

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q13

What changes has the Union Government recently introduced in the domain of Centre-State relations? Suggest measures to be adopted to build the trust between the Centre and the States and for strengthening federalism.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · GS II · 15 marks · Federal Structure and Devolution

Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Core demand of the question

- Name recent Union moves that have recast Centre-State relations
- Cover fiscal, institutional and administrative files
- Suggest measures to rebuild trust and strengthen federalism
- Use Sarkaria and Punchhi as the homework, not slogans

Revision summary

- **Recent Centre-State shifts:** GST compensation end, cess and surcharge, centrally sponsored schemes, NITI replacing plan bargaining, Governor delays on Bills, **Article 370**, simultaneous-election talk.

The Supreme Court in the Punjab Bills case limited pocket-veto use of **Articles 200-201**.

GST Council remains a federal bargain; CBI consent and cadre rules remain sore.

Sarkaria and Punchhi asked for an Inter-State Council, consultation, less cess, and a non-partisan Governor.

Trust is procedural - calendars, terms of reference, devolution - not a communiqué.

Cooperative federalism is minutes and transfers, not a chapter in a brochure.

Introduction

Indian federalism is bargaining inside a strong Union. In recent years the Union has used money, Governors and framework laws more loudly. States have used the Supreme Court and the GST Council. The question asks what changed, and how to put **trust** back into a structure that still has **Article 3** and a single Constitution.

Body**Fiscal recasting**

The purse has moved faster than the **Seventh Schedule**.

- **Peg:** The five-year **GST compensation** guarantee ran out; the Union leaned more on **cess and surcharge**, which do not enter the divisible pool.
- **Peg:** **Centrally sponsored schemes** still steer a large part of State budgets; the **Fifteenth Finance Commission** used 2011 population figures and attached conditions to some grants.

- **Peg:** **NITI Aayog** replaced the **Planning Commission**: more a think-tank, less a table at which States bargained plan money.

Institutional and administrative recasting

Offices that were meant to be a buckle have been read in State capitals as a bit.

- **Peg:** Governors in several Opposition-ruled States sat on Bills; in **State of Punjab** the Court read **Articles 200 and 201** as not allowing a pocket veto.
- **Peg:** Union terms of reference to **Finance Commissions**, and the **Kovind** simultaneous-election design, are read as an attempt to set the political calendar from Delhi.
- **Peg:** The 2019 reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir under **Article 370** was a federal shock of another kind.
- **Peg:** Several States withdrew **general consent for the CBI**; All India Services cadre rules and "one nation" platforms for ration and identity leave States as implementers more than designers.

Measures for trust

Sarkaria and Punchhi already wrote the homework.

- **Peg:** A living **Inter-State Council** (**Article 263**), consultation before Bills that eat into the State list, and Governors who are not extra Chief Ministers.
- **Peg:** A **Finance Commission** whose terms of reference are not a Union manifesto; **less cess**, more devolution; centrally sponsored schemes that States can opt and adapt.
- **Peg:** Opposition-ruled States in the room - GST rate talks, service postings, disaster money - without treating dissent as anti-national.
- **Peg:** Codify Bill timelines as a convention so the Union does not need a mandamus to forward a file; let the GST Council's dispute mechanism work before the Court is the first stop.

Flow diagram

Union -> Cess CSS NITI
 Union -> Governor Bills
 States -> Supreme Court
 States -> GST Council Council
 Inter-State Council -> Trust
 Cess CSS NITI -> Trust

Conclusion

Recent years tightened Union money and gubernatorial delay, then the Court pushed back on Bills. Trust will return through Inter-State Council habit, cleaner devolution and Governors who sign - not through another slogan about cooperation.

Facts & figures

State of Punjab v. Principal Secretary to the Governor

The Court treated unexplained delay on Bills as unconstitutional; Governors are not a third House.

GST compensation cess

Five-year statutory compensation to States ended; thereafter bargaining shifted to cess, surcharge and Council politics.

Article 263 of the Constitution

Inter-State Council - the neglected table for Centre-State distrust.

Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State Relations

Asked for consultation, a working Inter-State Council, and a Governor who is not a Union party agent.

Punchhi Commission on Centre-State Relations

Returned to Governor, emergency and consultation; still the standard homework for trust.

Fifteenth Finance Commission

Used 2011 population and attached conditions to some local and State grants - a fiscal federal sore in several capitals.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2024/what-changes-has-the-union-government-recently-introduced-in-the-domain-of-centre-state-relations-suggest-measures-to-be-adopted-to-build-th/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com