



Question 1:

Discuss three factors that determine the outcomes of politics of social divisions.

Solution:

Three factors are crucial in deciding the outcome of politics of social divisions. First of all, the outcome depends on how people perceive their identities. If people see their identities in singular and exclusive terms, it becomes very difficult to accommodate. As long as people in northern Ireland saw themselves as only Catholic or Protestant, their differences were difficult to reconcile. It is much easier if the people see that their identities are multiple and are complementary with the national identity. A majority of Belgians now feel that they are as much Belgian as they are Dutch or German-speaking.

This helps them to stay together. This is how most people in our country see their identity: they think of themselves as Indian as well as belonging to a state or a language group or a social or religious community.

Second, it depends on how political leaders raise the demands of any community. It is easier to accommodate demands that are within the constitutional framework and are not at the cost of another community. The demand for 'only Sinhala' was at the cost of the interest and identity of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. In Yugoslavia, the leaders of different ethnic communities presented their demands in such a way that these could not be accommodated within a single country.

Third, it depends on the how the government reacts to demands of different groups. As we saw in the examples of Belgium and Sri Lanka, if the rulers are willing to share power and accommodate the reasonable demands of minority community, social divisions become less threatening for the country. But if they try to suppress such a demand in the name of national unity, the end result is often quite the opposite. Such attempts at forced integration often sow the seeds of disintegration.

Question 2:

When does a social difference become a social division?

Solution:

People who feel marginalised, deprived and discriminated have to fight against the injustices. Such a fight often takes the democratic path, voicing their demands in a peaceful and constitutional manner and seeking a fair position through elections.

Sometimes social differences can take the form of unacceptable level of social inequality and injustice. The struggle against such inequalities sometimes takes the path of violence and defiance of state power. However history shows that democracy is the best way to fight for recognition and also to accommodate diversity.

Question 3:

How do social divisions affect politics? Give two examples.

Solution:

Expression of various kinds of social divisions in politics often results in their cancelling one another out and thus reducing their intensity. This leads to strengthening of a democracy. But a positive attitude towards diversity and a willingness to accommodate it do not come

about easily. People who feel marginalised, deprived and discriminated have to fight against the injustices. Such a fight often takes the democratic path, voicing their demands in a peaceful and constitutional manner and seeking a fair position through elections. Sometimes social differences can take the form of unacceptable level of social inequality and injustice. The struggle against such inequalities sometimes takes the path of violence and defiance of state power. However history shows that democracy is the best way to fight for recognition and also to accommodate diversity.

Question 4:

_____ social differences create possibilities of deep social divisions and tensions. _____ social differences do not usually lead to conflicts.

Solution:

Overlapping social differences create possibilities of deep social divisions and tensions. Cross-cutting social differences do not usually lead to conflicts.

Question 5:

In dealing with social divisions which one of the following statements is NOT correct about democracy?

- (a) Due to political competition in a democracy, social divisions get reflected in politics.
- (b) In a democracy it is possible for communities to voice their grievances in a peaceful manner.
- (c) Democracy is the best way to accommodate social diversity.
- (d) Democracy always leads to disintegration of society on the basis of social divisions.

Solution: d

Question 6:

Consider the following three statements.

- A. Social divisions take place when social differences overlap.
- B. It is possible that a person can have multiple identities.
- C. Social divisions exist in only big countries like India.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- (a) A, B and C (b) A and B (c) B and C (d) Only C

Solution:

- (b) A and B

Question 7:

Among the following, which country suffered disintegration due to political fights on the basis of religious and ethnic identities?

- (a) Belgium (b) India (c) Yugoslavia (d) Netherlands

Solution:

- (c) Yugoslavia

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