



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the evolution of Centre-State relations in India since independence. How have constitutional provisions and judicial interpretations influenced these relations? **(250 Words)**

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Approach

- Begin the answer by introducing Centre-State relations in India.
- Discuss the evolution of Centre-State relations in India since independence.
- Highlight constitutional provisions and judicial interpretations that influenced these relations.
- Conclude as per the requirement of keywords.

Introduction

Centre-State relations in India have evolved significantly since independence, reflecting the complex interplay of historical, political, and constitutional factors. The Constitution of India, through its provisions such as the 7th schedule and subsequent judicial interpretations, has played a crucial role in shaping these relations.

Body

Evolution of Centre-State Relations:

- **Pre-Independence Era:**
 - During British rule, India was a unitary state with significant centralization of power.
 - The Government of India Act, 1935, introduced federal features with separate powers for the Centre and provinces, laying the foundation for future Centre-State relations.
- **Post-Independence Period (1947-1966):**
 - The Government of India Act, 1935 formed the basis of the Indian Constitution, which adopted a federal structure with a strong Centre.
 - The Constitution outlined the distribution of powers between the Centre and states in the Seventh Schedule, with three lists—Union List, State List, and Concurrent List—detailing the subjects under each jurisdiction.
- **Nehruvian Era (1947-1964):**
 - Jawaharlal Nehru advocated for a strong Centre to maintain national unity and integrity.
 - The Planning Commission was established to promote economic planning, leading to a centralization of economic decision-making.
- **Era of Linguistic Reorganization (1956-1966):**
 - In 1953, the government established the **Fazal Ali Commission** to investigate and address the demands of various states for separation on linguistic basis.
 - Based on the recommendation of this commission, the States Reorganization Act, 1956, was introduced, which was a significant step in reorganizing states along linguistic lines.
 - This period saw tensions between linguistic states and the Centre over issues of language, culture, and identity.
- **Period of Political Turmoil (1967-1984):**
 - The 1967 general elections resulted in the rise of non-Congress governments in several

states, leading to a shift in Centre-State dynamics.

- The Sarkaria Commission (1983) was set up to examine and recommend changes to Centre-State relations, highlighting the need for cooperative federalism.

▪ **Era of Economic Reforms (1991-present):**

- Economic liberalization in 1991 led to changes in the fiscal relationship between the Centre and states.
- The formation of the NITI Aayog in 2015 replaced the Planning Commission, signaling a shift towards cooperative federalism.

Influence of Constitutional Provisions and Judicial Interpretations:

▪ **Constitutional Provisions:**

- Articles 245-255 define the legislative relations between the Centre and states, ensuring a division of powers.
- Articles 256-263 detail the executive relations, emphasizing cooperation and coordination between the Centre and states.
- Article 356 provides for President's Rule in states in case of constitutional breakdown.

▪ **Judicial Interpretations:**

- The Supreme Court has played a crucial role in interpreting and clarifying the constitutional provisions related to Centre-State relations.
- Landmark cases such as S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994) have established principles regarding the misuse of Article 356 and the autonomy of states.

Contemporary Issues and Suggestions:

- **Goods and Services Tax (GST):** The implementation of GST represents a significant shift in fiscal federalism, aiming to streamline taxation but also leading to debates over revenue sharing and States' autonomy.
- **Inter-State Water Disputes:** Water being a State subject, disputes over river water-sharing highlight the complexities in Centre-State relations, often necessitating central intervention for resolution.
- **National Security and Law Enforcement:** Issues like terrorism and internal security require coordination between the Centre and States, sometimes leading to tensions over jurisdiction and control.

Conclusion:

The evolution of Centre-State relations in India reflects a dynamic process influenced by historical, political, and constitutional factors. While the Constitution provides a framework for these relations, judicial interpretations have helped clarify and define the boundaries of power between the Centre and states. As India continues to evolve as a federal democracy, it is essential.