


Class 10 Civics – Chapter 2: Federalism

◆ What is Federalism?

Federalism is a system of government in which power is **divided between a central authority and various constituent units**, such as states or provinces.

✚ Unlike a **unitary system** (where power is centralized), federalism allows **two or more levels of government**, each with its **own powers and responsibilities**.

 Only 25 of 193 countries are federal, but they include large countries like India, USA, Brazil, and Australia.

✚ Add: (Fig. 1 - World Map of Federal Countries)

◆ Features of Federalism

1. **Two or more levels of government**
2. **Each level governs the same citizens**, but in different matters.
3. **Jurisdiction of each level is specified in the Constitution.**
4. **Constitutional provisions** cannot be changed unilaterally.
5. **Courts can resolve disputes** between levels of government.
6. **Revenue sources are clearly assigned** to each level.
7. **Dual objectives**: Unity of the country + regional diversity

✚ This ensures both central authority and local autonomy.

◆ Types of Federations

Coming Together Federation	Holding Together Federation
Independent states come together voluntarily	A large country divides power between Centre and States
All units have equal power	Centre is more powerful
Example: USA, Australia	Example: India, Spain, Belgium

✚ Add: (Fig. 2 - Visual comparison of two types of federations)

Federalism in India

India is a **‘holding together’ federation**. The term “Union of States” is used instead of “federation” in the Constitution, but **India is a federal country in practice**.

Three Levels of Government:

1. **Union (Central) Government**
2. **State Governments**
3. **Local Governments (added in 1992)**

📌 Add: (Fig. 3 - Three-tier government structure in India)

◆ Division of Powers: Three Lists

List	Who Can Make Laws?	Examples
Union List	Only Union Govt.	Defence, currency, foreign affairs
State List	Only State Govts.	Police, agriculture, trade
Concurrent List	Both	Education, marriage, forests

⚠ If there's a conflict in the Concurrent List, **Union law prevails**.

Residuary Subjects: Not listed in the Constitution (e.g., cyber laws) – Union Govt. has the power to legislate.

⚠ Unequal Powers in Indian Federalism

Not all states have equal power:

- **Special status** to states like Nagaland, Mizoram, etc. due to cultural and historical reasons.
- **Union Territories** (like Delhi, Chandigarh) are directly governed by the Centre.

⚖ Safeguards of Federalism in India

1. **Distribution of powers is constitutional** – not easy to change.
2. **Parliament needs 2/3 majority + State ratification** to amend federal structure.
3. **Judiciary** (Supreme Court & High Courts) settles disputes.
4. **Independent revenue powers** for each level (through taxes).

🌍 How is Federalism Practised in India?

Federalism works in reality when political practices **respect the spirit of the Constitution**. Here's how India has strengthened its federalism:

1. Linguistic States

- States reorganized based on language since 1950s.
 - Helped accommodate diversity and improve governance.
- 📌 Add: (Fig. 4 - Map of Linguistic States of India)

2. Language Policy

- **Hindi** is the **official** language, **not national language**.
- **21 other languages** recognized as Scheduled Languages.
- **English continues as associate official language**.
- States have their own official languages.
- The **use of Hindi is promoted but not imposed**.

📌 Add: (Fig. 5 - Table of Scheduled Languages with speaker percentages)

3. Centre-State Relations

- Initially, Centre was dominant (same party ruled both levels).
- Post-1990s: **rise of regional parties** → coalition governments.
- Increased respect for **State autonomy**.
- **Supreme Court** ruling limited Centre's power to dismiss State govts arbitrarily.

📌 Add: (Fig. 6 - Cartoons showing Centre-State relationship)

Decentralization: Third Tier of Government

Decentralization = transferring power from higher levels to **local governments** (Panchayats & Municipalities)

Importance:

- Solves **local problems** better
- Increases **public participation**
- Strengthens **democracy**

1992 Constitutional Amendment:

1. Local bodies are now **constitutionally recognized**.
2. **Regular elections** are mandatory.
3. **Reservations** for SC/STs and women (1/3rd seats).
4. **State Election Commissions** formed.
5. State Govts must **share powers and revenue**.

📌 Add: (Fig. 7 - Panchayati Raj Structure)

Structure of Local Government

Rural Areas

- **Gram Panchayat:** Village-level body (members called *panch*, headed by *sarpanch*)
- **Panchayat Samiti:** Block level
- **Zila Parishad:** District level

Urban Areas

- **Municipality:** Small towns
- **Municipal Corporation:** Big cities
- Political head: **Chairperson or Mayor**

✓ Achievements and Challenges

✓ Achievements:

- 36 lakh+ elected representatives – world's largest democracy experiment.
- Improved women's participation.
- Helped deepen democracy.

✗ Challenges:

- **Gram sabhas not active** in many areas.
- **Lack of funds and powers** to local bodies.
- State governments still **retain control** over local units.

📌 Important CBSE Question Trends

Question Type	Topics
1 mark	Definition of federalism, concurrent list
3 marks	Features of Indian federalism, division of powers
5 marks	Role of local government, federalism in practice
Map-based	Identify federal countries, Indian states