

## **UNITARY AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

On the basis of relationship between the centre and the units, the governments may be classified as unitary and federal. In a unitary government, all the powers of government are vested in the central government whereas in a federal government, the powers of government are divided between the centre and the units. Their distinctive feature and comparative merits and demerits are given as follows.

### **UNITARY GOVERNMENT**

Unitary government is a kind of government system in which a *single power*, which is known as the central government, controls the whole government. In fact, all powers and administrative divisions authorities lies at the central place. Today most of the government systems in the world are based on unitary system of government. It is slightly different from federal model of government. In unitary government, central government has the power to increase or curtail the power of subnational units. It can create and abolished the same. UK, Afghanistan, Italy, China, Saudi Arabia, Spain, etc., are the important examples of unitary government. The unitary government system is based on the *concept of consistency, unity, and identity* that's why the centralization of power and authority system remains at the top priority. The *decision-making power rests with the central government* that are shared by the government with the lower level government when needed. There are not so many options for change and new innovation as the *people have a very limited voice* in this government system. There are many merits and demerits of unitary government. It is *useful in the term that rules and regulations* in this government systems remain consist and equal throughout the country. Moreover, it is *less expensive as compared to the federal government* because the number of powerful people remains very low. In a time of emergency, it makes *timely decisions as compared to the federal* government system. But at the same time, the *concept of freedom of speech and expression always remains at a low* priority that's why most of the principles of unitary government are much similar to that of dictatorship system of government. Its distinctive feature is given as follows;

#### **1. Concentration of Powers:**

A unitary government is one in which all the powers of administration are vested in a single centre. The centre is omnipotent. A unitary state may be divided into small units for the sake of administrative convenience but the units do not have any constitutional status of their own.

In other words, the constitution does not confer any powers on the units. It is the central government which delegates certain powers to the units on its own accord. The units are, therefore, subordinate agents of centre. The powers enjoyed by them are the gifts of the centre and as such these can be taken back at any moment. The units are thus not autonomous and independent in any way.

## **2. Single Government:**

In a unitary government, there is a single set of governmental apparatus. There is a single supreme legislature, single executive body and one supreme judiciary. England, for example, is a unitary state. She has one parliament as her legislature, the King-in-Council as the executive and the judicial committee of the House of Lords as her supreme judiciary.

## **3. Written or unwritten Constitution:**

A unitary government may or may not have a written constitution. As for example, England and France are unitary states. France has a written constitution but England has none

## **4. Rigid or Flexible Constitution:**

Unlike a federation, a unitary state may or may not have a rigid constitution, e.g., the constitution of England is flexible but that of France is slightly rigid.

## **5. No Special Judiciary:**

There is no need of having a special judiciary with wide powers of judicial veto in a unitary government. Even the highest court of U.K., for example, cannot sit in judgment over the law passed by Parliament.

## **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

Federal government is a type of national government in which government have powers to delegates the power to other elected member of the states. There can be two level of federal government in a country either it is performing through common institutions or through powers as prescribed by a constitution of the state. It is totally *opposite to the unitary* government. In federation or federal government, provinces or territories enjoys some rights as are available to the independent states. However international diplomacy, national security,

foreign affairs and other kinds of international dealings are solely made by the federal government. Pakistan, India, Brazil, Switzerland, Australia, Belgium, Canada, etc., are the significant examples of federal government. Mostly the federal government system is referred to the United States government. This government is based on the republicanism and federalism. In the federal system, *power is jointly shared* between the state and federal governments. In the federal government system, the powers never rest with one national government. However, there can be *certain powers and authorities that remain totally with the federal government* like policies on defence, budget, international diplomacy, etc. The hierarchy of power in federal government system starts from the federal level and then flows to the state and then local level. Its distinctive feature is given as follows;

### **1. Division of Powers:**

In a federal government the powers of administration are divided between the centre and the units. The powers may be distributed in two different ways. Either the constitution states what powers the federal authority shall have, and leaves the remainder to the federating units, or it states what powers the federating units shall possess and leaves the remainder to the federal authority. The remainder is generally known as residuary powers. The first method was employed in America and the second in Canada. The federal government in U.S.A., for example, is weak in relation to the states whereas the federal government in Canada is more powerful. In a federation both the federal and state governments are independent and autonomous in the spheres of their powers. 'One is not subordinate to the other. Both derive their powers from the constitution which is the supreme law of the land. The powers enjoyed by the units are, therefore, original and not delegated by the centre.

### **2. Separate Government:**

In a federal form of government both the centre and the units have their separate set of governmental apparatus. America is a federation of states. States have therefore separate legislatures and Separate executives.

### **3. Written Constitution:**

A federal government must have a written constitution. As a federation is a political partnership of various states and consequently there must be a written agreement in the form of a written constitution.

#### **4. Rigid Constitution:**

The constitution of a federation should be more or less rigid. It is regarded as a sacred agreement, the spirit of which should not be easily violated. A flexible constitution allows a scope to the central government to curtail the autonomy of the federating states.

#### **5. Special Judiciary:**

In a federation, there are possibilities of constitutional disputes arising between the federal centre and the units or between one unit and another. All these disputes are to be adjudicated in the light of the constitution. For this purpose a special judiciary with wide powers must be established.

It should act as the custodian and guardian of the constitution. It should be vested with powers of declaring any law, national or local, ultra vires if it is at variance with the articles of the constitution. The constitution is thus the supreme law in a federation to which both the centric and the state must adhere to.