



Q1. What are the different forms of power sharing in modern democracies ? Give an example of each of these.

Answer:

1. Power sharing among the different organs of government (Horizontal power sharing). In a democracy, power is shared among the different organs of the government such as the legislature, executive and the judiciary. This is called the horizontal distribution of power because it allows different organs of the government placed at the same level to exercise different powers. Under this kind of power sharing arrangement, one can exercise unlimited powers. Each organ has its own powers, and it can also check the powers of other. So this results in a balance of power among the various institutions.
2. Power sharing among governments at different levels : Under this, people choose separate governments at separate levels, for example, a general local government for the entire country and local governments at the provincial, sub-national or regional levels. Such a general government for the entire country is usually called a Federal government.
3. Power sharing among different social groups : In a democracy, especially, in a multi-ethnic society, power is also shared among social groups such as the religious and linguistic groups. 'Community government' in Belgium is a good example of this arrangement. In some countries, there are constitutional and legal arrangements whereby socially weaker sections and women are represented in the legislatures and the administration.
4. Power sharing among political parties, pressure groups and movements : In a democracy, power is also shared among different political parties, pressure groups and movements. Democracy provides the citizens a choice to choose their rulers. This choice is provided by the various political parties, who contest elections to win them. Such competition ensures that power does not remain in one hand.

Q2. State one prudential reason and one moral reason for power sharing with an example from the Indian context. [CBSE Sept. 2010]

Answer: (i) (a) India is a multicultural society.

(b) India is a democratic country.

Q3. After reading this chapter, three students drew 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.

Mattai - Power sharing is suited only for big countries that have regional divisions.

Ousep - Every society needs some form of power sharing even if they are small or do not have social divisions.

Answer: Every society needs some form of power sharing even if they are small or do not have social divisions because :

(i) Some power sharing is always needed to give voice to all, and representation to all the members of the country.

(ii) Power sharing solutions are adopted to maintain stability in the

system, and peace among various groups to ensure the smooth functioning of the system, irrespective of the size of the country.

Q4. 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 in 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.

Answer: No, the measure taken by the Mayor of Merchtem is not in keeping with the spirit of Belgium's power sharing arrangements. As 59 per cent of the population in the Flemish region speaks Dutch, the ban on speaking French in the town's schools would prevent French and Dutch speakers to mingle with each other, and also create feelings of distrust and suspicion. The ban ignores the regional differences and cultural diversities. It is against the spirit of accommodating every linguistic group, and creating a right environment for everyone to live. The ban, rather, makes the ground for a civic strife, and a possible division of the community on linguistic lines.

Q5. 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. The 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 the Panchayati Raj will strengthen the foundations of our democracy."

Answer: The following prudential reasons are cited into the passage for power sharing.

- (a) Reducing corruption by giving power into the hands of the people and thus, making them responsible for their own decisions.
- (b) Increasing administrative efficiency by delegating the decision-making function to the people affected by it.
- (c) Improving the efficiency of the system by reducing the number of middlemen, and transferring the planning and implementation to the people concerned through the Panchayats.

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