

# The Impact of Centralised Welfare Schemes on State Autonomy in India

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**Abstract:** This systematic literature review investigates the impacts of centralized welfare schemes on state autonomy in India in its decentralizing system of governance. Based on the thematic review of the peer-reviewed articles performed using axial coding of the articles found by the ResearchGate and ScienceDirect databases, three prominent themes are observed, including the constitutional and institutional framework changes, financial consequences of certain changes on state autonomy, and effectiveness of the used delivery mechanisms in comparison. Although the schemes are cost-effective ways to improve administrative and national coverage, they also compromise the principles of cooperative federalism. The results indicate that there should be institutional innovations to strike the right balance between national conformity and state discretions in supplying welfare.

**Keywords** Centralized welfare schemes, state autonomy, Indian federalism, Direct Benefit Transfer, welfare delivery mechanisms.

## Introduction

The federal structure of India is getting tighter because of the growth in the centralized welfare schemes that are taking place under the present government. A centralized policy feature such as an increase in direct benefit transfer (DBT) programs like Ayushman Bharat, and employment guarantee schemes amongst others is a paradigm change in the environment of centralized policy formulation. This centralization poses a setback to the conventional state autonomy in the social policy areas and very fundamental issues are raised regarding the aspect of uniform national provision of welfare.

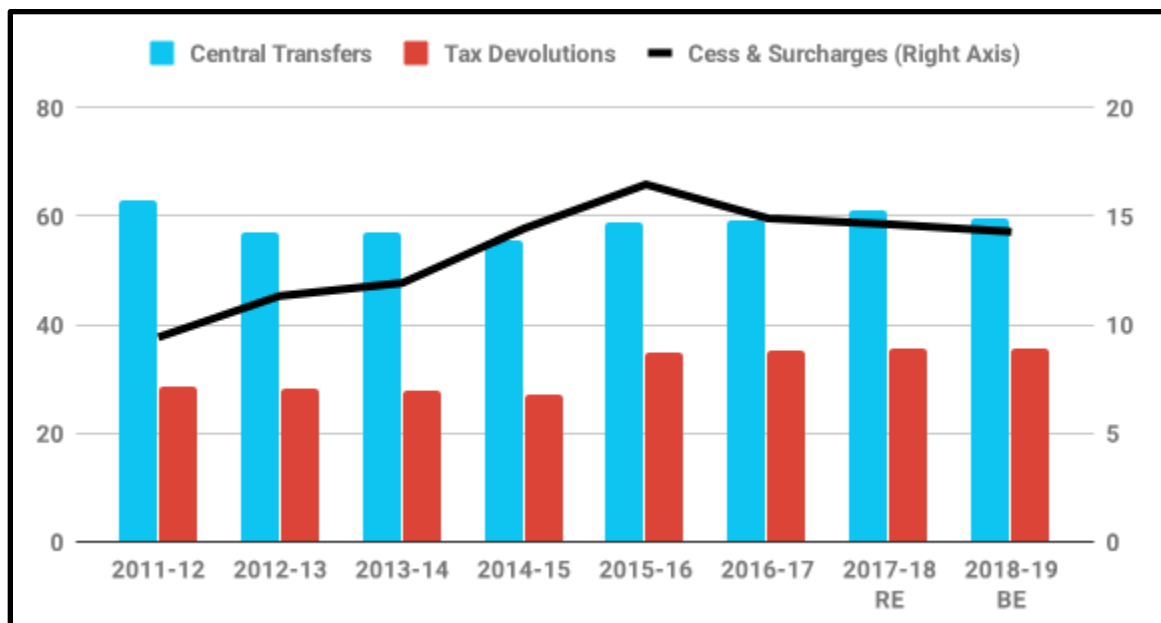
## Background

A complex federal system is provided by the Indian constitutional framework, and governmental roles in the social policy are split between states and the Centre. Under the constitution, the states of India have extensive powers as far as social policy is concerned, albeit in conjunction with the central regime. The 1950 constitution in India represented both health and education to the list of state subjects, which allowed states a high degree of control in the management of welfare (Striveedgeias., 2016).



**Figure 1: Social welfare schemes in India** (Source: Striveedgeias. in, 2016)

This, however, has changed in recent times with the change towards centralization in the design and implementation of welfare policies. The Modi government has been promoting it on a national level. At the same time, the Central government has also centralized the welfare and direct benefit scheme designs and credit claiming of the schemes which the State governments had a crucial role to play. Technological advancement in the area of digital infrastructure has helped to bring about this change, especially in the way Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) systems have been implemented allowing the transfer of funds directly by the Centre to the beneficiary eliminating the need to channel socio-economic funds through state mediated channels (Sharma, Saluja, & Sarma, 2016).



**Figure 2: Fiscal central transfers** (Source: Theindiaforum in, 2018)

Since 2014, the extent of planned welfare schemes has increased tremendously. Other notable schemes are the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi in which direct income support is given to farmers the Ayushman Bharat healthcare program and a series of employment guarantee schemes. Prime Minister

Narendra Modi launched the 18th installment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme which showed that the centralization of welfare delivery is still in existence (Theindiaforum.in, 2018).

### **Research aim and objectives**

The study aims to critically analyze the role that centralized welfare schemes are playing in altering the federal balance of power between the Centre and the states in modern India.

The objective of the research is to analyze constitutional and legal structures that guide the relation between the Centre and the states in the execution of its policy on welfare and define areas of jurisdiction prone to conflict. The main focus is to examine fiscal consequences of centralized welfare programs on state government revenues, patterns of expenditures, and their ability to formulate policy on their own. The research also aims to assess how effective centralized and state-led mechanisms of delivering welfare are in meeting social intended results and satisfaction of the beneficiaries.

### **Research question to be answered**

- What are the changes created by the centralized welfare schemes in the conventional allocation of powers between the Centre and the states as provided in the Indian Constitution?
- What are the financial and management effects of centralized welfare provision on the freedom of autonomy and independent social policy development to the state governments?
- How ineffective or effective are centralized welfare plans about the state-led approaches in terms of social protection delivery?

### **Previous literature**

#### ***Historical Evolution of Centralization in Indian Federalism***

Dynamic variations of centralization and decentralization have been seen to define the course of Indian federalism as an elaborate balance between constitutional practice and theory. According to Singh (2019), the balance of power in the federal system of India between the Centre and states has been found to swing widely between the years 1950 and 2010 questioning the notion that the process was either centralization or decentralization linear. A historical overview indicates that the current takeover discussion over the centralization of welfare schemes is one trend in the history of adjustment towards federalism other than a radical exit away from the conventional path. The constitutional dispensation in 1950 led to a system in which the tasks of social policy were assigned purposefully between various levels of the government, in which the states remained highly independent in the fields of health, education, and social welfare. Nevertheless, Tillin & Pereira (2017) identifies that federalism in real practice has always been accompanied by the conflict between constitutional regulations and political necessities in India. The history of the Centre-state relationship proves that federalism in India is not a fixed product but an evolving process because of the transformation in the political environment, economic needs, and administration issues.

#### ***Comparative Perspectives on Multi-Level Welfare Governance***

Comparative analysis between nations provides good information on how federalism is related to the implementation of social policies. The article prepared by Tillin and Pereira (2017) studies the influence of multi-level elections on social policy outcomes in Brazil and India's federal systems and helps to understand the role of welfare program design in determining Center-state relations and the mechanisms of electoral accountability. By analyzing the experiences of centralized welfare, they show that it allows the establishment of certain patterns of political competition, as well as policy responsiveness, which are significantly different from those created through decentralized actions.

#### ***Political Economy of Centralization under Contemporary Governance***

The following period of centralization in Indian welfare policy is part of the wider change happening in the political economy and governance style of the country. Chacko (2018), claims that the rightward

turn in the politics of India involves not only the ideological value but also the shifts in the plans of state-society relations and governmental organization. Such transformation involves the concentration of policy-making powers and the use of technocratic solutions to the delivery of welfare that focus more on efficiency rather than participatory governance.

Specifically, Sharma and Swenden (2018) discuss the changes brought by the Modi government to traditional patterns of Centre-state relations stating that contemporary centralization is qualitative rather than quantitative expansion of the centre. In their analysis, they indicate that modern centralization of welfare is entangled in a larger rearrangement of the structure of Indian federalism that influences various policy areas and processes of governance.

### Gap analysis

Regardless of the broad scholarship on Indian federalism and welfare policy, there are still crucial gaps when it comes to knowledge of the contemporary implications of centralized welfare schemes on the autonomy of the states. The literature available largely discusses patterns of centralization historically or uses general theory, but comparatively little has been done summarizing how particular welfare schemes such as Ayushman Bharat and DBT schemes are seen to impact Centre-state relations in practice. In addition to this, although comparative studies analyze federalism at the inter-country level, there is a lack of interest in comparing differences in centralization effects within the Indian states that have different administrative capabilities and political orientations.

### Methodology

In this study, a systematic literature review approach is used to explore the effects of centralized welfare schemes on state autonomy in India in a thorough manner. The research has adopted secondary data collection and analysis as methods of synthesizing the available academic knowledge as well as determining trends in the correlation linking the centralization of welfare and the structure of federal governance. The data were retrieved using systematic searches of academic databases, mostly ResearchGate and ScienceDirect, in peer-reviewed journal articles published in the period between 2013 and 2019. The search strategy used keywords such as federalism, welfare schemes, state autonomy, centralization, India, Centre-state relations, and social policy. Inclusion and exclusion have been done through using the PRISMA framework and also the Boolean operator has been used as well in the coordination of keywords for selecting articles (Coy, 2019).

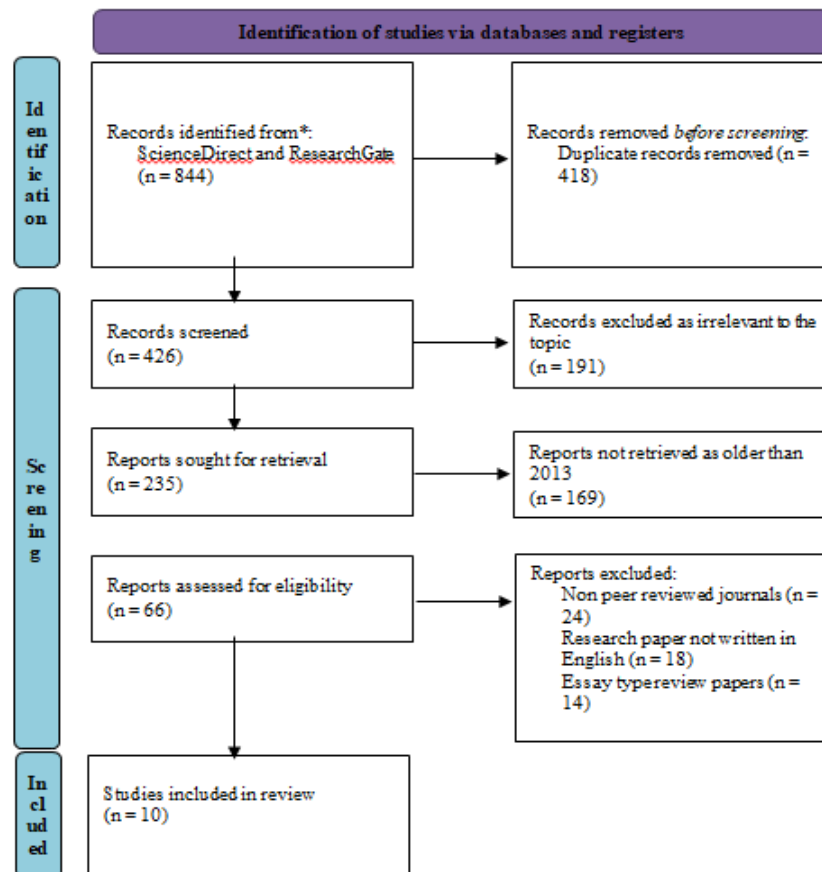
Opportunities or challenges		Intervention		Outcome	Search results
"federalism" "India"	And	"welfare"	And	Execution of policies on welfare	ScienceDirect-1 ResearchGate-2
"centralization"	And	"social policy" "India"	And	Policy management in relation with central and state government for welfare programs	ScienceDirect - 1 ResearchGate-1
"Social protection"	And	"governance" "federal"	And	Social protection delivery	ScienceDirect-0 ResearchGate-3
"direct benefit"	And	"state"	And	Social policy development	ScienceDirect-

transfer"		government"		and autonomy to the state governments	1 ResearchGate-1
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**Table 1: Boolean process**

(Source: Long, 2014)

The analytical framework utilizes the thematic analysis of axial coding to define the patterns of recurrence, themes, and associations noticed in the literature. The method consists of systematic coding of textual data that helps form categories and subcategories describing the most important dimensions of the relationship between centralization and autonomy (Long, 2014).



**Figure 3: PRISMA framework**

(Source: Coy, 2019)

## Result

### Axial coding

References	Codes	Themes
Sweden and Saxena, 2018	Central planning critique, federal structure challenges, planning commission limitations	<b>Constitutional and institutional frameworks governing Centre-state welfare policy jurisdictions and their transformation under centralized schemes</b>
Deshpande et al., 2018	States as laboratories, social welfare politics, policy experimentation	

Tillin', 2019	Indian federalism dynamics, Centre-state relations, constitutional provisions	
Sharma, 2015	Collaborative federal architecture, cooperative federalism, institutional redesign	
Mohapatra, 2013	Fiscal devolution challenges, decentralized governance reforms, policy reform requirements	
Rao, 2017	Central transfer mechanisms, performance-based funding, equity considerations	<b>Fiscal implications and resource allocation patterns affecting state government autonomy in welfare delivery</b>
Kohli, 2015	State redistributive capacity, development strategies, resource mobilization	
Mehrotra, 2013	Government monitoring systems, evaluation frameworks, implementation oversight	
Jha, 2014	Welfare schemes design, social protection coverage, delivery mechanisms	<b>Effectiveness and administrative efficiency of centralized versus state-led welfare delivery mechanisms</b>
Singh, 2019	Dynamic centralization patterns, historical federal evolution, power distribution	

**Table 2: Axial coding and theme identification**

(Source: Askarzai & Unhelkar, 2017)

**Summary table** (refer to appendix)

### **Thematic analysis**

#### ***Theme 1: Constitutional and Institutional Frameworks Governing Centre-State Welfare Policy Jurisdictions and Their Transformation Under Centralized Schemes***

The constitutional framework of Indian federalism has been changed greatly in the environment of the adoption of welfare policy and some basic alterations in the traditional scheme of the division of powers between the Centre and states were produced by it. Swenden and Saxena, (2018) believe that the criticism of central planning mechanisms, especially as regards such institutions as the Planning Commission is symptomatic of the entrenched weaknesses within India in terms of a federal system which have intensified given the current centralized welfare programs as per figure 1 where all states are differentiated. Tillin (2019) elaborates that the current Indian federalism is experiencing challenges never witnessed before since traditional Centre-state relations defined by the constitution are being transformed by centralized welfare schemes. The move of substitution of the Planning Commission with NITI Ayog is an initiative to be more centralized about policy coordination which influences the designing and implementation of welfare programs, including Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and the National Food Security Act in different states.



Expenditure Item	Share of Centre	Share of States
Defense services	100.0	0.0
Fiscal services	46.0	54.0
Administrative services	35.2	64.8
Organs of the State	37.6	62.4
Pension and other retirement benefits	36.6	63.4
Education, art and culture	11.1	88.9
Medical and public health, water supply and sanitation	11.5	88.5
Family welfare	23.5	76.5
Housing	56.6	43.4
Agriculture and allied services	32.4	67.6
Industry and Minerals	57.8	42.2
Power, irrigation and flood control	11.8	88.2
Transport and Communications	51.3	48.7
Public Works	17.6	82.4

**Figure 4: State's prevalent roles in public expenditure**

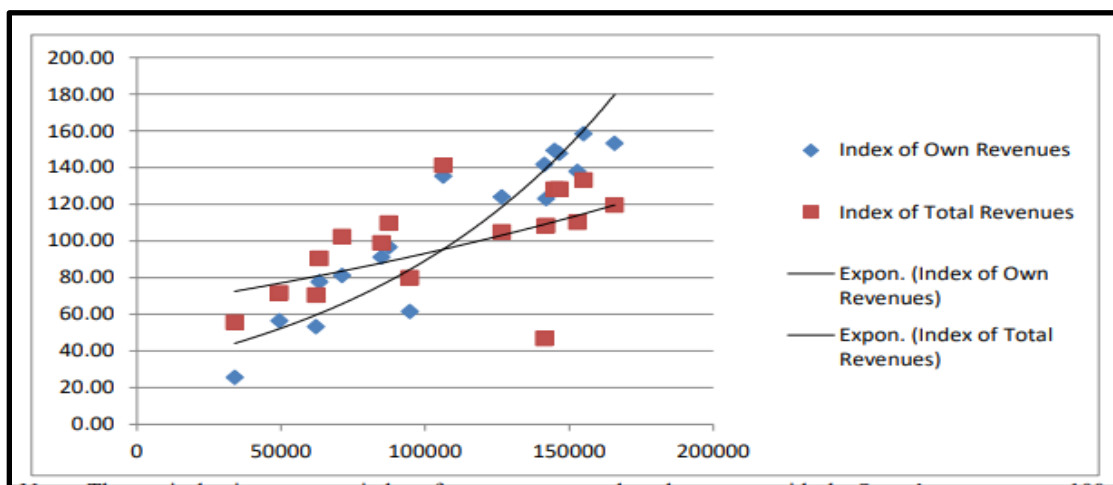
(Source: Sweden and Saxena, 2018)

The emergence of centralized welfare delivery mechanisms has cast basic doubts on the idea that states are policy laboratories. In an article by Deshpande, Kailash, and Tillin (2018), the politics of social welfare policies within India is revealed to be more centered on the way decision-making is carried out and gives less opportunity to conduct policy experimentation and innovation at the state level. In the adoption of Direct Benefit Transfer blueprints, the shift towards national standards overriding state-wise practices that used to define other more comprehensive programs such as the Public Distribution System is especially visible. According to Sharma (2015), present-day centralization trends overemphasize the need for institutional innovations that would embrace national homogeneity and state sovereignty and represent the reimagining of federalism achieved by collaborative federal architecture. Even states that used to have unique models of welfare provision, like the universal food distribution system of Tamil Nadu or the comprehensive health insurance system of Kerala, are functioning in more homogenized national setups.

**Theme 2: Fiscal implications and resource allocation patterns affecting state government autonomy in welfare delivery**

Centralized welfare plans have utterly redefined the fiscal architecture of Indian federalism posing unprecedented issues to state government authority in terms of resource allocations and welfare dispensation. According to Mohapatra (2013), Decentralized governance and fiscal devolution in India entail serious policy changes, as there is an increased imbalance between expenditure and revenue capacities at the state level. The examples of the introduction of centralized programs such as the “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)” indicate how central funding agencies can limit the fiscal autonomy of the state by infringing inflexible spending models and enhancing the difficulty of states to establish priorities based on local conditions of welfare.

The fiscal federal restructuring of India indicates that there exist undercurrents of conflict in redistributive and federal independence. Kohli (2015) points out that such centralized welfare dispensation systems which have no interface with the state revenue schemes, have systematically negated redistributive development state capability by establishing alternative conduits of funding. Such an effect is especially seen through the use of the Direct Benefit Transfer system, by which schemes such as PM-KISAN move finances directly out of central coffers into the hands of recipients, in effect making state governments less active in the decision-making processes of resource mobilization and allocation.



**Figure 5: Transfer system progressive**

(Source: Rao 2017)

Rao (2017) points to the complexity of relationships between central transfers to states with an illustration of how performance-based funding processes might generate efficiency incentives and be detrimental to the independence of states in making welfare policies. Performance indicators as in the graph above show elasticity coefficients of (-) 0.452 (1% significant) reflecting centralized schemes of welfare implementation in conditions of the central transfer are increasingly being built into the recommendations of the Finance Commission, establishing incentive arrangements that help to induce states to focus their priorities on central goals instead of local demands.

### **Theme 3: Effectiveness and Administrative Efficiency of Centralized Versus State-Led Welfare Delivery Mechanisms**

Singh, (2019) states that dynamics of centralization and decentralization throughout 1950-2010 prove very important by providing information on how viable mechanisms of delivery are which perhaps states that neither exclusively centralized nor entirely decentralized systems will always bring the best results in various conditions of states. Historical review has indicated that states such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu recorded better welfare gains through state-driven programs like complete system of public distribution and universal health coverage schemes, whereas centrally-driven schemes such as the “Integrated Child Development Services program” were inconsistently successful in various regional conditions.



Mehrotra (2013) prescribes that the system of monitoring and evaluation in India is a work at hand where there is a massive gap in the measurement of the differences between centralized and state-led systems of governance. Introducing centralized schemes, such as the Ayushman Bharat, proves the possibility of quickly covering the whole nation and lowers the capacity of blanket solutions that might fail to respond to the health system regardless of state needs. Jha (2014), states that it is critical to note that welfare schemes and the effectiveness of social protection are highly vulnerable to the degree of match between delivery mechanisms and the local institutional capacities. A cross-comparison as per HDI or Human Development Index shows state-wise centralized Direct Benefit Transfer programs and the state-managed Public Distribution Systems suggest that centralized programs might result in lesser leakages and administrative expenses; however, they tend to lack contextual insights and political responsibility that make effective programs in the hands of states.

State	HDI 1999-200	HDI 2007-08	Rank 1999-2000	Rank 2007-08
Kerala	0.677	0.790	2	1
Delhi	0.783	0.750	1	2
Goa	0.581	0.652	4	3
Punjab	0.595	0.617	3	4
NE (excluding Assam)	0.543	0.605	5	5
Maharashtra	0.501	0.572	6	7
Tamil Nadu	0.480	0.570	8	8
Haryana	0.501	0.552	7	9
Jammu and Kashmir	0.465	0.529	11	10
Gujarat	0.466	0.527	10	11
Karnataka	0.432	0.519	12	12
West Bengal	0.422	0.492	13	13
Uttarakhand	0.339	0.490	16	14
Andhra Pradesh	0.368	0.473	15	15
Assam	0.336	0.444	17	16
Rajasthan	0.387	0.434	14	17
Uttar Pradesh	0.316	0.380	18	18
Jharkhand	0.268	0.376	23	19
Madhya Pradesh	0.285	0.375	20	20
Bihar	0.292	0.367	19	21
Orissa	0.275	0.362	22	22
Chattisgarh	0.278	0.358	21	23
All India	0.387	0.467		

**Figure 6: HDI ranking of states**

(Source: Jha 2014)

As an example, the PM-KISAN scheme comes across as a stark contrast to both state-specific agricultural assistance schemes in the states of Punjab and Maharashtra due to the increased ability to

implement intervention measures as a result of locally understood factors regarding farming habits and seasonal necessities.

Authors and Year	Title	Aim	Methodology	Findings	Limitations
Swenden, W., & Saxena, R. (2018)	“Rethinking central planning: A federal critique of the Planning Commission”	To examine and understand the Planning Commission feasible objectives in India for policy reforms	Secondary qualitative method with present articles and government reports	The majority of the evidence points to these ministerial departments being even less effective than the PC and NITI at incorporating state perspectives into internal decision-making processes, which could pave the way for even more centralization.	Nevertheless, occasionally, the Finance and PCs did not go well together with the work. In a few cases, the PC even seemed to compromise the independence of the Finance Commission, such as in attempting to narrow the power of the latter to exercise specific purpose grants beyond the distribution of state block grants.
Deshpande, R., Kailash, K. K., & Tillin, L. (2018).	“States as laboratories: The politics of social welfare policies in India”	This article aims at how India’s states influence how social policies are framed and implemented within the country’s federal structure.	Mixed approach method using previous articles and interviews of health and education department personnels	Tamil Nadu and Kerala have employed the entry of health insurance with the aim of restoring the balance between public and private service providers whereas in other states the financing mechanism based on insurance played a role in increasing the success of private healthcare.	Even those states with more subnationalism, such as Punjab, Haryana, and Gujarat in Singh index, have failed to do better in the implementation of policies, based on a much wider set of indicators, including the performance of the states to more recent social protection schemes.
Jha, R. (2014).	“Welfare schemes and	The objective is to compare the	Secondary qualitative	India’s major welfare	Recent shifts in India’s major

	social protection in India”	performance of India with those of some other low- and middle-income countries in the Asia-Pacific region on some economic and social indicators	approach relied on the past literature and reports relied upon	programs need to be made much more effective and efficient. Women’s access to and involvement in social welfare programs require special consideration.	economic and social metrics and evaluates India’s social protection in comparison to low- and middle-income Asia Pacific nations.
Mohapatra, B. P. (2013)	“Decentralised Governance and Fiscal Devolution in India: Why there is a need for policy reform?”	The aim is to explore the significance of local self-governing institutions’ fiscal decentralization in India while looking at the institutional and policy limitations that currently exist and have become a major source of concern.	This paper’s analysis is based on fieldwork, secondary data, and in-depth conversations with important stakeholders who are knowledgeable about these topics.	More power devolution is required for decentralized governance in India, especially for fiscal authority given the massive execution of rural development initiatives.	With the exception of a few states like Kerala, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, there is a significant disparity in the funds, functions, and functionaries.
Tillin, L. (2019)	<i>Indian federalism</i>	In a bid to comprehend the functioning of politics, the economy, and the public policy, of the largest democracy in the world, there is need to appreciate federalism.	Based on previous government policies records and secondary resources	Institutions and practices of federalism determine whether or not the central government of India can establish the economic agenda or bring national policies to fruition across the land.	There is lack of information regarding political and economic change based on federal dominance.
Mehrotra, S. (2013)	<i>“The government monitoring and evaluation system in India: A work in</i>	The aim is to understand development of India’s strategy for tracking and assessing	Rapid appraisal techniques, participatory techniques, public	The effectiveness of public spending necessitates a comprehensive architecture of	In society mode, central ministries are worried about budget lapse, and thus they have reasons of spending

	<i>progress.”</i>	government initiatives is covered in this paper.	expenditure tracking surveys, cost benefit analysis, cost effectiveness analysis and impact evaluation.	functions carried out by different government agencies and cannot be solely reliant on recurring evaluation studies, which are limited to being carried out once every few years by their very nature.	not related with resource use by implementing agencies. Therefore the committee suggested the treasury mode of the transfer of the central plan funds. It is however yet to be enacted.
Sharma, C. K. (2015)	“Reimagining federalism in india: exploring the frontiers of collaborative federal architecture”	This study highlights the necessity of developing a new federal architecture for cooperative participation of the proper levels and actors in the formulation and execution of policies, going beyond the idea of cooperative federalism.	Secondary qualitative findings from previous election based reports, policy frameworks and articles. A SAM is a matrix representation is used.	An evolvement in regard to a more centrally administered cooperation towards an innovative, more constructive one (in the form of letting the states in as equal partners) and, more fundamentally, a change of old construct of federalism, dealing with governments only, is needed considering both the exogenous and endogenous imperatives highlighted in the paper.	It is known that the goals of the various social protection programmes and the amount spent on them are not the same, so there could not be the same effect of the economics of the various programmes.
Kohli, A. (2015)	“State and redistributive development in India”	The purpose of this study is to discuss India’s post-independence development experience	Under primary data collection, National Sample Survey (NSS) which is being used in the	Between 1960 and 1977–1978 there was no rise in either average consumption or consumption	Purely economic perspective of policymaking, but also demonstrate how growing democracy appears to offer a dynamic

		(1950 onwards).	examination of inequality is designed to measure the average consumption and not the distribution	inequality. However, the first half of 1960 saw a decline in average per capita consumption, which was reversed over the following few years.	that suggests a glimmer of hope for India's impoverished and defenceless.
Singh, A. K. (2019)	"Dynamic de/centralization in India, 1950–2010"	The aim is to analyse the decentralization in India where the impact has been provided on socio-economic justice	Secondary data has been collected from statistics of GDP census and government reports and quantitatively analysed	One citizenship is guaranteed by the Indian constitution. "The union ministry of home affairs is institutionally responsible for immigration, visa, foreign contribution, and citizenship related matters." The union government has legislative, administrative, and other regulatory powers.	The shift in the party system after 1970s has not made any noticeable difference in the level of de/centralization of the system. The extreme diversity of Indian society, in its turn, has not offered much of a challenge to centralization, not to mention encouraging strong demands of decentralization.
Rao, M. G. (2017)	"Central transfers to states in India: rewarding performance while ensuring equity."	The purpose of the research is to analyse the process of planning and implementation of general purpose, and of specific purpose transfers in India.	The goal of this study is to empirically analyze India's transfer system.	In the States, envelopes are based on population and area weighted by socioeconomic backwardness and health lag.	All federations have an inherent mismatch between their subnational governments' revenue capacity and spending needs. These differences go against the "horizontal equity" or "equal treatment of equals" principle.

Table 3: Summary table of sources

## Discussion

Theme 1 indicates how constitutional changes in power through the first research question have dealt with centralized welfare schemes that have essentially, side-lined conventional constitutional division of power between the Centre and states. The reformation of planning agency into NITI Aayog and the enforcement of standardized national programs such as Ayushman Bharat depicts how the centralized programs in governance form a shadow government paralyzing the state jurisdiction in welfare matters vesting initially at states.

The second research question on fiscal and administrative consequences can be explained by Theme 2 which shows that the centralized schemes of welfare are the sources of severe dependencies in the fiscal area that limits the autonomy of the states. As the analysis reveals, performance-based funding systems and direct benefit transfers are advancing states to be mere handlers of nationally conceived policies, and in principle, are compromising their abilities to form policy and distribute resources without the guidance of the nationwide plan.

The third research question on delivery effectiveness gets its answer within the context of Theme 3 which emphasizes the complex trade-offs involving centralized efficiency and state-led contextual sensitivity. Conclusions indicate that whereas the centralized schemes can be used to produce immediate national coverage, it tends to compromise and forgo the local expertise and political responsibility which are central to sound state-based schemes in the optimization of welfare delivery.

## Conclusion

The systematic literature review has indicated that centralized welfare schemes in India have brought about a paradigm shift in Centre-state relations which features a shift in cooperative federalism into a centralized system of governance. These schemes, as analyzed, bring about improved administrative efficiency and widespread coverage of the nation but also lead to constitutional bypassing, fiscal dependence, and less policy patronage by the state.

## Future scope and recommendations

The empirical study of state-specific differences in centralized welfare scheme implementation should be conducted in the future to determine how findings vary under different political conditions and administrative abilities. Cross-national comparison with other states of India with differing levels of fiscal autonomy and policy experiments provides a very powerful way to understand the best solutions for federal organizations to deliver welfare. Policy suggestions involve the creation of hybrid forms of governance where centralized funding may be accompanied by state-level flexibility in the implementation process, constitutional protections and guarantees of state freedom in welfare policy areas, and metrics that allow performance to be rewarded on grounds of efficiency and sensitivity of response (Sabharwal et al., 2014).

Moreover, the research in the future should focus on the opportunity of technology in realizing decentralized centralized welfare schemes, and how the digital infrastructure could be used to accommodate national standardization and local variation. Citizen satisfaction and welfare outcome research under various delivery mechanisms would assist an evidenced-based policy that strikes a balance between federal principles, and efficient delivery of social protection (Sen & Rajasekhar, 2015).

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