

*Institutions under legislative enactments***A. The Zonal Councils**

Recommendation

- a. The system of Zonal Councils may be dispensed with. Important issues of inter-State coordination or disputes between States in the same region may, wherever necessary, be entrusted to an Inter-State Council with appropriate composition and terms of reference so that any given issue is considered in depth.

B. National Human Rights Commission

This body was created in 1994 under the Protection of Human Rights Act 1993 and is presided over by a former Chief Justice of India with four members out of whom two have to be former Judges of the Supreme Court. Over the years, the NHRC has made visible impact on a wide variety of human rights related issues all over the country including in sensitive states like Jammu and Kashmir, North East and Punjab during the peak of militancy in these regions. While conflict resolution does not formally figure in the agenda of the NHRC, institutions like it have a major preventive role in dispelling helplessness and despair from victims of major human rights violations and dissuade such groups from resorting to violence.

C. National Minorities Commission and National Commission for Backward Classes

These bodies function like the National Commissions for Scheduled Castes/Tribes with the difference that they derive their mandate from parliamentary legislations rather than constitutional provisions.

Institutions or deliberative forums issued under executive orders of the Government

- *The National Integration Council (NIC)*
- *National Development Council (NDC)*
- *Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE)*

Recommendation

- a. Specific rules of procedure for the National Development Council and other apex level bodies may be drawn up to ensure focussed deliberations.

Other Institutional Innovations

While there is a need to broaden the base, strengthen and effectuate the existing institutions and fora for conflict reduction and resolution, there is also a case for extending the existing framework of some of the institutions so that certain proven methods of negotiations and deliberations could be more widely applied.

Recommendations at a glance

- a. State Integration Councils may be constituted to take stock of State level conflict situations having suitable linkages with the NIC. In important matters, the report of State level bodies may also be brought for consideration, advice and recommendations of the NIC. Guidelines for deciding the membership to the National Integration Council may also give suitable weightage to adequately representing the State Integration Councils in the national body.
- b. District level integration Councils (District Peace Committees) having suitable linkages with the State Councils may also be considered particularly for Districts with a history of violent, divisive conflicts. These should comprise eminent individuals enjoying confidence of all sections of society. These bodies may play mediatory and advisory roles in conflict situations.