

02

Federalism

Quick Revision

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 Federations

- There are two levels of government in a federation and both enjoy independent power of each other.
- A federal system is distinct from a unitary system. Unitary system has either one level of government or sub-units which are subordinates to the Central Government.
- The federal system has dual objectives, i.e., to safeguard and promote unity of the country and also to accommodate regional diversity.
- An ideal federal system of government must have mutual trust and agreement to live together.

Balance of Power between Central and State Government

- Federations are of two types: coming together federations and holding together federations.
- USA, Switzerland and Australia has formed a federation of 'coming together' type while India, Spain and Belgium by 'holding together' type.

What Makes India a Federal Country?

- India is a federal country. The Constitution declared India as a union of states.

Three-Tier System of Government

- The Constitution originally provides a two-tier system of government : the Union and the State Governments.
- Later a third-tier of federalism in the form of Panchayats and Municipalities was added.
- The Union List contains subjects of national importance. Like defence, foreign affairs, banking, communications and currency.
- State List contains subjects of state and local importance. Like police, trade, commerce, agriculture and irrigation.
- Concurrent List has subject of common interest to both the Union and the State Government. Like education, forest, trade unions, marriage, adoption and succession.
- The subjects which do not include in any three lists and subjects like computer software that came up after the Constitution was made are known as residuary subject. Only Union Government can make laws on the 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.

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.

Linguistic States

- The creation of linguistic states was the first and a major test for democratic politics in our country.
- Some states were created not on the basis of language but to recognise differences based on culture, a ethnicity or geography.

Language Policy

- Language Policy was the second test for the Indian federation.
- The Indian Constitution did not give the status of national languages.
- Hindi was identified as the official language and besides it there are 22 scheduled languages in the Indian Constitution.

Centre-State Relations

- Restructuring the Centre-State Relations is one more way in which federalism has been strengthened in practice.
- Since, no single party got a clear majority in the Lok Sabha, major national parties had to enter into an alliance with many parties including several regional parties, to form a government at the centre.
- It led to a new culture of power sharing and respect for the autonomy of State Governments.
- To follow the true spirit of federalism, respect for diversity in our country is very necessary.

Decentralisation in India

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

- 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.

Local Government

- The local government includes panchayats in villages and municipalities in urban areas.
- The local government includes panchayats in villages and municipalities in urban areas whose election is carried out by the **State Election Commission**.

Panchayati Raj System

- In India rural local government is popularly known as Panchayati Raj.
- Each village or group of villages has a Gram Panchayat which consists of several ward members (Panchs) and a President (Sarpanch).
- Panchayat works under the supervision of Gram Sabha.
- A few **Gram** Panchayats are grouped together to form a Panchayat Samiti.

Zilla Parishad

- All the Panchayat Samitis in a district together constitute the Zilla (district) Parishad.
- The Chairperson of Zilla Parishad is its political head.

Municipalities

- Municipalities are set up in towns. In big cities Municipal Corporations are set up. Both are controlled by elected bodies consisting people's representatives.
- Municipal chairperson is the political head of the municipality. In a Municipal Corporation, the head is known as Mayor.

Constitutional status for Local Government

- Constitutional status for local government has helped to deepen democracy in our country as well.
- But most state governments have not transferred significant powers to the local government.



Objective Questions

Multiple Choice Questions

- 01.** A system of government in which power is divided between a central authority and various constituent unit of the country is called
- (a) Federalism (b) Communalism
(c) Socialism (d) Democracy
- 02.** 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
- 03.** Which country is an example of coming together federation?
- (a) Belgium (b) USA
(c) Sri Lanka (d) India
- 04.** Belgium shifted from a unitary form of government to
- (a) Democratic (b) Federal
(c) Authoritarian (d) Communist
- 05.** In unitary form of government
- (a) all the power is divided between the centre/union and the state provincial government
(b) all the power is with the citizens
(c) State Government has all the powers
(d) power is concentrated with the Central Government
- 06.** Which countries follow the unitary system of government?
- (a) Belgium, Spain and India
(b) USA, Japan and Belgium
(c) United Arab Emirates, China and Sri Lanka
(d) France, Germany and India
- 07.** Which of the following is not the feature of coming together federation?
- (a) In this type of federation, states come together on their own to form a bigger unit
(b) These states have equal power and are equally strong vis-a-vis the federal government
(c) They are coming together because they want to maintain sovereignty, identity and security of their own
(d) India, Spain and Belgium are examples of coming together federation
- 08.** Who can make laws relating to the subjects mentioned in the Concurrent List?
- (a) Local Government (b) State Government
(c) Union Government (d) Both (b) and (c)
- 09.** Which level of government has the power to legislate on the residuary subjects?
- (a) Union Government (b) State Government
(c) Local Government (d) Both (a) and (b)
- 10.** If there is a clash between the laws made by the state and centre on a subject in the Concurrent List
- (a) The central law prevails
(b) The state law prevails
(c) The Supreme Court has to intervene to decide
(d) Both the laws prevail in their respective jurisdiction
- 11.** Choose the incorrect statement.
- (a) Usually a federation has two levels of governments
(b) Both the levels of governments enjoy their powers independent of one another
(c) In a federal system, a State Government has powers of its own
(d) In a federal system, the State Government is answerable to the Central Government



12. Consider the following statements.

- A. In a federation, the power of the federal and provincial governments are clearly demarcated.
- B. 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.
- C. Sri Lanka is a federation because the country is divided into provinces.
- D. India is no longer a federation because some powers of the states have been devolved to the local government bodies.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) A, B and C
- (b) A, C and D
- (c) A and B
- (d) B and C

13. Which is true regarding sources of revenue in a Federal system?

- (a) States have no financial powers or independent sources of revenue.
- (b) States are dependent for revenue or funds on the central government.
- (c) Sources of revenue for each level of government are clearly specified to ensure its financial autonomy.
- (d) States have no financial autonomy.

14. Find the incorrect statement

- (a) Even in democracy, the Constitution can be misused.
- (b) In reorganisation, Central Government shares its power with State Governments.
- (c) In coming together federation, all the constituent states have equal powers.
- (d) Panchayati Raj is an example of people's direct participation in decision making.

15. Identify the correct option of power sharing on the basis of different levels of government. (CBSE 2020)

- (a) Among different pressure groups
- (b) Among different social groups
- (c) Legislature, Executive and Judiciary
- (d) Union Government, State Government and Local bodies.

16. The first and major test for democratic politics in our country was

- (a) caste problem
- (b) language problem
- (c) problems related to Union Territories
- (d) creation of linguistic state

17. Which language has status of the national language in India?

- (a) Tamil
- (b) Hindi
- (c) English
- (d) None of these

18. The state which violently demanded that the use of English for official purpose should be continued, is

- (a) Kerala
- (b) Karnataka
- (c) Tamil Nadu
- (d) Andhra Pradesh

19. How many languages are included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution?

- (a) 15
- (b) 20
- (c) 22
- (d) 25

20. Which of the following reactions to the language policy holds true in the case of India?

- (a) The language-based states have divided us as they make everyone conscious of their language
- (b) The policy of accommodation has strengthened the national unity
- (c) The language policy has helped to consolidate the dominance of English over all the other languages
- (d) All of the above

21. Consider the following statements regarding language policy of Indian Federation.

- A. Hindi was identified as the official language.
- B. Besides Hindi, there are 21 other languages recognised as scheduled languages.
- C. English can be used along with Hindi for official purpose.



Choose the right option from the following

- (a) A and C (b) A and B
(c) Only A (d) A, B and C

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

- (a) Decentralisation
(b) Centralisation
(c) Panchayat Samiti
(d) Federalism

23. Major step towards decentralisation in India was taken up in

- (a) 1992 (b) 1993
(c) 1991 (d) 1990

24. Who has special power in administering the Union Territories in India?

- (a) Central Government (c) Chief Minister
(c) President (d) Governor

25. The power to interpret the Constitution is with the

- (a) Executive (b) Judiciary
(c) Legislature (d) Administration

26. It reviews the performance of the Gram Panchayat. This is

- (a) Gram Sabha (b) Zilla Parishad
(c) Panchayat Samiti (d) None of these

27. In the local government elections at least of all positions are reserved for women?

- (a) Only-third (b) Two-third
(c) 50% (d) 100%

28. Which of the following is incorrect based on the Constitutional Amendment, 1992?

- (a) One-fourth of positions are reserved for women.
(b) Regular elections should be held to the local government bodies.
(c) Seats are reserved for SC's, ST's and OBC's.
(d) State Election Commission looks after these elections.

29. Identify the Prime Minister of India and the name of Alliance headed by him.



- (a) Atal Bihari Vajpayee, NDA
(b) PV Narasimha Rao, UPA
(c) HD Deve Gowda, NDA
(d) Atal Bihari Vajpayee, UPA

30. Match the following.

List I	List II
A. The use of English for official purpose was to stop.	1. 2011
B. There are more than 1300 language as mother tongue.	2. 1990
C. The true rise of regional political parties in India.	3. 1965

Codes

- | | | | | | |
|-------|---|---|-------|---|---|
| A | B | C | A | B | C |
| (a) 3 | 1 | 2 | (b) 2 | 1 | 3 |
| (c) 1 | 2 | 3 | (d) 1 | 3 | 2 |

31. Match the list I with List II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists.

List I	List II
A. Union of India	1. Prime Minister
B. State	2. Sarpanch
C. Municipal Corporation	3. Governor
D. Gram Panchayat	4. Mayor

Codes

- | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|---|---|-------|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D | A | B | C | D |
| (a) 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | (b) 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| (c) 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | (d) 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 |



32. Which of the following is an incorrect match from the following?

List I	List II
A. State List	1. It includes subjects like trade, commerce, etc.
B. Union List	2. It includes subjects like defence, foreign affairs, etc.
C. Residuary Powers	3. It includes subject like computer software.
D. Concurrent List	4. It includes subjects like police, agriculture, etc.

- (a) Only A (b) Only B
(c) Both (A) and (C) (d) Only (D)

Assertion/Reasoning MCQs

Directions (Q. Nos. 33-37) *In the question given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct code.*

Codes

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

33. Assertion (A) Belgium and Spain has 'holding together' federation.

Reason (R) A big country divides power between constituent states and national government.

34. Assertion (A) Power is taken away from central and state governments and given to local government and it is known as decentralisation.

Reason (R) Large number of problems and issues are best settled at the local level and it is the basic idea behind decentralisation.

35. Assertion (A) Zilla Parishad chairperson is the political head of the Zilla Parishad

Reason (R) Mayor is the head of Municipalities.

36. Assertion (A) Hindi is identified as the only official language of India.

Reason It helped in creating supremacy of Hindi speaking people over others.

37. Assertion (A) Third-tier of government is known as local government.

Reason (R) It made democracy weak in nature.

Case Based MCQs

01. Read the following source and answer the questions that follow.

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.

(i) Which of the following is not an example of 'coming together' federation'?

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| (a) India | (b) USA |
| (c) Australia | (d) Switzerland |

(ii) In a holding together federation

- A. A large country divides its power between constituent states and the national government
- B. The central government tends to be more powerful vis-a-vis the states
- C. All of the constituent states usually have equal powers
- D. Constituent states have unequal power

Which of the above statements are correct?

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| (a) A, B, C and D | (b) A and D |
| (c) B and C | (d) A, B and D |

(iii) Choose the incorrect statement.

- (a) A federation has two levels of governments
- (b) In a federal system, the state government is answerable to the central government
- (c) In a federal system, the state government has powers of its own
- (d) Both the levels of government enjoy their powers independent of one another

(iv) Which of the following are the objectives of a federal system.

- (a) To safeguard and promote unity of the country
- (b) To accommodate regional diversity
- (c) To share powers among different communities
- (d) Both (a) and (b)

02. Read the following source and answer the questions that follow.

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 a three-fold distribution of legislative powers between the Union and State governments which is depicted in
- three lists
 - Laws of the country
 - Special Article
 - None of the above
- (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
 - Concurrent List
 - Both (a) and (b)
- (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

03. Read the following source and answer the questions that follow.

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.

- (i) 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.
- (ii) Constitutional arrangements for sharing power work depend on
- same party rule at both centre and states
 - how ruling parties follow them
 - strength of federalism
 - rights of state as autonomous federal units
- (iii) The basic objective of a federal system is to
- accommodate regional diversity
 - share powers among different communities
 - ensure financial autonomy
 - Both (a) and (b)
- (iv) 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.



04. Read the source given below and answer the following questions:

When power is taken away from Central and State governments and given to local government, it is called decentralisation. 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 better knowledge of problems in their localities. They also have better ideas on where to spend money and how to manage things more efficiently. Besides, 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. Local government is the best way to realize one important principle of democracy, namely local self-government.

The need for decentralisation was recognised in our Constitution. Since then, there have been several attempts to decentralise power to the level of villages and towns. Panchayats in villages and municipalities in urban areas were set up in all the States. But these were directly under the control of state governments. Elections to these local governments were not held regularly. Local governments did not have any powers or resources of their own. Thus, there was very little decentralisation in effective terms.

(i) Consider the following statements on the practice of federalism in India. Identify those which hold true for decentralisation after 1992.

- A. Local governments did not have any power or resources of their own.
- B. It became constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to local government bodies.
- C. The state governments are required to share some powers and revenue with local government bodies.
- D. No seats are reserved in the elected bodies for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward classes.

- (a) B and C (b) A and C
- (c) A and D (d) B and D

(ii) Which among the following is not a part of the three tier system of Panchayati Raj?

- (a) Village Panchayat (b) Municipalities
- (c) Block Samiti (d) Zila Parishad

(iii) Which of the following system is established on the basis of the direct election?

- (a) Gram Panchayat (b) Block Committee
- (c) Zila Parishad (d) Both (b) and (c)

(iv) What was the main purpose behind bringing the Panchayati Raj System in India?

- (a) To Prevent criminalisation of politics
- (b) Development of villages
- (c) Decentralisation of the political power to the general peoples
- (d) To reduce election expenses



ANSWERS

Multiple Choice Questions

1. (a) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (b) 5. (d) 6. (b) 7. (d) 8. (d) 9. (a) 10. (a)
11. (d) 12. (c) 13. (c) 14. (b) 15. (d) 16. (d) 17. (d) 18. (c) 19. (c) 20. (b)
21. (d) 22. (a) 23. (a) 24. (a) 25. (b) 26. (a) 27. (a) 28. (a) 29. (a) 30. (a)
31. (c) 32. (d)

Assertion/Reasoning MCQs

33. (b) 34. (b) 35. (b) 36. (c) 37. (c)

Case Based MCQs

Passage 1

- (i) (a) (ii) (d) (iii) (b) (iv) (d)

Passage 2

- (i) (a) (ii) (b) (iii) (b) (iv) (c)

Passage 3

- (i) (c) (ii) (b) (iii) (a) (iv) (c)

Passage 4

- (i) (c) (ii) (b) (iii) (a) (iv) (c)

EXPLANATIONS

- 32.** Subjects like police, agriculture, irrigation, trade and commerce are included in State List.
- 33.** The power of a large country is divided between constituent states and national government. The Central Government is more powerful than the states. Thus, the reason is not appropriate as per the given assertion.
- 34.** Many states in India are internally diverse. There is thus a need for power sharing within these states. Federal power sharing in India needs another tier of government, below that of the State Governments. This is the rationale for decentralisation of power. Thus, resulted a third-tier government, called local government. Thus, both statements are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- 35.** In rural local government all the panchayat samiti or mandals in a district together constitute the zilla parishad. Zilla parishad chairperson is the political head of it, similarly local bodies exist for urban area as well. Municipalities are set up in towns. In a municipal corporation such an officer is called the mayor. Thus, the reason is not appropriate as per the given assertion.
- 36.** Hindi is identified as official language of India. However, it is spoken by only 40% of Indians. Thus, to safeguard the rights of other linguistic communities, 21 other languages were recognised as scheduled languages by the Constitution.
- 37.** The third tier of government basically work at a local level through decentralisation. It helped in making democracy stronger at the grass-root level. Thus, the reason is false but assertion stands true.

