



Ministry of Information & Broadcasting



DD News Conclave on 'Cooperative and Competitive Federalism'



Team India Spirit pervades in Centre-State relations, High Vaccination Rates and COVID-19 management have been made possible through this: Union Law Minister Shri Kiren Rijiju

Experts discuss role of Finance Commission, GST Council and NITI Aayog in boosting Cooperative and Competitive Federalism

DD News Conclave Series enters its last phase, discusses aspects of New India

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As part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'- celebrating India's 75 years of glorious Independence, DD News is organising a series of conclaves, bringing together eminent dignitaries, policymakers and domain experts. The Conclave has discussed various topics ranging from Yuva Shakti to Social Empowerment to Ease of Living.

The sixth Conclave in this series was held on the topic '**Cooperative and Competitive Federalism**' with Shri Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister for Law and Justice, Dr. N.K Singh, Chairman of the Fifteenth Finance Commission, Prof. Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog, Shri B.P. Singh, Former Governor, Sikkim & Former Home Secretary, Prof Sudhir Singh, Department of Political Science, Delhi University and Prof. Ashwani Mahajan, Economist. A studio audience comprising of scholars and college students interacted with the panellists during the session.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Kiren Rijiju said that a Team India spirit has been maintained in Centre-State relations, with cooperation in GST Council, and frequent interactions between Prime Minister and Chief Ministers, especially in the fight against COVID-19. He said that without this cooperative spirit, India could not have achieved such high numbers in vaccination or utilised PM Cares funds for

combating COVID-19. He added that while grievances may exist in a country with finite resources and diverse demands, institutional framework like Finance Commission and NITI Aayog have encouraged a consultative process to ensure equitable and proportionate distribution of resources.

Dr. N.K Singh said that the Finance Commission has an important role in helping States meet their developmental goals and that it has studied every state's unique issues in detail. At the macro level, the Fifteenth Finance Commission has tried to allocate resources balancing demographic management, growth inequality, needs of states and performance incentives for progress, he said. He cited that while Himalayan and North-Eastern states had to account for ecological considerations in their growth path, southern states have prioritised population management, thereby a 'One Size Fits All' Approach no longer works, he said.

Shri B.P. Singh cited the need for a trio of institutional framework, finances and technology to be adapted to the needs of the states. He said that Prime Minister Modi has changed the grammar of democratic governance by keeping the channels of communication open with states.

Prof. Ramesh Chand said that the Aspirational Districts Programme set targets to ensure that those districts with lower growth than state average were focussed on. The next phase of this shall be Aspirational Blocks and so on until there can be micro-level growth emphasis on India's villages, he said. He added that just like successive Finance Commissions have tried to address inequality between states through grants, State Finance Commissions must be empowered to do the same between districts. Prof. Sudhir Singh said that villages where more than 50 per cent of India's population lives, needs to overcome governance deficit through capacity building, resources and boost to Gram Sabhas.

Prof. Ramesh Chand also elaborated on NITI Aayog's Index Approach that has heralded a new wave of Competitive Federalism between states on a variety of aspects including Ease of Living, meeting Sustainable Development Goals, Swachh Survekshan among others. He informed that NITI Aayog has used Knowledge Sharing Platforms for transferring best practices and innovations across states.

Prof Ashwini Mahajan said that states have to make a wise choice between the path of growth and fiscal prudence versus populism and doling out freebies. He said that successive Finance Commissions have encouraged States to prioritise their developmental goals by increasing the allocation of revenues and rationalising Central Sector Schemes. He said that India is an aspirational country that has proven its capabilities during the COVID pandemic and that it needs institution building and some of its brightest minds to come together to achieve its goals.

Saurabh Singh

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