

Civics Class 10 Important Question Chapter 1 Power Sharing

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

Answer: The minority French-speaking community was relatively rich and powerful. So the Dutch speaking community, who got the benefit of economic development and education much later showed the resentment between the Dutch-speaking and the French-speaking communities during the 1950s and the 1960s. The conflict between the two communities was more severe in Brussels because the Dutch speaking people constituted a majority in the country, but a minority in the capital.

2. What is the ethnic composition of Belgium? [CBSE Sept. 2011]

Or

Describe the ethnic composition of Belgium. [CBSE 2012]

Answer: The ethnics composition of Belgium, a small country is very complex. Of the country's total population, 59 per cent live in the Flemish region and speak Dutch language. Another 40 per cent people live in the Wallonia region and speak French. Remaining 1 per cent of the Belgians speak German. In the capital city, Brussels, about 80 per cent people speak French while 20 per cent are Dutch-speaking.

3. What is the ethnic composition of Sri Lanka?

Answer: Sri Lanka has a diverse population. The Sinhalese community forms the majority of the population (74%) with Tamils (18%) who are mostly concentrated in the north and east of the island, forming the largest ethnic minority. Other communities include the Muslims. Among Tamils, there are two sub-groups. The Tamil natives of the country are called 'Sri Lankan Tamils' (13 %). The Tamils, who were brought as indentured labourers from India by British colonists to work on estate plantations are called the 'Indian Origin Tamils' (5%). Most of the Sinhala-speaking people are Buddhists, while most of the Tamils are Hindus or Muslims. There are about 7 per cent Christians, who are both Tamil and Sinhalese.

4. Mention any four steps which were taken by the Sri Lankan government to achieve majoritarianism.

Answer: (i) In 1956, an Act was passed under which English was replaced as the country's official language not by the Sinhala and Tamil but by the Sinhala only.

(ii) The governments followed preferential policies that favoured the Sinhala applicants for

university positions and government jobs.

(iii) A new constitution stipulated that the state shall protect and foster Buddhism.

(iv) Denial of citizenship to estate Tamils.

5. What is a Civil War? Explain with context to Sri Lanka.

Answer: (i) It is a violent conflict between the opposing groups within a country, for example the Sinhalese and the Tamils.

(ii) Due to the violent conflict between both these ethnic groups thousands of people of both the communities have been killed. Many families were forced to leave the country as refugees and many more lost their livelihoods.

(iii) The civil war has caused a terrible setback to the social, cultural and economic life of the country.

6. What is community government? Explain the concept of community government with context to Belgium.

Answer: (i) A community government is one in which different social groups are given the power to handle the affairs related to their communities. They are expected to work jointly for the benefit of the common masses without undermining any one community.

(ii) The 'community government' is elected by people belonging to one language community- Dutch, French and German speaking – no matter where they live.

(iii) This government has the power regarding cultural, educational and language-related issues.

7. What is the relationship between democracy and power sharing?

Answer: 'Democracy' means giving every citizen the right and power to make the decisions through their elected representatives. Power sharing is dividing power among various social groups to give them equal representation in the governance. Power sharing is the essence of democracy where every individual, irrespective of cultural and language differences feel involved in the political system.

8. How did the Sri Lankan and the Belgium government try to solve the ethnic problem?

Or

Explain any two important differences between the power sharing model accepted by Belgium and Sri Lanka.

Answer: (i) The Belgium leaders tried to solve the ethnic problem by respecting the feelings and interests of different communities and regions, whereas the Sri Lankan government tried to solve the problem through majoritarianism.

(ii) Belgium leaders established a federal structure under which power was shared between

the Union Government and its other constituent units whereas Sri Lankan leaders adopted Unitary Government structure.

(iii) The Belgium solution helped in avoiding civic strife whereas the majoritarianism in Sri Lanka led to the civil war.

9. “Both Belgium and Sri Lanka are democracies but they follow different systems of power sharing.” Support the statement by giving three points of difference.

Answer: (i) Type of Government: Sri Lanka continues to be, for all practical purpose, a unitary system where the national government has all the powers. Tamil leaders want Sri Lanka to become a federal system under which the regional governments were given constitutional powers that were no longer dependent on the central government. Belgium shifted from a unitary to a federal form of government.

(ii) Religion and Government : To accommodate people belonging to different ethnic groups Belgium formed a ‘community government’ whereas Sri Lankan government passed a law to protect and promote Buddhism.

(iii) Language and government : In 1956 Sri Lankan government passed an act to recognize Sinhala as the only official language whereas Belgium government “tried to protect and foster all the languages spoken by the people.

10. What is power sharing? Explain.

Answer: (i) The concept of providing a permanent share of power in the government different communities or regions is termed as power sharing.

(ii) Under this the people and the leaders of the nation respect the feelings and interests of different communities and regions.

(iii) The principle of power sharing is very important for the unity and growth of democracy.

11. Explain the principle of federal division of power.

Answer: (i) Under the federal division of power the power is divided among different levels of government; for example in India the power is shared among the three levels of governments, i.e., Union government, the state governments and the local governments.

(ii) This type of system is known as vertical division of power.

(iii) Under this the Constitution clearly lays down the power of each level of government

12. “Power may also be shared among different social groups”. Explain by giving examples.

Answer: (i) Power may also be shared among different social groups such as the religious and linguistic groups. ‘Community government’ in Belgium is a good example of this arrangement.

(ii) In some countries there are constitutional and legal arrangements whereby socially weaker sections and women are represented in the legislatures and administration. For example in India we follow the principle of 'reserved constituencies' in assemblies and the parliament of our country. This type of arrangement is meant to give space in the government and administration to diverse social groups who otherwise would feel alienated from the government.

(iii) This method is used to give minority communities a fair share in power.

Long Answer Type Questions (5 Marks)

1. Describe the tension that existed between the Dutch and the French speaking people in Belgium.

Or

What were the two main causes of resentment in Belgium in 1960 ? How was the conflict solved?

Answer: (i) The economic inequality between the Dutch speaking and French-speaking was the basic cause of tension.

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

(iii) This was resented by the Dutch-speaking community who for the benefit of economic development and education much later.

(iv) The tension between the two communities was 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.

(v) Between 1970 and 1993, the Belgium government amended their constitution four times so as to work out an arrangement that would enable everyone to live together within the same country. '

2. How were the ethnic problems solved in Belgium? Mention any four steps which were taken by the government to solve the problems?

Or

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

Or

Highlight any three measures adopted by the Belgian government to accommodate regional and cultural diversities.

Answer: (i) Equal number of ministers for both the groups : The Belgian Constitution prescribes that the number of 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 state governments :

Under the proper power sharing arrangement, many powers of the central government were given to 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.

3. Why is Power sharing desirable?

Or

Why is power sharing necessary in democracy? Explain.

Or

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

Or

Why is power sharing desirable? Give any three prudential reasons.

Answer: 1. Prudential reasons:

(i) Prudential reasons are based on careful calculations of gains and losses. For example in the Nepal movement for democracy even the Maoists, an armed _ revolutionary group, was given some share after the formation of government. The major gain 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 the nation. Tyranny of the majority is not just oppressive for the minority; it often brings ruin to the majority as well.

2. Moral reasons:

(i) 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.

(ii) 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.

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

4. Explain the major forms of power sharing in modern democracies.

Or

Explain four forms of participation in government under modern democratic system.

Or

Explain, how power is shared among different organs of government.

Or

Describe with examples the way in which power can be shared among different social and linguistic groups ?

Or

Describe horizontal and vertical power sharing in modern democracies.

Answer: (i) Power sharing among the different organs of government (Horizontal power sharing). In a democracy, power is shared among the different organs of the government such as the legislature, executive and the judiciary. This is called the horizontal distribution of power because it allows different organs of the government placed at the same level to exercise different powers. Under this kind of power sharing arrangement, one can exercise unlimited powers. Each organ has its own powers, and it can also check the powers of other. So this results in a balance of power among the various institutions.

(ii) Power sharing among governments at different levels : Under this, people choose separate governments at separate levels, for example, a general local government for the entire country and local governments at the provincial, sub-national or regional levels. Such a general government for the entire country is usually called a Federal government.

(iii) Power sharing among different social groups : In a democracy, especially, in a multi-ethnic society, power is also shared among social groups such as the religious and linguistic groups. 'Community government' in Belgium is a good example of this arrangement. In some countries, there are constitutional and legal arrangements whereby socially weaker sections and women are represented in the legislatures and the administration.

(iv) Power sharing among political parties, pressure groups and movements : In a democracy, power is also shared among different political parties, pressure groups and movements. Democracy provides the citizens a choice to choose their rulers. This choice is provided by the various political parties, who contest elections to win them. Such competition ensures that power does not remain in one hand.

5. What are the advantages of horizontal power sharing? Explain with the help of examples.

Or

What is meant by the horizontal distribution of power? Explain any two merits of this form of power sharing.

Answer: (i) The power that is shared among different organs of government equally is known as horizontal power sharing.

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

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

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

(v) For example, in India, though the ministers and government officials exercise power, but they are responsible to the parliament or state legislatures. Similarly, although the judges are appointed by the executive, but they can check the functioning of executive of laws made by the legislatures.

6. Explain the power sharing arrangements among the political parties and pressure groups.

Answer: (i) In a democracy, power is also shared among different political parties, pressure groups and movements.

(ii) Democracy provides the citizens a choice to choose their rulers. This choice is provided by the various political parties, who contest elections to win them. Such competition ensures that power does not remain in one hand.

(iii) In the long run, power is shared among different political parties that represent different ideologies and social groups. Sometimes, this kind of sharing can be direct, when two or more parties form an alliance to contest elections. If their alliance is elected, they form a coalition government and thus, share power.

(iv) In a democracy, various pressure groups and movements also remain active. They also have a share in governmental power, either through participation in governmental committees or having influence on the decision making process.

7. How is a federal government better than a unitary government? Explain with examples of Belgium and Sri Lanka.

Answer: (i) Federalism is a system of government under which power is divided between a central authority and its various constituent units. Whereas in a unitary government all the powers are in the hands of a central authority,

(ii) The Belgium leaders tried to solve the ethnic problem by respecting the feelings and interests of different communities and regions by establishing a federal government, whereas the Sri Lankan government tried to solve the problem through majoritarianism.

(iii) The Belgium solution helped in avoiding the civic strife, whereas the majoritarianism in Sri Lanka led to the civil war.

8. What are some of the basic elements of Belgium model of power sharing ? Write any three.

Or

Explain any three elements of the Belgium model of Power sharing. [CBSE 2013]

- Answer:** (i) Equal number of ministers : Constitution prescribes that the number of 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 make decisions unilaterally.
- (ii) Power sharing : 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.
- (iii) Separate government for 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.