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Monday

Politics

POWER - SHARING

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BELGIUM AND SRI LANKA

Belgium

- » It is a small country in Europe, smaller than Haryana
- » It has borders with France, Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg.
- » Population - around 1 crore (half of Haryana)
- » The ethnic composition of Belgium:

Belgium

Dutch

- » 59%
- » Flemish region
- » Majority

French

- » 40%
- » Wallonia region
- » Minority

German

- » 01%

Good

Belgian capital
Brussels

French [majority] 80%

Dutch [minority] 20%

- » French minority was rich and powerful
- » Dutch community got benefit of economic development and education much later.
- » Main problem:
Dutch were majority in country, but minority in capital
- » This led to tensions between French and Dutch.

Sri Lanka

- » It is an island nation with population of 2 crore.
- » Sri Lanka has a diverse population.

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»» Ethnic composition of Sri Lanka :

Sri Lanka

Tamil-speakers

»» 18%

»» Hindus and Muslims

Sinhala-speakers

»» 74%

»» Buddhists

Sinhala & Tamil (both)

»» Christians

»» 07%

Sri Lankan Tamils

»» 13%

Indian Tamils

»» 05%

»» Possible outcomes of Belgium and Sri Lanka situations

Belgium

1. Dutch community could force its will on French and German due to majority.
2. Could lead to a messy partition of country
3. Both sides would want to claim control over Brussels

Sri Lanka

1. Sinhala majority could impose its will on the entire country.

Actual outcomes:

MAJORITARIANISM IN SRI LANKA

- »» In 1948, Sri Lanka became independent.
- »» Sinhala community dominated over the government, due to their majority.

1956

- >>> An Act was passed to recognise Sinhala as the only official language.
- >>> The govt. favoured Sinhala applicants for university positions and government jobs.
- >>> The new constitution to protect Buddhism.

Reaction of Sri Lankan Tamils

- >>> They felt that Buddhist and Sinhala parties ignored Tamil language and culture
- >>> They felt the constitution did not give them equal political rights.
- >>> They were discriminated in getting jobs and other opportunities.
- >>> Their interests were ignored
- >>> Sri Lankan Tamils launched parties and struggles for:
 - Recognizing Tamil as official language
 - Regional autonomy
 - Equal opportunity in education and jobs
- >>> Tamil demands were denied
- >>> 1980s - Political organizations formed demanding an independent Tamil Eelam (state) in north and east of Sri Lanka.

>>> Result:

Conflicts among two communities and soon a civil war.

1. Thousands of people of both communities killed.
2. Many families forced to leave countries as refugees
3. Many people lost livelihoods
4. Severe loss to social, cultural and economic life

>>> Civil war ended in 2009.

ACCOMMODATION IN BELGIUM

- >>> Belgian leaders recognised the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities.
- >>> 1970 - 1993: Four constitutional amendments to work upon a peaceful arrangement.

Elements of Belgian model

1. According to the Constitution, the number of Dutch and French ministers will be equal in central government.
(decisions taken by majority, including both linguistic groups)
2. Many powers of central govt. have been given to State govt.s of both Flemish and Wallonia regions.
3. Brussels has a separate govt. with equal representation by both communities. (French accepted equality for Brussels, because Dutch accepted equality for central govt.)
4. Community Govt. - elected by people belonging to one language community - Dutch, French and German - no matter where they live.
(Community govt. has power regarding cultural, educational and linguistic issues)

Outcomes of these arrangements

1. Helped to avoid civic strife between two communities.
2. Prevented a division of country based on language.
3. When many European countries came together to form European Union, Brussels was chosen as the headquarters.

Why power sharing is desirable?

»» Two types of reasons - PRUDENTIAL and MORAL

Prudential

Moral

»» This type of reasoning stresses on power sharing will bring out better outcomes.

»» This type of reasoning emphasizes the act of power sharing as valuable.

»» ~~Examples: (Prudential reasons)~~

»» Power sharing helps to reduce social conflicts

»» Power sharing is the very spirit of democracy

»» Ensures political stability

»» Democratic rule involves sharing power with:

»» Imposing majority will
Short run - looks like attractive option
Long run - it destroys unity of nation

1. People affected by ^(power sharing) democratic exercise
2. People affected by effects of power sharing

»» Tyranny of majority:
1. Oppressive for minority
2. bring ruin for majority as well

»» People have right to be consulted on how they are to be governed.

»» A legitimate government is where citizens participate in the system.

FORMS OF POWER SHARING

»» The idea of power sharing has emerged in opposition to undivided political power.

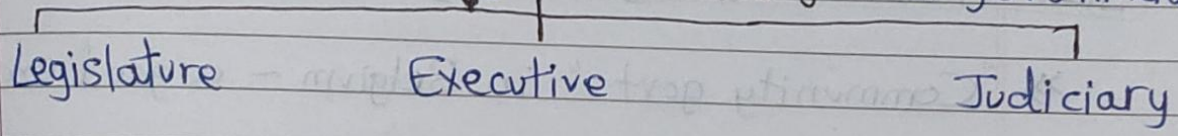
In democracy :

- >>> People are the source of all political power.
- >>> People rule themselves through institutions of self ~~governm~~ government.
- >>> Respect ~~is~~ is given to diverse groups and views.
- >>> Therefore, power should be shared to citizens in a democracy.

Some power sharing arrangements

I. Horizontal power sharing

Power is shared among different organs of government



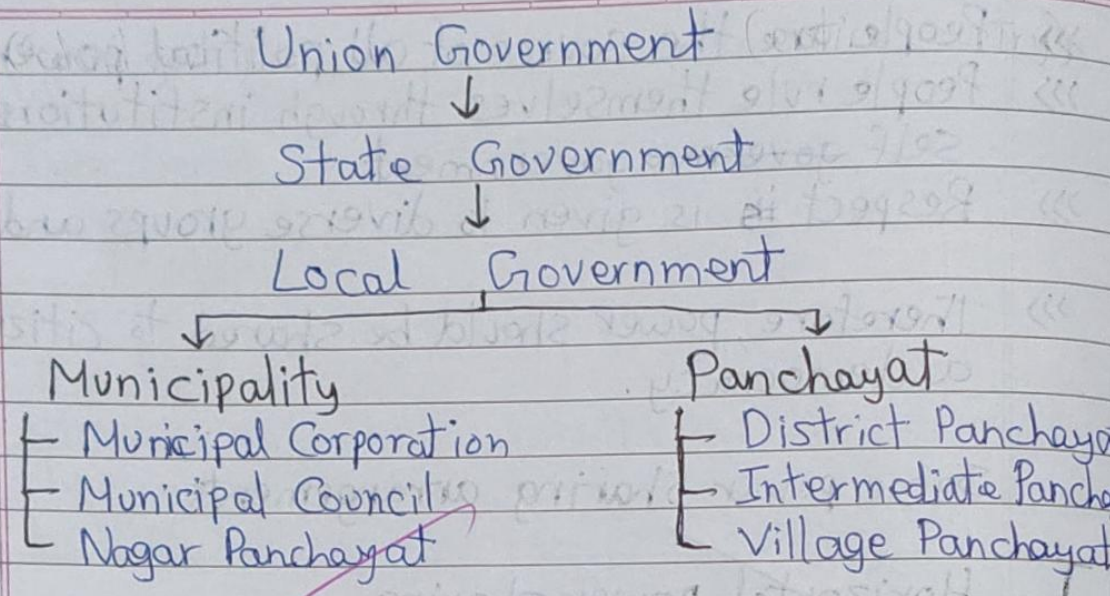
System of Checks and Balances

1. Different organs of government are placed at same level to exercise different powers.
2. No organs can exercise unlimited power, one organ checks the other, resulting in a balance of power.
3. Even though government officials exercise power (executive), they are responsible to the Parliament (legislature). Although judges (judiciary) are appointed by executives, they check functioning of executives and laws made by legislature.

II. Vertical power sharing

Power shared at different levels

- >>> Known as "federal division of power"



III. Power sharing among different social groups

- »» "Community govt." in Belgium - a good example
- »» There are legal arrangements for weaker sections and women.
- »» System of "reserved constituencies"
- »» Minority communities get a fair share in power.

IV. ~~For~~ Power sharing in political parties, pressure groups and movements

- »» Citizens must have freedom to choose among various contenders for power.
- »» Competition ensures that power does not remain in one hand.
- »» Different parties represent different ideologies and social groups. They share power by forming an ~~govt.~~ alliance. They then form a coalition government.

»» Interest groups -

1. Traders

2. Businessmen

3. Industrialists

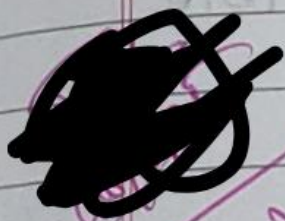
4. Farmers

5. Industrial workers

have a share in power by:

1. participating in govt. or

2. influencing decisions



Very Good