

- Q.1 Mention any one feature of federalism.**
- Q.2 What is the percentage of seats reserved for women in local government bodies?**
- Q.3 What is the language policy of the Government of India?**
- Q.4 What is meant by decentralisation?**
- Q.5 There are two kinds of routes through which federations have been formed. Describe them.**
- Q.6 Describe what undermined the spirit of federalism before 1990.**
- Q.7 Describe in brief the panchayati raj system.**
- Q.8 Give three reasons that highlight the need for power sharing within the states of India.**
- Q.9 What is Gram Sabha? Mention its important functions.**
- Q.10 Mention two achievements and two difficulties of the local self-governments in India.**

- Sol.1** Different levels of government govern the same citizens, but each level has its own jurisdiction in specific matters of legislation, taxation and administration.
- Sol.2** The percentage of seats reserved for women in local government bodies is 33.
- Sol.3** The language policy of the Government of India is not giving the status of national language to any one language. Hindi has been identified as the official language.
- Sol.4** When power is taken away from Central and State governments and given to local government, it is called decentralisation.
- Sol.5** (i) 'Coming together' federation: This is the first route which involves independent states coming together on their own to form a bigger unit and the states surrender some of their sovereignty to it. This type of federation includes the USA, Switzerland and Australia. All the constituent states in this type usually have equal power and are strong with regard to the federal government.
- (ii) 'Holding together' federation: This is the second route. Here a large country decides to divide its power between the constituent states and the national government. These types of federations are found in India, Spain and Belgium. In this category, the central government tends to be more powerful in comparison to the states. Very often different constituent units of the federation have unequal powers. Some units are even granted special powers
- Sol.6** In a true federal system, the Central government cannot order the State governments to do something. State governments have powers of its own for which it is not answerable to the Central government. But the situation was sharply different before 1990. This period saw the Centre more powerful and effective than the State governments. For a long time, the same political 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. 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. 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.
- Sol.7** Rural local government is popularly known by the name Panchayati raj. The panchayati raj is a three tier system. In other words, we can say that panchayati raj system works at three levels
- (i) Gram Panchayat at village level: This is a council consisting of several ward members, often

called panch, and a president or sarpanch. They are directly elected by all the adult population living in that ward or village. It is the decision-making body for the entire village. The panchayat works under the overall supervision of the gram sabha.

(ii) Block Samiti at block level: A few gram panchayats are grouped together to form what is usually called a panchayat samiti or mandal or block. The members of this representative body are elected by all the panchayat members in that area.

(iii) Zilla Parishad at district level: Zilla Parishad is the body at highest level of the panchayati raj system. All the panchayat samitis or mandals in a district together constitute the zilla (district) parishad.

Sol.8 • India is a vast country and cannot be run only through the two-tiers (the Union Government, representing the entire country and the state governments).

- States in India are as large as independent countries of Europe. Many of these states are internally very diverse.

- Federal power sharing in India needs another tier of government, below that of the State governments, in order to solve the grassroot problems more efficiently and quickly.

Sol.9 • Gram Sabha is one of the three main bodies of the panchayat system. It consists of all adult men and women in a village. Its functions are-

- The panchayat works under the overall supervision of the gram sabha.

- 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.

- If not satisfied with the work of the panchayat, it has the power to remove its members by a vote of no-confidence

Sol.10 Two achievements

Local-self governments have made the local administration easier and more effective. Constitutional status for local government has helped to deepen democracy in our country. It has also increased women's representation and voice in our democracy.

Two difficulties

While elections are held regularly, gram sabhas are not held regularly. Most state governments have not transferred significant powers to the local governments. Nor have they given adequate resources.