

READING MATERIAL OF CHAPTER

POWER SHARING CLASS 10TH SST

In a democracy all power does not rest with any one organ of the government. An intelligent sharing of power among legislature, executive and judiciary is very important to the design of a democracy.

BELGIUM AND SRI LANKA

BELGIUM

- Belgium is a small country in Europe, smaller in area than the state of Haryana.
- It has borders with France, the Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg.
- It has a population of a little over one crore, about half the population of Haryana.
- The ETHNIC composition of this small country is very complex. Of the country's total population, 59 per cent lives in the Flemish region and speaks Dutch language. Another 40 per cent people live in the Wallonia region and speak French. Remaining one per cent of the Belgians speak German.
- In the capital city Brussels, 80 per cent people speak French while 20 per cent are Dutch-speaking.

SRILANKA

- Sri Lanka is an island nation, just a few kilometres off the southern coast of Tamil Nadu. It has about two crore people, about the same as in Haryana.
- Like other nations in the South Asia region, Sri Lanka has a diverse population. The major social groups are the Sinhala-speakers (74 per cent) and the Tamil-speakers (18 per cent).
- Among Tamils there are two sub-groups. Tamil natives of the country are called 'Sri Lankan Tamils' (13 per cent). The rest, whose forefathers came from India as plantation workers during colonial period, are called 'Indian Tamils'.

- Sri Lankan Tamils are concentrated in the north and east of the country. 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 Sinhala.

ACCOMMODATION IN BELGIUM

The Belgian leaders took a different path. They recognised the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities. Between 1970 and 1993, they amended their constitution four times so as to work out an arrangement that would enable everyone to live together within the same country. The arrangement they worked out is different from any other country and is very innovative.

Here are some of the elements of the Belgian model:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Apart from the Central and the State Government, there is a third kind of government. This ‘community government’ is elected by people belonging to one language community – Dutch, French and German-speaking – no matter where they live. This government has the power regarding cultural, educational and language-related issues.

Belgian model very complicated. But these arrangements have worked well so far. They helped to avoid civic strife between the two major communities and a possible division of

the country on linguistic lines. When many countries of Europe came together to form the European Union, Brussels was chosen as its headquarters.

FORMS OF POWER-SHARING

One basic principle of democracy is that people are the source of all political power. In a democracy, people rule themselves through institutions of self-government.

In democracy Everyone has a voice in the shaping of public policies.

Some of the most common arrangements of power sharing in democracy are :-

1. Power is shared among **different organs of government, such as the legislature, executive and judiciary**. Such a separation ensures that none of the organs can exercise unlimited power. Each organ checks the others. This results in a balance of power among various institutions.
2. Power can be shared among **governments at different levels** – a general government for the entire country and governments at the provincial or regional level. Such a general government for the entire country is usually called federal government. In India, we refer to it as the Central or Union Government. The governments at the provincial or regional level are called by different names in different countries. In India, we call them State Governments.
3. 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. This method is used to give minority communities a fair share in power.
4. Power sharing arrangements can also be seen in the way **political parties, pressure groups** and movements control or influence those in power. In a democracy, the citizens must have freedom to choose among various contenders for power. In a democracy, we find interest groups such as those of traders, businessmen, industrialists, farmers and industrial workers.
They also will have a share in governmental power, either through participation in governmental committees or bringing influence on the decision-making process.