

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Chapter - 1 : POWER SHARING

CLASS: X

Q1. Analyze how power sharing is a success in Belgium and not in Sri Lanka? (3m)

Ans. *In Belgium, the leaders have realized that the unity of the country is possible only by respecting the feelings and the interests of different communities and regions. Such a realization resulted in mutually acceptable arrangements for sharing power.

*Sri Lanka shows us a contrasting example. It shows us that if a majority community want to force its dominance over others and refuses to share power, it can undermine the unity of the country and create conflict in the region.

Q2. Why is power sharing desirable in a democratic government than any other system of government? OR Why is power sharing desirable? Give any three prudential reasons. OR What are the Prudential and Moral reasons of power sharing? (3m)

Ans. Prudential reason: *Power sharing is good because it helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between social groups. As social conflict often leads to violence and political instability, power sharing is a good way to ensure the stability of political order. Tyranny of the majority is not just oppressive for the minority, it often brings ruin to the majority too.

Moral reason: *Power sharing is the very spirit of the democracy. A democratic rule involves sharing power with those affected by its exercise, and who have to live with its effects. People in a democracy have a right to be consulted on how they are to be governed. A legitimate government is one where citizens acquire a stake in the system through participation.

Q3. How do you think the ethnic problems should be resolved in Sri Lanka? Suggest any three measures. (3m) (any 3 points)

Ans. *The Sri Lankan government should avoid taking majoritarian measures. *They should not disregard the wishes and needs of the minorities. *Accommodation of minority groups in the Constitution should be set up. *They should not keep all power and prestige to themselves and refuse to share power with other groups. *They should give educational and job reservation to Tamil minorities.

Q4. Explain the main provisions of the Act passed in 1956, which established Sinhala supremacy in Sri Lanka. OR Explain the three majoritarian measures taken by the Sri Lankan government. (3m – three main underlined pts. ; for 5m – all the given pts.)

Ans. The democratically elected government adopted a series of majoritarian measures to establish Sinhala supremacy.

*In 1956, an Act was passed to recognize Sinhala as the only official language, disregarding Tamil.

*The government followed the preferential policies that favoured Sinhala applicants for university positions and government jobs.

*A new constitution stipulated that the state shall protect and foster Buddhism.

*These measures increased the feeling of alienation among the Sri Lankan Tamils.

Q5. What steps were taken by the Sri Lankan Tamils to attain regional autonomy?

Ans. *The Sri Lankan Tamils launched political parties and struggles for the recognition of Tamil as an official language, for regional autonomy and equality of opportunity in securing education and jobs.

*But their demand for more autonomy to provinces populated by the Tamils was repeatedly denied.

*By 1980s several political organizations were formed demanding an independent Tamil Eelam (state) in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka.

Q6. Explain the power sharing arrangement in Belgium. OR What are the main elements of the Belgium model of accommodation in sharing power? OR What measures were adopted by Belgian government to accommodate regional and cultural diversities? (5m)

Ans. *Equal representation: The Belgian Constitution prescribes that the number of Dutch and French speaking ministers shall be equal in the central government.

* No unilateral decision: Some special laws require the support of majority of members from each linguistic group. Thus no single community can make decisions unilaterally.

*No subordination: Many powers of the central government have been given to the state governments of the two regions of the country. The state governments are not subordinate to the central government.

***Separate government in Brussels:** 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.

***Community government:** Apart from the Central and State government, there is a third kind of government called the Community government which is elected by the people belonging to one language community – Dutch, French and German speaking – no matter where they live. This government has the power regarding cultural, educational and language related issues.

Q7. What is the ethnic composition of Belgium? (3m)

- * The ethnic composition of this small country is very complex. Of the country's total population, 59 percent lives in the Flemish region and speaks Dutch language.
- * Another 40 percent people live in the Wallonia region and speak French. Remaining 1 percent of the Belgians speak German.
- * In the capital city Brussels, 80 percent people speak French while 20 percent are Dutch-speaking.

Q8. What led to the ethnic tension in Belgium? Why was it acute in Brussels? (3m)

- * The minority French-speaking community was relatively rich and powerful. This was resented by the Dutch-speaking community who got the benefit of economic development and education much later.
- * This led to tensions between the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking communities during the 1950s and 1960s. The tension between the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking communities as more acute in Brussels. Brussels presented a special problem: the Dutch-speaking people constituted a majority in the country, but a minority in the capital.

Q9. What is ethnic composition of Sri Lanka? (3m)

- * Sri Lanka has a diverse population. The major social groups are the Sinhala-speakers (74 per cent) and the Tamil-speakers (18 per cent). Among the Tamils there are two subgroups. Tamil natives of the country are called 'Sri Lankan Tamils' (13 per cent). The rest whose forefathers came from India plantation workers during colonial periods, are called 'Indian Tamils'.
- * Sri Lankan Tamils are concentrated in the north and the east of the country. Most of the Sinhala-speaking people are Buddhist, while most of the Tamils are Hindus or Muslims.
- * There are about 7 per cent Christians, who are both Tamil and Sinhala.

Q10. 'Sharing of power makes a country more powerful and united'. Support this statement with examples. (5m)

Ans. Sharing of power makes a country more powerful and united:

- *Power sharing helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between social groups.
- *Power sharing is a good way to ensure the stability of political order.
- *Imposing the will of majority community over others undermines the unity of the nation.
- *In democracy, sharing of power involves those affected by its exercise and who have to live with its effects.
- *People have the right to be consulted on how they have to be governed. Eg: India, Belgium.

Q11. Define majoritarianism. What was its impact in Sri Lanka? What was the result? (5m)

Ans. Majoritarianism is a belief that the majority community should be able to rule a country in whichever way it wants, by disregarding the wishes and needs of the minority.

All the government measures , coming one after the other, gradually increased the feeling of alienation among the Sri Lankan Tamils.

They felt that none of the major political parties led by the Buddhist Sinhala leaders were sensitive to their language and culture.

They felt that the constitution and the government policies denied them equal political rights, discriminated against them in getting jobs and other opportunities and ignored their interests.

As a result, the relation between the Sinhala and the Tamil communities strained over time.

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