



Teacher's Guide

Federalism

Part 1

Based on the NCERT Curriculum for Standard X



JANAAGRAHA CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP & DEMOCRACY

Janaagraha's initiative to improve citizen engagement in India's democracy through their civic learning program

Developed in collaboration with Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC)

Federalism | Teacher's Guide (1/4)

Part 1

Class X

Board – CBSE

Subject – Social Science

Textbook – Democratic Politics- II for class X (NCERT)

Chapter 2 – Federalism

Number of parts – 04

Length – 75-85 minutes (estimated, for a class of 40-45 students)

Note: Teachers may divide the lesson plan into as many periods as they see fit

Section I – What are we going to learn and why is it important?

Learning objectives

Students will:

- Understand the meaning of federalism.
- Understand the key features of federalism.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to

- Understand the benefits of a federal structure of government.

Key Terms

Union Government	Federalism	Unitary form of government	Jurisdiction	Federal system of government
State Government				

Materials needed

- Projector to show pictures of politicians
- Print outs of activity sheets

Section II – How are we going to learn?

1. Discussion on the Indian Government

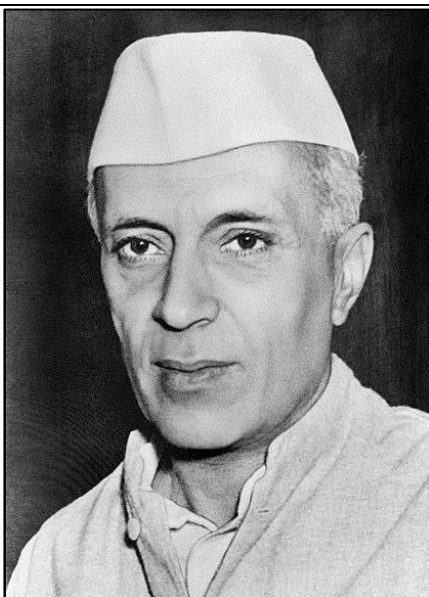
Time: 15 minutes

Facilitation notes:

The following discussion introduces students to the concept of multiple levels of government:

Let's start with a simple question: how many of you read the newspaper?

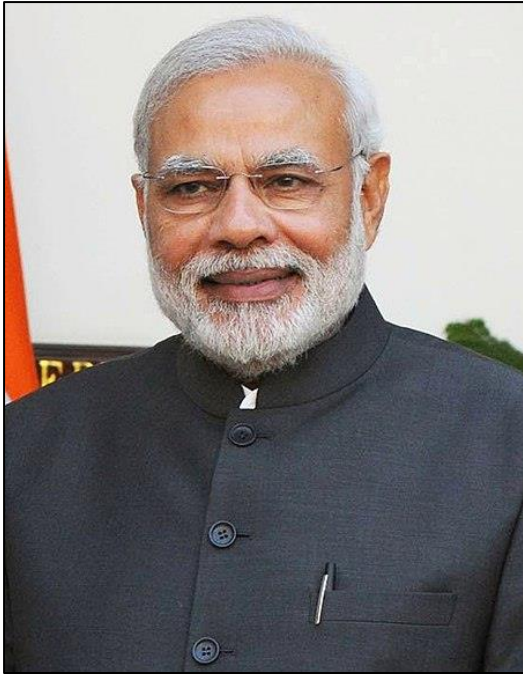
- And how many of you read news related to the government or politics and not just news about movies and film actors. (say this in a slightly joking manner)
- Okay, so I will project 4 images in front of you. I want you to tell me who are these people and what do they do/ did.



Source: [Wikipedia](#)



Source: [Wikipedia](#)



Source: [Wikipedia](#)



Source: [BBC News](#)

- Who are these people? (take a few responses)
- For those of you who don't know, the above photos are of **Jawaharlal Nehru, Mamata Banerjee, Narendra Modi, and Jayalalithaa**. I am now hoping all of you know who these people are? (Two Prime Ministers of India and two Chief Ministers)
- What does it mean to be a Prime Minister and a Chief Minister in this country? (A Prime Minister is responsible for governance in the whole country and a Chief Minister oversees the affairs of his/her state).
- The Prime Minister is a part of the central government or the **union government** while the Chief Minister is a part of the state government.
- When there is a problem with country, let's say the country's defense or an investment from a foreign country, who will be responsible for it? (the Prime Minister and the central government)
- What do you think is the Chief Minister and state government's duty? (All issues related to the state)

- (The teacher now discusses a few more instances of when the state government is responsible for the state's welfare. Issues like drought or flood in the state, crime in the state, state schemes, poverty etc.)
- We understand that even though we have a government at the center, there are a lot of issues that are addressed at the state's level. These issues make it important for us to have a state government. Can you imagine the impact of not having state governments but only one large central government? (Expected answers- the centre will control everything, they will not listen to everyone, people will feel ignored etc.)
- The Indian Constitution mandates that we have three levels of government- the center/ union, state, and local. This system is called the **federal system of government**.
- Definition (from the book): **Federalism** is a system of government in which the power is divided between a central authority and various constituent units of the country. (the teacher to write this on the board)
- Any doubts, before we move on to why we need a federal system of government.

2. The importance of a federal government.

Activity: Who am I? What do I want to see?

Time: 20-25 minutes

Materials Needed: Activity sheets for every student

Facilitation Notes:

- We will start this part with an activity I am really excited about. You will all get a sheet, the sheet is fairly self-explanatory. I want you all to take 10 minutes, think and fill it completely. Try and not leave anything blank and think as differently as possible.
- Activity Sheet

Who am I?	What do I want to see?
Full Name:	The one place in India I want to see:
My mother's first language:	The one new Indian language I want to learn:
My father's first language:	The one Indian food item I want to eat:
My birth place:	

- I want everyone to now see this video:



Video: Incredible India

The video shows a woman travelling through India and how diverse it is.

Source: [YouTube](#)

- Okay, now I want to take a few answers. (the teacher to only write one word answers on the board, so the board is full of names of languages, places, and religions)
- Let's start with your father's first language, then your birth place, then the language you want to learn, the place you want to see. Students to keep giving out the answers while I write them on the board.
- (The board is full of different names from all over India). Isn't this a beautiful board!
- We are in a class full of such different students and we have such diverse answers. Some of you want to visit Gujrat, some Kashmir, and some Goa. You want to learn Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati, English and so on. Your parents are all from different parts of the country.
- I will now share a few facts with you. India has:
 - 29 states
 - 22 official languages (about 880 regional languages!)
 - 130 crore people
 - All major types of terrains including mountains, coasts, plains, islands, deserts and the plateaus.
 - All climatic conditions
- In short, India is a huge country. And every corner of this country has its own issues. While some states are bound to have droughts, some are prone to floods, some have a majority of one religion, some have the other. Languages, food, clothes change in every state.
- Let's ask this question again: now in such a country, if there is only one central government, what do you think will happen? (connect this back to the question you asked at the end of the first discussion)

- Having had this discussion, can we now summarise why it is important for India to have central and state governments?
 - India is a huge country with a variety of people.
 - Every state has its own issues. To make sure every state gets attention, state governments are important. For instance, a lot of states in the North east like Meghalaya and Manipur have too much rainfall, while Rajasthan has no rainfall at all, Punjab's economy is based majorly on agriculture, while Kerala gets a lot of its money from tourism.
 - The country is too big to be governed by one government.
 - In a central government, no state will be able to focus on its own people and their special needs.
 - The diversity of people, their religion, regional identity etc. will not be protected
- So, is it fair for me to say that federalism as a system is very important for India?

3. Features of federalism

Time: 20-25 minutes

Facilitation Notes:

- Before we discuss the important features of a federal system of government, I want someone to recap the definition of federalism.
Case Question:
- Now let's say that I am the Prime Minister of country X and after getting elected, I appoint _____ (any student's name) as the Chief Minister of state A and _____ (another student) as the Chief Minister of state B. I sit down with both these CMs regularly and tell them what to do in their respective states. I give orders on all state matters. At one point, I get really annoyed with _____ (Chief Minister of state A) and I suspend him and instead appoint _____ (a third student). Is this a federal government? (No)
- In a federal government, it is essential that the state and the center are separate. This means that the powers of the state and center are independent of each other and there is no way the center can take away the powers from the state.
- A form of government where the central government is either completely in control or delegates powers to the state government and can take them back is a **unitary form of government**. Eg, **Sri Lanka is a unitary form of government, Belgium moved from unitary to federal form of government.**
- The most important feature of federalism is: **The state and the central governments are independent of each other.**
- Let's now think of the following question before we list the other features of the federal system of government. (give them 5 minutes discussion time)
- What are the top 3-4 important things that a government needs in order to be strong, stable and protect the citizens well? As you discuss this answer, think how should a federal system of government be designed so that both central and state governments are strong and stable.

- After discussion, draw the following table on the board. I want everyone to see how I have filled the first column and then fill the rest to complete the list of features of a federal government

Essential trait of the government	Feature of federal government
Power- A government should have legal power to protect its citizens. At the same time, it should have the power to punish those who break the law. This power should be independent and should be easy to take away.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since power is important for a government to function, a federal system of government should ensure that the centre and state governments have separate and independent powers and do not overlap with each other. They should have separate subjects on which they can decide and separate areas of jurisdiction. For instance, if the state government has power over issues such as commerce and agriculture, then the central government should not be able to over rule the state and make policies or laws on these subjects. This division of power should be clear.
Money- Every successful government needs money to be able to provide its citizens with services, run public institutions etc.	
Stability- The government should be stable and its existence should be guaranteed by the constitution and should not be under threat from internal or external forces.	

Solutions Sheet:

Essential trait of the government	Feature of federal government
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For instance, if the state government has power over issues such as commerce and agriculture, then the central government should not be able to over rule the state and make policies or laws on these subjects. This division of power should be clear.
Money- Every successful government needs money to be able to provide its citizens with services, run public institutions etc.	A successful federal system would make sure that every level of government has different sources of income so that the state governments do not have to ask the central government for money thereby ensuring its financial autonomy.
Stability- The government should be stable and its existence should be guaranteed by the constitution and should not be under threat from internal or external forces.	The stability of a government is imperative for a society to function peacefully. A successful federal government should ensure that the system of different governments functioning together should be stable. At no point should the legitimacy of any government be under question. It should also be extremely difficult to dismiss any government.

- While these are all the important points, I want everyone to note down all the features in their notebooks in brief. Also please refer to your books for all the features in case of any confusion. A federal system of government has the following features:
 - There are two or more levels of government.
 - Every level of government has its own areas of jurisdiction.
 - The authority of each level is guaranteed by the constitution.
 - The provisions of the constitution can only be changed after consent from both the centre and state.
 - Courts have the power to interpret the constitution.
 - Sources of revenue for each level of government are specified within the constitution to ensure a flow of income for each government.
 - The federal system thus has dual objectives: to safeguard and promote unity of the country, while at the same time accommodate regional diversity.

4. Federalism around the world

Time: 5 minutes

10

- Mark 'T' if the statement is True and 'F' if the statement is false
 - Federalism means that the central government has no authority.

- In a country like India, it doesn't really matter if we are a federal system or not.
- States have their own sources of revenue guaranteed by the constitution
- A federal system is a good way to ensure that the diversity of the country is protected.
- The provisions of the constitution with respect to the powers of the state can be changed by passing a bill by the central government.

Section IV – Closure

Time: 5 minutes

Summary by students

Get a student to summarise the definition and features of federalism. Ask other students to add to his points to ensure everything is covered.

Recap by a student

Time: 2 minutes

Recap by the teacher

Time: 3 minutes

Please ensure that all the following points are covered in the recap by the teacher and student.

- As countries become large and more populated, a single level of government is not enough to ensure that all the issues in the country are resolved.
- The Indian Constitution, therefore, mandates that we have three forms of government- the center/ union, state, and local. This system is called the **federal system of government**.
- **Federalism** is a system of government in which the power is divided between a central authority and various constituent units of the country.
- In order to ensure that the federal system is not impacted by politics, the Indian Constitution ensures that state and centre are separate in their powers and responsibilities:
 - Every level of government has its own areas of jurisdiction
 - The authority of each level is guaranteed by the constitution
 - The provisions of the constitution can only be changed after consent from all the concerned levels of government
 - Courts have the power to interpret the constitution.
 - Sources of revenue for each level of government are specified within the constitution to ensure a flow of income for each government.

- The federal system thus has dual objectives: to safeguard and promote unity of the country, while at the same time accommodate regional diversity.
- Federalism is not just a feature of the Indian government system. It is a system that is followed around the world including countries like USA, Brazil, Australia, Spain etc.

Section V- Homework

Find out answers to the following:

- a. Name three countries that have federal systems of governance.
- b. Name one country that has a unitary form of governance.
- c. In a country like India, federalism makes more sense than a unitary form of government. Justify in 150 words.

Section VI -Additional Resources

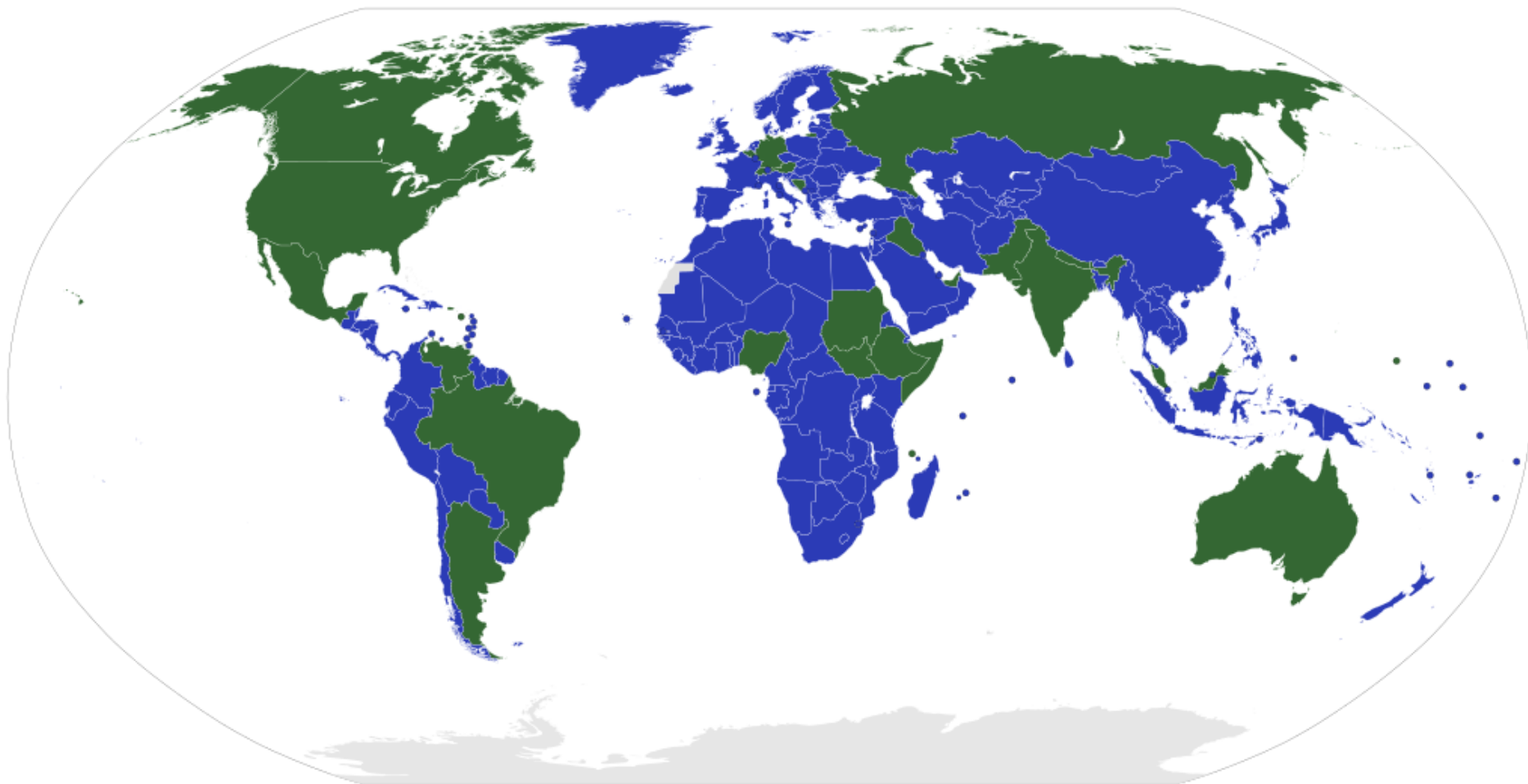
Resources for teachers

1. Article: Indian identity is forged in diversity
The opinion article very interestingly talks about how India is an amalgamation of multiple identities.
Link: [The Guardian](#)

Resources for students

1. Video: What does it mean to be Indian?
The talk is a very interesting take on how we see our multiple identities as Indians
Link: [YouTube](#)

Printable world map for activity federalism around the world.



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