

Narendra Modi's vision of cooperative federalism

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has a unique background. No other Indian PM served as the chief minister of a state for 12 consecutive years before moving on immediately to take on the mantle of leadership in Delhi. This gives him a somewhat different perspective to governance: an understanding of the centrality, importance and needs of states where most decisions and schemes of the government are implemented coupled with a macro policy outlook of being at the apex at the Centre. Modi brought this understanding to the table at the Niti Aayog Governing Council meeting on Sunday, when he emphasised the spirit of “cooperative federalism” and what he calls Team India, the collective of the Centre and the states.

At the council itself, the discussions hovered on specific points: achieving a TB-free India; export promotion; ease of doing business; agriculture and MNREGA; kicking off Ayushman Bharat; development of the Northeast; and more. But the broader message in the remarks of both the PM and the chief ministers was this: the Centre and state need to work together, closely, if India's development and economic goals have to met. This is often forgotten in India's competitive political and polarised landscape. The constitutional scheme provides for division of responsibilities. Take law and order: the Centre can provide broad direction, step in when required, beef up security, but ultimately, it is a state subject. It is the same for agriculture and health delivery. There can be broad policy formulation in Delhi, but the room for initiative and implementation is with state governments.

Over the past few years, Indian federalism has entered a new phase. With a strong central government, for the most part, Delhi has asserted its authority on issues like foreign affairs. The fact that the BJP is in power at both the Centre and by itself, or along with allies, in 19 states, lends greater convergence in policy. But it also makes the Centre more powerful in some ways. At the same time, with the recommendation of the Fourteenth Finance Commission, states have greater control over finances and resources which they can allocate for service delivery. The rise of regional parties has also given them greater political weight. Modi's 'Team India' vision rests on maintaining the right balance between these two strands.

END

Downloaded from crackIAS.com

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com