



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 13-06-2024

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Federalism in India during 18th Lok Sabha

Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Polity – Federalism.

Context:

- *The aftermath of the 2024 general election in India has revealed a **significant shift towards increased democratization**, with regional parties gaining substantial representation in Parliament. This development is anticipated to enhance federalism in India.*

What is Federalism?

- *Federalism is a system of government that combines a **central (or federal) government with regional governments** within a single political framework, distributing powers between them.*
- *In India, **the Constitution outlines this structure**, delineating the relationship between the federal and state governments.*
- ***Legislative, administrative, and executive powers** are divided between the Union government and the states through the Union List, State List, and Concurrent List.*

Features of Indian Federalism:

- **Multilevel Government:** *Federalism includes two or more tiers of government, typically a central (or federal) government and regional (or state) governments.*
- **Separate Jurisdiction:** *Each level of government has its own authority and autonomy in areas such as legislation, taxation, and administration, despite governing the same populace.*
- **Constitutional Specification:** *The powers and functions of each tier of government are clearly delineated and safeguarded by the Constitution, ensuring a balance of authority.*
- **Dispute Resolution Mechanism:** *The Supreme Court is empowered to adjudicate disputes between state governments, providing a mechanism for resolving conflicts within the federal structure.*

What does the 2024 Election Result Mean for Indian Federalism?

- **Increase in Regional Party Representation in Parliament:** *The significant presence of regional parties enhances the voices of diverse local interests in national policymaking.*
- **Diverse Composition in Ruling Coalition and Opposition:** *The ruling coalition and opposition are now more varied, leading to broader representation and potential for coalition governance.*

- **Potential for More Inclusive Governance:** *With regional parties holding more power, policies may better address the unique needs of different states and regions.*
- **Voter Preference for Addressing Local Issues:** *The electorate's support for regional parties indicates a strong desire for solutions tailored to local concerns rather than national agendas.*
- **Challenge to Traditional Dominance of Central Parties:** *The traditional dominance of major central parties is challenged, potentially shifting the political landscape towards a more decentralized governance model.*
- **Concerns Over Central Policies Undermining State Autonomy:** *There are rising concerns about central government policies potentially infringing on state autonomy, which could lead to increased pushback from regional governments.*
- **Tensions Over Resource Allocation and Political Rhetoric:** *The election campaign highlighted issues of resource distribution and political rhetoric, which may lead to ongoing tensions between the central and state governments regarding fair allocation and governance priorities.*

Challenges to Centre-State Relations:

- **State Border Disputes:**
 - *Examples: Assam-Meghalaya, Assam-Mizoram disputes*
- **Interference in State Matters:**
 - *Examples: Government of NCT of Delhi (GNCTD) Act, Agriculture laws, 2020*
- **Alleged Use of Autonomous Agencies Against Opposition-Led States:**
 - *Examples: Enforcement Directorate raids*
- **Governors Sitting Over State Bills:**
 - *Examples: Tamil Nadu and Telangana Governors pulled by Supreme Court*
- **Resource Allocation Complaints:**
 - *Examples: Kerala's complaints on resource transfer, Karnataka's drought relief concerns, West Bengal's MGNREGS funds*
- **Legal Disputes:**
 - *Examples: Increase in legal disputes between states and Centre, as highlighted by Supreme Court*
- **Bias in Finance Commissions:**
 - *Examples: States argue for fair allocation, citing bias towards the Centre in Finance Commissions*
- **Disparities:**
 - *Examples:*
 - *Richer states like Mumbai contribute significantly to national taxes but receive a smaller share, leading to development disparities.*

- *Poorer states require more resources for development; while the Finance Commission aims for fair distribution, historical disparities remain.*

The Concept of Cooperative Federalism

- **Cooperative federalism** involves central and state governments collaborating to achieve common goals while respecting each other's constitutional boundaries.

Constitutional Boundaries Between Centre and States

Division of Powers:

- *The Constitution of India divides powers through the Seventh Schedule into three lists: **Union, State, and Concurrent.***

Doctrine of Pith and Substance:

- *Courts use this doctrine to determine **the appropriate list for a particular legislation.** If the core subject matter of legislation falls within a list assigned to one level of government, the law is deemed valid even if it incidentally encroaches on another list.*

Examples Illustrating Cooperative Federalism

GST Council:

- *Comprising **representatives from both central and state governments,** the GST Council makes decisions on tax rates, exemptions, and GST implementation, ensuring a balance between regional interests and national priorities.*

Disaster Management:

- *During natural disasters, **the central government collaborates with states.** For instance, during COVID-19, the Centre issued guidelines and provided resources, while states adapted these guidelines to their local contexts for a tailored response.*

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:

- *While outlining broad national objectives, the **NEP allows states to customize and implement reforms** according to their specific needs and contexts.*

River Water Disputes:

- *The **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act** allows the central government to set up tribunals to adjudicate disputes, but implementation requires state cooperation. For example, the Cauvery water dispute resolution involved extensive consultations and compliance from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, overseen by the central government.*

NITI Aayog:

- *Acts as a platform bringing states **together as 'Team India'** to work towards the national development agenda.*

Strengthening Federalism

Inter-State Council:

- *Strengthening the **Inter-State Council** to debate and discuss subjects in the concurrent list can balance Centre-state powers, as recommended by multiple committees.*

Democratic Decentralisation:

- *Decentralizing administration and strengthening governments at all levels based on the **principle of subsidiarity** can promote true democratic decentralization.*

Increase Resource Devolution:

- ***Raising the current 41% resource devolution** from the Centre to the states can empower states, enabling more localized governance.*

Fair Finance Commission Practices:

- *The Sixteenth Finance Commission should **strive for equitable treatment of all states**, reducing friction and promoting fairer resource distribution, especially benefiting poorer states to address inequality.*

Enhance State Autonomy:

- *Reducing central control in programs such as the **Public Distribution System and MGNREGS can affirm states' roles** as equal partners in governance, preventing central dominance over state initiatives.*

Conclusion

- *For the central government to exercise its powers within constitutional boundaries in the spirit of cooperative federalism, it must engage in continuous dialogue, respect state autonomy, and ensure collaborative policymaking. This approach strengthens the federal structure and promotes more inclusive and responsive governance.*

Cooperative Societies and RTI Act

Syllabus: GS-2; Judiciary

Context

- *The Madras High Court recently observed that a co-operative society registered under the Tamil Nadu Co-operative Societies Act is not bound by the Right to Information (RTI) Act of 2005 to provide the information requested by a citizen.*
- *Court said that the co-operative society does not fall within the definition of “**public authority**” as defined under Section 2(h) of the RTI Act.*

More about the news

- *Justice V. Bhavani Subbaroyan said that cooperative societies registered under the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Societies Act of 1983 in the State would not fall under the definition of the term ‘public authority’ as it had been defined under Section 2(h) of the RTI Act of 2005.*
- *The verdict was passed while allowing a writ petition filed by the president of Madhanam Primary Agricultural Cooperative Credit Society in Sirkazhi Taluk, Mayiladuthurai district.*
- *The petitioner society had challenged an order passed by the TNIC on May 4, 2022 for disclosure of crop and jewel loan details.*

What is a cooperative society in India?

- *A cooperative society is usually a voluntary organization formed by the underprivileged or the weaker sections.*
- *Such a society is a free and voluntary association that aims at the betterment of its members.*
- *This kind of body is formed by like-minded people driven by common goals.*

The Right to Information (RTI) Act

- *The Right to Information (RTI) is an act of the Parliament of India which sets out the rules and procedures regarding citizens' right to information.*
- *It replaced the former **Freedom of Information Act, 2002.***
- *Under the provisions of RTI Act, any citizen of India may request information from a “public authority” (a body of Government or “instrumentality of State”) which is required to reply expeditiously or within thirty days.*
- *In case of matter involving a petitioner's life and liberty, the information has to be provided within 48 hours.*

- *Although Right to Information is not included as a Fundamental Right in the Constitution of India, it protects the fundamental rights to **Freedom of Expression and Speech under Article 19(1)(a)** and **Right to Life and Personal Liberty under Article 21** guaranteed by the Constitution.*
- *The authorities under RTI Act 2005 are called public authorities.*
- *The **Public Information Officer (PIO)** or the First Appellate Authority in the public authorities perform quasi judicial function of deciding on the application and appeal respectively.*
- *This act was enacted in order to consolidate the fundamental right in the Indian constitution 'freedom of speech'.*
- *Since RTI is implicit in the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution, it is an implied fundamental right.*
- *Information disclosure in India had traditionally been restricted by **the Official Secrets Act 1923** and various other special laws, which the new RTI Act overrides.*
- *Right to Information codifies a fundamental right of the citizens of India. RTI has proven to be very useful, but is counteracted by the Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2011.*
- *The Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019, seeks to amend Sections 13, 16, and 27 of the RTI Act.*
- *Section 13 of the original Act: It sets the term of the central Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners at five years (or until the age of 65, whichever is earlier).*
- *Finally in Ashwanee K. Singh's case on 20 September 2020, it is stabilised that right to information is a fundamental right*

Governance and process

- *The Right to information in India is governed by two major bodies:*
- **Central Information Commission (CIC)** – *Chief Information commissioner who heads all the central departments and ministries- with their own **public Information officers (PIO)s**. CICs are directly under the President of India.*
- *State Information Commissions – State Public Information Officers or SPIOs head over all the state department and ministries. The SPIO office is directly under the corresponding State Governor.*
- *State Information Commissions are independent bodies and Central Information Commission has no jurisdiction over the State Information Commission.*

UNESCO's New Tools for Greening Education

Syllabus: GS-2; International Institutions

Context

- *On **World Environment Day**, UNESCO introduced new resources aimed at incorporating environmental education into schools and curricula, emphasizing the imperative of empowering youth to actively address the climate crisis.*

UNESCO's new Greening Curriculum Guidance

- *UNESCO's new Greening Curriculum Guidance is a practical manual providing, for the first time, a common understanding of what climate education should consist of and how countries can mainstream environmental topics across curricula, with detailed expected learning outcomes according to age group (from 5-year-olds to 18+).*
- *It focuses on the importance of **promoting active learning and designing a range of hands-on activities.***

Greening education

- *Education enables learners of all ages with the agency to address interconnected global challenges including **climate change, loss of biodiversity, unsustainable use of resources, and inequality.***
- *It empowers them to make informed decisions and take action to change society and care for the planet.*
- *Drawing upon ESD's holistic approach to learning, the Greening Education Partnership aims to inspire action from countries to empower learners with the skills required for inclusive and sustainable economic development within the context of the transition toward digital and green economies.*
- *The practices monitored by members of the Partnership adopt an interdisciplinary approach across all subjects, not only looking at the scientific facts of climate change, but addressing the social economic and behavioural facets of climate justice, eco-anxiety, action-based solutions and ensuring that it is contextualized to learners' real-life experience and aspirations.*

Four pillars of transformative education

The Greening Education Partnership is structured around four key pillars of transformative education

- *Greening schools*
- *Greening curriculum*

- *Greening teacher training and education systems' capacities*
- *Greening communities*

Base erosion and profit shifting

Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Global economic developments.

Context:

- *OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann has welcomed the commitment of the 147 Members of the **Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit-Shifting** to keep working to resolve any remaining issues in time to start the signing process of the Multilateral Convention (MLC) implementing Amount A of Pillar One by the end of June this year.*

Key Points from the 16th Meeting of the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on BEPS

Inclusive Framework on BEPS:

- *Finalizing negotiations on Pillar One.*
- *Implementing the Global Minimum Tax under Pillar Two globally.*

What is the Inclusive Framework?

OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on BEPS:

- *Comprises 147 countries and jurisdictions, including India.*
- *Aims to combat tax avoidance and promote fair tax practices.*

Utilizes a Two-pillar approach:

- *Pillar One: Reallocates profits of large multinational enterprises (MNEs).*
- *Pillar Two: Establishes a Global Minimum Corporate Tax of 15%.*
- *Ensures fairness in tax systems, addresses tax avoidance, and adapts to evolving business models and digital economies.*

What is BEPS?

Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS):

- *Corporate tax planning strategies that shift profits from higher-tax jurisdictions to lower or no-tax jurisdictions.*

- *OECD Definition: Exploits gaps and mismatches in tax rules, costing countries USD 100-240 billion in lost revenue annually.*
- *Developing countries, with a higher reliance on corporate income tax, suffer disproportionately from BEPS.*

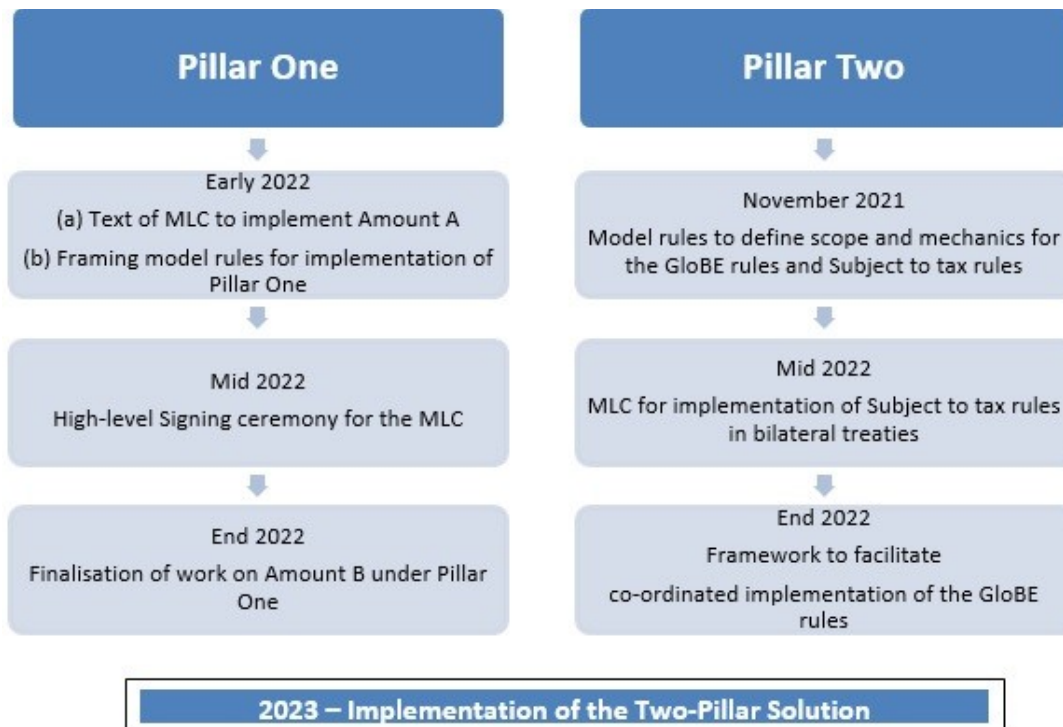
Collaboration within OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on BEPS:

Over 135 countries and jurisdictions are collaborating to:

- *Implement measures to tackle tax avoidance.*
- *Improve the coherence of international tax rules.*
- *Ensure a more transparent tax environment.*
- *Objective of the Outcome Statement*
- *Delivered a package to further implement the Two-Pillar Solution to address the tax challenges arising from the digitalization of the economy.*
- *Two-Pillar Solution / Global Anti-Base Erosion (GloBE) Rules*

Agreement in 2021:

- *137 countries and jurisdictions under the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on BEPS agreed upon these rules.*

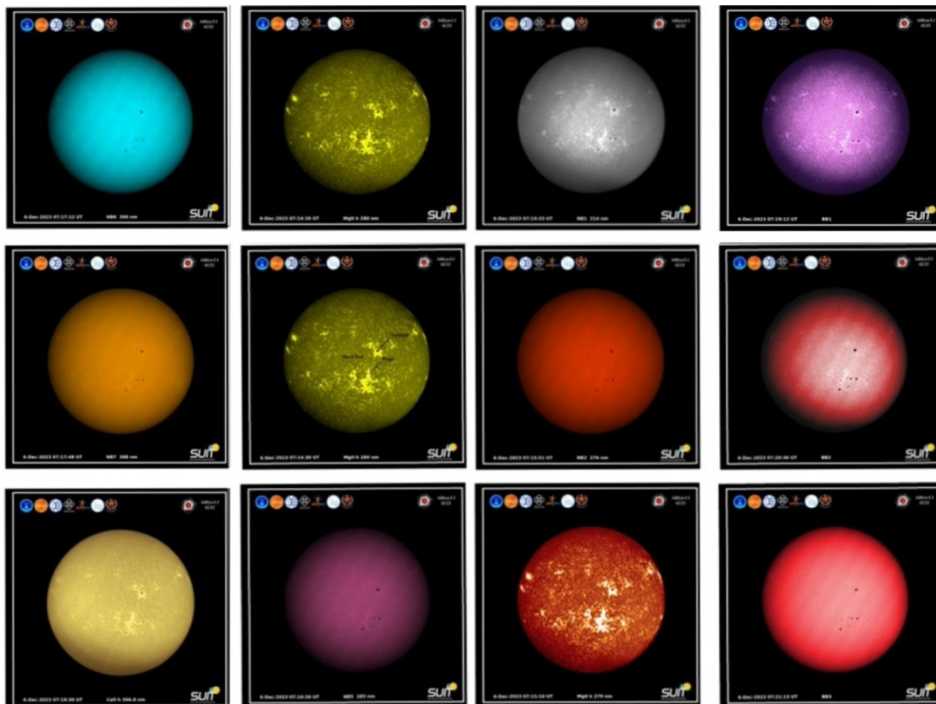


Aditya-L1

Syllabus: GS-3; Science and Technology

Context

- **The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** shared photographs depicting the dynamic activities of the Sun during the last month (May 2024).
- These have been captured by the **Solar UltraViolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT)** and the **Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC)** onboard the Aditya-L1 spacecraft.



More to know

- ISRO said that during the May 8-15 2024 week, the Active region AR13664 on the Sun - said to be one of the biggest sunspots in recorded history - during its passage erupted several X-class and M-class flares that were associated with **Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs)** between May 8 and 9 2024.
- This later produced a major geomagnetic storm on May 11 2024.
- SoLEXS and HEL10S, two of the remote sensing payloads on board Aditya-L1, have captured these events between May 8-9 2024.
- Meanwhile, the other two in-situ payloads — ASPEX and MAG — captured the event during the May 10-11 2024 period when it passed through L1, the statement added.

SUIT observations

- *The images of the Sun acquired by the SUIT payload on May 17 show bright, active regions on the **Solar disk in Mg II k line (NB3)**.*
- *"The active regions signify magnetically active regions on the Sun's surface. Large solar flares may originate in these active regions due to changes in magnetic field," ISRO stated, adding that the Sun moves towards solar maximum, giving rise to enhanced activity.*
- *As a result, there are multiple active regions visible around the equatorial region.*
- *In **Narrow Band 276 nm (NB2)**, the continuum emission shows the sunspots in the active regions, while plages around them remain visible.*
- *"The relative brightness of the sunspots are different from 276 nm narrow band," the statement said.*
- *It noted that such variation appears as the different narrow bands probe different heights of the atmosphere, probing the structural difference of the magnetic tubes at different heights.*

VELC Observations

- *The VELC carried out observations in one of the spectroscopic channels for the emission line 5303 Angstrom, the ISRO statement added.*
- *For capturing the coronal activities in this particular spectral line, the raster scans of the solar corona were carried out on May 14 2024. The AR 13664 location is marked in the raster image as a box.*
- *This is created by "assembling the wavelength-averaged slit images as the Sun is rastered on the slit of the spectrograph," ISRO stated.*
- *Noting that the raster's duration is about 20 minutes, it added that the same used four slits covering different regions of the solar corona simultaneously.*
- *In the image, the yellow "open" circle indicates the edge of the solar photosphere, which is also the "visible" disk of the Sun.*
- *The black "filled" circle, meanwhile, indicates the extent of the occulting disk used in the VELC for blocking the bright light of the solar photosphere to observe the relatively million times faint structures in the solar corona.*