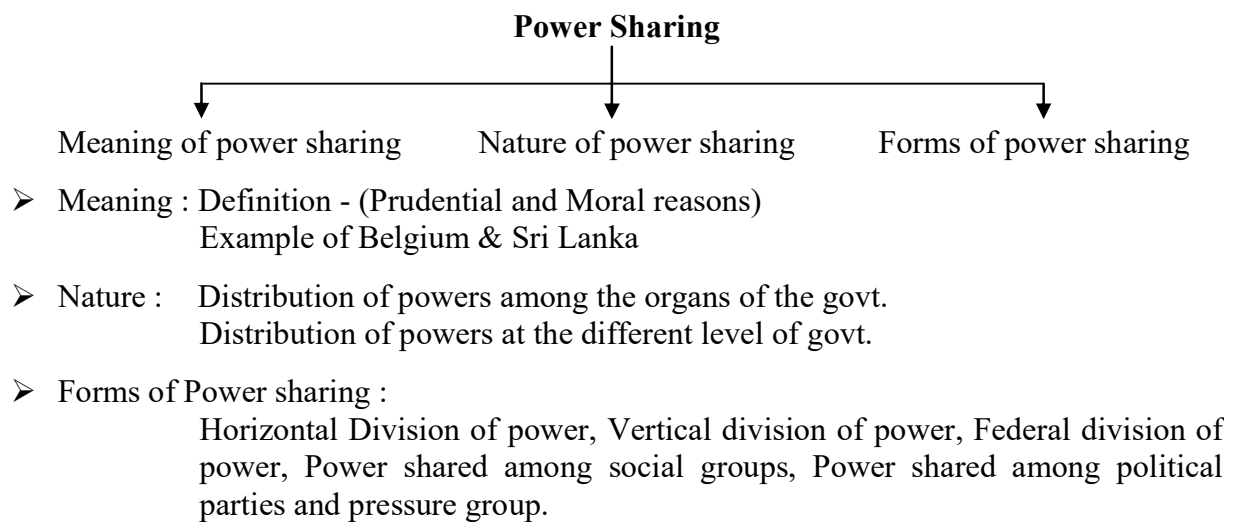


# POWER SHARING

## CHAPTER COVERAGE



### Belgium & Sri Lanka

- ◆ **Belgium :** It is a small country in Europe with a population of a little more than a crore, has an **ethnic** problem that is highly complex. It has border with Netherlands, France & Germany.
- (A) Of the country's total population, 59 % lives in the Flemish region and speak Dutch language.
- (B) 40% people live in the Wallonia region and speak French.
- (C) Remaining 1 % of the Belgians speak German.
- (D) In the capital city Brussels 80 % speak French while 20 % are Dutch speaking.
- (E) The minority French speaking community was relatively rich and powerful.
- (F) Dutch speaking people received benefits of economic development & education much later & this led to tension between the two groups.
- (G) The conflict between the two communities was more severe in Brussels because the Dutch speaking people constituted a majority in the country, but a minority in the capital.

### ◆ Sri Lanka

- (A) It is an island nation, just a few kilometres off the southern coast of Tamil Nadu.
- (B) It has a population of about 2 crore.
- (C) It has diverse population. The major social groups in Sri Lanka are -
  - 1. Sinhala speaking which are 74 %.
  - 2. Tamil speakers which are 18 %. Tamil are also divided in two groups -
    - I. Tamil natives of the country are called 'Sri Lankan Tamils' (13 %)
    - II. Indian Tamil (Whose forefathers came from India as plantation workers during colonial period) are 5 %.
- (D) Srilankan Tamils are concentrated in north and east of the country.
- (E) Sinhala speaking people are Buddhists.
- (F) Tamils are either Hindus or Muslim.
- (G) About 7 % are Christians who are both Tamil & Sinhala.

In Belgium & Srilanka the majority community, i.e., Dutch speakers & Sinhala could take advantages of their numeric majority & impose their will on the entire country.



### Majoritarianism in Sri Lanka

The leader of the Sinhala community dominated the government & adopted a series of majoritarian measures.

- (A) Srilanka become independent in 1948.
- (B) In 1956, an Act was passed to recognise Sinhala as the only official language, thus disregarding Tamil.
- (C) Sinhala applicants were favoured for university and government jobs.
- (D) The constitution gives special protection to Buddhism.
- (E) The result of these policies make the Srilankan Tamils feel that -
  - (I) Leaders were insensitive to their language and culture.
  - (II) Government policies deprived them of equal political rights.
- (F) They were discriminated against in getting jobs & other opportunities.

### ◆ Demands of Srilankan Tamils :

- 1. Recognition of Tamils as an official language.
- 2. For regional autonomy.
- 3. Equality of opportunity in securing education & jobs.
- 4. Demand was made for an independent Tamil Eelam (state) in northern and eastern parts of Srilanka.

The distrust between the two communities turned into widespread conflict. It soon turned into a **civil war**.

## ➤ Accommodation in Belgium

Belgium leaders recognised the differences that existed in the regional & cultural aspects. So they amended their constitution four times so as to enable everyone to live together within the same country. Some of the elements of the Belgian model are -

1. Constitution prescribes that the number of Dutch and French speaking ministers shall be equal in the central government.
2. Many powers of the central government have been given to state governments of the two regions of the country. The state governments are not subordinate to the central government.
3. Brussels has a separate government in which both the communities have equal representation. The French speaking people accepted equal representation in Brussels because the Dutch speaking community has accepted equal representation in the central government.
4. A 3<sup>rd</sup> kind government called community government is elected by people belonging to one language community no matter where they live. This government deals with language related issues.

## ➤ Why power sharing is desirable

- ◆ **Comparison :** In Belgium leaders realised that by a mutual arrangement for sharing power unity in the country was possible.

In Sri Lanka the majority community wanted to dominate & refused to share power. This hindered the unity of the country.

- ◆ **Power sharing is good because :**

1. It helps to reduce the conflict between social groups.
2. It is a good way to ensure the stability of political order.
3. It is good for democracy. It is the spirit of democracy because people have the right to be consulted on how they are to be governed.
4. The first point is called **prudential** because it states that power sharing will bring out better outcomes.
5. Moral reasons emphasises the very act of power sharing as valuable.

## ➤ Forms of power sharing

Many people felt that if the power to decide is dispersed, it would not be possible to take quick decision and to enforce them.

One basic principle of democracy is that people are the source of all political power, & people rule themselves. In a good democratic government, due respect is given to diverse groups that exist in a society. Every one has a voice in the shaping of public policies.

- ◆ **In modern democracies, power sharing arrangements can take many forms.**

1. **Power is shared among different organs of the govt.**

### **Horizontal distribution of power.**

- (A) In this form of distribution power is shared among different organs of government such as the legislature, executive and judiciary.
- (B) This type of distribution advocates separation of powers in which different organs of government at the same level exercise different powers.
- (C) Separation of powers ensures a check over the unlimited powers of each organs. This results in a balance of power among various institutions.
- (D) It is also called a system of “checks and balances”.

### **2. Vertical Distribution of Powers :**

- (A) Under this form of power sharing arrangement, power is shared among governments at different levels. e.g. a general government for the entire country and a government at the provincial level.
- (B) A general government for the entire country is usually called Federal government. In our country it is called as central government.
- (C) In some countries like India & Belgium, the constitution clearly lays down the powers of the government at different levels. This is called the “Federal division of powers”.

All such division of powers involving higher and lower level of government is called vertical division of powers.

### **3. Power sharing among different social groups :**

- (A) In another way power may also be shared among different social groups, such as the religious and linguistic groups.
- (B) This type of arrangement is meant to give space in the government and administration to diverse social groups who otherwise would feel alienated from the government.
- (C) This method is used to give minority communities a fair share in power.
- (D) **Community government** in Belgium and **Reserved constituencies in assemblies** and **Parliament** in India are the examples of this type of arrangement.

### **4. Power sharing among political parties and pressure groups :**

Sometimes power sharing arrangements can also be seen in the way political parties, pressure groups and movements control or influence power because in a democracy the citizens must have a choice among various contenders for powers.

# **GLOSSARY**

1. **Ethnic** : A social based division based on shared culture people belonging to same ethnic group believe in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of culture, or both. They need not always have the same religion or nationality.
2. **Majoritarian** : A concept which signifies a belief that the majority community should be able to rule a country in whichever way it wants is known as “Majoritarian”. In this type of rule they disregard the wishes and needs of the minority.
3. **Civil war** : A violent conflict between opposing groups within a country is known as civil war. Some times it becomes so intense that it appears like a war.
4. **Prudential** : Based on prudence, or on careful calculation of gains and losses. Prudential decisions are usually contrasted with those decisions, which are based purely on moral considerations.
5. **Moral** : It is a set of reasons which emphasise the intrinsic worth of power sharing.
6. **Community government** : A type of government which is elected by people belonging to one language community is called community government.
7. **Federal government** : It is a type of government in which powers are shared among the different levels.
8. **Power sharing** : It is the distribution of powers among the organs of the government at different level.
9. **Checks and Balance** : A system in which each organ of the government checks the others which results in a balance of power among various institutions.
10. **Sri Lankan Tamils** : Tamil natives of Sri Lanka are called Sri Lankan Tamils.
11. **Indian Tamils** : The Tamilians whose forefathers came from India as plantation workers during colonial period and settled in Sri Lanka are called Indian Tamils.
12. **Horizontal Distribution of Power** : A type of distribution in which power is shared among different organs of government such as the legislature, executive and judiciary. They are placed at the same level.