in this model.

4. Voters have twelve votes each in this model. They give the votes to leaders whom they trust would address their needs, issues, causes and concerns. Voters can give all their twelve votes to one leader, or distribute them, in any proportion of their choice, to multiple leaders who they trust would care for the multiple needs, issues and causes of their concern.

5. Voters can distribute their votes to the leaders at anytime, at any e-Seva center, or using a mobile App, or any other mechanism established by the election commission.

6. Voters can redistribute their votes to a different set of candidates, or to the same set of candidates in a different proportion, at any time, as long as they maintain a gap of at least ninety days between two successive redistributions.

7. The voters who give their votes to a specific leader are called the Trust Base of that leader. Voters, by distributing their votes to multiple leaders, can be part of the Trust Bases of multiple leaders at the same time.

8. The Trust Bases of leaders can be spread all over the country. Voters from any part of the country can distribute their votes to leaders from any part of the country. Similarly, at the state level, voters from any part of the state can distribute their votes to leaders from any part of the state. The same applies to local levels also.

9. Leaders from any political party can jump into the fray by registering their candidacy with the election commission, without needing an official 'ticket' from the party.

10. Voters can distribute all their votes to leaders of one party or to leaders of multiple parties or to independents, or to a mix of them, in any proportion.

11. Election commission, in this model, publishes the size of the Trust Bases of all the registered candidates every day, maintaining, however, secrecy about who gave votes to whom.

12. Registered candidates become Elected Leaders when the size of their respective Trust Bases rise above a set *minimum number of votes* (MNV), and stays there for ninety days continuously. A leader ceases to be an Elected Leader if and when the size of his/her Trust Base falls below MNV and stays there for ninety days continuously.

13. The value of MNV can be set appropriately at the center and in each state and in each local body, based on the size of the electorate and the desired number of Elected Leaders. Lower MNV results in higher number of Elected Leaders, and vice versa.

14. There is no upper limit to the size of the Trust Base in this model and hence Trust Bases can grow very large. Leaders with larger Trust Bases will have proportionally higher voting power in the Leadership councils, similar to the stockholders of a publicly traded company.

Benefits

This model presented here brings a great number of benefits to the democratic process, to the voters, to the leaders, to the political parties and to the election commission as well. It solves a great number of problems which have proven hither to be very difficult to solve, and some of which did not even gain public attention.

Improvements to the Democratic Process

1. The role of legislatures in Indian Democracy is more than making legislation. Legislatures are also responsible for electing the Executive and overseeing it. The members of the legislatures also serve as part of the Executive in the form of ministers, chairmen of the government bodies, corporations, etc. Plus, at the ground level, the members also serve as the elders and leaders of the communities, responding to their needs, issues, causes, concerns and emergencies. The new terminology of NLC, SLC, NEL and SEL represents this broader role and spirit of the elected leaders.

2. The current, i.e., FPTP model is supposed to result in majority rule. But it results, almost always, in minority rule, and this is how it happens. Considering the fact that only about 70% of voters turn out in the elections and considering that the polled votes are split between two or three candidates, the winning candidates typically receive only thirty to forty percent of the votes of the total electorate. This is how FPTP results in a minority rule. This also means, on an average, on any given day, sixty to seventy percent of the voters do not have a leader that they trust, in power. This completely contradicts the spirit of democracy, of people governing themselves through trusted leaders. In the new model, at least one or two, if not all, of the trusted leaders of the voters are likely to be in power representing every voter. So, the likelihood of a voter seeing a leader that one trusts in power is near 100%.

3. In the current model, a minority of swing voters can determine the outcome of an election, wielding disproportionately higher level of influence in the public life. In that sense also, FPTP can result in an indirect minority rule. In the new model, everyone who gets more than minimum votes (MNV) wins. No leader loses the election *because* someone else got a fewer votes more, cast by swing voters. Everyone with enough number of supporters wins, regardless of who else wins or does not win.

15. No wise person puts all his money in one bank, or in one stock, or in one property. Similarly, no voter should put all his/her trust in one leader. No leader is infallible. But, the current election model, by giving only one vote per voter, forces each individual voter to put all of one's trust in only one leader. The new model, on

the other hand, gives the opportunity for voters to distribute their votes to multiple leaders. They no longer have to side with one specific individual leader. They can choose multiple leaders who they consider to be worthy of giving a chance.

16. The election of one leader, in the current model, implies the rejection of all the other leaders by the voters; at least that is how the winning leader portrays the results. But in reality, the defeated leader also could have had the support of almost equal, albeit, a slightly fewer number of voters. It would be ideal if we can let all the leaders who gained a sizable vote, represent their respective voters. That is what happens in the new model. Every leader whose Trust Base is above the MNV will be in power representing the voters in that Trust Base. In the current model, a leader loses to another leader. In the new model, a leader loses for lack of the ability to attract a sizable Trust Base, and not because someone got more. It is no more a zero sum game. The current model sets one leader against another in a fight. The new model sets a target for the leader to achieve.

17. In the current model, voters who voted for a leader who lost the election are forced by the system to put their faith in the winning leader, whom they did not trust to begin with. Similarly, the leaders are also forced, by the system, to represent the people who did not vote for them. No leader is a Mahatma and no one will be able to treat the voters who voted for him/her and the voters who did not, in the same way. The new model provides an ingenious solution for this problem, by letting the leaders represent only the voters in their Trust Base, i.e., who voted for them, and never someone who did not vote for them. This guarantees a trust-based relationship between the leader and the electorate, which is a cornerstone of democracy.

18. In the current model, voters feel that their vote is wasted if their chosen leader does not win the election. Many voters abstain from voting, precisely because they feel that their vote could go 'waste'. In the new model, it would seldom be the case. One or two of the twelve votes of the voters may go 'waste', but not all. At least one or two of their trusted leaders, if not all, are likely to be elected and hence represent them.

19. In the current model, just a few votes are enough to push a bad leader, who uses all kinds of tricks and demagoguery, into power, and leave a good leader who is principled and straightforward by the wayside. This means the voters have to not only put up with the bad leader but also lose the benefit of being served by a good leader for the next five years. In the new model, every leader who can attract enough Trust Base gets into power. Thus the new model would propel more good leaders into power compared to the current model. This is precisely what everyone is looking for in India today.

20. Currently, the population distribution among constituencies is not even. Some constituencies have 1.5 to 2 times that of the population of some other constituencies. As a result, the leader of one constituency represents a large number of people, while another leader in another constituency represents only a small number of people. Neither of these situations is desirable. This problem would not get corrected until a census is taken and the boundaries of the constituencies are redrawn, which happens very rarely. There would be no such need to redraw the boundaries in the new model as there are no constituencies. A leader would represent exactly as many voters as there are in his/her Trust Base.

21. In the current model, because the leaders are guaranteed power for five years, they can easily turn their backs on the voters after the election, as it happens most of the time. Leaders who are seen everywhere before the elections can become completely inaccessible to the voters after the elections. Leaders can promise one thing before the elections and pursue something else after the elections with impunity. The new model curtails this kind of behavior, as the voters can withdraw their support as soon as they see leaders deviating from their promised policies and professed principles.

22. In the current model, voters have to resort to media posts, online petitions, street demonstrations and protests to express their displeasure or disapproval of the actions of leaders. This leads to violence and disruption of life, both for the protesters and for the general public. Organizing such protests and demonstrations and sustaining them for a long time is not easy. In most cases, the protesters run out of energy and the protests die down before they achieve their intended goal. In the new model, there is no need for any of such ineffective petitions, demonstrations, protests, or violence. Voters can simply and immediately withdraw their votes from the non-performing or questionable leaders and give them to other or new leaders. In other words, a sophisticated and inexpensive 'recall' process is built into the new model.

23. In the current model, the winning leader is expected to address each and every issue, need, and concern of the people of the constituency. This is not an easy task by any means. It is impossible for one person to have the required understanding and passion, and hence, many issues do not get adequate attention, and some get no attention. In the new model leaders focus on only the issues, needs and concerns that they understand and are passionate about, and their Trust Bases are passionate about. In other words, this model brings into the fore the leaders passionate about each and every issue. Each and every issue gets proper representation, be it related to education or agriculture or healthcare or energy, etc.

24. Issues, problems, ideas, dreams that pertain to only a small percentage of people, such as handicapped people, or people of any specific trade or craft, would never find a champion in the current model, as they form only a small minority in any given constituency. But they could be sizable in number when combined across the country. In the new model, such minorities, who are spread across the country can form the Trust Bases of the leaders passionate about those specific issues, and thus find champions in them.

25. The new model propels leaders with a focus on causes and issues into power, rather than just the generic politicians. Political parties are also incentivized to promote leaders focused on certain issues and causes, rather than on the generic politicians, because of Trust Bases. Thus the new model propels more expert politicians into power rather than generic politicians, a powerful paradigm shift, that would pay dividends forever.

26. In the current model, parties fight the election on one or two of the 'hot' issues. Voters get swayed by them and ignore the many other issues that are important in their lives. Whereas in the new model, they are propelled to think about each issue that is important to them, and find a leader who addresses those issues. They are not pushed to make a decision in an emotionally charged election season, and live with the consequences for the next five years. They can take their own time to decide which leaders they can trust to address their issues and concerns. Current model promotes emotional decisions, and this new model promotes rational decisions.

27. The new model also addresses a key, but less noticed, gap in the current model. Consider the situation, where there is a bill that is good for the country as a whole but requires some sacrifice from the constituency. The Constitution assumes that the MLA/MP would focus on the interests of the country as a whole. But the voters assume that the MLA/MP would focus on the interests of the constituency. These two contradictory assumptions put any conscientious MLA/MP in a bind. And there is no clear cut ethical stand that one can take. In the new model, there are no constituencies. Every NEL can act as a true national level leader, representing the issues of the Trust Base that could truly span across the country.

28. In the current model, programs and projects started by the governments face uncertainty every five years. A new government, belonging to a different party would have few incentives to continue the programs or projects started by the previous government. They do not want the previous government get the credit. Investments made by the previous government in the programs and projects could simply go waste. This is a loss of national resources and impedes national progress. The new model solves this problem. Because there are no elections, there would be no such abrupt change of governments and hence no abrupt end to any program. Every

program will take its natural course, either to evolve into something better and bigger or to peter out. One of the reasons for China's enormous progress in a short period is the continuity of the Government. The new model brings the same kind of continuity and stability within the fold of democracy.

29. In the current model, political leaders hardly enjoy any freedom of expression. They have to align with the party and party leadership for their survival. They can never speak against the policies or ideas of party or the party leadership and have to denounce ideas of the other political parties even if they are good. In the new model, any leader who enjoys the trust of the Trust Base can express one's opinions freely. This freedom of expression is vital to a vibrant democracy.

30. Voters have many issues and needs. What are the most important ones among them? How to prioritize? Leaders, voters, and even the analysts find it hard to answer the question. It is common for leaders to guess the priorities of the voters wrong, both during election campaigns and during budget allocations. In the new model there would be no such ambiguity. Trust Bases are a clear indication of what issues are important to whom, and to how many of them. This makes budget allocations and policy decisions easier. Also, the issues themselves can change over time. What is important now could be different from what was important a decade ago. The Trust Bases also change accordingly, serving as true mirror to the spectrum of issues and needs.

31. The new model creates an organic bond between the leaders and voters, based on the issues and needs they care for. This allows the leaders to be candid and honest with the voters about the intricacies of the issues. They don't have to promise Utopian solutions. They don't have to focus on emotionally appealing solutions. They can educate the voters about the pros and cons of the possible solutions. In the current model, the 'generic' politicians do not have deep understanding of the issues to begin with. No matter what solution they propose out of that limited understanding, there would be more people who oppose it than support it, as leaders in the current model get only 35% to 40% of the votes, on an average.

32. Trust Bases create a long lasting association between leaders and voters. Voters would not let go a good leader who understands their needs, issues and concerns well. Where as, in the current model, any leader, no matter how deeply one understands the issues, can lose the next election and thus the association between the leaders and voters can get broken. Long lasting associations between leaders and voters create the atmosphere for working out long-lasting solutions.

Benefits for the Political Parties

33. In the current model, a party that gets five percent fewer votes could lose as many as ninety percent of the seats. In the new model, with the MNV criteria, both parties would have leaders in proportion to their true support among the voters. No party will ever be routed out of power because of a change of a small percentage of votes. Thus the new model serves as an elegant implementation of the proportional representation model.

34. Voters who like a political party but not the candidate fielded by the party face a tough choice in the current model. In such situation some may choose to vote for the candidate of the other party. That would be a loss of voters for the party. There would be no such loss to a political party in the new model. Voters who want to be loyal to the party can always find another leader from the party whom they like and give votes to him/her. Thus this model helps the parties retain all their loyal voters.

35. In the current model, political parties are forced to choose a candidate who can win the election by hook or crook. They have to go through the difficult political exercise of giving 'tickets' and 'funding' the candidates. Whereas in the new model, parties can endorse a large number of candidates who have the potential to win, and let the voters decide who among them are worthy. Parties, thus, will know which of their candidates are truly trusted by the voters. This also solves the issue of lack of internal democracy in the political parties.

36. In the current model, candidates who are not popular among the voters can also win an election, based on the popularity of the party and the party chief. Such leaders, whom the voters do not like, can erode the popularity and credibility of the party and party chief in the long run. In the new model, candidates who have enough Trust Base only will win. The party gets to develop genuine and long-lasting roots into the Trust Bases of its candidates. The party also gets a deeper understanding of the needs, issues, and opinions of the voters, based on the candidates chosen by the voters.

37. Should a leader, who switches from one political party to the other, lose his/her seat? There has been a lot of debate, constitutional provisions and amendments, and supreme court rulings on this question, but none of them are satisfactory. This new model answers this question elegantly. The voters can simply withdraw their votes to the particular leader if they feel that the switch

is done for wrong reasons. If they feel that the switch is justified, they do not have to do anything.

Benefits for the Leaders

38. NTR launched a new party and came into power within a matter of nine months. It should be that easy to come to power for any political leader who has ideas and can connect to people, even without having to launch a entire new party. We should increase the ease of doing politics, similar to increasing the ease of doing business. In the current model, a leader may have ideas, may be able to connect to enough voters, but still cannot come into power, unless one has enough money, gains a good hold in the party ranks, gets the party ticket and garners more votes than the opponents. This process is hard and a leader needs not only ideas and voter base but also a good amount of luck. The new model removes all these hurdles. Any leader with ideas and can connect to people can immediately register one's candidacy and become an Elected Leader in a matter of weeks, if one can form and mobilize one's Trust Base. There is no need to wait for elections. There is no need to defeat others in the election.

39. Suppose a leader continues to enjoy the support of the voters for decades. Even then he has to prove it again and again every five years, by going through an expensive election and facing the associated uncertainty of winning. In the new model, a leader can continue in power even for decades, without ever having to go to elections, if one continues to maintain the size of one's Trust Base above MNV.

40. In the current model, a candidate who gets even one vote less than his immediate rival loses the election. This makes the elections very contentious. Every candidate is forced to fight tooth and nail to snatch every single vote from the opponents. They resort to making false promises, taking populist stances, appealing to the base emotions of voters, and so on, to gain every single possible vote. The conscientious and principled leaders have no choice but to resort to similar techniques if they want to gain votes and win the election. One is forced to employ foul means even if one intends to provide fair leadership. In the new model, candidates do not contest against each other. They don't have to fight tooth and nail for the same votes. Each one can develop a Trust Base of one's own, at one's own pace. Since the Trust Base could be spread across the entire country, no two candidates have to fight for the vote of the same voters in a specific constituency. Each one would continue in power if they can grow and retain their own base.

41. In the current model, the incumbent leaders are never sure of either getting the party ticket or winning the next election. This uncertainty propels them to

focus more on the next election than on the people's issues. It propels them to make hay while the sun shines. They cannot take a long-term stand on any issue. In the new model, they can stick to their stand on any issue and can stay in power as long as they can retain the confidence of their respective Trust Bases.

42. In the current model, there is no good mechanism for the leaders to gain feedback on their performance from the voters. Opinion polls, approval ratings, etc., are neither reliable nor conducted regularly. Whereas in the new model, the changes in the size of the Trust Bases, which can be monitored daily, like Businesses do their stock prices, serve as instant feedback to the leaders about their performance. They can immediately put efforts to re-connect with the voters if the see their Trust Bases shrinking.

43. In the current model, it is very difficult for candidates who are new or independent, or service-oriented rather than politics-oriented to win an election, because it is difficult for them to get more votes than the politically-oriented, party-backed candidates. In the new model, anyone with leadership qualities and is passionate about an issue or need or concern or cause of the voters can find one’s own Trust Base without specifically needing the support of a political party. The new model thus gives more opportunities for new, independent, and service-oriented leaders to gain power, than the current model.

44. In the current model, voters do not vote for new or independent, or service-oriented candidates because they are afraid that their vote could go 'waste'. In the new model, voters can 'keep the old as well as try the new' leaders, by distributing some of their votes to the established candidates and some to the emerging and alternate leaders.

Benefits for the Voters

45. In the current model, young people attaining the voting age, i.e., turning eighteen, right after the day of the election, have to wait till the next election, i.e., till the age of twenty-three, to exercise their right to vote for the first time. In the new model, there will be no such delay for eligible voters. They can register themselves as voters at an election office as soon as they attain the voting age, and distribute their votes to the candidates of one's liking on the very same day.

46. In the current model, people who are away from home for work or business or pleasure or pilgrimage, have to disrupt their plans, to come back to their home polling station on the election day to cast their vote. The other alternative is to use the postal ballot, which is a cumbersome process and is not familiar and available to all. In the new model, there are no polling stations or election dates. Voters can

distribute and redistribute their votes anytime and from anywhere using a Mobile App or at an e-Seva center.

47. In the current model, voters who happen to migrate from one place to another place because of marriage or job or business, have to give up their voting rights at the old place in order to establish voting rights in the new place. In the new model, there is no such need, as anyone from any place can vote for any candidate from any place in the country. Further, they can do the same with the state level votes. They can give some of their state level votes to the leaders of the new state, and some to the leaders of the old state. This is especially useful for people who have business, property or family interests in more than one state.

48. In the current model, there is no good solution for the nomadic tribes to vote, as they don't have a 'native place' or 'residential address' as all the others do. It is difficult for them to exercise their voting privilege. It is a problem for the voters as well as for the leaders and the Election Commission. This problem is elegantly solved in the new model, as anyone can distribute their votes to any candidate from anywhere at an e-Seva center or using mobile App.

49. In the current model, we do not have a good solution for Indian citizens who happen to be abroad for various reasons at the time of elections, to vote. The new model solves that problem also. They can distribute their votes through Internet or Mobile App or at the nearby Indian Consulate.

Benefits for the Minorities

50. In the current model, small, poor, and powerless communities hardly have any representation. Ideally, they should have seats in proportion to their votes. The current model tries to address this problem by reserving certain constituencies for SC, ST, and women candidates. This solution, however, is flawed, for three reasons. One, the minority leader from the reserved constituencies cannot be expected to represent the voters of the other majority and minority communities truthfully. Two, the leader cannot represent the minority communities that live in the other constituencies, and thus the minorities in the other constituencies go without representation. Three, it is impossible to create a reserved constituency for every type of minority. The new model gives a much better, and in fact, an ideal solution to the problem. The minorities of every kind, from all over the country, can form Trust Bases and elect leaders who care about their particular needs and issues. No minority, whose size exceeds MNV goes unrepresented in the new model. All the plurality of the country, whether it is based on language, culture, religion, caste, profession, issues, needs, causes can be proportionally represented in the new model.

Less Expensive, Fewer Resources and No Disturbances

51. In the current model, candidates, parties, and governments incur huge expenses every five years. Whereas in the new model, there are no elections, and hence there are no such huge expenses. There is no deadline to win. Every leader can build up his Trust Base gradually, at his/her own pace, by virtue of his/her deeds, words, and leadership qualities.

52. In the current model, resources are drawn from many government departments during the election season, disrupting their normal function. In the new model, with no elections, there is no such need. The workload on the election offices will be mostly uniform all round the year.

53. In the current model, a candidate is allowed to contest from more than one constituency. A candidate who wins in more than one constituency, has to resign from all the constituencies but one. Then bye-elections need to be conducted in those constituencies, which is an added expense to the candidates, to the parties, and to the election commission as well. In this new model, there will be no constituencies, and hence someone contesting from more than one constituency becomes a moot point. Voters from two or more regions can form the Trust Base the same leader if they so wish.

54. In the current model, normal public life gets disrupted in the election season, which sometimes lasts for almost six months before the election. There is no such disruption in the new model, as there are no elections to begin with.

55. In the current model, elections have to be postponed if a natural disaster strikes. In the new model, no such issue arises as there are no elections to begin with. The voters can continue to distribute and redistribute their votes, whenever and wherever connectivity is available and wherever e-Seva centers are open.

56. In the new model, the voters can distribute their votes using Aadhaar cards. There is no need to go through the cumbersome, error-prone and sometimes contentious exercise of preparing the voter lists.

Implementation

Technology

1. The kind of technology that is needed to implement this model is already available. It is the same technology that is behind the Aadhaar card system, Banking systems, reservation systems, eCommerce platforms and so on. India is technologically more than ready for implementing this model.

Road map

2. This model need not be implemented at the national level, state level and at the level of local bodies, all at the same time. This can be introduced in a few local bodies or one or two states to begin with, and can then be adopted gradually in all states and at the national level.

Strategy

3. An All-Party Forum is established to review, discuss, refine and finalize this model and work along with the Election Commission of India to impress upon the Government of India, to introduce a bill in the Parliament to pass the necessary legislation, amend the constitution as needed and establish the technical infrastructure needed to implement this model.

4. Leaders and cadres of all political parties, and voters interested in improving the election and democratic process in India are invited to join this Forum. The details of the All-Party Forum, including how to join it, how to participate in or follow its activities, can be found on the website **https://belmodel.in**.

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