

## Long Answer Questions

### **Q. 1. What factors led to a civil war in Sri Lanka?**

**Ans.** Measures taken in majoritarianism gradually increased the feeling of alienation among Sri Lankan Tamils.

They felt that the constitution and government policies denied them equal political rights, discriminated against them in getting jobs and other opportunities and ignored their interests.

As a result, the relations between Sinhalas and Tamil communities got strained over time.

The Sri Lankan Tamils launched parties and struggles for the recognition of Tamil as an official language, regional autonomy and equality of opportunities in getting education and jobs.

By the 1980s, several political organisations were formed demanding an independent Tamil Elam (state) in northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka.

The distrust between the two communities turned into widespread conflict. It soon turned into a civil war. As a result, thousands of people of both the communities were killed.

### **Q. 2. How did the Belgium government solve its ethnic problem?**

**Ans.** In Belgium, leaders recognised the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities. The Belgian government accommodated its diverse ethnic population in the following manner:

Constitution says that the number of Dutch and French speaking ministers shall be equal in the Central government. Thus, no single community can make decisions unilaterally.

Many powers of the Central Government have been given to the 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.

There is a third kind of government, called the 'community government'. This government is elected by the people belonging to one language community—Dutch, French and German speaking, no matter where they live. This government has the power regarding cultural education and language related issues.

These arrangements helped to avoid a civic strife between the two major communities and a possible division of the country on linguistic lines.

**Q. 3. What was the ethnic composition of Sri Lanka?**

**Ans.** The major social groups of Sri Lanka 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' and 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 Tamils and Sinhala.

**Q. 4. What kind of power sharing problems were faced by Belgians and Sri Lankans?**

**Ans.** In Belgium, the Dutch community could have taken advantage of its numeric majority and force its will on the Flemists and German-speaking population. This would have pushed the conflict among all these communities further. This could lead to a very messy partition of the country; both the sides would claim control over Brussels. In Sri Lanka, the Sinhala community enjoyed an even bigger majority and could impose its will on the entire country.