

Ch:POWER SHARING

READ THE FOLLOWING SHORT TYPES QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THOROUGHLY AND TRY TO UNDERSTAND AND WRITE IN YOUR H.W.COPY.

Short Answer Questions (SA) 3 Marks

Question 10.

Compare the different ways in which the Belgians and the Sri Lankans have dealt with the problem of cultural diversity. (2012)

Answer:

Both Belgium and Sri Lanka are democracies, yet they have dealt with the problem of cultural diversity very differently.

Belgium:

1. Leaders realised that for the unity of the country it is important to respect the feelings and interests of different communities. The Constitution prescribes that the number of Dutch and French speaking people shall be equal in the Central Government.
2. Both Dutch and French communities share power on an equal basis at the Centre. Along with the State Government, both communities have a third kind of Government called 'Community Government' which decides on cultural, education and language related issues.
3. Between, 1970 and 1993, the Constitution was amended four times to enable all linguistic groups to live together within the same country.

Sri Lanka:

1. In Sri Lanka, there are two major communities, the Sinhalese speaking (74%) and Tamil speaking (18%). The majority community, the Sinhalese have forced their domination over Tamils, refusing to share power.
2. Both communities have lived in tension as the Sinhalese have denied political, educational, religious, employment and economic rights to the Tamils leading to Civil War.
3. In 1956, the Government passed an Act to recognise Sinhala as the only official language, thus disregarding Tamil.

Question 11.

How far do you agree with the statement that power sharing is keeping with the spirit of democracy? (2012)

Answer:

Power sharing is desirable in democracy because it helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between social groups. Conflict between social groups leads to violence and political instability. Power sharing is a good way to ensure the stability of political order.

Imposing the will of majority community over others, in the long run may undermine the unity of the nation. Tyranny of the majority is not just oppressive for the minority, it often brings ruin to the majority as well.

A democratic rule involves sharing power with those affected by its exercise and who have to live with its effects. People have a right to be consulted on how they are to be governed. A legitimate government is one where citizens, through participation, acquire a stake in the system. Prudential reasons stress that power sharing brings out better outcomes whereas moral reasons emphasize the act of power sharing as valuable.

Question 12.

Explain any three consequences of the majoritarian policies adopted by the Sri Lankan government. (2013)

Answer:

Sri Lanka emerged as an independent country in 1948. The democratically elected government adopted a series of majoritarian measures to establish Sinhala Supremacy. Consequences of these majoritarian policies:

1. The Sri Lankan Tamils felt that none of the major political parties led by the Buddhist Sinhala leaders were sensitive to their language and culture and the government policies denied them equal political rights which led to increased feeling of alienation among them.
2. The Sri Lankan Tamils felt that the constitution denied them equal rights in politics, in getting jobs and ignored their interests. The relation between the Tamil and Sinhala communities became extremely strained as a result.
3. The Sri Lankan Tamils launched parties and struggles for the recognition of Tamil, for regional autonomy and equality of opportunity in every field.
4. Therefore, the measures adopted by the government to establish Sinhala supremacy led to distrust between the two communities which turned the widespread conflict into a Civil War. As a result, thousands of people of both communities were killed and many families were forced to leave the country as refugees and lost their livelihoods.

Question 13.

Why is the ethnic composition of Belgium complex?

Answer:

Belgium is a small country in Europe, having a population of a little over one crore.

- 59 per cent of the country's total population lives in the Flemish region and speak Dutch language.
- Another 40 per cent people live in Wallonia region and speak French. Remaining one per cent of the Belgians speak German.

- Whereas in the Belgian capital, Brussels, 80 per cent of the population is French-speaking and 20 per cent is Dutch-speaking.

Question 14.

How is Belgium's power-sharing path different from any other country?

Or, Explain the four elements in the Belgian power-sharing model.

Or, Why do we find the Belgian model very complicated? How has it helped to prevent conflict and division of the country on linguistic lines?

Answer:

The power-sharing arrangements made by the Belgian leaders were different and more innovative than any other country. To recognise the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities, they amended their Constitution four times between 1970 and 1993.

The major elements of the Belgian Model are:

1. Constitution prescribes that the number of Dutch and French-speaking ministers shall be equal in the Central Government. No single community can take decisions unilaterally.
2. The State Governments are not subordinate to the Central Government.
3. Brussels, the capital, has a separate government where both the communities have equal representation.
4. A third kind of government, 'Community Government', is elected by people belonging to one language community – Dutch, French and German speaking – no matter where they live. This government can decide on cultural, educational and language related issues.

Question 15.

What is majoritarianism? Is it wrong if a majority community in a country rules? Give reasons to justify your answer.

Answer:

A belief that the majority community should be able to rule a country in whichever way it wants, by disregarding the wishes and needs of the minority is majoritarianism.

Yes, it is wrong if a majority community in a country rules.

- The very idea of power-sharing has emerged in opposition to the notions of undivided political power.
- A positive attitude towards diversity and willingness to accommodate it, is good for democracy.
- Power in the hands of one community will make the other community feel marginalised, deprived and discriminated.
- The struggle against such inequalities sometimes takes the path of conflict and defiance of State power as in Sri Lanka.

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