



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** Analyze the impact of the pandemic on India's federal structure and the challenges faced by the Centre and the states in tackling the crisis. Discuss the measures taken by the government to strengthen inter-governmental coordination during the pandemic.

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### Approach

- Write a brief introduction about the pandemic and its impact.
- Analyze the impact of pandemic on federal structure of the nation and associated challenges faced by both central and state governments.
- Mention the measures taken by the government to strengthen the intergovernmental coordination during the pandemic.
- Write a holistic and appropriate conclusion.

### Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on India's federal structure, affecting the balance of power between the central government and the states. The challenges faced by the Centre and the states in tackling the crisis have been numerous and have varied in severity across different regions of the country.

### Body

#### Impact of pandemic on federal structure of the nation:

- One of the most significant impacts of the pandemic on India's federal structure has been the increased role of the central government in policy making and decision-making. The central government has been responsible for coordinating the national response to the pandemic, including the distribution of essential medical supplies, vaccines, and financial aid. This has led to some tensions between the Centre and the states, as some states have felt that the central government has not done enough to support them in their efforts to combat the pandemic.
- The pandemic has also highlighted existing inequalities between different regions of the country, particularly in terms of access to healthcare and economic opportunities. Some states have been better equipped to handle the pandemic than others, due to factors such as higher levels of investment in healthcare infrastructure, more diversified economies, and better governance. This has led to disparities in the level of support provided by the central government, with some states receiving more assistance than others.
- Another impact of the pandemic on India's federal structure has been the increased decentralization of decision-making and governance. The states have had to take on greater responsibility for managing the pandemic within their own borders, including implementing lockdowns, managing the healthcare system, and distributing vaccines. This has been a significant challenge for some states, particularly those with weaker healthcare infrastructure or limited financial resources.

**The Indian government has taken several measures to strengthen inter-governmental**

**coordination during the Covid -19 pandemic. Some of the key measures are:**

- **National Disaster Management Act (NDMA):** The NDMA was invoked by the central government to coordinate the country's response to the pandemic. This act empowers the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to take measures for the prevention of the spread of Covid -19.
- **Formation of Empowered Groups:** The central government formed Empowered Groups to coordinate with the states and UTs in various areas such as medical infrastructure, logistics, and information management. These groups provided guidelines to the states and ensured that they are following them.
- **Regular Video Conferences:** The Prime Minister of India regularly conducted video conferences with the Chief Ministers of all states and Union Territories to discuss the pandemic situation in their respective states. This allowed the central government to understand the challenges faced by the states and provide them with necessary support.
- **Financial Assistance:** The central government provided financial assistance to the states under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for Covid -19 related activities. The government also announced an economic package of Rs. 20 lakh crores to provide relief to different sectors affected by the pandemic.
- **Inter-State Movement of Goods and People:** The central government coordinated the inter-state movement of essential goods and people during the pandemic. This was done by issuing standard operating procedures (SOPs) and guidelines for the movement of goods and people across different states.
- **Vaccine Distribution:** The central government has been coordinating the distribution of vaccines across the country. The government created a digital platform called CoWIN to register and schedule vaccination appointments. The vaccines were distributed to the states based on their population and the number of healthcare workers and frontline workers.

## **Conclusion**

The pandemic has posed challenges for both the Centre and the states in India, with the need for national coordination and state autonomy being a balancing act. The government has taken measures to strengthen inter-governmental coordination, but there is still room for improvement. Strengthening the federal structure and addressing existing inequalities are crucial for building a resilient and equitable society.