



Teacher's Guide

Federalism

Part 2

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 (2/4)

Part 2

Class X

Board – CBSE

Subject – Social Science

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

Chapter 2 – Federalism

Number of parts – 04

Length – 70-85 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 why India is a 'holding' together Federation.
- Understand the division of power among different levels of government in India.
- Know the contents of the union, state and concurrent list.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to

- Better understand the dynamics of centre-state relations in India.

Key Terms

Coming Together Federation	Holding Together Federation	Three tier system of government	Union, state, and concurrent list	Residuary power	Subjects
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Materials needed

1. Discussion prompts for activity one

Section II – How are we going to learn?

1. The formation of the Indian Republic

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials Needed: 5 chits with one prompt each written on them.

Facilitation notes:

- Okay, we will start from where we left off the last time . Will someone recap Federalism for me? Just the meaning and one or two important features in your own words.
- I want 5 volunteers to come in front of the class and hold these 5 notes from me. Read them out after I have finished my discussion.
- How many of you have heard of the events that led to the Indian Independence? Let's discuss all that happened in India immediately after independence. (Take a few answers).
- Okay, I will now mention a few very important issues that existed in India at the time of independence. Each student reads the note slowly so that everyone understands it.



Source: [Scroll](#)

Note 1: India had just gotten independence but this also meant separation of the Indian subcontinent into two countries- India and Pakistan. After a lot of pressure from a major political party of the Muslims (Indian Muslim League), all Muslims were given a separate country and there was a mass movement of Muslims from all over the country to Pakistan and movement of Hindus from Pakistan to India. Tensions between Indians and Muslims were so massive that there was widespread violence throughout the country. In fact, hundreds and hundreds of people were killed during this time.

Source: India's Struggle for Independence by Bipin Chandra.

Note 2: India was no longer the rich and prosperous land. The British has looted most of the country of its wealth and riches. The partition had led to the death of nearly a million people. Migration between India and Pakistan was made worse by violence, disease, and food shortage.

Source: Article in the [Telegraph](#)

Note 3: India was not just one country. It was a collection of princely states, countless languages, religions, castes, professions, and differences. India's size and diversity prevented functioning of a too unified administration but at the same time demanded a central authority that was strong enough to keep its administrative structure from disintegrating.

Source: Federalism-1, The Indian Constitution by Granville Austin.

Note 4: India's preoccupation with issues such as communalism from the late twenties till partition never allowed the issue of state rights to assume importance. For Indians the only political issue that was important besides partition was that of community rights and status.

Source: Federalism-1, The Indian Constitution by Granville Austin.

Note 5: At that time, India had two very important objectives: to improve the standard of living of its people, and to boost the economy by increasing industrial and agricultural productivity. To make sure that the country did not collapse under the weight of interstate issues and to ensure that India as a collective progressed, a very strong central government was important.

Source: Federalism-1, The Indian Constitution by Granville Austin.

- Let's summarise these issues:
 - Communal and religious tensions.
 - Widespread poverty.
 - Need for a strong central government.
 - Need to give power to all states.
 - Distrust among states and center.
- In this situation, can you imagine how our law makers and the writers of the constitution have solved all these massive issues!

2. Discussion: Which type of federation should India choose?

Time: 10-15 minutes

- So you understand the problem, now I will give you two solutions, tell me which is better:

Coming Together Federation	Holding Together Federation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All states retain their individual identity, are very powerful in their own self, and retain their sovereignty. They only agree to be together to pool their powers and protect each other from outside forces. • The independent states have equal power and are not too much under the influence of the centre. • Examples of such countries include USA, Switzerland, and Australia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large country decides to distribute its power among smaller states. • The states are not independent of the centre. • The centre divides power among states but retains power to take important decisions. • Examples of such countries include India, Spain, and Belgium.

- Which of these two types would you have chosen given India's situation and needs at the time of Independence? (Take responses for both the cases. Drive the conversation towards how coming together federation would have made the centre less powerful and made India weak. Likely responses in favour of coming together federation could be that every state in India is very different, they should have the maximum freedom, the centre cannot interfere, people will not feel that one state is more powerful than the other, every culture and religion will be given due importance etc. Likely responses in favour of holding together federation is that it promotes unity in the country, it ensures that the country is protected, that everyone thinks of themselves as Indians, it will help to reduce differences among people etc.)
- Discuss the positives and negatives of each system. What would happen in India were to pick one form over the other?
- (Likely responses:

Holding Together Federation	Coming Together Federation
Advantages: Independence to the states, Non interference, people from different states will get due importance and attention, no one larger state will have an advantage etc.	Advantages: The country will be united, the centre will have influence and will be able to promote harmony among the states, there will be more profitable relations between states, everyone will be an Indian first.
Disadvantages: The country may feel divided, the central government will not be very powerful, states may refuse to co-operate with one another etc.	Disadvantages: The centre may have too much power, a few states may feel ignored, people may not get due attention, a few languages or cultures may get lost etc.

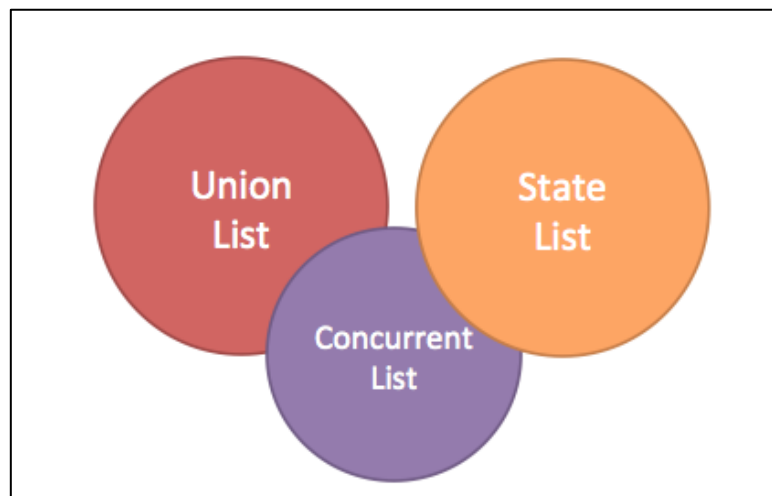
- India chose to be a 'Holding Together Federation'. This means that in India the central government is more powerful than the states and the power is divided between the state and centre but not equally. Why?
- Please also go through these concepts in your text books on Page 15.

2. The union, state, and concurrent lists:

Time: 20 minutes

Facilitation Notes

- I was recently reading in the paper how so many road accidents in smaller lanes happen because there is no street lighting.
- Who do you think is responsible for ensuring that all streets are well lit in a town or city? Now let's say that there is a short circuit and all the street lighting near my house breaks down. Will I write to a department in the state government or the centre (expected answer- state)
- Since the time of independence, I know that in India, power is divided among central and state governments. Later a third tier of government was also added in the forms of panchayats and municipalities. Therefore, it is divided in three levels- the centre, state, and panchayats and municipalities. India is a three tier system of government.
- The Indian constitution clearly provides for a division of power between the three levels of government (the third tier of government was later added to the constitution) To put it briefly, the 74th amendment to the constitution (also known as the Nagarpalika Act) made the local level of government more active and strong in India. We will study about this in detail in the last lesson. This was done to ensure that there was a clear division of power and resources. The constitution divides these topics or **subjects** into three lists:
 - **The Union List**
 - **The State List**
 - **The Concurrent List**
- Can you guess what these lists would contain?



- Make students draw the following table in their notebooks:

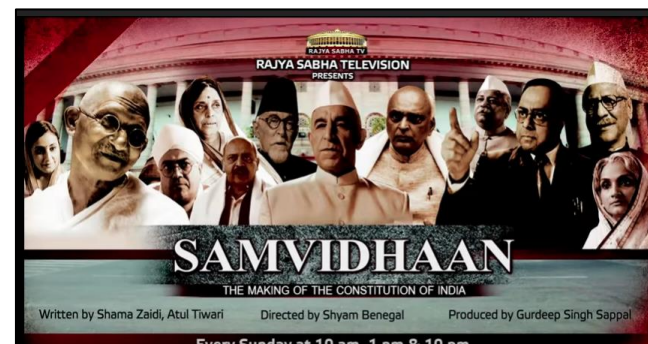
Union List	State List	Concurrent List
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This includes subjects of national importance and can be decided upon only by the centre. • For e.g.: Currency, foreign affairs, banking, defence etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This list includes subjects of state and local importance and can be acted upon only by the state. • For e.g.: police, trade, commerce, agriculture etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This includes subjects of common importance and are of interest both to the state and centre • For e.g.: marriage, adoption, trade unions, education, forest etc. • If the centre and state make contradictory laws on these subjects, the law made by the centre will prevail over the law made by a state.

- What if a new subject comes up that was not mentioned in the constitution? For e.g., I am sure the writers of our constitution did not think of social media when they were writing the constitution!
- On a serious note, issues like online safety, internet, software etc. were not a part of any list. In such a situation, our constitution has given the central government special **residuary power** to be able to make decisions on subjects not mentioned in any of the lists.
- Any doubts?

- As I mentioned earlier, India is a ‘holding together’ federation. A point to note is that all states do not have equal powers.
- Jammu and Kashmir has special powers and a constitution of its own. For instance, unless an Indian is a resident of the state, he/she cannot own land in Jammu and Kashmir. Many provisions of the constitution do not exist in the state unless they are passed by the state assembly.
- Some smaller units in India are too small to be independent states but are not a part of any state. These are our union territories. For example Chandigarh, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands to name a few. The central government also has special powers to run these union territories.
- The subjects mentioned in the three lists cannot be easily changed or moved around. In fact, if the government desires to make any changes in the power sharing, it needs to first pass a constitutional amendment bill in the parliament with a 2/3rd majority and then ratify it in at least half of the state legislatures.
- In conclusion, the constitution has ensured that state governments remain strong and their subjects and powers are clearly mentioned.
- Let’s now finish this section with an activity. The activity is very simple. I will read out a few instances from my personal life. I want you to tell me who in your understanding I should go to, the centre or the state.

I want to complain about my neighbour who I think beats his wife.	Centre/ State (State)
I think that someone has fake notes in the bank.	Centre/ State (Centre)
I want a driving license to be issued to me after I take a driving test.	Centre/ State (Centre)
My friend from Spain wants to visit and wants a visa.	Centre/ State (Centre)
I am very concerned about the poor quality of education in the country.	Centre/ State (Either)
A friend wants to get married and wants to register the marriage.	Centre/ State (Either)
I am a farmer and I want a well dug near my village	Centre/ State (State)

- And these are only a few examples. Imagine having to think about every possible area that can affect a country!
- Let’s wrap this conversation with this informative video.
- **Video: Samvidhaan- Episode 8/10 (condensed)**
The video explains how the centre and state divided their powers and how state government was given more power despite pressures from the centre. The teacher to play this video from 3 minutes 42 seconds to the end.



Link: [YouTube](#)

3. Debate: Centre State Dispute Resolution : Thinking in pairs and in a group

Time: 20-25 minutes

Note to the teacher: The purpose of this activity is to make the students understand that even though the division of subjects between the union, state, and concurrent list is very clear, there are times when the subjects of the concurrent list need to be extensively debated on between the centre and states.

Facilitation Notes:

- Till now, we have studied in detail how every subject has been categorised under the union list, centre list or the state list. However, this is not as clear and easy to implement as we might think.
- Very often, the central government and state governments disagree on matters that are listed in the concurrent list. Though the constitution clearly mentions that in such a situation, the decision of the centre will over rule the states, the state and centre often get into discussions to come to mutually agreeable solutions.
- Some of the most common disputes are on matters related to education, taxation etc.
- Now let's understand a dispute where the centre and state had different policies on the same issue and how the two levels of government resolved this issue.
- For this purpose, I want the class to divide into three groups: The centre, the state, and the observers. (The teacher divides the class into three groups)

The case:

The Right to Education Act, 2009 prohibits detention of children till they complete elementary education i.e., class 8. According to this Act, all children are automatically promoted to the next grade, irrespective of her/ his performance up to grade 8. However, many state governments are demanding that this 'no-detention' policy needs to be removed and each state should be allowed to decide whether they want to detain students or not. State governments and the central government are now in conversation on what should be done.

- The class is now split into three groups. Within your groups, I want everyone to form smaller groups and discuss this:
- The state government group- All the students will argue why no-detention policy should be removed and each state should be given the freedom to decide.
- The central government group- All students will argue why a uniform no-detention policy should be implemented across the country and no state should be given this flexibility.
- The observers are thinking of a solution on what can be done to make sure this issue is resolved in the correct manner.
- (The teacher to give students 10 minutes discussion time in class and draw the following table on the board. Once the students have finished the discussion, the teacher to ask for multiple students in every group to stand up and give their opinions and write all the points on the board)

Central Government on why a uniform no-detention policy is important.	State governments on why every state should be given the freedom to decide for their students.	Observers How can this issue be resolved?
<p>(Sample points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolishing the detention policy will discourage students and increase dropouts. • Detention can cause emotional problems for the students. • There is no proper way to ensure that the students who are detained are treated well and will pass the next time. • If students are detained in some states and not detained in others, it will create a difference in the learning levels across states. The whole country should follow the same policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If students are not detained then the problems they face in studies are not really addressed till grade 8, by then it is already too late. • Promoting a student for no reason, even when he hasn't cleared the exam is as bad for the student as the teachers. • If students do understand what is being taught in class, it will also discourage the teacher. • Every state's situation, education system, level of students is different. A state is in the best position to solve this problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be regular exams and students should be held back if they don't clear them across the country. • Students should be given extra classes and promoted across the country. • The no-detention policy should be changed on a state-by-state basis. • Every state should be allowed to make a decision for themselves.

Debrief:

- Some of the points you all made were absolutely brilliant. Now let's look at the actual amendment that was passed by the central government.
- There are differing views on whether children should be detained for failing examinations in elementary school. Some argue that automatic promotion reduces incentive for children to learn and for teachers to teach. Others argue that detaining a child leads to drop outs and does not focus on the systemic factors that affect learning such as quality of teachers, schools, and assessment.
- Under the Act, no child may be detained till he completes class 8. The Bill amends this provision to state that a regular examination will be held in class 5 and class 8 at the end of every academic year. If a child fails the examination, he will be given additional instruction and the opportunity for a re-examination within two months from the declaration of the result.
- If the child fails in the re-examination, the relevant central or state government may allow schools to hold back the child. Further, the central or state government will decide the manner and the conditions in which a child may be held back. (Source: [PRS Legislative Brief](#))
- Even though the constitution clearly lays down the subjects, division of power is a very complicated issue and often needs to be dealt with a lot of sensitivity and care.
- Another example to think of is labour. Though the subject is mentioned in the concurrent list, if the centre makes one standard law for all labour, especially women, then it will not work across states. For instance, some states are safer for women than some other. While women can easily work late in some, there may be safety issues in others. In such cases, every state will have to have their own rules and the centre and state will have to collectively come up with laws.

Section III –Assessment

Time: 10 minutes

Materials needed: Blackboard and chalk

Facilitation notes:

- Mark 'T' if the statement is True and 'F' if the statement is false
 - India is a holding together federation.
 - The subjects of the concurrent list are under the central government alone.
 - The state government has powers independent of the centre in India.

- Union, state and concurrent list cover all possible subjects that relate to governance.
- Fill In the blanks:
 - India is a _____ federation while USA is a _____ federation.
 - _____ and _____ and examples of subjects in the state list.
- Mark the correct answer:

The distinguishing feature of a federal government is:

 - National government gives some powers to the provincial governments.
 - Power is distributed among the legislature, executive and judiciary.
 - Elected officials exercise supreme power in the government.

Governmental power is divided between different levels of government.

■ **Section IV – Closure**

Time: 5 minutes

Recap by a student and teacher

Time: 5 minutes

Pick a student and ask him to summarise. The teacher to add to points whenever the student misses.

In the recap by the teacher, the following points should be covered:

- There are two types of federations- coming together and holding together. India is a holding together federation. This implies that the powers are divided between the centre and the smaller units of government such as the state government. But the central government is more powerful than the states.
- In order to ensure balance of power, governance subjects are divided into three lists- the union (subjects decided by the state), state (subjects decided by the centre), and concurrent lists (subjects decided on by both).
- Both the centre and the state have the power to levy taxes to raise money to carry out their functions.
- The central government has the power to decide on subjects not mentioned in any of the lists. These are the centre's residuary powers.
- The powers and subjects are clearly divided in the constitution. In case the constitution has to be amended, a resolution has to be passed by both the houses of the parliament with at least a two-third majority and then ratified by the legislatures of at least half the states.

- The judiciary plays an important role in ensuring that everything goes on smoothly and in case of any disputes the courts have the power to interpret the constitution and give a decision.

Section V- Homework

Find out answers to the following:

- a. What is the main difference between a federal form of government and a unitary one? Explain with an example.
- b. Evaluate the Indian Federal system. Mention at least 4 points, positive or negative, and give a final conclusion.
- c. Ask any 5 neighborhood adults if they know which government department to approach for the following: License renewal, Passport renewal, currency fraud, local garbage, admission in a government school.
- d. Find out which level of government will have the final call in the following cases:
 - Pokhran, the place where India conducted its nuclear tests, lies in Rajasthan. Suppose the Government of Rajasthan was opposed to the Central Government's nuclear policy, could it prevent the Government of India from conducting the nuclear tests?
 - Suppose the Government of Sikkim plans to introduce new textbooks in its schools. But the Union Government does not like the style and content of the new textbooks. In that case, does the state government need to take permission from the Union Government before these textbooks can be launched?
 - Suppose the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Orissa have different policies on how their state police should respond to the Naxalites. Can the Prime Minister of India intervene and pass an order that all the Chief Ministers will have to obey?

Section VI- Additional resources

Resources for teachers:

1. Article: A strong union can only be a union of strong states

The article gives a very interesting opinion on how centre state relations in India should be keeping India's population and size in mind.

Link: [India Today](#)

2. Document: Constitution of India
Pg. 194- 202 mentions all the subjects in the three lists.
Link: [Legislative. Gov](#)
3. Book: India's struggle for independence
This is a very detailed and in-depth book detailing India's independence movement.
Link: [Amazon](#)
4. Article: Indian Independence
The article details the violent events that followed the Indian Independence.
Link: [The Telegraph](#)

Resources for students:

1. Article: How Indian newspapers reported Independence and Partition in 1947
The article shows various newspaper clippings of how the Indian independence was reported in newspapers across the country.
Link: [Scroll](#)
2. Video: Federalism in the USA
The video explains how coming together federalism works in the USA.
Link: [YouTube](#)

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