



Mains Practice Question

Q. NITI Aayog is an action tank than just a think tank. Critically Examine. (150 words)

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Approach:

- Explain the role and function of NITI Aayog.
- Explain the significance and limitations of the body.
- Suggest how it can play a better role in raising the standards of governance.

Introduction

- The Government has replaced the Planning Commission with a new institution named NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) to provide state and central government with relevant strategic and technical advice.
- Unlike, Planning Commission, NITI Aayog follows the bottom-up approach in its composition which has more representatives various sectors and stakeholders of governance.

Body

NITI Aayog as Action Tank

- By providing fresh ideas and sharing them with the Central and State governments, NITI Aayog helps institutions to be able to reform themselves according to the needs of the nation in a 21st century through initiatives like three-year national action agenda.
- NITI Aayog has become an agent of change over time and has helped in improving governance by working across various dimensions of public policy. For example it has brought policy framework for simultaneous elections to improving health and education standards in aspirational districts.
- NITI Aayog has helped in bringing convergence among central and state government and across different ministries to push the agenda of development forward through initiatives like 115 Aspirational Districts.
- NITI Aayog also comes up with performance-based rankings of States across various dimensions to foster a spirit of competitive federalism. It has established a Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office which collects data on the performance of various Ministries on a real-time basis.
 - The data are then used at the highest policy-making levels to establish accountability and improve performance. This ultimately helps in improving the efficiency of government.
- NITI Aayog helps in replicating the best practices in different States in various sectors.
- NITI Aayog also plays an important role in being the States' representative in Delhi, and facilitate direct interactions with the ministries, which can address issues in a relatively shorter time.

NITI Aayog as a Thinktank

- NITI Aayog is not a statutory body. Hence its role is largely limited to making recommendations.
- It has no role in influencing public or private policy.
- It can only recommend long-term, policy changes but cannot influence or see their progress on the ground.

- NITI Aayog is supposed to be a think tank. This implies that while generating new ideas, it maintains a respectable intellectual distance from the government of the day.

Way Forward

- With its current mandate that is spread across a range of sectors and activities, and with its unique and vibrant work culture, NITI Aayog remains an integral and relevant component of the government's plans to put in place an efficient, transparent, innovative and accountable governance system in the country.
- However, it needs more mandate to play an effective role in bringing true transformation at ground level. More autonomy should be provided to the body with better machinery so that it can play a larger role between center and states.

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