Chap 1. Power Sharing

1. Compare the Belgian model and the Sri Lankan model of power sharing.

Belgian model

• They recognised the existence of regional differences and cultural diversity.
• They amended the constitution four times between 1970 and 1993, which enabled everyone to live together.
• They respected the feelings and interests of different communities.
• The State Governments are not subordinate to the Central Government.
• The French majority in Brussels accepted an equal number of Dutch and French ministers at the state level of government.
• The Dutch majority in Belgium accepted an equal number of French and Dutch ministers at the central government level.
• A third kind of government – the 'community government' – ensured the German minority does not feel alienated.
• The community government looked after culture, education and language-related issues of the three ethnic groups.

Sri Lankan model

• They overlooked the existence of regional differences and cultural diversity. They applied the model of majoritarianism.
• An Act was passed in 1956 that recognised Sinhala as the only official language.
• The governments followed preferential policies that favoured Sinhala applicants for university positions and government jobs.

• A new Constitution stipulated that the state shall protect and foster Buddhism.
• They suppressed the feelings of the minority and refused to share power.
• The Sri Lankan Tamils struggled for the recognition of Tamil as an official language, for regional autonomy and equality of opportunity in securing education and jobs.
• The relations between the Sinhala and Tamil communities remained strained over time.
• By the 1980s, several political organisations demanded a separate Tamil Eelam (state).
• The distrust between the two communities turned into a civil war that ended in 2009.

2. Why is power sharing necessary in a democracy? Explain.
• Power sharing accommodates social diversity.
• Power sharing gives minority communities, such as religious and linguistic groups, a fair share in power.
• It reduces the possibility of conflict between social groups.
• Power sharing is the very spirit of democracy.
• A legitimate government is one where citizens, through participation, acquire a stake in the system.
• It strengthens the unity of the country.
• It reinforces the trust of people in democracy.

Chap 2. Federalism

1. Explain the features of federalism in India.

The Constitution divides powers between the Union Government and State Governments through three lists: (a) Union List, (b) State List, (c) Concurrent List. This ensures each level works independently within its jurisdiction.

• India has a written Constitution, and all governments must function within its limits. The Constitution is the supreme authority, not the Parliament.

• The division of powers cannot be changed easily. Any change must be passed by both Houses of Parliament with a two-thirds majority and then approved by at least half of the State Legislatures.

• The Supreme Court acts as an impartial authority. It settles disputes between the Centre and States and protects the Constitution.

• States have their own sources of revenue, though some taxes are shared with the Centre.

• Important subjects like defence, foreign affairs, communication and currency are under the union government.

2. Examine the provision made for local self-government by the 1992 constitutional amendment.

• It is constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to local government bodies.

• Seats are reserved in the elected bodies and the executive heads of these institutions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

• At least one-third of all positions are reserved for women.

• An independent institution called the State Election Commission has been created in each state to conduct panchayat and municipal elections.
• The state governments are required to share some powers and revenue with local government bodies.

Chap 3. Gender, Religion and Caste

1. "Secularism is the very idea of Indian Constitution." Justify the statement.

• There is no official religion of the Indian State.
• The Constitution treats all religions equally.
• The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion.
• The Constitution allows the state to intervene in matters of religion in order to ensure equality within religious communities.
• The Constitution provides to all individuals and communities freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion, or not to follow any.
• Hence, we can say that secularism is the very idea of the Indian Constitution.

2. Suggest any five measures to establish the gender equality of labour.

• Promote education among women.
• Equal employment opportunities.
• Follow the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, which provides that equal wages should be paid for equal work.
• Enhance the political and legal status of women and their career opportunities.

• Encourage participation of women in highly paid and valued jobs.

Chap 4. Political Parties

1. Describe the main functions of political parties.

• Political parties contest elections. Elections are fought mainly among the candidates put up by political parties.

• Parties put forward different policies and programmes and the voters choose from them.

• Parties form and run governments. Parties play a decisive role in making laws for a country. Laws are debated and passed in the legislature.

• Those parties that lose in the elections play the role of opposition to the parties in power, by voicing different views and criticising the government for its failures or wrong policies.

• Parties shape public opinion. They raise and highlight issues and resolve people's problems. Many pressure groups are the extensions of political parties.

• Parties provide people access to government machinery and welfare schemes implemented by governments. For an ordinary citizen it is easier to approach a local party leader than a government officer.

2. Examine the need of the political parties in a democratic government.

• Political parties are needed to form a representative democracy.

• In large and complex societies, political parties gather different views on various issues and present them to the government.

• They bring various representatives together so that a responsible government could be formed.
• Without political parties, no one will be responsible for running the country. Elected representatives will only be accountable to their constituency for what they do in the locality.
• Political parties are needed as a mechanism to support or restrain the government, make policies, justify them or oppose them.
• Parties provide people access to government machinery and welfare schemes implemented by governments. For an ordinary citizen it is easier to approach a local party leader than a government officer.

3. Explain the challenges faced by the political parties in India.
• Lack of internal democracy: in many political parties, power is concentrated in one or a few leaders at the top. Ordinary members of the party do not get sufficient information on what happens inside the party.
• Dynastic succession: top positions in many parties are controlled by one family, so ordinary workers rarely rise to the top.
• Money power: parties nominate rich candidates to win elections, and rich donors influence party policies.
• Muscle power: some parties support criminals who can win elections.
• Lack of meaningful choice: parties have few ideological differences, so voters have little real choice.
• Party hopping: leaders keep shifting from one party to another.
• Other issues: lack of transparency, equal opportunity and a proper decision-making process.

4. Analyse how the issue of leadership succession poses a challenge to political parties in India.

• Most political parties do not practise open and transparent procedures for their functioning. So there are very few ways for an ordinary worker to rise to the top in a party.

• Those who happen to be the leaders are in a position of unfair advantage as they favour people close to them or even their family members.

• In many parties in India, we see a trend of dynastic succession. The top positions are always controlled by members of a particular family, which is unfair to other members of the party, and bad for democracy.

• This is so because people who do not have adequate experience or popular support come to occupy positions of power.

• More than loyalty to party principles and policies, personal loyalty to the leader becomes more important.

5. Define multi-party system. Explain its merits and demerits.

If several parties compete for power, and more than two parties have a reasonable chance of coming to power either on their own strength or in alliance with others, we call it a multiparty system.

Merits

• In a democratic system like India, multiparty politics plays a crucial role in representing the diverse interests and aspirations of the citizens.

• The multiparty system allows for a competitive and dynamic political environment, where parties with different ideologies

and agendas can participate and compete for the support of the electorate.
• The presence of multiple parties also provides a check and balance against any one party becoming too powerful and dominant.
• People can make a choice between several candidates.
• India adopted this system because of the vast diversity and plurality in the nation.
Demerits
• The multiparty system often appears very messy.
• Sometimes it leads to political instability.

6. Evaluate the differences between the national and regional parties and assess the requirements for a regional party to become a national party.
• National parties are powerful in the nation and deal with national issues.
• Regional parties' power is limited to a specific region or state; only the issues and demands of a specific region are discussed by regional parties.
• National parties' actions offer preference to national issues over regional problems.
• Regional parties' operations are confined to the state.
• A party becomes a regional party if it gets at least six percent of the total votes in a state assembly election and wins at least two seats.

The regional parties must attain the following requirement to become a national party:

• A party must gain at least six percent of the total votes in Lok Sabha or assembly elections in four states and win at least four seats in Lok Sabha to be a national party.
• Examples of national parties are the BJP and Congress. Examples of regional parties are DMK, Telugu Desam.

Chap 5. Outcomes of Democracy

1. How is democracy an accountable, responsive and legitimate government?

• Accountable: citizens elect their rulers and can replace a government that fails them.
• Responsive: the government attends to people's needs because it wants to be re-elected.
• Legitimate: it is the people's own government, chosen by them.
• Transparent: decisions follow norms and procedures, so citizens can check how they were made.
• Right to information: citizens can get information about the government and its work.
• Public debate: major policies and laws are openly debated before they are passed.

2. How does democracy promote the dignity and freedom of citizens?

• Respect: every person wants respect, and democracy is built on this desire for respect and freedom.
• Citizens, not subjects: democracy turns people from subjects of a ruler into citizens with rights.
• Freedom: citizens enjoy freedom of speech, expression and other rights guaranteed by law.

• Political equality: every adult has one vote of equal value.
• Dignity of women: democracy treats women with equal respect and gives them equal rights.
• Disadvantaged groups: democracy has strengthened their claims for equal status and opportunity.
• Awareness: people become aware of their rights and can question the government.

3. Why is democracy better than other forms of government?
• Accountable: citizens elect their rulers and can replace a government that fails them.
• Responsive: the government attends to people's needs because it wants to be re-elected.
• Legitimate: it is the people's own government, chosen by them.
• Transparent: decisions follow norms and procedures, so citizens can check how they were made.
• Better decisions: decisions are made through debate and discussion, so people accept them.
• Political equality: every adult has one vote of equal value.
• Citizens, not subjects: democracy turns people from subjects of a ruler into citizens with rights.
• Social diversity: democracy handles differences peacefully, resolves conflicts.

4. How does democracy help reduce poverty and inequality?
• Political equality: every adult has one vote of equal value.
• Disadvantaged groups: democracy has strengthened their claims for equal status and opportunity.

• No discrimination: democracy discourages discrimination based on economic status, language or religion.
• Reservation: seats in education and government jobs are reserved for weaker sections.
• Welfare schemes: the government runs schemes to reduce poverty and give basic facilities to the poor.
• Employment: the government runs job-creation programmes such as MGNREGA.
• Limitation: economic inequality still exists, as a few rich people hold a large share of the wealth.

5. How does democracy accommodate social diversity?
• Harmony: democracy helps people of different groups live together peacefully.
• Negotiation: democracy develops ways to negotiate social differences, divisions and conflicts.
• Respect for differences: democracy teaches people to respect differences, while dictatorships ignore or suppress them.
• Peaceful competition: elections and power sharing keep tensions between groups from turning violent.
• Majority works with minority: no religious, racial or language group dominates, and every citizen can be in the majority at some time.
• Dignity of women: democracy treats women with equal respect and gives them equal rights.
• Disadvantaged groups: democracy has strengthened their claims for equal status and opportunity.
• Example: Belgium successfully negotiated differences among its ethnic groups.

6. How does democracy help economic growth and development?

• Many factors: economic growth also depends on population size, the global situation and the country's priorities.

• Reforms: democracies encourage growth through economic reforms and initiatives like Make in India.

• Employment: the government runs job-creation programmes such as MGNREGA.

• Welfare schemes: the government runs schemes to reduce poverty and give basic facilities to the poor.

• Food security: the Public Distribution System supplies food grains to the poor at low prices.

• Health and education: the government provides these facilities to weaker sections.

• Trade: globalisation and liberalisation have increased international trade.

• Infrastructure: democracies invest in roads, the digital economy and renewable energy.