



**BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY**  
Tiruchirappalli- 620024,  
Tamil Nadu, India

**PROGRAMME: FIVE-YEAR INTEGRATED M.A. HISTORY**

**COURSE TITLE: MODERN GOVERNMENTS**

**COURSE CODE: A1C01**

**UNIT - III**

**Separation of Powers – Theory – Criticism, Executive: Importance and functions of parliamentary and non-parliamentary executive – Plural Executive**

**Dr. T. ASOKAN,  
Professor & Head,  
Department of History**

# Separation of Powers

## Importance of Separation of Powers:

- Separation of powers is an organizational structure where responsibilities, authorities, and powers are divided between groups rather than being centrally held.
- It is essential to prevent the concentration of unchecked power and to provide for checks and balances.
- It helps to prevent abuses of power and avoid autocracy.

# Historical Background

- Aristotle in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC described the three agencies of the government as General Assembly, Public Officials and Judiciary.
- In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, French philosopher Jean Bodin and British politician John Locke expressed their views about the theory of separation of powers.
- Montesquieu who for the first time formulated this doctrine systematically in his book "Esprit des Lois" (The Spirit of the Laws), published in the year 1748.

# Implementation of Separation of Powers

- Principles of Check and Balances
- Legislative – to frame laws and regulations for citizens
- Executive – to implement, carry out and enforce the will of the State.
- Judiciary – to ensure that the laid rules and regulations are being enforced in a proper manner.

# Major criticisms

- Complete separation is neither possible nor desirable.
- Impracticable in itself
- Separation of powers can lead to deadlocks and inefficiency
- Limits the powers and neutralizes the element of oppression.

# Executive

Executive is a branch of government that is charged with such powers as diplomatic representation, superintendence of the execution of the laws, and appointment of officials.

# Types of Executives

## Political Executive

- Political executives are chosen by the people.
- They are also known as representatives.
- They decide on the policies and framework of the state, and make all major decisions related to politics.

# Permanent Executive

- Permanent Executives are civil servants who work in government for a fixed period of time.
- They do not make major decisions in their departments.
- However, as political executives, they assist the political administrators in making all kinds of decisions.



# Importance and functions of Parliamentary and non-parliamentary executive

## Parliamentary

- Prime Minister is the Head of the Government.
- He/She is the leader of the majority party in Legislature.
- Prime Minister is accountable to the legislature

# Non-parliamentary executive

- The President is the Head of the State.
- He/She is also the head of the Government.
- He/She is not accountable to legislature

# Plural Executive

- In a Plural Executive, the authority to direct is exercised not by a single authority but by a group of persons having co-equal status of authority.

For e.g. Swiss Federal Council.