

⊗ Introduction :- Federalism is a system of government in which the power is divided between a central authority & various constituent units of country. The power is shared among the central government & various states, regional & local governments.

⊗ Features of Federalism :-

① Two or More Levels of Government :- Usually a federal government has two levels. One is the govt for the entire country & the other govt at the state or provincial level. In some countries, there is a third level also.

② Same Citizens Separate Jurisdiction :- Different tiers of the government govern the same citizens. But each tier has its own jurisdiction in specific matters of legislation, taxation & administration.

③ Superiority of Constitution :- The jurisdiction of the different levels of the govt are specified in the constitution.

④ Rigid Constitution :- 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 the govt.



## ⑤ Supreme Authority of the Courts :- Courts

have the power to interpret the Constitution & the powers of different levels of the govt. The highest court acts as an umpire in case of disputes arising between different levels of the govt.

## ⑥ India is a Federal Country :- ① India emerged as independent nation after partition in 1947. The Constitution declared India as a Union of States.

- ② The Constitution originally provided two-tier system of govt : the central govt & the state govt. Later, a third tier of govt was added in the form of Panchayats & Municipalities.
- ③ The different tiers enjoy separate jurisdiction. The Union govt makes laws on the subjects mentioned in the Union List & the state govt makes laws on subjects mentioned in the State List.
- ④ Both Union & state govt work independently. Union govt is more powerful.
- ⑤ Any changes to Constitution has to be first passed both houses of Parliament with at least two third majority. Then it has to be ratified by the legislatures of at least half of the total states.
- ⑥ In case of any dispute between state & centre, the High Courts & the Supreme Courts have to make a decision.



⑦ The Union & the State governments have the power to raise resources by levying taxes in order to carry on the governments.

⑧ Division of Powers Between the States & the Centre:-

① Union List :- It includes subjects of national importance. Union list includes defence, foreign affairs, banking, currency & communication.

② State List :- It includes matter of state level importance. It contains matter such as police, trade, agriculture, commerce & irrigation.

③ Concurrent List :- It includes those subjects which are of common interest of both the central & state governments. It includes matter such as education, forest, marriage & trade unions.

④ Residuary Subjects :- The subjects which are not included in any of these three lists, are included in residuary subjects. They contain subjects like computer software that came up after constitution was made. According to the constitution, the Union govt has the right to legislate on these residuary subjects also.

⑨ Language Policy of India :- ① The Constitution of India did not give the status of national language to any one language. Hindi was identified as the official language. But Hindi is the mother tongue of only about 40% of Indians. Besides Hindi, there are 21 scheduled languages by our constitution.



② According to Constitution, the use of English for official purposes was to be stopped in 1965. Many non-Hindi speaking states demanded that the use of English should continue. The central govt then took a decision to continue the use of English along with Hindi for official purposes. Thus, the govt does not follow a policy of imposing Hindi on non-Hindi speaking states.

⊛ Linguistic States :- ① The boundaries of several old states were changed in 1947 & new states were created on the basis of languages. This was done to ensure that people who speak the same language lived in the same state.

② The formation of linguistic states has actually made the country more united.

③ It has also made the administration of a state easier.

⊛ Decentralisation :- When the power is taken away from the central & the state govt and is given to local govt, it is called decentralisation.

⊛ Need of Decentralisation :- ① There are a large number of problems & issues which can be solved best at local level. People have a better knowledge of problems in their locality.

② At the local level, it is possible for the people to directly participate in decision making. Local govt is the best way to realise the important principle of democracy namely local self-government.



⊗ Steps Taken Towards Decentralisation :- A major step towards decentralisation was taken in 1992. The Constitution was amended to make third-tier of the govt more powerful & effective. It was made for the following objectives :

- ① To provide 3-tier system of the Panchayati Raj for all the states having population of over 20 lakhs.
- ② To hold panchayat elections regularly over a lapse of every 5 years.
- ③ To provide 3-tier of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes & other Backward Classes.
- ④ To appoint State Election Commission to conduct panchayat & municipal elections.
- ⑤ The state governments are required to share some powers & revenue with local government bodies. The nature of sharing varies from state to state.
- ⑥ One-third seats are reserved for woman.

⊗ 'Holding Together' Federations :- ① When a large country divides its powers between the states & the national govt, it is known as 'holding together' federations.

- ② Central govt tends to be more powerful.
- ③ Different constituent units have unequal powers. Examples of such countries are : India, Spain & Belgium



- ⊗ 'Coming Together' Federation :- ① When independent states come on their own to form a bigger unit so that by pooling in their sovereignty, they can increase their security.
- ② All the constituent units have equal powers. Examples of such countries are: USA, Australia, Switzerland

⊗ Working of Rural Local Government / Features of Third Tier of Government :-

- ① Each village or group of villages in some states has a gram panchayat. This is a council consisting of members & its president is called Sarpanch.
- ② They are directly elected by the adult population living in that ward or village.
- ③ The Panchayats work under the supervision of Gram Sabha. All the voters in the village are its members.
- ④ It has to meet at least twice or thrice in a year to approve the annual budget of the Gram Panchayat & to review its importance.
- ⑤ The local government structure goes right up to the district level. A few gram panchayats are grouped together to form Panchayat Samiti or Block or Mandal.



⑥ The members of this representative body are elected by all the panchayat members in that area. All the panchayat samitis or mandals in a district together constitute the Zila Parishad. Zila Parishad is the political head of the Zila Parishad.

⊗ Advantages of Local Self Government :- ① The local authority understands the problems to the ground level.

② It has made the country more united & stronger.

③ It has also made the administration easier.

⊗ Difficulties Faced By Local Self Government :-

(i) They are not free to take all the decisions

(ii) There is a shortage of resources.

(iii) Elections are not held regularly.

⊗ Centre - State Relations :-

① Before 1990 :- Except for once, the Congress ruled at the centre for about 40 years. These were the years when the single party made the government. The govt at the centre ruled the states with biased views. It supported those states which had a government formed by the same party. The govt at many occasions dismissed the state governments formed by other parties in the name of law & order situations. In other words, the centre dictated the states & the states had no alternatives except to follow the centre.



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② After 1990 :- This was the beginning of the era of coalition governments at the centre. Since, no single party got a clear majority in the Lok Sabha, major national parties had to enter an alliance with many small regional parties. This led to a new culture of power sharing & respect for the autonomy of state government.

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

⊗ Some Sub-Political Units of India Have a Special Status :-

- (i) All British ruled regions have same status.
- (ii) All princely states that have voluntarily joined have the same status as British ruled territory.
- (iii) French & Portuguese ruled territories were given the status of Union Territory.
- (iv) Jammu & Kashmir joined India on special condition.