

**REVISITING INDIAN FEDERALISM:
CENTRE - STATE TENSIONS
IN THE ERA OF THE 'ONE NATION'
POLICY FRAMEWORK.**

MS. SALINI C & MS. SHONA K P



ANANTJIT PUBLICATION

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PREFACE

The concept of India as a federal polity was never inert, it is constructed by its enormous social heterogeneity, uneven economic structure, and the complicated balances between the national integrity and regional independence. The Constitution has given a loose structure of how these warring imperatives can be balanced since the Independence, such that the Centre and the states can collaborate, contest, and co-evolve. However, in the past years this balance has been under new examination. Political agendas that have been formed through the rise of a strong central executive, and the rise of a One Nation policy paradigm, in the form of One Nation, One Tax, One Nation, One Ration Card, and plans to create One Nation, One Election, have remodeled the nature, scope, and future of Indian federalism.

In this text, Revisiting Indian Federalism: Centre -State Tensions in the Era of the One Nation Policy Framework, the authors attempt to analyze these current changes in a critical and sensitive manner. Federalism is, in fact, not an administrative arrangement, but it is the heart of the Indian democratic building. It is an expression of a promise in the constitution that power should be distributed, diversity honored, and that governance should be decentralized. But these new

centralizations in the major areas such as the fiscal decision-making process to regulatory control have brought up some core questions: Do these changes contribute to national coherence or the spirit of cooperative federalism? Are they streamlining governments or affecting the independence of states? What does it imply to citizens and political institutions working with these new structures of power?

This work reinvents the shifting frontiers of Centre State relations in the twenty first century through scholarly analysis, case studies and policy critique. It does not just attempt to record tensions but it also attempts to highlight ways to engage positively. It is hoped that by doing so a better popular and scholarly appreciation of federalism as a living, changing institution can emerge, one that needs to be constantly subject to change, and at the same time be anchored to the values of the constitution.

With a fast-paced political, economic and technological turnover, the federal question keeps on taking the centre stage of the Indian democratic future. This book is a call to reconsider, re-evaluate and rethink that future with clarity, balance and constitutional fidelity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Without the intellectual, institutional, and personal assistance we have received in the process, *Revisiting Indian Federalism: Centre -State Tensions in the Era of the One Nation Policy Framework* would have been impossible to complete. The idea of federalism, as we will demonstrate throughout the present paper, is a living and changing principle, the one that requires constant debate, criticism, and introspection. Similarly, this book has been made out of numerous discussions, partnerships, and selfless efforts.

We owe great debt to the constitutional law scholars, political science scholars and public policy scholars whose landmark on the subject of Indian federalism gave both substance and guiding objective. Their constitutional design studies, Centre-State relations, and changing character of cooperative and competitive federalism have contributed to our knowledge beyond measure.

We are grateful to policy practitioners, policy alumni, and civil society players who provided useful insights into how the federal set up functions on the ground particularly in the light of the new one nation policy paradigms. Their life experience served us to question the ways national coherence, regional autonomy and

democratic decentralization are being reexamined in the present day India.

We also owe much debt to the institutions, libraries, and research centres, which helped in accessing documents, data, and archives that were needed to conduct this study. We are indebted to our colleagues and peer reviewers who subjected the manuscript to constructive criticism that enhanced the manuscript and enabled us to sharpen our arguments.

Our families and close associates have always been there to support us, to be patient and encouraging during the long research and writing process, which we are thankful.

Our last benefactors are the readers, students and scholars who remain entangled in questions of Indian federalism. We hope that it is a valuable addition to continuing discussions and can contribute to the continued existence of an informed, balanced, and constitutionally based knowledge of the Centre-State relations in the twenty first century.

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