

Chapter 2: Federalism

What is Federalism?

- **Federalism** is a system of government where power is divided between a **central government** and various **regional or state governments**.
 - Both levels of government govern the same people but have authority over different matters.
 - This division of power is **constitutional** — meaning the powers of the central and state governments are defined and protected by the constitution.
 - Each government level is **independent** in its areas of authority and cannot take orders from the other in those areas.
 - The goal is to maintain the **unity** of the country while respecting the **diversity** of different regions or groups.
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Is India a Union, Federal, or Central Government?

- India is a **federal country**, but it is often called a **Union of States** in the Constitution.
 - The Indian Constitution divides powers between the **Central (Union) government** and the **State governments**.
 - However, the Indian federal system is somewhat **asymmetrical**:
 - The **Central government is stronger** compared to the states.
 - States have their own powers but in some situations, the Central government can intervene.
 - So, India is a "**holding together**" **federation**, where a previously united country has been divided into states with some powers, but the central government remains powerful.
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Important Points:

- Only about 25 out of 193 countries in the world have federal systems, but they cover about 40% of the world's population.
 - Most **large countries** (like the USA, Canada, Australia, India, Russia) are federations.
 - An example of a **unitary system** is Sri Lanka, where the central government holds most power.
 - Belgium is an example of a country that moved from a unitary to a **federal system** by giving constitutional powers to regions.
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Recap

Feature	Federalism
❖ Levels of Government	Central + Regional/State governments
❖ Power Distribution	Powers divided constitutionally
❖ Independence	Each level independent in its jurisdiction
❖ Goal	Unity + accommodate diversity
❖ Example countries	India, USA, Belgium, Australia
❖ Indian Government called	Union or Federal, with strong Central government

Features of Federalism

1. Two or More Levels of Government

- There are at least two levels: one at the center (national) and others at state or regional level.

2. Division of Powers

- Each level has its **own responsibilities** (like law-making, tax collection, and administration).

3. Constitutional Status

- The powers of each level are written in the **Constitution**, and cannot be changed easily.

4. Mutual Agreement Needed

- One level (like the central government) **cannot change the powers** of the other level alone.
- **Both must agree** to any constitutional change.

5. Independent Judiciary

- **Courts settle disputes** between the center and states.
- The **Supreme Court** acts as the **referee**.

6. Financial Independence

- Each level has its own **sources of income**, so it can work independently.

■ Top Exam Questions (3 Marks Each)

Q1. What is federalism?

Ans: Federalism is a system where power is divided between a central authority and regional governments, and both levels are independent and constitutionally protected.

Q2. Mention any three features of federalism.

Ans:

1. Two or more levels of government.
 2. Powers divided by the Constitution.
 3. Courts can resolve disputes between levels of government.
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Q3. Why is the judiciary important in a federal country?

Ans: The judiciary, especially the Supreme Court, settles disputes between the center and states. It ensures both levels follow the Constitution.

Q4. How does the Constitution ensure financial independence in federalism?

Ans: The Constitution clearly defines sources of revenue for both central and state governments, giving them financial autonomy.

Q5. Why can't one level of government change the Constitution in a federation?

Ans: Because federalism is based on **mutual trust**, any change to powers must be approved by **both levels** of government.

1. Two or More Levels of Government

- India has **two main levels** of government:
 - **The Union (Central) Government**
 - **The State Governments**
 - There is also a **third tier**: Local Governments (Panchayats and Municipalities).
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2. Three Lists in the Constitution

India's Constitution divides subjects between the Centre and the States through three lists:

List	Subjects	Who can make laws?
Union List	Defence, foreign affairs, banking, etc.	Only Union Govt.

List	Subjects	Who can make laws?
State List	Police, public health, local govt., etc.	Only State Govts.
Concurrent List	Education, forests, marriage, etc.	Both can make laws, but Union law prevails if there's a conflict

3. Residuary Subjects

- Subjects like **computer software** or other new topics not listed in the three lists are called **residuary subjects**.
- Only the **Union Government** can make laws on these.

4. Unequal Powers to States

- India follows a "**holding together**" model of federalism.
- All states do not have equal powers:
 - States like **Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh** have **special status** under **Article 371** to protect their cultural and social practices.
 - **Union Territories (e.g., Delhi, Chandigarh)** are under **direct control of the Central Government**.

5. Constitutional Safeguards

- The **Constitution guarantees** the powers of each level.
- **Parliament cannot change this arrangement alone.**
 - A change requires:
 - **2/3rd majority** in Parliament, and
 - Approval from at least **half of the State legislatures**

6. Independent Judiciary

- The **High Courts and the Supreme Court** settle disputes between the Union and States.
- Judiciary ensures that **rules of the Constitution** are followed.

7. Financial Autonomy

- Both the Centre and States can **collect taxes** and manage their **own finances** as per their assigned powers.

Summary: Why is India a Federal Country?

Feature	Explanation
Levels of Govt.	Union, State, and Local
Power Division	Through Union, State, and Concurrent Lists
Residuary Powers	Belong to Union Govt.
Special Status	Some states have unique powers
Union Territories	Controlled by Central Govt.
Judicial Protection	Courts resolve disputes
Financial Power	Centre & States collect taxes independently

Top 3 Questions (3 Marks)

Q1. What makes India a federal country?

Ans: India has two levels of government (Union and State), power is divided by the Constitution, both levels have their own responsibilities, and disputes are resolved by an independent judiciary. This makes India a federal country.

Q2. What are Union Territories? How are they different from States?

Ans: Union Territories are areas too small to become states and are directly controlled by the Central Government. Unlike states, they do not have full autonomy or a separate government in most cases.

Q3. What is the importance of the judiciary in the Indian federal system?

Ans: The judiciary protects the Constitution and settles disputes between the Centre and the States, ensuring that power is shared as per constitutional rules.

Case	Subject	List	Who has authority?
Pokharan - Nuclear Tests	Defence, Nuclear Energy	Union List	Union Government only
Textbooks in Sikkim	Education	Concurrent List	Both (Centre prevails in conflict)

Case	Subject	List	Who has authority?
Police action on Naxalites	Police, Law & Order	State List	State Government only

How is Federalism Practised in India?

Although the Constitution provides the **legal framework** for federalism, its **successful implementation** depends on **democratic politics**, which includes:

- Respect for **diversity**
- Spirit of **cooperation**
- **Decentralised** decision-making

✓ 1. Linguistic States

- After 1947, the boundaries of Indian states were **redrawn based on languages**.
- States like **Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra** were formed to accommodate people who spoke the same language.
- Some states were also created on the basis of **culture, ethnicity or geography** (e.g. Nagaland, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand).
- **Initially feared** to cause disintegration, but this step actually **strengthened national unity**.

✓ 2. Language Policy

- **No national language** declared in the Constitution.
- **Hindi** is the **official language**, spoken by **~40%** of Indians.
- There are **22 Scheduled Languages** listed in the Constitution.
- **English** was to be phased out in 1965, but due to protests (especially in **Tamil Nadu**), it continues to be used for official purposes along with Hindi.
- States have the freedom to use their own **official languages**.
- Promotion of Hindi is allowed but **cannot be imposed**.

✓ 3. Centre-State Relations

- Early years: Same party ruled Centre and most States → **States had less autonomy**.
- When different parties ruled, **Centre often misused power** to dismiss state governments.
- Post-1990:
 - Rise of **regional parties**

- **Coalition governments** at the Centre
 - Greater cooperation and **respect for State autonomy**
 - **Supreme Court ruling** made arbitrary dismissal of state governments difficult.
 - Result: **Federalism strengthened in practice.**
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Top Exam Questions - 3 Marks or 5 Marks

Q1: What role has the formation of linguistic states played in strengthening federalism in India?

Answer:

- Helped people with a common language stay united within a state.
 - Created a sense of identity without threatening national unity.
 - Made administration easier and more efficient.
 - Strengthened democracy and federal spirit.
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Q2: Why is India's language policy considered flexible?

Answer:

- Hindi is the official language, not the national language.
 - Constitution allows use of **22 Scheduled Languages**.
 - English continues to be used along with Hindi.
 - States can have their **own official languages**.
 - No imposition of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states.
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Q3: How have Centre-State relations changed after 1990?

Answer:

- Rise of regional parties led to **coalition governments**.
 - States became **more assertive** and autonomous.
 - Centre had to **consult and cooperate** with states.
 - **Supreme Court ruling** protected elected state governments from arbitrary dismissal.
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Q4: How has democratic politics strengthened federalism in India?

Answer:

- Formation of linguistic states.
- Flexible language policy.
- Better Centre-State relations.
- Rise of coalition governments.
- Judiciary ensured **constitutional safeguards**.

List of 22 Scheduled Languages of India

S.No.	Language	S.No.	Language
1	Assamese	12	Malayalam
2	Bengali	13	Manipuri
3	Bodo	14	Marathi
4	Dogri	15	Nepali
5	Gujarati	16	Odia
6	Hindi	17	Punjabi
7	Kannada	18	Sanskrit
8	Kashmiri	19	Santali
9	Konkani	20	Sindhi
10	Maithili	21	Tamil
11	Malayalam	22	Urdu

1. What are Scheduled Languages?

Ans:

Scheduled Languages are the **22 languages** listed in the **Eighth Schedule** of the Indian Constitution. These languages are **officially recognised**, promoted, and can be used in government exams, education, and official documents.

2. How many languages were originally included in the Eighth Schedule, and how many are included now?

Ans:

Originally, **14 languages** were included in 1950. As of now, there are **22 languages**, after additions via constitutional amendments.

3. Name any five Scheduled Languages.

Ans:

Examples include **Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi**. (Choose any five from the official list.)

4. Which constitutional articles relate to Scheduled Languages?

Ans:

Article 344 - procedure for appointment of Official Language Commission

Article 351 - role of the Union in developing Hindi and encouraging other languages.

5. Why were more languages added to the Eighth Schedule after 1950?

Ans:

To promote **balanced linguistic representation**, ensure **cultural identity**, and **preserve heritage** of more regional languages through recognition and support.

6. Give two reasons why Scheduled Languages are important.

Ans:

1. They protect the **linguistic and cultural heritage** of diverse groups.
 2. They foster **inclusive administration and education**, allowing citizens to use their own languages.
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7. Name one language added to the Eighth Schedule in 1967.

Ans:

Sindhi was added by the 21st Amendment in 1967.

8. Which four languages were added in the 2003 Amendment?

Ans:

Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Santali were added in the 92nd Amendment Act, 2003.

9. How does Article 344 support Scheduled Languages?

Ans:

It mandates the appointment of **Commissioners and Committees** to review language use, suggest measures for development, and recommend inclusion of new languages.

10. Which act governs the promotion of Hindi as the official language?

Ans:

Article 351 directs the Union to **develop Hindi**, and the Official Languages Act (1963, amended 1967) supports its implementation.

11. Can a candidate appear for civil services exams in any Scheduled Language?

Ans:

Yes, candidates can take the **Civil Services Preliminary Exam** in any of the 22 Scheduled Languages as per government rules.

12. Why was the inclusion of languages like Manipuri and Konkani significant?

Ans:

It recognized the **distinct identity and culture** of their speakers in regions like Manipur and Goa, promoting **linguistic diversity**.

13. Mention two benefits of having multiple Scheduled Languages.

Ans:

1. Encourages **regional participation** in governance.
 2. Ensures **equity and justice** by allowing people to use their language in official matters.
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14. What criteria are used to add a language to the Eighth Schedule?

Ans:

Considerations include **historical significance**, **number of speakers**, **cultural importance**, and demands from linguistic communities.

15. Name three South Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule.

Ans:

Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam. (Any three are acceptable.)

16. Why wasn't English included as a Scheduled Language?

Ans:

English is classified as an **associate official language** but not a Scheduled Language. The Eighth Schedule focuses on promoting **Indian regional languages**.

17. How does recognizing Scheduled Languages aid in education?

Ans:

Allows use of **regional languages** as mediums of instruction, helping children learn in their **mother tongue** and preserve their linguistic identity.

18. Explain the role of the Official Language Commission.

Ans:

It reviews **progress of official language use**, recommends their development, and makes suggestions to the government as per **Article 344**.

19. Can a Scheduled Language lose its status?

Ans:

Yes, but only via a **constitutional amendment**, which must be passed by **2/3rd of Parliament** and ratified by a majority of state legislatures.

20. How do Scheduled Languages promote national integration?

Ans:

By recognizing linguistic diversity, they allow **people from different regions** to feel included, fostering a sense of **unity and belonging** across India.

1. How many Scheduled Languages are listed in the Eighth Schedule?

- A) 18
- B) **22**
- C) 24
- D) 26

Answer: B

2. Which year did the original Constitution include 14 languages in the Eighth Schedule?

- A) 1945
- B) **1950**
- C) 1956
- D) 1960

Answer: B

3. Which of the following is not a Scheduled Language?

- A) Sindhi
- B) Sanskrit
- C) Marathi
- D) **English**

Answer: D

4. Sindhi was added to the Eighth Schedule in which year?

- A) 1956
- B) 1960
- C) **1967**
- D) 1972

Answer: C

5. Which amendment included Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santali?

- A) **42nd**

- B) 52nd
- C) 72nd
- D) **92nd**

Answer: D

6. Which Article mandates the appointment of the Official Languages Commission?

- A) Article 345
- B) **Article 344**
- C) Article 350
- D) Article 351

Answer: B

7. Article 351 of the Constitution focuses on:

- A) Language rights
- B) Official languages for states
- C) **Development of Hindi**
- D) Education in regional languages

Answer: C

8. Which Scheduled Language is spoken in Goa?

- A) Konkani
- B) Bhojpuri
- C) Marathi
- D) **A and C**

Answer: D

9. Which Scheduled Language belongs to the northeast and has tribal roots?

- A) Bengali
- B) **Santali**
- C) Kannada
- D) Tamil

Answer: B

10. The Eighth Schedule does not include:

- A) Manipuri
- B) Kashmiri
- C) Tamil
- D) **Arabic**

Answer: D

11. A candidate can appear for UPSC mains examination in:

- A) Only Hindi or English
- B) Any one of the 22 Scheduled Languages
- C) English only
- D) **B and C**

Answer: B

12. Which Uttar Pradesh-based language was included in the Schedule in 2003?

- A) Awadhi
- B) Bhojpuri
- C) **Maithili**
- D) Magahi

Answer: C

13. Recognition of Scheduled Languages promotes:

- A) Official dominance
- B) Cultural unification
- C) **Linguistic diversity**
- D) Administrative uniformity

Answer: C

14. Which Article protects rights of linguistic minorities?

- A) Article 345
- B) **Article 346**
- C) Article 350A
- D) Article 351

Answer: C

15. How can a language lose its Scheduled status?

- A) Presidential order
- B) **Constitutional amendment**
- C) Legislative resolution
- D) Supreme Court order

Answer: B

16. Santali was included through:

- A) 21st Amendment
- B) 42nd Amendment
- C) **92nd Amendment**
- D) 51st Amendment

Answer: C

17. Which language is common to South India?

- A) Assamese
- B) **Kannada**
- C) Punjabi
- D) Odia

Answer: B

18. Which of the following is not in the Scheduled list?

- A) Nepali
- B) Gujarati
- C) Sindhi
- D) **Dhaari**

Answer: D

19. The Official Languages Commission reviews language use as per:

- A) Article 345
- B) Article 351
- C) **Article 344**
- D) Article 346

Answer: C

20. Scheduled status ensures:

- A) Official status in all states
- B) **Use in public exams and government work**
- C) No revenue sharing
- D) Neither A nor B

Answer: B

Learning Horizon