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Federalism is a System of government in which Power is divided between a Central government and state government.

Features

1. There are two or more levels of government
2. Each tier has its own jurisdiction in specific matters of taxation, legislation and administration.
3. Jurisdiction of the respective levels/tiers of Government are specified in the Constitution.
4. Require the consent of both the levels of Government to change the Fundamental Provision.
5. Courts have the power to interpret the Constitution and powers of different levels of Government
6. Two aspects of an ideal Federal System - mutual trust and agreement to

Routes to Federation

Independent States coming together to form a unit

Coming together Federation
eg - USA, Australia.

Constituent units/states have equal power and are as strong as the central government

A large country divides its power between states

Holding together Federation

eg - India, Spain, Belgium
Some states are granted special power. Central

Federalism in India

Constitution originally provided for a two tier system of Government - Central Government and State Government.

Third tier added in the form of Panchayats and municipalities

Constitution provided a three fold distribution of legislative powers between the Union Government and the State Government:

1. Union list - Defence, banking, Foreign affairs etc.
2. State list - Police, trade, commerce.
3. Concurrent list - education, Forests

Practice of Federalism in India

1. Linguistic States:

After independence (1950) boundaries of many States were changed to create new States so that the people who speak same language, have common culture etc could live in the same State.

2. Language Policy:

Indian Constitution did not give the status of national language to any of language.

Central Government agreed to continue the use of English along with Hindi as

3. Centre - State Relations -
Improving the
Centre - State
Relations is
another way in
which Federalism
has been strength-
ened in Practice.

After 1990's due
to emergence of
many regional
parties - no
single party
got a clear
majority -
which lead to
beginning of
the era of
Coalition government

Decentralisation in India

⇒ some of the Powers
are taken away
from Centre and
State government
and given to local
government i.e., village
Panchayats, Municipal
Committees and
Municipal Corporations

Advantages of Decentralisation

1. Locals have
better knowledge.
2. Direct Participation
of the People.
3. Foundation of
Democracy
4. Reduction of the
burden of the
State/Central Government

Major Steps under the Act of 1992

- (a) Regular elections.
- (b) Reservation of seats
- (c) State Election
Commission
- (d) Source of