

Q What are the advantages and disadvantages of a federal system of governments?

Introduction:

Federal system of governments means governing a territory or a country through two levels of governments. One of which is national government and the other one is state or level government. This system pertains both positive and negative impacts on a country. On one hand, it strengthens governance and democracy in a country through various features. On the other hand, it causes several problems in a federal country. Thus, a federal form of government inflicts its effects upon a country.

Federal System of Governments.

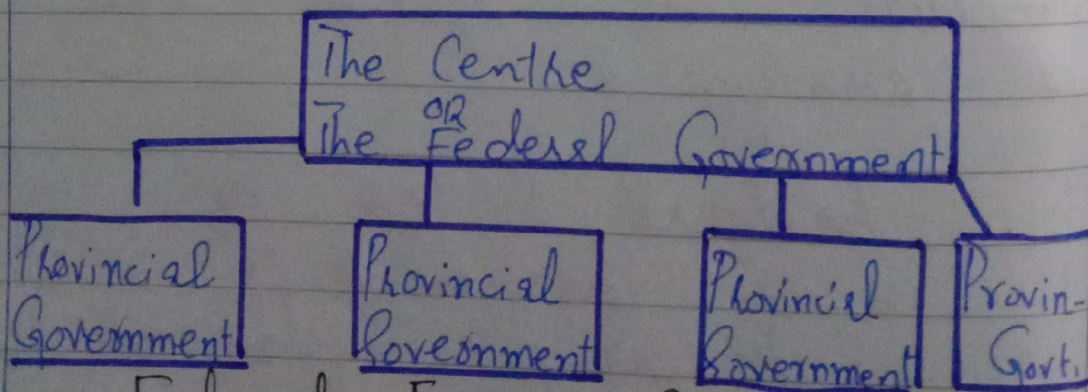
Federal system of governments is a system

of governing people.
The seminal attempt at defining federalism was made by K.C. Wheare in his work "Federal Government" in 1946. Viewing the American System, he said,

"By the federal principle I mean the method of dividing powers so that the general and regional governments are each within a sphere co-ordinate and independent"

Thus, Federal structure of governments can be drawn as following:

Taking example of Pakistan with its four federating units the structure will be,



Federal Form of Government in Pakistan

Advantages of Federal Form of Governments.

The Federal form of governments pertain certain advantages, discussed as below:

1) Separate Government.

This system of government provides separate governments for Centre and States or provinces.

In the United States of America, there is federal form of government. It means, the USA has one central government and its all fifty (50) states have separate governments.

2) Provides written constitution.

A federal government must have a written constitution.

As, in all federal countries there is a written constitution. ~~Except~~, the ~~United~~ These include the USA, Pakistan, Canada and

India.

3. A rigid Constitution prevents Unfavorable legislations.

In federal form of government, a rigid Constitution is required. This feature makes a Constitution difficult to be amended.

The Constitutions of Pakistan, India, the USA and other federal countries need 2/3rd majority for any possible amendment.

4. Enhancing public participation.

A federal form of government has potential to enhance public role and participation.

All countries having a federal structure of government has set minimum age 18 for citizens to participate in politics. Further more public could also take part in polls and political committees.

5. Division of power.

The system of federation calls for division of powers among Centre and provinces. As in Pakistan, powers related to foreign affairs, defence, currency, foreign trade and other powers mentioned in Federal list of Powers are under authority of federal or central government. While matters related to education, health, rural development and so on come under the domain of provincial authority.

6) Protection against Tyranny.

A federal form of government protects a country from political chaos and instability.

As in the USA, there is a system of check and balance. The system is established to keep powers of all organs of government in control.

Disadvantages of Federal Form of Government.

1) Causing Conflict of Authority.
Due to different governments in a federal structure a conflict of authority may arise.

Such conflict arisen when the federal government through an ordinance wanted to develop cities on islands off the coastal belt. Pakistan Islands Development Authority ordinance sparked a controversy in between the Centre and the province.

2) Resulting inequalities among States.

The Federal form of government results in inequalities among provinces or states.

As the richest state in America is New York with a GDP (Gross Domestic

Product) per capita of \$96,502 billion
While the poorest state,
Vermont has GDP per capita
as \$31.4 billion

3) Confusing Share of Power.
There may arise a
confusion over taking any
responsibility for a national
task.

It happened in the USA.
When typhoon Katrina hit
the Greater New Orleans
in 2005. There was a delay
in the rescue work. It
was due to confusion arisen
on who is responsible for
which disaster management
work.

4) Causing Complexities in
accountability
Due to presence of
numerous stakeholders, it
became difficult for citizens
whom to hold accountable
for policy failures.
"Federalism can also

make accountability more difficult
(Federalism and Accountability
by The Centre for Free, Fair
and Accountable Democracy).

5) Rigidity of Constitution is
obstacle in national progress.
The federal form of
government pertains a rigid
Constitution. Making thereby,
the method of amendment is
very rigid and difficult. The
things which may require
prompt action cannot be
done quickly.

6) Costs national exchequer
This system is expensive
in its nature. It includes
costs of elections, salaries
of policy-makers and
officials. Involving a large
force of individuals, a
federal structure is costly.
As it is reported by
the Election Commission of
Pakistan, The cost of

General elections has increased by 261.52 percent in a span of just 10 years. Moreover, the ACP has estimated the cost for upcoming 2023 general elections will be Rs. 47 million.

Conclusion

The Federal form of governments is two-tiered government. It promotes basic elements of democracy, resulting in national progress. On contrary, it gives birth to multiple challenges. However, meeting such problems efficiently is possible through positive steps.