

LESSON NOTE FOR WEEK FOUR (4)

TOPIC : TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF GOVERNMENT

SUB TOPIC : UNITARY SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

A unitary system of government may be defined as one in which all governmental powers are concentrated in the hands of a single authority or central government. This single authority does not share governmental powers with any other body but can delegate powers to other subordinate bodies. A unitary government adopts a unitary constitution which is guided by the principle of Unitarianism. Countries that adopt Unitary system of government include; Britain, Italy, France, Belgium, New Zealand, Sweden, Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Togo, Cameroun etc.

FEATURES OF UNITARY GOVERNMENT

1. Governmental powers are concentrated in the central and in the hands of a single authority.
2. It adopts a unitary constitution.
3. The legislature can alter the powers and boundaries of the various units or regions.
4. There is no constitutional division of powers between the central government and the districts or regions.
5. The citizens owe allegiance to only one government, the central government.

FACTORS OR CONDITIONS THAT LEADS TO THE ADOPTION OF UNITARY GOVERNMENT

1. The size of a country (small) -Togo, Ghana etc.
2. Absence of Tribal differences.
3. Lack of fear of domination.
4. When there is common language and culture
5. Strong loyalty to the central government.

ADVANTAGES OF UNITARY GOVERNMENT

1. It leads to strong and stable government when citizens show strong loyalty.
2. The cost of running government is reduced.
3. Quicker decisions are made.
4. It removes frictions between Centre and regional government.
5. It fosters spirit of oneness.
6. It has a flexible constitution
7. It simple to operate.

DISADVANTAGE OF UNITARY GOVERNMENT

1. It encourages Dictatorship by concentrating powers in a single authority.
2. The central government is always overburdened.

3. It prevents local autonomy when it prevents local authorities from exercising power.
4. Government is kept far away from the people.
5. Unitary government does not suit large territories.
6. It does not create more employment opportunities like the federal system.

FEDERAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

A federal system of government may be defined as one in which governmental powers are shared between the central government and the component units (the component units may be states, regions, district etc.). This makes each levels of government constitutionally independent and autonomous. This does not mean that the powers are shared equally between the central and component regions or units, but there are areas of authority reserved exclusively for the central government. For instance, in Nigeria, there are three Lists or areas of authority exercised by these levels of government: A. Exclusive List: Under this List, the central or federal government has all the powers in areas of foreign affairs, defence, currency, immigration and emigration. B. Concurrent list: Powers in this list is both for the federal and state governments. Subjects in this list are: education, agriculture, collection of taxes, electric power, industry etc. however, the federal always prevails. C. Residual list: This list gives the component units or states the powers to function in areas not captured in the constitution. Issues like chieftaincy matters creation of feeder roads, abattoir and other local issues. Examples of countries that adopt federalism includes: USA, Nigeria, Germany, Brazil, Switzerland, Australia Yugoslavia, and India among others.

Features of federalism

1. Division or sharing of government power between the central and component government.
2. The different governments derive their powers from the constitution.
3. It adopts a written constitution.
4. The constitution is rigid.
5. Existence of a bicameral legislative.
6. Existence of a supreme court.

WHY COUNTRIES ADOPT FEDERALISM

1. Tribal differences.
2. The large size of the country.
3. To bring government nearer to the people.
4. For rapid and speedy development.
5. Protection of the interest of minority

Advantage of Federalism

1. It leads to political unity.
2. It faster Development.
3. Encourages healthy competition.

4. It brings government nearer to the people.
5. Protects the interest of the minority.
6. Greater participation of the people to government.
7. Guarantees Human Rights.

DISADVANTAGES OF FEDERALISM

1. It leads to Inter-State friction.
2. Unnecessary Duplication of Organs of government.
3. It is expensive to operate.
4. Difficulty in taking quick decisions.
5. It creates weak centre.

PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

Presidential system of government may be defined as one in which all executive powers are vested in one person called the President and in which the executive arm of government is separated from the legislature but equal to it. The President who is elected by the electorate either directly or indirectly through an electoral college, he is the commander-in-chief of the Armed forces. Examples of countries that practiced the system are: USA and Nigeria (in 1979-1983 and the now fourth republic).

ADVANTAGES OF PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM

1. There is separation of powers among the arms of government.
2. in the presidential system office holders have fixed tenure.
3. It leads to effective executive control.
4. The people are given the opportunity to elect their leaders.
5. It encourages democracy.
6. There is independence of the president

DISADVANTAGE OF PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

1. There is absence of opposition party.
2. Lobbying Breeds widespread corruption.
3. It is expensive to run.
4. It causes frequent friction especially among the arms of government.
5. It is difficult to control the president.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Write short on the Con-Federal system of government.
2. Give ten functions of the president.