1) Discuss the meaning, importance and models of Inter-Governmental Relations.

Ans: Inter-governmental Relations (IGRs) means the relationship between different government organisations. Its scope is widened to include the citizens and governmental institutions, agencies and officials as well as non-governmental organisations. It is very difficult for the policy formulators to make any policy by keeping it isolated from the effect and impact of the other governmental agencies in existence at different levels. The union and the state governments cannot perform their tasks adequately without the proper support of the local government.

In the process of governance, the governmental structures at the union, state and local levels have to interact with each other for achieving the maximum with the minimum inputs. As such, the interaction between various governmental organisations is indispensable. There is hardly any political structure or sub-structure, administrative agency or sub-organisation of an administrative structure where the IGRs are not having a place of prominence. IGRs have substantial roots in the past and will have important consequences in the future regarding issues like health, education, environment, agriculture, etc. Anderson (1960), has defined IGRs as “an important body of activities or interactions occurring between governmental units of all types and levels within a system”. Wright (1988), defines IGR as “patterned, interdependent, and bargained behaviour among national, state and local officials”.

The major characteristics of IGRs are as follows:

i) IGRs have a bearing on all governmental units in operation in a given system. From the top to the bottom, for example, in India, that is, the union government, state governments, municipal corporations, municipal committees, cantonment boards, zila parishads, panchayat samities, gram panchayats, etc., all are involved in it.

ii) IGRs aim at purposeful behaviour of the governmental officials involved in the process. The officials’ actions and attitudes have to be positive and meaningful. They should not put the public interest at stake, in order to fulfil their self-interest. The officials’ goal-oriented attitude does not permit them to have wrong inclination regarding the other participants involved in the process of governance.

iii) IGRs aim at regular interaction among officials. Through frequent interactions, based on objective data and analysis, the officials at various levels can contribute to the attainment of targets fixed for the given unit of governance. The day to day contacts along with most called for practical working relationship among the officials would go a long way in improving the process of governance.

iv) Public officials include all governmental officials and actors. These are elected representatives, in the Lok Sabha, legislative assemblies, local governments or indirectly elected representatives, in the Rajya Sabha, Vidhan Parishads, local governments, political executives and appointed officials, including the administrative personnel at lower and middle ranges, etc. The interaction amongst all the governmental actors and officials, whether elected or appointed, contribute in improving the process of governance.

v) The financial aspects, viz., loans, grants-in-aid, revenue sharing, auditing, etc., also strengthen or weaken the IGRs. The governmental structures, which are evident at grassroots, states, or union level, are made to facilitate the governance process in such a way whereby the common person could get the maximum benefits through the policies that are formulated. The financial assistance and help from one level of government to another is also a step in this particular direction and an important component of IGRs.

MODELS OF INTER – GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The union-state-local governmental relationship could either be based on the hierarchical control, or there could be an element of coordination between the three, or there could be an element of overlapping. In this context, Deil S. Wright's (1982) three models of IGRs are worth our quotation.

1. Inclusive Authority Model

In this model, the state and local governments depend exclusively on decisions that are broader in scope and arrived at by the union government. This model is based on the principle of hierarchy, where one level dominates over the other. For example, the state government dominates over the local government, the union government dominates the state and local governments and the union and state government dominate the local government. This model represents a centralised system where the union government is very powerful and the state and local governments are viewed as mere appendages of a powerful union government.

2. Coordinate-Authority Model

This model posits union-state authority relationship as autonomous. Their jurisdictions have distinct domains of power and control. The model aims at the element of coordination of the activities of all the units in the overall interest of the polity and the society. As per this model, all the units are to work in accordance with the basic spirit of the Constitution and established conventions of the land. This model is criticised on the ground that it fails to fit the actual operating features of the union, state and local relationships.

3. Overlapping Authority Model

In this model, each unit has a limited area of autonomy. The relationship amongst the units is mostly of bargaining exchange type where the three units – the union, state and local, attempt to cooperate with each other. In this model, each unit has limited dispersed powers and they are interdependent. This model describes IGRs as patterned, interdependent, and bargained behaviour among all the three units. It is true of their officials as well. All the three models could be diagrammatically shown as: i) Inclusive-Authority Model: