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Power Sharing

OBJECTIVE TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Study the picture and answer the question that follow.



Which of the following aspects best signifies the light gray shaded part of the map of Belgium?

- (a) Walloon – French-speaking
 (b) Flemish – Dutch-speaking
 (c) German-speaking region
 (d) Brussels-Capital Region
2. In the question given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and chose the correct option:

Assertion (A): Belgium and Sri Lanka both faced ethical tension among different communities.

Reason (R): Both the countries resolved the conflict by power sharing arrangement which gave equal representation to all the communities.

- (a) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.
 (b) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A.
 (c) A is correct but R is wrong.
 (d) A is wrong but R is correct.

3. Modern democracies maintain a system of checks and balances. Identify the correct option based on the horizontal power sharing arrangement.

- (a) central government, state government, local bodies
 (b) legislature, executive, judiciary
 (c) among different social groups
 (d) among different pressure groups

4. Study the picture and answer the question that follow.



Which one of the following options best signifies this picture?

- (a) Problems of power distribution
 (b) Problems of running the Germany's grand coalition government
 (c) Power to be shared equally among parties
 (d) All of these
5. Correct the following statement and rewrite.
 The community government in Sri Lanka is a good example of power shared between two social groups.
6. Tamils in Sri Lanka whose forefathers came from India as plantation workers during colonial period are called
7. When the European Union was formed, was chosen as its headquarters.
8. What is meant by power sharing?

9. Consider the following two statements on power sharing and select the answer using the codes given below:

- A. Power sharing is good for democracy.
- B. It helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between social groups.

Which of these statements are true and false?

- (a) A is true but B is false
- (b) Both A and B are true
- (c) Both A and B are false
- (d) A is false but B is true

10. Match List I (forms of power sharing) with List II (forms of government) and select the correct answer using the codes given below in the lists:

List I	List II
1. Power shared among different organs of government	(a) Community Government
2. Power shared among governments at different levels	(b) Separation of powers
3. Power shared by different social groups	(c) Coalition government
4. Power shared by two or more political parties	(d) Federal government

	1	2	3	4
a)	D	A	B	C
b)	B	C	D	A
c)	B	D	A	C
d)	C	D	A	B

Answers :

- 1. (b) Flemish – Dutch-speaking
- 2. (c) A is correct but R is wrong.

(Belgians adopted such a power sharing model where all communities got equal representation—which further helped

in resolving tension between different communities. Whereas Sri Lanka tried to promote the supremacy of majority community (Sinhala) which led to Civil War.)

- 3. (b) legislature, executive, judiciary
- 4. (b) Problems of running the Germany's grand coalition government.

(This coalition government included the two major parties---Christian Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party. These two parties were historically rivals to each other. They had to form a coalition government because neither of them got clear majority of their own in the 2005 elections. Hence, the car has been shown with two steering wheels signifying the two rival parties.)

- 5. The community government in Belgium is a good example of power shared between different social groups.

(This 'community government' in Belgium is elected by 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.)

- 6. Indian Tamils
- 7. Brussels
- 8. **Power sharing** means sharing of responsibilities and powers by the different organs of the government such as the legislature, executive and judiciary.

- 9. (b) Both A and B are true

- 10. (c) B, D, A, C

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

- 1. Describe the ethnic composition of Belgium.

Ans. The ethnic composition of Belgium is very complex. (Ethnic composition means a group of people having similarities with each other with respect to culture, language, physical type, history or society. They need not always have the same religion or nationality.)

- (a) Of the country's total population, 59 per cent lives in the Flemish region (north part of Belgium) and speaks Dutch language.
- (b) Another 40 per cent people live in the Wallonia region (south part of Belgium) and speak French.
- (c) Remaining one per cent of the Belgians speak German.
- (d) In the capital city Brussels, 80 per cent people speak French while 20 per cent are Dutch-speaking.

(In the country majority was that of Dutch but in the capital majority was of French.)

2. **What led to the ethnic tension in Belgium? Why was it more acute in Brussels?**

OR

Describe the tension/conflict that existed between the Dutch and French-speaking people in Belgium.

Ans. The following reasons led to the ethnic tension in Belgium:

- (a) The minority French-speaking community was more rich and powerful than the Dutch-speaking community.
- (b) The Dutch-speaking community did not get many benefits (economic development and education) like the French-speaking community which made the Dutch very angry. This led to tensions between the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking communities.

The tension between the two communities was more acute (serious) in Brussels because the Dutch-speaking people had a majority in the country, but they were in minority in Brussels.

3. **Give an account of the ethnic composition of Sri Lanka.**

Ans. The ethnic composition of Sri Lanka is as follows:

- (a) Sri Lanka has a diverse population.

The major social groups are the Sinhala-speakers (74 per cent) and the Tamil-speakers (18 per cent).

- (b) There are two subgroups among Tamils:
 - (i) Sri Lankan Tamils, i.e Tamil natives of the country (13 per cent)
 - (ii) the rest Indian Tamils
- (c) Sri Lankan Tamils live in the north and east of the country.
- (d) Most of the Sinhala-speaking people are Buddhists.
- (e) Most of the Tamils are Hindus or Muslims.
- (f) There are about 7 per cent Christians, who are both Tamil and Sinhala.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. **What were the reasons for the alienation (separation) of Sri Lankan Tamils? What was the effect of this on Sri Lankan Tamils?**

OR

What were the majoritarian measures taken in Sri Lanka to establish Sinhala supremacy?

OR

Describe the provisions of the Act passed in Sri Lanka in 1956 to establish Sinhala supremacy.

OR

What were the causes for strained (showing tension) relations between the Sinhala and Tamil communities in Sri Lanka?

Ans. Leaders of the Sinhala community wanted to dominate (control/influence) the government as they were in majority. Therefore, the government adopted a series of **majoritarian measures** to establish Sinhala supremacy (majoritarian means a belief that the majority community should be able to rule a country in whichever way it wants, ignoring the wishes and needs of the minority). The measures are as follows:

- (a) In 1956, an Act was passed to declare Sinhala as the only official language thus, disregarding Tamil.
- (b) The governments followed policies that favoured Sinhala applicants for admissions and jobs.
- (c) A new constitution declared that the state shall protect and promote Buddhism.

All these government measures increased the feeling of alienation among the Sri Lankan Tamils.

- (a) They felt that the major political parties led by the Buddhist Sinhala leaders were not paying attention to their language and culture.
- (b) They felt that the constitution and government policies did not give them equal political rights, discriminated against them in getting jobs and other opportunities and ignored their interests.

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

2. **Why did the Civil War break out in Sri Lanka? What was its impact on the country?**

Ans. The Civil War broke out in Sri Lanka due to the following reasons:

- (a) The majoritarian measures adopted by the government created a feeling of alienation among Sri Lankan Tamils. Tamils launched parties and struggles for the recognition of Tamil as an official language, for **regional autonomy (freedom) and equality** of opportunity in education and jobs.
- (b) But their demand for freedom and equality was rejected.
- (c) Several political organisations were formed by 1980s. They demanded an independent Tamil Eelam (state) in northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka.
- (d) The distrust (lack of trust) between the two communities turned into a Civil War (a violent conflict between

opposing groups within a country that is so serious that it appears like a war).

This war had the following impact on the country:

- (a) Thousands of people of both the communities have been killed.
- (b) Many families were forced to leave the country.
- (c) Many people lost their livelihoods.
- (d) The war caused a terrible difficulty for the social, cultural and economic life of the country.

3. **Describe the elements of Belgian model for accommodating diversities.**

OR

Highlight the measures adopted by the Belgian Government to accommodate regional and cultural diversities.

Ans. The Belgian leaders recognised the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities. Between 1970 and 1993, they amended (made changes) their constitution four times to bring everyone together within the same country.

The elements of the **Belgian model** are as follows:

- (a) The Constitution declares that the number of Dutch and French-speaking ministers shall be equal (in numbers) in the central government. Special laws required support from both the groups. One group cannot take decisions on their own.
- (b) 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. (They work freely.)
- (c) 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.

(d) There is also a third kind of government – community government. This government is elected by 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.

4. **Differentiate between the horizontal and vertical power sharing in modern democracies.**

Ans:

Horizontal division of power	Vertical division of power
(a) In horizontal power sharing arrangement, power is shared among different organs of government such as the legislature, executive and judiciary.	In vertical power sharing arrangement, power is shared among governments at different levels like central/union government, state government and local governments such as municipality and panchayats.
(b) It allows Different organs of government to exercise Different powers which means no organ is more powerful than the others.	It involves higher and lower levels of government which means all levels are not equally powerful.

(c) In this power Sharing arrangement, each organ checks the others. This results in a balance of power among various institutions. This arrangement is called a system of checks and balances .	In this power Sharing arrangement, there is no system of checks and balances because the Constitution clearly lays down the powers of different levels of government that means (power divided among higher and lower levels).
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5. **Both Belgium and Sri Lanka are democracies but they follow different systems of power sharing. Support the statement.**

OR

Bring out contrasts between Belgian and Sri Lankan democracies.

Ans. Both Belgium and Sri Lanka are democracies. But they follow the system of power sharing differently in the following manner:

- Belgium gives an ideal example of a democratic country. It adopted the **policy of accommodation of social and ethnic divisions**. On the other hand, Sri Lanka adopted majoritarian policies.
- Under the Belgian model, power is shared between two ethnic groups: Dutch and French-speaking people while Sri Lanka favoured the interests of majority Sinhala community.
- Equal representation is provided to both the groups in Belgium. Apart from that, the community government also exists that looks after cultural, educational and language related issues. In Sri Lanka, there is no such arrangement. The minority communities were denied even the basic rights.

(d) In Belgium, the leaders have realised that the unity of the country is possible only by respecting the feelings and interests of different communities and regions. But the example of Sri Lanka shows us that if a majority community wants to dominate over others and refuses to share power, it can threaten the unity of the country.

6. **State one prudential reason and one moral reason for power sharing with an example from the Indian context.**

OR

Power sharing is the very spirit of democracy. Justify this statement with suitable points.

OR

Explain two sets of reasons as why power sharing is desirable.

Ans. Power sharing is desirable for the following reasons:

(a) **Prudential** (decision based on careful calculation of gains and losses) **reason:**

- Power sharing helps to **reduce the possibility of conflict** between social groups.
- As social conflict often leads to violence and political instability, power sharing ensures the **stability of political order.**
- Imposing the will of majority community over others threatens the unity of the nation.
- For example, in India reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to participate in the running of the government fulfils the prudential reason.

(b) **Moral reason:**

- **Power sharing** is the **very spirit (soul) of democracy.**

- People have a right to be consulted on how they are to be governed.
- A legitimate government is one where citizens, through participation, acquire a share in the system.
- For example, decentralisation of powers (transfer of power from central government to local government) in India fulfils the moral reason.

7. **How is power shared among political parties and pressure groups?**

Ans. Power is shared among **political parties and pressure groups** in the following manner:

- (a) The way political parties, pressure groups and movements control or influence people in power, is also a form of power sharing.
- (b) In democracies, this takes the form of competition among different parties. Such competition ensures that power does not remain in one hand.
- (c) Power is shared among different political parties that represent different ideologies (system of ideas and ideals) and social groups.
- (d) When two or more parties form an alliance (join together) to contest elections and if they win election, they form a **coalition government** and thus, share power.
- (e) Interest groups such as those of traders, businessmen, industrialists, farmers and industrial workers also have a share in governmental power.
- (f) These interest and pressure groups bring influence either through participation in governmental committees or by influencing the decision-making process.

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