

2.4.1. Administrative Reform Commission (First)

The Central government appointed a six member Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) in 1966 under the Chairmanship of Morarji Desai. Its terms of references included, among others, the examination of Centre-State relations. In 1969, ARC submitted 22 recommendations in its report on Centre-State relationship. The important recommendations are:

- a) Establishment of Inter-State Council under Article 263 of the Constitution.
- b) Appointment of people having long experience in public life and administration and non-partisan attitude as Governors.
- c) Delegation of powers to the maximum extent to the States.
- d) Transferring of more financial resources to the States to reduce their dependency upon the Centre.
- e) Deployment of Central armed forces in States, either on their request or otherwise.

But, no action was taken by the Central Government on the recommendations of ARC.

Next, important development in this direction was appointment of Sarkaria Commission.

2.4.2. Sarkaria Commission

The Central government appointed a three-member Commission in 1983 on Centre-State relationship under the Chairmanship of R S Sarkaria, a retired Judge of the Supreme Court. The Commission submitted its report in October 1987 with 247 recommendations. It did not favour structural changes and regarded the existing constitutional arrangements and principles relating to the institutions basically sound. But, it emphasised need for the change in functional or operational aspect. It outrightly rejected the demand for curtailing the powers of centre and stated that a strong centre is essential to safeguard the national unity and integrity. However, it observed the over-centralisation as an avoidable phenomenon. Its important recommendations were:

1. A permanent Inter-State Council called the Inter-Governmental Council should be set up under Article 263.
2. Article 356 (President's rule) should be used very sparingly, in extreme cases as a last resort when all the available alternatives fail.
3. The institution of All-India Services should be further strengthened and some more such services should be created.
4. The residuary power of taxation should continue to remain with the parliament, while the other residuary powers should be placed in the concurrent list.
5. When the President withholds his assent to the state bills, the reason should be communicated to state government.
6. The Zonal Councils should be constituted afresh and reactivated to promote the spirit of federalism.
7. The Centre should have powers to deploy its armed forces, even without the consent of states. However, it is desirable that the states should be consulted.
8. The Centre should consult the states before making a law on a subject of the Concurrent List.
9. The procedure of consulting the Chief Minister in the appointment of State Governor should be prescribed in the Constitution itself.
10. The Governor's term of five years in a state should not be disrupted except for extremely compelling reasons.
11. Steps should be taken to uniformly implement the three language formula in its true spirit.
12. No autonomy in for radio and television but decentralization in their operations.
13. The Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities should be activated.

Till December 2007, The Central Government has implemented 179 (out of 247) recommendations of the Sarkaria commission. **The most important is the establishment of Inter-State Council in 1990.**