

Class 10 Civics

Chapter 2 Federalism

what is Federalism :-

Federalism is a system of government in which the power is divided between a central authority and various constituent units of the country.

Key Features of Federalism Government :-

- There are two or more levels of Governments.
- Different tiers of government govern the same citizens.
- The jurisdictions of the respective levels or tiers of government are specified in the constitution.
- The fundamental provisions of the constitution can possibly be changed only by the consent of the both level of the government.
- Courts have the power to interpret the constitution and the powers of different levels of the government.
- For financial autonomy source of revenue for each level of government are clearly specified.
- Main objective is to safeguard and promote unity of country while accommodating regional diversity.

Demerits of Federal Government :-

- Central government to be more powerful.
- Only the Center should get the right to amend the Constitution.
- Parliament to have more Rights.
- Excess of monetary rights with the Centre.
- Unnecessary interference of the Central Government in the affairs of the State Governments.

Types of Government :-

Federal Government	Unitary Government
Two or more levels of governments.	State governments are answerable to central government.
Central government cannot order the state government to do something.	Central government can order the state government to do something.
State government has powers of its own for which it is not answerable to the central government.	Only one level of government or the sub-units are subordinate to the central government.
Examples :- India, Canada, Germany	Example :- France, China, Japan

Types of Federalion :-

Coming together Federation

Holding together Federation

Coming together Federation :- Independent units come together on their own to form a larger unit. All the constituent units have equal power. Example :- Australia, USA

Holding together Federation :- Large country decides to divide its powers among the constituent units (states) keeping view of internal diversity. Central Government tends to be more powerful. Example :- India, Spain

Difference between federations of coming together type and holding together type :-

Coming Together Federation	Holding Together Federation
1. Under this, independent states come together on their own to form a bigger unit.	1. Under this, a large country decides to divide its powers between the constituent units and the national government.
2. All constituents states usually have equal powers and the states enjoy certain amount of autonomy.	2. Under this, central government tends to be more powerful.
3. The main aim of the federation is to pool their sovereignty and maintain their separate identity to increase their security.	3. In this type of federation, there is an absence of pooling sovereignty and maintaining identity.
4. Some examples are USA, Australia, and Switzerland.	4. Some examples are India, Belgium and Spain.

What Makes India a Federal Country?

- India is a federal country. The constitution declared India as the Union of States.
- The Constitution originally provided for a two-tier system of government, the Union Government or what we call the Central Government, representing the Union of India and the State government.
- Later the third tier of federalism was added in the form of Panchayats and municipalities.

The distribution of powers between the Center and the states in the Indian Constitution :-

The constitution clearly provided a threefold distribution of legislative powers between the Union government and state government. These are :-

Union List

State List

Concurrent list

Union List :- It includes the subjects of national importance as-defense, foreign affairs, banking, communications and such currency.

These matters are included in this list as it needs a uniform policy throughout the country.

The union Government alone can make laws relating to the subjects mentioned in the union list.

Earlier there were only 97 subjects but presently it includes 100 such subjects.

State List :- It contains subjects of State and local importance such as police, trade, commerce, agriculture and irrigation.

The state government alone can make laws relating to the subjects mentioned in this list.

Earlier there were only 66 subjects but presently it includes 61 subjects.

☐ Concurrent list :-

It includes subjects of common interest to both the Union government as well as the state governments such as education, forest trade unions, marriage, adoption and succession.

Both the union and the state government can make laws on the subjects mentioned in the list.

If their laws conflict with each other the law made by the central government will prevail.

Earlier there were only 47 subjects but presently it includes 52 subjects.

Residuary Subjects :-

The subjects which are not mentioned in Union, state or concurrent list come under the power of federal or union govt. and are called residuary subjects.

Power Sharing Between Union and State Governments :-

Our Constitution determines the extent of the sharing of power between Union and State Government and it is the basic structures of the Constitution.

Any change to it has to be first passed by both the Houses of Parliament with at least two thirds majority. Then it has to be ratified by the legislatures of at least half of the total states.

The judiciary plays an important role in overseeing the implementation of constitutional provision and procedures.

In case of any dispute about the division of powers, the High Courts and the Supreme Court make a decision.

Role of the judiciary in a federal system :-

The Judiciary plays an important role in overseeing the implementation of constitutional provisions and procedures.

In case of any dispute about the division of powers, the High Courts and the Supreme Court make a decision.

The Union and State governments have the power to raise resources by levying taxes in order to carry on the government and the responsibilities assigned to each of them.

How is Federalism Practised?

Our Constitution did not give the status of national language to any language, though Hindi and English were identified as the official language.

How Does India Practice Federalism?

- Constitutional provisions are necessary for the success of federalism but these are not sufficient.
- The real success of federalism in India can be attributed to the nature of democracy.
- The centre state relations have been restructured to strengthen federalism in the following ways.

Linguistic States

Language Policy

Centre-State Relation

Linguistic States :-

- The creation of linguistic states was the first and a major test for democratic politics in our country.
- Many old States have vanished and many new States were created. In 1947, the boundaries of several old states of India were changed in order to create new States.
- This was done to ensure that people who spoke the same language lived in the same States.
- When the demand for the formation of States on the basis of language was raised, some national leaders feared that it would lead to the disintegration of the country.

Language Policy :-

- A second test for Indian federation is the language policy.
- Our constitution did not give the status of national language to any one language.
- Hindi was identified as the official language. But Hindi is the mother tongue of only about 40 % of Indian therefore there were many safeguard to protect other languages.
- Besides Hindi, there are 21 other languages recognized as Scheduled Language by the constitution.
- A candidate in an examination conducted for the central government positions may option to take the examination in any of these languages.
- States too have their own official languages. Much of the government work takes place in the official language of the concerned states.
- According to the Constitution the use of English for official purposes was to stop in 1965 but many non-Hindi speaking states demanded that the use of English continue.
- Promotion of Hindi continues to be the official policy the Government of India. Promotion does not mean that the central Government can impose Hindi on States where people speak a different language.
- The flexibility shown by the Indian political leaders helped our country avoid the kind of situation that Sri Lanka finds itself in.

Centre-state relation :-

- Restructuring the centre-state relations is one more way in which federalism has been strengthened in practice.
- In 1990 there was the rise of regional political parties in many states of the country.
- This was also the beginning of the era of COALITION GOVERNMENT at the Centre.

- Since no single party got a clear majority in the Lok Sabha, the major national parties had led to enter into an alliance with many parties.
- This led to a new culture of power-sharing and respect for the autonomy of State Government. Thus, federal power sharing is more effective today than it was in the early years after the Constitution came into force.

Coalition Government :-

When two or more political parties come together to form a government.

Scheduled Languages :-

Such languages that come under eighth schedule of the Indian constitution.

Decentralisation :-

When power is taken away from Central and State government and given to local government, it is called decentralisation.

Decentralisation in India :-

- Federal power sharing needed another tier of government and hence the government power was decentralised.
- Decentralisation was done so that a large number of problems could be settled at the local level.
- A major step towards decentralisation was taken in 1992. The Constitution was amended to make the third-tier of democracy more powerful and effective.

Major Provision of decentralisation of 1992 :-

- It is constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections for local government bodies.
- Seats are reserved in the elected bodies and the executive heads of these institutions for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.
- At least one-third of all positions is reserved for women.
- An independent institution called the State Election Commission has been created in each State to conduct panchayat and municipal elections.
- The State Governments are required to share some powers and revenue with local government bodies.

Reasons For Decentralisation :-

- In a big country like India, it is essential to have an elected government at the local level also.

- Local people have better knowledge of local problems.
- Local people have better ideas of where to spend money and how to manage things more effectively.
- Common citizens can be involved in decision-making process, concerning their needs and how to plan development.
- People can approach a local government for solving their problems easily and quickly. The cost is also reduced to the minimum.
- Local governments at grass root level ensures stability, strength and health of democracy.

Panchayati Raj :-

- Rural local government is popularly known by the name of Panchayati Raj.
- It has been divided into three tiers or three levels. At the village level, there is a Gram Panchayat; at the block level, there is a Block Committee and at the district level, there is a Zila Parishad.

Gram Panchayat :-

- Each village or a group of village in some states has a gram Panchayat.
- This is a council consisting of several ward members often called panch and a president or Sarpanch.
- They are directly elected by all the adult population living in that ward or village.
- It is the decision making body for the entire village. The Panchayat works under the overall supervision of gram Sabha.
- It has to meet at least twice or thrice in a year to approve the annual budget of the gram Panchayat and to review the performance of the gram Panchayat.

Gram Sabha :-

Gram Sabha includes all the adult people of the village.

Functions of Gram Sabha :-

- It elects the members of the gram panchayat.
- It reviews the performance of gram panchayat.
- It supervises the work of the gram panchayat.

Panchayat Samiti :-

- The local government structure goes right up to the district level. A few gram panchayats are grouped together to form what is usually called a Panchayat samiti or block or mandal.

- The members of this representative body are elected by all the Panchayat members in that area.

Zila Parishad :-

- All the Panchayat samities or mandals in a district together constitute the zila parishad.
- Most members of the zila parishad are elected. Members of Lok Sabha and MLA of that district and some other officials of the other district level bodies are also its members.
- Zila parishad chairperson is the political head of the zila parishad.

Municipalities/ Municipal corporations :-

- Similarly local government bodies exist for urban areas as well. Municipalities are set up in towns.
- Big cities are constituted into municipal corporations. Both Municipalities and municipal corporations are controlled by elected bodies consisting of people's representatives.
- Municipal chair person is the political head of the municipality. In a municipal corporation such an officer is called the mayor.