Polity & Governance · GS - II

‘Cooperative federalism requires institutions that convert constitutional principles into everyday administrative coordination.’ Discuss. (150 words)

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
Daily Practice 07/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

- **Seventh Schedule; Inter-State Council; GST Council; Finance Commission; centrally sponsored schemes; local governments; fiscal federalism.**
- **Explain why coordination matters in policing, health, education, disasters and infrastructure; suggest strengthening mechanisms.**

Model Answer

Indian federalism combines constitutional division of powers with extensive interdependence between the Union and States. Therefore, cooperative federalism requires institutional mechanisms that transform constitutional allocation into practical coordination.

The GST Council illustrates how shared decision-making can harmonise taxation while retaining representation of States. The Finance Commission addresses vertical and horizontal fiscal imbalances, while the Inter-State Council can facilitate dialogue on common policy concerns. Centrally sponsored schemes, disaster management and major infrastructure projects also require coordination because responsibilities and resources frequently overlap.

Challenges include fiscal asymmetry, conditional transfers, disputes over centrally designed schemes and limited institutionalisation of intergovernmental consultation. Local governments further require stronger fiscal and administrative autonomy because many public services are delivered at the grassroots level.

Strengthening cooperative federalism requires regular meetings of intergovernmental bodies, predictable transfers, greater flexibility in centrally sponsored programmes, transparent fiscal data and stronger dispute-resolution mechanisms. States should be treated as policy partners rather than merely implementing agencies.

Ultimately, cooperative federalism is not only a constitutional principle; it is a governance necessity for delivering public goods efficiently across a diverse country.

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