

# **Socio-Economic Implications of Covid-19 Pandemic in India: Growing Challenges and Potential Solutions**

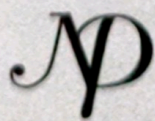
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# Status of Cooperative Federalism in India's response to Covid-19 Pandemic

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Papia Deb

**Abstract:** It can be said that India's constitution is not designed to deal with a catastrophic global pandemic like COVID-19. Besides, part XVIII of Indian Constitution (Emergency Provisions) does not provide an adequate framework for the COVID-19 crisis. Although there has been no formal declaration of emergency during this pandemic through which the Union Government can take over the powers of entire governance in their hands. But in response to the pandemic, the Union government took charge of our entire governance structure at national and regional levels. It is also known to us that under Indian constitutional scheme, the states are bound to implement directions from the Union government. But it is important to know how India's Centre-State relationships have been working out, during this state of de-facto emergency. So the purpose of this paper is to analyze the role how centre-state 'co-operative federalism' has played in addressing the current world-wide pandemic in a diverse federal system like India, how centre-state cooperation can play an effective role in reviving the pandemic economy and how the various coercive decisions of the centre have caused social and economic problems in India.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, constitutional scheme, co-operative federalism, coercive decisions.

## I

### Constitutional arrangements and cleft in cooperation

The Constituent Assembly of India has examined various federal democratic models around the world and developed a system specifically tailored to the needs of India. K.C. Wheare notes that federalism has traditionally meant the independence of the governments of the Union and the states of a country in their own area. However, there was nothing traditional about the circumstances in which the Constituent Assembly of India met. Therefore, even as its members carefully studied the constitutions of other major federations such as the United States, Canada, Australia and Switzerland, they followed a policy of 'pick and choose' to formulate a specially suited system to the needs of the republic. As a result, the Constituent Assembly of India became the first constituent body in the world to adopt what AH Birch and others have called 'cooperative federalism,' which essentially involves administrative cooperation between the center and the states and partial dependence by the states on centre for finance. Finally, India adopted 'Cooperative Federalism', essentially defined by administrative cooperation between the center and the states, as well as between the states. But to see the centralizing tendency in various developmental process of Indian federalism, K.C. Wheare called it 'Quasi-federal'. Other constitutional researchers also describe it as a 'federation without federalism' and as 'a Union of Unequal States.'