

# Power Sharing

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## Introduction

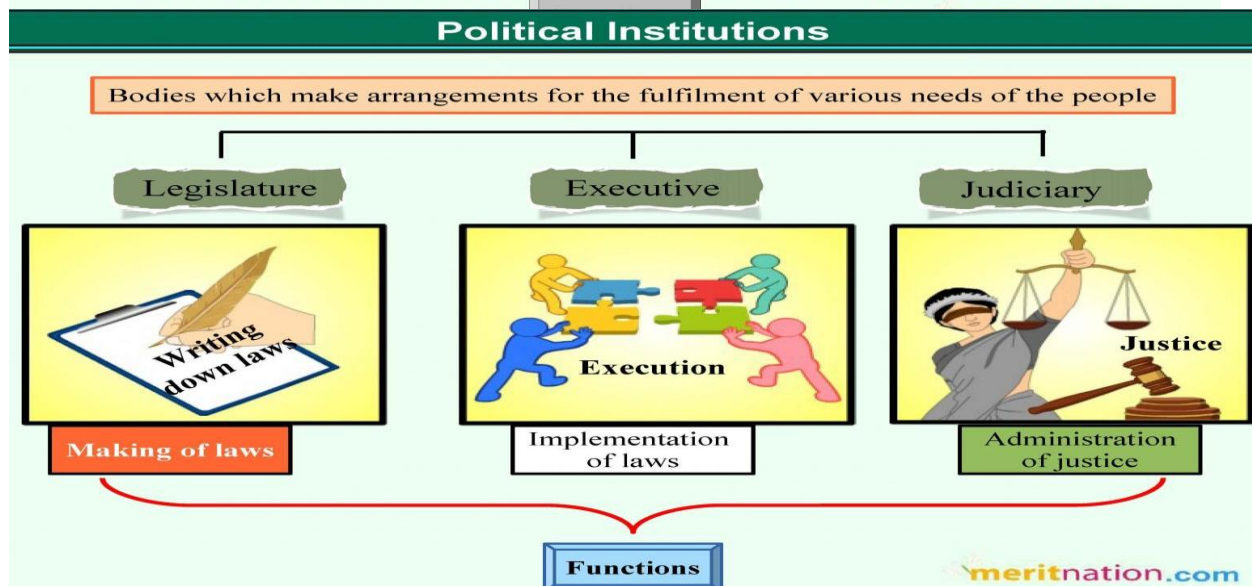
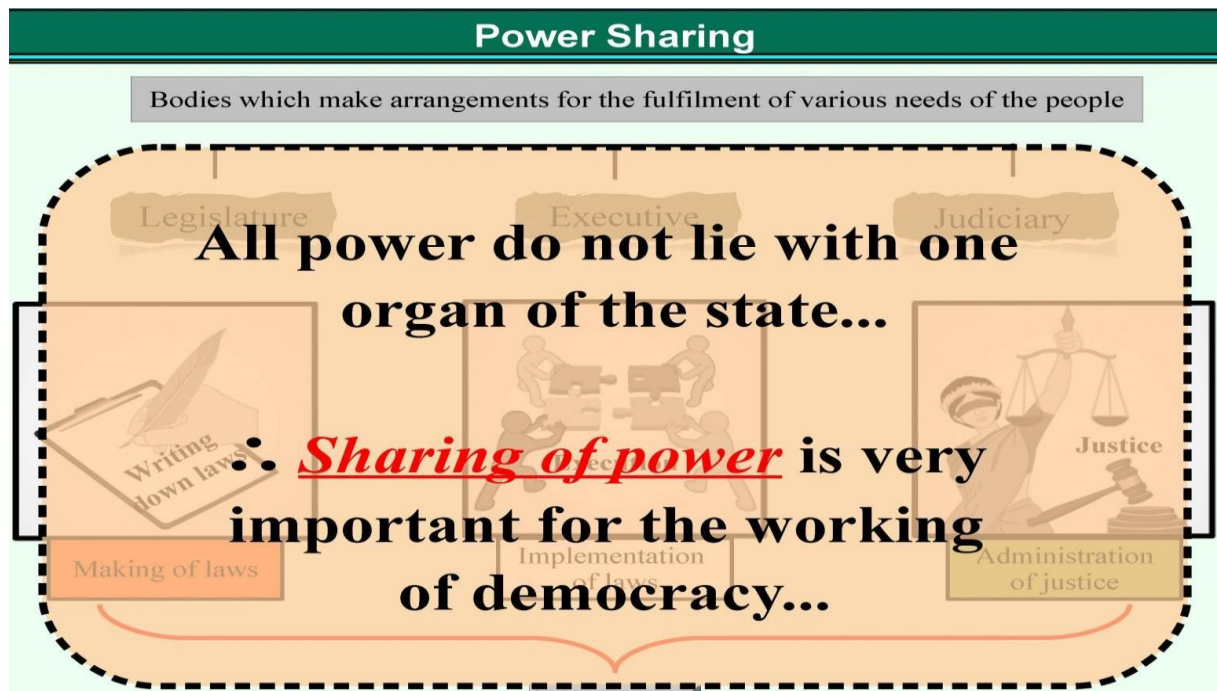
You must have observed in your class the teacher often appoints certain students as class monitors, sports incharge, cultural head etc. She does this, so that classroom activities can function smoother and more efficiently. By doing this she is encouraging students to take responsibilities and take initiative in the activities they are good at. This ofcourse helps in the better functioning of the class activities right? Also, 'sharing of responsibilities can ensure efficiency'.

The same concept introduced in the video applies to every country's administrative organs as well.

Every country needs to tackle many activities to ensure its security, progress and welfare. How do you think this is done? These issues are resolved by simply delegating the tasks amongst different bodies. Every body specialises in a definite field of activity ensuring efficient and effective outcome.

The biggest gift that democracy has granted us is that we can choose our own representatives who form these bodies. We elect these **leaders** because they promise to **fulfil our demands** and work for us. Guaranteeing essential requirements like schools, Hospitals, security etc. is a big task for the government and requires extreme planning. They have to understand how these policies will work in reality and work out all the hurdles and conflicts when implementing these policies.

*To work out so many tasks, our political institutions resort to power sharing i.e sharing the responsibilities same as the teachers of the classroom. These tasks which involve Making of law, implementation of Law and settlement of conflicts, responsibilities are shared amongst the elected representatives i.e. the **Legislature** (Parliament), the **Executive** (PM, President, VP and the council of ministers) and the **Judiciary** (Supreme and the High court).*



Therefore sharing of responsibility or we can say *sharing of power* is necessary.

**Power Sharing:**

Power sharing means sharing of power at different levels of government, so that power is not concentrated on one hand. It helps in group representation and managing conflicts in the society.

Let us understand more about power sharing by taking the example of Belgium and Sri Lanka.



**Belgium**



**Sri Lanka**

Power Sharing in Belgium

### **RECAP**

In the previous section, we learnt the definition of power sharing.

Power sharing means sharing of power at different levels of government, so that power is not concentrated on one hand. It helps in group representation and managing conflicts in the society.

Now, let us study about the *power sharing model in Belgium*.

### **Few facts about Belgium**

## Few Facts about Belgium

Continent: Europe  
Capital: Brussels



Borders: Netherland,  
France, Germany and  
Luxemborg

### Division of Population

1. Flemish (Dutch speaking)	59%
2. Wallonia (French speaking)	40%
3. Brussels	80% (French), 20% (Dutch)
4. Remaining 1 % speak German	

(Belgium is a country in Europe and it's capital is Brussels. It covers an area of 30,528 square kilometres and has a population of about 11 million people. Belgium comprises of two main linguistic groups: the Dutch-speaking Flemish community which constitutes about 59% of the population, and the French-speaking Wallons community which constitutes 40%, the remaining 1% speak German. In Brussels the scenario is totally opposite. There 80% of the population speaks French and the remaining 20% speaks Dutch, making Dutch speaking people

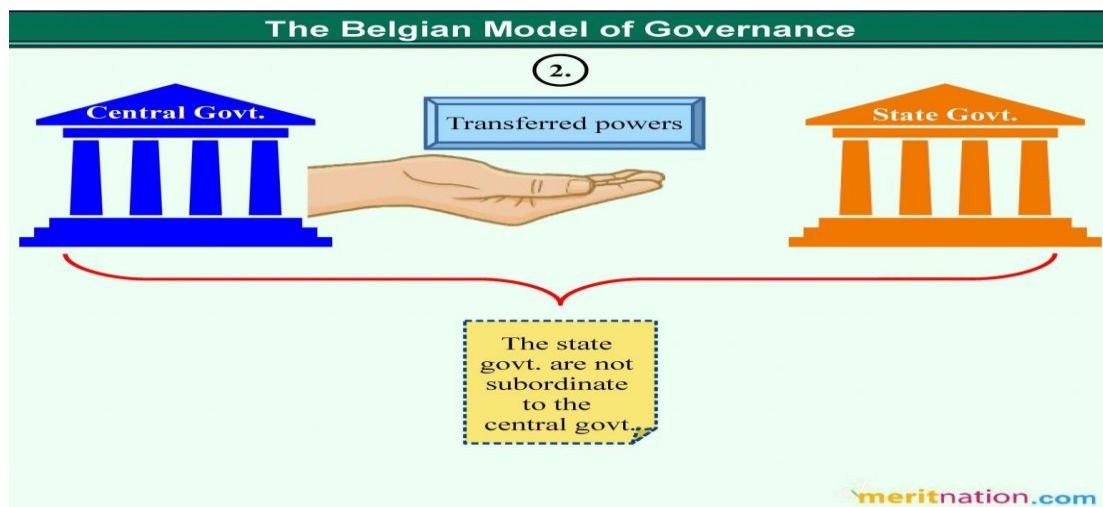
Though the French speaking people were in minority, they were financially and educationally more well-off and strong compared to the Dutch speaking people in Brussels. The majority Dutch speaking people got economic and other benefits much later, widening the gaps between the two communities and creating tension between them.

Therefore, for accommodating the interests of the minority and the majority, Belgium adopted a unique system of power sharing known as the **Belgian Model of Governance**.

The power sharing model which was introduced in Belgium had the following features:



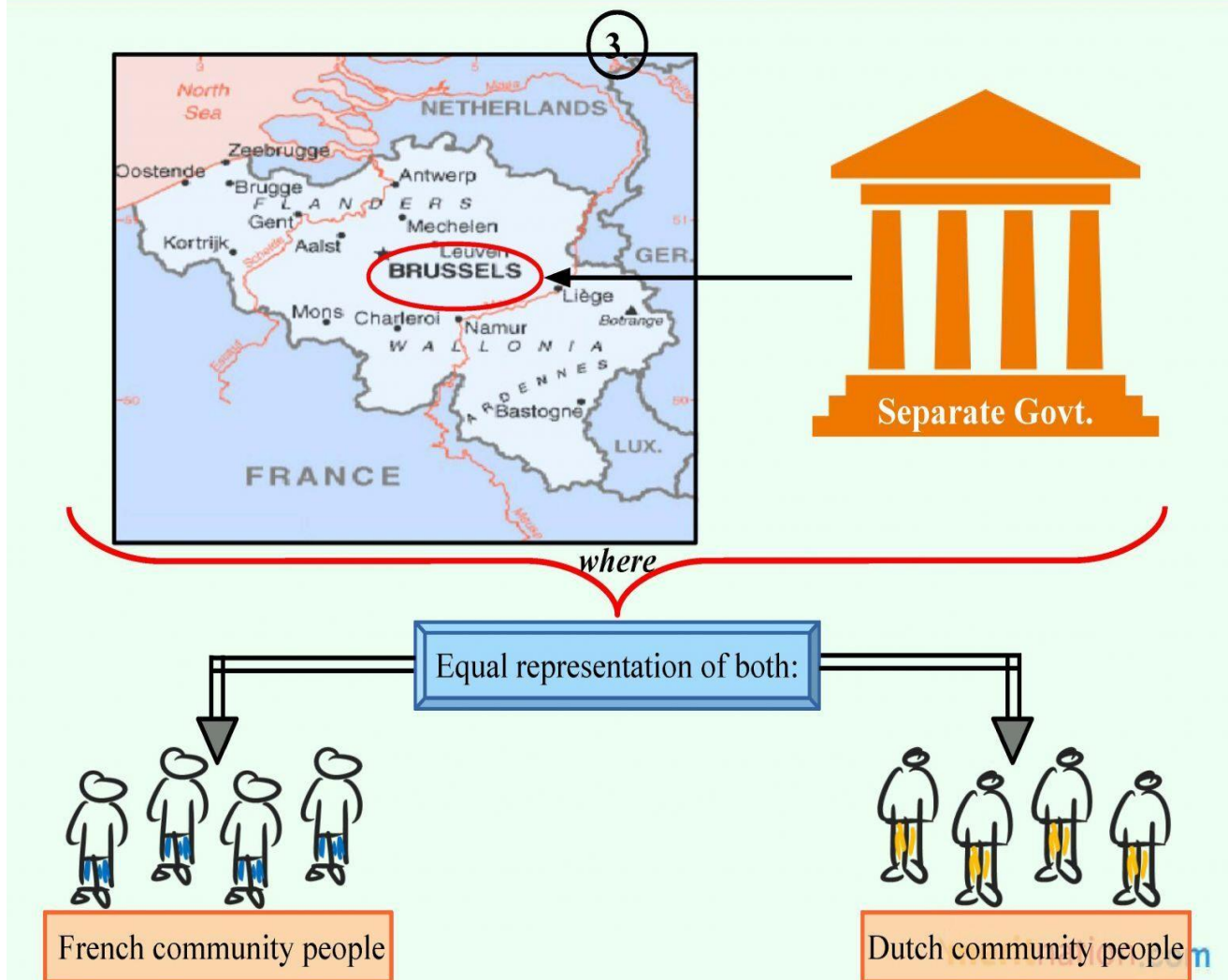
There were *equal number of Dutch and French-speaking ministers in the Central Government*. No single community could make decisions unilaterally.



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.



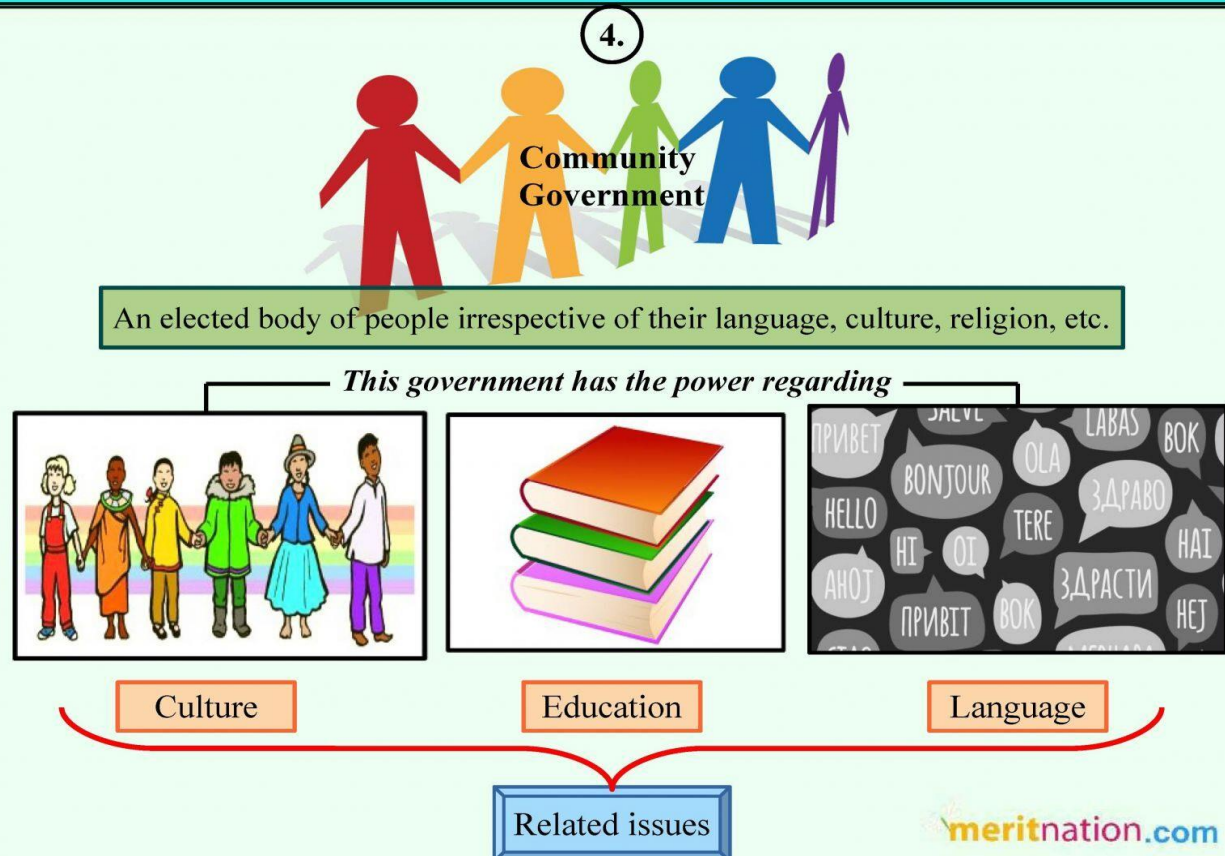
## The Belgian Model of Governance



**Brussels got 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 accepted equal representation in the Central Government.

Apart from the Central and the State Government, there is a third kind of government known as the '**community government**'. The idea to introduce this government was to make the people responsible for the issues that were closely related to them. So, this form of government had people as its members belonging to the various communities existing in the Belgium society. This government made rules and regulations on the issues relating to language, culture and education and shared power in this manner.

# The Belgian Model of Governance



You might find the Belgian model very complicated; it indeed is very complicated. But, these arrangements have worked well so far, that it has prevented a civil strife between the two different communities and a possible division of the country on linguistic lines.

## Power Sharing in Sri Lanka

### RECAP

We have studied about power sharing model in Belgium.

<b>Features of the Belgian Model of Governance</b>	Equal number of Dutch and French-speaking ministers in the Central Government
	The state governments were given individual powers.
	Brussels has a separate government in which both the communities have equal representation
	Community government

## Facts about Sri Lanka

### Few Facts about Sri Lanka

Island nation  
located in  
South Asia

Population:  
Two crore

Independent  
country: 1948



Few kms. off the  
southern coast of  
Tamil Nadu, India

Official language:  
Sinhala in 1956

<u>Division of Population</u>	
1. Sinhala speakers	74%
2. Tamil speakers	18%
• Sri Lankan Tamils	13%
• Indian Tamils	5%



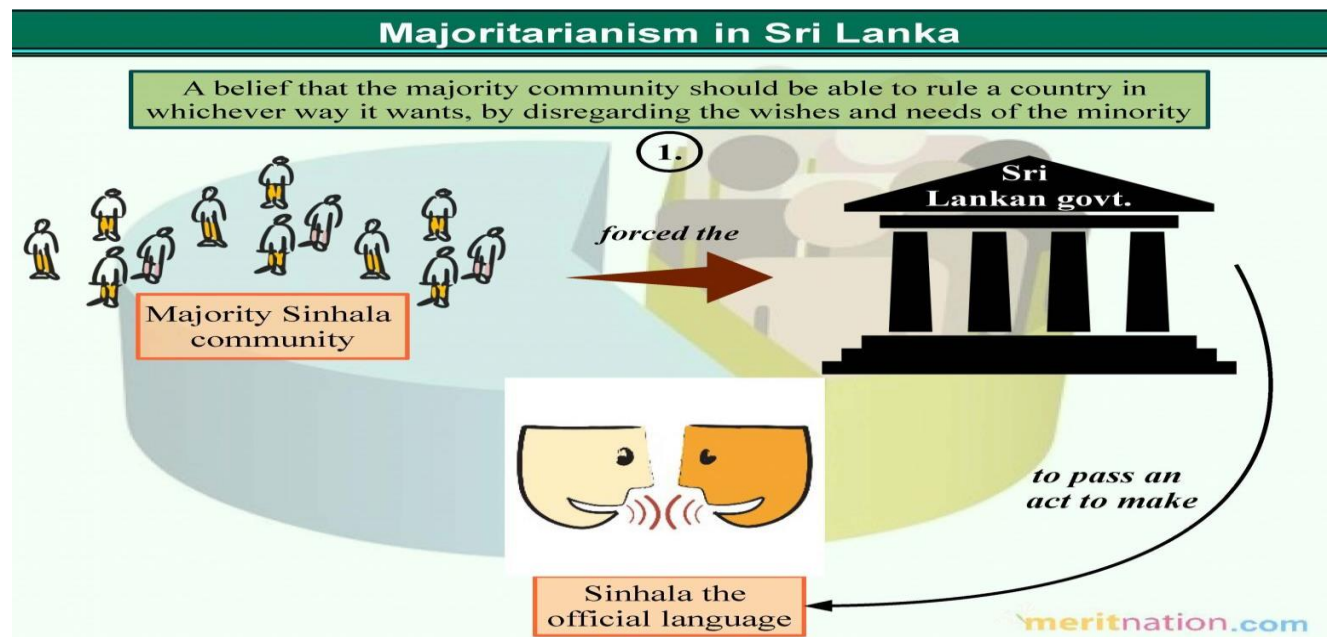
<u>Division of People</u>	
<u>Language</u>	<u>Religion</u>
1. Sinhala speakers	Buddhist
2. Tamil speakers	Hindus
3. 7 % Christians, who are both Tamil and Sinhala.	

Sri Lanka is an island nation located in South Asia. It was formerly known as Ceylon. Its capital is Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte. Sinhalese and Tamil are the two official languages of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is a multi-religious country. Buddhists comprise 70 percent of the total Sri Lankan population and Hinduism is the second most prevalent religion in Sri Lanka.

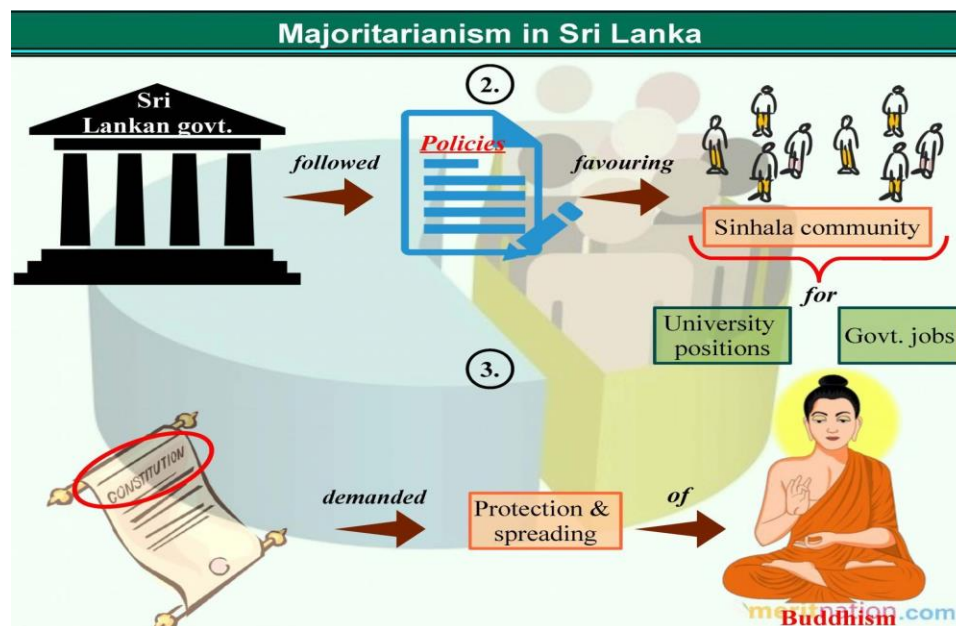
Sri Lanka emerged as an independent country in 1948. The leaders of the Sinhala community sought to secure dominance over government by virtue of their majority. As a result, the democratically elected government adopted a series of 'majoritarian' measures to establish Sinhala supremacy.



Let us now see what were these principles of majoritarianism-

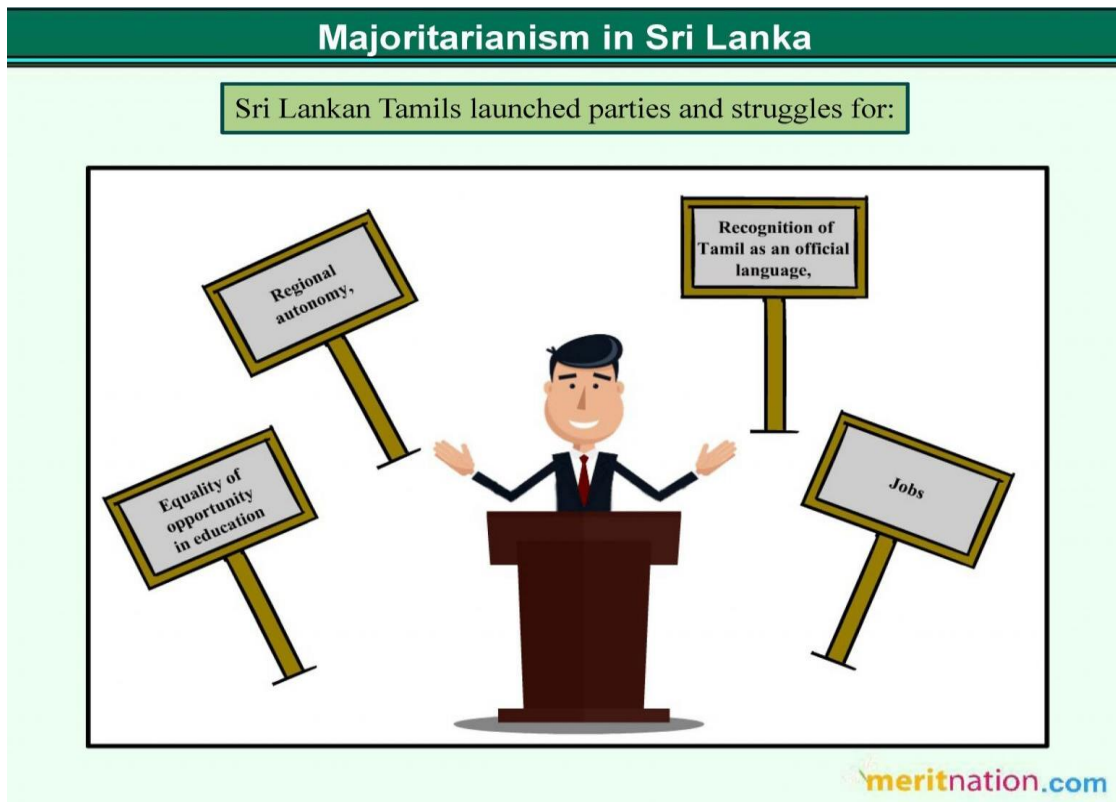


In 1956, an Act was passed to recognise Sinhala as the only official language, thus ignoring Tamil.

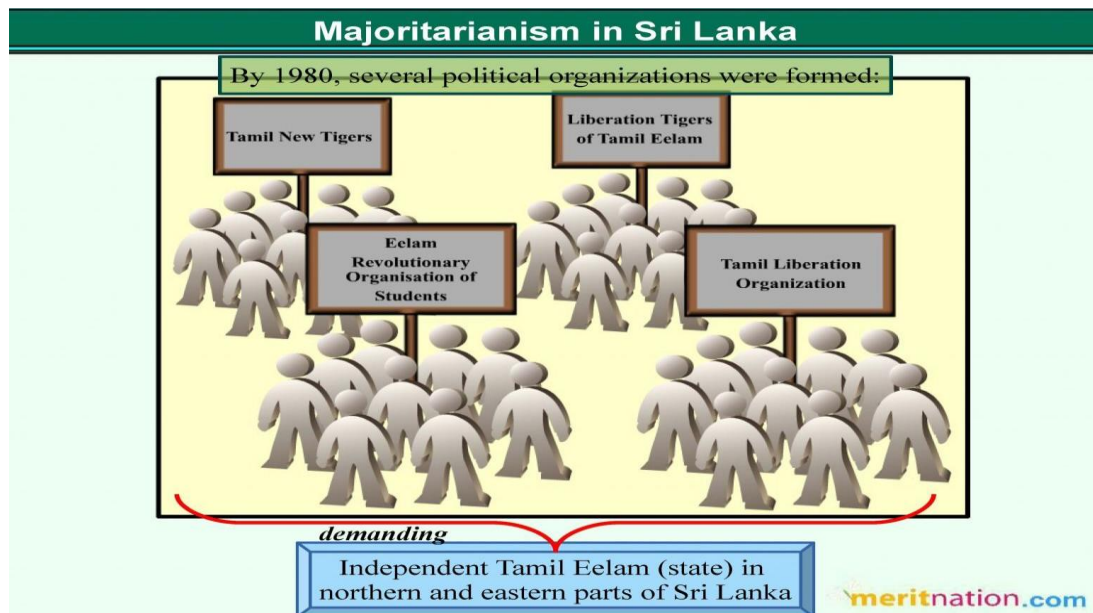


The government followed preferential policies that favoured Sinhala applicants for university positions and government jobs. It also took measures that promoted and protected Buddhism.

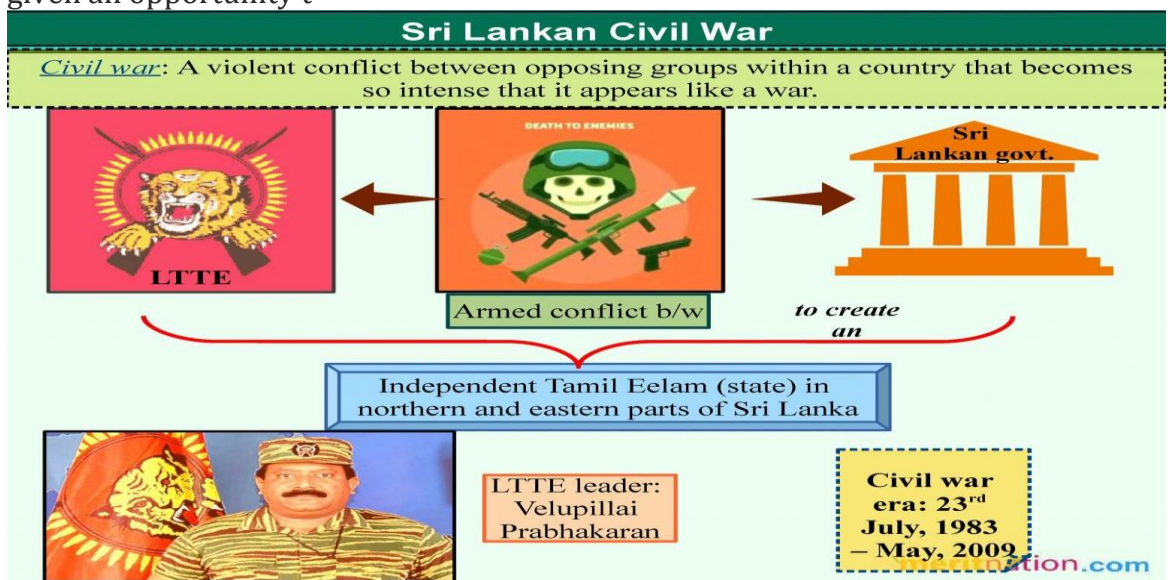
A feeling of alienation grew amongst the Sri Lankan Tamils because of these preferential steps of the government. No respect or recognition was given to their language, culture or religion.



To fight such discrimination, the Tamil speaking community of Sri Lanka began a struggle for equality in jobs, in university and for recognition of their language and culture. Slowly the conflict changed into a demand for regional autonomy. But, these were all denied by the Sinhala dominated government.




By 1980s, several political organizations were formed demanding an independent Tamil Eelam (state) in northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka. These differences between the two communities pushed Sri Lanka into the state of civil war since the Tamilians were not given an opportunity to




share the power in the country. The Sri Lankan Civil War was an armed conflict or rebellion between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan government to create an independent Tamil state called Tamil Eelam in the north and the east of the island. This war began on 23rd July 1983 and ended on **May 2009**. After a 26 year military campaign, the Sri Lankan military defeated the LTTE bringing the civil war to an

end.


**Effects of the War**



1. 1000s of people died from both the communities



2. Families lost their livelihoods



3. Families were forced to leave the country as refugees

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Due to the civil war, thousands of people from both communities were killed. Many families were forced to leave the country as refugees and many more lost their livelihoods. The civil war had a terrible setback to the social, cultural and economic life of the country.

#### **Our Learning from the two Case Studies:**

Both Belgium and Sri Lanka were democracies. Yet, they dealt with the question of power sharing differently. In Belgium, the leaders realised that the unity of the country is possible only by respecting the feelings and interests of different communities and regions. Such a realisation resulted in mutually acceptable arrangement for sharing power. On the other hand, Sri Lanka showed us that if a majority community wants to force its dominance over others and refuses to share power, it can undermine the unity of the country.

#### **Forms of Power Sharing**

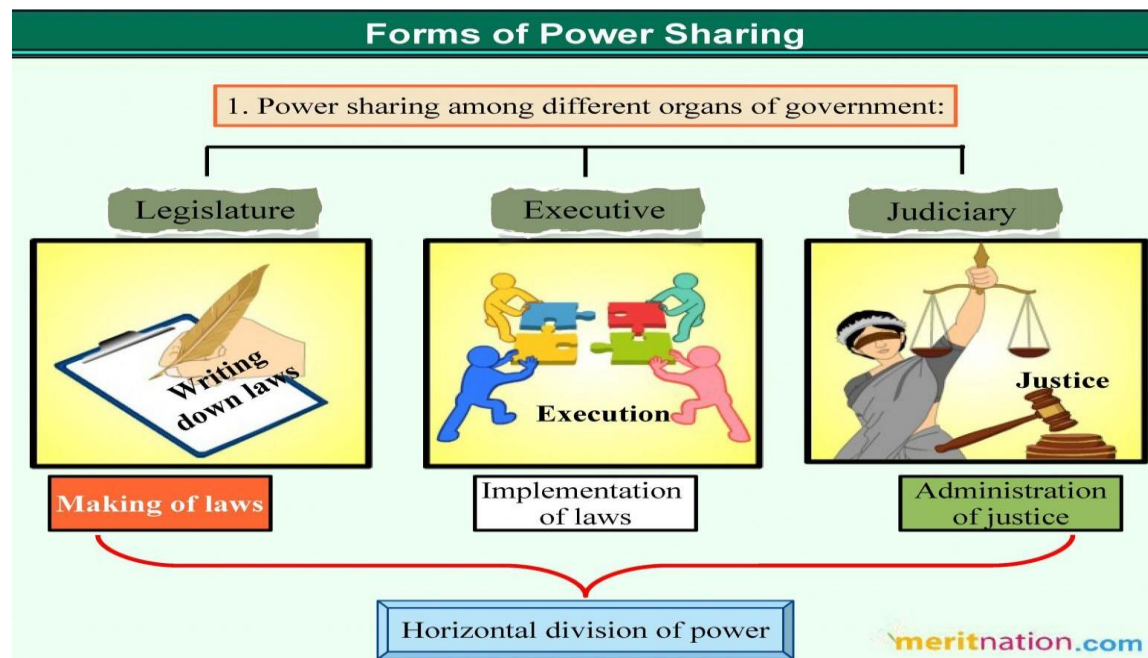
##### **RECAP:**

We have studied about power sharing model in Sri Lanka.

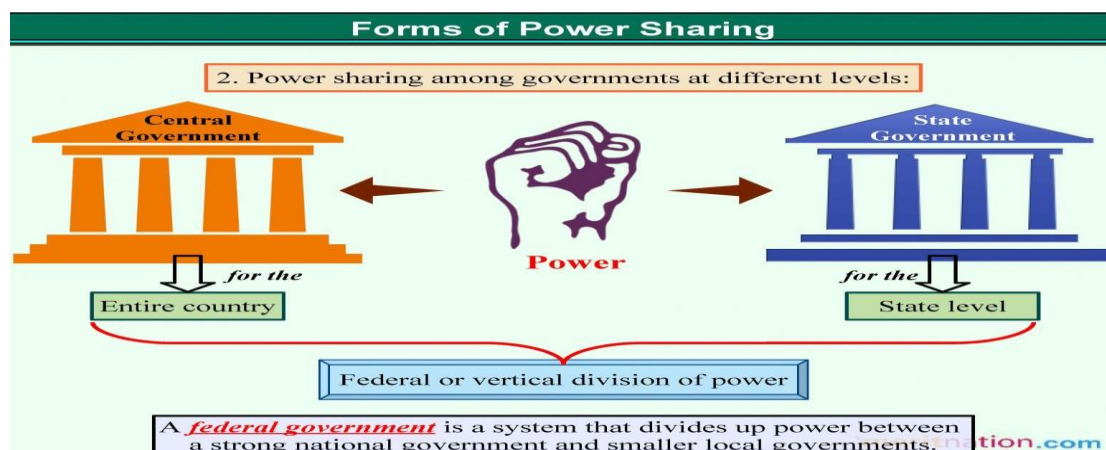
<b>Majoritarian Principles</b>	In 1956, an Act was passed to recognise Sinhala as the only official language, thus ignoring Tamil
	The governments followed preferential policies that favoured Sinhala applicants for university positions and government jobs
	It promoted and protected Buddhism



## Different Forms of Power Sharing:



Power is shared among different organs of government, such as the legislature, executive and judiciary. Each organ keeps a check on the other which results in a balance of power amongst the three organs. This is known as the **horizontal division of power**, as it allows different organs of government placed at the same level to exercise different powers.

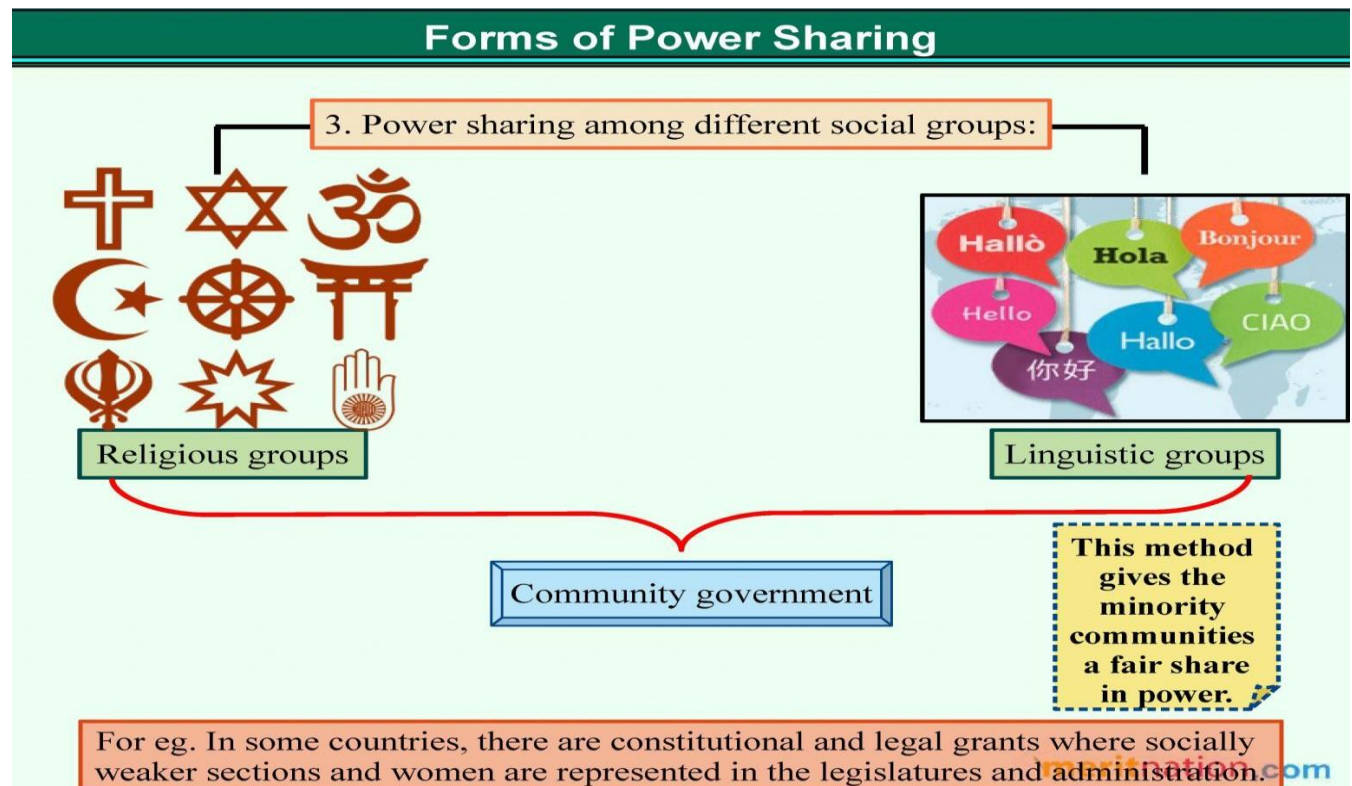


Power can be shared within the government at different levels as well: a government at the national level and governments at the regional levels. Such a government is called **federal**

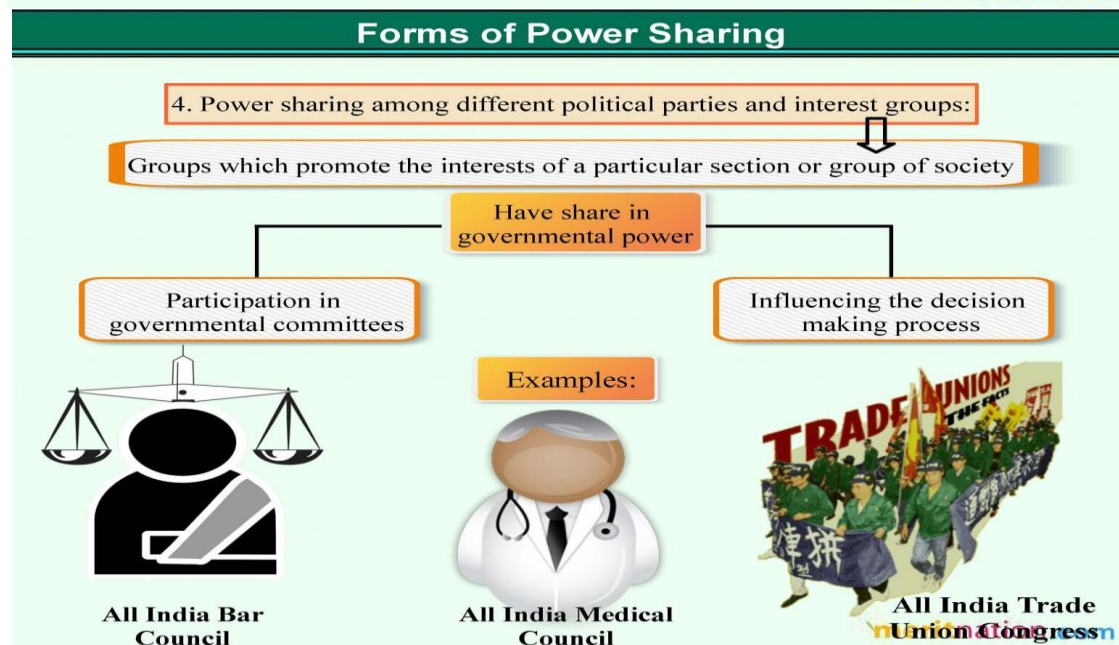
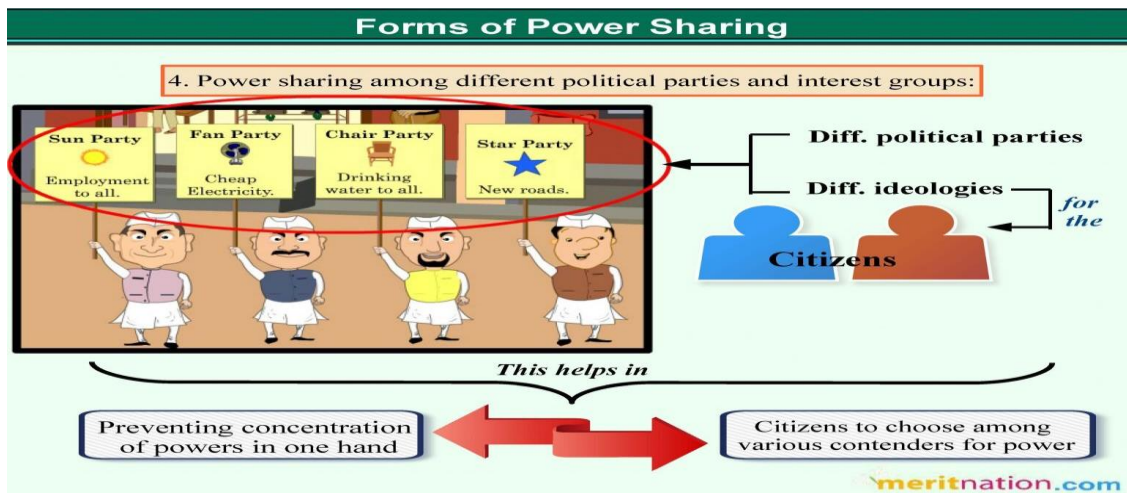


**government.** This is known as the **vertical division of power**, as the central government delegates its powers to the state governments and they in turn delegate it to the smaller governing bodies and institutions at the grassroot level.

### Power Sharing between Different Social Groups



Power may also be shared among different social groups based on religion and linguistics. In some countries, there are constitutional and legal arrangements whereby socially weaker sections and women are represented in the legislatures and administration. For eg. 33% of reservation is given to women in the Lok Sabha. of power



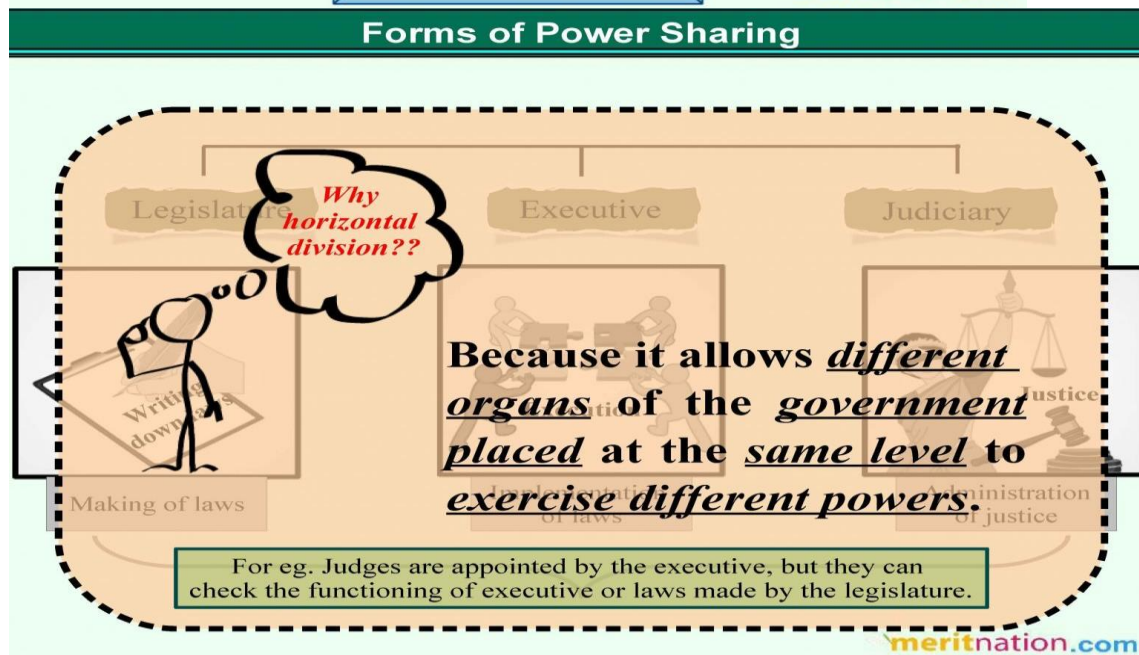
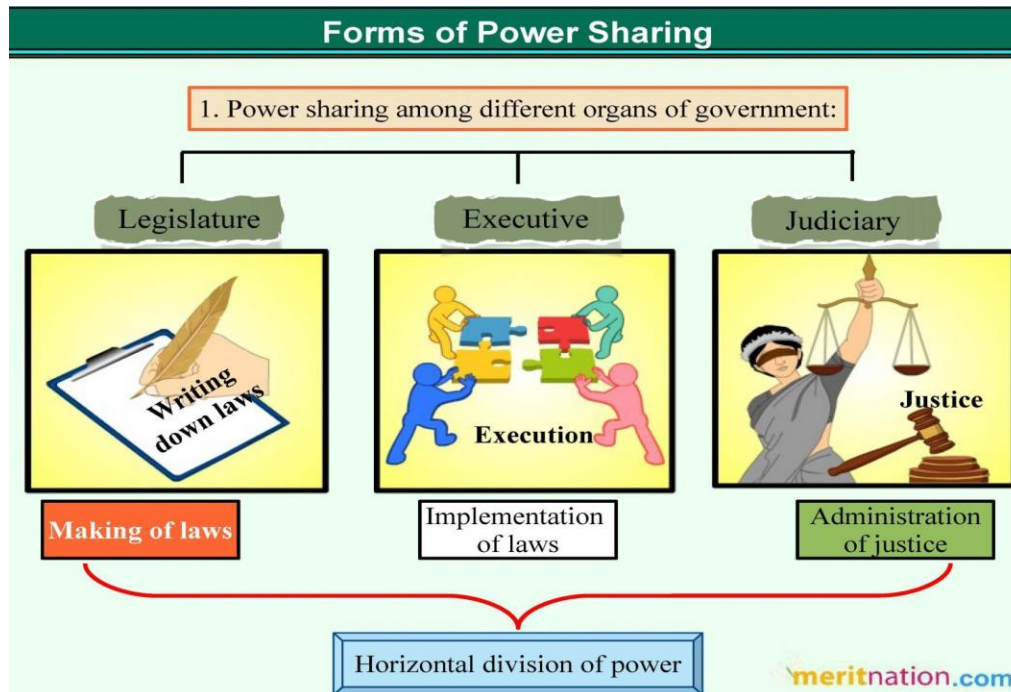
Political parties, pressure groups and various movements also affect those in position of power. This leads to sharing of power amongst different parties representing different ideologies and social groups. This way, members of the society can choose a contender who has their best interest in mind.

So, through this chapter we have got a fair idea about power sharing and it's types in details with the help of the two case studies of Belgium and Sri Lanka. But do you think all these efforts by the two countries were required?

### Types of Power Sharing

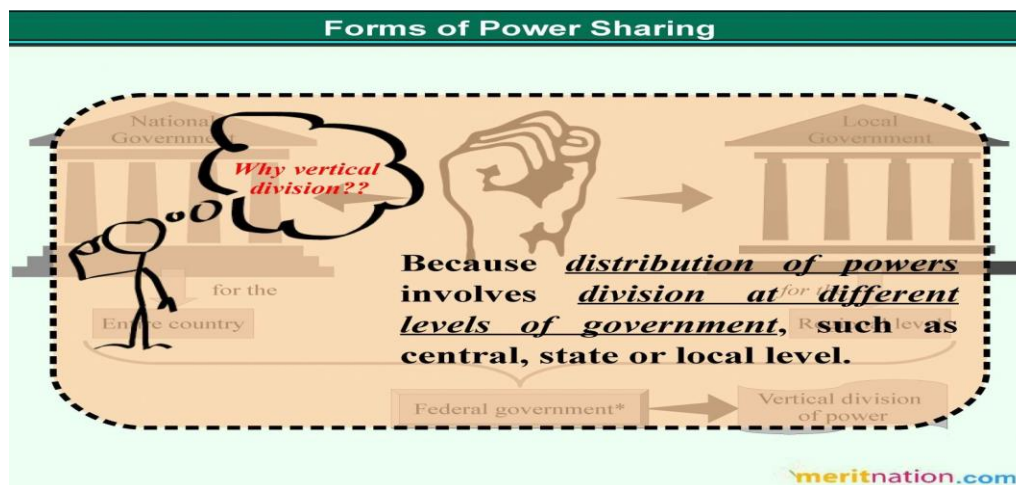
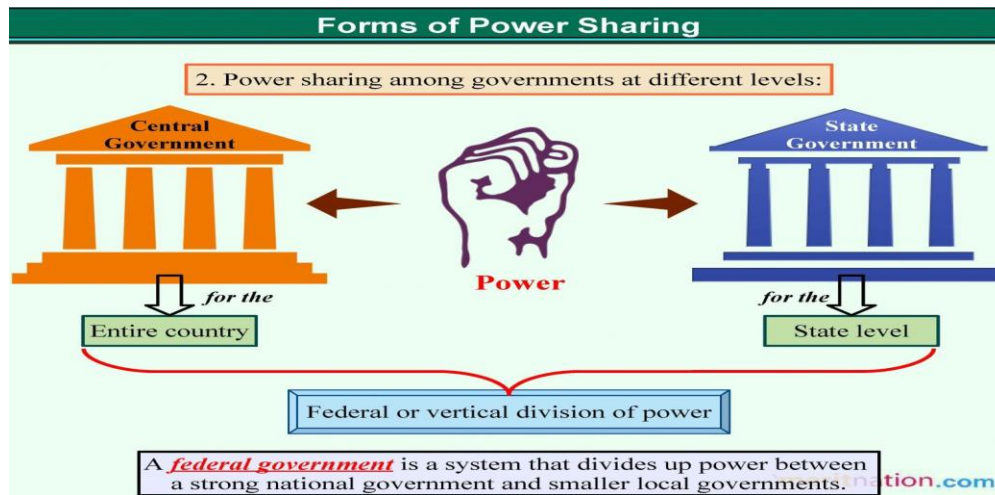
The four types of Power Sharing are as follows :

1. Power is shared among different organs of government, such as the legislature, executive and judiciary. Each organ checks the others. This results in a balance of power among various organs. This is a horizontal division of powers, as it allows different organs of government placed at the same level to exercise different powers.



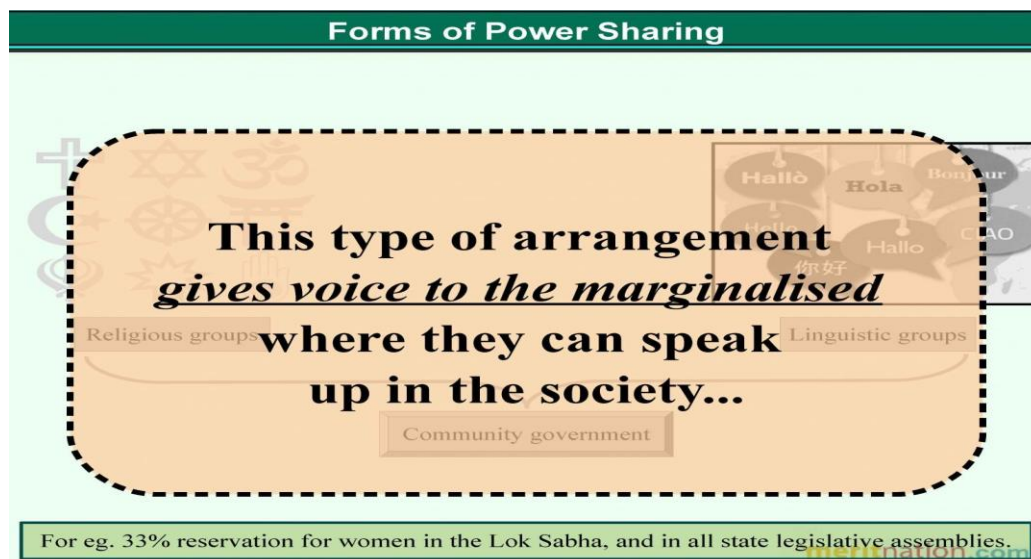
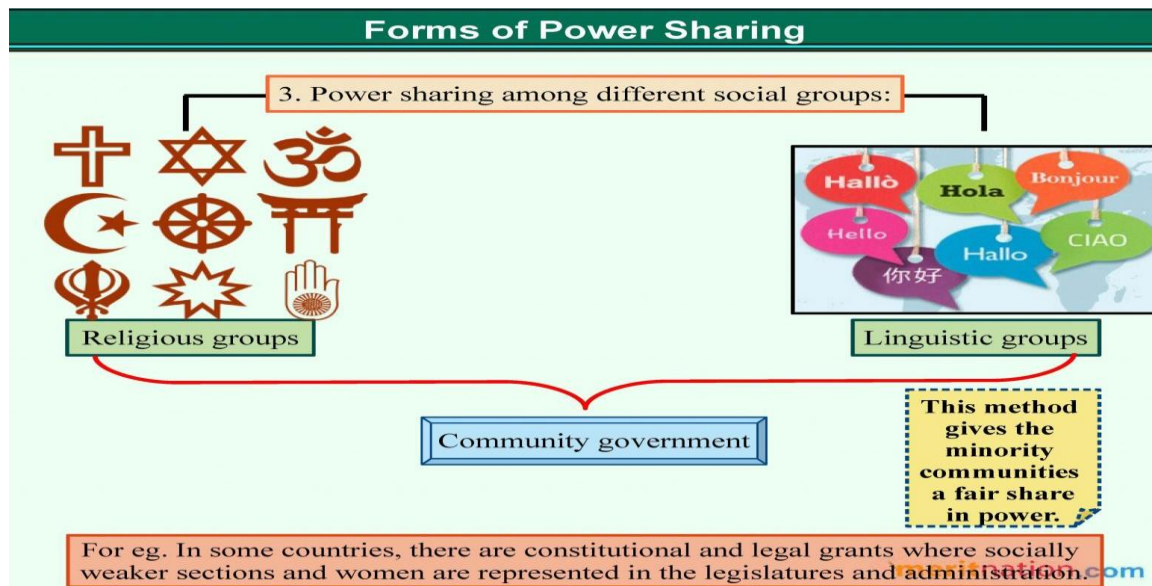
2. Power can be shared among governments at different levels: a general government for the entire country and governments at the provincial or regional level. Such a government is called federal government. This is a vertical division of power, as the central government

delegates its powers to the state governments and they in turn delegate it to the smaller governing bodies and institutions.



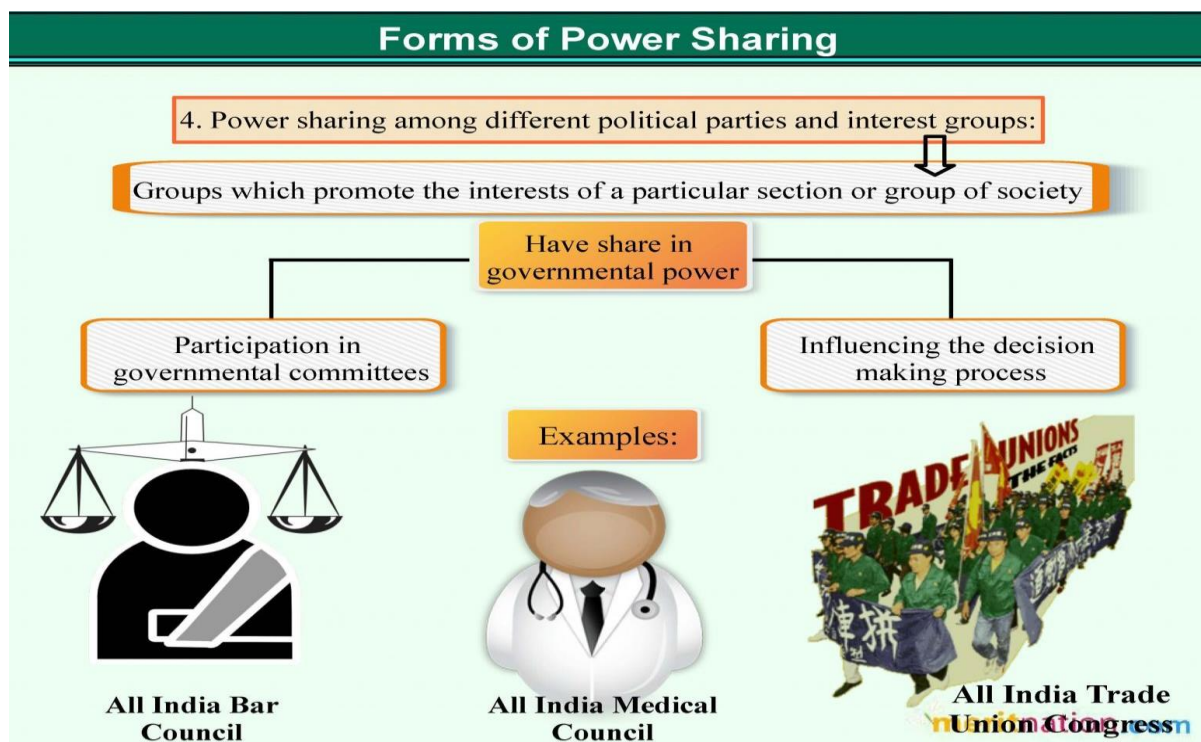
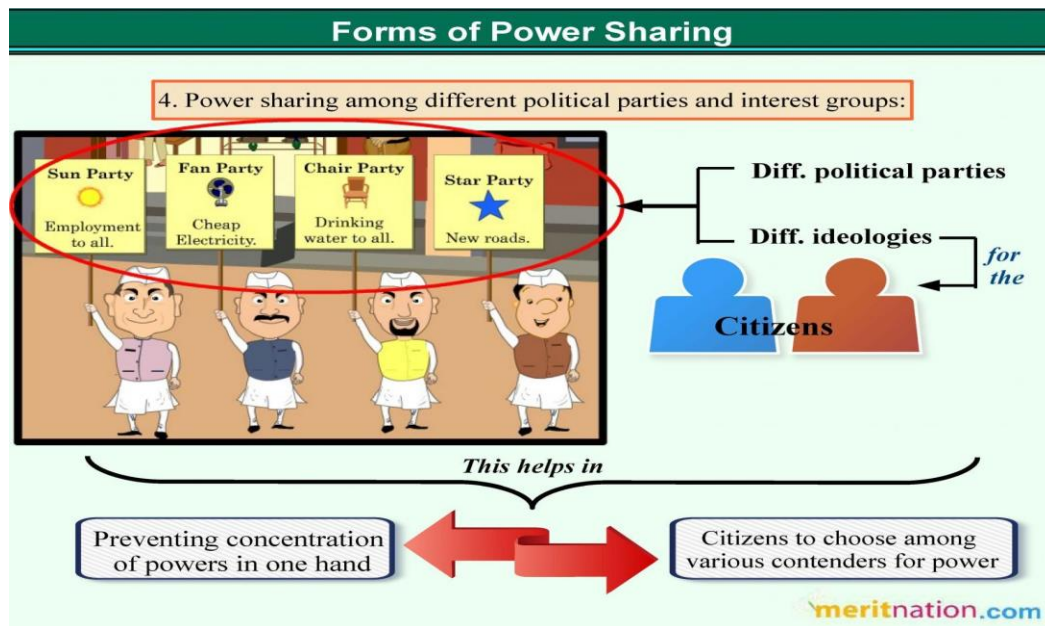
3. Power may also be shared among different social groups such as the religious and linguistic groups. In some countries, there are constitutional and legal arrangements whereby socially weaker sections and women are represented in the legislatures and administration.





4. Power sharing arrangements can also be seen in the way political parties, pressure groups and movements control or influence those in power. This way the power is shared among different parties that represent different ideologies and social groups. When two or more parties form an alliance to contest elections, this kind of power sharing can be direct. If their alliance is elected, they form a coalition government and thus share power.



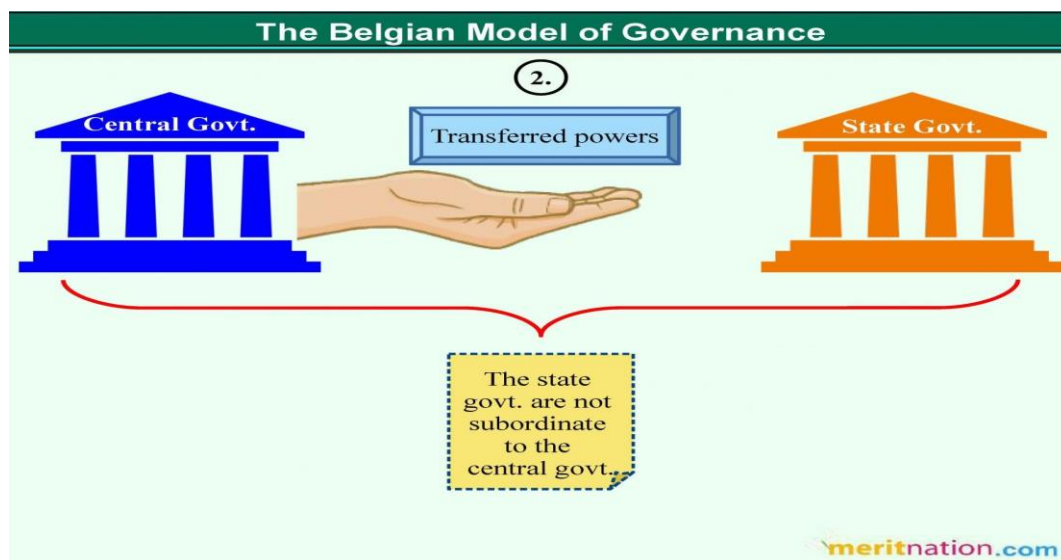
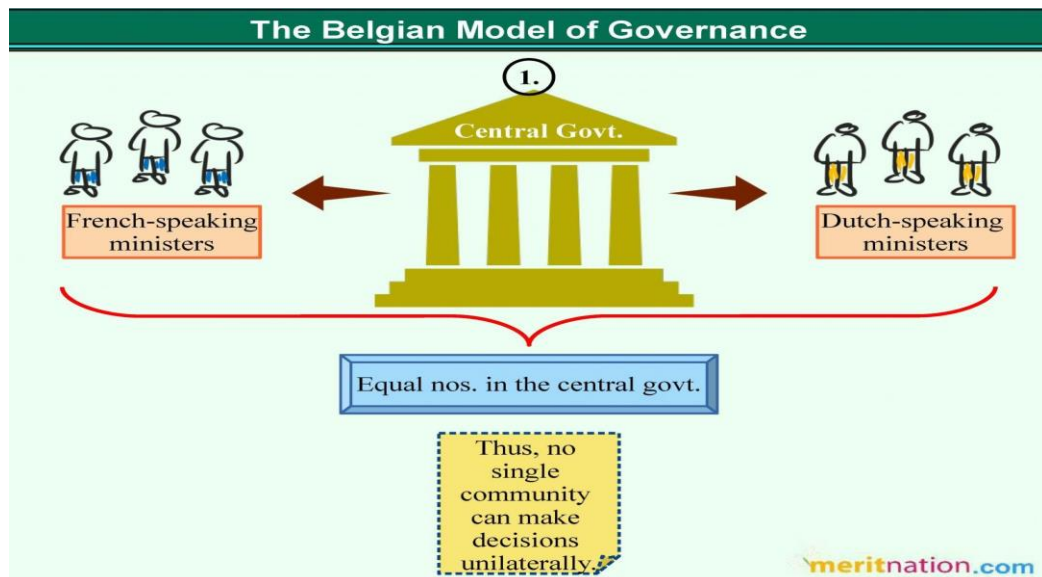


## Belgium Model of Governance

### The Belgian Model of Governance :

- The French and Dutch-speaking ministers are in the central government.
- Some special laws require the support of majority of members from each linguistic group.

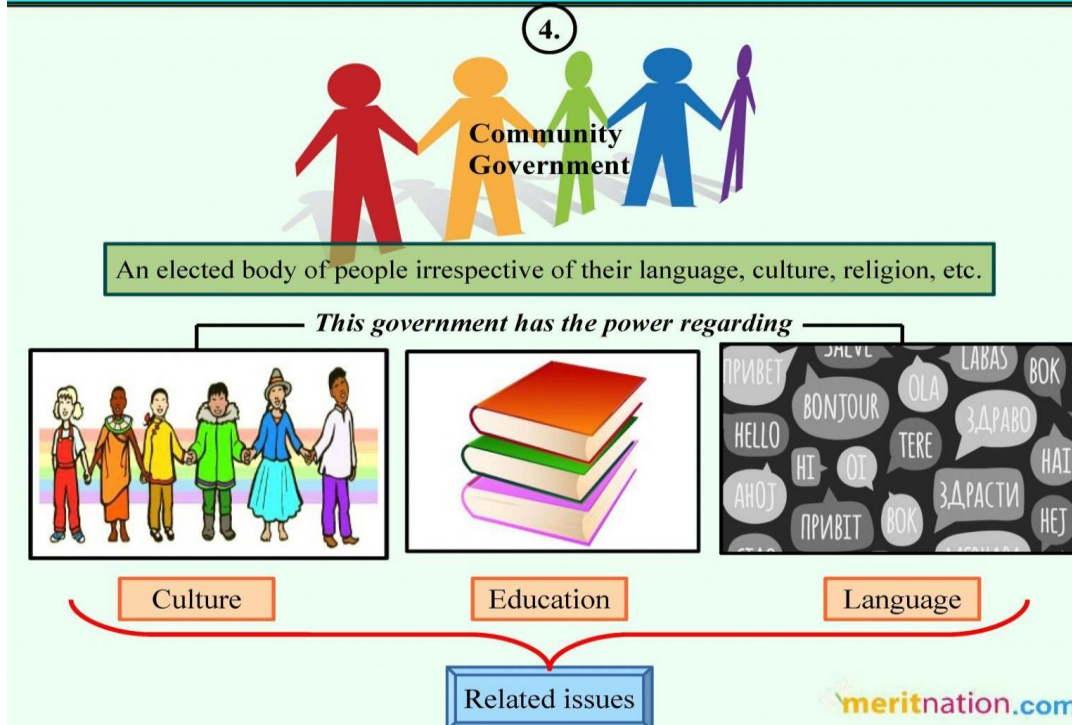
- Many powers of the central government have been given to state governments of the two regions of the country.
- Brussels has a separate government in which both the communities (French and Dutch) have equal representation.
- A 'community government' exists. It is elected by people belonging to one language community. This government engages with the cultural, educational and language- related issues.
- This kind of governance has prevented a civil strife between the two different linguistic communities.



## The Belgian Model of Governance

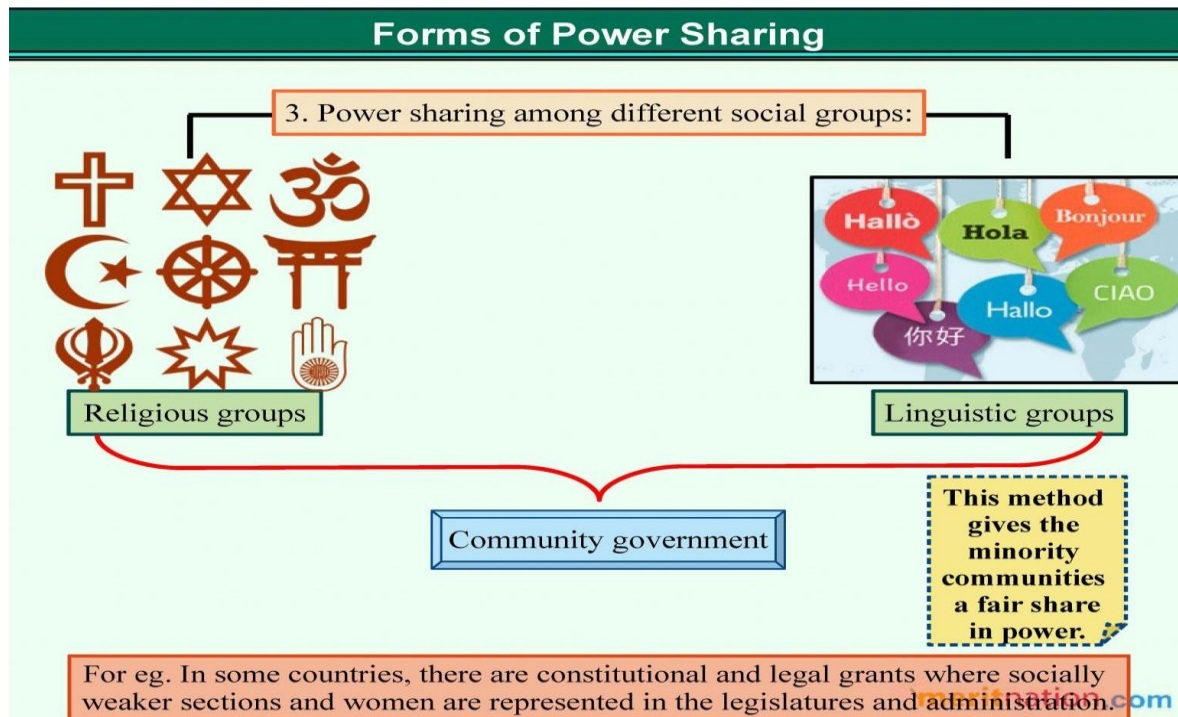


## The Belgian Model of Governance



### Different Social Groups

Power may also be shared among different social groups such as the religious and linguistic groups. In some countries, there are constitutional and legal arrangements whereby socially weaker sections and women are represented in the legislatures and administration.



This type of arrangement gives voice to the marginalised where they can speak up in the society.

Political parties, pressure groups and movements

### **Pressure Groups and Movements :**

- Pressure groups are organisations that attempt to influence government policies.
- Unlike political parties, pressure groups do not aim to directly control or share political power.
- These organisations are formed when people with common occupation, interests, aspirations or opinions come together in order to achieve a common objective.
- Like an interest group, a movement also attempts to influence politics rather than directly take part in electoral competition.
- Unlike interest groups, movements have a loose organisation.
- Their decision-making is more informal and flexible. They depend much more on spontaneous mass participation than an interest group.



## IMPORTANT



What is the difference between pressure groups and movements?

### PRESSURE GROUPS

Has a strong organisation

Formal and rigid

Participation of people can be both spontaneous or planned.

### MOVEMENTS

Has a loose organisation

Informal and not rigid

Depend upon spontaneous mass participation

## IMPORTANT



Political parties and pressure groups directly influence the decisions of the govt.  
Examine the statement and elaborate your views.

The above statement is wrong. It is true that **political parties** have a **direct influence** on the govt's decision but on the other hand **pressure groups** **indirectly influence** the govt's decisions. Let us clear it by pointing out the difference between the two :

### PRESSURE GROUPS

It is a public body acting outside the political party

Aim is the promotion of interest of the people by influencing political power

Champagnes for pressurizing the government for change in unsuitable policies

They work for self interest.

They keep on emerging and dissolving.

Use both conventional & non conventional means to demonstrate their demands.

### POLITICAL PARTY

A political party constitutes the government

Aim is to achieve political power.

Helps the government in decision making

They work for national interest.

Their existence is fixed for a certain period by the election commission.

Uses constitutional means for the execution of its duties.



## IMPORTANT



### How do pressure groups and movements influence politics?

Pressure groups & movements exert influence on politics in the following ways :

- 1 ➤ Gain public support by :
  - ➔ Carrying out information campaign
  - ➔ Organising meetings
  - ➔ Filing petitions
- 2 ➤ Try to influence the media to pay attention to these issues
- 3 ➤ Organise protest through :
  - ➔ Strikes
  - ➔ Disrupting govt. programmes
  - ➔ Set up associations & organisation of people
- 4 ➤ Business groups :
  - ➔ Employ lobbyists
  - ➔ Sponser expensive advertisements
- 5 ➤ Participate in official bodies and committees that give advice to the govt.