Polity & Governance · GS - II

Inter-state river water disputes expose the challenges of cooperative federalism in India. Examine the institutional and constitutional mechanisms for resolving such disputes, with special reference to the Cauvery River.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 11/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Article 262, Article 263, Inter-State River Water Disputes Act 1956, Cauvery Water Management Authority, Supreme Court, cooperative federalism, water scarcity, dispute resolution, enforcement mechanisms.

Model Answer

Introduction

Inter-state river water disputes arise when competing regional demands create disagreements over the sharing and management of common water resources. The Cauvery dispute involving Karnataka and Tamil Nadu illustrates these federal challenges.

Constitutional and Institutional Framework

- **Article 262:** Empowers Parliament to provide for adjudication of inter-state river water disputes.
- **Article 263:** Provides for the establishment of an Inter-State Council to facilitate coordination and discussion.
- **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956:** Provides a mechanism for adjudicating such disputes through tribunals.

- **Cauvery Water Management Authority:** Oversees implementation of the Cauvery water-sharing arrangements and regulates water releases.

Major Challenges

- Seasonal rainfall variability and recurring droughts intensify competing demands.
- Weak enforcement and coordination can delay compliance.
- Political considerations sometimes obstruct cooperative decision-making.
- Agricultural, drinking-water and ecological requirements compete for limited resources.

Way Forward

Strengthening monitoring, transparent data sharing, enforceable institutional decisions and basin-level planning is essential.

Conclusion

Sustainable river governance requires constitutional mechanisms supported by cooperative federalism, scientific water management and timely dispute resolution.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP