

Editorial of the Day – 21.02.2026

Index

1. Treatise for federalism– On Tamil Nadu and the Kurian Joseph report (TH) –01

2. India's First Nationwide Childhood Cancer Survivorship Registry (2026) (IE) –02

1. Treatise for federalism– On Tamil Nadu and the Kurian Joseph report (TH)

General Studies 2– Governance

Topic– Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure.

Sub Topic– Devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein; Role of the Governor; Constitutional Provisions and Amendments.

1. Introduction

The Government of Tamil Nadu constituted a high-level, three-member committee chaired by Justice Kurian Joseph (Retd. Supreme Court Judge) to evaluate the evolving landscape of Union-State relations in India. Against the backdrop of a shifting political and fiscal climate, the report warns of a "federal erosion" and advocates for a structural reset of Indian federalism, equating the necessity of these reforms to the landmark 1991 economic liberalization.

2. Foundational Context and Methodology

The Committee's findings are rooted in a multi-disciplinary approach–

Historical Analysis– Reviewed Constituent Assembly debates to understand the "centralized federalism" chosen during the post-Partition era and the integration of princely states.

Academic Rigor– Integrated scholarship across law, economics, and political science.

Comparative Study– Analysed previous commissions (like Sarkaria and Punchi) alongside recent governance practices.

Core Thesis– While centralisation was a post-1947 necessity for national integrity, it is no longer justified in a modern, diverse, and mature democracy.

3. Key Findings– The "Crisis" of Centralisation

The report identifies a "clear and continuing" trend of power concentration that threatens the following–

Democratic Balance– The checks and balances between different levels of government are weakening.

State Autonomy– States are increasingly being reduced to administrative arms of the Centre.

Developmental Outcomes– Excessive centralisation is labelled as administratively inefficient and politically risky.

4. Critical Areas of Concern (The "Federal Erosion")

The Committee flags several recent trends that have disrupted the Union-State equilibrium–

A. Institutional & Territorial Integrity

Alteration of Boundaries– The 2019 reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir is cited as a precedent where the Centre exercised significant power over a State's territorial existence.

Ease of Amendments– The report notes that the Constitution can be amended with relative ease, facilitating a self-perpetuating cycle of centralisation.

B. Governance & Political Overreach

Role of Governors– Highlighted as a primary friction point; Governors are increasingly perceived as "agents of the Centre" interfering in State-level governance.

Control over Elections- The Union's significant authority in election conduct is seen as a tilt in the level playing field.

Language Policy- Assertive pushes toward a single national language are viewed as a threat to India's cultural and federal diversity.

C. Fiscal & Sectoral Centralisation

GST Impact- The GST regime has fundamentally reconfigured the fiscal framework, leading to fiscal dependency and reduced autonomy for States.

Encroachment on State Subjects- Sectors traditionally managed by States, such as Health and Education, are increasingly being brought under Central control through schemes and policy mandates.

D. The Delimitation Threat

Representation Gap- The proposed inter-State Lok Sabha delimitation creates anxiety that States which successfully implemented population control (like Tamil Nadu) will lose political weight and representation in Parliament.

5. Recommendations for a "Structural Reset"

The Committee argues that federalism is the only path to sustainable progress and recommends-

Restoration of Autonomy- Decentralising decision-making in key sectors like Health and Education.

Institutional Rebalancing- Strengthening bodies like the Inter-State Council to ensure they are not just consultative but functional.

Fiscal Reform- Re-evaluating the GST framework to provide States with more predictable and independent revenue streams.

National Dialogue- Initiating a country-wide conversation on federal restructuring to safeguard the "Basic Structure" of the Constitution.

6. Conclusion

The Justice Kurian Joseph Committee concludes that excessive centralisation is a threat to national unity. By advocating for a "structural reset," the report emphasizes that a strong Union can only exist if its constituent States are empowered, autonomous, and respected. Restoring this equilibrium is not just a legal necessity but a prerequisite for India's long-term developmental and democratic health.

Source- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/treatise-for-federalism-on-the-tamil-nadu-and-the-kurian-joseph-report/article70656419.ece>

2. India's First Nationwide Childhood Cancer Survivorship Registry (2026) (IE)

General Studies 3- Science & Technology

Topics- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

Sub Topic- Recent developments in Indian Medicine and Research; Public Health Infrastructure and Policy.

1. Introduction

India has achieved a landmark in paediatric oncology with the release of its first nationwide Childhood Cancer Survivorship (C2S) Registry (February 2026). Coordinated by AIIMS New Delhi under the Indian Paediatric Haematology Oncology Group, the registry marks a transition from a "cure-centric" approach to a "care-continuum" model. It highlights an impressive 94.5% five-year survival rate while sounding an alarm on long-term health complications for survivors.

2. The C2S Cohort- Scope and Methodology

Duration & Scale- The study tracked 5,419 survivors across 20 centres nationwide between 2016 and 2024.

Treatment Modalities- Reflected modern multimodal care-

1. Chemotherapy- 94.7%
2. Surgery- ~30%

3. Radiotherapy- 26.3%

Monitoring Protocol- Survivors were monitored every 3 months for the first two years and every 6 months thereafter to ensure longitudinal data integrity.

3. Key Survival Outcomes and Statistical Highlights

Overall Survival (OS)- 94.5% at five years, indicating that nearly 95 out of 100 children survive the critical post-diagnosis window.

Event-Free Survival (EFS)- 89.9%, meaning the vast majority remained free from relapses or major acute complications.

Follow-up Correlation- Survival rates rose to 98.2% for children who received structured monitoring for at least two years.

Global Benchmarking- These figures bring India closer to high-income country standards, signalling a maturation of India's oncology protocols.

4. Burden of Childhood Cancer in India

Annual Incidence- Approximately 50,000 new cases are diagnosed every year.

Common Malignancies- Acute leukaemia, Hodgkin lymphoma, bone tumours, and retinoblastoma are the most prevalent.

Age Vulnerability- 44% of cases occur in the 2–8 age group, necessitating targeted paediatric screening.

The Socio-Economic Gap- High incidence among lower-income families highlights the urgent need for equitable access to early diagnosis and affordable long-term care.

5. The "Hidden Burden"- Late Effects of Treatment

While survival is high, the registry warns of "Late Effects"—complications that emerge months or years after treatment—

Prevalence- International data suggests 33–50% of survivors develop long-term health issues.

Clinical Risks- Includes cardiac problems, endocrine (hormonal) disorders, and cognitive difficulties.

Psychosocial Impact- Survivors face challenges in schooling, emotional well-being, puberty, and general quality of life.

Multi-disciplinary Requirement- Future care must integrate cardiology, endocrinology, and mental health services into oncology follow-ups.

6. Policy and Health System Implications

The C2S Registry serves as a vital evidence base for national planning—

National Frameworks- Aligns with Ayushman Bharat and the NPCDCS (National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke).

Standardized Guidelines- Provides the data needed to design national survivorship guidelines and regional "Survivorship Clinics."

Infrastructure Expansion- Underscores the need for more regional cancer centres and specialized paediatric oncologists to bridge rural-urban disparities.

Global Leadership- India's model provides a blueprint for other Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) to build survival tracking systems.

7. Conclusion

The First Nationwide Survival Registry is a testament to India's growing medical prowess in paediatric oncology. However, the findings emphasize that "surviving" is not the same as "thriving." To secure the future of these 50,000 children diagnosed annually, India must move toward a comprehensive survivorship care model that addresses the physical and psychological scars of cancer long after the final dose of chemotherapy.

Source- <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/india-childhood-cancer-registry-high-survival-late-effect-risks-10540751/>