

# Civics Class 10 Important Question Chapter 2 Federalism

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**1. “Belgium shifted from a unitary to a federal form of government”. What key changes were brought in the political system under the above mentioned shift ?**

**Answer:** (i) Many powers of the central government were given to state governments of the two regions of the country.

(ii) The regional governments were given constitutional powers that were no longer dependent on the central government.

(iii) Apart from the central government and the state government there is a third kind of government known as community government. This government has the power regarding cultural, educational and language related issues.

**2. “Federations are contrasted with unitary governments”. Explain by giving examples from Sri Lanka and Belgium.**

**Answer:** Under the unitary system, either there is 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 or the Local government. For example in Sri Lanka is a unitary country and the Union government passed a new law stipulating that the state shall protect and foster Buddhism. Whereas under federal system, the Central government cannot order the State government to do something. State government has powers of its own for which it is not answerable to the Central government. Both these governments are separately answerable to the people.

**3. Mention any three features of an ideal federal system.**

**Answer:** (i) The federal system which safeguards and promotes unity of the country, while at the same time accommodates regional diversity.

(ii) 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.

(iii) An ideal federal system has both aspects : mutual trust and agreement to live together.

**4. Mention any two subjects which are included in the union list. Explain by giving reasons why these are included in the union list.**

**Answer:** Defence and foreign affairs.

Reasons:

(i) These are subjects of national importance.

(ii) We need a uniform policy on these matters throughout the country.

**5. 'All states in the Indian Union do not have identical powers. Justify. –**

**Answer :** (i) Some states like Jammu and Kashmir has its own Constitution.  
(ii) Many provisions of the Indian Constitution are not applicable to this State without the approval of the State Assembly.  
(iii) Indians who are not permanent residents of this State cannot buy land or house here. Similar special provisions exist for some other States of India as well.

**6. "Federal power sharing is more effective today than it was in the early years after the Constitution came into force". Explain.**

**Or**

**How is federal power sharing more effective today than in the early years? Explain.**

**Answer:** (i) Centre-State relations: 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. The Central Government has been misusing the Constitution to dismiss the State governments that were controlled by rival parties. This undermined the spirit of federalism. All this changed significantly after 1990. This period saw the rise of regional political parties in many states of the country.

(ii) Coalition Governments and autonomy of states: The era of coalition has changed the relationship between the centre and state governments 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. This led to a new culture of power sharing and respect for the autonomy of State Governments.

(iii) Judgement of the Supreme Court: The Supreme Court of India has established strict guidelines for imposing President's rule. With new guidelines it is very difficult for the Central Government to dismiss state governments in an arbitrary manner. Thus, federal power sharing is more effective today than it was in the early years after the Constitution came into force.

**7. 'The sharing of power between the Union government and the state governments is basic to the structure of the Indian Constitution'. Explain.**

**Answer:** (i) Under a federal government, the fundamental provisions cannot be unilaterally changed by one level of the government and the same is true for India,  
(ii) The Parliament cannot on its own change the fundamental structure of the Constitution. Any change in it has to be first passed by both the Houses of the Parliament with at least two-third majority. Then it has to be ratified by the legislatures of at least half of the total states.

## 8. Mention any four features of federalism.

Or

### Explain four features of the federal form of government.

**Answer:** (i) The power is divided between a central authority and its various constituent units.

(ii) Different tiers of the government govern the same citizens.

(iii) The fundamental provisions of the government cannot be unilaterally changed by one level of government.

(iv) It has a dual objective, i.e., to safeguard and promote the unity of the country, and also to accommodate the regional diversity.

## 9. “There is a need for power sharing within the states”. Explain.

**Answer:** (i) A vast country like India cannot be run only through these two-tiers. States in India are as large as independent countries of Europe. In terms of population, Uttar Pradesh is bigger than Russia, Maharashtra is about as big as Germany.

(ii) Many of Indian states are internally very diverse. There is thus a need for power sharing within these states.

(iii) The third tier is also required to principle of decentralisation of power.

## 10. Mention any four difficulties of the local government in India.

**Answer:** (i) Most states have not transferred significant powers to the local governments.

(ii) There is a shortage of resources.

(iii) Elections are not held regularly.

(iv) The Gram Sabhas are not held regularly.

## 11. What are the advantages of local governments?

**Answer:** (i) Constitutional status for local government has helped to deepen democracy in our country.

(ii) It has also increased women’s representation and voice in our democracy.

(iii) This allows people to directly participate in decision making.

(iv) Local people have better ideas and knowledge about the local problems.

## 12. Explain two achievements and two difficulties of the local self-governments in India.

**Answer:** Achievements:

(i) It has made the country more united and stronger.

(ii) It has also made the administration easier.

Difficulties:

- (i) There is a shortage of resources.
- (ii) Elections are not held regularly.

**13. What is Gram Sabha? Mention its functions.**

**Answer:** Every adult of the village who is 18 years of age constitute the Gram Sabha.

- (i) It is the decision-making body of the entire village.
- (ii) The village Panchayat works under the supervision of the Gram Sabha.
- (iii) It approves the annual budget of the Gram Panchayat.

**14. What is a Panchayati Raj? What is its importance?**

**Answer:** The rural local government is known as the Panchayati Raj.

Importance:

- (i) It helps the people to directly participate in decision-making.
- (ii) It helps in the decentralisation of power.
- (iii) It reduces the burden of the central government.

**15. Which is the highest tier of the Panchayati Raj ? Explain its composition.**

**Answer:** The highest institution of the Panchayati Raj in rural areas is the Zila Parishad. The Zila Parishad coordinates the activities of all the Block Samitis in the whole district. Most members of the Zila Parishad are elected. Members of the Lok Sabha and the MLAs of that district along with some other officials of other district level bodies are also its members. The Zila Parishad's Chairperson is the political head of the Zila Parishad.

**16. Define:**

- (a) Gram Panchayat
- (b) Panchayat Samiti
- (c) Zila Parishad
- (d) Mayor

**Answer:** (a) It is a council consisting of several ward members, often called the Panch and a president or a Sarpanch.

(b) A few Gram Panchayats are grouped together to form a Panchayat Samiti or Block or a Mandal.

(c) All the Panchayat Samitis or Mandals in a district together constitute the Zila Parishad.

(d) A Mayor is an elected Chairperson of the Municipal Corporation.

**17. What is a Concurrent List?**

**Answer:** The Concurrent List comprises of the subjects which are of common concern both to the centre and the state governments. Ordinarily both the central and the state governments can frame laws on these subjects. However, if there is a conflict between the central law and the state law, over a subject in the Concurrent List, the central law would be effective. This List includes subjects like criminal and civil procedure, marriage and divorce, education, economic planning, trade unions etc. The Concurrent List has 47 subjects.

### **Long Answer Type Questions (5 Marks)**

**1. Explain the major key features of federalism.**

**Or**

**Describe any four features of the federalism.**

**Answer:** (i) Two or more levels of government :

Federalism is a system of government in which the governmental power is divided between a central authority and its various constituent units. Usually, a federation has two levels of government. One is the government for the entire country, and the other governments at the state or provincial level.

(ii) 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 and administration.

(iii) Superiority of Constitution : The jurisdictions of the respective levels or tiers of the government are specified in the Constitution. So the existence and authority of each tier of the government are constitutionally safeguarded.

(iv) Rigid Constitution : The fundamental provisions of the Constitution cannot be unilaterally changed by one level of the government. Such changes require the consent of the both the levels of the government.

(v) Supreme authority of the courts : Courts have the power to interpret the Constitution, and the powers of different levels of the government. The highest court acts as an umpire in case of disputes arising between different levels of the government in the exercise of their respective powers, (of) Dual objectives : The federal system, thus has dual objectives : to safeguard and promote the unity of the country, while at the same time, to accommodate the regional diversity.

**2. 'India is a federal country.' Explain by giving examples.**

**Or**

**Explain the three fold distribution of legislative powers between the Union**

## **Government and the State Governments.**

**Or**

**Mention any five main features which make India a federal country.**

**Answer:** (i) Division of powers: The Constitution demarcates the powers of the central and the state governments into different lists of subjects. There are three lists :

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

(ii) Three-tier system : As discussed earlier, under a federal government different tiers of the government govern the same citizens. This is true for India. In India, we have a three-tier system of government, i.e.,

- Union Government
- State Government
- Local Self-Government.

(iii) Not equal powers to all administrative units : Most of the federations that are formed by 'holding together' do not give equal powers to its constituent units. Thus, all states in the Indian Union do not have identical powers. Some states enjoy a special status. Jammu and Kashmir has its own Constitution. Many provisions of the Indian Constitution are not applicable to this state without the permission of the state assembly.

(iv) Consent of both the levels of the government : Under a federal government, the fundamental provisions cannot be unilaterally changed by one level of the government, and the same is true for India. The Parliament cannot on its own change the fundamental structure of the Constitution.

implementation of constitutional provisions and procedures. The same is true for India. In case of any dispute about the division of powers, the High Courts and the Supreme Court take a decision.

(v) Separate sources of income : A clear mention regarding the financial powers of the centre and the states 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 government.

**3. How is federalism practised in India ? Explain.**

**Or**

**'The real success of federalism in India can be attributed to the nature of democratic politics in India.' Explain.**

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

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

(iii) Centre-State relations : Improving the Centre-State relations is one more way in which federalism has been strengthened in practice. Though Indian Constitution has demarcated the powers of the Union and the state governments but still the Union government can have influence over the state in many ways.

In the past, the Central government has often misused the Constitution to dismiss the state governments that were controlled by rival parties. This undermined the spirit of federalism, and that of democracy. The judiciary has played a major role in improving the autonomy of the state governments because many a time, it has rescued state governments which were dismissed in an arbitrary manner.

**4. “The creation of linguistic states was the first and major test for democratic politics in our country.” Justify this statement.**

**Answer:** In 1947, the boundaries of several old States of India were changed in order to create new States. This was done to ensure that people who spoke the same language lived in the same State. Some States were created not on the basis of language but to recognize differences based on culture, ethnicity or geography. These include States like Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand. When the demand for the formation of States on the basis of language was raised, some national leaders feared that it would lead to the disintegration of the country. The Central Government resisted linguistic States for some time. But the experience has shown that the formation of linguistic States has actually made the country more united. It has also made administration easier.

**5. Explain how law making powers are shared between centre and states in India ? Mention three subjects each of Union List and State List.**

**Or**

**Describe the division of power between the central and the state governments in India.**

**Or**

**How are the powers divided between the states and centre? Explain with examples.**

**Answer:** 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 subjects 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 this list. If their laws conflict with each other, the law made by the Union Government will prevail.

(i) Under a federal government, the fundamental provisions cannot be unilaterally changed by one level of the government and the same is true for India,

(ii) The Parliament cannot on its own change the fundamental structure of the Constitution. Any change in it has to be first passed by both Houses of the 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. 'Most federations that are formed by 'holding together' do not give equal power to its constituent units.' Is it true for India? Explain.**

**Or**

**"Holding together federations" do not give equal power to its constituent units. Explain the statement with the help of examples in context to India.**

**Answer:** Yes, the above statement is true for India.

(i) All states in the Indian Union do not have identical powers. Some states enjoy a special status. Jammu and Kashmir has its own Constitution. Many provisions of the Indian Constitution are not applicable to this state without the permission of the state assembly. Indians who are not permanent residents of this state cannot buy land or house here.

(ii) Similar special provisions exist for Assam and the hill states of North-East India.

(iii) There are some units of Indian Union which enjoy very little power. These are areas which are too small to become an independent state but which could not be merged with any of the existing states. These areas, like Chandigarh, or Lakshadweep or the capital city of Delhi, are called the Union Territories. These territories do not have the powers of a state. The central government has special powers in running these areas.

**7. Why were the linguistic states created? What are their advantages?**

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

(ii) Common culture, ethnicity or geography: Some States were created not on the basis of



language but to recognise differences based on culture, ethnicity or geography. These include States like Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand.

**Advantages:**

- The experience has shown that the formation of linguistic States has actually made the country, more united. It has also made administration easier.

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

**Or**

**Write any four characteristics of language policy of India.**

**Or**

**Describe in brief the language policy of India.**

**Answer:** (i) No National Language: Our Constitution did not give the status of national language to any one language. Hindi was identified as the official language. But Hindi is the mother tongue of only about 40 per cent of Indians. Therefore, there were many safeguards to protect other languages.

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

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

(iv) Language policy of Sri Lanka: In 1956, an Act was passed by the Sri Lankan government to recognise Sinhala as the only official language whereas in case of India the government agreed to continue the use of English along with Hindi for official purposes.

**9. 'Restructuring the Centre-State relations is an important way in which the Indian Federalism has been strengthened in practice.' Explain.**

**Answer:** (i) After 90s, many regional political parties have emerged in many states of the country.

(ii) The regional parties are playing a very vital role in forming the Union government.

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

**10. Point out one feature in the practice of federalism in India that is similar to any one feature that is different from that of Belgium.**

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

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

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

**11. What is decentralisation? What is the importance or need for decentralisation?**

**Or**

**“Do you take decentralisation as a mean to minimise the conflicts ?” Give your view point.**

**Answer:** When power is taken away from the Central and State governments, and given to the Local governments, it is called decentralisation.

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

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

**12. Name the three tier government system in India. What steps have been taken by the government to make the third tier more powerful and effective ?**

**Or**

**How has the third tier of government in our country been made more effective and powerful by the Constitutional Amendment of 1992 ?**

**Or**

**Explain any four provisions that have been made towards decentralisation in India after the constitutional amendment in 1992.**

**Answer:** Three tier system :

1. Union Government
2. State Governments
3. Local Governments.

**Steps :**

- Now, it is constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to the local government bodies.
- Seats are reserved in the elected bodies and the executive heads of these institutions for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Backward Classes.
- At least one-third of all positions are reserved for women.
- An independent institution called the State Election Commission has been created in each state to conduct free and fair elections for the panchayat and the municipalities.
- The State governments are required to share some powers and revenue with the Local government bodies. The nature of sharing varies from state to state.

**13. Explain the advantages of decentralisation.**

**Or**

**Explain any four features of the third tier of government.**

**Or**

**Explain how the federal experiment has been successful in the matter of formation of states in India.**

**Or**

**Give two arguments in favour of decentralisation of powers to local governments.**

**Give two provisions under the amendment of 1992 which empowers local governments in India.**

**OR**

**Assess the need for local government.**

**Answer:** (i) Locals have better knowledge : 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.

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

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

their vote, which is the very foundation of democracy.

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

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

### **HOTs Questions and Answers**

**1. Some subjects have been mentioned below. Categorise them into Union List, State List and Concurrent List.**

**(i) Education (ii) Currency (iii) Police (iv) Forest (v) Banking (vi) Communication**

**Answer:** (a) Union List – Currency, Banking and Communication.

(b) State List – Police

(c) Concurrent List – Education, Forest

**2. How is the Indian federal system different from that of Sri Lanka ? Explain by giving three examples.**

**Answer:** (i) Sri Lanka believes in majoritarianism whereas in India equal rights are given to minorities.

(ii) In Sri Lanka, Sinhala is the only official language, whereas in India though Hindi is the official language but along with Hindi, 21 other languages have been recognised as Scheduled Languages.

(iii) In Sri Lanka, the government protects and fosters Buddhism, whereas India is a secular country.

**3. Explain how the federal experiment has been successful in the matter of formation of states in India.**

**Answer:** (i) The federal experiment had been successful in matter of formation of states in India because of the nature of the democratic politics of the country.

(ii) Earlier, when the demand for the formation of linguistic states was raised, some national leaders feared that it would lead to the disintegration of the country.

(iii) But the experience has shown that the formation of linguistic states has actually made the country more united.

(iv) It has also made administration easier.

(v) Linguistic States : After independence, the boundaries of many old states of India were

changed in order to create new states to ensure that people who spoke the same language, lived in one state. For example, Gujarati-speaking Gujarat and Marathi speaking Maharashtra.

(vi) Cultural States : Some states were created to recognize differences of culture, ethnicity and geography, e.g., Nagaland, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand.

#### **4. Critically analyse the Centre-State relations prior to 1990 and after. [CBSE 2013]**

**Answer:** (i) Prior to 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.

(ii) The government at the centre ruled the states with biased views. It supported those states which had a government formed by the same party. The government at many occasions dismissed the state governments formed by other parties in the name of law and order situations. In other words, the centre dictated the states and the states had no alternative except to follow the centre.

(iii) The rise of regional politics in many states has changed the Centre-State relations significantly after 1990. This was also the beginning of the era of coalition governments at the centre.

(iv) Since, no single party got a clear majority in the Lok Sabha, major national parties had to enter into an alliance with many small regional parties. Hence, regional parties do take care of their states.

(v) This led to a new culture of power sharing and respect for the autonomy of state government. It became difficult for the central government to dismiss state governments in an arbitrary manner.

#### **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 2012]**

**Answer:** (1) India became a 'Union of states' because it consisted of both British ruled territories as well as many princely states.

(2) 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 and Portuguese ruled territories were given the status of Union Territory.

(iv) Jammu & Kashmir joined India on special condition.

#### **6. What is the rationale for decentralization of power ? Describe the functions of Rural Local Government.**

**Answer:** (1) (i) The rationale behind decentralisation is 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'.

(2) Following are the functions of the rural local government :

(i) Supply of water for domestic use.

(ii) Maintaining public health and sanitation.

(iii) Construction and repairing of public roads.

(iv) Lighting on roads and public places.

(v) Construction, repairing and maintaining public buildings, grazing lands, forest, public wells and tanks in good conditions.