**Chapter 2:**

**Functions and roles of the government in working for the good of society.**

**FUNCTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**Functions of the Singapore government:**

* To make and pass laws.
* To implement and enforce laws.
* To interpret and apply laws.

**These functions are carried out by 3 branches of the government.**

1. **The Legislature.**
   1. Makes and passes laws.
   2. Consists of President and Parliament.
   3. Passes a bill which is debated in Parliament and once the President agrees to it, it will be come law in Singapore.
2. **The Executive.**
   1. Implements and enforces laws.
   2. Consists of President and the Cabinet.
   3. Creates government policies for education, healthcare, transport, defence etc.
   4. Ensures the country is running smoothly.
   5. Has support from various ministries and statutory boards.
3. **The Judiciary**
   1. Interprets and applies laws.
   2. Consists of Supreme Court, State Courts and Family Justice courts.
   3. The Head of Judiciary is the Chief Justice.
   4. Makes formal judgements on disputes between individuals and on those between individuals and government.
   5. Ensures laws are interpreted and applied fairly.

**An example of when the three branches of the Singapore government worked together is during the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Here's how each branch contributed to resolving the crisis:**

**1. The Legislature**

* The Legislature passed emergency laws, such as the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) Act, to address issues like social distancing, mask-wearing, and restrictions on public gatherings.
* Parliament debated the bill to ensure it was effective and appropriate before the President gave approval, turning it into law.

**2. The Executive**

* The Executive implemented and enforced the laws passed by the Legislature. For example:
  + The Ministry of Health (MOH) issued detailed regulations and guidelines for safe management measures.
  + Statutory boards, such as the Housing Development Board (HDB), enforced rules in public spaces.
* The Executive also created policies to support affected sectors, like financial aid schemes and healthcare initiatives to strengthen the country's response.

**3. The Judiciary**

* The Judiciary played a role by interpreting and applying the new laws to ensure fairness. For instance:
  + Courts handled cases where individuals or businesses were charged with violating COVID-19 regulations.
  + Legal disputes related to the pandemic, such as contract breaches due to lockdowns, were resolved in courts based on the new laws.

**This coordinated effort among the three branches ensured that laws were properly made, implemented, and enforced while maintaining fairness and justice during a challenging time. The government’s power is thus separated into the three branches. It ensures power does not concentrate in the hands of a small group of people.**

**The three branches also serve as a check on each other to ensure the other branches do not act illegally or irresponsibly. This ensures an efficient and effective government which would facilitate a harmonious society.**

**ROLES OF THE GOVERNMENT**

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| **MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER** |

* Ensuring law and order -> **safeguards the safety and security of its citizens** from harm and injustice.
* **Singapore Police Force (SPF)** play an important role in crime prevention and deterrence.
  + They implement initiatives to prevent threats from escalating to harm anyone.
  + For instance, the SPF collaborates with various stakeholders, including students, to run campaigns aimed at combatting scams.
* **The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** in Singapore also contributes to maintaining law and order by promptly carrying out investigations under the Internal Security Act (ISA).
  + This rapid response led to the detainment of a self-radicalized individual who had intentions to carry out a violent act in the country.
* Regular and strict law enforcement helps to deter crime and creates thereby maintaining social order.
* **By keeping people safe from harm and injustice, society feels more secure, allowing everyone to live, work, and interact without fear. Campaigns like anti-scam initiatives help people stay aware and protect themselves, leading to less crime. This creates a safer, more peaceful community, supports economic growth, attracts investments, and improves everyone’s quality of life.**
* **Judiciary system** -> ensuring **justice**.
* They interpret and apply laws to cases of crime. Crimes are meticulously investigated by both law enforcement agencies and the courts, resulting in just and fair rulings.
* For example, the courts sentenced a couple to jail for scamming citizens of their money by selling fake designer products.
* **This process instills confidence in citizens about Singapore’s fair justice system. People will be appreciative of the fair government systems in place.**
* **Laws will then be respected and taken seriously. This will deter unlawful behaviors and ensure a harmonious society.**

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| **ENSURING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELL BEING OF CITIZENS** |

* Ensuring the economic and social well-being of citizens is another major responsibility of the government.
* **Providing basic needs** like food, water, and housing
* **Providing opportunities for citizens to improve themselves.**
* The government allocates substantial resources to ensure that goods and services are affordable for all citizens. These goods and services range from education, transport, healthcare to housing.
* Furthermore, the Central Provident Fund (CPF), helps citizens prepare for their retirement, and it can also be used for housing, medical, and healthcare needs.
* These goods and services are often heavily subsidized by the government to make them accessible to all citizens, thereby improving their overall quality of life and peace of mind.
* Example - the government has been working to expand the capacity of public transport systems. Under the Land Transport Masterplan 2013, MRT lines are set to expand to include TEL, CRL, and JRL by 2030.
* **The SkillsFuture programme** by the government -> offering courses, programmes, and subsidies for lifelong learning and career development.
  + The government gives credits for citizens to take up courses to expand their skills.
* By catering to both the basic needs and growth of all citizens, the government ensures a high quality of life and a sense of security for its people. This translates into a sense of belonging to the country.

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| **PROMOTES AND PROTECTS ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS.** |

* National interests refer to what is necessary to ensure its security and well-being.
* National interests can be protected by diplomacy and deterrence.

**DIPLOMACY**

Diplomacy is the practice of obtaining agreement between countries to cooperate to produce results that align with their interests.

* **Bilateral diplomacy**, involving only two countries, serves as a platform to nurture mutual interests, particularly in trade.
* Singapore has numerous bilateral relationships.
* E.g. -> The 1962 Water Agreement with Malaysia allows Singapore to secure raw water supply from the Johor River in exchange for treated water.
* Bilateral diplomacy benefits Singapore as it can protect and advance its interest.
* **Multilateral diplomacy** involves interactions within international or regional organizations.
  + For example -> Singapore, as an **ASEAN** founder member, participates in multilateral diplomacy at both regional and international levels.
  + Being a member of ASEAN has benefitted Singapore as its able to establish partnership with countries within and beyond ASEAN and thus protect and promotes its national interests.
  + E.g. the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP**), including Singapore and 14 other countries. This agreement aims to stimulate economic cooperation, trade expansion, and the opening of opportunities within the Asia-Pacific.
  + Through the RCEP, local businesses gain an advantage by venturing into member countries with minimized tariff barriers, translating into cost savings. -> increases trade, business opportunities and provides jobs.
  + RCEP helps to deepen relationships between member countries.

**With strong diplomatic relations with other countries, small countries such as Singapore can protect its national interests. It can ensure its common interests are protected and resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner.**

**DETERRENCE**

Deterrence refers to the efforts taken by a country to discourage potential aggressors.

* **Deterrence** is another strategy employed by governments to protect their national interests, particularly in matters of national security.
* A country deters potential aggressors by building up its air, land and sea defenses.
* Singapore’s strong army, navy and Airforce deters potential aggressors from attacking Singapore by making it costly for them to attack.
  + MINDEF - > Oversees the SAF. -> SAF is a technologically advanced defence force.
  + For e.g. it has Unmanned Aerial Vehicles which allow the SAF to see the enemy first, which would allow commanders to make better decisions during war.
* Through deterrence, a nation's power and capabilities are enhanced, making any potential attack costly and detrimental to aggressors.
* Deterrence ensures a country's safety from external threats, thereby safeguarding national interests in defense.

**With a strong defence force, it makes aggressors think twice about attacking Singapore. This protects Singapore from external threats and keeps Singapore safe.**

**SRQ 7**

Do you think **maintaining law and order** is more important than **protecting national interests** for the good of society? Explain your answer.

Maintaining law and order is important for the good of society. Ensuring law and order is essential as it safeguards the safety and security of citizens from harm and injustice. In Singapore, the Singapore Police Force (SPF) plays a vital role in crime prevention and deterrence by implementing initiatives to prevent threats from escalating and causing harm. For example, the SPF collaborates with various stakeholders, including students, to run campaigns aimed at combating scams, thereby promoting awareness and reducing crime in society. **By keeping people safe from harm and injustice, society feels more secure, allowing everyone to live, work, and interact without fear. Campaigns like anti-scam initiatives help people stay aware and protect themselves, leading to less crime. This creates a safer, more peaceful community, supports economic growth, attracts investments, and improves everyone’s quality of life.**

Protecting national interests is also important for the good of society. National interests are essential for a country's security and well-being and can be protected through diplomacy and deterrence. Diplomacy involves agreements between countries to cooperate on shared interests. Bilateral diplomacy, which focuses on relationships between two countries, helps nurture mutual benefits, especially in areas like trade. For example, the 1962 Water Agreement with Malaysia ensures Singapore's access to raw water from the Johor River in exchange for treated water. **Strong diplomatic ties allow small countries like Singapore to protect their national interests, safeguard common goals, and resolve conflicts peacefully.**

**TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE TO STUDY A BREAKDOWN OF THE ABOVE ANSWER.**

**First Paragraph: Maintaining Law and Order**

|  | **The key details** | **What this means** |
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| **Point** | Maintaining law and order is important for the good of society. | *The main idea or claim that answers the question directly.* |
| **Evidence** | The Singapore Police Force (SPF) collaborates with stakeholders, such as students, to run anti-scam campaigns to prevent threats and raise awareness. | *Facts or examples that support the point made, showing its validity.* |
| **Explanation** | By keeping people safe from harm and injustice, society feels secure, people can live without fear, and it creates a peaceful community, boosts the economy, and improves quality of life. | *Explains the impact or significance of the point and evidence to society.* |

**Second Paragraph: Protecting National Interests**

|  | **The key details** | **What this means** |
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| **Point** | Protecting national interests is important for the good of society. | *The main idea or claim that answers the question directly.* |
| **Evidence** | The 1962 Water Agreement with Malaysia allows Singapore to access raw water from the Johor River in exchange for treated water, showcasing successful diplomacy. | *Facts or examples that support the point made, showing its validity.* |
| **Explanation** | Strong diplomatic ties allow Singapore to protect its interests, ensure common goals are met, and resolve conflicts peacefully, fostering security and cooperation. | *Explains the impact or significance of the point and evidence to society.* |