

Daily Mains Practice Answer 18-08-2026

Q. The effectiveness of India's inter-State river governance depends more on institutional coordination than on the creation of new legal mechanisms. Critically examine. (15 marks, 250 words)

Direction: Intro-----Institutional coordination matters more + New legal mechanisms still necessary + Measures needed-----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Describe interstate rivers (or) start with interstate river dispute act (or) river boards.

Main Body

Why institutional coordination matters more?

- Fragmented governance - Water is a State subject, but regulation and development of interstate rivers fall under the Union List.
- Largely ineffective institutions - Eg., no River Boards have been created under the River Boards Act.
- States are reluctant to surrender control
- Weak implementation mechanisms
- Data disputes - 2nd ARC recommended integrated databases connecting central, State and basin-level agencies.
- Climate variability
- Ecological concerns
- Political incentives
- Need for basin-level management - All basin states can facilitate joint planning for the use of water.

Why new legal mechanisms may still be necessary?

However, institutional coordination alone is insufficient.

- Existing laws have limitations in enforcement and compliance.
- Tribunals often faces delay.
- Disputes may continue for decades.
- Need for clearly defined distress-sharing principles during droughts.
- Stronger statutory institutions are required.
- Need for a unified legal framework to reduce fragmented approaches in interstate water governance.

What measures need to be taken?

- Strengthen River Basin Organisations.
- Establish common water-data systems.
- Institutionalise Centre-State & State-State negotiations.
- Develop drought/distress-sharing protocols in advance.
- Incorporate environmental flows and climate-change considerations.
- Strengthen compliance and monitoring mechanisms.
- Promote cooperative federalism rather than competitive water politics.

Conclusion:

Give a neutral conclusion.

