# Polity & Governance · GS - II

**Cooperative federalism requires clear distribution of regulatory responsibilities between the Union and the States. Examine the challenges arising from overlapping regulatory powers in India's food safety administration.**

| EXAM YEAR | PAPER | SUBJECT |
|---|---|---|
| DAILY PRACTICE 20/11/2026 | GS - II | Polity & Governance |

| MARKS | WORD LIMIT |
|---|---|
| 10 | ~150 words |

## Answer Hint

**Cooperative federalism, FSSAI, Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, central licensing, state enforcement, regulatory overlap, administrative coordination, public health.**

## Model Answer

### Introduction

Food safety is a shared governance concern requiring coordination between national regulators and state enforcement agencies. Disputes over inspection powers between FSSAI and state authorities highlight the importance of clarity in India's regulatory federalism.

### Institutional Framework

The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 establishes FSSAI as the national statutory regulator while providing for State Food Safety Commissioners and local enforcement authorities.

### Major Challenges

**1. Overlapping Jurisdiction**

- Differences in interpretation of central licensing and state inspection powers can create administrative disputes.
- Unclear operational responsibilities may delay enforcement.

**2. Uneven Enforcement Capacity**

- States differ in laboratory infrastructure, trained personnel and inspection resources.
- Smaller businesses may face inconsistent compliance requirements.

**3. Accountability Gaps**

- Conflicting directions can create uncertainty for food businesses.
- Weak coordination may allow unsafe products to escape timely regulatory action.

**4. Federal Coordination**

- Excessive centralisation may weaken local enforcement responsiveness.
- Uncoordinated state action can undermine uniform national standards.

**Way Forward**

- Clarify inspection and enforcement responsibilities through transparent regulations.
- Establish regular coordination between FSSAI and State Food Safety Commissioners.
- Strengthen state laboratories, personnel and digital inspection systems.
- Introduce common risk-based inspection protocols and effective grievance mechanisms.

**Conclusion**

Effective food safety governance requires national standards combined with strong state-level enforcement. Cooperative federalism, institutional clarity and scientific regulatory capacity are essential to protecting public health.