

CHAPTER -2 FEDERALISM

Political Science

Chapter 2 Federalism

Q1. What do you understand by the term 'Federalism'?

Ans.

- Federalism is a system of government in which the power is divided between a central authority and various constituent units of the country.
- Usually, a federation has two levels of government:
 - One is the government for the entire country that is usually responsible for a few subjects of common national interest.
 - The others are governments at the level of provinces or states that look after much of the day-to-day administering of their state.
- Both these levels of governments enjoy their power independent of the other.

Q2. Explain any 5 features of Federalism.

Ans. Following are the 5 features of Federalism:

- 1) There are two or more levels (or tiers) of government.
- 2) Different tiers of government govern the same citizens, but each tier has its own jurisdiction in specific matters of legislation, taxation and administration.
- 3) The jurisdictions of the respective levels or tiers of government are specified in the constitution.
- 4) The fundamental provisions of the constitution cannot be unilaterally changed by one level of government. Such changes require the consent of both the levels of government.
- 5) Courts have the power to interpret the constitution and the powers of different levels of government. The highest court acts as an umpire if disputes arise between different levels of government in the exercise of their respective powers.

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Q3. What are the dual objectives of federal system?

Ans. The dual objectives of federal system are:

- 1) To safeguard and promote unity of the country,
- 2) Accommodate regional diversity.

Q4. How is federal government different from Unitary government?

Ans.

| Federal Government | Unitary Government |
|---|--|
| 1) There are two or more levels of government. Eg. National, state and local governments. | There is only one level of government. Eg. National government |
| 2) There is division of powers between different levels of government. | There is no division of power. |
| 3) State governments are not answerable to the central government | State governments or provincial governments are answerable to the national government. |
| 4) Jurisdiction of government cannot be changed unilaterally. | The government can make any changes. |
| 5) Constitutional amendments cannot be made without the consent of states. | The government can make any constitutional amendment. |
| 6) For Example: Sri Lanka and China | For Example: India and USA. |

Q5. What is the rational behind decentralisation in India?

Ans.

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

- 1) Decentralisation helps in solving a large number of problems and issues at the local level.
- 2) People have better knowledge of problems in their localities and hence they are the best resources to solve problems.
- 3) They also have better ideas on where to spend money and how to manage things more efficiently.
- 4) Besides, at the local level it is possible for the people to directly

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participate in decision making. This helps to inculcate a habit of democratic participation

5) Local government is the best way to realise one important principle of democracy, namely local self-government.

Q6. What were the major steps taken towards decentralization in India?

Ans. Following are the major steps taken towards decentralization in India:-

- 1) It was constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to local government bodies.
- 2) States were reserved in the elected bodies and the executive heads of these institutions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes.
- 3) At least one third of all positions were reserved for women.
- 4) An independent institution called the State Election Commission has been created in each State to conduct panchayat and municipal elections.
- 5) The state governments were required to share some powers and revenue with local government bodies. The nature of sharing varied State to state.

Q7. Distinguish between ‘coming together’ and ‘holding together’ types of federations.

Ans.

| Coming Together Federations | Holding Together Federations |
|--|---|
| 1) Independent states come together on their own to form federation. | A large country decides to divide its power between the constituent states and national government. |
| 2) The objective is to pool sovereignty , retain identity and increase security. | The central government is more powerful so that it can ensure unity . |
| 3) All the constituent states and federal government have equal powers . | Different constituent units of the federation have unequal powers. Some units are granted special powers. |
| 4) For Examples: USA, Switzerland and Australia. | For Examples: India , Spain and Belgium. |

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Q8. Explain how language policy has strengthened federalism in our country.

Ans.

- 1) **No National Language:** Our Constitution did not give the status of national language to any one language. Hindi was identified as the official language.
- 2) **Scheduled Languages:** There are 22 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.
- 3) **Official Languages of States:** States have their own official languages. Much of the government work takes place in the official language of the concerned State
- 4) **Cautious approach in spreading hindi:** 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.
- 5) **Use of English as official language :** 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.

Q9. What are the achievements of the third -tier(local) of government?

Ans.

- 1) New system of local government is the largest experiment in democracy conducted in the world.
- 2) There are now about 36 lakh elected representatives in the panchayat and municipalities all over the country.
- 3) It has also increased women's representation and voice in our democracy.
- 4) Constitutional status for local government has helped to deepen democracy in our country.

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Q10. What is a coalition government?

Ans.

- 1) A government formed by the coming together of at least two political parties.
- 2) Partners in a coalition form a political alliance and adopt a common programme.
- 3) Eg. National Democratic Alliance(NDA) and United Progressive Alliance(UPA).

Q11. What are residuary subjects?

Ans.

- 1) Some special subjects which are not included under state list, concurrent list and central list .
- 2) These subjects are legislated by the central government. This is called residuary power.
- 3) Example: Computer Software.

Q12. Describe the role of judiciary in federalism.

Ans.

- 1) The Judiciary oversees the implementation of constitutional provisions and procedures.
- 2) In case of any dispute about the division of powers, the High Courts and the Supreme Court make a decision.

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