

2020
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Intro
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Unitary system, how local govt system works in UK?

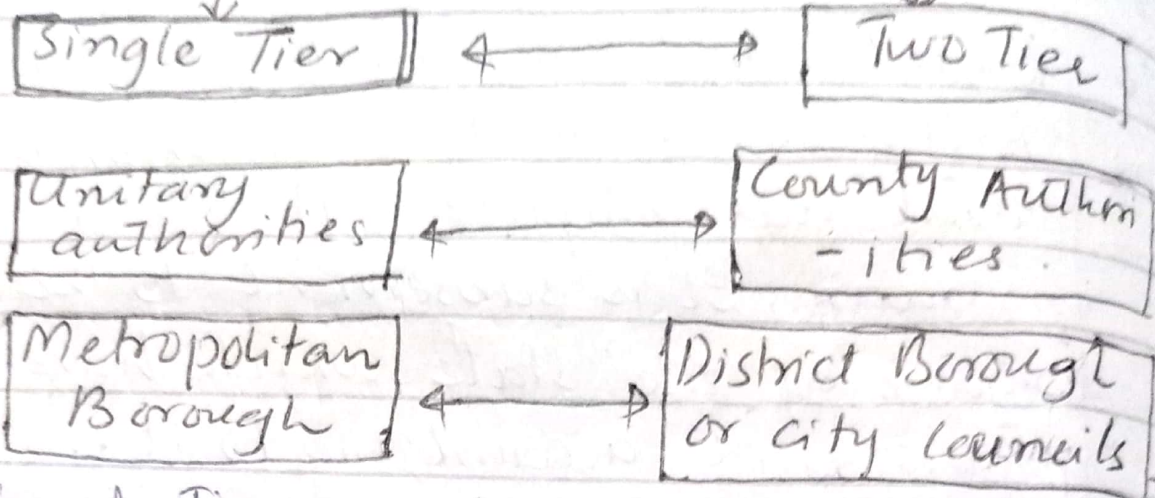
British Constitution is Unitary in character. British Parliament is a sovereign body, that has complete control over the administration. It is subservient to the executive organs of the state, which have delegated powers and accountable to it.

In Unitary state, the central government may grant some powers to its local government through a legislative process called "devolution".

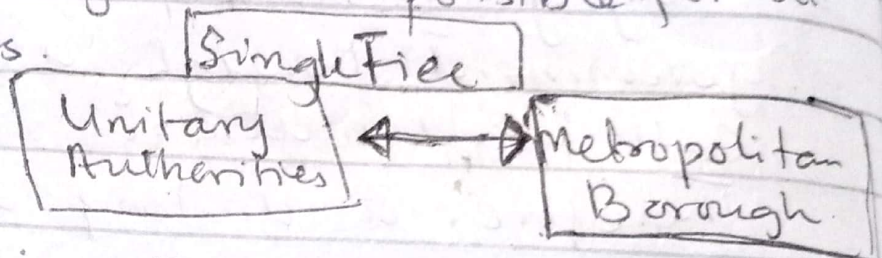
Therefore, a unitary system is a sovereign system governed as a single entity, with the central government as the supreme authority. It is distinguished by two features: the central government's supremacy and absence of subsidiary sovereign polities.

* Division of UK's local government system:
UK has a system of local government whose structure and responsibilities are determined by the central government.

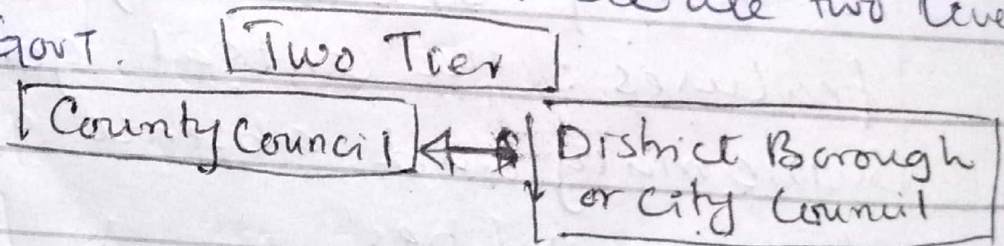
Division of UK's Local Government System



• Single Tier: In this system only one level of local govt is responsible for all local services.



• Two Tier: This method predominantly utilized in England's non-metropolitan Counties, also known as Shire Counties. There are two levels of local govt.



• Types of Local Authorities
The UK has various types of local authorities, including county councils, district councils, and unitary authorities.

These bodies have different functions and responsibilities based on their geographical location and administrative functions.

Devolution of Power:

The central government, located in Westminster, devolves certain power and responsibilities to local authorities. Devolution has led to the creation of legislatures and governments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland each with varying degrees of autonomy.

Local Elections:

Local authorities are democratically elected. Citizens in different regions of the UK vote for their local representatives who serve on local councils. The electoral systems and structures can vary by region.

Local Government Functions:

Local authorities in the UK are responsible for various functions, including education, social services, housing, transportation, planning and waste management. For instance, local councils decide on school budgets and the allocation of services in their areas.

- Example: Local Education

In England local authorities oversee and fund state schools within their boundaries. They are responsible for school admissions,

setting school term dates, and distributing education budgets. e.g. Birmingham City Council manages primary and secondary schools within its jurisdiction.

- Funding: Local authorities derive their funding from a combination of sources, including grants from the central government, council tax (local property tax) and business rates.

The central government provides grants to local councils to help them meet their responsibilities.

- Example: Council Tax

Council tax is collected by local authorities to fund services, the amount paid depends on the value of property and local council's tax rate. e.g. the London Borough of Westminster sets its own council tax rate to cover services like waste collection and street cleaning.

- Relation With Central Government
While local authorities have a degree of autonomy, they remain subject to overarching laws and policies set by the UK Parliament. They can also receive guidance and directives from central government departments.

• Example: Covid-19 Response:
During Covid-19 pandemic the UK local government provided guidance to local councils on public health measures and financial support for businesses. Local authorities implemented these measures at the regional level, such as enforcing lockdown restrictions and distributing financial aid.

Conclusion:

To sum up, local government in UK is a complicated but essential part of the unitary state. Even though power is centralized, local government can manage and run services that are specific to their areas in a good way. It bridges the gap between how basic services are run and how national policies are made.