

Essay on NITI Aayog

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The **NITI Aayog** (Hindi for *Policy Commission*) (abbreviation for **National Institution for Transforming India**) is a policy think tank of the Government of India, established with the aim to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and to enhance cooperative federalism by fostering the involvement of State Governments of India in the economic policy-making process using a bottom-up approach. Its initiatives include "15 year road map", "7-year vision, strategy and action plan", AMRUT, Digital India, Atal Innovation Mission, Medical Education Reform, agriculture reforms (Model Land Leasing Law, Reforms of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Act, Agricultural Marketing and Farmer Friendly Reforms Index for ranking states), Indices Measuring States' Performance in Health, Education and Water Management, Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on Rationalization of Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on Skill Development, Task Forces on Agriculture and op of Poverty, and Transforming India Lecture Series.^[1]

It was established in 2015, by the NDA government, to replace the Planning Commission (योजना आयोग) which followed a top-down model. The Prime Minister is the Ex-officio chairman. The permanent members of the governing council are all the state Chief Ministers, along with the Chief Ministers of Delhi and Puducherry, the Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar, and a vice chairman nominated by the Prime Minister. In addition, temporary members are selected from leading universities and research institutions. These members include a chief executive officer, four ex-official members and two part-time members.

The NITI Aayog comprises the following:

The **Prime Minister** as the Chairperson.

A **Governing Council** composed of Chief Ministers of all the States and Union territories with Legislatures and lieutenant governors of Union Territories (except Delhi and Pondicherry)

Regional Councils composed of Chief Ministers of States and Lt. Governors of Union Territories in the region to address specific issues and contingencies impacting more than one state or a region.

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Full-time organizational framework composed of a Vice-Chairperson, five full-time members, two part-time members (from leading universities, research organizations and other relevant institutions in an ex-officio capacity), four ex-officio members of the Union Council of Ministers, a Chief Executive Officer (with the rank of Secretary to the Government of India) who looks after administration, and a secretariat.

Experts and specialists in various fields.

With the Prime Minister as the Chairperson, presently NITI Aayog consists of:

- *Vice Chairperson: Rajiv Kumar*
- *Ex-Officio Members: Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nirmala Sitaraman and Narendra Singh Tomar*
- *Special Invitees: Nitin Gadkari, Piyush Goyal, Thawar Chand Gehlot and Rao Inderjit Singh*
- *Full-time Members: V. K. Saraswat (former DRDO Chief), Ramesh Chand (Agriculture Expert)[13] and Dr. Vinod Paul (Public Health expert)*
- *Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Amitabh Kant*
- *Governing Council: All Chief Ministers of States (and Delhi and Puducherry), Lieutenant Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Special Invites*

The NITI Aayog never Plans

It primarily formulates policy. The different Ministries of the Central Government prepare projects based on these policies. The Aayog supports a cooperative federal structure where the Center and the States prepare development policies together.

At the same time, it also promotes healthy competition among the developing states. The regional councils focus on the development activities in specific areas. Also, the Aayog is based on the National Reforms Development Commission, China.

Here we will look at Five-year Plan of India.

No power to Allocate Funds

Unlike its predecessor (The Planning Commission) which had the power to allocate funds to States for regional development, the NITI Aayog has no such powers.

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The Finance Ministry's Department of Expenditure allocates funds now. The Aayog's primary responsibility is to undertake long-term policy and design frameworks, along with taking necessary initiatives for faster development. Further, the Aayog also monitors these activities.

The Aayog provides direction to the Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) activities in India. It also pegs importance to the quality standards, ethical procedures and provides appropriate institutional mechanisms. Therefore, NITI Aayog means:

- A group of people that the Government entrusts for formulating and regulating policies concerning the transformation of India.
- A Commission which assists the Government in both social and economic issues.
- An institution with experts
- A body which actively monitors and evaluates the implementation of the Government's programs and initiatives.

Aims of the NITI Aayog

1. Provide a critical directional and strategic input to the development process of India.
2. Serve as a think tank of the Government both at the Center and State-level. Also, provide relevant strategic and technical advice on key policy matters.
3. Try to replace the center-to-state, one-way flow of policy with an amicably settled policy which a genuine and continued partnership of states frames.
4. Seek to put an end to the slow and tardy implementation of policy. This is possible through a better Inter-Ministry and state-to-state coordination.
5. Further, help to evolve a shared vision of national development priorities and foster cooperative federalism. Work with the view that strong states = a strong nation.
6. Develop mechanisms to formulate credible plans at the village level. Further, aggregate these plans progressively at the higher levels of the Government. In other words, ensure that special attention is paid to the sections of the society which carry the risk of not benefitting from the overall economic progress of the country.
7. Create a Knowledge, Innovation, and Entrepreneurial system through a collaborative community of national and international experts and practitioners. Offer a platform for the

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resolution of inter-sectoral and inter-departmental issues to accelerate the implementation of the development agenda.

8. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of programs and also focus on upgrading technology and building capacity.

FUNCTIONS:

1. To evolve a shared vision of national development priorities sectors and strategies with the active involvement of States in the light of national objectives.
2. To foster cooperative federalism through structured support initiatives and mechanisms with the States on a continuous basis, recognizing that strong States make a strong nation.
3. To develop mechanisms to formulate credible plans at the village level and aggregate these progressively at higher levels of government.
4. To ensure, on areas that are specifically referred to it, that the interests of national security are incorporated in economic strategy and policy.
5. To pay special attention to the sections of our society that may be at risk of not benefiting adequately from economic progress.
6. To design strategic and long term policy and programme frameworks and initiatives, and monitor their progress and their efficacy. The lessons learnt through monitoring and feedback will be used for making innovative improvements, including necessary mid-course corrections.
7. To provide advice and encourage partnerships between key stakeholders and national and international like-minded Think tanks, as well as educational and policy research institutions.
8. To create a knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurial support system through a collaborative community of national and international experts, practitioners and other partners.
9. To offer a platform for resolution of inter-sectoral and inter departmental issues in order to accelerate the implementation of the development agenda.

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10. To maintain a state-of-the-art Resource Centre, be a repository of research on good governance and best practices in sustainable and equitable development as well as help their dissemination to stake-holders.
11. To actively monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes and initiatives, including the identification of the needed resources so as to strengthen the probability of success and scope of delivery.
12. To focus on technology upgradation and capacity building for implementation of programmes and initiatives.
13. To undertake other activities as may be necessary in order to further the execution of the national development agenda, and the objectives mentioned above.

The measures were taken by the NITI Aayog to help India face complex challenges

- Leverage India's demographic dividend and realize the potential of young men and women. This is done through imparting education, skill development, the elimination of gender bias and providing employment opportunities.
- Eliminate poverty and offer Indians a better chance to live a life of dignity and respect.
- Redress inequalities based on gender bias, caste, and economic disparities.
- Integrate villages into the development process of the country.
- Provide policy support to more than 50 million businesses – a major source of employment generation.
- Safeguard our environmental and ecological assets.