

Social Science Class 10

Important Questions Political Science

Chapter 2

Federalism

Very Short Answer Questions (VSA) 1 Mark

Question 1.

Which state in India has its own Constitution?

Answer:

Jammu and Kashmir

Question 2.

What is rural local self-government popularly known as?

Answer:

Panchayati Raj

Question 3.

Which local body has a 'Mayor' as its head?

Answer:

Head of Municipal Corporation is a Mayor.

Question 4.

What other factors besides politics keep the federations united?

Answer:

Besides politics, other factors which keep the federations united are culture, ideology and history. Culture of trust, cooperation, mutual respect and restraint has also helped in the smooth functioning of nations.

Question 5.

What was the main objective of the Constitutional Amendment made in 1992 in India?

Answer:

The main objective of the Constitutional Amendment in 1992 was to strengthen the three-tier system of governance, i.e., make the Panchayati Raj Institution and the urban local bodies more powerful and effective.

Question 6.

What status has been given to the 'Hindi' language by the Constitution of India?

Answer:

Hindi has been given the status of 'Official language' by the Constitution of India.

Question 7.

Much of the official work in Indian States is done in which language?

Answer:

Much of the official work in Indian States is done in the official language of the concerned state.

Question 8.

What is Federalism?

Answer:

Federalism is a system of government in which the power is divided between a central authority and various constituent units of the country. This vertical division of power among different levels of governments is referred to as federalism. Federalism is one of the major forms of power-sharing in modern democracies.

Question 9.

Name the subject list from which both the Union and the State governments can make laws?

Answer:

Concurrent List

Question 10.

Define Federalism.

Answer:

Federalism is a system of government in which the governmental power is divided into a central authority and its various constituent units.

Question 11.

What do you mean by unitary system of government?

Answer:

Under the unitary system, either there is only one level of government or the sub-units are subordinate to the central government.

Question 12.

Write the dual objectives of the federal government.

Answer:

The federal system has dual objectives:

1. To safeguard and promote unity of the country and
2. To accommodate the regional diversity.

Question 13.

Which aspects are crucial for the institutions and practice of federalism?

Answer:

1. Agreement to live together : Government at different levels should agree to some rules of power sharing
2. Mutual trust: They should also trust that each would abide by its part of the agreement.

Question 14.

Define Jurisdiction.

Answer:

Jurisdiction : The area over which someone has legal authority. The area may be defined in terms of geographical boundaries or in terms of certain kinds of subjects.

Question 15.

Explain the contents of Union List.

Answer:

Union List includes subjects of national importance such as defense, foreign affairs, banking, communications and currency.

Question 16.

What are the subjects of State List?

Answer:

1. State List contains subjects of state and local importance such as police, trade, commerce, agriculture irrigation etc.
2. The state governments alone can make laws relating to the subjects mentioned in the state list.

Question 17.

Who is authorized make laws about subjects that do not fall in any of the three lists?

Answer:

According to the Indian Constitution, the Union government has the power to legislate on these 'residuary subjects'.

Question 18.

Whose role is important in the implementation of constitutional provisions?

Answer:

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

Question 19.

What was the basis of creation of new states in India?

Answer:

1. In 1947, the boundaries of states of India were changed in order to create new states. This was done to ensure that people speaking same language lived in the same state.
2. Some other states were created to recognize differences based on culture, ethnicity or geography. Example-Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand.

Question 20.

What was the main fear of some national leaders on creation of new states on linguistic basis?

Answer:

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.

Question 21.

Do you think the creation of new states on the basis of language has helped India anyway?

Answer:

1. The experience shows that the formation of linguistic states has actually made the country more united and stronger.
2. It has also made the administration easier.

Question 22.

Explain the composition and function of Gram Sabha?

Answer:

1. The Gram Panchayat works under the overall supervision of Gram Sabha.
2. All the voters in the village are its members.
3. It meets 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.

Question 23.

Who controls municipalities and municipal corporations?

Answer:

Both municipalities and municipal corporations are controlled by elected bodies consisting of people's representatives.

Question 24.

What are the difficulties of the institutions of local self-government?

Answer:

1. While elections are held regularly gram sabha are not held regularly.
2. Most State governments have not transferred significant powers to the local governments.
3. The institutions of local self-governments do not have adequate resources also.

Question 25.

What is federalism? What are its two types?

Answer:

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 that is usually responsible for a few subjects of common national interest.

The other are governments at the level of provinces or states that look after much of the day to day administering of their state. Both these levels of governments enjoy their power independent of the other.

Question 26.

How is the 'Coming together federations formed?

Answer:

The exact balance of power between the central and the state government and within various state governments 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 USA, Switzerland and Australia. In this first category of federations, all the constituent states usually have equal power and are strong vis-a-vis the federal government.

Question 27.

What do you mean by 'holding together' federations?

Answer:

The exact balance of power between the central and the state government and within various state governments 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 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.

Question 28.

"All states in the Indian Union do not have identical powers." Explain.

Answer:

1. Most federations that are formed by 'holding together' do not give equal power to its constituent units.
2. 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.
3. Many provisions of the Indian Constitution are not applicable to this state without the permission of the state assembly.
4. Indians who are not permanent residents of this state cannot buy land or house here.

Question 29.

Explain the main contributing factor towards success of federalism in India.

Answer:

1. Constitutional provisions are necessary for the success of federalism but these are not sufficient.
2. If the federal experiment has succeeded in India, it is not merely because of the clearly laid out constitutional provisions.
3. The real success of federalism in India can be attributed to the nature of democratic politics in our country.
4. This ensured that the spirit of federalism, respect for diversity and desire for living together became a shared ideal in our country.

Question 30.

What is the rationale behind decentralisation of power in India?

Answer:

The federal governments have two or more tiers of governments. But a vast country like India cannot be run only through these two tiers. States in India are as large as independent countries. In terms of population, Uttar Pradesh is bigger than Russia, Maharashtra is about as big as Germany.

Many of these states are internally very 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 for decentralisation of power. Thus, resulted a third tier of government, called Local Government.

Question 31.

“The basic idea behind decentralisation is that there are a large number of problems which are best settled at the local level” Justify.

Answer:

1. When power is taken, away from Central, and State governments and given to local government, it is called decentralisation.
2. The basic idea behind decentralisation is that there are a large number of problems and issues which are best settled at the local level.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Local government is the best way to realise one important principle of democracy, namely local self-government.

Question 32.

“There was very little decentralisation in effective terms before 1992.” Explain.

Answer:

1. 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.
2. 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

3. Elections to these local governments were not held regularly.
4. Local governments did not have any powers or resources of their own. Thus there was very little decentralisation in effective terms.

Question 33.

Which problem undermined the spirit of federalism in before 1990?

Answer:

1. The constitutional arrangements for sharing power work, in reality, depend to a large extent on how the ruling parties and the leader follow these arrangements,
2. In India, for long time, the same party (Congress 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.
3. 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.

Question 34.

What steps have been taken after 1992 to decentralise power in India?

Answer:

1. A major step towards decentralisation was taken in 1992. The Constitution was amended to make the third tier of democracy more powerful and effective.
2. Now it is constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to the local government bodies.
3. Seats are reserved in the elected bodies and the executive heads of these institutions for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward classes
4. An independent institution called the State Election Commission has been created in each state to conduct the panchayat and municipal elections.
5. The State governments are required to share some powers and revenue with local government bodies. The nature of sharing varies from state to state.

Question 35.

Describe the working of panchayat raj system in India.

Answer:

Rural local government is popularly known by the name Panchayati Raj, 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 Panchayat, and a President or Sarpanch. These are directly elected by all the adult people living in that ward or the village. It is the decision making body for the entire village. The panchayat works 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. The local government structure goes right up to the district level. A few gram panchayats are grouped together to form what is usually called a panchayat Samiti or block.

The members of this representative body are elected by all the panchayat members in that area. All the panchayat in a district together constitutes the Zilla (district) Parishad. Most members of the Zilla Parishad are elected. Members of the Lok Sabha and MLA'S of that district and some other officials of other district-level bodies are also its members. Zilla Parishad Chairperson is the political head of the Zilla Parishad.

Question 36.

Analyse the benefits of decentralisation of power in India.

Answer:

1. This new system of local government is the largest experiment in democracy conducted anywhere in the world

2. There are now about 36 lakh elected representatives in the panchayats and municipalities etc. all over the country.
3. This number is bigger than the population of many countries in the world.
4. Constitutional status for local government has helped to deepen democracy in our country.
5. It has also increased women's representation and voice in our democracy
6. At the same time, there are many difficulties. While elections are held regularly and enthusiastically, gram sabha are not held regularly
7. Most state governments have not transferred significant powers to the local governments. Nor have they given adequate resource.

Question 37.

Explain some of the key features of federalism.

Answer:

Some of the key features of federalism are as following:

1. There are two or more levels (or tiers) of government.
2. Different tiers of government govern the same citizens, but each tier has its own jurisdiction in specific matters of legislation, taxation and administration.
3. The jurisdictions of the respective levels or tiers of government are specified in the constitution. So the existence and authority of each tier of government are constitutionally safeguarded.
4. The fundamental provisions of the constitution cannot be unilaterally changed by one level of government. Such changes require the consent of the both the levels government.
5. Courts have the power to interpret the constitution and the powers of different levels of government. The highest court acts as an umpire in case disputes arise between different levels of government in the exercise of their respective powers. Sources of revenue for each level of government are clearly specified to ensure its financial autonomy.

Question 38.

What makes India a federal country?

Answer:

1. The Constitution of India declared India as a Union of States. Although it did not use the word federation, the Indian Union is based on the principle of federalism.
2. 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 die State governments.
3. The Constitution clearly provided a threefold distribution of legislative powers between the Union government and the State governments.

Thus it contains three lists:

(a) Union List includes subjects of national importance such as the 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.

(b) 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.

(c) Concurrent list includes subjects of common interest to both the Union government as well as the State governments, such as education, forest, trade unions, marriages, 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.

4. According to the Indian constitution, the Union government has the power to legislate on ‘residuary’ subjects.

Question 39.

“Federal power-sharing is more effective today than it was in the early years after the constitution came into force.” Justify.

Answer:

1. Restructuring the Centre-State relations is one more way in which federalism has been strengthened in practice. The constitutional arrangements for sharing power, work in reality, depend to a large extent on how the ruling parties and leaders follow these arrangements.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. All this changed significantly after 1990. This period saw the rise of regional political parties in many states of the country. This was also the beginning of the era of coalition governments at the centre. Since no single party got a clear majority in Lok Sabha, the major national parties had to enter into an alliance with many parties including several regional parties to form a government the centre.
6. This led to a new culture of power-sharing and respect for the autonomy of the state governments.

Short Answer Questions (SA) 3 Marks

Question 40.

Explain the vertical division of power by giving examples from India.

Answer:

When power is shared among governments at different levels, i.e., the Union or the Central Government, the State Government and the Municipality and Panchayat at the lower level. This division of power involving higher and lower levels of government is called the vertical division of power.

Vertical division of power in India:

The Constitution declares India as a Union of States. Although the word ‘Federation’ is not used, the Indian Union is based on the principles of federation. The Constitution originally provided for a two-tier system of government, the Union Government or the Central Government representing Union of India and the State Governments.

A third-tier of federation was added in the form of Panchayats and Municipalities. As in any federation, these different tiers enjoy separate jurisdiction. The Constitution provides for a three-fold distribution of legislative powers between the Union Government and State Government. It contains three lists:

1. Union List (97 Subjects)
2. State List (66 Subjects)
3. Concurrent List (47 Subjects)

Question 41.

Why is decentralisation favoured in democracy? Identify any two reasons.

Answer:

Five advantages of decentralisation of power:

1. When power is taken away from Central and State Governments and given to local governments, 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.
2. They also have better ideas on where to spend money and how to manage things more efficiently.
3. 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.
4. Local government is the best way to realise one important principle of democracy, namely local self-government.
5. The need for decentralisation was recognised in our Constitution. A major step towards decentralisation was taken in 1992. The Constitution was amended to make the third tier of democracy more powerful and effective.

Question 42.

India comes under which type of federation and why?

Answer:

India comes under 'a holding together' type federation. In this type of federation, a large country divides its power between the constituent States and the National government. There is one government for the entire country and the others are governments at the State level. Both Central and State Governments enjoy their power independent of the other.

The Central government tends to be more powerful vis-a-vis the states. Often different constituent units of the federation have unequal powers. For example, special powers have been granted to Jammu & Kashmir.

Question 43.

State two agreements through which federations have been formed. Give an example of each.

Answer:

(i) 'Coming together' federations—This agreement induces 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. Examples are: USA, Switzerland and Australia. All the constituent states have equal power and are strong vis-a-vis the federal government.

(ii) 'Holding together' federations — In this agreement, a large country decides to divide its power between the constituent States and the national government. The Central Governments tend to be more powerful vis-a-vis the states. Often different constituent units of the federation have unequal powers. Some units are granted special powers, for example, India granted special powers to Jammu & Kashmir.

Other examples are Spain and Belgium.

Long Answer Questions (LA)

Question 44.

Which five provisions of the constitutional amendment of 1992 really strengthened the third tier of democracy in India? Explain.

Answer:

Major steps towards decentralisation and strengthening of third tier taken in 1992 were:

1. Now it is constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to Local Government bodies.
2. Seats are reserved in elected bodies for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes (OBCs).
3. At least one-third of all positions and seats are reserved for women.
4. An independent institution called the State Election Commission was created to conduct Panchayat and Municipal elections.

5. The State Governments are required to share some powers and revenue with Local Government bodies.

Question 45.

Why has federalism succeeded in India? Which are the policies adopted by India that have ensured it? Explain.

Answer:

Reasons for success of federalism in India are:

1. Clearly laid out Constitutional Provisions providing a three-fold distribution of powers in the three lists—Union List, State List and Concurrent List—between the Union Government and State Governments.
2. The nature of democratic politics in our country which ensures that the spirit of federalism, respect for diversity and desire for living together became a shared ideal.
3. The creation of linguistic states. 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. Later some states were created to recognise differences based on culture, ethnicity or geography. For example: Nagaland, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Telangana, etc.
4. Restricting Centre-State relations. The constitutional arrangements for sharing power work depending 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 states. Post-1990 saw the rise of regional parties. Since no single party got a clear majority in the Lok Sabha, the national parties had to enter into an alliance which led to a new culture of power sharing and respect for autonomy of State Governments.

Question 46.

Explain any five features of federalism.

Answer:

Features of federalism:

1. There are two or more levels of government.
2. Different levels of government govern the same citizens, where each level has its own jurisdiction in specific matters of legislation, taxation and administration.
3. Existence and authority of each level of government is constitutionally governed.
4. The fundamental provisions of the Constitution cannot be unilaterally changed. Such changes require the consent of both the levels of government.
5. Courts have the power to interpret the Constitution and powers of the different levels of government. The highest court acts as the umpire if any dispute arises between different levels of governments.
6. Sources of revenue for each level of government are specified to ensure its financial autonomy.
7. Federal system has dual objectives. To safeguard and promote unity of the country, and to accommodate regional diversity.

Question 47.

Describe the three forms of power sharing among different organs of government in India. (2014)

Answer:

The Constitution declared India as a Union of States based on the principles of federalism. The Constitution originally provided for a two-tier system of government, the Union or the Central Government representing Union of India and the State Governments. Later, a third tier was added in the form of Panchayats and Municipalities.

As in any federation, these different tiers enjoyed separate jurisdiction. The Constitution provided a three-fold distribution of legislative powers:

1. Union List includes subjects of national importance, i.e., defence of the country, foreign affairs, banking, communications and currency.

2. State List contains subjects of state and local importance, i.e., police, trade, commerce, agriculture and irrigation.
3. Concurrent List includes subjects of common interest to both the Union Government as well as the State Governments, i.e., education, forests, trade unions, marriages, adoption and succession. In case of dispute, law made by the Union Government shall prevail.
4. Residuary—Subjects which do not fall in any of the three lists, i.e., computer software, etc. Union Government has the power to legislate such subjects.
 1. As India is an example of ‘holding together’ federation, all states in the Indian Union do not have identical powers. Some states enjoy special status such as Jammu & Kashmir. There are some states too small to become independent like the Union Territories of Chandigarh and Lakshadweep.
 2. This sharing of power between the Union Government and State Governments is basic to the structure of the Constitution. Any change to it, has to be passed by both the Houses of the Parliament with at least two-third majority.
 3. The judiciary plays an important role in the implementation of constitutional procedures. In case of any dispute about division of powers, the High Courts and the Supreme Court make a decision.

Question 48.

Describe in brief the language policy of India?

Answer:

1. Our Constitution did not give the status of national language to any one language.
2. The formation of linguistic states united the country and made administration easier.
3. The leaders of our country adopted a very cautious attitude in spreading the use of Hindi. Hindi was identified as official language.
4. The banning of use of English for official purposes in 1965 took a violent form in Tamil Nadu. The Central Government responded by agreeing to continue the use of English along with Hindi for official purposes.
5. Promotion of Hindi is an official policy of the Government of India but it does not impose Hindi on states where people speak a different language.
6. Besides Hindi, there are 21 other languages recognised as scheduled languages by the Constitution.
7. This flexibility shown by Indian leaders helped our country avoid the situation that Sri Lanka finds itself in.

Question 49.

What were the major steps taken to make decentralisation more effective?

Or

What amendments were made in the Constitution in order to make the third tier of democracy (Local Government) more powerful and effective?

Answer:

Major steps towards decentralisation taken in 1992 are:

1. Now it is constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to Local Government bodies.
2. Seats are reserved in elected bodies for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes (OBCs).
3. At least one-third of all positions are reserved for women.
4. The State Election Commission was created to conduct Panchayat and Municipal elections.
5. The State Governments are required to share some powers and revenue with Local Government bodies.

Question 50.

Explain the structure of the new Panchayati Raj institutions, both in rural and urban areas.

Answer:

Rural Local Government is known by the name of Panchayati Raj/ Democratic decentralization.

1. Each village or group of villages has a Gram Panchayat.
2. Panch, President or Sarpanch are directly elected by all the adult population of the village and is the decision-making body.
3. The Panchayat works under the supervision of Gram Sabha, with all the voters as its members.
4. The local structure goes up to the district level—a group of Gram Panchayats form a Panchayat Samiti or Block or Mandal.
5. All the Panchayat Samitis or Mandals together constitute the Zilla Parishad which consists of elected members.
6. Lok Sabha members, Local MLAs and officers are also members of the Zilla Parishad.
7. Its Chairperson is the political head of the Parishad.

Urban areas local bodies.

1. Municipalities are set up in towns.
2. Big cities are constituted into Municipal Corporations.
3. Both are controlled by elected bodies consisting of people's representatives.
4. Municipal chairperson is the political head of the Municipality.
The head of Municipal Corporation is an officer called the Mayor.

Question 51.

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

Answer:

1. Federal power sharing is more effective because of the nature of democratic politics in India. It has ensured that the spirit of federalism, respect for diversity and desire for living together have become a shared ideal in our country.
2. Federal power sharing has helped to inculcate a habit of democratic participation. Federal power sharing is the best way to realise one important principle of democracy, namely local self-government. Constitutional status for local government has helped to deepen democracy.
 1. It has increased women's representation and voice in democracy.
 2. Federal power sharing has led to formation of linguistic states which has actually made the country more united. It has also made administration easier.
 3. It reduces the power of the Central government and gives power to regional governments.