

⊗ Introduction :— Power sharing is the spirit of democracy. All communities, social groups get their say in the governance. People have a right to be consulted on how they are to be governed.

⊗ Power Sharing in India :— India is a democratic country. People of India elect their representatives through elections. After that, people's representatives elect the govt to make or amend the rules & regulations & to carry out day to day functioning of governance. One basic principle of democracy is that people are the source of all political power.

⊗ Forms of Power Sharing in Democracies :—

① Horizontal Division of Power :— Power is shared among different organs of government, such as legislature, executive & judiciary. This type of distribution of power called horizontal division of power. It allows different organs of government placed at the same level to exercise different powers. This ensures a balance of power among various institutions. The executive is answerable to legislature. The legislature has the right to make or amend laws but it is answerable to the people. The judiciary is independent & ensures that the laws of the land are obeyed by legislature & executive.



② Vertical Division of Power :- Power can be shared among governments at different levels. Usually, a central government is responsible for the entire nation. The state governments are responsible for the respective states. There is clear cut demarcation on subjects which come under the union government & those which come under state government. There are some subjects which come under the concurrent list i.e. both state & central governments exercise power on such subjects. There is a third level also, called municipalities and panchayats.

③ Power Sharing Among Social Groups :- Power can also be shared among different social groups. In a diverse country like India, there are various social, linguistic & caste groups. Power is shared among each of these groups. e.g- people from the minority communities, OBCs & SC & ST are given reservation so that there could be adequate representation for them in the government machinery.

④ Power Sharing Among Various Pressure Groups :- Political parties, pressure groups & movements help in controlling or influencing those who are in power. In a democracy, the citizens have freedom to choose among the various contenders for power. Such competition ensures



that power does not remain in one hand, but is shared among different political parties. Sometimes this kind of sharing can be direct, when two or more parties form an alliance to contest elections. If their alliance group is elected, they form a coalition government & thus share power. Various interest groups such as those of traders, businessmen, industrialists, farmers & industrial workers have a share in governmental power.

- ⊗ Need of Power Sharing :-
- ① Power sharing helps in reducing the conflict between various social groups. Power sharing is necessary for maintaining social harmony & peace.
  - ② Power sharing helps in avoiding tyranny of majority. The tyranny of majority not only destroys the minority social groups but also the majority social groups.
  - ③ People's voices forms the basis of a democratic government. Hence, power sharing is essential to respect the spirit of democracy.
  - ④ Avoiding conflict in society & preventing majority tyranny are considered as prudential reasons for power sharing. Maintaining the spirit of democracy is considered as the moral reason for power sharing.



⊕ Ethnic Composition of Belgium :- The population of

Belgium is a little over one crore. The ethnic composition of this small country is very complex.

- (1) 59% of total population lives in Flemish region & speaks Dutch language.
- (2) Another 40% people live in the Wallonia & speak French.
- (3) Remaining 1% of the Belgians speak German
- (4) In the capital city, Brussels, 80% people speak French while 20% are Dutch speaking.

⊕ Diverse Population of Sri Lanka :- Sri Lanka is

an island nation having about 2 crore people. The major social groups in the country are the Sinhala - speakers whose %age is 74 & the Tamil speakers who constitute 18% of the population. Among Tamils there are two sub-groups. Tamil natives of the country are Sri Lankan Tamils (13%). The rest, whose forefathers came from India as plantation workers during colonial period, are called 'Indian Tamils'. Most of the Sinhala - speaking people are Buddhists, while most of the Tamils are Hindus or Muslims. There are about 7% Christians, who are both Tamils & Sinhalas.



⊛ Reasons For Strained Relationship Between the Sinhala & Tamil Communities :- When Sri Lanka emerged as an independent country in 1948, the leaders of the Sinhala community tried to dominate over the govt by virtue of their majority. In order to establish their supremacy they took some 'majoritarian measures' which are given below :

- (1) In 1956, an Act was passed which declared Sinhala as the only official language. This act, thus, disregarded Tamil.
- (2) Preferences were given to Sinhala applicants for university positions & government jobs.
- (3) A new constitution stipulated that the state shall protect & promote Buddhism.

⊛ Community Government :- A government in which different social groups can handle the affairs of their community.

⊛ Federal Division of Power :- The system of sharing power among government at different levels is called federal division of power.

⊛ Majoritarianism :- Under Majoritarianism, majority community rules the country in its own way by disregarding the wishes & needs of the minority.



\* Tensions Between the Dutch & the French Speaking People in Belgium :- (i) The economic inequality between the Dutch-speaking & French-speaking was the basic cause of tension.

(ii) The French-speaking community who was in minority was rich & powerful whereas the Dutch-speaking community who was in majority was poor.

(iii) The Dutch-speaking community got the benefit of economic development & education much later.

(iv) The tensions between two communities was more acute in Brussels. The Dutch-speaking people constituted a majority in the country but a minority in the capital.

\* Belgium Model of Power Sharing :-

① The Belgian Constitution prescribes that the number of Dutch & the 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.

② Under the proper power sharing arrangement, many powers of the central government were given to state government for the two regions of the country.

③ A separate govt had been set up at Brussels in which both communities have equal representation.

④ Apart from the central & state government, there is a third type of govt. "Community Government". This govt was elected by the people belonging to one language community - Dutch, French & German - no matter where they live.



⊗ Concept of Community Government in Belgium :- A

Community government is one in which different social groups are given the power to handle the affairs related to their communities. The various provisions in context of Belgium are as follows:

- (i) The 'Community government' is elected by people belonging to a language community - Dutch, French & German speaking - no matter where they live.
- (ii) They are expected to work jointly for the benefit of common masses without undermining anyone community.
- (iii) This govt has the power regarding cultural, educational & language related issues.

⊗ Federal Government is Better Than Unitary Government :-

Federalism is a government in which power is divided between a central authority & its various constituent units. In a unitary government, all the powers are in the hands of a central authority. Federal govt is better than unitary govt. It can be understood by the following examples:

- (i) The Belgium leaders tried to solve the ethnic problem by respecting the feelings & interests of different communities & regions.
- (ii) The majoritarianism in Sri Lanka led to civil war.

⊗ Civil War in Sri Lanka :-

- Causes :
- (i) Tamil community was demanding that Tamil language should be recognised as an official language.
  - (ii) They were demanding for regional autonomy.
  - (iii) They were demanding equal opportunity in securing jobs & education.



(iv) They formed various political organisations, but when the govt tried to suppress their activities by force, this led to a civil war

Effects :- (i) It was a violent conflict between the Sinhala community & Tamil community

(ii) Thousands of people of both the communities were killed.

(iii) Many families were forced to leave the country as refugees & many more lost their livelihoods.

(iv) The civil war caused a terrible setback to the social, cultural & economic life of the country.

⊗ Advantages of Horizontal Power Sharing :- (i) The power that is shared among different organs of government equally is known as horizontal power sharing.

(ii) This type of power sharing places all the organs of government i.e. legislature, executive & judiciary at the same level.

(iii) Under this type of power sharing, no organ can exercise unlimited powers.

(iv) This system is also known as the system of checks & balances.

⊗ Coalition Government :- It is a government in which several parties cooperate. It generally happens when no party gets a majority in the parliament & several parties join to prove their majority & form govt.

⊗ Reserved Constituency :- A constituency which is reserved for a particular section of the society.



## \* Reasons for Power Sharing :-

① Prudential Reasons :- (i) Prudential reasons are based on careful calculations of gains & losses. eg in the Nepal movement of democracy even the Maoists (An armed revolutionary group) was given some share after the formation of government. The major factor for this was peace in Nepal.

(ii) Prudential reasons help to reduce the possibility of conflict between social groups.

(iii) Prudential reasons are good way to ensure political stability.

(iv) 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 nation.

② Moral Reasons :- (i) Power sharing is the basic spirit of democracy. A democratic rule involves the sharing of power.

(ii) A democratic govt 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 require a stake in the system.

(iii) Decentralisation of power i.e. formation of state governments, local governments is an example of moral reason.