

Power Sharing

2016

Very Short Answer Type Question [1 Mark]

Question 1.

After independence, Sri Lanka witnessed the supremacy of which community?

Answer:

After independence in 1948, Sri Lanka witnessed the supremacy of Sinhala community.

Short Answer Type Questions [3 Marks]

Question 2.

Do you think that the steps taken by Sri Lankan Government to establish the supremacy of Sinhalese were justified and long lasting? Give your view point.

Answer:

The steps taken by the Sri Lankan government to establish Sinhalese' supremacy cannot be justified as long lasting because of the following reasons.

- These steps ignored the interests of a minority community. Even the basic rights were not given to them.
- Discrimination based on religion and language further deprived other communities in Sri Lanka.
- Repeated denial of the demands further developed distrust and ignited the situation that resulted in a civil war causing terrible setback to Sri Lankan social, cultural and economic life.

Question 3.

'Sharing of powers makes a country more powerful and united'. Justify the statement.

Answer:

Sharing of power makes a country more powerful and united because of the following reasons.

Power sharing ensures that all people have stake in government.

Power sharing ensures maximum participation. It upholds the concept of people's rule. It always brings better outcomes in democracy. It ensures the political stability in democracy.

Power sharing accommodates diverse groups. It helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between social groups.



Short Answer Type Question [3 Marks]

Question 4.

Describe any three 'majoritarian measures' taken by the Sri Lankan Government to establish Sinhala supremacy.

Answer:

The following are the majoritarian measures adopted by the Sri Lankan government to establish Sinhala supremacy.

- In the year 1956, an act was passed, which established Sinhala as the official language to be used in Sri Lanka disregarding the minority group of Tamils. The passing of this act created a feeling of alienation among the minority group, i.e. Sri Lankan Tamils and they started to feel left-out from the society.
- The government then started adopting and formulating government policies that favoured the Sinhala people in government jobs and for university positions, which made the Sri Lankan Tamils feel ousted.
- The Sri Lankan Government further proclaimed that they shall foster and protect only Buddhism as their State religion and refused to cater to any other religion disregarding the religion of Sri Lankan Tamils.

Long Answer Type Question [5 Marks]

Question 5.

Bring out any two sharp contrasts between Belgium and Sri Lankan democracies.

Answer:

Sri Lanka and Belgium are both democratic countries yet have a very diverse social set-up. Both the countries have adopted very different approaches when it comes to power sharing.

- Belgium produced an ideal example of democratic system. It adopted the policy of accommodation of social and ethnics divisions. On the other hand, Sri Lanka also adopted democratic system but followed majoritarian policies.
- Under the Belgium model of democracy, power was shared among two ethnic groups. Sri Lanka favoured the interests of the majority Sinhala community.
- In Belgium, both the groups had equal share in working of government but in Sri Lanka the minority community was isolated.
- To maintain political stability and unity, equal representation was provided to both the groups. Apart from that, community government of both the ethnic groups also existed at the local level. Sri Lanka, however, had no such arrangement.
- Belgium constitution was amended four times before arriving at a final draft to prevent civil strife. In Sri Lanka, majoritarianism led to civil war for twenty long years.



2014

Very Short Answer Type Questions [1 Mark]

Question 6

What is the official religion of Sri Lanka?

Answer:

Buddhism is the official religion of Sri Lanka.

Question 7.

After independence, Sri Lanka witnessed the supremacy of which community?

Answer:

Sri Lanka witnessed the supremacy of Sinhala community after independence.

Short Answer Type Question [3 Marks]

Question.8

Explain the three ways by which Belgium has accommodated the existing regional differences and cultural diversities.

Answer:

When the Belgian leaders recognized the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities, they amended their constitution four times in order to accommodate these differences.

The following are the ways in which Belgium has accommodated the existing regional differences and cultural diversities.

- **Equal number of ministers:** The Government of Belgium has equal number of Dutch- and French-speaking ministers. This has been done to give equal power to the majority and the minority language speaking groups.
- **Setting up of Community Government:** A third kind of government, named the community government, is introduced in addition to the Central and the State Government. This government has the power regarding cultural, educational and lingual issues. This government comprises members from all the three communities—Dutch-speaking, French-speaking and German-speaking.
- **Fair share of power:** 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 but are independent.
- **Equal representation:** In the State Government of Brussels—the capital city—both the French- and Dutch-speaking communities have equal representation.

2012

Short Answer Type Questions [3 Marks]

Question 9.

Sharing of powers makes a country more powerful and united. Do you agree with the statement? Why?

Answer:

Yes, I agree with the statement. Power sharing makes a country more united.

- Power sharing helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between social groups.
- It is a good way to ensure the stability of political order as social conflict often leads to violence and political instability.
- Power sharing is the very spirit of democracy. The concept of democracy is a system



of government of the people, by the people and for the people, which emphasizes on distribution of power among people.

- It involves sharing powers with those affected by its exercise and who have to live with its effects, so that the people would be consulted on how they are to be governed.

Question 10.

Highlight the measures adopted by the Belgium Constitution for the prevention of conflicts in Belgium.

Answer:

When the Belgian leaders recognized the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities, they amended their constitution four times in order to accommodate these differences.

The following are the ways in which Belgium has accommodated the existing regional differences and cultural diversities.

- **Equal number of ministers:** The Government of Belgium has equal number of Dutch- and French-speaking ministers. This has been done to give equal power to the majority and the minority language speaking groups.
- **Setting up of Community Government:** A third kind of government, named the community government, is introduced in addition to the Central and the State Government. This government has the power regarding cultural, educational and lingual issues. This government comprises members from all the three communities—Dutch-speaking, French-speaking and German-speaking.
- **Fair share of power:** 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 but are independent.
- **Equal representation:** In the State Government of Brussels—the capital city—both the French- and Dutch-speaking communities have equal representation.

Question 11.

Describe any three provisions of the act which was passed in Sri Lanka in 1956 to establish Sinhala supremacy.

Answer:

The following are the majoritarian measures adopted by the Sri Lankan government to establish Sinhala supremacy.

- In the year 1956, an act was passed, which established Sinhala as the official language to be used in Sri Lanka disregarding the minority group of Tamils. The passing of this act created a feeling of alienation among the minority group, i.e. Sri Lankan Tamils and they started to feel left-out from the society.
- The government then started adopting and formulating government policies that favoured the Sinhala people in government jobs and for university positions, which made the Sri Lankan Tamils feel ousted.
- The Sri Lankan Government further proclaimed that they shall foster and protect only Buddhism as their State religion and refused to cater to any other religion disregarding the religion of Sri Lankan Tamils.

2011

Short Answer Type Question [3 Marks]



Question 12.

How have Belgium and Sri Lanka dealt with the question of power sharing differently?

Answer:

Sri Lanka and Belgium are both democratic countries yet have a very diverse social set-up. Both the countries have adopted very different approaches when it comes to power sharing.

- Belgium produced an ideal example of democratic system. It adopted the policy of accommodation of social and ethnics divisions. On the other hand, Sri Lanka also adopted democratic system but followed majoritarian policies.
- Under the Belgium model of democracy, power was shared among two ethnic groups. Sri Lanka favoured the interests of the majority Sinhala community.
- In Belgium, both the groups had equal share in working of government but in Sri Lanka the minority community was isolated.
- To maintain political stability and unity, equal representation was provided to both the groups. Apart from that, community government of both the ethnic groups also existed at the local level. Sri Lanka, however, had no such arrangement.
- Belgium constitution was amended four times before arriving at a final draft to prevent civil strife. In Sri Lanka, majoritarianism led to civil war for twenty long years.

Long Answer Type Question [5 Marks]

Question 13.

Explain two reasons as to why power sharing is desirable.

Answer:

There are many reason as to why power sharing is important in a democracy. The following are the two main sets in which the reasons can be broadly divided.

Prudential reason:

- Power sharing helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between social groups.
- It is a good way to ensure the stability of political order as social conflict often leads to violence and political stability.

Moral Reason:

- Power sharing is the very spirit of democracy. The concept of democracy is a system of government of the people, by the people and for the people, which emphasizes on distribution of power among people.
- It involves sharing powers with those affected by its exercise and who have to live its effects, so that the people would be consulted on how they are to be governed.

2010

Short Answer Type Question [3 Marks]

Question 14.

Explain how Belgium was able to solve her ethnic problems.

Answer:

When the Belgian leaders recognized the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities, they amended their constitution four times in order to accommodate these differences.

The following are the ways in which Belgium has accommodated the existing regional



differences and cultural diversities.

- **Equal number of ministers:** The Government of Belgium has equal number of Dutch- and French-speaking ministers. This has been done to give equal power to the majority and the minority language speaking groups.
- **Setting up of Community Government:** A third kind of government, named the community government, is introduced in addition to the Central and the State Government. This government has the power regarding cultural, educational and lingual issues. This government comprises members from all the three communities—Dutch-speaking, French-speaking and German-speaking.
- **Fair share of power:** 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 but are independent.
- **Equal representation:** In the State Government of Brussels—the capital city—both the French- and Dutch-speaking communities have equal representation.

2009

Short Answer Type Question [3 Marks]

Question 15.

Explain how power is shared among between different organs of government.

Answer:

In democracy, power is shared among different organs of government, i.e. legislature, executive and judiciary through the horizontal distribution of power. It is so because it allows different organs of government to be placed at the same level to exercise different powers. In horizontal division, different organs exercise their power based on the concept of separation of powers such as legislature makes laws, executive enforces these laws and judiciary interprets these laws. This results in balance of power among different organs of government. No organ can exercise unlimited power as each organ checks the other. Hence, in horizontal division the concept of checks and balance is followed.

The power is shared between different organs of the government in horizontal form of power sharing.

Long Answer Type Question [5 Marks]

Question 16.

What is majoritarianism? How has it increased the feelings of alienation among Sri Lankan Tamils? Explain with examples.

Answer:

Majoritarianism is a concept which signifies a belief that the majority community should be able to rule a country in whichever way it wants. In this type of rule, the majority community disregards the wishes and needs of the minority community.

The majoritarian concept has increased the strong feelings of alienation among Sri Lankan Tamils after a series of majoritarian measures adopted by the democratically-elected government in Sri Lanka after its independence in 1948 to establish Sinhala Supremacy.

- In 1956, an act was passed to recognise Sinhala as the only official language, thus disregarding Tamil.
- The Government followed preferential policies that favoured Sinhala applicants for university positions and government jobs.
- A new constitution advocated that the state shall protect and foster Buddhism.



Question 17.

Describe the demands of Sri Lankan Tamils. How did they struggle for their demands?

Answer:

The following were the demands of Sri Lankan Tamils.

- Recognition of Tamil language and that Tamil should be given equal status with that of the Sinhala language and should be added as an official language.
- There should be no discrimination between the Sri Lankan Tamils and Sinhala residents of Sri Lanka in government jobs and university posts.
- Their religion should be equally respected with that of Buddhism and they should be given equal political rights.

They struggled for their demands in the following ways.

- By 1980, several political organizations were formed demanding an independent Tamil state.
- Sri Lankan Tamils launched struggles for the fulfillment of their rights.
- As a result, a civil war was proclaimed and thousands of people were killed when their legitimate demands were denied by the Sri Lankan government