

WEEK 7

CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION OF POWER

MEANING OF CENTRALIZATION

Centralization can be defined as the action or process by which the power and authority for governing a state are concentrated in one single central body. Different systems of government have various degrees of centralization but the unitary system of has the highest degree of centralization. Examples of centralized state include Britain and France.

ADVANTAGES OF CENTRALISATION

Benefits of centralization of power include:

1. Decision-making is fast, direct and clear.
2. It is less expensive.
3. Less bureaucracy is obtainable which saves time in implementation.
4. It unifies diverse interest and opinions easily.
5. Conflict of interest in authority is rare.
6. It produces stronger government.
7. The constitution is flexible and easily amendable to reflect current realities.

DISADVANTAGES OF CENTRALISATION

1. It encourages dictatorship.
2. It can only work in a homogeneous society.
3. Conflict of interest and favoritism of a particular group may result in secession.
4. Constitution may be amended by the central government for selfish reasons.
5. The distance between decision-making center and implementation center is wide.
6. It does not give room for political participation by the people.
7. There may be less development at the local communities.

MEANING OF DECENTRALISATION

Decentralization in politics is the process in which the power or authority for governing a state is shared between the national and sub-national levels of government. In a state where the decentralized principle is practiced, political powers are constitutionally shared between the central government and other tiers of government such as states and local government.

FORMS OF POLITICAL DECENTRALISATION

These include devolution, de-concentration and delegation.

1. **DEVOLUTION:** This is when the central government sets up constituent levels of government across the country with powers to make decisions on the governance of their localities.
2. **DECONCENTRATION:** this is where the central government develops policies for the entire country and appoints officials to oversee local areas with a view to implementing and regulating the policies in the localities.

MERITS OF DECENTRALISATION

1. Government is closer to the people.
2. It encourages fast and even development in the country.
3. Competition among various components fosters development.
4. Dictatorship is discouraged.
5. More people participate in governance.
6. Decisions follow wider consultation thereby errors are avoided.
7. Various interests are represented in governance thereby encouraging stability.

DEMERITS OF DECENTRALISATION

1. There is bureaucracy which leads to delay in decision-making and implementation.
2. The cost of running a decentralized administration is higher.
3. The center is weak.
4. Wastage ensues due to duplication of functions.
5. There is uneven development across the country.
6. It can lead to sectional nationalism and people may not be loyal to the country as a whole.

- **ASSIGNMENT**

- (a) What is centralization?.
- (d) Discuss the forms of decentralization