



Mains Marathon

Day 8: "Federalism is no longer the fault line of Center-State relations but the definition of a new partnership of Team India." Discuss.

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Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Give a brief introduction about federalism in India.
- Discuss the issues of associated with federalism in India.
- Describe how cooperative federalism is promoting healthy center state relations.
- Conclude suitably.

Answer

A centralised authority and its constituent political subdivisions share power in a federation. Federalism in essence is a dual government system including the Centre and a States. Federalism is one of the pillars of the Basic Structure of the Constitution. As the Supreme Court iterated in the S.R. Bommai vs Union of India case, the States are not mere appendages of the Union and the latter should ensure that the powers of the States are not trampled with.

Issues associated with the Federalism in India:

Indian federalism is also associated with some issues and challenges like the Center is given the power to amend the constitution by Article 368 of the Indian Constitution The states in the Indian Union have essentially no control in this crucial area of governance, despite the fact that ratification from half of the states is requested in some limited circumstances. Since it occasionally jeopardizes the federal nature of the Indian Union, the office of the governor for each state has been a contentious subject.

However, federal India is no longer an impediment to stronger center-state relations; rather, it has given fresh hope to the combined efforts of the Centre and states, known as cooperative federalism.

It is true that states now have a more important role to play. They are involved in the decision-making process. The same appears to be sensible, since they would be able to provide a more complete image of their particular areas due to India's diversity. The NITI Aayog and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) legislation are two noteworthy examples.

NITI Aayog was established by the present administration to replace the earlier Planning Commission, which had sole authority over the Union. It also raises state morale and keeps them accountable for improved decision making because they are now a part of the process.

On the other hand, in 2017, India adopted a dual-structure GST model in which both the Center and the states play significant roles. Both have the authority to charge and collect taxes. Furthermore, the Center redistributes a portion of its revenues among the states.

A step towards cooperative federalism:

This trust and confidence between the Center and the states would enable India to become a cooperative federal nation. The division of powers on various issues would provide better outcomes since it would prevent overlapping of actions and, as a consequence, an appropriate system would be in place.

Harmony between Center and states:

The Indian Constitution already distinguishes the authority of the Center and the states. The provision for separate lists reduces misunderstanding and disagreement between the Center and the states. Similarly, establishing Parliament's laws superior to those of state legislatures assures what prevails in the event of a conflict between the two. This would result in a simplified procedure in which states would not attempt to extend their authority because it is already allowed for in the Constitution. As a consequence, there would be less confusion and more amicable interactions between the Center and the states.

Better role of states:

The states may actively participate in legislative, administrative, and budgetary concerns under certain provisions. For instance, states have the authority to enact laws in conformity with the State List. They also carry out their executive or administrative duties. They also carry out specific monetary tasks like taxation and collection. These activities provide the state more autonomy and improve the federalism of India.

Lesser burden on the Center:

Improved ties between the center and the states would ease the centre's burden. A federal system of government divides authority between the central government and the states, which facilitates efficient administration. Additionally, the states would be better equipped to control the problems associated with it.

Inclusion of different sections of society:

In a nation like India, where there are regional differences, the separation of powers between the federal government and the states is quite beneficial. As a result, it will not be feasible for the Center to approach the issue in each state differently based on its needs. In this case, states play a crucial role since they can manage the situation and rule the region in accordance with the demands of the population, which will ultimately result in the inclusion of additional groups of people in mainstream society.

Conclusion:

India is a federal country, yet there are significant regional differences as well. In this regard, it was vital to have separate authorities at the federal and state levels to meet the demands of the nation, which would not have been achievable under a unitary system of government. As a result, the Indian Constitution includes clauses that address center-state relations. These interactions between the center and the state have been crucial to the nation's development. It has contributed to an improved administrative system, and the integration of various communities into society at large.