

Social Science Class 10

Important Questions Political Science

Chapter 1

Power Sharing

Very Short Answer Questions (VSA) 1 Mark

Question 1.

Which language was recognized as the only official language of Sri Lanka in 1956?

Answer:

Sinhala

Question 2.

Apart from the Central and the State governments, which is the third type of government practised in Belgium?

Answer:

Community government

Question 3.

Define majoritarianism.

Answer:

Majoritarianism is rule by majority community by disregarding the needs and wishes of the minority community.

Question 4.

What measure was adopted by the democratically elected government of Sri Lanka to establish Sinhala Supremacy?

Answer:

- In 1956, an Act was passed to make Sinhala the official language.
- The government followed preferential policies favouring Sinhala applicants for University positions and government jobs.

Question 5.

What is the language spoken by the people residing in the Wallonia region of Belgium?

Answer:

People residing in Wallonia region of Belgium speak French.

Question 6.

What is meant by the system of 'checks and balances'?

Answer:

The horizontal distribution of power ensures that power is shared among different organs of government—the legislature, executive and judiciary. It allows different organs of government placed at the same level to exercise different powers. The horizontal distribution of power is also called a system of checks and balances. This system ensures that none of these organs can exercise unlimited power. Each organ checks the other.

Question 7.

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

Answer:

Sri Lanka emerged as an independent country in 1948 and the democratically elected government adopted a series of measures to establish Sinhala supremacy.

Question 8.

Define the term 'Ethnic'.

Answer:

Ethnic means a social division based on shared culture and common descent. People belonging to an ethnic group need not have the same religion or nationality.

Question 9.

What is vertical division of power?

Answer:

When power is shared among governments at different levels, i.e., the Union or the Central Government, the State Government and the Municipality and Panchayat at the lower level. This division of power involving higher and lower levels of government is called the vertical division of power.

Question 10.

Why did the Dutch-speaking people resent in Belgium?

Answer:

Because the minority French-speaking community of Belgium was relatively rich and powerful.

Question 11.

Why was the conflict more acute in Brussels?

Answer:

The conflict between the two communities was more acute in Brussels because the Dutch-speaking people constituted a majority in the country, but a minority in the capital.

Question 12.

Who are the majority and minority social groups of Sri Lanka?

Answer:

Sinhala speaking people 74% Tamils 18% er ar Christians – 7%.

Question 13.

Define majoritarianism.

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.

Question 14.

When was the demand for independent Tamil state raised?

Answer:

By 1980s several political organizations were formed demanding an independent Tamil Eelam in north-eastern Sri Lanka.

Question 15.

Why was Belgium Constitution amended four times?

Answer:

Between 1970 -1993, the constitution of Belgium was amended four times so as to work out an arrangement that would enable everyone to live together within the same country.

Question 16.

What do you mean by "Community government"?

Answer:

1. The "Community government" in Belgium is elected by people belonging to one language community Dutch, French and German-speaking no matter where they live.
2. This government has the power regarding cultural, educational and language-related issues.

Question 17.

What is civil war?

Answer:

A violent conflict between opposing groups within a country that becomes so intense that it appears like a war.

Question 18.

What is the main difference between prudential reasons and moral reasons?

Answer:

While prudential reasons stress its beneficial consequences, moral reasons emphasise the intrinsic worth of power-sharing.

Question 19.

Which government can be called legitimate?

Answer:

A legitimate government is one where groups through participation, acquire a stake in the system.

Question 20.

What do you mean by prudential?

Answer:

Prudential means based on prudence or on careful calculation contrasted with those decisions based purely on moral considerations.

Question 21.

Define 'horizontal distribution of power'.

Answer:

When power is shared among different organs of government, such as 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.

Question 22.

What do you understand by federal government?

Answer:

When power is shared among governments at different levels, for example, a general government for the entire country and governments at the provincial, sub-national or regional level. Such a general government for the whole country is called federal government.

Question 23.

Describe 'federal division of power'.

Answer:

In those countries where there are different levels of governments, the constitution clearly lays down the powers of different levels of governments. This is called federal division of power.

Question 24.

Explain 'Vertical division of power'.

Answer:

The federal division of power can be extended to levels of government lower than the state government such as the municipality and panchayat. All such divisions involving higher and lower levels of government are called "vertical division of power".

Question 25.

Why the provision of "reserved constituencies" have been made in our country?

Answer:

Arrangements such as provision of reserved constituencies in the parliament of our country is meant to give space in the government and administration to diverse social groups who otherwise feel alienated from the government.

Question 26.

Describe the ethnic composition of Belgium.

Answer:

The ethnic composition of Belgium, a small country in Europe is very complex. Of the country's total population, 59 per cent live in the Flemish region and speak Dutch language.

Another 40 per cent live in the Wallonia region and speak French. Remaining 1 per cent of the Belgians speak German. In the capital city Brussels, 80 per cent people speak French while 20 percent are Dutch-speaking.

Question 27.

What was the main reason of tension between the Dutch and the French-speaking people

of Belgium?

Answer:

1. The minority French-speaking community of Belgium was relatively rich and powerful,
2. This was resented by the Dutch-speaking community who got the benefit of economic development and education much later.
3. This led to tensions between the Dutch and the French speaking communities during the 1950s and 1960s.

Question 28.

How was the majoritarian dominance established in Sri Lanka?

Answer:

1. Sri Lanka got independence in 1948. The leaders of Sinhala community wished to secure dominance over government by virtue of their majority.
2. The democratically elected government adopted a series of majoritarian measures to establish Sinhala supremacy in Sri Lanka.
3. In 1956, an Act was passed to recognize Sinhala as the only official language, thus disregarding Tamil
4. The Sinhala speaking people were given preference in university position and government jobs.

Question 29.

Explain the outcomes of Belgian model of governance?

Answer:

- The Belgian model is very complicated even for the Belgian people. But these arrangements have so far worked well, they helped avoid civic strife between the two major communities and a possible division of the country on linguistic lines.
- When many countries of Europe came together to form the European Union, Brussels who chosen as its headquarters.

Question 30.

“Belgium and Sri Lanka both are democracies, yet they dealt with the question of power-sharing differently.” Justify.

Answer:

1. Belgium and Sri Lanka, both are democratic Yet they dealt with the question of power-sharing differently
2. In Belgium, the leaders have realized that the unity of the country is possible only by respecting the feelings and interests of different communities and regions.
3. Such a realization resulted in mutually acceptable arrangements for sharing power.

4. 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.

Question 31.

Write a short note on checks and balances.

Answer:

Power-sharing among different organs of government, such as the legislature, executive and judiciary allows different organs of government placed at the same level to exercise different power. Such a separation ensures that none of the organs can exercise unlimited power.

Each organ checks the others. This results in balance of power among various institutions. For example, even though the ministers and government officials exercise power, they are responsible to the parliament or state legislatures. Similarly, although the judges are appointed by the executive, but they can check the functioning of executive or laws made by legislatures. This arrangement is also called a system of checks and balances.

Question 32.

What do you mean by Pressure groups or interest groups?

Answer:

Pressure groups or interest groups are those organized groups which influence the government decisions. They demonstrate the demands of the industrialists, traders, farmers, working-class and other professional people.

They use various methods with a view to influencing public opinion.

They organize big demonstrations and rallies and get newspapers columns written by prominent people to arouse public opinion for or against a particular Bill or Law. Makenzie defined it as, "the organized groups possessing both formal structure and real common interests, in so far as they influence the decisions of public bodies."

Question 33.

Analyse the results of majoritarian dominance in Sri Lanka.

Answer:

1. In 1956, the Government of Sri Lanka passed an Act to recognize Sinhla as official language. The state declared to protect and foster Buddhism. The governments followed preferential policies that favoured Sinhla applicants for university positions and government jobs. All these, government measures, coming after one another, gradually increased the feeling of alienation among Sri Lankan Tamils.
2. They felt that none of the major political parties led by the Buddhist Sinhalese were sensitive to their language and culture.

3. 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,
4. It resulted in strained relations between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities.
5. The Sri Lankan Tamils launched parties and started struggling for the recognition of Tamil as an official language, for regional autonomy and equality of opportunity in securing education and jobs.
6. Their demand for more autonomy to provinces with more Tamil populations was repeatedly denied. By 1980s, several political organizations were formed demanding an independent Tamil Eelam in north-eastern Sri Lanka.

Question 34.

How did the Belgian leaders solve the problems of regional differences and cultural diversities?

Answer:

1. The Belgian leaders recognized the existence of regional differences and cultural diversities.
2. They amended their constitution four times between 1970 to 1993, so as to work out an arrangement that would enable everyone to live together within the same country.

The arrangement is very innovative. Some important elements of the Belgian model is as follows:

(a) 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.

(b) Many powers of the central government have been given to state governments for the two regions of the country. The state governments are not subordinate to the central government.

(c) 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.

(d) 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.

Question 35.

Why power sharing is desirable for democracy?

Answer:

(a) Prudential Reasons: Two different sets of reasons can be given in favour of power-sharing. Firstly power-sharing is good because it helps to reduce the possibility of conflict between social groups. Since social conflict often 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 may look like an attractive option in the short run, but in the long run it undermines 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.

(b) Moral Reasons: There is a second, deeper, reason why power sharing is good for democracies. Power-sharing is the very spirit of democracy, A democratic rule involves sharing power with those attested 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 groups, through participation, acquire a stake in the system. While prudential reasons stress its beneficial consequences, moral reasons emphasise the intrinsic worth of power-sharing.

Question 36.

"The idea of power-sharing had emerged in opposition to the notions of undivided political power." Justify.

Answer:

1. The idea of power-sharing has emerged in opposition to the notions of undivided, political power.
2. For a long time it was believed that all power of a government must reside in one person or group of persons located one place.
3. It was felt that if power to decide is dispersed, it would not be possible to take quick decisions and to enforce them.
4. But these notions have changed with the emergence of democracy. One basic principle of democracy is that people are the source of all political power.
5. In a democracy, people rule themselves through institutions of self-governance.
6. In a good democratic government, due respect is given to diverse groups and views that exist in a society and everyone has a voice in the shaping of public policies. Therefore it follows that in a democracy political power should be distributed among as many citizens as possible.

Question 37.

"Power can be shared among governments at different levels." How?

Answer:

1. Power can be shared among governments at different levels: for example, a general government for the entire country and governments at the provincial,

sub-national or regional level. Such a general government for the entire country is usually called federal government.

2. In India, we refer to it as the Central government. The governments at the provincial or regional level are called by different names in different countries. In India, we call them State governments.
3. This system is not followed in all the countries. There are many countries where there are no provincial or state governments.
4. But in those countries, where there are different levels of governments, the constitution clearly lays down the powers of different levels of government. This is what they did in Belgium, but was refused in Sri Lanka. This is called federal division of power.
5. The same principle can be extended to levels of government lower than the State government, such as the municipality and panchayat. All such divisions of power involving higher and lower levels of government are called vertical division of power.

Question 38.

How can we share power among different social groups?

Answer:

Power can be shared among governments at different levels, such as the religious and groups. 'Community government in Belgium is a good example of this arrangement. In some countries, there are constitutional and legal arrangements whereby socially weaker sections and women are represented in the legislatures and administration. There is a system of 'reserved constituencies' in assemblies and the parliament of our country.

This type of arrangements 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 of power.

Short Answer Questions (SA) 3 Marks

Question 39.

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

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 40.

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

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 41.

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

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 those equal political rights which led to increased feeling of alienation among them.
2. The Sri Lankan Tamils felt that the constitution denied those 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 42.

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 43.

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 44.

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.

Long Answer Questions (LA) 5 Marks

Question 45.

Analyse how majoritarianism has increased the feeling of alienation among the Sri Lankan Tamils?

Or

Mention the measures adopted by the government to establish Sinhala supremacy.

Sri Lanka emerged as an independent country in 1948. The democratically elected government adopted a series of measures to establish Sinhala supremacy:

1. In 1956, an Act was passed to make Sinhala the official language.

2. The government followed preferential policies favouring Sinhala applicants for University positions and government jobs.
3. The Constitution provided for State protection and fostering of Buddhism.

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 those equal political rights which led to increased feeling of alienation among them.

The Sri Lankan Tamils launched parties and struggles for the recognition of Tamil, for regional autonomy and equality of opportunity in every field.

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.

Question 46.

“Power Sharing is the very spirit of democracy”. Justify the statement.

Answer:

1. A democratic rule involves sharing power with those affected by its exercise. Power sharing ensures that people have the right to be consulted and have equal participation in the government.
2. In a democracy, each individual has a say in governance through their elected representatives. This is the essence of power sharing that grants equal rights to each citizen.
3. Sharing of power ensures that respect for diversity and desire for living together becomes a shared ideal amongst different communities in a country. It actually makes the country united and the administration easier.
4. Prudential reasons stress that power sharing would bring out better outcomes by helping to reduce the possibility of any conflict between the social groups.
5. Power sharing is a good way to ensure the stability of political order through unity of the nation.

Question 47.

Describe the vertical and horizontal forms of power sharing exercised in India.

Answer:

Vertical distribution of power. Power can be shared among governments at different levels—a general government for the entire country and governments at provincial or regional level. This is the federal form of government.

When power is shared among governments at different levels, i.e., the Union or the Central Government, the State Government and the Municipality and Panchayat at the lower level. This division of power involving higher and lower levels of government is called the vertical division of power.

The Constitution clearly lays down the powers of different levels of government. This federal division of power involving higher and lower levels of government is also called the vertical division of power. Example: A key change in the Constitution of Belgium in 1993 was that the regional governments were given constitutional powers that were no longer dependent on the Central Government. Thus, Belgium shifted from a unitary to a federal form of government.

Horizontal distribution of power. Power is shared among different organs of government, such as the legislature, executive and judiciary. This is horizontal distribution of power. It ensures that power is shared among different organs of government—the legislature, executive and judiciary. It allows different organs of government placed at the same level to exercise different powers.

In a democracy, ministers and government officials exercise power. They are responsible to the Parliament or State Assemblies. The judges appointed by the executive can check the functioning of executive or laws made by the legislature.

The horizontal distribution of power is also called a system of checks and balances.

This system ensures that none of the organs can exercise unlimited power. Each organ checks the other. This results in a balance of power among various institutions.

Example: In India the judiciary has an independent status. The Supreme Court is the apex court of justice. The Parliament is the legislative body where the laws governing the country are made and the Executive is the implementing body.