

CH-1 - POWER SHARING

Q1Ans

Q.1) Describe the ethnic composition of Belgium.

Ans. The ethnic composition of Belgium is very complex. It is as follows -

- 1) Of the country's total population, 59 percent lives in the Flemish region and speaks Dutch language.
- 2) Another 40 percent people live in Wallonia region and speak French.
- 3) Remaining one percent of the Belgians speak German.
- 4) In the capital city Brussels, 80 percent people speak French while 20 percent are Dutch-speaking.

Q.2) Describe the ethnic composition of Sri Lanka.

Ans. The ethnic composition of Sri-Lanka can be described as follows -

- 1) The major social groups are the Sinhala-speakers (74%).
- 2) Tamil-speakers ~~constitute~~ constitute 18%.
- 3) Among the Tamils there are two sub-groups. Tamil natives of the country are called 'Sri Lankan Tamils' (13%). The rest, whose forefathers came from India as plantation workers during colonial period, are called 'Indian Tamils'.

Q3. Explain the special problem of Brussels

- Ans.
- 1) In the capital city Brussels, 80% people speak French while 20% are Dutch-speaking.
 - 2) The Dutch-speaking people constitute a majority in the country, but a minority in the capital.
 - 3) In Belgium the Dutch community

could take advantage of its numerical majority and force its will on the French and German speaking population. This would push the conflict among communities further. This could lead to a very messy partition of the country; both sides would claim control over Brussels.

Q4 Describe the term majoritarianism.

Or

What were the majoritarian provisions of the act of 1956 in Sri Lanka

Or

What were the reasons that made Tamils feel eliminated in Sri Lanka

Ans. The Majoritarian Act that was passed in 1956 made Tamils feel eliminated in Sri Lanka. Following were its provisions -

- 1) It recognised Sinhala as the only official language, thus disregarding Tamil.

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

3) A new constitution stipulated that the state shall protect and foster Buddhism.

Q5 The Sri Lankan Tamils launched parties and struggles for three reasons. Mention them.

Ans. The Sri Lankan Tamils launched parties and struggles for the following reasons -

- 1) They wanted the recognition of Tamil as an official language.
- 2) They wanted regional autonomy.
- 3) They wanted equality of opportunity in securing education and jobs.
- 4) By 1980s several political organisations were formed demanding an ~~etc~~ independent Tamil Eelam (state) in northern and eastern parts of

Date _____
Page _____

Sri Lanka.

Q6. Describe the Belgium model of power sharing after defining the term power sharing.

Ans Power sharing is a strategy, wherein all the major segments of society are provided with a permanent share of power in the governance of the country.

The Belgium model of power sharing can be described as follows -

- 1) Constitution prescribes that the number of Dutch and French-speaking ministers shall be equal in the central government. Some special laws require the support of majority of members from each linguistic group. Thus, no single community can make decisions unilaterally.
- 2) 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.

- 3) Brussels has 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 has accepted equal representation in the central government.
- 4) Apart from the central and the state government, there is a third kind of government. This 'community government' is elected by people belonging to one language community - Dutch, French and German-speaking - no matter where they live. This government has the power regarding cultural, educational and language-related issues.

Q7. What are the two categories of

Date _____
Page _____

reasons for Power sharing? Describe two reasons under each category.

Ans. The two categories of reasons for Power sharing are -

1) Prudential reasons -

- i) Power sharing helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between different social groups. As social conflicts often leads to violence and political instability, power sharing helps to ensure the stability of political order.
- ii) The absence of power sharing results into imposition of will by majority community over other. In the short run, it appears attractive, but in the long run, it undermines the unity of the nation.

2) Moral reasons -

- i) Power sharing is the very spirit of democracy.
- ii) In democracy, people have a right

to be consulted on how they are to be governed through participation they acquire a stake in the system. Thus, it is obvious that sharing of power makes us more powerful.

Q8. Describe the following terms -

- 1) Majoritarianism - 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.
- 2) Ethnic - A social division based on shared culture. People belonging to the same ethnic group believe in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of culture or both. They need not always have the same religion or nationality.
- 3) Prudential - Based on prudence, or on careful calculation of gains and

losses. Prudential decisions are usually contrasted with decisions based ~~on~~ purely on moral considerations.

4) Civil War - A violent conflict between opposing groups within a country that becomes so intense that it appears like a war.

5) Legitimate government - A legitimate government is one where citizens, through participation, acquire a stake in the system.

Q9. Describe the modern forms of power sharing in democracies of the world. Give eg also.

Ans. In modern democracies, power sharing arrangements can ~~th~~ take many forms, they are -
1) power is shared among different organs of government such as

Date _____
Page _____

the legislature, executive and judiciary. This is called horizontal distribution of power because it allows different organs of government placed at the same level to exercise different powers. Such a separation ensures that none of the organs can exercise unlimited power. Each organ check the others.

For example, in a democracy, even though ministers and government officials exercise power, they are responsible to the Parliament or State Assemblies.

- 2) Power can be shared among governments at different levels - a government for the entire country and governments at the provincial or regional level. Such a general government for entire country is usually called federal government. This division of powers involving higher and

Date _____
Page _____

lower levels of government is called vertical division of power. For example - central or Union government and state government in India.

3) Power may also be shared among different social groups such as the religious and linguistic groups.

'Community government' in Belgium is a good example of this arrangement.

4) Power sharing arrangements can also be seen in the way political parties, pressure groups and movements control or influence those in power.

For example when two or more parties form an alliance to contest elections. If their alliance is elected, they form a coalition government and thus share power.