



States Planning to Bypass Central Legislation

Why in News

Recently, many states are exploring the possibilities of passing legislation under **Article 254(2)** of the Constitution, to negate the enforcement of [three Farm Acts](#) passed by the Central government under **Entry 33 of the Concurrent List**.

- Entry 33 of the Concurrent List mentions trade and commerce, production, supply and distribution of domestic and imported products of an industry; foodstuffs, including oilseeds and oils; cattle fodder; raw cotton and jute.

Key Points

▪ The Article 254(2):

- It **enables a State government to pass a law**, on any subject in the **Concurrent List**, that may contradict a Central law, provided it gets the **President's assent**.
 - In 2014, the Rajasthan government took this Article 254 (2) route to make changes to the central labour laws — the Factories Act, the Industrial Disputes act, and the Contract Labour Act — which subsequently got the President's assent.
- However, the **Parliament is not barred from enacting** at any time any law with respect to the same matter including a law adding to, amending, varying or repealing the law so made by the Legislature of the State.

▪ Background:

- The [three Farm Acts](#) includes:
 - **Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020**
 - **Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020**
 - [Essential Commodities \(Amendment\) Act, 2020](#).
- In short, the **Acts aim to do away with government interference in agricultural trade** by creating **trading areas free of middlemen** and **government taxes outside** the structure of [Agricultural Produce Market Committees \(APMCs\)](#).
 - They also aim to **remove restrictions on private stock holding** of agricultural produce.

Distribution of Legislative Subjects

- **Article 246** adopts a **threefold distribution of legislative power** between the Union and the states.
- The subject-wise distribution of this power is given in the three lists of the **Seventh Schedule** of the constitution:

- List-I- the **Union List**
- List-II- the **State List**
- List-III- the **Concurrent List**
- **Union List: Parliament has exclusive powers** to make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the Union List.
 - It includes the **matters of national importance** and the matters which require uniformity of legislation nationwide.
 - This list includes **98 subjects (originally 97)** like defence, banking, foreign affairs, currency, atomic energy, insurance, communication, inter-state trade and commerce, census, audit and so on.
- **State List: The state legislature has exclusive powers** (not during emergency) to make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the State List.
 - It includes the **matters of regional and local importance** and the matters which permit diversity of interest.
 - This list includes **59 subjects (originally 66)** like public order, police, public health and sanitation, agriculture, prisons, local government, fisheries, markets, theaters, gambling and so on.
- **Concurrent List: Both, the Parliament and state legislature** can make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the Concurrent List.
 - It includes the matters on which **uniformity of legislation throughout the country is desirable** but not essential.
 - However **State legislation operates to the extent that it is not in conflict with the Central legislation.** At times, the very presence of a central legislation can negate the state's ability to legislate.
 - This list has at present **52 subjects (originally 47)** like criminal law and procedure, civil procedure, marriage and divorce, population control and family planning, electricity, labour welfare, economic and social planning, drugs, newspapers, books and printing press, and others.
 - The **42nd Amendment Act of 1976** transferred five subjects to Concurrent List from State List i.e **education, forests, weights and measures, protection of wild animals and birds, and administration of justice; constitution and organisation of all courts except the Supreme Court and the High Courts.**
- **Other Features:**
 - The power to make laws with respect to **residuary subjects** i.e. the matters which are not enumerated in any of the three lists, is vested in the Parliament.
 - Parliament has power to make laws with respect to any part of the territory of India not included in a state even though that matter is one which is enumerated in the State List.
 - This provision is related to the Union Territories or the Acquired Territories (if any).

[Source: TH](#)