

Q.1. Why is power sharing desirable ?

Or

Power sharing is the very spirit of democracy. Justify this statement with three examples. [CBSE 2012]

- Ans.** (i) **To avoid conflict** : Power sharing is desirable because it helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between the various social groups. Since social conflict often leads to violence and political instability, power-sharing is a proper way to ensure political stability. Imposing the will of majority community over the minority may look like an attractive option in the short-run, but in the long-run, it undermines the unity of the nation.
- (ii) **Spirit of democracy** : Power sharing is the basic spirit of democracy. A democratic rule involves the sharing of power with those affected by its exercise, and those who have to live with its effects. A democratic government is chosen by the people. So, they have the right to be consulted on how they are to be governed. A legitimate government is one where groups, through participation, acquire a stake in the system.

Q.2. Explain the differences between horizontal power sharing and vertical power sharing.

- Ans.** (i) The horizontal distribution of power ensures that power is shared among different organs of the Government—the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. It allows different organs of government placed at the same level to exercise different powers. In a democracy, ministers and government officials exercise power. They are responsible to the Parliament or State Assemblies. The judges appointed by the executive can check the functioning of the executive or laws made by the legislature.
- (ii) The horizontal distribution of power is also called a system of checks and balances.
- (iii) When power is shared among government at different levels, *i.e.*, the Union or the Central Government, the State Government and the Municipality or the Panchayats. This division of power sharing involving higher and lower levels of the Government, is called the vertical division of power.

Q.3. How is the political system in Belgium innovative and different from the other countries of the world ? Explain any three points.

Or
What are some of the basic elements of the Belgium model of power sharing ?

[CBSE 2010, 2011, 2012]

Or
Highlight the measures adopted by the Belgium constitution for the prevention of conflict in Belgium.

[CBSE 2012]

- Ans. (i) **Equal number of ministers for both the groups** : The Belgian Constitution prescribes that the number of the Dutch and French-speaking Ministers shall be equal in the Central Government. Some special laws require the support of majority of members from each linguistic group. Thus, no single community can take decisions unilaterally.
- (ii) **More powers to the State Governments** : Under the power-sharing arrangement, many powers of the Central Government were given to the State Governments for the two regions of the country. The State Governments were not subordinate to the Central Government.
- (iii) **Equal representation at the State and the Central level** : A separate government has been set up at Brussels in which both the communities have equal representation.
- (iv) **Formation of Community Government** : Apart from the Central and the State Government, there is a third kind of government, i.e., 'community government'. This 'community government' is elected by the people belonging to one language community—Dutch, French and German speaking—no matter where they live. This government has the powers regarding cultural, educational and language related issues.

Q.4. What is majoritarianism ? How has it increased the feelings of alienation among Sri Lankan Tamils ? Explain with examples.

Or

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

[CBSE 2010, 2012]

- Ans. (i) Majoritarianism means 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.
- (ii) In 1956, an act was passed to recognise Sinhala as the only official language, thus disregarding Tamil.
- (iii) Government favoured Sinhala applicants for university positions and government jobs.
- (iv) A new constitution stipulated that the state shall protect and foster Buddhism.
- (v) All these government measures, coming one after the other, gradually increased the feeling of alienation among the Sri Lankan Tamils. They felt that move of the major political parties led by the Buddhist-Sinhala leaders were sensitive to their language and culture. As a result, the relations between the Sinhala and Tamil Communities strained over time.