

What is Federalism?

To put it simply, Federalism can be referred to as a form of government which comprises of a division of power between the central authority and several other units of government such as states. While studying our Federalism Class 10 notes, you must also go through the prominent levels of government in a nation following this concept. In a federal country, there are two significant government levels, and each enjoys multiple powers that are independent of one another. These two levels of a federal government are:

1. The central government is responsible for handling issues that concern the entire nation.
2. The state governments look after the day-to-day administration of individual states/provinces.

Objectives of Federalism

The next concept you must explore through our Federalism class 10 notes is the objectives of Federalism which are as follows:

- To advance and protect the unity of a nation
- To support regional diversity in a country

Difference Between Unitary System and Federal System

The class 10 chapter on Federalism also notes that there is a crucial difference between the unitary system of government and the federal system of government. Take a look at the major differences between these two systems of government:

Unitary System	Federal System
In this system, the government's powers are centralized. If there are sub-units under the central government, they are under the control of the centre.	There are two or more tiers of government that function independently.
The centre can pass orders or commands to the sub-units.	The centre cannot issue commands to the state governments.

The central government is supreme and can narrow or broaden the powers of the sub-units.

The state governments function independently and are not answerable to the centre.

Features of Federalism

While summarizing this chapter of Class 10 social science, you must also prepare the study notes on the salient features of Federalism which are enlisted below:

- It is comprised of two or more levels of government.
- Both central and state governments govern the same set of the same citizens, but the level has varying powers in some issues like administration, taxation, and legislation.
- The constitution guarantees the authority of each tier.
- Any single tier of government does not hold the authority to change or alter the fundamental powers of the constitution of a federal country (unilaterally) but an agreement will be needed from both sides to modify any such fundamental power or right.
- The courts have the authority to interpret the powers of different government tiers to ensure that they don't change the constitution.
- The constitution specifies sources of revenue for both levels of government. This ensures the financial autonomy of both tiers.

Formation of Federations

The next sub-topic we have summarized in our Federalism Class 10 notes is the methods by which federations are formed. To ensure the success of federations, there need to be two critical factors: mutual trust between the different government tiers and a willingness to live together. Historically, federations have been formed in two different ways:

- Independent states are coming together on their own accord to form a bigger country. This type of federation was established in Australia, Switzerland, and the USA.
- A large country decides to divide power between the national government and constituent states. Examples of this type of federation include India, Belgium, and Spain.

What makes India a Federal Country?

A crucial question asked in this chapter on Federalism in Class 10 Social Science is what makes India a federal country. As per the Indian constitution, the nation follows a three-fold distribution of legislative powers. The distribution of powers between the union and state governments is what makes India a federal country. In India, there are three lists divided between the centre and state governments, i.e.

1. Union List: It includes areas of national importance like defence, foreign affairs, currency, banking, and communications. The union government holds the powers to make laws on the regions mentioned in the union list.
2. State List: It includes areas of state-level and local importance like agriculture, trade, commerce, irrigation, and police. The state government alone has the power to make laws regarding the subjects on this list.
3. Concurrent List: It includes subjects that are of common interest to both the central and state governments. It includes trade unions, forest, education, marriage, succession, and adoption. Both the centre and state can make laws on these subjects. If there is a conflict, the laws made by the centre will prevail.

How is Federalism Practised in India?

Another important section covered under the study notes for Federalism in Class 10 Social Science is how it is actually practised in India. Here are some of the challenges for how federalism is exercised in the country.

Formation of Linguistic States

From the time of independence, several new states have been formed in India. A vast majority of India's states are created to include people who speak the same language and belong to the same region. These states are known as linguistic states. Examples include Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, etc.

Language Policy

Besides Hindi, 21 languages are recognized by the constitutions as Scheduled Languages. Though Hindi is recognized as the official language by the union government, states have their official language. Government work in countries takes place in the official language of the state.

Center-state Relations

If no single party gets a majority in the Lok Sabha elections, major national parties ally with regional parties to form the union government. This led to the practice of

power-sharing between the centre and states while respecting state governments' autonomy.

Decentralization in India: Power for Local Governments

The Class 10 chapter on Federalism also elaborates the essential aspects of Decentralization which plays a key role in empowering local government. The practice of taking power away from the union and state governments and giving it to local governments is called decentralization. The objective behind devolution is that most issues and problems can be resolved better at the local level. This way, local citizens can directly participate in decision making. In 1992, the constitution was amended to make way for a third-tier of democracy. The key features of the third-tier as per the constitution are:

- Periodic elections must be held mandatorily to fill up positions in the various local government bodies.
- One-third of all local-government positions are reserved for women.
- The State Election Commission was created in each state to hold municipal and Panchayat level elections.
- A percentage of the position of executive heads in local elections is reserved for SC, ST, and other backward classes.
- State governments are required to share revenue and powers with local government bodies. The percentage of revenue sharing varies from state to state.

Panchayati Raj: What is it and how does it work?

While studying our Class 10 Federalism notes, you must also understand the participation of Panchayati Raj in the functioning of the Federal Indian government. Panchayati Raj is the term given to rural governments in India. These are local governments, and each village has a setup known as Gram Panchayat.

- Gram Panchayat is a council that includes several local members known as panch and a president known as sarpanch. The panch and sarpanch are elected by the adults of the village/ward. The Gram Panchayat is responsible for making decisions for the entire village.
- The Gram Sabha does the supervision of the Panchayat. All adults of voting age in a village form the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha meets at least twice or thrice in a year to approve the Panchayat budget and review its performance.
- Several Gram Panchayats are clubbed together to form a Panchayat Samiti, Mandal, or Block. All Panchayat members in a region elect the members of the Panchayat Samiti.

- The Panchayat Samitis in a district is grouped to form the Zilla Parishad. MLAs of the areas, MPs of the district, and other district-level officials constitute the Zilla Parishad.

Municipalities

Just like Gram Panchayats work in rural areas, municipalities are responsible for the urban regions' administration. Big cities have municipal corporations. Elected bodies of representatives control municipal corporations and municipalities – like MPs, MLAs, councillors, etc. The political head of the municipality is the Municipal Chairperson. The head of a municipal corporation is the Mayor. The system of a decentralized local government is the biggest democracy experiment in the world. Local governments have helped in strengthening the functioning of democracy in India while supporting women and citizens belonging to SC/ST and other backward classes to gain a voice in the democratic process.

Important Questions

Now that you are familiar with the major concepts of Federalism and how it is practised in India, take a look at the important exam questions you must prepare for Class 10 Social Science exam:

- Identify the following states on a blank political map of India: Chhattisgarh, Goa, Manipur, and Sikkim.
- Identify any three federal countries in the world (other than India). Shade them on a blank political world map.
- State the differences between a federal government and a unitary government.
- What are the prominent features of Federalism?
- Describe the key factors of how Federalism is practised in India.

Thus, we hope that our Federalism Class 10 notes help you understand the key concepts explored in this chapter. Unsure about the right stream after 10th? Get in touch with our **Leverage Edu** experts and we will assist you in selecting the best stream of study as per your interests and preferences. Sign up for a free session with us today!