

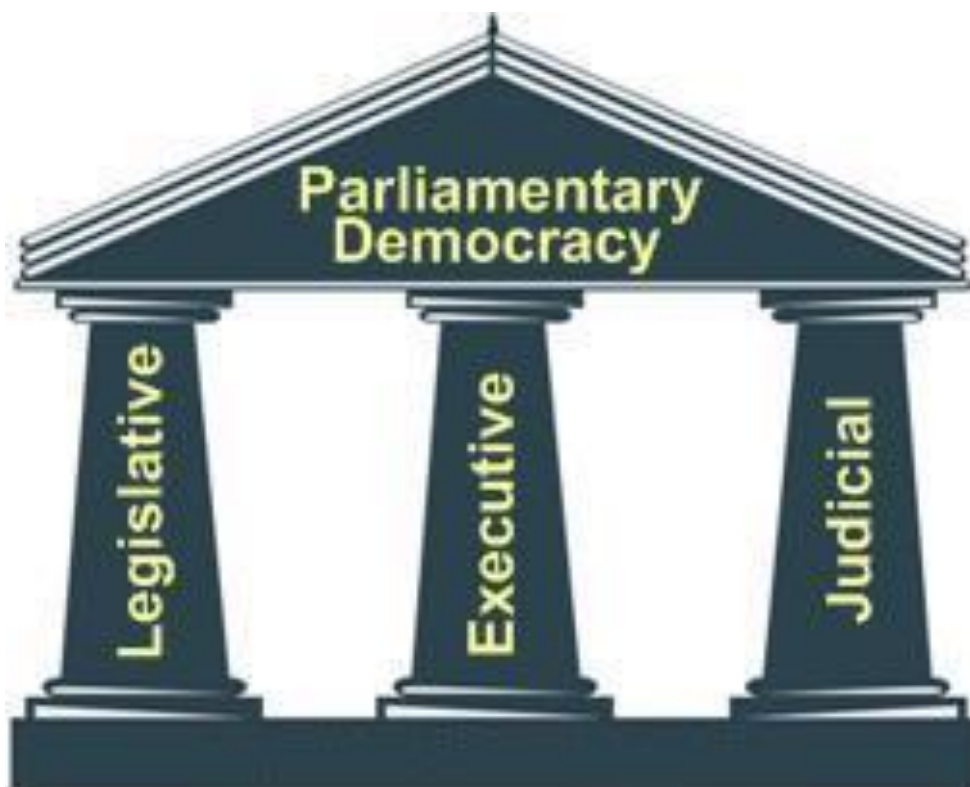
5. Multiple State Capitals & Governance

Prelims Level: State Legislature

Mains Level: GS-II Separation of powers between various organs Dispute Redressal Mechanisms and Institutions. Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.

Context:

- The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly has passed the **AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020** that intended to give shape to state government's plan of having three capitals – executive capital in Visakhapatnam, legislative in Amaravati and judicial in Kurnool.



AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020:

- The proposal for **Three Capital Cities** is said to be aimed at “decentralised and inclusive development of all regions of the state”.
- The cabinet also approved repealing of the Capital Region Development Authority Act and established the Amaravati Metropolitan Development Authority.
- South Africa has been taken as an example, as it has three capital cities – Bloemfontein, Pretoria and Cape Town – for a decentralised development.

Advantages of having Three Capital Cities:

- It restores Asymmetric Federalism - accommodates diversity not only between states but also within states.
- Three new large cities would boost the growth of the state, having multiple capitals spreads the economic growth in diverse channels by building multiple growth poles.
- This shall reduce the migration of the people towards one large capital city, instead it may provide three different destinations, making it a viable and sustainable urbanization.

Disadvantages of having Three Capital Cities:

- Involves huge **Financial Cost**. (The World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) pulled out of the project to fund Amaravati's development is a lesson to learn from.)
- The **District Level Imbalance** would still exist. (Amaravati in the south coastal AP, Visakhapatnam in north coastal Andhra and Kurnool in Rayalaseema region.)
- It involves issues like **land Acquisition**, which is already a problem in the newly developed capital of Amaravati.
- May make people run from one region to another region for their works.
- A single large capital may attract more investors than three small capital cities.

Having Judiciary away may not be a big problem. But, can legislature and executive Operate Separately?

- Many Indian states have separate Judicial capitals, like Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- Maharashtra has its winter session in Nagpur, which doesn't have any legal status as a capital; and Himachal Pradesh has its winter session in Dharamshala.
- These doesn't change the fact that the executive and legislature are together in the same place.
- Because, India has Parliamentary form of government, in which the ministers perform the functions of both the executive and the legislature.
- Making separate capitals would make their presence in both the capitals nearly impossible.
- However, given the advances in communications technology it is unlikely that old arguments of the practicality in locating everyone in the same place will be valid.

Way Forward:

- The states can opt for multiple Judiciary benches for improving their efficiency, which needs the nod from the Supreme Court.
- Decentralization doesn't necessarily involve creation of separate capitals. Boosting the local level governance shall also aid in improving the decentralization.
- The states shall concentrate on improving the physical and social infrastructure in the Backward Regions.

