PREFACE
This thesis is an attempt to analyse the working of federalism in the United Arab Emirates. The year 1996 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of federalism by the erstwhile seven Trucial States (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ummal-Qaiwain, Ajman, Fujairah and Ras al-Khaimah) who came together as the United Arab Emirates in December 1971.

The first chapter discusses the dynamics that led to the creation of the UAE and the initial attempts to form a federation. It concentrates on the developments up to 1971 like the withdrawal of the British from the Gulf and the efforts to create a nine-member federation including, in addition to the above seven, Bahrain and Qatar.

The second chapter attempts an analysis of the working of the Provisional Constitution which gets extended every five years. The UAE's inability to adopt a permanent constitution often invites criticism that the federal experiment there is fragile. But, by resorting to a kind of 'permanent ad hocism', the member-emirates have been able to retain the much-needed flexibility. It is also significant that the UAE polity does not possess any features that are common to federalism such as a rigid constitution, clear division of powers between centre and units and judicial review. This chapter discusses various constitutional provisions and salient features of
federalism in general so that a comparison can be made between UAE and other well-established federations.

The economy of the UAE is discussed in the third chapter. It highlights the following points: 1) the UAE is an oil rich and capital surplus country; 2) regional economic disparities are too wide to be bridged; 3) federal grants have enabled the seven emirates to maintain a very high standard of living, and; 4) the UAE needs to address the question that how will it sustain the present living standards once the oil reserves are depleted. Credit should be given to the federal polity for the impressive performance of the country’s economy.

The fourth and final chapter discusses foreign and defence policies of the UAE. The common heritage of the member-emirates -- they all speak the same language, follow the same religion and share the common history and culture -- made it possible for them to build consensus on major foreign policy and security issues. It is followed by a brief conclusion, the text of the Provisional Constitution in Appendix and Bibliography.

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