

## CHAPTER 1 : Power Sharing

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### BELGIUM AND SRI LANKA AND MAJORITARIANISM IN SRI LANKA

#### ➤ BELGIUM

**Geographical Position :** It is small country in Europe, bordered by the Netherlands, France and Germany.

**Area and Population :** It is smaller in area than the Indian state of Haryana. Its population is a little over one crore, about half of the state of Haryana of the country's total population.

**Ethnic Composition :** 59% live in Flemish region and speak **Dutch**, 40% live in Wallonia region and speak **French** and remaining 1% speak **German**.

**Capital :** Brussels where 80% speak French and 20% Speak Dutch.

- **Important Point :** In Brussels, the Dutch-speaking people are in a **minority** which is the opposite for the rest of the country, where they are in a **majority**.
- The minority population of French-speaking people were richer than the Dutch-speaking people. The majority community were given benefits much later. This led to tension between the two communities in the 1950s and 1960s. Tension was more acute in the capital city of Brussels.

#### ➤ SRI LANKA

**Geographical Position :** A small island in Asia just a few kilometers off the southern coast of Tamil Naidu.

**Population :** It has about two crore people, about the same as in Haryana.

**Ethnic Composition** : 74% are Sinhalese-speaking people, 18% are Tamil-speaking people, 13% are natives of Sri Lanka, known as **Sri Lankan Tamils**.

The rest are called **Tamil Lankans** who are descendants of plantation workers, who came from India during the colonial period.

**Religion** : Most of the Sinhala-speaking people are **Buddhists**. Most of the Tamils are **Hindus** or **Muslims**. **Christians** constitute 7% of the population and they belong to both Sinhala and Tamilian communities.

### ➤ MAJORITARIANISM IN SRI LANKA

**Meaning of Majoritarianism** : A belief that only the majority community should rule a country, make laws for everyone with total disregard to the wishes and needs of the minority.

➤ Sri Lanka became independent in 1948. It immediately adopted measures to impose Sinhala supremacy.

**Examples :**

- (i) It made Sinhalese the official language of the country (by an Act in 1956), and ignored Tamil completely.
- (ii) It made a preferential policy to favour Sinhala-speaking people in all government jobs and educational institutions.
- (iii) It promoted and protected Buddhism.

**Result.** The Tamils felt alienated. No respect or recognition was given to their language, culture and religion. They began a struggle for equality in jobs, entry to the universities, recognition of their language and culture. Slowly the conflict changed into a demand for regional autonomy. The Tamilians were grouped together in the North and East of Sri Lanka. Their demands were ignored, the conflict became more severe and by the 1980s, the Tamilian demand had changed.

They wanted **TAMIL EELAM** in the North and East. A civil war ensued, which killed thousands of people on both sides. The flourishing economy of Sri Lanka has disappeared and the conflict has given a blow to social, cultural and economic life of Sri Lanka.

## ACCOMMODATION IN BELGIUM AND FORMS OF POWER SHARING

### ➤ Accommodation in Belgium

Belgium, unlike Sri Lanka, has taken a totally different stand. It amended the Constitution to accommodate every ethnic community, with the result that it did not suffer from a civil war, demands for autonomy or partition of the country.

**Why is Power-Sharing Desirable ?**

- Power sharing is a must in a democracy.
- There are two sets of reasons which make power-sharing desirable.

**Reasons**

S. No.	Prudential	Moral
(i)	Reduces the possibility of conflicts between different social groups. Social conflicts lead to violence and political instability.	The spirit of democracy calls for power sharing.
(ii)	Prevents groups from overstepping their rights to enhance their own power.	People who are affected by the policies must have a hand in shaping those policies.

(iii)	No single group can subvert the constitution, power sharing unites the nation.	Citizens' participation is a must.
(iv)	When power is not shared, it oppresses the minority and even the majority is ruined.	Moral reasons make power sharing essential and valuable.

## CHAPTER 2 : Federalism

### WHAT IS FEDERALISM?

- The sharing of power among the central, state, regional and local governments is known as federalism.
- In the federal form of government, there is a clear cut division of powers between the central authority and various constituent units of the country .

### KEY FEATURES OF FEDERALISM :

- There are two or more levels (or tiers) of government.
- Different tiers of government govern the same citizens, but each tier has its own jurisdiction in specific matters of legislation, taxation and administration.
- The jurisdictions of the respective levels or tiers of government are specified in the constitution.
- The fundamental provisions of the constitution cannot be unilaterally changed by one level of government. Such changes require the consent of both the levels of government.
- The Supreme Court have the power to interpret the constitution and the powers of different levels of government.
- Sources of revenue for each level of government are clearly specified to ensure its financial autonomy.
- The federal system thus has dual objectives: to safeguard and promote the unity of the country; while at the same time accommodate regional diversity.

### WHAT MAKES INDIA A FEDERAL COUNTRY ? My Tutorials Coaching

- All the features of federalism are present in the Indian Constitution. The only difference is that in addition to the two-tier system, India added a third – **panchayats and municipalities**.
- The Constitution has made provisions for distribution of legislative powers between the Union Government and the State Governments.
- These powers come under three lists –

Union List	State List	Concurrent List
Has 97 subjects	Has 66 subjects	Has 47 subjects
Subjects of national importance such as defence, foreign policy, atomic energy, banking, communication and currency.	Subjects of state and local importance like police, trade and commerce within the state and agriculture are included in it.	Subjects of common interest to both union and state government like education, forest, trade unions, marriage, adoptions and succession.

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Only the Union Government can pass the laws on these subjects mentioned in the union list.	Only the state governments can pass the laws on this list.	Both Central and State can make laws on the subjects mentioned in this list. In case of conflict about any subject between central and state the preference will be given to the central.
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There might be some subjects that do not come under any list. (For example, Computers). The Union Government has the power to make laws on these 'residuary subjects.'

### SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE INDIAN FEDERATION

- Centre is more powerful than the states. All states do not have same powers. Jammu and Kashmir has a special status.
- No dual citizenship, like the USA. Every citizen votes as an Indian.
- The Constitution provides special powers to the Centre if there is an emergency in the country.
- Chandigarh, Lakshadweep or the capital city of Delhi are too small in area to become independent states and are called **Union Territories**. The Union Government has special powers to run them.
- According to the Constitution, the powers of the States and the Union Government is specified, therefore if any change is needed, it has to be passed by both houses of the Parliament with at least 2/3 majority. Then it has to be ratified by the legislatures of at least 1/2 of the total states.
- The judiciary has the power to oversee the implementation of the constitutional provision and procedures.

### HOW IS FEDERALISM PRACTISED ?

#### Linguistic States

- New states have been created. Areas, boundaries and names of the states have been changed.
- Creation of new states was done on two basis :
  - (i) Culture, ethnicity or geography, e.g., Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand.
  - (ii) On the basis of language, e.g., Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and many others.

#### Language Policy

- Our Constitution has not made any language as the national language of India.
- Hindi is the official language spoken by 40% of the population.
- Besides Hindi, 21 other languages are recognized by the Constitution. They are : Assamese, Bangla, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu.
- English was to cease as an official language in 1965. But there were agitations in many states [specially Tamil Nadu] against this, so English has been allowed to continue. English is the 22<sup>nd</sup> language.
- The way Constitution has made the Centre and the States share powers has also strengthened federalism in India.

### DECENTRALISATION IN INDIA

- The Constitution was amended to make the third-tier of Democracy more powerful and effective.
- The three-tier system was adopted because :
  - (i) India is a very big country.
  - (ii) It is difficult for the union and state governments to manage big provinces and huge population.
- **Decentralisation** means that some power is taken away from the central and state governments and given to local governments.
- A major step towards decentralization was taken in 1992.

- Rural local government popularly known by the name Panchayati Raj were introduced in the rural areas.
- Municipalities were set up in towns. Big cities were constituted into Municipal Corporations.

## REASONS FOR DECENTRALISATION

- In a big country like India, it is essential to have an elected government at the local level also.
- Local people have better knowledge of local problems.
- Local people have better ideas of where to spend money and which problem to tackle first and how to manage things more efficiently.
- Common citizens can be involved in decision-making, concerning their needs and how to plan development.
- People can approach a local government for solving their problems easily and quickly. The cost is also reduced to the minimum.
- Local governments provide training in becoming active participants in the working of a democracy. It trains one for leadership.
- Local governments at grassroots level ensure stability, strength and health of democracy.

## CHAPTER 3 : Gender, Religion and Caste

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### GENDER AND POLITICS

- Gender division is a form of hierarchical social division which can be seen everywhere .
- Sexual division of labour means the work is divided amongst people according to their sex.
- Social division of the Indian society is clearly indicated by casteism, gender inequality and communal divisions.
- Earlier, only men were allowed to participate in public affairs, vote and contest for public offices. Gradually, the gender issue was raised in politics.

### PUBLIC LIFE AND POLITICS

- Women's role was minimum in public life – specially politics. Though they constitute half of the humanity, their role is minimal. In many, even in advanced countries of the world, women were not given voting rights for a long time. They were not allowed and even now not allowed to participate in public affairs or contest for public offices. Women all over the world (not in India) organized agitations, e.g. the Suffragette Movement in England for equal rights.
- Women demanded educational and job opportunities, improvement in their legal and political status.
- Feminist movements demanded equality in personal and family life also.
- As a result , there has been a marked change. Women now work as scientists, doctors, engineers, lawyers, managers, college and university teachers. In countries like Norway, Sweden and Finland women's participation in public life is very high.

### STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA

- India is still a male-dominated **patriarchal society**.  
The **literacy rate** among women is 54% as compared to the 76% among men.
- Every year girls do better than boys in school results, but more girls dropout as parents want to spend their resources on their sons' education.
- Though there is an **Equal Wages Act** which states that women should be paid equal wages for equal work, women are still paid less for the same work.
- The sex ratio for women is low – 933 girls per 1000 boys. In some states, it is less than 800 per 1000.

- The percentage of elected women members in the **legislature** has been very low.
- In the state assemblies the share is less than 5%. Among the world nations, India is at the bottom, it is behind the averages for several developing countries of Africa and Latin America.
- Women are harassed, exploited and subjected to violence, specially in urban areas.
- **First step to empower women** : Reservation of seats for women in Panchayati Raj have been done in India. One-third seats in panchayats and municipalities are now reserved for women. **At present 10 lakh** women are elected representatives in rural and urban local bodies.

## RELIGION, COMMUNALISM AND POLITICS

### Religious Differences

- India is a land which gave birth to **four religions** : Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism.
- Religious differences usually find expression in politics.
- If all religions are treated equally, then people will be able to express their needs, interests and demands.

### Secularism

- India chose secularism – because communalism was a major challenge.
- There is no state religion in India – no religion has a special status (unlike Pakistan, Sri Lanka and England).

### Communalism can take various forms in politics

- The most common expression of communalism is in everyday beliefs.
- A communal mind often leads to a quest for political dominance of one's own religious community.
- Political mobilisation on religious lines is another frequent form of communalism.
- Sometimes communalism takes its most ugly form of communal violence, riots and massacre.

## CASTE AND POLITICS

- **Caste and politics** have both positive and the negative sides to it.
- Indian democracy faces the problem of casteism, communalism, illiteracy, unemployment and poverty.
- All societies have some form of **division of labour, occupations** and in most societies are passed from one generation to another.
- **Caste system** is an extreme form of division of labour – it has hereditary occupational divisions sanctioned by rituals.
- Political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jyotiba Phule, B.R. Ambedkar, Periyar Ramaswami Naicker promoted a casteless society.
- Nowadays, the **caste hierarchy** is breaking down.
- **Reason** : Economic development, growth of literacy and education, the loss of power and position by landlords in the villages and occupational mobility are a few reasons for the breaking up of the caste hierarchy.
- But caste has not totally disappeared from present-day India.
- Caste continues to be linked with economic status and access to education.
- Constitution of India prohibits any caste-based discrimination and has laid the foundation of policies to reverse the injustices of the caste system.

## CASTE AND POLITICS

- Caste like communalism, encourages the belief that people belonging to the same caste belong to the same natural community and have the same interests which they do not share with other communities.
- In many places, people vote on the basis of caste and fail to select suitable candidates.
- When political parties nominate candidates or choose them for elections, they keep in mind the caste composition of their constituencies and the people voting.

- When a government is formed after elections, political parties take care of caste equations and different castes are represented in the government. Political parties appeal to caste sentiments during elections.

### Caste Inequalities Today

- The untouchable class was denied the right to own land, the right to education, etc. These have been outlawed, but new kinds of inequalities have developed.
- Today, it is possible to find very rich and very poor in every caste.
- People living below the poverty line are to be found more in the lowest castes and much less in the upper castes.

## CHAPTER 4 : Political Parties

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### POLITICAL PARTIES - AN INTRODUCTION

#### (i) What is a political party?

- A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government.
- It mobilises voters to support common sets of interests, concerns and goals.
- A political party fixes the political agenda and policies and tries to persuade people by claiming why their policies are better than those of other parties.
- A political party is the means through which people can speak to the government and have a say in the governance of any country.
- A political party has three components : (i) the leaders, (ii) the active members, and (iii) the followers.

#### (ii) Functions

- Parties contest elections by putting up candidates.
- In some countries, candidates are selected by members and supporters of a party (eg., USA).
- In other countries, candidates are chosen by top party leaders – eg., India.
- Parties have different policies and programmes, voters choose from them. In a democracy, a large number of people with similar opinions group together and form a party and then give a direction to the policies followed by the government.
- The parties that lose elections from the opposition; voice different views and criticize government for their failures and wrong policies.
- They shape public opinion. Parties with the help of pressure groups launch movements for solving problems faced by the people.
- They provide people access to government machinery and welfare schemes. The local party leader acts as a link between the citizen and the government officer.

#### (iii) Need for Political Parties

- Democracies cannot exist without political parties is clear from the functions they perform.
- If there were no political parties then :
  - All candidates in an election would become independent candidates. They would not promise any major policy change to the people. No one would be responsible for how the country will run.
  - In large societies, only representative democracy can work. Political parties become an agency to gather different views on various issues and present them to the government.

### PARTY SYSTEM

There are three types of party systems :

(i) One-Party System (ii) Two-Party System and (iii) Multi-Party System.

(i) **One-Party System** : There is no competition in this system. The lone party nominates the candidates and the voters have only two choices – (i) Not to vote at all or (ii) write 'yes' or 'no' against the

name of the candidates nominated by the party. This system has been popular in Communist countries and other authoritarian regimes e.g., China, North Korea and Cuba. This system was also prevalent in USSR till Communism collapsed.

- (ii) **Two-Party System** : Power shifts between two major, dominant parties. In this system, to win elections, the winner has to get maximum number of votes, but not necessarily a majority of votes. The smaller parties usually merge with the bigger parties or they drop out of elections. This parliamentary system prevails in Great Britain and Canada, in which only two parties hold significant numbers of seats. Supporters of this system believe that this prevents dangers of fragmentation (too many parties winning seats from different constituencies) and the government can run smoothly.
- (iii) **Multi-Party System** : It is the most common type of party system. In this system, three or more parties have the capacity to gain control of the government separately or in coalition. When no party gains a majority of the legislative seats in multi-party parliamentary system, then several parties join forces and form a coalition government. Supporters of this system point out that it allows more points of views to be represented in the government. Critics of this system point out that multi-party system sometimes leads to political instability.

## NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PARTIES

### An Alliance

- When several parties in a multi-party system join hands for the purpose of contesting elections and winning power, it is called an **alliance** or a **front**.
- India, in 2004 and 2009, had three such alliances for parliamentary elections: (i) National Democratic Alliance (ii) The United Progressive Alliance and (iii) Left Front.

### Proportion Of Participation

- Level of participation in the activities of the parties:
  - Very high in India.
  - Advanced countries like Canada, Japan, Spain and South Korea much less.
  - People in India who feel close to a political party is very high.
  - Membership of political parties has also gone up.

### Election Commission

- Every party in India has to register with the Election Commission.
- The Commission treats every party as equal to the others, but it offers special facilities to large and established parties.
- They are given a unique symbol and are called, "Recognised Political Parties."

### Introduction to Major Political Parties in India :

- (i) Indian National Congress (INC)
- (ii) Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)
- (iii) Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
- (iv) Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPI-M)
- (v) Communist Party of India (CPI)
- (vi) Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)
- **State or Regional Political Parties :**
  - Regional parties need not be regional in their ideology or outlook. Some of these parties are all India parties that happen to have succeeded only in some states.
  - Parties like the Samajwadi Party, Samata Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal have national level political organisation with units in several states.



- Some of these parties like Biju Janata Dal, Sikkim Democratic Front and Mizo National Front are conscious about their state identity.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY POLITICAL PARTIES AND ITS REFORMS

- (i) **Lack of internal democracy within parties**
  - Power is concentrated in the hands of few.
  - No organisational meetings. No keeping of membership register.
  - No internal, regular elections.
  - Ordinary members do not have access to information, cannot influence decisions.
  - Disagreement with the leader leads to ouster from the party.
- (ii) **Dynastic succession**
  - Leaders on top have unfair advantage to favour people close to them or family members.
  - Top positions controlled by family members in most parties.
  - Bad for democracy.
  - Tendency seen all over the world, even in the older democracies.
- (iii) **Money and muscle power**
  - During elections this power is very visible.
  - Candidates who can raise money are nominated.
  - Rich people and companies who give funds have influence on policies.
- (iv) **Parties do not offer a meaningful choice to the voters.**
  - There is not much difference in ideology among parties. Example : The Labour Party and Conservative Party of Britain only differ on details of implementation rather than fundamental principles.
  - In India too there is not much difference among parties on economic issues.

### Reforms :

- As political parties face these challenges, there is a growing need to reform the system. Some of the reform measures taken by the government are : Anti-Defection Law, affidavit requirement and organisational meetings for political parties.

### Some suggestions made to reform political parties and its leaders :

- A law should be made to regulate the internal affairs of political parties. It should be made compulsory for political parties to maintain a register of its members, follow its own constitution and hold open elections to the highest posts.
- It should be made mandatory for political parties to give a minimum number of tickets, about one-third, to women candidates.
- There should be state funding of elections. The government should give parties money, petrol, paper, telephone, etc. to support their election expenses.

## CHAPTER 5 : Outcomes of Democracy

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### HOW DO WE ASSESS DEMOCRACY'S OUTCOMES ?

Is democracy a better form of government when compared with dictatorship or any other alternative because:

- It promotes equality among citizens.
- It enhances the dignity of the individual.
- It improves the quality of decision making.
- It provides a method to resolve conflicts.

- It allows room to correct mistakes.

**Is the democratic government efficient as well as effective ?**

- Imagine that other form of government may take decisions very fast. But it may take decisions which are not accepted by the people and may therefore face problems.
- Democracy is based on the idea of deliberation and negotiation. So, some delay is bound to take place.
- In contrast, the democratic government will take more time to follow procedures before arriving at a decision.
- But, because it has followed procedures, its decisions may be both more acceptable to the people and more effective.
- So, the cost of time that democracy pays is perhaps worth it.

**Outcomes out of every democracy :**

- As a **political outcome** of democracy, we expect an accountable, responsive and legitimate government.
- As an **economic outcome**, we expect that democracies produce economic growth and development, and reduce poverty and inequality.
- As a **social outcome**, we expect democracy to accommodate the social diversity in a society, and provide dignity and freedom to all citizens.

### POLITICAL OUTCOMES

**Democracy is accountable, responsive and legitimate government**

- Democracy ensures that decision making will be based on norms and procedures. So, a citizen has the right and the means to examine the process of decision making. This is known as transparency.
- Democracy **follows procedures and is accountable** to the people.
- Democratic governments have a very good record when it comes to sharing information with citizens and much better than any non-democratic regime in this respect. Democracy is **attentive to the needs and demands of the people** and is largely free of corruption.
- There is one respect in which democratic government is certainly better than its alternatives: democratic government is **legitimate government**. It may be slow, less efficient, not always very responsive or clean. But a democratic government is **people's own government**.

### ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

**Economic growth and development**

- Economic development depends on several factors: **country's population size, global situation, cooperation from other countries, economic priorities adopted by the country, etc.**
- However, the difference in the rates of economic development between less developed countries with dictatorships and democracies is negligible.
- Overall, we cannot say that democracy is a guarantee of economic development. But we can expect democracy not to lag behind dictatorship in economic development.

**Democracy reduces economic inequality and poverty**

- Democracies have growing economic inequalities. A small number of ultra-rich enjoy a lion share of wealth and those at the bottom of the society have very little to depend upon and find very difficult to meet their **basic needs of life**, such as food, clothing, house, education and health.
- Democratically elected governments address the question of poverty by making various **welfare schemes** to remove poverty.
- Democracies not only make welfare schemes but also give **reservations** for socially and economically backward people in jobs, elections and educational institutions.

## SOCIAL OUTCOMES

### Democracy accommodates social diversity

- Democracies usually develop a procedure to **accommodate various social groups**. This reduces the possibility of social tensions becoming explosive or violent.
- No society can fully and permanently resolve conflicts among different groups. But democracy is best to **handle social differences, divisions and conflicts**.
- But the example of Sri Lanka reminds us that a democracy must fulfil two conditions in order to achieve accommodation of social divisions.
  - (a) It is necessary to understand that democracy is **not simply rule by majority opinion**. The majority always needs to work with the minority so that governments function to represent the general view.
  - (b) It is also necessary that **rule by majority** does not become rule by majority community in terms of religion or race or linguistic group, etc. Rule by majority means rule by **majority's choice**.
- **Democracy promotes dignity and freedom of the citizens**
  - Democracy stands much superior to any other form of government in promoting dignity and freedom of the individual by providing the **Fundamental Rights**. Every individual wants to receive respect from fellow beings.
  - The passion for **respect and freedom** are the basis of democracy. Democracies throughout the world have recognised this, at least in principle. This has been achieved in various degrees in various democracies.
  - Take the case of **dignity of women**. Most societies across the world were historically male dominated societies.
  - Long struggles by women have created some sensitivity today that **respect to and equal treatment of women are necessary** ingredients of a democratic society.
  - Democracy in India has strengthened the claims of the **disadvantaged and discriminated castes** for equal status and equal opportunity.
- **Conclusion :**
  - (i) A democracy is always striving towards a better goal. People constantly demand more benefits in a democracy. There are always more expectations.
  - (ii) People now look critically at the work of those who hold power, the rich and the powerful. They express their dissatisfaction loudly. It shows they are no longer **subjects** but **citizens** of a democratic country.