

Examrace

Competitive Exams Essay: If USA have Fifty States, India can also recast its federation

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The disintegration of the Soviet Union has important implications for the Union of India. Regional aspirations can no longer be dismissed as chauvinistic, and federalism will have to be taken seriously.

in his recent book *Federal India: A Design for Change*, Professor Rasheeduddin Khan makes a plea for a comprehensive review of the entire gamut of Centre-State relations by a National Assembly specially constituted for the purpose. His plea in substance is for a new Constitution. The most vital change necessary at this point of history, he feels, is the creation of a new federal balance in India. The following measures are vital for changing the present centralized federation into a cooperative and constructive federal policy

1. territorial reorganization of States on the criterion of providing the States maximum homogeneity within and maximum identity without:
2. increasing the autonomy of the States, by incorporation greater administrative and fiscal powers to them
3. activation of the Panchayati Raj and Nagarpalika system with necessary devolution of authority to build and active grassroots democracy
4. building of a new federal national consensus to fight communalism, casteism and separatism, and to defend the values of democracy, secularism, social justice and federal nation-building.

Federalism in the polity and decentralization in administration are comprehended in the same mindset. Large, unwieldy States with more powers than at present will not really federalize the polity. A reorganization based on the principles of techno-economic viability, socio-cultural homogeneity and administrative and political the necessity. The application of these principles leads to the creation of as many as 58 States. This would help mass mobilization and keener participation for development, and bring functional politics closer to the people by making it more responsive to local and specific sub-regional demands.

If the United States of America, with one-third of India's population, can have 50 States, India can also recast its federation to have as many States as are required by the genuine needs of its diverse population. Incidentally, the complicated procedure for amending the Constitution is not required to be followed while creating new States or redrawing the boundaries of existing States: This can be done by an ordinary law of Parliament. What, however, is required is that

the Bill for the purpose should be introduced on the recommendation of the President, and the legislature of the State whose area or boundaries are to be altered should be given an opportunity to express its views on the proposals.

The Sarkaria Commission did apply itself assiduously to the task of examining and reviewing the working of the existing arrangements between the Union and the States. But it was not given a Carre Blanche. It was asked to have due regard to the scheme and framework of the Constitution which the founding fathers have so sedulously designed to protect the independence and ensure the unity and integrity of the country which is of paramount importance for promoting the welfare of the people. That scheme and framework created a federation with strong unitary and centralizing features; the Sarkaria Commission could therefore not suggest an obliteration of those.

The centralizing features of our Constitution will in all likelihood be held to be part of the basic structure and hence, indestructible.

By the same test, a new Constituent Assembly to rewrite the Constitution cannot be called through the present Constitution. A limited amending power itself has been held to be one of the basic features of our Constitution. In Kesavananda Bharati Case, Justice Khanna said that if the people decided to have an entirely new Constitution, they would not need the authority of the existing Constitution for this purpose. Apropos this observation, a distinguished commentator says that it is not the business to suggest a revolution.

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