

Hots (Higher Order Thinking Skills)

Q. 1. How is ethnic composition of Belgium very complex? Explain.

Ans. The ethnic composition of this small country is very complex. Of the country's total population, 59 per cent lives in Flemish region and speak Dutch language. Another 40 per cent people live in the Wallonia region and speak French. Remaining one per cent of the Belgians speak German. In the capital city Brussels, 80 per cent people speak French while 20 per cent are Dutch speaking.

Q. 2. What measures were adopted by the democratically elected government of Sri Lanka to establish Sinhala Supremacy.

Ans. (i) In 1956, an Act was passed to recognise 'Sinhala' as the only official language; thus disregarding Tamil.

(ii) The governments followed preferential policies that favoured Sinhala applicants for university positions and government jobs.

(iii) A new constitution specified that the state shall protect and foster Buddhism.

Q. 3. Evaluate the steps which turned out to be milestones to establish majoritarianism in Sri Lanka.

Ans. (i) 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.

(ii) As a result, the democratically elected government adopted majoritarian measures to establish Sinhala supremacy.

(iii) In 1956, an act was passed to recognise Sinhala, as the only official language, thus disregarding Tamil.

(iv) The government followed policies that favoured Sinhala applicants for university positions and government jobs.

With a new constitution, Buddhism was adopted as a state religion.

Q. 4. "Existence of Dutch and the French speaking people in Belgium created an ethnic tension." Elaborate the statement.

Ans. Causes of conflict in Belgium:

(i) The minority French speaking community was relatively rich and powerful.

(ii) This was resented by the Dutch speaking community, who got the benefits of economic development and education much later.

(iii) This led to tension between the Dutch and French speaking communities.

Q. 5. Why was Brussels chosen as the headquarters during the formation of European Union?

Ans. The Belgian leaders recognised the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities.

Between 1970 and 1993, they amended their constitution four times, so as to work out an arrangement that would enable everyone to live together within the same country.

This arrangement was different from any other country and was very innovative, such as they put the equal number of ministers in the central government from Dutch and French speaking both.

They formed a community government which would be empowered to take up cultural, educational and language-related issues of their community.

Q. 6. “Power sharing is the very spirit of democracy.” Justify the statement with four suitable points.

Or

Why is power sharing desirable? Give any three prudential reasons.

Ans. Power sharing helps to reduce the possibilities of conflicts between various ethnic groups living in a society.

It helps in ensuring political stability, since a country can be run by all the communities without giving preference to any majority community.

It also reduces violence and linguistic problems. In India, there is diversity in language but our constitution gives equal weightage to all the languages.

Power sharing is actually being called the true spirit of democracy. It helps in bringing political, economic, social and cultural stability to the nation.

Q. 7. Both Belgium and Sri Lanka are democracies but they follow different systems of power sharing. Support the statement by giving these points of difference.

Ans. Both countries are democracies. Both have various ethnic groups living in their respective countries.

Differences

(i) In Belgium, the leaders have 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 the power.

(ii) Sri Lanka shows us a contrasting example. It shows 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.

Q. 8. Explain the two main reasons why power sharing is important in a democracy.

Ans. The two main reasons are:

(i) Prudential Reasons: These lay emphasis on better outcomes of power sharing.

(a) Power sharing helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between the social groups. Thus, it ensures the stability of political order.

(b) Its absence results into imposition of will by majority community, which undermines the unity of the nation.

(ii) Moral Reasons: These stress on power sharing as a valuable act because

(a) It is the very spirit of democracy.

(b) A democratic rule involves it with those affected by its exercise and who have to live with its effects.

(c) A legitimate government is the one where citizens acquire a role in the system through participation.

Q. 9. “Power is shared between different social groups.” Comment on this statement with the help of an example.

Ans. Power may 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 represent in the legislatures and administration.

There is a system of ‘reserved constituencies’ in our country. This type of arrangement is meant to give space in the government and administration to diverse social groups who otherwise would feel alienated from the government. This method is used to give minority communities a fair share in power.

There is a government called “community government” in Belgium. This government is elected by the people, belonging to one language or community—Dutch, French and German speaking, no matter where they live. This government has the power regarding to culture, education and language issues.

These arrangements help to avoid civic clashes and animosity between the two major communities and possible division of the country on linguistic lines.