



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the evolving dynamics of the federal structure in India, highlighting the key issues and challenges faced by states. (150 Words)

23 Jan, 2024 GS Paper 2 Polity & Governance

Approach

- Write a brief introduction about the federal structure in India.
- Mention how the provision related to federal structure came and grows in Indian statute and constitution.
- Write a conclusion

Introduction

The federal structure of India is a system of governance that divides the power and responsibility between the central government and the state governments. The Constitution of India specifies the distribution of legislative, administrative, and executive powers between the union and the states in three lists: Union List, State List, and Concurrent List.

Body

- The federal structure of India has evolved due to various factors such as historical, political, economic, and social. Some of the major events that have shaped the federal structure of India are:
 - **The reorganization of states** on linguistic and cultural basis, which increased the number and diversity of states and gave them a sense of identity and autonomy.
 - **The emergence of regional parties** and coalitions, which challenged the dominance of the national parties and increased the bargaining power of the states in the federal system.
 - **The adoption of the recommendations of the Finance Commissions**, which enhanced the fiscal autonomy and resources of the states and reduced the vertical imbalances between the center and the states.
 - **The implementation of the Panchayati Raj** and the Municipal Acts, which devolved power and functions to the local governments and strengthened the
 - The 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts, 1992, which recognized the third tier of local self-government and devolved some powers and functions to the panchayats and municipalities.
 - **The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST)** in 2017 marked a major step towards achieving a unified economic system,
- **Key issues and challenges faced by states.**
 - **Regionalism:** The states assert their regional identity and interests, sometimes against the center or other states. This can lead to demands for autonomy, statehood, or secession.
 - **Examples:** Telangana, Gorkhaland, Bodoland, etc.
 - **Fiscal federalism:** The states complain that the center does not share enough resources or impose conditions on their spending.
 - For Example, the GST Compensation Cess to compensate states against their

reduced revenue collection, is not provided timely.

- **Representation:** The states are represented in the Rajya Sabha based on their population. The larger states have more seats and influence than the smaller states.
- **Governor:** The governor is often accused of acting as an agent of the center, and interfering in the state government's affairs.
 - For example, there have been several instances where the state governments have accused the Governors of acting as agents of the central government.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening the role of the Inter-State Council,** which is a constitutional body that facilitates dialogue and consultation among the center and the states on various issues of common interest.
- **Reforming the fiscal federalism system,** which determines the allocation of financial resources between the center and the states.
- **Enhancing the representation of the states** in the Rajya Sabha, which is the upper house of the parliament that represents the states. The states should have more seats and voice in the Rajya Sabha, and the Rajya Sabha should have more say in the legislation that affects the states.
- **Respecting the role of the governor,** who should act as a bridge between the center and the state, and not as an agent of the center. The governor should also refrain from interfering in the state government's affairs, and respect the democratic mandate of the state legislature and the chief minister.

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/mains-practice-question/question-8130/pnt>

