

## Very Short Answer Questions

**Q. 1. How was Belgian government shifted from a unitary to federal form of government?**

**Ans.** One of the key changes made in the constitution of Belgium was to reduce the powers of Central government and to give these powers to the regional governments. The regional governments were given constitutional powers that were no longer dependent on the Central Government. Thus, Belgium shifted from a unitary to federal form of government.

**Q. 2. What form of government was existing in Sri Lanka?**

**Ans.** Sri Lanka continues to be for all practical purposes, a unitary system where the national government has all the powers. Tamil leaders want Sri Lanka to become a federal system.

**Q. 3. What is 'Federalism'?**

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

**Q. 4. Who has power to make law?**

**Ans.** Legislature or Parliament makes Laws.

**Q. 5. What is 'Unitary System'?**

**Ans.** 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.

**Q. 6. What is Federal system of Government?**

**Ans.** In a 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.

**Q. 7. What does 'Jurisdiction' mean?**

**Ans.** The area over which government has legal authority. The area may be defined in terms of geographical boundaries or in terms of certain kinds of subjects.

**Q. 8. How can you say that, 'Each tier of government has its own Jurisdiction?'**

**Ans.** The jurisdiction of the respective levels or tiers of government are specified in the constitution. So, the existence and authority of each tier of government is constitutionally guaranteed.

**Q. 9. What is the role of courts in our Constitution?**

**Ans.** Courts have the power to interpret the Constitution and the power of different levels of government. The highest court acts as an umpire if disputes arise between different levels of government in the exercise of their respective powers.

**Q. 10. How is financial autonomy of each tier of government ensured?**

**Ans.** Sources of revenue for each level of government are clearly specified in the Constitution to ensure their financial autonomy.

**Q. 11. What are the dual objectives of a federal system?**

**Ans.** The dual objectives of the federal system are to safeguard and promote unity of the country and at the same time accommodate regional diversity.

**Q. 12. Which two aspects are crucial for the practice of Federalism?**

**Ans. (i)** Government at different levels should agree to some rules of power sharing.

**(ii)** They should also trust that each would abide by its part of the agreement.

**Q. 13. What is 'coming together federation'?**

**Ans.** When independent states coming together on their own, form a bigger unit, so that by pooling sovereignty and retaining identity, they can increase their security, this is called 'coming together federation'.

**Q. 14. Explain the term 'holding together federation'?**

**Ans.** When a large country decides to divide its power between the constituent states and the national government, it is called 'holding together federation'.

**Q. 15. What are the examples of coming together federation?**

**Ans.** USA, Switzerland and Australia. In it, all the constituent states, usually have equal powers and are strong.

**Q. 16. What are the examples of holding together federation?**

**Ans.** India, Spain and Belgium are examples of holding together federations. In it, the central government tends to be more powerful vis-à-vis the states.

**Q. 17. What was originally two tier system of government according to Indian Constitution?**

**Ans.** The Constitution originally provided for a two-tier system of government, the Union Government or what we call the Central Government representing the Union of India and the State governments.

**Q. 18. Which third tier was added later on the system of Indian Government?**

**Ans.** A third tier of Federalism was added in the form of Panchayats and Municipalities.

**Q. 19. Which subjects are included in the union list?**

**Ans.** Union list includes subjects of national importance such as defence, foreign affairs, banking, communication and currency.

**Q. 20. Why are these subjects included in the union list?**

**Ans.** They are included in this list because we need a uniform policy on these matters throughout the country. The union government also can make laws relating to these subjects in the union list.

**Q. 21. Which subjects are included in the state list?**

**Ans.** State list contains subjects of state and local importance such as police, trade, commerce, agriculture and irrigation.

**Q. 22. Give the subjects of Concurrent List.**

**Ans.** The Concurrent list includes subjects of common interest to both the union government as well as the state government, such as education, forests, trade unions, marriage, adoption and succession. Both the union as well as the state governments can make laws on these subjects.

**Q. 23. What happens, if there is a conflict in the decision of state and Central Government?**

**Ans.** Both the governments can make laws. If their laws conflict with each other, the law made by the Union Government will prevail.

**Q. 24. What are residuary Subjects?**

**Ans.** Subjects which do not fall into any of the three lists. In this subjects like computer software and its related issues are included. Only Union Government has the power to legislate on these subjects.

**Q. 25. Is it true that all states in the Indian Union do not have identical powers? Explain.**

**Ans.** It is true since some states of India 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 approval of the State Assembly. Similar special provisions exist for some other states of India as well.

**Q. 26. What are 'Union Territories'?**

**Ans.** These areas are too small to become an independent state but they could not be merged with any of the existing states. These areas are called Union Territories. These territories do not have the power of the state. The Central Government runs these areas.

**Q. 27. Name the Union Territories of India.**

**Ans.** Chandigarh, Lakshadweep Islands, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Puducherry and Capital city of Delhi.

**Q. 28. Is it easy to make changes in the power sharing arrangement of India? Explain.**

**Ans.** No. It is not easy to make changes in the power sharing arrangements of India. The Parliament cannot on its own change this arrangement.

**Q. 29. How are changes made in power sharing arrangement of a country?**

**Ans.** Any change to it has to be first passed by both the Houses of Parliament with atleast two-thirds majority. Then it has to be ratified by the legislatures of at least half of the total states.

**Q. 30. What is the role of judiciary in power sharing arrangement?**

**Ans.** The judiciary plays an important role in overseeing the implementation of constitutional provisions and procedures. In case of any dispute about the division of powers, the High Courts and the Supreme Court make a decision.

**Q. 31. What is the reason for real success of federalism in India?**

**Ans.** The real success of federalism in India can be attributed to the nature of democratic politics in our country. This ensured that the spirit of federalism respect for diversity and desire for living together became a shared ideal in our country.

**Q. 32. How were the new states created in India after independence?**

**Ans.** 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.

**Q. 33. What was the fear in forming linguistic states in India?**

**Ans.** 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. But the experience has shown that the formation of linguistic states has actually made the country, more united.

**Q. 34. What is the language policy of India?**

**Ans.** Our Constitution did not give the status of national language to anyone language. Hindi was identified as the official language. Besides Hindi, there are 21 other languages recognised as Scheduled Languages by the Constitution.

**Q. 35. What are the official languages of the states?**

**Ans.** States have their own official languages. Much of the government work takes place in official language of the concerned state.

**Q. 36. How has English been added as second official language of India?**

**Ans.** 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 should continue. The central government responded by agreeing to continue the use of English along with Hindi for official purposes.

**Q. 37. Had promotion of Hindi shown any formation to the language? Explain.**

**Ans.** 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. Flexibility shown by Indian political leaders helped our country avoid the kind of situation that Sri Lanka faced.

**Q. 38. How does sharing power in reality depend on ruling parties and their leaders?**

**Ans.** For a long time, the same party ruled both at the centre and in most of the states. But when the ruling party at the state level was different, the parties that ruled at the Centre tried to undermine the powers of the state.

**Q. 39. What is a Coalition Government?**

**Ans.** When no single party gets 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.

**Q. 40. How does Coalition government lead to a new culture of power sharing?**

**Ans.** Coalition government led to a new culture of power sharing and respect for the autonomy of State Governments. This trend was supported by a major judgement of the Supreme Court that made it difficult for the Central Government to dismiss State Government in an arbitrary manner.

**Q. 41. What is the need for power sharing within the states?**

**Ans.** A vast country like India cannot be run only through two tiers. States in India are as large as independent countries of Europe. Many of these states are internally very diverse. Thus, there is a need of power sharing within the states.

**Q. 42. 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.

**Q. 43. What is the basic idea behind decentralisation?**

**Ans.** 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. 44. Why do we need local governments?**

**Ans.** Local 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.

**Q. 45. How is local government the best way to realise principle of democracy at grass root level?**

**Ans.** 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.

**Q. 46. When was the major step towards decentralisation taken in our country?**

**Ans.** A major step towards decentralisation was taken in 1992. The Constitution was amended to make the third tier of democracy more powerful and effective.

**Q. 47. Discuss the third tier of the decentralisation of power in India.**

**Ans.** Now it is constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to the local government bodies. Seats are reserved for SC, ST and Other Backward classes. Atleast one-third of all positions are reserved for women.

**Q. 48. What is Panchayati Raj?**

**Ans.** Rural local government is popularly known as Panchayati Raj.

**Q. 49. How is Gram Panchayat formed?**

**Ans.** Each village in some states, has a Gram Panchayat. This is a council consisting of several ward members, often called Panch, and a president or Sarpanch. They are directly elected by all the adult population living in that ward or village.

**Q. 50. What is a Gram Sabha? The panchayat works under the overall supervision of the gram sabha.**

**Ans.** All the voters in the village are its members. It has to meet at least twice or thrice in a year to approve the annual budget of the Gram Panchayat and to review the performance of the Gram Panchayat.

**Q. 51. What is a Panchayat Samiti?**

**Ans.** A few Gram Panchayats are grouped together to form a Panchayat Samiti or a Block.

**Q. 52. How are members of Panchayat Samiti elected?**

**Ans.** The members of Panchayat Samiti are elected by all Panchayat members in that area.

**Q. 53. What is a Zila Parishad?**

**Ans.** All the Panchayat Samitis or mandals in a district together constitute the Zila Parishad.

**Q. 54. How are members of Zila Parishad elected?**

**Ans.** Members of the Zila Parishad are elected on the basis of adult franchise from the district for a term of five years. It is headed by a president and a Vice-President. Zila parishad has minimum of 50 and maximum of 75 members. There are seats reserved for SC/STs backward classes and women. These councillors chosen by direct election from electoral division in the district.

**Q. 55. What are Municipalities and Municipal Corporations?**

**Ans.** Municipalities are local government bodies in smaller towns and Municipal Corporations are meant for bigger towns.

**Q. 56. Who are the chairpersons of Municipalities and Municipal Corporations?**

**Ans.** Municipal chairman is the political head of the municipality. In a Municipal Corporation, such an officer is called the Mayor.

## Short Answer Questions

**Q. 1. What are the two levels of federalism?**

**Ans. Federalism has two levels of government:**

- (i) One is the government for the entire country that is usually responsible for a few subjects of common national interest.
- (ii) The others are governments at the level of provinces or states that look after much of the day-to-day administering of their state.

**Q. 2. What is the role of the judiciary in a federal system?**

**Ans. (i)** The Judiciary plays an important role in overseeing the implementation of constitutional provisions and procedures.

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

**(iii)** The Union and State governments have the power to raise resources by levying taxes in order to carry on the government and the responsibilities assigned to each of them.

**Q. 3. Why were the linguistic states created?**

**Ans. (i)** The creation of Linguistic States was the first and a major test for democratic politics in our country.

**(ii)** Many old states had vanished and many new states had been created.

**(iii)** Areas, boundaries and names of the states had been changed.

**(iv)** In 1947, the boundaries of several old states of India were changed in order to create new states.

**(v)** This was done to ensure that people who spoke the same language lived in the same state.

**Q. 4. How is Panchayat Samiti formed and at what level?**

**Ans. (i)** Panchayat Samiti is formed at the block level.

**(ii)** The members of this representative body are elected by all the Panchayat members in that area.

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

**Q. 5. What is Panchayati Raj?**



**Ans. (i)** Rural local government is popularly known by the name of Panchayati Raj.

**(ii)** It has been divided into three tiers or three levels.

**(iii)** At the village level, there is a Gram Panchayat; at the block level, there is a Block Committee and at the district level, there is a Zila Parishad.

**Q. 6. What difficulties are faced during local government elections?**

**Ans. (i)** While elections are held regularly and enthusiastically, Gram Sabha's are not held regularly.

**(ii)** Most State governments have not transferred significant powers to the local governments.

**(iii)** Nor were they given adequate resources.

**Q. 7. "The constitution did not use the word 'Federation' but the Indian Union is based on the principles of federations." Explain this statement.**

**Ans.** The Constitution did not use the word 'Federation' but it has the division of powers into a three tier system of the central government, the state governments and the local governments. The Constitution of India has also mentioned the distribution of legislative powers in the form of three lists namely—Union, State and Concurrent. So each level of the government has its own jurisdiction to legislate. But we have a centralised federation in which Union government carries more powers than the State governments. It is seen in such a way that Union government has 97 subjects, whereas State as well as Concurrent lists have much less number of subjects. Besides, Union government also has the power to legislate on the residuary powers.

## Long Answer Questions

### Q. 1. How did India emerge as a federal state?

**Ans.** India had emerged as an independent nation after a painful and bloody partition.

Soon after independence, several princely states became a part of the country.

The Constitution declared India as a Union of States.

Although it did not use the word federation, the Indian Union is based on the principles of federalism.

The Constitution originally provided for a two-tier system of government, the Union government or Central government, representing the Union of India and the State governments.

Later, a third tier of 'Panchayati Raj' or local government was added.

### Q. 2. How are Gram Panchayats formed?

**Ans.** Rural local government is popularly known as Panchayati Raj. Gram Panchayat is the smallest unit at the village level.

Each village or a group of villages in some states has a gram panchayat.

This is a council consisting of several ward members often called Panch, and a President or Sarpanch.

They are directly elected by all the adult population living in that ward or village.

It is a decision-making body for the entire village.

The panchayats work under the overall supervision of the gram sabha; all the voters in the village are its members.

It has to meet at least twice or thrice in a year to approve the annual budget of the gram panchayat and to review the performance of the gram panchayat.

### Q. 3. Describe the three-fold distribution of legislative powers between the Union government and State government.

**Ans.** It contains three lists:

**(i) Union List:** It 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.

**(ii) State List:** The 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.

**(iii) Concurrent List:** Includes subjects of common interest to both, the Union government as well as the State government such as education, forests, trade unions, marriage, adoption and succession. Both the Union as well as 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 prevails.

**Q. 4. How is a Zila Parishad formed?**

**Ans. (i)** All the Panchayat Samitis or mandals in a district together constitute the Zila Parishad.

**(ii)** Most members of the Zila Parishad are elected.

**(iii)** Members of the Lok Sabha and MLAs of that district and some of the officials of other district level bodies are also its members.

**(iv)** Zila Parishad chairperson is the political head of the Zila Parishad.

**Q. 5. How are constitutional changes made in a federal system?**

**Ans.** It is not easy to make changes to power sharing of power between the Union Government and the State Government.

The Parliament cannot on its own change this arrangement.

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.

**Q. 6. What special provisions are provided to some of the states of India?**

**Ans.** Most of the federations that are formed by 'holding together' do not give equal power to its constituent units. All states in Indian union do not have identical powers. Some states enjoy a special status, like Jammu & Kashmir which has its own constitution. Many provisions of the Indian Constitution are not applicable to this state without the approval of the State Assembly. Indians who are not the permanent residents of this state cannot buy land or house here.

**Q. 7. Which territories in India do not enjoy the powers of a state?**

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

**Q. 8. How is power shared in a coalition government?**

**Ans.** After 1990, there was the rise of regional political parties as well as the beginning of the era of 'Coalition Governments' at the Centre. 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. This trend was supported by a major judgement of the Supreme Court that made it 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.

**Q. 9. Which local government bodies exist for the urban areas?**

**Ans.** Municipalities are set up in towns. Municipal Corporations are constituted in big cities. Both municipalities and municipal corporations are controlled by elected bodies consisting of people's representatives. Municipal Chairperson is the political head of the municipality. In a municipal corporation, such an officer is called the 'Mayor'.

**Q. 10. State any two achievements and any two problems of the Panchayati Raj system**

**Ans.** The Panchayati Raj system of India has been introduced by Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. Its achievements are:

- (i) The introduction of local governments has helped to deepen the roots of democracy in India.
- (ii) It has increased representation of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women as well.

**At the same time, its problems are:**

- (i) While elections are held regularly but gram Sabha's, block committees and zila parishads do not hold their meetings regularly.
- (ii) Most of the state governments are not ready to provide powers to the local governments. Neither they are ready to provide sufficient funds for their needs.

**Q. 11. 'Promotion of Hindi continues to be the official policy of government of India.' Elucidate.**

**Ans.** 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 should continue. In Tamil Nadu, the movement took a violent turn.

The Central Government responded by agreeing to continue the use of English along with Hindi for official purposes. Many critics think that this solution favoured the English-speaking elite.

Promotion of Hindi continues to be the official policy of Government of India.

Promotion does not mean that the Central Government can impose Hindi on states where people speak a different language.

The flexibility shown by Indian political leaders helped our country avoid the kind of situation that Sri Lanka finds itself in.

## Hots (Higher Order Thinking Skills)

**Q. 1. Distinguish between ‘coming together federation’ and ‘holding together federations’ with examples. India comes under which type of federation?**

**Ans. Coming Together Federation:**

It 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.

E.g.: USA, Australia

In this category of federation, all the constituent states usually have equal powers and are strong as a federal government.

**Holding Together Federations:**

Here, a large country decides to divide its power between the constituent states and the national government. In this kind of federalism, Central government tends to be more powerful than the states. Very often different constituent units of federation have unequal powers. Some units are granted special powers.

For e.g. India, Spain, Belgium, etc.

**Q. 2. Which five provisions of the Indian constitution make India a full-fledged federation? Explain.**

**Ans.** There are two or more levels of government.

Different tiers of government govern the same citizens, but each tier has its own jurisdiction.

The jurisdiction of the respective levels or tiers of government are specified in the constitution.

The fundamental provisions of the constitution cannot be unilaterally changed by one level of the government.

Sources of revenue for each level of government are clearly specified to ensure its financial autonomy.

Courts have the power to interpret the constitution and the powers of different levels of government.

So, an ideal federal system has both aspects—mutual trust and agreement to live together.

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

**Or**

**What are the power sharing arrangements in our country? Explain with examples.**

**Ans.** Our Constitution declared India as a Union of States. Indian Union is based on the principles of federalism. The Constitution originally provided a two-tier system (at the central and the state level) but later in 1992, a three-tier system (added up the third tier as local government) was adopted.

The powers are divided between three levels by Union List, State List and Concurrent List respectively.

The Union List includes 97 subjects like defence, foreign affairs, banking, etc. These subjects are of national importance, so they are looked after by the Union government and they only legislate on these subjects.

The State List includes 66 subjects like police, agriculture, trade and commerce, etc. These subjects are allotted to all the state governments and the state governments can legislate on them.

The Concurrent List includes subjects of common interests between the Centre and the State, e.g., education, forest, marriage, etc. Both the Union as well as the State governments can make laws on their respective subjects but central government exercises an upper hand.

**Q. 4. Critically analyse the centre–state relations prior to 1990 and after.**

**Ans.** For a long time, the same party ruled both at the centre and in most of the states. This meant that State governments did not exercise their rights as autonomous federal units.

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.

After 1990, there was a rise of regional parties in many states. This was also the beginning of the era of Coalition Government at the centre. This led to a new culture of power sharing and respect for the autonomy of State Governments.

**Q. 5. Explain the constitutional amendments of 1992 that compare local governments in India.**

**Ans.** A major step towards decentralisation was taken in 1992. The constitution has amended to make the third tier more powerful and effective.

**(i)** Now it is mandatory to hold regular elections for local government bodies.

**(ii)** Seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes.

(iii) At least one-third of all positions are reserved for women.

(iv) The State Election Commission monitors the elections of municipalities and local governments of a state.

(v) The State governments are required to share some powers and revenue with local government's bodies.

**Q. 6. What is the rational decentralisation of power? Describe the functions of rural local government.**

**Ans.** 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 the money and how to manage things more efficiently.

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.

**Functions of Rural Government:**

The local government is a three-tier structure. At the top is the District or Zila Parishad, few blocks form a Zila, so blocks have Block or Mandal and then few villages form a block and a village panchayat.

The smallest unit of our country is a village and at the village level, we have Gram Panchayat, which is run by a head called 'Sarpanch' with his team of representatives.

A few Gram Panchayats fall under a Block. At Block level, we have a Panchayat Samiti or Block Committee.

All Panchayat Samitis of a district are under a district having a local government called Zila Parishad. Members of Lok Sabha and MLAs of that district also become the members of Zila Parishad.

**Q. 7. How challenge of language policy was adopted by the Indian federalism?**

**Ans.** A second test for Indian federalism is the language policy.

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.

Besides Hindi, there are 21 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 one 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.