

Q1. What is NITI Aayog? What are the 5 key changes brought by NITI Aayog in Indian Planning? (250 words)

Ans. NITI Aayog - The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog has replaced the Planning Commission instituted in 1950. It was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015.

→ It works as a 'Think Tank' of the govt of India, providing both directional and policy inputs.

→ It also provides relevant technical advice to the Centre and the States.

→ The Aayog planned to come out with three documents - 3 year action agenda, 7 year medium-term strategy paper and 15 year vision document.

5 KEY CHANGES BROUGHT BY NITI AAYOG IN INDIAN PLANNING ARE AS FOLLOWS -

(1) COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM

→ The planning commission was a central government institution and there was no representation of state government. There was no structural mechanism for interaction with states.

→ NITI Aayog provides a partnership with state governments to promote co-operative federalism. It provides a platform for structured and regular interaction with states.

→ It has planned to evolve a shared vision of national development priorities, sectors and strategies with the active involvement of states.

(2) AGRICULTURAL REFORMS -

- The plan panel proposed major changes in the agricultural produce marketing committee act, the law that ensure farmers get a fair deal for their produce and are not exploited.
- Second green revolution - The panel suggested reforms in land leasing policies, ramping up of land records and land titles, preparing the country for the second "green Revolution" in eastern states, and addressing farmers' distress.

(3) HEALTH, EDUCATION & WATER - The plan panel came up with indices for measuring states' performance in health, education and water management.

The indices helping states gauge the results of social programmes, compete with each other and share best practices and innovations.

(4) NEW PLANNING SYSTEM -

- The NITI Aayog sets a 15-year plan for govt actions for achieving social goals such as poverty reduction, and improving health and sanitation.
- Another 7-year strategy document for 2017-24 will chart out policy action outlined as the "National Development Agenda"
- A 3-year "Action Agenda" from 2017-18 to 2019-20 is being worked out to assess funding requirements.

(5) CASHLESS TRANSACTIONS -

It has been training officials of various ministries, at the central and state levels alike, to adopt digital

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modes of transaction. It announced award programmes for businesses and individuals to use cashless transactions.

CONCLUSION - NITI Aayog could emerge as an agent of change over time and contribute to the govt's agenda of improving governance and implementing innovative measures for better delivery of public services.