

# Federalism

## Fastrack Revision

- ▶ Federalism is a system of governance in which power is divided between a central authority and various constituent units of the country.
- ▶ There are two levels of federal government. First is the Central Government for the entire country, which is usually responsible for subjects of common national interest. The other is the government at the level of provinces or states that looks after the day-to-day administering of their states.
- ▶ In a federal system, the Central Government cannot order the State Government. State Government has powers of its own for which it is not answerable to the Central Government.

### Knowledge BOOSTER




The jurisdiction of the respective levels or tiers of government are specified in the Constitution under the Union List, State List and Concurrent List.

- ▶ Different tiers of government govern the same citizens, but each tier has its own jurisdiction in specific matters of legislation, taxation and administration.
  - ▶ Courts have the powers to interpret the Constitution and the powers of different levels of government. The Supreme Court plays the role of an umpire.
  - ▶ The federal system has dual objectives, viz., to safeguard and promote unity of the country and to accommodate regional diversity. An ideal federal system of government must have mutual trust and agreement to live together.
  - ▶ Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Mexico, Switzerland and the United States have federal governments.
- There are two forms of federations and these are as follows:
- ▶ **Coming together Federation:** In this form of federation, independent states come together to form a bigger unit. The objective of nations in forming this federation is that by pooling sovereignty and retaining identity, they can increase their security. The USA, Switzerland and Australia have this form of federation.
  - ▶ **Holding together Federation:** In this form of federation, a large country decides to divide its power between the constituent states and the national government. The Central Government tends to be more powerful vis-à-vis the states. Very often different constituent units of the federation have unequal powers. India, Spain and Belgium have this form of federation.
- ▶ India had emerged as an independent nation after a painful and bloody partition. After independence, several princely states became a part of the country and the Constitution declared India as a Union of States, based on the principles of federalism.
  - ▶ The Constitution provides for a three-tier government, comprising of the Central Governments, State Governments and Panchayats and Municipalities.
  - ▶ There are some units of the Indian Union which enjoy very little power. These units are referred to as Union Territories, such as Chandigarh and Lakshadweep. The Central Government has special powers in running these units.
  - ▶ It is not easy to make changes in the power-sharing arrangement between the Central and State Governments. A complex process is laid down.
  - ▶ The Constitution provided a three-fold distribution of legislative powers among the Central and the State Governments. This distribution contains three lists:
    - ▶ **Union List** includes subjects of national importance such as defence of the country, foreign affairs, banking, communication and currency, etc.
    - ▶ **State List** contains subjects of state and local importance such as police, trade, commerce, agriculture, irrigation, etc.
    - ▶ **Concurrent List** includes subjects of common interest to both the Union Government as well as the State Governments, such as education, forest, trade unions, marriage, adoption, etc.
  - ▶ The federal experiment has succeeded in India, because of the clearly laid out constitutional provisions, which provided for the following:
    - ▶ In the journey of democracy between 1947 and 2017, many old states vanished and new states were created to ensure people speaking same language live in the same state. Formation of linguistic states has actually made the country, more united. It has also made administration convenient.
    - ▶ Our Constitution did not give the status of national language to any one language. Hindi has been identified as the official language and 21 other languages are recognised as scheduled languages by the Constitution.
  - ▶ To strengthen federalism in practice, the Centre-State relations have been restructured. Though Indian Constitution has demarcated the powers of the Union and the State Governments, still the Union Government can have influence over the state in many ways.



- ▶ India is a vast country with a large population and cannot be run only through two-tiers of the government, but there is need for another tier below the State Governments, i.e., the local governments.

### Knowledge BOOSTER

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

- ▶ A major step towards local governance (decentralisation) was taken in 1992 and the following amendments were made in the Constitution to make the three-tier democracy more effective:
  - ▶ It is constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to local government bodies.
  - ▶ The seats are reserved in the elected bodies for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and women.
  - ▶ An independent institution called the State Election Commission has been created in each state to conduct Panchayats and Municipal elections.

- ▶ The State Governments are required to share some powers and revenue with the local government bodies.
- ▶ The Panchayati Raj System in rural areas has the following hierarchical structure:
  - ▶ Each village has a Gram Panchayat. Several ward members are elected as 'Panch' and a President is called as Sarpanch.
  - ▶ A few Gram Panchayats are grouped together to form what is usually called a Panchayat Samiti or Block or Mandal.
  - ▶ All the Panchayat Samitis or Mandals in a district together constitute the Zila (district) Parishad.
- ▶ Urban areas too have local government bodies referred to as Municipalities. The following points are important regarding urban local bodies:
  - ▶ Municipalities are set-up in towns. The big cities are constituted into Municipal Corporations.
  - ▶ The head of a Municipal Council is called Chairperson and the members are called Councillors.
  - ▶ The head of the Municipal Corporations is called the Mayor and the members are called Corporators.



## Practice Exercise

### Multiple Choice Questions

- Q 1. Which are the basic objectives of a federal system?**
- To safeguard and promote unity of the country.
  - To accommodate regional diversity.
  - To share powers among different communities.
  - Both a. and b.
- Q 2. What are the kinds of routes through which federations have been formed?**
- One route involves independent states coming together on their own to form a bigger unit.
  - The second route is where a large country decides to divide its powers between the states and the national government.
  - Both a. and b.
  - None of the above
- Q 3. Which form of power-sharing is most commonly referred to as federalism?**
- Horizontal division of power.
  - Vertical division of power.
  - Division of power among various communities.
  - Sharing of power among political parties.
- Q 4. Consider the following four statements:**
- In a federation the powers of the federal and provincial governments are clearly demarcated.
  - India is a federation because the powers of the Union and State Governments are specified in the Constitution and they have exclusive jurisdiction on their respective subjects.

- Sri Lanka is a federation because the country is divided into provinces.
- India is no longer a federation because some powers of the States have been devolved to the local government bodies.

Which of these statements are correct?

- (i), (ii) and (iii)
- (i), (iii) and (iv)
- (i) and (ii)
- (ii) and (iii)

- Q 5. State Government has powers of its own for which .....**
- it is answerable to Central Government
  - it is not answerable to Central Government
  - It is answerable to the people
  - Both a. and b.
- Q 6. Which of the following is incorrect regarding a unitary government?**
- There is either only one level of government or the sub-units are subordinate to the Central Government.
  - The Central Government can pass on orders to the Provincial Government.
  - A State Government is answerable to Central Government.
  - The powers of State Governments are guaranteed by the Constitution.
- Q 7. Identify the correct feature of unitary form of government from the following options:**
- (CBSE 2021 Term-1)
- There are two or more levels of government.

- b. Different tiers of government govern the same citizens.
- c. Each tier of government has its own jurisdiction.
- d. The sub-units are subordinate to the Central Government.

**Q 8. Identify the correct statements about the theory of Federalism in the Indian Constitution.**

(CBSE SQP 2021 Term-1)

- (i) The Constitution declared India as a Union of States.
  - (ii) Sharing of power between the Union Government and the State Governments is basic to the structure of the Constitution.
  - (iii) It is easy to make changes to this power-sharing arrangement.
  - (iv) The Parliament can on its own change this arrangement.
- a. (i) and (ii)                      b. (ii) and (iii)  
c. (i) and (iii)                     d. (ii) and (iv)

**Q 9. Study the picture and answer the following:**



**Which one of the following options best signifies this cartoon?**

- a. The State representatives are begging before the Central Government.
- b. The Central Government is undermining the spirit of Federalism.
- c. A lady is distributing food to the beggars.
- d. None of the above

**Q 10. Which of the following group of countries are an example of coming together federation?**

- a. India, USA, Belgium
- b. USA, Switzerland, Australia
- c. India, Belgium, Spain
- d. USA, Spain, Australia

**Q 11. Which of the following countries is an example of 'coming together federation'? (CBSE 2021 Term-1)**

- a. United States of America
- b. India
- c. Spain
- d. Belgium

**Q 12. Which of the following is not an example of 'holding together federations'?**

- a. India                              b. Spain
- c. Belgium                         d. Switzerland

## Knowledge BOOSTER

A large country decides to divide its power between the constituent states and the national government. India, Spain and Belgium are examples of this kind of 'holding together' federations.

**Q 13. Which one of the following countries is the example of 'holding together federation'?**

(CBSE 2021 Term-1)

- a. Australia                        b. India
- c. USA                                d. Switzerland

**Q 14. Choose the correct pair among the following:**

(CBSE 2022)

(Country)	(Administration)
a. Russia	- Unitary
b. China	- Federal
c. Canada	- Unitary
d. Argentina	- Federal

**Q 15. What type of distribution of powers does the Indian Constitution provide for? (NCERT)**

- a. Single-fold                      b. Two-fold
- c. Three-fold                        d. Four-fold

## Knowledge BOOSTER

The Constitution of India provides a three-fold distribution of legislative powers between the Central and the State Government—Union List, State List and Concurrent List.

**Q 16. Which one comes under the Union List in India?**

- a. Police                              b. Agriculture
- c. Banking                         d. Trade

## TIP

Students should remember the subjects included in each list, i.e., their names as well as the total number.

**Q 17. Which level of government in India has the power to legislate on the 'Residuary' subjects?**

- a. Union Government
- b. State Government
- c. Local Self-government
- d. Both a. and b.

**Q 18. Read the information given below and identify the correct option:**

It includes subject of common interest to both the Union Government as well as the State Government such as education, forest, trade unions, marriage, adoption and succession. Both the Union as well as the State Governments can make laws on the subjects mentioned in this list.

- a. Concurrent List                b. Union List
- c. State List                        d. Government List





Q 44. Read the statements carefully and choose the correct option:

Statement (I): A major step towards decentralisation was taken in 1992.

Statement (II): The Constitution was amended to make the third-tier of democracy more powerful and effective.

- a. Statement (I) is correct and (II) is incorrect.
- b. Statement (I) is incorrect and (II) is correct.
- c. Both statements are incorrect.
- d. Both statements are correct.

Q 45. Read the statements carefully and choose the correct option:

Statement (I): Belgium shifted from a federal form of government to a unitary government.

Statement (II): Usually, a federation has two levels of government.

- a. Statement (I) is correct and (II) is incorrect.
- b. Statement (I) is incorrect and (II) is correct.
- c. Both statements are incorrect.
- d. Both statements are correct.


### **Assertion & Reason** Type Questions

**Directions (Q.Nos. 46-53):** In the following questions given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:

- a. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- b. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- c. Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
- d. Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.


Q 46. Assertion (A): India has a federal system.

Reason (R): Under a unitary system, either there is only one level of government or the sub-units are subordinate to Central Government.

 **TiP**  
India has a federal government. There is a Central Government for the entire country and State Governments for different regions.


Q 47. Assertion (A): Belgium and Spain has 'holding together federation'.

Reason (R): A big country divides power between constituent States and National Government.

 **TiP**  
The power of a large country is divided between the constituent States and National Government. The Central Government is more powerful than the States.


Q 48. Assertion (A): The subjects which are not included in Union List, State List and Concurrent List are considered as Residuary subjects.

Reason (R): The Residuary subjects included that came after Constitution was made and thus could not be classified.

 **TiP**  
The subjects which are not included in Union List, State List and Concurrent List are considered as Residuary subject. It includes the subjects such as computer software that came after Constitution was made. Union Government has power to legislate on these 'Residuary' subjects.

Q 49. Assertion (A): Hindi is identified as the only official language of India.

Reason (R): It helped in creating supremacy of Hindi speaking people over others.

 **TiP**  
Hindi is identified as the official language of India. However, it is spoken by only 40 per cent of Indians. Thus, to safeguard the rights of other linguistic communities, 21 other languages were recognised as scheduled languages by the Constitution.

Q 50. Assertion (A): States Reorganisation committee was formed in 1954.


Reason (R): The committee was formed to recommend creation of states on the linguistic basis.

Q 51. Assertion (A): When power is taken away from Central and State Governments and given to Local Government, it is called decentralisation.

Reason (R): The basic idea behind decentralisation is that there are a large number of problems and issues which are best settled at the local level.


Q 52. Assertion (A): A major step towards decentralisation was taken in 1992 by amending the Constitution.

Reason (R): Constitution was amended to make the third-tier of democracy more powerful and effective.

 **TiP**  
The Constitution was amended in 1992 to make the third-tier more powerful and effective. It includes steps like regular elections for Local Government bodies, reservation of seats for OBC, SC, ST and women and creation of State Election Commission.

Q 53. Assertion (A): Zila Parishad Chairperson is the Political head of the Zila Parishad.

Reason (R): Mayor is the head of Municipalities.

 **TiP**  
Panchayat Samitis of a district together form the Zila Parishad. Zila Parishad chairperson is the political head of the Zila parishad. Municipalities are set-up in towns. Mayor is the head of Municipal corporation.

## Answers

1. (d)    2. (c)    3. (b)    4. (c)    5. (d)
6. (d)    7. (d)    8. (a)    9. (b)    10. (b)
11. (a)    12. (d)    13. (b)    14. (d)    15. (c)
16. (c)    17. (a)    18. (a)    19. (c)    20. (a)
21. (b)    22. (a)    23. (c)    24. (a)    25. (b)
26. (a)    27. (b)    28. (d)    29. (d)    30. (b)
31. (d)    32. (c)    33. (c)    34. (a)    35. (c)
36. (a)    37. (c)    38. (a)    39. (d)    40. (b)
41. (a)    42. (a)    43. (b)    44. (d)    45. (c)
46. (b)    47. (a)    48. (a)    49. (c)    50. (a)
51. (a)    52. (a)    53. (c)

## Source Based Questions

### Source 1

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

The federal system thus has dual objectives: to safeguard and promote unity of the country, while at the same time accommodate regional diversity. Therefore, two aspects are crucial for the institutions and practice of federalism. Governments at different levels should agree to some rules of power-sharing. They should also trust that each would abide by its part of the agreement. An ideal federal system has both aspects: mutual trust and agreement to live together.

The exact balance of power between the Central and the State Government varies from one federation to another. This balance depends mainly on the historical context in which the federation was formed. There are two kinds of routes through which federations have been formed. The first route involves independent states coming together on their own to form a bigger unit, so that by pooling sovereignty and retaining identity they can increase their security. This type of 'coming together' federations include the USA, Switzerland and Australia.

The second route is where a large country decides to divide its power between the constituent states and the National Government. India, Spain and Belgium are examples of this kind of 'holding together' federations. In this second category, the Central Government tends to be more powerful *vis-a-vis* the states. Very often different constituent units of the federation have unequal powers. Some units are granted special powers.

Q 1. What is/are main objective(s) of the federal system?

- a. To safeguard the country.
- b. To promote the unity of the country.
- c. To accommodate the regional diversity of the country.
- d. All of the above

Q 2. Ideal federal system must have two aspects—mutual trust and .....

- a. power distribution
- b. proper Constitution
- c. agreement to live together
- d. All of the above

Q 3. The exact balance of power between the Central and State Government depends mainly on .....

- a. historical context
- b. the Constitution
- c. political set-up of the country
- d. None of the above

Q 4. In ....., a large country divides its power between the different States and the National Government and very often there are unequal distribution of powers.

- a. coming together federation
- b. holding together federation
- c. federalism
- d. ideal federation

Q 5. Choose the incorrect statement.

- a. Belgium shifted from a unitary of a federal form in 1993.
- b. Belgium shifted from a federal form to unitary form of government in 1993.
- c. Sri Lanka continues to be a unitary system.
- d. Tamil leaders want Sri Lanka to become a federal system.

### COMMON ERROR

Students do not read the statements properly and tick the correct statement (any) instead of incorrect one.

Q 6. 'Holding together' federations are not found in.

- a. India
- b. Spain
- c. Belgium
- d. Australia

## Answers

1. (d)    2. (c)    3. (a)    4. (b)    5. (b)    6. (d)

### Source 2

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

Restructuring the Centre-State relations is one more way in which federalism has been strengthened in practice. How the constitutional

arrangements for sharing power work in reality depends to a large extent on how the ruling parties and leaders follow these arrangements. For a long time, the same party ruled both at the Centre and in most of the States. This meant that the State Governments did not exercise their rights as autonomous federal units. As and when the ruling party at the State level was different, the parties that ruled at the Centre tried to undermine the power of the States. In those days, the Central Government would often misuse the Constitution to dismiss the State Governments that were controlled by rival parties. This undermined the spirit of federalism.

**Q 1. The Centre-State relations undermined the spirit of federalism in the following way:**

- The formation of states led to the disintegration of the country.
- The formation of linguistic states made the country united.
- The State Governments could not exercise their rights as autonomous federal units due to same ruling party at both centre and states.
- State Government misused the Constitution to dismiss the rival parties.

**Q 2. Constitutional arrangements for sharing power work depends on:**

- same party rule at both centre and states.
- how ruling parties follow them.
- strength of federalism.
- rights of state as autonomous federal units.

**Q 3. The basic objective of a federal system is to:**

- accommodate regional diversity.
- share powers among different communities.
- Both a. and b.
- ensure financial autonomy.

**Q 4. The parties that ruled at the centre undermined the power of states because:**

- there was no power-sharing.
- there was no right to State Governments.
- ruling party at the state level was different.
- State Governments were ruled and controlled by rival parties.

**Q 5. In a federal system, the Central Government:**

- can order the State Government to take relevant action.
- cannot order the State Government to take relevant action.
- can order the state to take relevant action on certain occasions.
- None of the above

**Q 6. Two statements are marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:**

**Assertion (A):** The centre-state relations in India have been changed from time-to-time since independence.

**Reason (R):** The State Government exercised their rights as autonomous federal units.

- Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
- Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

## Answers

1. (c)   2. (b)   3. (a)   4. (c)   5. (b)   6. (c)

### Source 3

*Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:*

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 levels 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.

In this sense, federations are contrasted with a unitary system, either there is only one level of government or the sub-units are subordinate to the Central Government. The exact balance of power between the Central and the State Government varies from one federation to another.

**Q 1. What is the distinguishing feature of a federal government?**

**Ans.** The distinguishing feature of a federal government is that the governmental power is divided between different levels of government.

**Q 2. There was a key change that took place in 1993 in Belgium, making it a federal form of government. What was that change?**

**Ans.** The changes were as follows:

- The regional governments were given constitutional powers.
- The regional governments were no longer dependent on the Central Government.



**Q 3. What is the main feature of a unitary form of government?**

**Ans.** Under unitary form of government, there is only one level of government or the sub-units are subordinate to the Central Government.

#### Source 4

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:

##### Language Diversity of India

How many languages do we have in India? The answer depends on how one counts it. The latest information that we have is from the Census of India held in 2011. This census recorded more than 1300 distinct languages which people mentioned as their mother tongues. These languages were grouped together under some major languages. For example, languages like Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Bundelkhandi, Chhattisgarhi, Rajasthani and many others were grouped together under 'Hindi'. Even after this grouping, the Census found 121 major languages. Of these 22 languages are now included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and are therefore called 'Scheduled Languages'. Others are called 'Non-Scheduled Languages'. In terms of languages, India is perhaps the most diverse country in the world.

(CBSE 2023)

**Q 1. Explain the importance of language diversity in India.**

**Ans.** Language diversity in India has helped in preserving the unique identities and cultures of different communities. It has also contributed to the development of various art forms, literature and music.

**Q 2. Differentiate between Scheduled and Non-scheduled Languages.**

**Ans.** Scheduled languages have been accorded official status but non-scheduled languages not accorded official status and are not used for official administrative purposes.

**Q 3. "The fusion of languages has united the country into one cultural entity." Explain the statement with an example.**

**Ans.** The statement, "The fusion of languages has united the country into one cultural entity" means that the diverse languages and cultures of India have blended whether to create a shared sense of national identity. One example of this fusion has been seen in Bollywood films.



#### Very Short Answer Type Questions

**Q 1. What is federalism?**

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

**Q 2. Is India a federal country? Give reason for your answer.**

**Ans.** Yes, India is a federal country. In India, there is a three-tier government, comprising of the Central Government, State Governments and Panchayats.

**Q 3. Mention any four reasons to prove that India is a federal country.** (CBSE SQP 2023-24)

**Ans.** The four reasons to prove that India is a federal country are:

- (i) Distribution of powers
- (ii) Jurisdiction
- (iii) Supreme sources of income
- (iv) Two or more levels of Government

**Q 4. Do you think that State Governments are dependent on the Central Government?**

**Ans.** No, the states are not completely dependent on Central Government. They enjoy autonomy. But in some cases they depend on Central Government. For example, in case of natural disaster, they can ask the Central Government for help.

**Q 5. What do you mean by 'holding together federation'?**

**Ans.** 'Holding together federation' is a federation where a large country decides to divide the powers between the Central Government and the government of the states. For Example: India.

**Q 6. Write names of any two countries, which are the examples of 'holding together federations'.**

**Ans.** India, Spain and Belgium are the examples of holding together federation.

**Q 7. Which government has the power to legislate on Residuary subjects in India?** (CBSE 2019)

OR

**Which administrative authority legislates on Residuary subjects?**

**Ans.** Union Government has the power to legislate on Residuary subjects in India.

**Q 8. Which administrative authority legislates an Union List?**

**Ans.** Union or Central Government legislates an Union List.

**Q 9. Who governs the Union Territories?**

**Ans.** The Central Government has special powers to run the Union Territories by creating legislatures for them. In general, the President of India appoints an administrator or Lieutenant Governor for each Union Territory.

**Q 10. When did Belgium shift from a unitary to a federal form of government?**

**Ans.** Most of the powers in Belgium were in the hands of Central Government before 1993, but after that, the regional governments were given constitutional powers. Thus, Belgium shifted from a unitary to a federal form of government.

**Q 11. Which government can make laws on topics contained in Union List?**

**Ans.** The Central Government can make laws on topics contained in Union List.

**Q 12. What status has been given to Hindi by the Constitution of India?**

**Ans.** Hindi has been considered as the official language of the country by the Constitution of India.

**Q 13. Why was States Reorganisation Commission formed?**

**Ans.** States Reorganisation Commission was formed in 1954 to recommend creation of states on the linguistic basis.

**Q 14. What percentage of reservation is given to women in local administration in India? (CBSE 2020)**

**Ans.** One-third or 33 per cent seats are reserved for women in local administration in India.

**Q 15. Under whose supervision does a Panchayat work?**

**Ans.** The Panchayat works under the supervision of Gram Sabha.

**Q 16. Arrange the following institutions of power according to the size of their jurisdiction in increasing order:**

- (i) Panchayat Samiti or Mandal
- (ii) State Government
- (iii) Gram Panchayat
- (iv) Zila Parishad

**Ans.** (iii)–(i)–(iv)–(ii)

### Knowledge BOOSTER

*Gram Panchayat heads a village or groups of villages, Samitis head groups of Gram Panchayats, Zila Parishad heads all Panchayat Samities of a district and State Governments head Zila Parishads.*

**Q 17. Which local body has a Mayor as its head?**

**Ans.** Municipal Corporation has a Mayor as its head.

**Q 18. How are village Sarpanch or Panch elected?**

**Ans.** Village Sarpanch or Panch are directly elected by all the adult population living in that ward or village.

**Q 19. What do you understand by decentralisation?**

**Ans.** When power is taken away from Central and State Governments and given to local government, it is called Decentralisation.

### Short Answer Type Questions

**Q 1. Describe any three features of 'federal government'. (CBSE 2020)**

OR

Describe any three federal features of Indian democracy. (CBSE 2019)

**Ans.** The key features of a federal government are as follows:

(i) **Distribution of Powers:** In federalism, the Constitution demarcates the power of the Central and the State Government into different lists of subjects. The three lists are:

(a) Union List (b) State List (c) Concurrent List.

(ii) **Jurisdiction:** In a federation, the judiciary plays an important role in overseeing the implementations of constitutional provisions and procedures. In case of any dispute about the division of powers, the High Court and the Supreme Court take a decision.

(iii) **Supreme Sources of Income:** A clear mention regarding the financial powers of the Centre and the State has been made in the Indian Constitution. Income tax, excise duty, corporation tax, etc., are levied and collected by the Central Government, whereas land revenue, stamp duty, building tax, etc., come under the State Governments.

(iv) **Two or More Levels of Government:** In a federal government, there are two or more levels of government at the state, provincial and local levels. As an exception, in India, we have got a third level of government, i.e., the local level.

(v) **Three-tier System:** As discussed earlier, under a federal government, different tiers of the government govern the same citizens. In India, we have a three-tier system of government, i.e.,

- (a) Union State
- (b) State Government
- (c) Local Self-government

(vi) **Constitutional Status:** The federation provides constitutional guarantees for the existence and authority of each tier of the government.

**Q 2. Describe any three features of unitary government. (CBSE 2020)**

**Ans.** The three features of unitary government are:

(i) The Central Government can pass orders to the provincial or the local government.

(ii) The jurisdictions of government or its sub-units are not specified in the Constitution, centre can delegate power to introduce any change.

(iii) Any constitutional power given to the states or regions of the country is dependent on the Central Government which can withdraw them at any time.

(iv) The Constitution could be published or unspoken according to people's desires.

**Q 3. Distinguish between the 'Coming Together Federation' and the 'Holding Together Federation'.**

OR

Highlight three major distinctions between the federations of 'Coming Together' type and 'Holding Together' type.

**Ans.** Difference between 'Coming Together Federation' and 'Holding Together Federation' are:

S.No.	Basis of Difference	Coming Together Federation	Holding Together Federation
(i)	Definition	States come together on their own to form a bigger unit. In 'Coming Together federation'.	A large country decides to divide its power between the constituent States and the National Government.
(ii)	Distribution of power	Under this, all the constituent states usually have equal powers.	Under this, the Central Government tends to be more powerful.
(iii)	Examples	The USA, Switzerland and Australia.	India, Spain and Belgium.



### TIP

Mention the names of the countries practising different federations.

**Q 4. India comes under which type of federation and why?** (CBSE 2015)

**Ans.** The Indian Union is based on the principle of 'Holding Together Federation', i.e., the union to the units rather than from the units to the union. Our Constitution says that India shall be a 'Union of States'.

It is basically a federal system with striking unitary features. Hence, it is also called 'Quasi-federal'.

Under 'Holding Together Federation,' the Central Government tends to be more powerful vis-a-vis the states as is the case with India.

**Q 5. How is sharing of power between the Union and the State Governments basic to the structure of the Constitution of India? Explain.** (CBSE 2019)

**Ans.** The sharing of power between the Union and the State Governments is basic to the structure of the Constitution of India because of the following reasons:

- (i) Both the Central and State Governments derive their power from the Constitution and it is not easy to make changes to the power-sharing arrangement between the Union and the State Governments. The Parliament cannot on its own change this arrangement.

- (ii) Any change to the sharing of power has to be the 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.

- (iii) In case of any dispute about the division of powers, the High Court and the Supreme Court make a decision.

### COMMON ERROR

Students don't explain the structure of Constitution (power-sharing arrangement) step-wise.

**Q 6. Describe any three characteristics of 'Union List' mentioned in the Indian Constitution.**

**Ans.** The three characteristics of 'Union List' mentioned in the Indian Constitution are:

- (i) It includes subjects of national importance such as defence of the country, foreign affairs, banking, communications and currency.
- (ii) The subjects included in the Union List need a uniform policy throughout the country.
- (iii) The Central Government alone can make laws on the subjects that are mentioned in the Union List.

**Q 7. Name any two subjects that are included in Concurrent List. How are laws made on these subjects? Explain.** (CBSE 2019)

**Ans.** The subjects that are included in Concurrent List are education, forest, marriage, adoption and succession. On these subjects, laws are made in the following ways:

- (i) Both the union as well as the State Government can make laws on the subjects mentioned in this list.
- (ii) If the laws conflict with each other, the law made by the Union Government will prevail.



### TIP

The names of subjects should be learnt thoroughly.

**Q 8. The Indian Constitution provides three lists to distribute the legislative power. State any two subjects that are included in the union list. In which list the subject 'Education' is included and why?**

(CBSE SQP 2023-24)

**Ans.** (i) The Indian Constitution provided a three-fold distribution of legislative powers among the Central and the State Governments. This distribution contains three lists:

The Union list, the State list and the Concurrent list.

**Union List** includes subjects of national importance such as defence of the country, foreign affairs, banking, communication and currency, etc.

- (ii) The subject 'Education' comes under the Concurrent List, which means that both the Union and State Governments have the power to make laws on this subject.

**Q 9. Explain the advantages of decentralisation.**

**Ans.** The advantages of decentralisation are as follows:

- (i) It enables people to directly participate in decision-making.
- (ii) It helps to inculcate the habit of democratic participation.
- (iii) It reduces the burden on Centre and State Governments.
- (iv) One-third of all positions are reserved for women in all local bodies. This has led to women empowerment.

**Q 10. Describe the rationale behind the implementation of Decentralisation in India.** (CBSE 2020)

**Ans.** The rationale behind the implementation of Decentralisation in India is explained as follows:

- (i) It aims to ensure community participation for proper growth and development of the community itself. It is aimed to ensure social, economic and political development of the community.
- (ii) It is also oriented to ensure no or less interferences in the local affairs by the union and state executive bodies. It has been executed to make village 'Little Republic'.

**Q 11. Describe any three steps taken by the government towards decentralisation in the year 1992.**

(CBSE SQP 2020)

**Ans.** The steps taken by the government towards decentralisation in the year 1992 are as under:

- (i) Constitution mandate to hold regular elections to local government bodies.
- (ii) Reservation of seats in the elected bodies and the executive heads of these institutions are for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.
- (iii) There is reservation of at least one-third of all positions for women.
- (iv) An independent institution called the State Election Commission has been created in each state to conduct panchayat and municipal elections.
- (v) The State Governments are required to share some powers and revenue with local government bodies.

**COMMON ERROR**

Students do not write proper steps taken towards decentralisation, i.e., sometimes forget to mention about the seats reservation etc.

**Q 12. Explain the factors that make federal government in India so attractive.** (CBSE 2016)

**Ans.** The following factors make federal government in India so attractive:

- (i) The nature of the democratic politics of the country has made federalism succeed in India. This ensures the spirit of federalism, respect for diversity and desire to live together.
- (ii) There is a clear distribution of powers and revenue between the different levels of government.
- (iii) There is a mutual trust and agreement between the government at different levels.
- (iv) The Supreme Court has been given the power to solve the federal disputes.

**Q 13. What is Panchayati Raj? What is its importance?**

**Ans.** The rural local government in villages is called Panchayati Raj.

The importance of *Panchayati Raj* is discussed below:

- (i) It has contributed significantly towards reducing the burden of the Central and State Governments.
- (ii) It allows local people to directly participate in decision-making.
- (iii) It helps in decentralisation of power.
- (iv) There are a large number of problems and issues which are now successfully settled at the local level.

**Q 14. Explain any four features of the third-tier government.**

**Ans.** Features of the third-tier government are as follows:

- (i) The third-tier government has led to decentralisation of power.
- (ii) This government exists in rural areas as well as urban areas.
- (iii) The State Governments share power and revenue with third-tier governments.
- (iv) The third-tier governments have reserved seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Backward Classes.

**Q 15. What is Gram Sabha? Describe any four functions of a Gram Sabha.**

**Ans.** *Gram Sabha* includes all the adult voters of a village. It is empowered to support or topple down the *Gram Panchayat* body.

The functions of *Gram Sabha* are:

- (i) It elects the members of the Gram Panchayat.
- (ii) It supervises the work of the Gram Panchayat.
- (iii) It approves the annual budget of the Panchayat.
- (iv) It reviews the performance of the Gram Panchayat.

**COMMON ERROR**

Students commonly mention the functions of *Gram Panchayat* instead of *Gram Sabha*.

**Q 16. Examine the composition and structure of urban local self-government.**

**Ans.** The composition and structure of urban local self-governments is as follows:

(i) **Municipal Corporations:** Big cities have Municipal Corporations. It is the top most urban local government. The Corporation comprises of elected members called Corporators. The political head of the Municipal Corporation is known as Mayor.

(ii) **Municipalities:** These are set-up in towns and are controlled by elected bodies consisting of people's representatives. Municipal Chairperson is the political head of the Municipality.

**Q 17. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of local self-government in a democracy. (CBSE 2019)**

**Ans.** The strengths of local self-governments in India are as follows:

- (i) It has made the administration easier.
- (ii) It has made the country more united and stronger.
- (iii) It has increased women's representation and voice in democracy.
- (iv) Problems and issues are best settled at local level.

The limitations faced by local self-governments are as follows:

- (i) There is a shortage of resources.
- (ii) Gram Sabhas are not held regularly.
- (iii) Most State Governments have not transferred significant powers to the local government.

## Long Answer Type Questions

**Q 1. Why has federalism succeeded in India? What policies adopted by India has ensured this success?**

(CBSE 2016)

**Ans.** The success of federalism in India can be owed to the following factors:

- (i) Administration of subjects which are of national importance and require uniformity in administration are given to the Central Government, while subjects of the local importance or day-to-day administration are given to the states.
- (ii) Both these levels of governments enjoy their powers independent of each other.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) The federal system has dual objectives, viz., to safeguard and promote unity of the country, while at the same time accommodate regional diversity.

(v) Sources of revenue for each level of government are clearly specified to ensure their financial autonomy.

(vi) Restructuring the Centre-State relations is one more way in which federalism has been strengthened in practice.

(vii) Power in India has been decentralised to the local government. The local government includes Panchayats in villages and Municipalities in urban areas.

**Q 2. How is federal power-sharing more effective today than in the early years? Explain. (CBSE 2017)**

**Ans.** Federal power-sharing is more effective today due to the following reasons:

(i) For a long time, the Central Government misused the constitutional power to dismiss State Governments that were controlled by the rival parties.

(ii) But the rise of regional political parties in many states has changed the Centre-State relations significantly after 1990. This was the beginning of the era of coalition governments at the Centre.

(iii) Since no single party got a clear majority in the Lok Sabha, the major national parties had to enter into an alliance with many parties including several regional parties to form a government at the Centre.

(iv) All this led to a new culture of power-sharing and respect for the autonomy of State Governments.

(v) The trend was supported by the Constitution and it made it difficult for the Central Government to dismiss any State Government in an arbitrary manner.

**Q 3. How is a federal government different from the unitary form of government? Why are federations preferred these days?**

OR

**What is the main difference between a federal form of government and a unitary one? Explain with an example.**

**Ans.** Difference between federal government and unitary government are:

S. No.	Basis of Difference	Federal Government	Unitary Government
(i)	Meaning	Under this, the <u>power is divided between a central authority and its various constituents units</u> .	Under this, there is <u>only a single government controlling all the powers</u> .

(ii)	Working	In a federal system, the <u>Central Government cannot give orders to the State Government.</u>	The <u>Central Government can give orders to the provincial or the Local Government.</u>
(iii)	Nature	Local Governments <u>enjoy freedom and powers.</u>	Local Govern-ments do <u>not enjoy any freedom or powers.</u>
(iv)	Power	Governments at any level <u>are answerable to the people.</u>	Governments at any level <u>are not answerable to the people.</u>
(v)	Example	<u>India, USA, Canada, etc., have adopted a federal system.</u>	<u>England, Japan, France, Italy, etc., have adopted a unitary system.</u>

These days federations are preferred due to the following reasons:

- (i) It helps to make administration effective and efficient.
- (ii) It helps to accommodate all diverse groups.

**Q 4. What challenges did Centre-State relations in India face before the 1990s? Why is power-sharing between Centre and State more effective today?**

**Ans.** The challenges faced by the Centre-State relations in India before the 1990s were:

- (i) Political scene was dominated by one party only at the Centre as well as in the States.
- (ii) The ruling party at the Centre and State level was different and that at the Centre tried to undermine the power of the States.
- (iii) The Central Government misused the Constitution to dismiss the State Governments that were controlled by rival parties.

Power-sharing between Centre and State is more effective today due to the following reasons:

- (i) The Centre and the majority of State Governments belong to different political parties in the coalition.
- (ii) The coalition government at the Centre has inculcated respect for federal autonomy.
- (iii) A number of regional parties have become powerful and they play a crucial role at the Centre and States.

### COMMON ERROR

Students do not mention the challenges before 1990s properly and the effectiveness of power-sharing is not explained.

**Q 5. Why did the makers of our Constitution declare India to be a 'Union of States'? Why were some sub-political units of India given a special status?**

(CBSE 2015)

**Ans.** The makers of our Constitution declared India to be a 'Union of States' because it consisted of both British-ruled territories as well as many princely states.

Some sub-political units of India were given a special status due to the following reasons:

- (i) Jammu and Kashmir joined India on a special condition.
- (ii) French and Portuguese ruled territories were given the status of Union Territory.
- (iii) Some units were too small to become independent states and were made Union Territories.
- (iv) States in the North-West have been given a special status as have a large tribal population having a distinct history as well as culture.

**Q 6. Explain any five provisions of the constitutional amendment of 1992 that really strengthened the third-tier of democracy in India.**

(CBSE 2016)

OR

**Explain any five steps taken towards strengthening the third-tier of democracy in India.**

OR

**Describe any three provisions of amendment made in Indian Constitution in 1992 for making 'Three-tier' government more effective and powerful.**

(CBSE 2018)

**Ans.** A major step towards decentralisation was taken after the 73rd Amendment of Constitution in 1992.

The important provisions of 73rd Amendment are as follows:

- (i) It is constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to government bodies.
- (ii) Seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).
- (iii) At least one-third of all positions are reserved for women.
- (iv) The State Election Commission (SEC) has been created in each state to conduct Panchayat and Municipal elections.
- (v) The local government has been given adequate powers.

### Knowledge BOOSTER

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



**Q 7. Describe the importance of a third-tier of government in a vast country like India.** (CBSE 2019)

**Ans.** The importance of a third-tier of government in a vast country like India is as follows:

- (i) A major step towards decentralisation was taken in 1992. The Constitution was amended to make the third-tier of democracy more powerful and effective.
- (ii) The third-tier of the government works at the lowest level. Village Panchayats and Municipal Corporations are the example of local self-government. The members of the Village Panchayats are elected by the village people and that of Municipal Corporations are elected by the people of a city.
- (iii) The head of the Village Panchayat is known as the Sarpanch. Panchayat is the decision-making body of the entire village. However, the Panchayat works under the supervision of the Gram Sabha.
- (iv) Some Panchayats grouped together form the Panchayat Samiti or the Block. Its members are elected by the members of the Panchayats. Zila Parishad exists at the top level of the rural bodies. Most of its members are elected.
- (v) Urban areas and cities have their own local bodies. While small towns and cities have municipality, bigger cities have municipal corporations. Elections to these bodies take place regularly

after every five years. While a mayor is the head of the municipal corporation, a municipal chairperson is the head of a municipality.

**Q 8. How has the Panchayati Raj strengthened the democracy in India? Explain the structure of rural local Government in India.**

**Ans.** Panchayati Raj has strengthened the democracy in India in the following ways:

- (i) People can get most of the problems solved at the local level.
- (ii) They can think and plan for themselves.

The structure of rural local government in India is as follows:

- (i) **Zila Parishad:** It constitutes together all the mandals in a district. Most of the members are elected and headed by a chairperson.
- (ii) **Panchayat Samiti:** Its members are elected by the entire panchayat members in that area. A few Gram Panchayats are grouped together to form this body.
- (iii) **Gram Panchayat:** A council consisting of several ward members is often called Panch and the President is called Sarpanch. It is the decision-making body for the entire village.



## Chapter Test

### Multiple Choice Questions

- Q 1. The distinguishing feature of a federal government is:**
- a. national government gives some powers to the provincial governments.
  - b. power is distributed among the legislature, executive and judiciary.
  - c. elected officials exercise supreme power in the government.
  - d. governmental power is divided between different levels of government.
- Q 2. When independent states come together on their own to form a bigger unit, so that by pooling sovereignty and retaining identity they can increase their security. This type of 'coming together' federations are practiced by which countries?**
- a. Switzerland and Canada
  - b. USA and Britain
  - c. USA, Australia and Switzerland
  - d. Britain, Canada and USA
- Q 3. Which of the following pairs of subjects is not associated with the Union List?**
- a. Education and marriage
  - b. Communications and currency
  - c. Foreign affairs and currency
  - d. Banking and defence

**Q 4. Which is not true regarding changes in power-sharing arrangement between the centre and the states?**

- a. The Parliament cannot on its own change this arrangement.
- b. Any change to it has to be first passed by both the houses with at least two-thirds majority.
- c. Then, it has to be ratified by the legislatures of at least half of the total states.
- d. The Parliament alone has the power to amend the provisions regarding power-sharing.

**Q 5. Who is the head of urban local government?**

- a. Sarpanch
- b. Ward Commissioner
- c. Mukhiya
- d. The Mayor

### Assertion and Reason Type Questions

**Directions (Q. Nos. 6-7):** In the following questions given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:

- a. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- b. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- c. Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
- d. Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

**Q 6. Assertion (A):** The jurisdictions of the respective levels or tiers of government are specified in the Constitution.

**Reason (R):** Courts have the power to interpret the Constitution and the powers of different levels of government.

**Q 7. Assertion (A):** Local Government bodies exist for urban areas as municipalities are set-up in towns.

**Reason (R):** Both Municipalities and Municipal Corporations are controlled by elected bodies consisting of people's representatives.

### Source Based Question

**Q 8.** Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

The Constitution clearly provided a three-fold distribution of legislative powers between the Union Government and the State Government. Thus, it contains three lists:

**Union List** includes subjects of national importance such as defence of the country, foreign affairs, banking, communications and currency. They are included in this list because we need a uniform policy on these matters throughout the country. The Union Government alone can make laws relating to the subjects mentioned in the Union List.

**State List** contains subjects of state and local importance such as police, trade, commerce, agriculture and irrigation. The State Governments alone can make laws relating to the subjects mentioned in the State List.

**Concurrent List** includes subject 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 as well as the State Governments can make laws on the subjects mentioned in the list. If their laws conflict with each other, the law made by the Union Government will prevail.

- (i) **The Constitution of India has provided it three-fold distribution of legislative powers between the Union and State Government which is depicted in:**
- three lists
  - laws of the country
  - special article
  - None of these

- (ii) **Why do Union List include subject of national interest?**
- Only Parliamentarians have the right to make laws.
  - We need a uniform policy on these matters throughout the country.

- Subjects are very specific.
- None of the above

(iii) **Agriculture is the most important sector of our country which is included in:**

- Union List
- State List
- Both a. and b.
- Concurrent List

(iv) **Both the Union and State Government can make laws on:**

- education, trade union, marriage.
- forest, adoption and succession.
- Both a. and b.
- None of the above

(v) **The Constitution of India has:**

- divided powers between centre and states in three lists.
- divided powers between centre and states in two lists.
- listed the powers of the states and left the undefined powers to the state.
- specified the powers of the states and left the residuary powers with the centre.

(vi) **Choose the correct option from the following:**

Column I	Column II
A. Union List	1. Agriculture
B. State List	2. Computer Software
C. Concurrent List	3. Education
D. Residuary Subject	4. Foreign Affairs

- A-1
- B-2
- C-3
- D-4

### Very Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 9.** Whose laws prevail if there is conflict between the State Government and Central Government on the subjects of the Concurrent List?
- Q 10.** Who is the head of the Gram Panchayat? How is he elected?

### Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 11.** How is sharing of power between the Union and the State Governments basic to the structure of the Constitution of India? Explain.
- Q 12.** "India has a large cultural, regional and religious diversity, but there is unity among people". What factors are responsible for this? Elaborate.
- Q 13.** Describe the division of powers between the Central and the State Government in India.

### Long Answer Type Questions

- Q 14.** Why has federalism succeeded in India? Which were the policies adopted by India that ensured this success? Explain.
- Q 15.** What is the rationale for decentralisation of power? Explain the structure of rural local government in India.