Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the challenges involved in resolving inter-State disputes over river water and hydropower resources in India. How can cooperative federalism ensure equitable sharing of such resources?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 06/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP

Answer Hint

Inter-State resource sharing, Article 262, constitutional framework, river water disputes, hydropower benefits, federal coordination, equitable distribution, dispute resolution mechanisms, cooperative federalism

Model Answer

Introduction

Inter-State rivers and hydropower resources are shared assets whose utilisation often creates competing demands among States. Disputes over their distribution can affect federal relations and regional development.

Constitutional and Institutional Framework

Article 262 empowers Parliament to provide for adjudication of inter-State river water disputes. The Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 provides for tribunal-based dispute resolution. Inter-State coordination is also essential for implementing water and energy-sharing arrangements.

Challenges in Resource Sharing

Unequal geographical advantages, competing developmental priorities, changing water availability and disagreements over project costs complicate resource allocation. Hydropower projects also raise questions

concerning electricity distribution, compensation and environmental impacts.

The Supreme Court's reported settlement requiring Punjab and Haryana to provide Himachal Pradesh 11,973 million units of electricity over 20 years illustrates the importance of resolving long-standing inter-State resource-sharing disputes.

Way Forward

Transparent agreements, scientific assessment of resources, regular inter-State consultations, time-bound dispute resolution and equitable benefit-sharing can strengthen cooperation.

Conclusion

Cooperative federalism, supported by constitutional mechanisms and negotiated settlements, is essential for sustainable and equitable utilisation of shared natural resources.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP