

Polity Study Material: Zonal Councils

Zonal Councils

Zonal Councils have been established by the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 to advise on matters of common interest to each of the five zones into which the territories of India. Has. Been divided Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western and Central. These Zonal Councils do not owe their origin to the Constitution but to an Act of Parliament, having been introduced by the States Reorganisation Act, with a view to securing co-operation and co-ordination as between the States, the Union Territories and the Union, particularly in respect of economic and social development. If properly worked these Councils would thus foster the “federal sentiment” by resisting the separatist tendencies of linguism and provincialism. The zones covered by these councils are as under:

1. The Central Zone, comprising the States of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Chhattisgarh.
2. The Northern Zone, comprising the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir and the Union Territories of Delhi and Chandigarh.
3. The Eastern Zone, comprising the States of Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Sikkim and Jharkhand.
4. The Western Zone, comprising the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa and the Union Territories of Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu.
5. The Southern Zone, comprising the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and the Union Territory of Pondicherry. Besides these, there is the North Eastern Council set up in 1971, to deal with the common problems of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. Constitution: Each Zonal Council consists of the Chief Minister and two other Ministers of each of the States in the Zone and the Administrator in the case of a Union Territory. There is also provision for holding joint meetings of two or more Zonal Councils. The Union Home Minister has been nominated as the common Chairman of all the Zonal Councils.

Functions

The main functions of Zonal Councils are:

1. to inquire into and advise upon disputes, which may arise among the States
2. to investigate and discuss subjects, in which some or all the States or Union and one or more States have common interest

3. to make recommendations upon any such subject and, in particular, recommendations for better co-ordination of policy and action with respect to that subject. Role: The Zonal Councils play multiplicity of roles in order to achieve

- i. an emotional integration of the people
 - ii. arresting the growth of acute state consciousness in the form of regionalism, linguism, etc.
 - iii. enabling the Centre and the States in economic and social matters for evolving the uniform policies
 - iv. co-operating with each other in speedy and successful execution of developmental plans
 - v. securing some kind of political equilibrium between different regions of the country.
- Importance: The importance of the Zonal Councils lies in the fact, they help to further co ordination and integration through extra constitutional advisory organization, without undermining the autonomy of States, thereby fostering the “federal sentiment” by resisting the separatist tendencies of linguism and provincialism.

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