

Ch 2 - Federalism

1. How many seats are reserved for women in the local bodies in India?

A. At least one-third of seats are reserved for women in the local bodies in India.

2. What is the official post for the Chairperson of a Municipal Corporation?

A. Mayor is an official post for the ~~champion~~ chairperson of a municipal corporation.

3. Define the term Federalism.

A. • Federalism is a system of government in which the power is divided between a central authority and various constituent units of the country.
• Both these levels of the government, the Central and the state enjoy their powers independent of each other.

4. Name any two subjects which are included in Union List.

A. Foreign affairs and defence are included in the Union List.

5. What other factors besides politics keep the federations united?

A. Besides politics other factors that keep federations united are:

- Power sharing arrangements between the central and state governments.
- Independent role of Judiciary.
- Language Ethnicity.
- Response to Conflicting claims.
- Active participation of the people.

Short Answer Type Questions :

1. Explain the vertical division of power giving example from India.

- A • The power shared among the different levels of the government is known as the vertical distribution of power.
- It involves higher and lower levels of government. These levels are the Union government, the state governments and the local governments.
 - In India, the Union government is at the highest level. The government at provincial or regional level is the state government.
 - The India Constitution has further laid down the provision of distribution of power. This division of power is further extended to the levels of the government lower than the state governments.
 - They are also called Municipal Corporations and the Municipalities in urban areas and Panchayati Raj in rural areas.

- Each level of the government exercise its power. There is no specification of the system of checks and balance.
- Each level has its own powers and areas of jurisdiction and no level can interfere in each other's functioning. Such an arrangement ensures deepening of ~~dem~~ democracy.

2. Compare the federations of coming together type and holding together type?

A The following are the differences between coming together and holding together federations.

Coming Together Federation

Holding Together Federation

(a) Under this, independent states come together on their own to form a bigger unit.

Under this, a large country decides to divide its powers between the constituent units and the national government.

(b) All constituent states usually have equal power and the states enjoy certain amount of autonomy.

Under this, central government tends to be more powerful.

(c) The main aim of this federation is to pool their sovereignty and maintain their separate identity to increase their security.

In this type of federation, there is an absence of pooling sovereignty and maintain identity.

(d) Some examples are USA, Australia and Switzerland.

Some examples are India, Belgium and Spain.

3 Point out one feature in the practice of federalism in India that is different from that of Belgium.

A One similar feature of Federalism between India and Belgium : India and Belgium are both holding together federations where the Central Governments tend to be more powerful vis-a-vis the States.

One different feature of Federalism between India and Belgium : In Belgium, there are three kinds of government - government at centre, government at the state level and third kind of government is the kind of community government. The community government has the power regarding cultural, educational and language related issues.

But in India, there is no third kind of government, there is no community government.

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4. What is decentralisation? What is the importance or need for decentralisation?

or

"Do you take decentralisation as a means to minimise the conflicts?" Give your view point.

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

(i) The basic idea behind decentralisation is that there are a large number of problems and issues which are best settled at the local level. People have a better knowledge of problems in their localities. They also have better ideas on where to spend money, and how to manage things more efficiently.

(ii) At the local level, it is possible for the people to directly participate in decision making. This helps to inculcate a habit of democratic participation. Basically the local government is the best way to realise one important principle of democracy, namely the local self-government.

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. Explain five changes towards decentralisation brought in the Constitution after the amendments made in 1992.

A The following steps were taken towards decentralisation after 1992:

- It was made constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to local government bodies.
- Seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other backward communities (OBCs) in the elected bodies.
- Women were given one-third representation.
- An independent institution, called state election commission, was created to conduct local body elections.
- State governments were required to share this power and revenue with local bodies.

2. Explain democratic policies have helped India which adopted by Government of India which made it successful federation.

A The following democratic policies have helped India to be a successful federation:

- The powers of the central and state governments have been clearly separated under the Union, State and Concurrent Lists. It removes the possibility of any type of interference in the

functioning of the Central and State governments

- A three - tier system of governance has been approved under the Union, State and Local governments. They govern the people at their respective levels.
- Some states like Jammu and Kashmir and Azunachal Pradesh have been given special status so as to maintain their autonomy.
- The Fundamental structure of the Indian Constitution cannot be unilaterally changed by the ~~President~~ Parliament. Any amendment in the Constitution needs the approval of both the houses of the Parliament and at least half of the total states.
- The sources of income of different levels of the government has been clearly stated in the Constitution to avoid any conflict.

3. How are the legislative powers divided between the Union government and the State Governments?

A The legislative powers are divided between the Union Government and the State Governments by the Constitution of India. The constitution is supreme in the country and the legislative powers are divided into various areas of

government jurisdiction into three List - Union List, State List, Concurrent List.

- The Union List: Union list includes subjects like defence, foreign affairs, banking, currency and communications. The Union Government alone can make laws relating to these subjects.
- The State Lists: The Concurrent List contains items like education, forest, trade unions, marriage, adoptions, and succession.
- The State List: State list contains subjects like defence, foreign affairs, banking, currency and communications. The Union Government alone can make laws relating to these subjects.
- The State List: State list contains subjects like police, trade, commerce, agriculture and irrigation, which come under the jurisdiction of the State Governments. Only the State Legislatures can make laws on these subjects.
- The Concurrent List: The Concurrent List contains items like education, forests, trade unions, marriage, adoption, and succession which are of common interest to both the Union government and the State Governments. Both can make laws on these subjects. However,

in case of conflict, the law made by the Union Government will prevail.

Q. Which five provisions of Indian Constitution make India a full-fledged federation?

or

Explain any four features of federation.

A A federation is a country in which the powers are divided between the union and its constituent ~~units~~. India is an example of holding together a federation where the country decides to create constituent units, thereby ~~diving~~ dividing the powers and duties between the centre and the states.

The following are the five provisions that make India a full-fledged federation.

~~Two or more levels of~~ g

Two or more levels of governments - We have a federal system whereby the constitution has more than two tiers of the government, viz.

the Governments & and local governments.

This implies that there are more than two levels of government administration among which powers are divided and duties are given.

Three Lists : The powers are divided between the Centre and the States by three Lists : Union List, State List and Concurrent List.

Union List deals with the issues relating to the Centre, State List deals with issues relating to the States and concurrent List deals with the matters of both the Centre and the States.

- Rigid Constitution : The Government of India is governed by the Constitution of India and it is considered the Supreme Power in the Country. It is not as easy as it looks to amend the constitution. For the constitution to be amended, it requires ratification by half of the State Legislatures failing which the Constitution cannot be amended.
requires

- Bicameral Legislature : India has a bicameral legislature which means that the Parliament consists of two houses, viz, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. One represents the country and the other represents the interests of the constituent states.

- Financial Autonomy : The revenue sources of both the Centre and States have been clearly defined, that ensures financial autonomy to both the Centre and the States. In layman's language, the Central and the State have different sources

of income, which means they are independent of each other when it comes to revenue.

- Independent Judiciary: Independent judiciary is the essence of the federal government. Here, courts have the power to interpret the constitution and the powers of the indifferent levels of government. In India, the highest court - the Supreme Court - acts as an umpire if a dispute arises between the different levels of government in the exercise of their respective powers.

5. How is federalism practiced?

Ans (i) Linguistic States: After independence, in 1950, the boundaries of several old states were changed in order to create new states. This was done to ensure that the people who spoke the same language, share common culture, ethnicity or geography could live in the same state.

(ii) Language Policy: The Indian Constitution did not give the status of national language to any one of these languages. Though Hindi was identified as the optional language, but the central government has not imposed Hindi on states where people speak different languages. Besides Hindi, there are 22 other languages recognised as scheduled languages by the Indian Constitution.

(iii) Centre - State Relations: Improving the Centre - State relations

is one more way in which federalism has been strengthened in practice. Though Indian Constitution has demarcated the powers of Union and State Governments but still the Union government can still have influence over the state in many way. In the past, the Central Government has often misused the Constitution to dismiss the State Governments that were controlled by rival parties. This undermined the spirit of Federalism, and that of Democracy.

The Judiciary played a major role in improving the autonomy of the state governments because many time, it has rescued state governments which were dismissed in an arbitrary manner.

- (iv) Decentralization in India: A vast country like India cannot be run only through these four - two - ties. So, Federal power sharing in India needs another tier of government called local government. At the local level, it is possible for the people to directly participate in decision making. A major step towards decentralization was taken in 1992.

6. "The creation of linguistic states was the first and major test for democratic politics in our country." Justify this statement.

A. 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 state.

- Some States were created not on the basis of language but to recognize differences based on culture, ethnicity or geography. These include States like Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand.
- When demand for the formation of states was on the basis of language was raised, some national leaders feared it would lead to disintegration of the country.
- The Central Government resisted linguistic states for some time. But the experience has shown that the formation of linguistic States has actually made the country more united. It has also made administration easier.

7. 'Most federations that are formed by 'holding together' do not give equal power to its constituent units. Explain the statement with the help of examples in context in Indian.

A Yes, the above statement is true for India.

- (i) All states in the Indian Union do not have identical powers. Some states enjoy a special status. Jammu and Kashmir has its own Constitution. Many provisions of the Indian Constitution are not applicable to this state assembly. Indians who are not permanent residents of this state cannot buy land or ~~have~~ house here.
- (ii) Similar special provisions exist for Assam and the hill states of North-East India.
- (iii) There are some units of Indian Union which enjoy very little power. These are areas which are too small to become

an independent state but which could not be merged with any of the existing states. These areas, like Chandigarh, or Lakshadweep or the capital city of Delhi, are called the Union Territories. These territories do not have the state powers of a state. The central government has special powers in running these areas.

8. Why were linguistic states created? What are their advantages?

Ans i) Common language: Many states were created on the basis of language to ensure people that people who speak the same language lived in the same state.

(ii) Common culture, ethnicity or geography: Some states were created not a basis of languages but to recognise differences based on culture, ethnicity or geography. These include states like Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand.

Advantages:

- The experience has shown that the information of linguistic states has actually made the country more united. It has also made administration easier.

9. Explain the language policy of Indian Federal. How is it different from Sri Lanka?

or

Write any four characteristics of language policy of India.

Ans No National Language: 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 percent of Indians. Therefore, there were many safeguards to protect other languages.

(iii) Besides Scheduled languages: ^{Besides} Hindi, there are 22 other languages recognised as Scheduled Languages by the Constitution. A candidate in an examination conducted for the Central Government positions may opt to take the examination in any of these languages. States too have their own ^{official} languages. Most ~~Much~~ of the government work takes place in the official languages of the concerned State.

(iii) Spread of Hindi with cautious approach: Unlike Sri Lanka, the leaders of our country adopted a very cautious attitude in spreading the use of Hindi. According to the Constitution, the use of English for official purposes was to stop in 1965. However, many non-Hindi-speaking States demanded that the use of English continue. In Tamil Nadu, this movement took a violent form. The Central Government responded by agreeing to continue the use of English along with Hindi for official purposes. Promotion of Hindi continues to be the official policy of the Government of India. Promotion does not mean that the Central Government can impose Hindi on States where people speak a different language.

(iv) Language policy of Sri Lanka: In 1956, an Act was passed by the Sri Lankan government to recognise Sinhala as the only official language whereas in case of India the government agreed

to continue the use of English along with Hindi for official purposes.

10. Explain the advantages of decentralisation.

or

Explain any four features of third tier of government.

Ans (i) Locals have better knowledge: The basic idea behind decentralisation is that there are ~~huge~~ a large number of problems and issues which are best settled at the local level. People have better knowledge of problems in their localities. They also have better ideas on where to spend money, and how to manage things more efficiently.

(ii) Direct participation of the people: Decentralisation makes it possible for the people to directly participate in decision making. This helps to inculcate a habit of democratic participation. The Local government is the best way to realise one important principle of democracy, namely the Local Self - Government.

(iii) Foundation of democracy: Local governments are most important in a democratic system. These are training schools for local citizens and local friendship. These provide political education. The people get familiar about the electoral process, and the proper use of their vote, which is the very foundation of democracy.

(iv) Reduction of Burden of the Central Government: It reduces the burden of the burden of the Central or state governments. These can concentrate on matters of national or state importance in a better way. In this way, the Local Self - Government ensures efficiency everywhere at all the three levels of today's governance. Indian leaders have recognised the need for decentralisation.

(v) Women empowerment: At least one-third of all positions are reserved for women in all the local bodies. This has led to women empowerment.