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LESSON-1. POWER SHARING

Prepared on : \_\_\_\_\_

Started notes in class on : \_\_\_\_\_

**Q.1. What are the different forms of power-sharing in modern democracies? Give an example of each of these.**

Ans.

In modern democracies, the different forms of power sharing are given below with an example of each :

(1)

Power sharing among different organs of government such as the legislature, executive and judiciary.

It is called horizontal distribution of power

For example, in India Parliament enacts laws. Executive executes or implements them and judiciary checks the functioning of executive or laws made by the legislature.

(2) Power sharing among governments at different levels :

There are governments at the National, State and Local levels.

Powers are divided among these governments. For example in India, there is a division of powers between Center and the States. There are three lists i.e., Union list, State list and Concurrent list. The residuary powers which have not been included in the three lists are with the Central Government.

(3) Power sharing among different social groups :

Sometimes religious and linguistic groups too share power as is the case in Belgium where there is a “community government” which is elected by people belonging to one language community no matter where they live.

Such government enjoys power regarding cultural, educational and language related issues.

(4) Power sharing among political parties, pressure groups and movements : In a democracy political parties, pressure groups and movements control or influence those in power.

Sometimes power is shared by different political parties having different ideologies. Such alliances form coalition government.

**Q.2. State one prudential reason and one moral reason for power-sharing with an example from the Indian context.**

Ans.

(i) (a) India is a multicultural society.

(b) India is a democratic country.

While prudential reasons stress that power-sharing will bring out better outcomes. In India, the power is shared horizontally among various organs of government. The Legislature, Executive and Judiciary are responsible for administering India. Reservation is applicable in India, where various sections are given benefits over others to avoid conflicts.

Moral reasons emphasise the very act of power-sharing as valuable. In India, citizens are conferred with fundamental rights and directive principles of state policies are implied in the government.

**Q.3. After reading this chapter, three students drew different conclusions. Which of these do you agree with and why ? Give your reasons in about 50 words.**

**Thomman – Power sharing is necessary only in societies which have religious, linguistic or ethnic divisions.**

**Mattai – Power sharing is suited only for big countries that have regional divisions.**

**Ousep – Every society needs some form of power sharing even if they are small or do not have social divisions.**

Ans.

The conclusion drawn by Ousep is correct. Every society needs some form of power-sharing even if it is small or does not have social divisions because power-sharing helps to reduce the possibility of conflicts among individuals too. For example, there may be a difference of opinion among the members of a joint family. Such differences may be resolved if responsibilities and powers are divided among the members of the family. Similar is the case in societies and governments. Thus there should be power-sharing in small or big societies or countries.

If there are different communities in a country they should try to accommodate each other as has been done in Belgium – where the French-speaking people accepted equal representation in Brussels because the Dutch-speaking community has accepted equal representation in the central government.

**Q.4. The Mayor of Merchtem, a town near Brussels in Belgium, has defended a ban on speaking French in the town’s schools. He said that the ban would help all non-Dutch speakers integrate in this Flemish town. Do you think that this measure is in keeping with the spirit of Belgium’s power sharing arrangements ? Give your reasons in about 50 words.**

Ans.

The ban on speaking French in the town’s schools in Merchtem is not in keeping with the spirit of Belgium’s power-sharing arrangements because this is a Flemish town. Dutch is spoken by the people in this region. The ban is an example of the imposition of the will of the majority on the minority which is against the principle of accommodation under which the Belgian leaders recognised the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities. However, they amended their constitution to work out an arrangement that would enable everyone to live together within the country. On the other hand, the ban on speaking French may result in strained relations between French-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities.

**Q.5. Read the following passage, and pick out any one of the prudential reasons for power sharing offered in this.**

**“We need to give more power to the panchayats to realise the dream of Mahatma Gandhi, and the hopes of the makers of our Constitution. The Panchayati Raj establishes true democracy. It restores power to the only place where power belongs in a democracy – in the hands of the people. Giving power to Panchayats is also a way to**

reduce corruption, and increase administrative efficiency. When people participate in the planning and implementation of developmental schemes, they would naturally exercise greater control over these schemes. This would eliminate the corrupt middlemen. Thus the Panchayati Raj will strengthen the foundations of our democracy.”

Ans. The following prudential reasons are cited into the passage for power sharing.

- (a) Reducing corruption by giving power into the hands of the people and thus, making them responsible for their own decisions.
- (b) Increasing administrative efficiency by delegating the decision-making function to the people affected by it.
- (c) Improving the efficiency of the system by reducing the number of middlemen, and transferring the planning and implementation to the people concerned through the Panchayats.

**6. Different arguments are usually put forth in favour of and against power-sharing. Identify those which are in favour of power-sharing and select the answer using the codes given below. Power-sharing:**

- A. reduces conflict among different communities**
- B. decreases the possibility of arbitrariness**
- C. delays the decision-making process**
- D. accommodates diversities**
- E. increases instability and divisiveness**
- F. promotes people’s participation in government**
- G. undermines the unity of a country**

- (a) A B D F
- (b) A C E F
- (c) A B D G
- (d) B C D G

Answer.

- (a) A B D F

**7. Consider the following statements about power-sharing arrangements in Belgium and Sri Lanka.**

- A. In Belgium, the Dutch-speaking majority people tried to impose their domination on the minority French-speaking community.**
- B. In Sri Lanka, the policies of the government sought to ensure the dominance of the Sinhala-speaking majority.**
- C. The Tamils in Sri Lanka demanded a federal arrangement of power-sharing to protect their culture, language and equality of opportunity in education and jobs.**
- D. The transformation of Belgium from a unitary government to a federal one prevented a possible division of the country on linguistic lines.**

**Which of the statements given above is correct?**

- (a) A, B, C and D
- (b) A, B and D
- (c) C and D

**(d) B, C and D**

Answer.

(d) B, C and D

**8. Match List I (forms of power-sharing) with List II (forms of government) and select the correct answer using the codes given below in the lists.**

**List I**

**List II**

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>1. Power shared among different organs of government</b>  | <b>A. Community government</b> |
| <b>2. Power shared among governments at different levels</b> | <b>B. Separation of powers</b> |
| <b>3. Power shared by different social groups</b>            | <b>C. Coalition government</b> |
| <b>4. Power shared by two or more political parties</b>      | <b>D. Federal government</b>   |

**Answer.**

List I List II

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Power shared among different organs of government  | Separation of powers |
| 2. Power shared among governments at different levels | Federal government   |
| 3. Power shared by different social groups            | Community government |
| 4. Power shared by two or more political parties      | Coalition government |

**9. Consider the following two statements on power-sharing and select the answer using the codes given below.**

**A). Power-sharing is good for democracy.**

**B). It helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between social groups.**

**Which of these statements are true and false?**

- (a) A is true, but B is false**
- (b) Both A and B are true**
- (c) Both A and B are false**
- (d) A is false, but B is true**

Answer.

(b) Both A and B are true