

# Federalism

## 1. What is federalism?

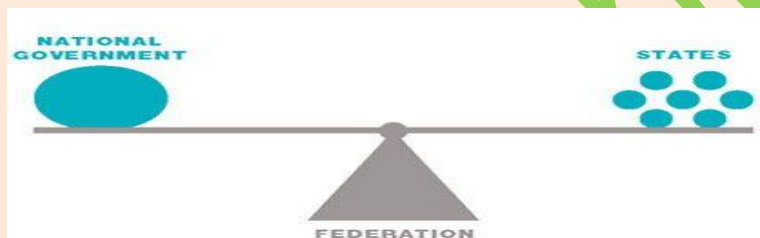
Federalism is system of government in which powers are divided between central government and other governments at the provincial and regional level.

## 2. What is unitary government?

Under unitary system of government there is only one level of government that is at the central level. Unitary system of government is opposite of the federal system.

### Features of federalism-

#### 1. Two level of government –



#### 2. Same citizens separate Jurisdiction.

#### 3. Supremacy of constitution.

#### 4. Rigid constitution- Constitution cannot be changed by only one level of government.

#### 5. Power of courts to interpret the constitution

#### 6. Financial autonomy at different levels of government.

#### 7. Dual objective- unity of country and accommodation of diversity.

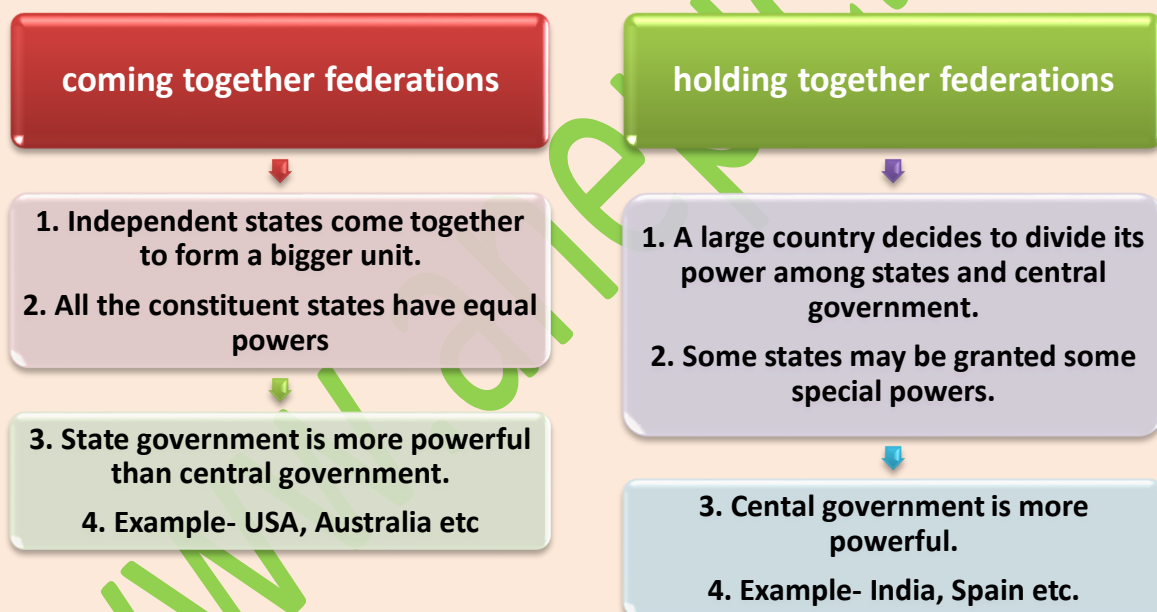
India is federal country because all the features mentioned above are available in the Indian political system.

1. Instead of two tier government India follows three tier system of government i.e Union government, state government and local self government.

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2. In India Parliament alone cannot amend the entire constitution for some amendments parliament requires the consent of states.
3. Judiciary is independent in India. High court and supreme court interpret the constitution.
4. Separation of power through the union list, state list and concurrent list. Some states even have special powers based on the social, geographical and historical aspects.
5. Separate source of income for central and state governments.

Federations are formed in two ways



Though Constitutional provisions are necessary for the success of federalism but the policies and democratic politics adopted by the leaders were equally important in promoting federalism in India. Some of the policies that were adopted have been discussed below.

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### Linguistic state

1. After independence States were rearranged on the basis of language.
2. People who spoke same language stayed in the same state.
3. Some states were also created based on culture and ethnicity.
4. This was done to appreciate diversity in India.

### Language policy

1. No language has been given status of national language.
2. Beside hindi 21 other languages were given status of scheduled languages.
3. Hindi has been adopted only as the official language.
4. though measures are taken to promote hindi but it is not imposed on states.
5. States has their own official languages.

### Centre state relations

1. Emergence of coalition government at centre after 1990 actually strengthened the federalism.
2. Before 1990 central government has misused the constitution to dismiss the state governments.
3. Courts has played a major role in strengthening the power of the state governments.

**Make a list of the subjects that are included in the union list, state list and concurrent list in the space given below.**

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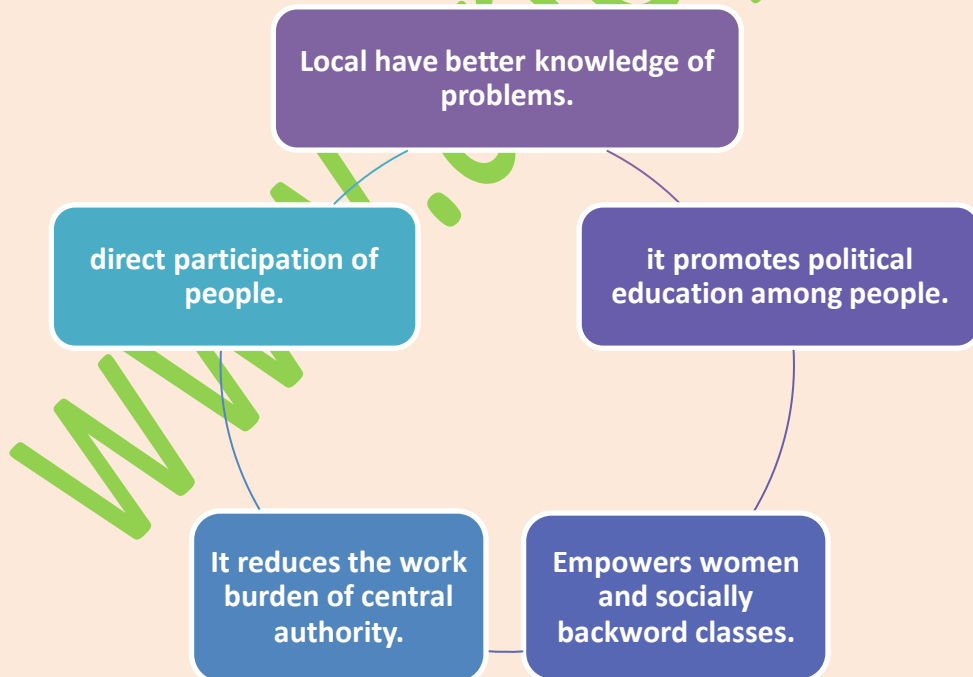
Read the information given on the page number 22 of NCERT text book.

Page Number 23 here one of the great historian Ramchandra Guha examines the role played by linguistic states in preserving the unity of India. According to him linguistic states has been successful in promoting the unity of India, though at the beginning Nehru, Patel and Rajaji were against the division of states on linguistic basis because of the past experiences but the linguistic state has been successful in maintaining the cultural and political identity of India.

What is decentralization?

When power is taken from a central authority and distributed among the regional and local authorities it is known as decentralization of power.

Advantages of decentralisation



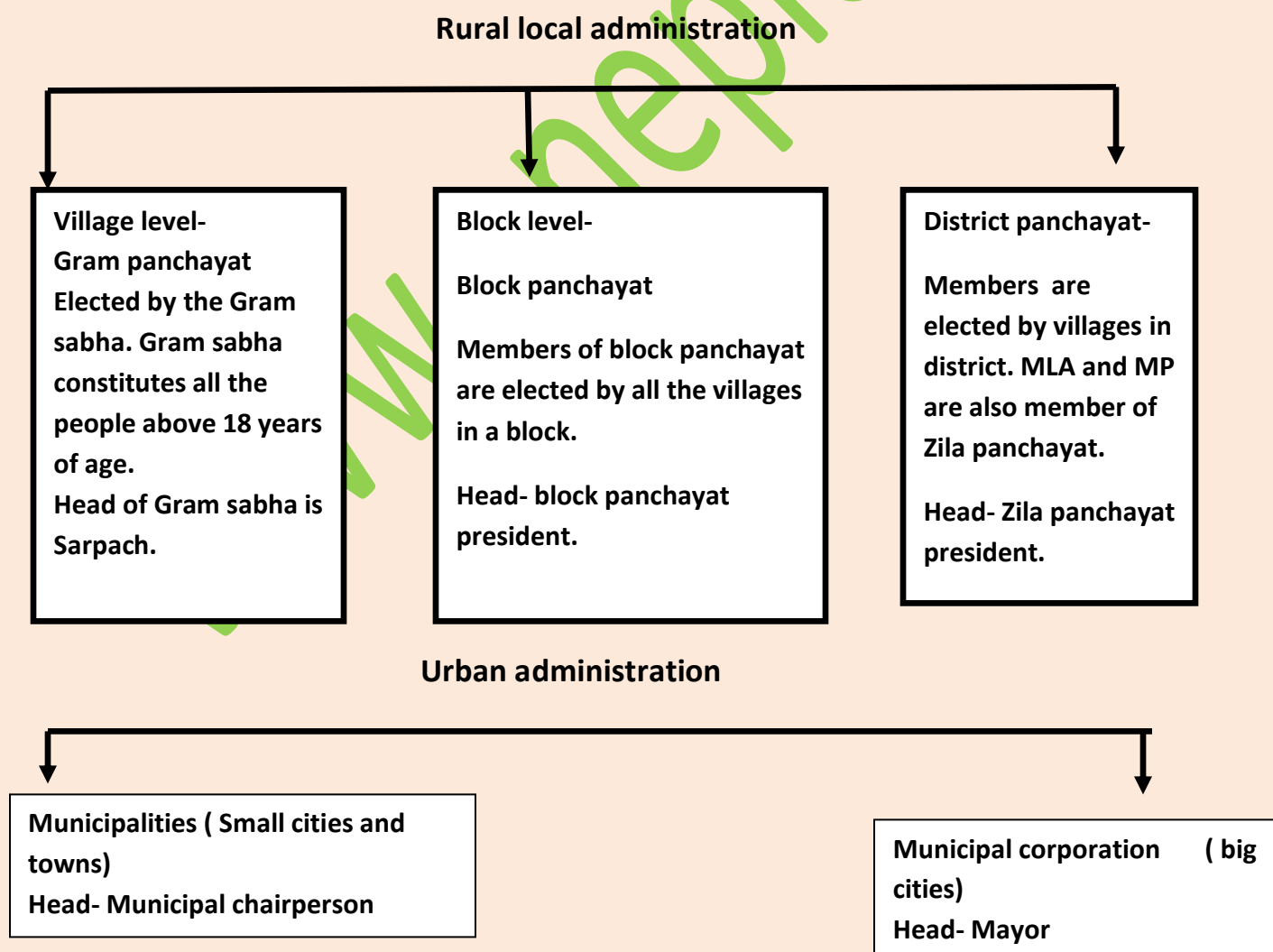
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Problems associated with local governments in India-

1. Local bodies were under the control of state governments.
2. Elections to these local bodies were not held regularly.
3. Lack of resources for working of local bodies.

Steps taken after 1992-

1. It has been made constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections.
2. Seats are reserved for socially backward and women.
3. State election commission to conduct free and fare elections.
4. It is mandatory for state government to share some power and revenue with local bodies.
5. Local bodies has been given constitutional status.



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In chapter 1 we learnt about Belgium and Sri Lanka. Belgium adopted federal system and was able to prevent the clashes. In three tier model of Belgium they also have community government to take culture related decisions. Sri Lanka on other hand did not adopted the federal system and continued to suppress the demand of recognition of Tamil language by Tamil leaders, whereas India recognized and promoted other languages along with Hindi. This lack of political adjustment in Sri Lanka led to the political crisis in the country.

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