

**CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS UNDER BHARTIYA JANATA PARTY
(BJP) LED NDA (NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE)
POST 2014 ELECTIONS**

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ABSTRACT

The adoption of a federal structure in India was viewed as a requirement in order to address the diversity of the Indian situation. The elements of heterogeneity and plurality could be addressed by achieving reconciliation between national and constituent unit identities. In political context balancing the relationship of Union and States become evidently important, particularly after 1975, the time when Emergency was imposed in the Country. The system's dynamism, with all of its checks and balances, causes issues and friction in the functioning of Union State relations. A mixture of pressures caused by such issues may obstruct the system's operation and jeopardise the country's unity and integrity. It is therefore necessary to review the evolution of the Union States arrangement not only to identify persistent problems and seek solutions based on past experience, but also to adapt the system to changing times so that, propelled or moved by the spirit of common endeavour and cooperative efforts, the country moves ever closer to the social welfare goals set forth in the Constitution. It was expected that conflicts would arise in the working of Union-State relations in India, so some structural devices for conflict resolution between the centre and states were carved out, such as provision of supremacy of the Constitution, independence of the judiciary, judicial Review, and amendment process, among others. However, the built-in system for resolving disputes between the Union and its constituent states proved insufficient. This argument can be expanded upon when the BJP-led NDA gains a majority at both levels post 2014 elections, and the relations may become smooth or as it's earlier.

KEYWORDS: *Federalism, Plurality, Arrangements Cooperative, BJP, NDA, and Centre- State Relations.*

INTRODUCTION

In the 2014 legislative elections, a single party secured a majority in the Lok Sabha for the first time since 1984. The study will look at the implications of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) win in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on India's centre-state dynamics.

Despite the BJP's pledge to "level the playing field" between the center and the states, under Narendra Modi's leadership, ties have gotten more centralised.

At the national level, the 2014 general elections reinstated one-party control. After nearly two decades of (minority) coalition government, the BJP was able to secure a legislative majority in

the Lok Sabha on its own. Recognizing that without seat-sharing arrangements with regional allies, not all of these seats would have been won, the BJP inducted regional partners into its (first) cabinet, including Maharashtra's Shiv Sena. Despite this, the 2014 elections appeared to mark a change in India's political structure.¹ Prime Minister Narendra Modi's National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, which took power in May 2014, embraced cooperative federalism.

The government has taken a number of efforts to economically empower states and make them essential actors in India's development agenda in the two years since it took office. The fourteenth finance commission recommended giving states more voice and freedom in centrally sponsored initiatives, as well as a significant increase in the proportion of untied funds from the pool of national/central levies, which can be seen as a major boost to cooperative federalism and Modi's demand for Team India.²

When Prime Minister Modi first took office, he promised that the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers would form Team India. However, in theory, cooperative federalism must coexist with competitive federalism, in which states compete with one another as they work toward development, but chief ministers have complained about intervention from the PMO, the Central government, Parliament, and even the Supreme Court.

BJP's Relationship with Non-NDA Ruled States

The federal government's disagreements with non-NDA-ruled states have increased significantly throughout the NDA's mandate. The Modi government's relationship with non-BJP-run states has been strained as a result of the government's decision to impose President's rule in Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh, as well as an ongoing legal battle with the Delhi government. The central government has also been criticised by its own political partners in a number of states, most notably Andhra Pradesh, for failing to provide promised funds or meet specific requirements.³

The enactments of the Goods and Services Tax, as well as the harmonisation of indirect taxation by the central and state governments and the elimination of inter-state tariff barriers, are significant steps toward India becoming a single market. The Centre and the states have had to pool their sovereignty as a result of the transition in order to pursue shared national economic goals. States will not have veto authority over the GST Council, which controls the new tax's administration; instead, they will have to form alliances with the federal government to have changes implemented.⁴

The state list has been a source of contention between the Centre and the states. Five states rejected Ayushman Bharat, the centralised health insurance system approved by an Act of Parliament, in 2018, for a variety of reasons, preferring their own health schemes and fearing interference into a state matter.⁵

Trending Issues That Effects Centre-State Relation

Maharashtra and Gujarat were among the states that rejected unilateral modifications to the Motor Vehicles Act that imposed hefty fines for traffic violations. Even though both states were governed by BJP state governments, the fines were later reduced.

Similarly, both non-NDA and BJP allies have voiced strong opposition to the Citizenship Amendment Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens. Because it is a Parliamentary statute, Home Minister Amit Shah believes they have no alternative, but chief ministers fear it will be nothing more than a piece of paper if the states fail to comply.⁶

Again, there was dissension between the centre and the states, with no mutual understanding between them, eroding the foundation of the country's federal structure. However, there is

evidence that Centre-state interactions are becoming more politicised in a number of areas, which could jeopardise the proclaimed goal of a more cooperative type of federalism.

Analysts believe that rather than simply providing more money to states, the centre will need to do a little more hand-holding to make cooperative federalism a success.⁷

The repeal of Article 370 and the establishment of the Union Territories of J&K with an assembly and Ladakh without one have been dubbed an assault on federalism. Article 1 of the constitution states that India is a Union of States, and Article 3 states that a state's limits and status can only be changed with the approval of the state assembly. In the instance of J&K, the law was introduced in Parliament at a time when the state legislature did not exist and the governor was considered the state legislature. Another pattern has been for BJP-appointed governors to push the party to form a government if the election results do not yield a single majority. This happened in Goa and Manipur in 2017 and in Karnataka and Maharashtra in 2019. This has weakened the ruling party's true commitment to federalism, leading to nasty feuds and the need for the courts to step in to discipline governor.⁸

The Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020 is one of the most recent flashpoints. States are practically unified in their belief that they should be able to choose how they want to distribute electricity, and the Bill is seen as an attempt to usurp those rights. The fact that the Centre imposed conditions when states wanted to increase their borrowing limits to address the COVID-19 situation did not sit well with them.⁹

There's also a sense that a stronger Centre provides ideological weight to the BJP's nationalist platform. The conclusion appears to be that states must be decreased in order for the Centre to appear strong. Ironically, the BJP government's "One Nation" slogan has exacerbated tensions between the Centre and the states, since some regional parties and leaders regard this as a ploy to weaken state governments and political parties.

From the De-Centralisation to Re-Centralisation

COVID-19 was a good opportunity for the Centre to mend relations with the states and re-establish trust. Instead, it appeared to be more eager to use the crisis to emphasise its power. From the circular stating that states may only obtain COVID-19 testing kits from the Centre to the Union home ministry's frequent recommendations.¹⁰

The Union government has the authority to impose, vary, and lift the lockdown. States are not allowed to weaken the Union's guidelines, but they are allowed to take more drastic measures. As a result, the general public, as well as business and industrial groups, look to the Union for guidance rather than their individual states. The Public Health (Prevention, Control, and Management of Epidemics, Bioterrorism, and Disasters) Bill, which has been pending since 2017, would most likely become law through an ordinance, giving the Union government more authority to intervene the states.¹¹

The NDA-led administration of the BJP was extremely successful in concentrating credit for central government efforts. Modi 1.0 was known for his two-level games, particularly with Arvind Kejriwal's Delhi and Mamata Banerjee's West Bengal.

These issues repeated in the first six months of Modi 2.0. State governments controlled by the opposition have opposed the Citizenship Amendment Act and the idea of creating a nationwide National Register of Citizens.¹²

The oft-repeated concept of co-operative federalism, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi espouses, has been substituted by a forceful coercive federalism, as many have pointed out. It's not going so great. States must feel empowered, and the Centre must be viewed as a caring figure who takes pride in his state's achievements.

CONCLUSION

The centre-state relationship is considered as a very beneficial tool for achieving consensus and peaceful settlement of problems between inter-states and intra-states, as well as strengthening the country's federal structure. Without the assistance of the states, the union government will not be able to fulfil its aim in a timely and effective manner. Likewise, require assistance and support from the central government and the state government concerned in order to handle the problems posed by the functional sectors. This aid could take the form of political direction, administrative support and oversight, or financial assistance. Similarly, the federal and the state governments cannot effectively carry out their responsibilities without the help and collaboration of local governments. As a result, governmental systems at the centre-state levels must interact and cooperate with each other.

The objective of the central government is to boost the state economy and to acquire operational control of the majority of government programmes for citizens, and the units' central-state dependence on each other creates peace and mutual understanding, which is an important aspect of nation building.

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