Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the importance of Centre–State coordination in implementing criminal justice reforms in India. How can such coordination improve access to timely and effective justice?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Cooperative federalism, criminal law reforms, State List and Concurrent List, police training, forensic infrastructure, judicial capacity, digital justice, intergovernmental coordination, access to justice, accountability.

Model Answer

Introduction

India's criminal justice system depends on cooperation among Union and State institutions. The implementation of the three new criminal laws requires administrative coordination, adequate resources and consistent procedural safeguards.

Importance of Centre–State coordination

- **Federal responsibilities:** Police and public order are State subjects, while criminal law and criminal procedure fall within the Concurrent List.
- **Capacity building:** States require trained police personnel, forensic facilities, prosecutors and technological infrastructure to implement reforms effectively.

- **Uniform implementation:** Coordination helps develop common standards while accommodating legitimate regional and administrative differences.
- **Timely justice:** Better investigation, digital case management and effective prosecution can reduce delays and improve case handling.

Challenges and way forward

Differences in financial capacity, staffing, digital infrastructure and training may produce uneven implementation. The Union and States should establish regular coordination mechanisms, share best practices, provide adequate resources and monitor implementation through measurable indicators. Reforms must also protect due process, legal aid, privacy and the rights of accused persons and victims.

Conclusion

Criminal justice reform requires more than new legislation. Cooperative federalism, institutional capacity and constitutional safeguards are essential to building an accessible, efficient and trustworthy justice system.

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