

YFR-LBC

by Rb Rb

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COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM AND EVOLVING CENTRE-STATE RELATIONSHIP IN INDIA

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Introduction

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, since he took charge, has championed cooperative federalism to enable states' participation in the formulation and implementation of national policies and thus, ensure better governance. In a cooperative federalism set up, the Centre and States share a horizontal relationship, where they are guided by the broader national concerns and cooperate in the larger public interest. Over past six years, there have been multiple occasions – for example, introduction of goods and services tax and more recently, in the fight against Covid-19 – when the Centre and states have worked under the principles of cooperative federalism. These experiences have shaped federalist arrangement power-sharing between different tiers of governments in India.

These experiences provide useful insights into Centre-state power balance in India. This YRF project analysed these events, processes and their outcomes, particularly over the last six years (2014-2020) to provide an explanation for the evolving Centre-state relationship in India.

Methodology

Considering that the team comprises of undergraduate students with limited understanding and exposure to research, the project was broad based in terms of focus. It analyses easily comprehensible developments at the national level and reflects on state insights. The study is primarily based on analysis of secondary literature and includes documentary analysis of key policy documents, media reports and academic literature.

Data Analysis & Results

The study analyses the shifts in the Centre-state balance since emergence of single party majority at the Centre, drawing upon two specific events: a) Introduction of goods and services tax, and b) response to COVID. The analysis includes how pronouncement of cooperative federalism as a key principle of governance enabled coordination and cooperation among the Central and state governments and how this has affected state capacity and effectiveness in governance and delivery of essential services. Drawing on secondary literature, the study finds that cooperative federalism processes and practices have enabled better coordination and

cooperation among the Central and state governments and agencies. However, the study also observes greater centralisation in the period, evident in the Centre taking over more responsibilities rather than addressing the state capacities to meet these responsibilities.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The study concludes that cooperative federalism is effective for better coordination and cooperation between the Central and state governments and their agencies. It suggests that cooperative federalism must be pursued as the driving principle for the Centre-state balance and governance in India. However, simultaneously, the focus should be on building capacities of the state governments and their agencies so that they are better able to meet their responsibilities. The study also highlights the need for granular and comparative analysis of emerging Centre-state power-sharing in India for more insights.

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