

What is the Inter-State Council?

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Recently, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister urged the Prime Minister to conduct at least three meetings of the Inter-State Council every year to strengthen the spirit of cooperative federalism.



[Ref: Indian Express]

Inter-State Council:

- It is a mechanism constituted to **support Centre-State and Inter-State coordination** and cooperation in India.
- It was established under **Article 263 of the Constitution**.
 - **It states that:** the President may constitute such a body if a need is felt for it.
- The Council serve as a **forum for discussions among various governments**.

History:

- In 1988, the **Sarkaria Commission** suggested the Council should exist as a permanent body.
- In 1990 it came into existence through a **Presidential Order**.
 - Government of India constituted Sarkaria Commission to **review the working of the existing arrangements between the Union and the States**.

Members of the Inter-state Council:

- **Prime Minister** is the Chairman of the Inter-State Council.
- **The Council members are:** Chief Ministers of all the States and UTs, Governors of the UTs without assembly, Governors of the States under rule of the President, and six ministers in the Cabinet nominated by the Council Chairman.
- **Zonal Councils** were created under **Part III of the State Reorganization Act, 1956**.

- According to **Section 15 of the State Reorganization Act**, there should be one Zonal Council for each of the five regions of the country.

Current Structure of each Zonal Council:

- **Northern Regional Council:** Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Region of Delhi, UT of Chandigarh, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.
- **Central Zonal Council:** Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh
- **Eastern Regional Council:** Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.
- **Western Zonal Council:** Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Union Territories of Dadra, Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.
- **Southern Zonal Council:** Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Union Territory of Puducherry.

Functions of the Councils:

- Each zone council shall be an **advisory body**.
- It may discuss any matter in which some or all of the States, Union have a common interest & advise the central and state governments concerned.

Zone Council may discuss and make recommendations on:

- Any matter of common interest in the field of **economic and social planning**.
- Any question relating to **border disputes, linguistic minorities or interstate transport**.
- Any matter relating to or arising out of the **reorganization of States** under this Act.

Powers of the Council (Article 263):

- Interest and advice in **possible disputes between states**.
- To **examine and discuss matters of common interest** to the States of the Union.
- Make proposals on any such topic in order to better coordinate policy and action.