

## USE OF 'UNION' AND 'CENTRE'



### Issue

A controversy has erupted in Tamil Nadu over the state government's referring to the Prime Minister's government as the Union government instead of central government.

### Background

Article (1) of the constitution refers to India as a Union of states. The Indian political structure is Federal with several unitary characteristics.

### Details

- The controversy was earlier present only on social media but later became stronger after a BJP MLA demanded to know the reason behind the use.
- The Chief Minister has said that there was no bad motive behind the use but it was in line with the principles of federalism.

### Reasons for clashes

- There has been no official translation of the constitution into Tamil language. There are some instances where 'centre' and 'union' words are used interchangeably.
- Experts have said that the original constitution mandated the use of 'union' as more appropriate to refer to the government at the centre.
- As the union government started getting powerful, the use of the word 'union' has been reduced to just symbolic.

- Dr Ambedkar had justified the use of the word 'Union' because he envisioned India not as a 'federation between states' but rather a single country divided into units for easy administration.

#### Language controversy in Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu has made efforts to give precise translation from English to Tamil for political words. There have also been efforts to change some words.
- Since the 1990s, many Sanskrit words in the translation have been replaced with appropriate Tamil words.
- The word 'sabha' used to determine assembly in the state has been replaced with satta peravai, since 'sabha' was a sanskrit word.

#### NOTES

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