

Ch 1 - Power Sharing

Exercises Questions :

1. What are the different forms of power-sharing in modern democracies? Give an example of each of these.

A Power-sharing in modern democracies occurs in many forms. These are as seen below -

(a) Horizontal division of power: It is the sharing of power among different organs of government. The division of government into the executive, the legislature and the Judiciary is an example of horizontal division of power. In such a power sharing arrangement, different organs of government, placed at the same level, exercise different powers. This separation of powers ensures that no organ exercises unlimited power. Each organ checks the others, thereby putting in place a system of checks and balances. The division of power between the Council of Ministers headed by the Indian Prime Minister, the Parliament of India and the Supreme Court is an example of this kind of power sharing.

(b) Vertical division of power: It is the sharing of power among governments at different levels - a general government for the entire country and governments at the provincial or regional level. For example, India, the Constitution defines the way

power is to be shared between the Central or Union government and the various State governments. There are certain matters on which only the Central government can take decisions, while there are others on which only an individual state government has an exclusive right for decision making.

- (c) Division of Power among social groups: Power can also be shared among different groups which differ socially. The system of 'community government' in Belgium is an example of this type of power division. This government is elected by people belonging to one language community (Dutch, French and German-speaking), and has the power to take decisions regarding cultural, educational and language-related issues. The system of reserved constituencies in India is another example.
- (d) Division of power between political parties, pressure groups and movements: Political parties are the organisations which aim to control power by contesting elections. In a democracy, citizens have the freedom to choose among the various contenders for powers (the different political parties or the different parties), which in turn ensures that power does not remain in one hand, and is shared among different political parties representing different ideologies and social groups. Pressure groups and movements also share governmental power, either through

participation in governmental committees or by influencing the decision-making process.

2. State one prudential reason and one moral reason for power-sharing with an example from the Indian context.

A Power Sharing is considered desirable both ~~prudent~~ prudentially and morally.

- Prudential reasons: Stress that power-sharing will bring out better outcomes. For example - Reservation is applicable in India, where various sections are given benefits over others to avoid conflicts and also and also to maintain positivity, which is the very essence of power-sharing.

- Moral reasons: On the other hand, emphasise the very act of power-sharing as valuable. In India, citizens are conferred with fundamental rights and directive principles of state policies are implied on the government so as to ensure that it is its moral duty to take care of its citizens and be accountable to them.

3. After reading this chapter, three students draw different conclusions. Which of these do you agree with and why? Give your reasons in about 50 words.

Thomman - Power sharing is necessary only in societies which have religious, linguistic or ethnic divisions.

Mathayi - Power sharing is suitable only in suitable only for big countries that have regional divisions.

Ouseph - Every society needs some form of power sharing even if it is small or does not have social divisions.

A(a) From the above example, we can conclude that Ouseph's conclusion is the right one.

(b) ~~Power-sharing helps~~ Every state should have some or the other form of power-sharing. Without a balance of power, any country can collapse.

Example - Sri Lanka.

(c) Power sharing ensures an optimum balance between different section in the society. The chances of conflict lessen, and so does the injustice. Hence, power-sharing becomes the value of democracy. Also, power-sharing becomes the value of democracy. Also power-sharing is a good way to ensure the stability of political order. A successful country in example is Belgium, as seen in the chapter.

4. The Mayor of Merchtem, a town near Brussels in Belgium, has defended a ban on speaking French in the town's schools. He said that the ban would help all non-Dutch speakers integrate

into this Flemish town. Do you think that this measure is in keeping with the spirit of Belgium's power-sharing arrangements? Give your reasons in about 50 words.

- A (a) The measure of the Mayor of Merchtem to ban on French-speaking in the town's schools near Brussels is unfair. It does not keep with Belgium's power-sharing arrangements.
- (b) Power-sharing helps between Dutch and French to avoid civil unrest.
- (c) Since there are two communities living in the same territory, one should not be given precedence over another. Hence, banning French will promote the tendency of civil unrest.
- (d) To promote peace among different communities, the Mayor should promote a bilingual education system in the town's schools.

5. Read the following passage and pick out any one of the prudential reasons for power sharing offered in this. "We need to give more power to the panchayats to realise the dream of Mahatma Gandhi and the hopes of the makers of our Constitution. Panchayati Raj establishes true democracy. It restores power to the only place where power belongs in a democracy - in the hands of the people. Giving power to Panchayats is also a way to reduce corruption and increase administrative efficiency. When people

participate in the planning and implementation of developmental schemes, they would naturally exercise greater control over these schemes. This would eliminate the corrupt middlemen. Thus, Panchayati Raj will strengthen the foundations of our democracy."

A The prudential reason in the given passage is -
"Giving power to Panchayats is also a way to reduce corruption and increase administrative efficiency."