

Power-sharing

❖ Understanding Ethnic Diversity and Power Sharing

Ethnic group: A group of people who share the same culture, language, or ancestry. They may not always have the same religion or nationality.

Belgium

- A small country in Europe, smaller than Haryana.
- Population: ~1 crore.
- **Ethnic groups:**
 - **Flemish (59%)** – speak Dutch, live in the Flemish region
 - **Walloon (40%)** – speak French, live in Wallonia
 - **German speakers (1%)**
- **Brussels (capital):** 80% French speakers, 20% Dutch speakers
- **Problem:** French speakers were richer and more powerful; Dutch speakers got benefits later. This created **tensions**, especially in Brussels where Dutch speakers were a minority.

Sri Lanka

- Island nation near Tamil Nadu, India.
- Population: ~2 crore (similar to Haryana).
- **Ethnic groups:**
 - **Sinhala (74%)** – majority
 - **Tamils (18%)** – minority, divided into Sri Lankan Tamils (natives) and Indian Tamils (brought by British for plantations)
- **Problem:** Conflict arose because the Tamil minority felt **disadvantaged** politically and socially.

Sri Lanka – Ethnic Composition

- **Tamils (18%)** – divided into:
 - **Sri Lankan Tamils (13%)** – natives, live mostly in **north and east**
 - **Indian Tamils** – descendants of plantation workers brought by the British
- **Sinhalese (74%)** – majority, mostly **Buddhists**
- **Tamils** – mostly **Hindus or Muslims**
- **Christians (7%)** – both Tamil and Sinhalese

Potential Problems in Multi-Ethnic Societies

- When one community is much larger, it could **dominate the smaller communities**.
- In **Belgium**, the Dutch majority could have forced their will on French and German speakers, causing tension and possible **division of the country**.
- In **Sri Lanka**, the Sinhala majority could impose its will on the Tamil minority, which could lead to **conflicts or civil unrest**.

❖ Majoritarianism in Sri Lanka

- **Independence:** Sri Lanka became independent in **1948**.
- **Sinhalese Majority:** The Sinhalese community (74% of population) wanted to **dominate the government** because of their numeric majority.
- **Majoritarian Measures:** The government passed several policies favoring the Sinhalese, which ignored the Tamil minority (18%).

Key Measures Taken:

1. **Official Language Act (1956):** Sinhala was made the **only official language**, ignoring Tamil.
2. **Preferential Policies:** Sinhalese candidates were given **priority in universities and government jobs**.
3. **Religious Preference:** The new constitution stated that the state must **protect and promote Buddhism**.

Impact on Tamils

- Tamils felt **alienated and discriminated against**.
- Their **language, culture, and political rights** were ignored.
- They believed the government was **biased toward the Sinhalese majority**.

Escalation of Ethnic Tensions in Sri Lanka

- The **Sinhalese-majority government** ignored Tamil demands for **language rights, jobs, and education**.
- Over time, relations between **Sinhalese and Tamils became strained**.
- The **Tamil community** formed political parties and demanded:
 1. Recognition of **Tamil as an official language**
 2. **Regional autonomy** for Tamil-majority areas
 3. **Equal opportunities** in education and employment

Demand for Tamil Eelam

- By the **1980s**, some Tamil groups started demanding an **independent Tamil Eelam** (state) in the **north and east**.
- Distrust escalated into **widespread conflict**, which turned into a **civil war**.

Consequences of the Civil War

- Thousands of **lives lost** from both communities
- Many families became **refugees**
- **Livelihoods and businesses destroyed**
- Severe impact on the **social, cultural, and economic life** of Sri Lanka
- The war finally **ended in 2009**

❖ **Accommodation in Belgium**

❖ **Belgium – Power Sharing Model**

Unlike Sri Lanka, Belgium **chose cooperation instead of conflict** to manage its diverse communities:

Key Features:

1. **Equal Representation in Central Government:**
 - Dutch and French-speaking ministers are **equal in number**.
 - Special laws require support from **both linguistic groups** for decisions.
2. **State Governments:**
 - Powers of the central government are **decentralized**.
 - Flemish and Walloon regions have their **own governments** that are **not subordinate** to the center.
3. **Community Governments:**
 - People belonging to a language group (Dutch, French, German) elect a **community government**.
 - These governments handle **cultural, educational, and language issues**, no matter where the people live.
4. **Brussels:**
 - Both French and Dutch-speaking communities have **equal representation** in the capital.

Why It Works

- Prevents any single community from **dominating others**.
- Respects the **interests and culture** of all communities.
- Avoids **civic strife** and possible **division of the country**.
- Brussels even became the **headquarters of the European Union** because of this cooperative model.

Lessons for Democracy

1. **Prudential Reasons (Practical):**

- Reduces conflict between communities.
- Ensures **political stability**.
- Prevents the **tyranny of the majority**, which can harm both minority and majority.

2. Moral Reasons:

- Power sharing is the **spirit of democracy**.
- Citizens have the **right to participate** in decisions that affect their lives.
- Legitimacy of government comes from **inclusion and participation**.

1. An ethnic group is a group of people who share:

- a) Only religion
- b) Same culture, language, or ancestry
- c) Same nationality
- d) Same political party

Answer: b) Same culture, language, or ancestry

2. Which country is smaller than Haryana and has ~1 crore population?

- a) Sri Lanka
- b) Belgium
- c) Bhutan
- d) Nepal

Answer: b) Belgium

3. Major ethnic groups in Belgium are:

- a) Flemish, Walloon, German speakers
- b) Sinhala, Tamil, Christian
- c) Dutch, English, French
- d) Tamil, Sinhala, Malay

Answer: a) Flemish, Walloon, German speakers

4. Flemish people in Belgium speak:

- a) French
- b) German
- c) Dutch
- d) English

Answer: c) Dutch

5. Walloon people in Belgium speak:

- a) German
- b) French
- c) Dutch
- d) English

Answer: b) French

6. What percentage of Belgium's population lives in Brussels and speaks French?

- a) 50%
- b) 60%
- c) 80%
- d) 100%

Answer: c) 80%

7. Main cause of tension in Belgium during 1950s–60s:

- a) Language and economic disparities between Dutch and French speakers
- b) Religious differences
- c) Overpopulation
- d) Territorial disputes

Answer: a) Language and economic disparities between Dutch and French speakers

8. Sri Lanka's major ethnic groups are:

- a) Flemish and Walloon
- b) Sinhala and Tamil
- c) Dutch and French
- d) Sinhalese and Malay

Answer: b) Sinhala and Tamil

9. Which community is the majority in Sri Lanka?

- a) Tamil
- b) Sinhalese (74%)
- c) Christians
- d) Indian Tamils

Answer: b) Sinhalese (74%)

10. Sri Lankan Tamils mainly live in:

- a) South and West
- b) North and East
- c) Central region
- d) Western coast

Answer: b) North and East

11. Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka are:

- a) Natives of Sri Lanka
- b) Descendants of plantation workers brought by the British
- c) Majority community
- d) French-speaking minority

Answer: b) Descendants of plantation workers brought by the British

12. Sinhalese majority in Sri Lanka promoted:

- a) Tamil language
- b) Sinhala supremacy
- c) Equal power-sharing
- d) Federalism

Answer: b) Sinhala supremacy

13. Official Language Act (1956) in Sri Lanka made:

- a) Tamil official language
- b) Sinhala only official language
- c) English official language
- d) Both Sinhala and Tamil official languages

Answer: b) Sinhala only official language

14. Consequence of majoritarian policies in Sri Lanka:

- a) Peaceful coexistence
- b) Alienation of Tamils

- c) Equal representation in government
- d) Federalism

Answer: b) Alienation of Tamils

15. Tamil Eelam demanded by Tamils refers to:

- a) New language policy
- b) Autonomous region
- c) Independent Tamil state in north and east
- d) Reservation in jobs

Answer: c) Independent Tamil state in north and east

16. Civil war in Sri Lanka ended in:

- a) 1983
- b) 1995
- c) 2009
- d) 2015

Answer: c) 2009

17. Belgium adopted which approach to manage diversity?

- a) Majoritarianism
- b) Cooperation and power-sharing
- c) Military rule
- d) Centralized control

Answer: b) Cooperation and power-sharing

18. In Belgium, number of Dutch and French-speaking ministers in Central Government is:

- a) Unequal
- b) Equal
- c) Only Dutch ministers
- d) Only French ministers

Answer: b) Equal

19. Community governments in Belgium are elected by:

- a) Residents of a region only
 - b) People of the same language group
 - c) Only French speakers
 - d) Only Dutch speakers
- Answer:** b) People of the same language group
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20. Responsibilities of Belgian community governments include:

- a) National defense
- b) Cultural, educational, and language issues
- c) Taxation policy
- d) Foreign policy

Answer: b) Cultural, educational, and language issues

21. Why Brussels has special power-sharing arrangements?

- a) To give French speakers more power
- b) Dutch speakers are a minority in capital
- c) It is not a part of Belgium

d) To promote tourism

Answer: b) Dutch speakers are a minority in capital

22. Prudential reasons for power-sharing include:

- a) Reduces conflict, ensures stability
- b) Moral duty only
- c) Benefits only majority
- d) Centralizes authority

Answer: a) Reduces conflict, ensures stability

23. Moral reasons for power-sharing include:

- a) Citizens have the right to participate in decisions
- b) Concentrates power in majority
- c) Avoids elections
- d) Ensures civil war

Answer: a) Citizens have the right to participate in decisions

24. Horizontal power-sharing means:

- a) Sharing power among levels of government
- b) Sharing power among organs of government at the same level
- c) Sharing power among political parties
- d) Sharing power among social groups

Answer: b) Sharing power among organs of government at the same level

25. Vertical power-sharing means:

- a) Sharing power among political parties
- b) Sharing power among social groups
- c) Sharing power among levels of government (central, state, local)
- d) Sharing power among judges and ministers

Answer: c) Sharing power among levels of government (central, state, local)

26. Power-sharing among social groups ensures:

- a) Majority domination
- b) Minority participation and prevents alienation
- c) Federalism only
- d) Judicial control

Answer: b) Minority participation and prevents alienation

27. Coalition government is an example of:

- a) Horizontal power-sharing
- b) Vertical power-sharing
- c) Power-sharing among political parties
- d) Power-sharing among social groups

Answer: c) Power-sharing among political parties

28. Reserved constituencies in India are meant for:

- a) Majority communities
- b) Minorities, women, SC/ST
- c) Only political parties
- d) Foreign nationals

Answer: b) Minorities, women, SC/ST

29. Which country's model prevented civic strife through innovative power-sharing?

- a) Sri Lanka
- b) Belgium
- c) Russia
- d) India

Answer: b) Belgium

❖ **Forms of Power-Sharing**

Power-sharing means **dividing political power among different people or groups** to ensure fairness, reduce conflict, and strengthen democracy. It can take several forms:

1. Horizontal Power-Sharing (among institutions)

- Power is **divided among different organs of government**.
- Example: **Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary** in India.
- Ensures **no single institution becomes too powerful**.

2. Vertical Power-Sharing (between levels of government)

- Power is **divided between central and state governments**.
- Example: **Federal system in India** where states have their own governments with specific powers.
- Allows regions to **govern themselves** while remaining part of the country.

3. Power-Sharing Among Social Groups

- Power is **shared among different social groups**, like **linguistic, religious, or ethnic communities**.
- Example:
 - **Belgium:** Dutch, French, and German-speaking communities share power at central, state, and community levels.
 - **Sri Lanka:** Lack of power-sharing led to conflict.

4. Power-Sharing Among Political Parties

- Power can also be shared through **coalitions and alliances** in the legislature.
- Helps in **representing multiple interests** and prevents domination by one party.

1. Horizontal power-sharing refers to:

- a) Power shared between central and state governments
- b) Power shared among social groups
- c) Power shared among different organs of government at the same level
- d) Power shared among political parties

Answer: c) Power shared among different organs of government at the same level

2. Which of the following is an example of horizontal power-sharing?

- a) Central and State Governments
- b) Coalition governments
- c) Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary
- d) Reserved constituencies

Answer: c) Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary

3. Vertical power-sharing means:

- a) Power shared among political parties
- b) Power shared among different levels of government

- c) Power shared among social groups
- d) Power shared among interest groups

Answer: b) Power shared among different levels of government

4. Which of the following is an example of vertical power-sharing?

- a) Belgium's community government
- b) Central (Union) and State Governments in India
- c) Legislature and Judiciary
- d) Coalition governments

Answer: b) Central (Union) and State Governments in India

5. Why is horizontal power-sharing important?

- a) Gives states autonomy
- b) Ensures coalition governments
- c) Prevents abuse of power and ensures checks and balances
- d) Provides minority representation

Answer: c) Prevents abuse of power and ensures checks and balances

6. Federal division of power refers to:

- a) Horizontal power-sharing
- b) Vertical power-sharing
- c) Power-sharing among social groups
- d) Power-sharing among political parties

Answer: b) Vertical power-sharing

7. Power-sharing among social groups is meant to:

- a) Give central government more power
- b) Prevent alienation of minorities
- c) Ensure coalition governments
- d) Concentrate power in one hand

Answer: b) Prevent alienation of minorities

8. Belgium's community governments are for:

- a) Vertical power-sharing
- b) Horizontal power-sharing
- c) Social group representation (Dutch, French, German-speaking)
- d) Coalition governments

Answer: c) Social group representation (Dutch, French, German-speaking)

9. Reserved constituencies in India are for:

- a) Majority communities
- b) Political parties
- c) Socially weaker sections and women
- d) Coalition governments

Answer: c) Socially weaker sections and women

10. Coalition governments are an example of:

- a) Horizontal power-sharing
- b) Vertical power-sharing
- c) Power-sharing among political parties
- d) Power-sharing among social groups

Answer: c) Power-sharing among political parties

11. Why is power-sharing desirable in a democracy?

- a) Reduces conflict and promotes stability
- b) Helps majority dominate minority
- c) Concentrates power
- d) Eliminates elections

Answer: a) Reduces conflict and promotes stability

12. Which country's example shows the failure of power-sharing leading to conflict?

- a) Belgium
- b) Sri Lanka
- c) India
- d) USA

Answer: b) Sri Lanka

13. Which country's model shows successful power-sharing among social groups?

- a) Sri Lanka
- b) Belgium
- c) India
- d) Russia

Answer: b) Belgium

14. System of checks and balances is an example of:

- a) Horizontal power-sharing
- b) Vertical power-sharing
- c) Power-sharing among political parties
- d) Power-sharing among social groups

Answer: a) Horizontal power-sharing

15. Who checks the executive in India?

- a) State governments
- b) Judges (Judiciary) and Parliament (Legislature)
- c) Political parties
- d) Citizens directly

Answer: b) Judges (Judiciary) and Parliament (Legislature)

16. Which of the following is a key feature of vertical power-sharing in India?

- a) All power resides in the central government
- b) State governments are subordinate to the central government
- c) Powers are divided between Central and State Governments
- d) Judges control policy decisions

Answer: c) Powers are divided between Central and State Governments

17. Why are coalition governments formed?

- a) To allow multiple parties to share power
- b) To prevent local governance
- c) To increase majority dominance
- d) To bypass elections

Answer: a) To allow multiple parties to share power

18. Interest groups (like farmers, workers, industrialists) influence power-sharing through:

- a) Horizontal division
- b) Vertical division
- c) Political participation and policy influence
- d) Judicial control

Answer: c) Political participation and policy influence

19. What is a moral reason for power-sharing?

- a) Ensures better outcomes
- b) Strengthens democracy by including all affected citizens
- c) Increases majority dominance
- d) Simplifies governance

Answer: b) Strengthens democracy by including all affected citizens

20. Which of the following statements is true?

- a) Power-sharing is only for social groups
- b) Power-sharing prevents tyranny of the majority and strengthens democracy
- c) Power-sharing is optional in a democracy
- d) Only coalition governments represent power-sharing

Answer: b) Power-sharing prevents tyranny of the majority and strengthens democracy