POWER SHARING

Why is power sharing desirable?

POWER SHARING IS DESIRABLE DUE TO:

- **Avoid conflicts** - power sharing reduces the possibilities of conflicts between social groups and leads to political stability (imposing the will of majority community over minority may look attractive in a short run but in a long run, it undermines the unity of nation.

- **Spirit of democracy** - power sharing is in the spirit of democracy. A democratic rule involves sharing power with those affected by its exercise and those who have to live with this affect. People have to be consulted on how they should be governed.

- **Prudential reason** - it stresses that power sharing brings better results.

- **Moral reason** - it emphasizes that the very act of power sharing is valuable.

Describe the major forms of power sharing in modern democracies.

**MAJOR FORMS OF POWER SHARING (p.s.):**

1. **between different forms of govt. (horizontal p.s.)**
   - Legislative
   - Executive
   - Judiciary

   In a democracy, power is shared among different towers of the govt. such as legislature, executive and judiciary. Each organ has its own powers and checks the powers of others. For e.g. in India the ministers exercise powers but they are responsible towards the parliament. Similarly, although judges are appointed by the executive, they can check the functioning of executive or laws made by the legislature. This arrangement is called the **system of checks and balances**.

2. **at different levels (vertical description of power)**
   - Union Govt.
   - State Govt.
   - Local Govt.
A union govt. for the entire country and a state govt. for the states which is also called the federal form of govt.

3. Power sharing among different social groups such as religions and linguistic groups. This is known as community govt. This type of arrangement is meant to give space in govt. and administration to diverse social groups who would otherwise feel alienated from the govt.

4. Political parties, pressure groups and movements

- They control those in power. In democracies, there is a competition among the political parties. In long run, the power is shared among political parties which can directly be by forming alliance or coalition govt. They also have a share in governmental power either through participation in governmental committees or bringing influence on decision making.

CASE STUDY—BELGIUM

What were the causes of the ethnic struggle in Belgium?

What were the Causes of ethnic struggles in Belgium:

Belgium is a small country in Europe sharing its borders with Dutch, France and Germany. It has a population a little over 10 million and ethnic composition of the country is complex.

I. Of Belgium’s total population, 59% live in Flemish region and speak the Dutch language. Another 40% live in Wallonia region and speak French. Remaining 1% of Belgians speak German.

II. In the capital city of Brussels, 80% speak French while 20% are Dutch speaking.

III. The minority French speaking community is relatively rich and powerful so the majority Dutch community showed resentment against it. This led to tension between the Dutch and French speaking communities in 1950s-1960s.

IV. The conflict between the Dutch speaking and French speaking was more severe in Brussels because here, the Dutch speaking people were majority in Belgium but a minority in Brussels. Therefore, the ethnic struggle in Belgium originated from tensions between Dutch and French community in Belgium.

METHODS ADOPTED BY BELGIUM LEADERS TO SOLVE THE ETHNIC CONFLICT:

What were the methods adopted by the Belgium leaders to resolve the ethnic conflict in Belgium?

The Belgium leaders recognized the existence of regional difference and cultural diversities. Between 1970-1993, the constitution was amended 4 times so as to work out an arrangement which would satisfy everybody. Following steps were taken:

I. Equal number of ministers from both the groups-so that no single community can take decisions unilaterally.

II. More powers to state govt.-under the new power sharing arrangement, many powers of central govt. were given to state govt. for 2 regions of the country.

III. Equal representation at state and central level-a separate govt. was set up at Brussels where both communities had equal representation.
IV. **Formation of community govt.**- apart from central and state govt., a third form of govt. was to be introduced which was elected by people belonging to 1 community i.e. Dutch, French and German and no matter this govt. would have power to discuss cultural, cultural and language related issues.

---

**REASONS FOR ETHNIC STRUGGLE IN SRI LANKA**

Discuss the reasons responsible for the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka?

Sri Lanka is an island nation in south Asia located about 31 km of southern coast of India. It has a diverse population of 20 million people.

1. The Sinhalese community forms the majority of population. Among Tamils there are 2 subgroups:
   - Srilankan Tamils
   - Tamils of Indian origin

   They contribute about 18% of Srilankan population of which 13% are Srilankan Tamils and 5% are Indian Tamils.

2. Besides this diversity, there are 7% christens in Srilanka who belong to Tamil or Sinhala community. The Sinhalese community is Buddhist where Tamils are either Hindu or Muslims.

3. The ethnic struggle in Srilanka originated from the dominance of Sinhalese people in Government administration by virtue of their majority.

---

*Reasons that lead to the rise of majoritism in Srilanka*

What were the reasons that led to the rise of Majoritarianism in Sri Lanka?

Srilanka emerged as an independent country in 1948, The new government of Srilanka adopted a series of majoritarian measures to establish Sinhala supremacy in the following ways:

i. In 1956, an act was passed under which Sinhala was recognized as Srilankan official language. No consideration was given to Tamil language.

ii. The government followed preferential policies which favored Sinhala applicants for universities, positions and government jobs.

iii. The new constitution stipulated that state would protect and promote Buddhism

All these government measures increased the feeling of alienation among Srilankan Tamils and they felt that government’s constitution denied them equal political rights, discriminated with them in terms of jobs and ignored their interests, as a result the relationship between Sinhala and Tamils strained over time.
What were the results of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka?

i. Sri Lankan Tamils launched parties and struggles for recognition of Tamil as an official language, regional autonomy, the equality of opportunities in government jobs and education. Their demand for more autonomy to provinces populated by Tamils was repeatedly denied.

ii. By 1980s, several political organizations were formed demanding an independent Tamil state in northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka.

iii. The distrust between two communities turned into a widespread conflict. It soon turned into a civil war resulting in the death of many people of both communities.

iv. Many families were forced to leave their country as refugees and many more lost their livelihood.

v. The civil war was a terrible attack to social, cultural and economic life of the country.