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Functions of NITI Aayog, its Governing Council Composition and more – Read Now!

The National Institution for Transformation of India, also known as the NITI Aayog, has been created to serve as a think tank for the Government of India. The Institution plays a *pivotal** role in the policy making of the Central Government, works closely with the State Governments and monitors progress of implementation of the policies and programs of the Government of India. In this article we will be discussing the constitution of NITI Aayog, its governing council composition, functions of NITI Aayog and new initiatives by NITI Aayog. It is important for you to have good knowledge about these topics since questions based on it may appear in Government Exams, Banking Exams or other Competitive Exams.

You can also refer the Glossary at the end of this article to understand the meaning of few italic astrick marked terms used in this article.

NITI Aayog

The NITI Aayog was formed by a resolution of the Union cabinet on 1st January 2015. The Government of India, in line with its reform agenda, constituted the NITI Aayog to replace the Planning Commission instituted in 1950. This was done in order to serve the needs and aspirations of the people of India in a better way. As an important evolutionary change from the past, NITI Aayog acts as the major platform of the Government of India to bring States to act together in national interest, and thereby *fosters* Cooperative Federalism**.

At the core of NITI Aayog's creation are two hubs – Team India Hub and the Knowledge and Innovation Hub. The Team India Hub leads the engagement of states with the





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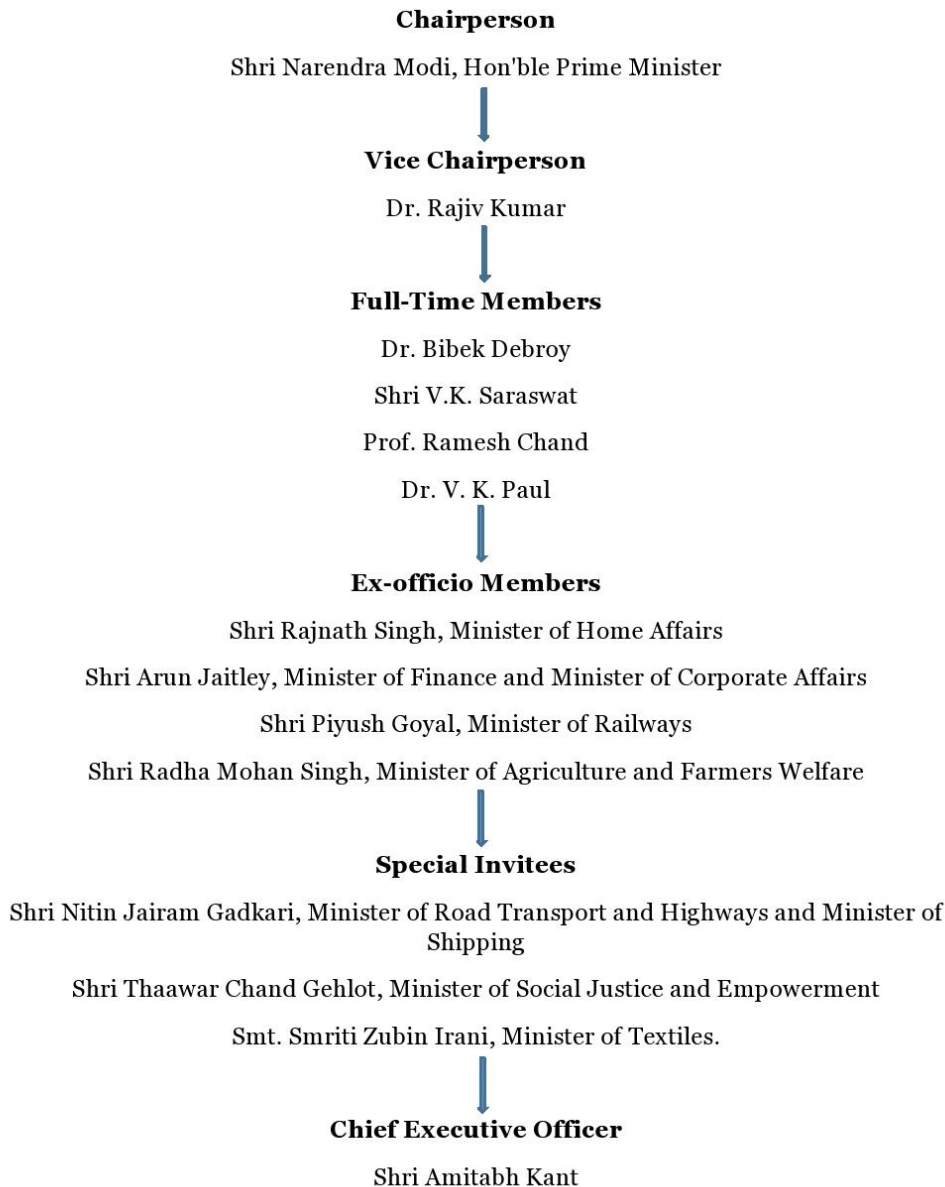
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Central government, while the Knowledge and Innovation Hub builds NITI's think-tank capabilities. Read all about the constitution of NITI Aayog, composition of governing council, functions of NITI Aayog and new initiatives launched, in the article below.

Constitution of NITI Aayog



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Composition of Governing Council of NITI Aayog

NITI Aayog's governing council includes Chief ministers of India's 29 states and seven union territories. Its full-time staff – a deputy chairman, Chief Executive Officer, and experts – answerable directly to the Prime Minister, who holds the post of Niti Aayog's chairman.

Functions of NITI Aayog

1. Functions of NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) are mentioned below in detail:

i. To work with the states governments on national development priorities sectors and strategies

- Develop federalism where national and state governments work with proper coordination and harmony.
- Implement schemes and initiatives for rural development.
- Ensure that the economic strategy and policy work in the interest of national security.
- Advice and encourage partnerships between key stakeholders and national and international like-minded Think tanks, as well as educational and policy research institutions.
- Create a knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurial support system with the help of national and international experts, practitioners and other partners.
- Maintain a state-of-the-art Resource Centre, be a research centre on good governance and best practices in *sustainable** and *equitable** development.
- Actively monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes and initiatives and to focus on technology *upgradation** and capacity building for the same.





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ii. National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development (NILERD)

iii. Another one of the functions of NITI Aayog is that it the *successor** in interest to the Planning Commission.

New Initiatives by NITI Aayog

Ever since its *inception** the institution has taken a series of initiatives aimed at giving a push to the economy and making the lives of every citizen of the country better. After replacing the Five Year Plans on 31st March 2017, NITI Aayog is in the process of preparing a vision document for the coming 15 years keeping in line with social goals set for the end of this 15 year period. Following are the highlights of the initiatives taken by NITI Aayog:

- **Model Land Leasing Law** - Taking note of increasing incidents of leasing in and out of land and *suboptimal** use of land with lesser number of cultivators, NITI Aayog has formulated a Model Agricultural Land Leasing Act, 2016 to both recognize the rights of the tenant and safeguard interest of landowners.
- **Reforms of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Act** - NITI Aayog consulted with the States on 21 October 2016 on three critical reforms –
 - Agricultural marketing reforms
 - Felling and transit laws for tree produce grown at private land
 - Agricultural land leasing
- **Reforming Medical Education** - A committee chaired by Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog recommended *scrapping** of the Medical Council of India and suggested a new body for regulating medical education. The draft legislation for the proposed National Medical Commission has been submitted to the Government for further necessary action.
- **Digital Payments Movement** -



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- NITI Aayog constituted a Committee of Chief Ministers on Digital Payments on 30th November 2016 with Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu, as the Convener to promote transparency, financial inclusion and a healthy financial ecosystem nationwide.
- To *incentivize** the States/UTs for promotion of digital transactions, Central assistance of Rs. 50 crore would be provided to the districts for undertaking Information, Education and Communication activities to bring 5 crore Jan Dhan accounts to digital platform.
- Cashback and referral bonus schemes were launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 14.4.2017 to promote the use of digital payments through the BHIM App.
- Niti Aayog also launched two incentive schemes to promote digital payments across all sections of society - the Lucky Grahak Yojana and the Digi Dhan Vyapar Yojana –Over 16 lakh consumers and merchants have won Rs. 256 crore under these two schemes.
- **Atal Innovation Mission** - The Government has set up Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) in NITI Aayog with a view to strengthen the country's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem by creating institutions and programs that *spur** innovation in schools, colleges, and entrepreneurs in general.
- **Task Force on Elimination of Poverty in India** - Constituted on 16th March, 2015 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, the report of the Task Force was finalized and submitted to Hon'ble Prime Minister on 11th July, 2016. The report of the Task Force primarily focuses on issues of measurement of poverty and strategies to combat poverty.
- **Task Force on Agriculture Development** - It was constituted on 16th March, 2015 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog. The Task Force based on its works prepared an occasional paper





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entitled “Raising Agricultural Productivity and Making Farming Remunerative for Farmers”. It focuses on 5 critical areas of Indian Agriculture which are:

- (i) Raising Productivity,
- (ii) Remunerative Prices to Farmers,
- (iii) Land Leasing, Land Records & Land Titles;
- (iv) Second Green Revolution-Focus on Eastern States; and
- (v) Responding to Farmers’ Distress.

- **Transforming India Lecture Series** - As the government’s premier think-tank, NITI Aayog views knowledge building & transfer as the enabler of real transformation in States. To build knowledge systems for States and the Centre, NITI Aayog launched the ‘NITI Lectures: Transforming India’ series, with full support of the Prime Minister on 26th August 2016. The lecture series is aimed at addressing the top policy making team of the Government of India, including members of the cabinet and several top layers of the bureaucracy.
- **Himalayan State Regional Council** - NITI Aayog has constituted Himalayan State Regional Council to ensure sustainable development of the Himalayan Region. This council will review and implement identified action points.
- **South Asian Regional Conference on Urban Infrastructure** - New approaches to Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and Municipal Finance Innovations were held in New Delhi. It was organised by NITI Aayog in partnership with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) and Asian Development Bank.
- **Agreement with Microsoft for AI** - NITI Aayog has inked an agreement with Microsoft India to deploy artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. It will address challenges in agriculture and healthcare and promote adoption of local language computing among others. This partnership will help NITI Aayog to move beyond pilots. It will also help in understanding how to scale AI implementation in sectors characterized by *preponderance** of public goods.



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Glossary :

- **pivotal** - of crucial importance in relation to the development or success of something else.
- **fosters** - encourage the development of.
- **Cooperative Federalism** - a concept of **federalism** in which national, state, and local governments interact **cooperatively** and collectively to solve common problems
- **sustainable** - able to be maintained at a certain rate or level.
- **equitable** - fair and impartial.
- **upgradation** - the process of improving the quality or usefulness of something, or of giving a person a more important job.
- **successor** - a person or thing that succeeds another.
- **inception** - the establishment or starting point of an institution or activity.
- **suboptimal** - of less than the highest standard or quality.
- **scrapping** - discard or remove from service.
- **incentivize** - motivate or encourage (someone) to do something.
- **spur** - a thing that prompts or encourages someone.
- **preponderance** - the quality or fact of being greater in number, quantity, or importance.

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