

SITUATING INDEPENDENT INDIA

COURSE CODE: SGB24HS201ME

Bachelor of Arts in History (Honours)

Major Discipline Specific Elective

Self Learning Material



SREENARAYANAGURU
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The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

The background features a stylized landscape with rolling hills in shades of yellow and green. On the right side, there is a detailed illustration of a plant branch with several elongated, pointed leaves. On the left side, another similar plant branch is visible. A large, faint, brown watermark with the letters 'SQU' is oriented diagonally across the center of the page.

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Situating Independent India

Course Code: SGB24HS201ME

Semester - IV

**Four Year Undergraduate Programme
Bachelor of Arts in History (Honours)
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Course Code: SGB24HS201ME

Semester- IV

Major Discipline Specific Elective
Bachelor of Arts in History (Honours)

Academic Committee

Dr. Shaji A.
Dr. S. Venu Mohan
Dr. Vysakh A.S.
Dr. Jyothirmani Vatakayil
Dr. Vinayan T.
Dr. Lalini M.
Dr. Vijaya Kumari K.

Development of the Content

Dr. Harikrishnan G.
Dr. Hinduja Ramesh
Zubin Antony Mehar Reynold
Dr. Aniziya Jayapalan

Review and Edit

Dr. Alex Mathew
Dr. Biju R.I.

Linguistics

Dr. Aravind S.G.

Scrutiny

Dr. Reeya R.
Zubin Antony Mehar Renold
Dr. Arun A.S.
Thahani Rezak
Dr. Preethi Chandran P. B.

Cover Design

Jobin J.

Co-ordination

Director, MDDC :

Dr. I.G. Shibi

Asst. Director, MDDC :

Dr. Sajeekumar G.

Coordinator, Development:

Dr. Anfal M.

Coordinator, Distribution:

Dr. Sanitha K.K.



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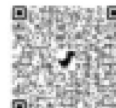
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It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Four Year UG History Programme offered by Sreenarayanaguru Open University.

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Best regards,



Dr. Jagathy Raj V.P.
Vice Chancellor
Sreenarayanaguru Open University

01-01-2026

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Independence and the Emergence of New State



UNIT

Partition

Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the historical process leading to the Partition of the Indian subcontinent and its consequences
- ◆ examine the social, economic, and political background in which the idea of the Two-Nation Theory emerged and became integrated into mainstream colonial and nationalist politics
- ◆ evaluate the administrative and geopolitical dimensions of Partition
- ◆ interpret the social repercussions of Partition, with particular attention to the spread of communal violence, displacement, and the refugee crisis

Prerequisites

The end of almost two hundred years of British rule in 1947 led to the creation of two new countries, India and Pakistan. This division of the subcontinent was supported by the Two-Nation Theory, which argued that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations with different religions, cultures, and ways of life, and therefore could not live together under one government.

The Partition was not a sudden or isolated event but the result of many years of political and social developments. From the late nineteenth century onward, British policies, growing economic inequalities, and political competition among elites encouraged divisions between religious communities. Over time, the use of religion in politics, known as communalism, undermined the inclusive and secular ideas that had once united people during the freedom struggle.

To understand the Partition and its long-lasting effects, learners must be aware of how communal politics began and spread in colonial India, the constitutional

and political changes that deepened these divisions such as the introduction of separate electorates, the rise of the Muslim League, and the framing of the Lucknow Pact and Lahore Resolution. It is also important to explore how the process of Partition was carried out, how the new boundaries were drawn, how millions of people migrated across them, and how governments tried to manage the enormous refugee crisis that followed.

The human dimensions of Partition such as the violence, displacement, suffering of women, and the later efforts toward peace and rehabilitation, are equally significant. Learning about these developments helps learners understand Partition not merely as a political event but as a deeply transformative social experience that reshaped the geography, demography, and collective memory of South Asia.

Keywords

Communalism, Partition, Rehabilitation, Nationalism, Independence, Reconciliation

Discussion

1.1.1 Communalism: The Phenomenon

The rise and growth of communalism in socio-political life was an important feature that characterised the modern epochs of Indian history. It ultimately led to the partition of the Indian subcontinent. Just like nationalism, the rise of communal tendencies in politics too was a modern phenomenon. While nationalism was a positive reflection of an objective reality i.e., the developing identity of the common interests of the Indian people against British colonialism; communalism developed in certain areas and sections of society due to their failure to imbibe the new nationalist consciousness. Communalism was generated by the lack of a deeper penetration of nationalist outlook and ideology. It was the false consciousness of the historical process of the past 100 years.

1.1.1.1 Bipan Chandra's Postulations of the Communalism Phenomenon

According to Bipan Chandra, communalism consists of three basic elements:

i) A belief that people who follow the same religion have common secular interests i.e. common political, economic, social and cultural interests, ii) in a multi-religious society like India, the secular interests such as social, cultural, economic and political of one religion are often dissimilar with the other religions and iii) communalism arises when the interests of different religions are seen as mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile.

Communal ideology starts when persons or groups believe that people of the same religion have the same socio-economic interests. The second stage is reached when a person or a group believes and practises communal politics i.e. while holding that different religion-based communities have



their own special interests, these interests can be reconciled and accommodated. The third stage is reached when the religious differences are converted into secular differences and are seen as incompatible with each other; there is a tendency to use violence of language, deed, behaviour, war and enmity against the political opponents. It was at this stage that the idea of a separate nation or 'two nations' theory was put forward. In the context of India, till the 1930s, a communal ideology of reconciliation and accommodation was prevalent but during the 1940s it reached its extremist form of a 'separate nation', resulting in the partition of the country.

1.1.1.2 Factors Promoting Communalism in the Indian Scenario

There is a tendency in the academia to study the question of communalism as 'a clash of cultures and conflict over the distribution of power', or roots of political antipathy in the religious antipathy between Hindus and Muslims or extreme form of conservatism in the context of Indian subcontinent, or a cloak for the struggle between Hindu and Muslim vested interests or a distorted expression of conflict between the exploiters and exploited. Explanations for communal problems have been biased in favour of either religious, economic or political factors. However, exploring the economic and political framework in which religious antipathy assumed political dimensions seems to be important in understanding the development of communalism in the Indian scenario.

1.1.1.3 Social Background for the Rise of Communalism in Indian Politics

The roots of communalism lies in the colonial economy and the consequent underdevelopment of India. The economic stagnation had an adverse impact on the Indian middle class which produced conditions

conducive to division and antagonism. It was an expression of the interests and aspirations of the middle class in the social situations in which opportunities for them were grossly inadequate. The communal question was a middle-class question. The main social base and its appeal were also to the middle class. It represented a struggle between two upper classes for power, privileges and economic gains. Belonging to different religions, these classes used communalism to mobilise the support of their co-religionists in their mutual struggle. Religion in the form of communalism did not emerge as a divisive force under British rule. It was the intensification of a conflict over material interests resulting from the colonial impact which provided an impetus for the transformation of religious antipathy into sharp political antipathy on religious lines.

Communalism was the result of cumulative causation i.e. certain initial factors caused a setback for the Muslims in the economic, educational and political spheres and this setback became a reinforcing factor leading to further and much greater handicaps and impediments to social and economic advance. During the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a tremendous growth in the tertiary sector; what expanded rapidly was not the sphere of production but the sphere of circulation. Lack of non-commercial tradition or lack of business orientation prevented the Muslim upper class from benefiting from the economic boom, their aristocratic pretensions or attachment to the feudal types of life brought about their rapid decline.

On the other hand, the Hindu castes, well-versed in trade and skills, thrived in the new economy giving birth to a new class of merchants, moneylenders and financiers. In other words, the new economy was characterised by almost total Hindu domination. The cumulative consequences of this whole way of life was the transfer of property from the Muslim to non-Muslim

moneylenders. The sharp contrast between the Muslims and the Hindus becomes glaring and manifest when one studies the economic decline of the Muslim upper class against the background of the rise of a new class among the Hindus. This particular feature of the Indian economic revolution during the British Raj was also responsible for some peculiar features of India's social evolution.

Similar was the case in the field of Western education. The mullas, religious leaders of the Muslims, forbade them from even learning the English language. While the Hindus flocked to the government and missionary schools in large numbers and promptly imbibed Western education, the Muslims tended to shun Western education. As a result, middle-class Hindus began to dominate the administrative rungs of the government. This widened the cultural gap between the two communities. Not having taken English education along with Hindus, the Muslims were living in a political wilderness. It was not only a lag in the social, economic and educational development but also, what we witness in the psychological sphere, the intensification of communal consciousness as a sharp reaction to the traumatic reverses and frustrations experienced by the Muslims in the economic or material sphere.

Communalism developed as a weapon of economically and politically reactionary social classes and political forces—the semi-feudal landlords, ex-bureaucrats, merchants, moneylenders and the colonial state. Also this is the background for the demand for a separate homeland emerged from sections of the Muslim leadership. The demand gathered the support and sympathy from many other sections of the community in the later period showing the amenability of religion for political mobilisation. Even the lower sections of Muslims were adversely affected by the British impact. The demand for a separate homeland seemed to give an outlet to the anxieties, fears, uncertainties and

aspirations of large sections of Muslims who identified Hindu domination as the greatest impediment to their progress.

According to A.R. Desai, modern intelligentsia, a modern educated middle class and a bourgeoisie sprang on a substantial scale from within the Muslim community rather than later from within the Hindu community. By the time they realised this lag, Hindus had already firmly established themselves in government services and key positions in trade, industry and finance. Thus, they sought the support of the masses within their community to strengthen their position in the competition with Hindu counterparts over employment opportunities and industrial or commercial interests.

They misdirected this struggle between the sections of the same classes as communal as those between the Hindu community and the Muslim community. Similarly, R.P. Dutt wrote 'Behind the communal antagonism lies social and economic questions. This is obvious in the case of middle-class communalists competing for positions and jobs'.

1.1.1.4 Growth of Communalism in Indian Politics

Communalism started acquiring something like an all-India dimension for the first time during the 1880s and 1890s. While nationalism was fast spreading among the Hindu intelligentsia, the Muslims in general remained aloof. There were limited notable Muslim organisations in the first half of the 19th century. But a change in the Muslim attitude became discernible. Nawab Abdool Lateef (1823-93) founded the Muhammadan Literary and Scientific Society of Calcutta in 1863 with the purpose of imparting English education and European customs to Muslims. In 1878, Syed Ameer Ali and Syed Ameer Hussain established



the National Mohammedan Association to promote the well-being of Indian Muslims by all legitimate and constitutional means. The organisation expressed its admiration for English education and loyalty to British rule. Ameer Ali turned down Surendranath's invitation to join the Indian Association because he felt that the Muslims needed a political association of their own. The fear of Hindu domination was deeply rooted in his mind. A new era was ushered in by Syed Ahmad Khan who is regarded as the 'father of the Muslim Renaissance'. He started as a liberal without any communal bias. The scientific societies started by him involved both Hindus and Muslims.

The Aligarh College founded by Syed Ahmad Khan to end the bias against modern education among the Muslims received financial support from Hindus. He perceived very clearly the danger to the Muslims for not taking advantage of English education. He preached the unity of Hindus and Muslims till the foundation of the Indian National Congress. Gradually he became inclined to the view that as the Hindus were far ahead of the Muslims in education and other respects, the Muslims in their own interest should keep away from nationalism. He did not agree with the Congress that admission to higher administrative services should not be restricted to men of higher birth and that they should be open to competition. Similarly, he opposed the Congress demand for a representative government. He firmly instilled in the Muslim community the fear of Hindu domination in the event that representative institutions were introduced in India.

His attitude was that democracy being majority rule would mean Hindu rule in India. It will be a government English by name and Hindu in reality. He argued that the country was unprepared for representative government. He urged the members of his community to cooperate with the British

government. In a speech, he appealed to the British rulers to remain in India for her peace and prosperity for many years-in fact, forever. In 1886, he founded the All India Muslim Educational Conference which helped to disseminate Muslim political ideas. In opposition to the Congress and its programmes, Sir Syed founded the United Patriotic Association in 1888.

The central theme of Syed Ahmad Khan's political views was that in a country as heterogeneous as India, the introduction of representative government would lead to negative consequences, as people were likely to vote based not on political issues but along religious lines. In the name of representative institutions, Congress would gain control over the administration. This would mean that by peaceful means alone, a great change in the relative importance of the different political groups and communities would be effected - something that was generally achieved through civil war. The Congress was declared a Hindu body whose major objectives were against Muslim interests. The British were needed to protect the minority interests. Muslims must remain loyal and oppose the Indian National Congress and its interests. Simultaneously, Syed Ahmad demanded safeguards for Muslims in government jobs, legislative councils, district boards and recognition of the historical role and political importance of Muslims.

The colonial rulers were quick to recognise the importance of communalism and the official protection of minorities. In his early days, Syed referred to the Hindus and Muslims as two eyes of India implying that they were complementary, but in later writings referred to them as two nations. The centre of this new Muslim outlook and policy was the Aligarh College for which it became famous as the Aligarh movement. A zealous exponent of this new doctrine was Theodore Beck, the Principal of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College which later became

Aligarh Muslim University. He urged that the parliamentary system of government was meaningless in a country like India which contained two nations tending to oppress the numerically weaker. He disfavoured competitive examinations as they would 'just advantage the Bengalis'. The Aligarh movement succeeded in alienating the bulk of Muslims from the national movement and in doing so sowed the seeds of Two-Nation theory.

1.1.2 Formation of All India Muslim League

The separatist Muslim leaders felt the necessity of independent organisation and action and they wished to secure independent political recognition from the British government as 'a nation within a nation'. To meet the long-felt need for an exclusively Muslim political organisation composed of the top stratum of the Muslim community and its professional classes, an All India Muslim League was founded in 1906 soon after a Muslim deputation led by Aga Khan met Lord Minto. The initiative in this regard was taken by Nawab Salimullah Khan of Dacca but the organisation was soon taken over by the Aligarh-based Muslim elite group. Mohsin-Ul-Mulk, considered to be the political heir of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan wrote to Principal Archbold in August 1906 about the necessity of a more active political programme to counter the influence of Congress among Muslims. British officers like Lord Minto, Dunlop Smith and Harcourt Butler had played decisive roles in the foundation of the Muslim League. The All-India Muslim League was founded by a group of zamindars, ex-bureaucrats and upper-class Muslims. The League firmly adhered to the policy of separation, welcomed the partition of Bengal, opposed the national movement led by the Congress and condemned the Swadeshi movement. It raised the slogan of separate Muslim interest, separate electorate and safeguards for Muslims in government

services. One major objective was to keep the Muslims away from joining the Congress. Its activities were directed against the Congress and not against the British government.

There was a rapid growth of Muslim separatism during the Swadeshi movement against the partition of Bengal. Despite eloquent pleas for communal harmony and the presence of an extremely active and sincere group of Swadeshi Muslim agitators such as Ghaznavi, Rasul, Din Mahomed, Dedar Bux and Abul Hussain, the British propaganda that the new province would mean more jobs for Muslims did achieve considerable success in swaying upper and middle-class Muslims against the Swadeshi movement. The colonial authorities and the Muslim separatist elite evolved a powerful instrument in the form of a separate electorate in 1909.

The Minto-Morley reforms introduced a system of separate electorate and representation for the Indian Muslims. It provided for separate constituencies from which only a Muslim could stand as candidate and for which only Muslims would vote. The British government thus introduced the communal principle in the constitutional machinery of the Indian state. The principle was later extended to other communities such as Sikhs, the depressed classes and other minority groups. It led to communal appeals at the time of voting and a thinking in terms of communal power and progress.

1.1.3 Growth of Hindu Communalism

Hindu communalism had also begun to evolve from the 1870s. A section of Hindu zamindars, moneylenders and middle-class professionals began to arouse anti-Muslim sentiments. They talked of the tyrannical Muslim rule of the medieval period and praised the British for saving Hindus from Muslim oppression. In UP and Bihar, they



took up the question of 'Hindi' and gave it a communal twist declaring 'Urdu' as the language of Muslims and Hindi as that of Hindus. Anti-cow slaughter propaganda was also undertaken in the early 1890s which took a communal turn resulting in communal riots.

The Punjab Hindu Sabha was founded in 1909. It criticised the Congress for trying to unite India into a single nation and for 'sacrificing Hindu interests' to appease the Muslims. A strong contributory factor was the introduction of a Hindu tinge into the national movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. Many extremist leaders began emphasising ancient Hindu culture to the exclusion of medieval culture. Tilak used Ganesh and Shivaji festivals to propagate nationalism. Many writers in Bengali, Hindi and Urdu referred to Muslims as foreigners in their novels, plays and stories. This produced a reaction among the Muslims and alienated them from the emerging national movement. But there was a secular stream in the national movement and nationalist Muslims like Jinnah and Azad had little difficulty in accepting it.

However, on the whole, Hindu communalism had remained dormant from the very beginning. This was because as Bipan Chandra points out, while among Parsees and Hindus, it was the modern intelligentsia with its emphasis on science, democracy and nationalism which acquired control over the social, economic and political fields, among the Muslims the reactionary landlords and mullahs continued to exercise dominant role. Again, the British government gave Hindu communalism few concessions and little support. It banked heavily upon Muslim communalism. The Hindu tinge in the national movement was not so much a cause of communalism as 'a cause of the nationalists' failure to check its growth.

1.1.4 Lucknow Pact

As the freedom struggle gained momentum, the Muslim leadership further fell behind and continued to indulge in politics of separatism and protectionism. However, political consciousness steadily grew among the Indian Muslims from 1912 onwards and it even began to take a militant form. Muslim middle class developed political maturity in the years immediately preceding the First World War. Dr. Ansari, Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Hakim Ajmal Khan were among the outstanding leaders who, while admiring the ideas and objectives of Sir Syed Ahmad and the Aligarh movement, believed that Muslims should not remain subservient to the British government. They should participate in the national movement and should reach an accord with the Indian National Congress. The Muslim League at its Lucknow session in 1913 adopted the goal of attainment under the aegis of the British Crown of self-government suited to India. Unfortunately, their nationalism was flawed in so far as it was not fully secular. It had a strong religious and pan-Islamic tinge. Instead of understanding and opposing the economic and political consequences of modern imperialism, they fought on the grounds of Khilafat and the protection of Muslim holy places outside India. Though their approach did not clash with the national movement immediately it proved harmful in the long run because it encouraged the habit of looking at political questions from a religious point of view. The positive development within the Congress and the Muslim League led to political unity among the two groups through the Lucknow Pact in 1916. The Pact accepted a separate electorate and the system of weightage and reservation of seats for the minorities in the legislatures. Though brought out of compulsions, the Pact was a step backward because through accepting a separate electorate, the Congress

accepted communal politics. It paved the way for further communalism.

1.1.5 Khilafat and the Question of Communal Amity

The Hindu-Muslim unity was at its peak during the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat agitation. Gandhi and the Indian National Congress enthusiastically supported the Khilafat Conference and the League in their demands for the restoration of holy lands. The Muslim religious organisations exhorted the Indian Muslims to participate in the Non-Cooperation movement. Mohammed Ali, Shaukat Ali and several other Muslim leaders were imprisoned in the course of the movement. Hundreds of Muslim volunteers were imprisoned for refusing to obey the ban put on their organisation by the government. But what is important to note is that even at the height of the Non-Cooperation movement, the Muslim League did not associate with the unity movement. Congress and Khilafat remained separate bodies, united because of the alliance between their leaders but potentially divisive if the leaders quarrelled. Khilafat brought orthodox mullahs into politics who saw free India as a federation of religious communities. The Khilafat issue did raise the national, anti-imperialist consciousness of the middle-class Muslims but the national leadership failed to elevate this religious - political consciousness to a higher plane of secular - political awareness.

1.1.6 Communal Situation in the Post-Khilafat Scenario

The truce between the Congress and the League proved only temporary. The communal accord which had begun with the Lucknow Pact in 1916 ended in 1922 with the calling off of the Non-Cooperation movement by Gandhi. The Hindu-Muslim unity which was build up during the last

few years gave way to communal hostility and division. By 1924 the Khilafat lost its raison d'être when Turkey abolished the office of the Caliph. In this vacuum, fresh interest was awakened in the Muslim League which had been moribund since 1918. The League became active and was cleansed of radical and nationalist elements. Loyatism and communal ideology came to the forefront and political alignments increasingly began to be made on communal basis.

Tanzeem and Tabligh movements were started by Muslim communal organisations. Simultaneously, there was the spread of Hindu communalism. The Hindu Mahasabha which was formed in 1915 at Haridwar by Madan Mohan Malviya along with some Punjab leaders was revived once again in 1922-23. A large number of nationalists such as Lajpat Rai, N.C. Kelkar joined the Hindu Mahasabha and argued for Hindu communal solidarity. The Tanzim and Tahbligh of the Muslims were met with Arya Samajists' Shuddhi and Sangathan movements among the Hindus to consolidate their hold.

The most vocal outburst of communalism during this period was the communal riots. There was a violent anti-Hindu outburst at Kohat in the North Western Frontier Province in September 1924 in which 155 persons were killed. There were waves of riots in Calcutta between April and July 1926. There were disturbances in the same year in Dacca, Patna, Rawalpindi and Delhi, and no less than 19 communal outbreaks in U.P. between 1923-27. The recurring ostensible issues included the Muslim demand to stop music being played before mosques and Hindu demand for a ban on cow slaughter. These tensions were further exacerbated by the assasination of Swami Shraddhanand by a young Muslim on 23 December 1926. In another incident, January 1927, the author of the scurrilous Rangila Rasul was acquitted after initially receiving a sentence of 18 months for defaming Prophet Muhammad. In



total, 112 communal riots occurred between 1922 and 1927.

The communal conflict was only an outward manifestation. The real deep-seated cause was political. There were anxieties about the future of the community, apprehensions concerning its status and doubts about its economic security. While the majority feared the extra-territorial loyalties and pan-Islamic ambitions, the minorities first formulated the demand for separate representation and then expanded it to increase the number of Muslim-majority provinces such as Sindh, NWFP, Baluchistan, Punjab, Bengal and Assam, ultimately insisting upon vesting residuary powers in the provinces and limiting the power of the centre. The Muslim League in its session in 1925 adopted a resolution asking for the immediate appointment of a royal commission to prepare a scheme for responsible government, adequate representation to the minorities in all legislative councils and fixation of separate electorate for minority communities.

1.1.6.1 Nehru Report, Jinnah's 14 Points and their Bearing on Communal Politics

Prospects of unity among Hindus and Muslims seemed bright when practically all parties boycotted the Simon Commission and agreed to prepare a constitution for India. Jinnah came out with a compromise formula. He proposed that a separate electorate could be given up in return for a joint electorate with reserved seats for the minorities, a promise of one-third Muslim representation in the Central Assembly, representation in proportion to the population in Punjab and Bengal and recognition of three new Muslim majority provinces (Sindh, Baluchistan and NWFP). The offer was repeated in the December 1927 session of the Muslim League. The Congress accepted most of the demands of Jinnah. However,

Hindu communalist pressure from Punjab and Maharashtra soon forced a disastrous retreat. The All-Party Conference which met in Delhi in February 1928 had a difficult time in negotiating communal representation. The Hindu Mahasabha in the meantime in its session at Jabalpur called for the conversion of non-Hindus and the Hindu communalists bitterly opposed the creation of new Muslim majority provinces and reservations of seats in Punjab and Bengal.

The Nehru Report made several concessions to the Hindu Mahasabha. It stipulated that while there would be a joint electorate everywhere, reserved seats were conceded only at the centre and in provinces with Muslim minorities. Sind would be detached from Bombay only after India acquired dominion status and also subject to a weightage given to the Hindu minority. The political structure would be unitary with the centre having residuary powers. In a final bid for unity, Jinnah pleaded for the immediate separation of Sind, residual powers for the provinces, one-third of the seats in the central assembly and reserved seats in Punjab and Bengal. However, the All Parties Conference rejected his proposal, prompting Jinnah to describe it as a parting of ways. As a result, most of the Muslim communalist groups joined hands and put forward a single document known as Jinnah's Fourteen Points as an alternative to the Nehru Report. The Fourteen Points became the point of reference for all future negotiations. Soon after the publication of Jinnah's 14 points, a split took place between the nationalist Muslims and the conservative section within the League.

The former desired to support the Nehru Report with minor modifications. They formed the Nationalist Muslim Party. During the Civil Disobedience movement, the stirring Hindu-Muslim unity of 1919-22 was totally missing. Outside the NWFP and a few isolated pockets like Delhi,

participation of Muslims remained miserably low. Separatism had spread its tentacles far and wide. The negotiations during the Round Table Conferences could not make any headway due to the uncompromising attitude of the Muslim League. On 5th October, Gandhi offered to accept all Muslims claims provided. They supported the Congress demand for Swaraj. However, the Muslim delegates bluntly rejected the offer. Even though Gandhi's generosity was not shared by the Hindu Mahasabha delegates. Even the British government succumbed to the pressure of the League by announcing the formation of two new Muslim-majority provinces of NWFP and Sind, and the prospective announcement of the Communal Award.

1.1.6.2 The Idea of Pakistan

From 1930 onwards, a section of Muslim intelligentsia began nourishing the idea of a separate independent Muslim state in India. The ideological and political background had been prepared by the Aligarh Movement, the foundation of the Muslim League and the Minto-Morley reforms. In 1930, Mohammad Iqbal, the well-known poet and philosopher, presiding over the Allahabad session of the Muslim League spoke in favour of a single state, an amalgamation of Punjab, the North-Western Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan enjoying self-government within or outside the British empire. The formation of a consolidated North West Indian Muslim state, he observed, would be the destiny of the Muslims of North West India. He raised the demand for the creation of a 'Muslim India within India.'

The idea of a separate Muslim state in a new form was also elaborated at the time of the Round Table Conferences by a group of young Muslim students in England led by Rahmat Ali. Rahmat Ali conveyed to the Muslim delegates attending the Round Table Conferences the scheme of a separate Muslim homeland consisting of Punjab, North-West

Frontier or Afghan Province, Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan. The proposed Muslim state was to be named PAKISTAN (taking the first letter of four provinces and the end of the last province). The idea did not receive serious consideration from the delegates, but Rahmat Ali founded the Pakistan National Movement in 1933 to propagate the idea. The scheme continued to gain ground. In 1932, Chaudhury Mohammad Ali, instigated by the British government, prepared the outlines and maps of Pakistan in Britain and sent them to India.

After 1935, the Muslim League began to be reorganised and consolidated under the leadership of Jinnah. He rallied the middle-class intellectuals under the banner of the Muslim League and infused a new spirit in the moribund organisation. He gave new slogans to the community: protection of the integrity of Islam, equality in political power with Hindus and full national independence. In 1936, at the Delhi Ulama Conference, he said that the problem was not religious, but a purely political one: the Muslims wanted safeguards of their rights in the constitution since power and authority were likely to intoxicate people. The Congress did not neglect the challenge of Jinnah. In November 1937 it passed a resolution on minority rights where it affirmed that no class or group would exploit another to its advantage. It also reiterated the fundamental rights and neutrality of the state in religion. It condemned the Communal Award and Nehru called upon the Congress to take up mass contact programmes among the Muslims. But Jinnah gave a warning to the Congress that interference in Muslim affairs would mean complete disaster. By this time, Jinnah's interest in unity had worn thin.

1.1.6.3 Communal Situation After 1937

It was the post-1937 election scenario that led Muslim communalism to take an



extremist form. In the elections, the Congress secured 711 out of 1585 assembly seats, with an absolute majority in five provinces out of seven and a near majority in Bombay. The Muslim League won only 109 out of 483 seats allotted to it. It failed to win a single seat in NWFP and could capture only 2 out of 84 reserved constituencies in Punjab and 3 out of 33 in Sindh. In Bengal, Fazlul Haq's party and in Punjab, the Unionist Party achieved success. The League's demand for a coalition in the United Province was rejected by the Congress (The Congress demanded total absorption of the Muslim League Assembly Party). The Congress feared that a coalition would render any radical socio-economic reforms impossible. Also it enjoyed the support of the Deoband ulama group in UP and of the Ahrar Party in Northern India.

Throughout the twenty-seven months of Congress rule in the provinces, the League kept up intense propaganda against the Congress. In the Lucknow session of the Muslim League in October 1937, Jinnah charged the Congress for alienating the Muslims by following a policy which was exclusively Hindu. In October 1938, Jinnah declared that the Congress had adopted a most oppressive and inimical attitude towards the Muslim League since they secured a majority in the six provinces.

The charges included failure to prevent communal riots, local ban on Bakrid, cow slaughter, singing of Bande Matram with its 'idolatrous' passage on public occasions and encouragement of Hindi and Hindustani in the Devanagari script at the cost of Urdu. He even accused the government that it had a secret understanding with Congress not to protect Muslim rights. The charges were repeated in the Patna session of the Muslim League. The League also appointed a committee to investigate Muslim complaints against the Congress governments and submit a report. The one-sided report published in

December 1939 condemned the Congress governments and the Hindus on various counts such as excluding Muslims from a share in government, introduction of Wardha scheme of education, compelling them to show respect to the Congress flag and extending the use of Hindi. Much of the charges were exaggerated and the Congress offered to investigate the complaints by an independent authority but Jinnah rejected the proposal.

Even the government gave a clean chit to Congress. The fact of the matter was that during the 27 months of Congress rule, the League was in the wilderness and without a clear programme because its old demands such as separate electorate, provincial autonomy, full provincial status for NWFP and Sind, the Muslim political predominance in Punjab and Bengal had all been more or less accepted by the British and the Congress.

In short, from 1937 onwards, as Bipan Chandra writes, communalism began to take a virulent form. The previous theory was that India which consisted of distinct religious communities with separate socio-economic and political interests could still form a single nation and the methods for this could be separate electorate, communal rights, reservations etc. within a single country. Now the idea of living together as a single nation began to be replaced by the politics of hatred, fear, enmity towards the other communities and separation. The interests of Hindus and Muslims were declared to be contradictory and permanent in conflict. The move towards Pakistan seemed inevitable since separation was the only part of the communal programme that was left unfulfilled.

1.1.6.4 Intensification of Hindu Communalism

Meanwhile, Hindu communalism had also begun to take an extreme form. The

Hindu Mahasabha was originally founded as a social, cultural and religious organisation and not as a political body. The first session of the Hindu Mahasabha in 1925 was attended by many prominent Congressmen of the time, including the Ali brothers and Abul Kalam Azad. In his presidential address Madan Mohan Malaviya argued that it was wrong to think that the Mahasabha was a communal organisation which would clash with the nationalist Congress. Malaviya himself was a member of the Mahasabha as well as the Congress. 'It would be a shame' he said, if any Hindu opposed the national Congress. Rather the Mahasabha would supplement the work of the Congress. The Congress was a political body and could not deal with social and non-political matters such as untouchability, inter-caste jealousies, child marriage and other social issues. The Mahasabha would deal with these and also safeguard the interests of the Hindus. But the socio-cultural role envisaged by Malaviya was soon superseded by its political role with its decision to participate in the elections in 1926 and become a political body. It became a communal party for the Hindus as the Muslim League was for the Muslims.

The Mahasabha was dominated by Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya during the 1920s. However Lajpat Rai died in 1928 and Malviya retired in 1934. The logic of Muslim communalism during the 1930s brought extremist leadership in the Hindu Mahasabha into the forefront under the direction of V.D. Savarkar. In his notes which were later compiled into a treatise *Hindutva*. Savarkar gave the concept of nationality based on Hindus and not on all the people of diverse faiths inhabiting India. He said that the Hindus or at least the Hindu ideas should have preeminence in the whole of the Indian subcontinent. He rejected the idea of a secular state and in 1928, even urged his co-religionists to boycott the Congress. This he wanted so that the Congress should be disabled from doing any further harm to

the Hindu Sangthan Movement. Though the Congress was to be boycotted. Savarkar made it clear that its leaders were not wicked but only erring. He even agreed with Jinnah that the Congress, since its inception down to this day, was a Hindu body manned mostly by Hindu brain, Hindu money and Hindu sacrifice.

Savarkar formulated Two-Nation theory long before Jinnah. In his address to the Hindu Mahasabha in 1937, Savarkar stated that India could not be assumed to be a unitarian and homogeneous nation, but rather, comprised two main nations : the Hindus and the Muslims. There are two antagonistic nations living side by side in India. It is an irony of fate that in the 1940s those who claimed a separate state for the Muslims referred to this very fact that Savarkar had spoken of a Hindu nationality in support of their contention that the Hindus and the Muslims could not live together harmoniously and, therefore, Muslims should have a separate state.

Similarly, another Arya Samajist, Bhai Parmanand also felt that the Congress had ignored the interests of the majority community and, like Savarkar, pleaded for the organisation of the Hindus under the banner of a Hindu party. While the Muslim ministries are quite free to look to the interests of their community without any regard for the Congress or the Hindus, the Congress ministries are wedded to their pro-Muslim programmes and are even alert in their attempt to appease the insatiable Muslim communal hunger, he said in October 1937.

Since the Hindu Mahasabha became a political party, another Hindu para-military organisation appeared on the scene in 1925—the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Founded by Hedgewar at Nagpur, it believed in the revival and purification of Hindu *Sanskriti*. His successor M.S. Golwalkar adopted the same line as that of Savarkar



regarding the non-Hindu minorities. 'The non-Hindu peoples in Hindustan must adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion and must entertain no ideas but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture'. By 1940, when Golwalkar took over RSS had on its role one lakh trained and highly disciplined cadre.

Golwalkar stood for the assimilation or merger of the minorities within the Hindu nation. RSS attacked both the Congress and the Muslim leaders. Golwalkar criticised the nationalists for hugging to our bosom, our most inveterate enemies (Muslims) and thus endangering our very existence. Like the Muslim League, RSS also kept aloof from the Quit India movement in 1942. Similarly, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee said in 1945 that the Congress policy of appeasement had merely widened the breach between Hindus and Muslims and had gravely jeopardised the legitimate rights of Hindus. Although the Congress in 1938 declared Hindu Mahasabha membership to be a disqualification for remaining in the Congress and there were no communal riots during 1938-45, it was precisely during this period that communalism grew very fast among Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. If the Muslim League raised the bogey of 'Islam in danger', the Hindu communalists also tried to raise the cries of 'Hinduism in danger'.

1.1.6.5 Lahore Resolution and the Two-Nation Theory

After the outbreak of the Second World War, the Congress ministries resigned and demanded that the British government make a declaration that India would get complete freedom after the war and that effective power to run the administration be transferred to Indians immediately. To counter such a move, the government recognised the League as the sole spokesman of the Muslims and gave them the power to veto

any political settlement. The 17 October 1939 declaration referred to the need to consult representatives of several communities and the August 1940 offer made it clear that Britain would not transfer responsibility to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by a large and powerful element of Indian national life. This in effect conceded one of Jinnah's central demands since the outbreak of the war that the League was the sole spokesman of Indian Muslims and it should have some kind of veto power in any future constitutional changes.

The Lahore session of the Muslim League held on 26 March 1940 was a crucial day for the Muslims of India as well as for the Indian national movement. On that day, the Muslim League passed the famous Pakistan Resolution. Drafted by Sikandar Hayat Khan, moved by Fazlul Haq and seconded by Khaliquzzaman, the resolution asserted that no constitutional plan would be workable in the country or acceptable to Muslims unless it was based on the following fundamental principle: that geographically contiguous units in Muslim-majority regions in the north-western and eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'independent states' in which the constituent units would be autonomous and sovereign.

In his presidential address, Jinnah expanded his 'Two-Nation' theory. He declared that it was a common mistake to assume that the Muslims were a minority. They were not. They were a nation by any definition. He claimed that Islam and Hinduism were not religions in the strict sense but were different and distinct social orders and that it was futile to expect that India would ever be able to evolve a common nationality. Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literary traditions. They neither intermarry nor interdine and indeed they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and

conceptions. Their perspective on life and way of living are fundamentally different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Muslims derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes and different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and likewise their victories and defeat overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state.

Now Jinnah regarded the Indian problem as not a communal problem but an international one. The only solution to this problem was to allow the major nations separate homelands by dividing India into autonomous national states. Notwithstanding a thousand years of close contact, Hindus and Muslims have lived apart and it was futile to expect that they would be transformed into one nation merely by means of subjecting them to a democratic constitution and holding them forcibly together by unnatural and artificial methods of British parliamentary statutes.

However, in the Resolution, neither Pakistan nor partition was explicitly mentioned. Even the Muslim leaders did not take the idea of Pakistan seriously. No province where Muslim inhabitants were in majority wanted Pakistan. In Punjab with a 57% Muslim population, the government was unenthusiastic, indifferent and unfavourable to the idea of Pakistan. Sikandar Hayat declared that if Pakistan meant Muslim Raj here and Hindu raj there, he would have nothing to do with it. As far as Sind was concerned, no Muslim League leader had been elected to the legislature in 1937. The chief minister of Sind rejected the Two-Nation theory of Jinnah. "No segregated or isolated region but the whole of India was the homeland of all Muslims and no Hindu or Muslim or any other had the right

to deprive them of their homeland". In the North Western Frontier, the overwhelmingly Muslim region had nothing to do with the League. In Bengal province, Fazlul Haq though publicly committed to the idea of Pakistan had not yet at heart accepted it.

Apart from the provinces, many Muslim organisations such as Ahrars, Jamait-ul-Ulama and the Shia Political Conference were opposed to it. Even for Jinnah, it began as a bargain counter. Gandhi called the idea of partition vivisection; Nehru dismissed the idea as impractical and gave it no more than 24 hours of life. Rajendra Prasad wrote a book to prove the non-viability of Pakistan. But as months passed, there was a rapid change. By 1943, it had become an article of faith and a matter of life and death for the Muslims. The factors for such a change were not far to seek. Firstly, there was a change in the attitude of upper-middle class Muslims. The ambitious politicians saw a wide expansion of opportunities for power and influence as legislators and administrators. The service people, both civil and military, looked forward to rapid promotions. The professional class of lawyers, doctors, teachers, bankers, entrepreneurs and industrialists saw much scope for their activities. These classes were enthusiastic about eliminating Hindu competition. To the Muslim peasants of Bengal and Punjab, Pakistan was being presented as the end of Hindu zamindar and Bania exploitation.

During the Quit India Movement when all Congress leaders were in jail, the rapid advance of Muslim League was the most striking political development of the closing years of war. League ministries were installed in Assam, Sindh, Bengal and NWFP. Jinnah was on way towards establishing his claim to be the sole spokesman of Muslims with the right to be treated on equal terms with the Hindu Congress under Gandhi. The government deliberately helped the League to build the leadership of Jinnah. It promised



that no constitutional or administrative measure would be effected or even considered without the consent of the League. Even in the expansion of the Viceroy's council, the Viceroy promised that no Muslim candidate would be appointed without the League's consent. Through such measures, the British government was able to thwart the Congress's demand for independence, keep the Muslims quiet during the War and also to secure its post-war imperial interests.

Jinnah collected considerable funds and raised a volunteer corp. The League left all other organisations behind and could legitimately claim to be the representative of the largest number of the community. At the sametime, Jinnah consolidated the authority of the Muslim League under his personal leadership. The working committee of the League was under the direction of the President. The All India Muslim League was a powerless body whose function was to receive and record the resolutions of the working committee. The masses followed him, the educated class, especially the students adorned him, the men of property supported him and men in power were afraid of him. Again, even though the proposals of Cripps Mission were rejected both by the Congress and the League, the Mission accepted one of Jinnah's proposals that any province or provinces which do not acquiesce to the new constitution will be entitled to frame a constitution of their own, giving them full status as the Indian union. The Mission enhanced the influence of Jinnah over the Muslims and his value in the eyes of the government as a counterpoise against the Congress.

1.1.6.6 Gandhi-Jinnah Talks

In spite of opposition from Hindu Mahasabha, Gandhi, in July 1944, proposed talks with Jinnah on the basis of Rajagopalachari Formula which envisaged:

- i) a post-war commission to demarcate

- contiguous districts in North-West and North-East India where Muslims had an absolute majority, ii) plebiscite of all inhabitants in such areas to decide whether they would prefer Pakistan, iii) mutual agreement in case of separation to run certain essential common services like defence and communications, and iv) implementation of the whole scheme only after the transfer of power by British. Jinnah, on the other hand, criticised the Formula, reiterated the demand for separation of the whole of six provinces and felt that the plebiscite contradicted the basic principle of Muslims' right of self-determination, and that separation could not be deferred till independence.

In the Gandhi-Jinnah talks held from 9th September to 27th September 1944, Gandhi accepted the Pakistan proposal on the basis of the Rajaji Formula but rejected the basis of the Lahore Resolution because it was based upon Two- Nations theory. Jinnah insisted that Gandhi should accept the Two-Nation Theory and recognise Hindus and Muslims as two nations. The talks ultimately broke down. Meanwhile, with the release of Congress MLAs from jail, the League's position became weak. The League ministry in North Western Frontier Province was replaced by the Congress, the Unionist Party of Punjab broke with Jinnah and the League ministry fell in Bengal. Even Sind and Assam ministries existed on Congress support and there was little evidence that the League would be able to organise the masses around the demand for Pakistan.

1.1.6.7 Elections and the Communal Holocaust

It was the elections of 1946 which sealed the fate of communities. It was here that religion was brought to the forefront. Muslims were asked to vote for the League because a vote for League and Pakistan was a vote for Islam. The success of the Muslim League in their constituencies was spectacular - all

30 seats reserved in the centre with 86.6% of Muslim votes and 442 out of 509 in the provinces went to the League. The League established itself as the dominant party among the Muslims. The most significant feature of these elections was the presence of Muslim communal voting in sharp contrast to the anti-British unity of the earlier days. Also, what is important to note is that the Hindu Mahasabha was completely routed.

The League won its demand for Pakistan without its claim to represent the majority of Muslims having been really tested either through fully democratic elections or a sustained mass movement in the face of official repression. The League held a convention of Muslim legislators in April 1946 where Jinnah declared that there could be no compromise on the issue of Pakistan as a fully sovereign state and warned the British government that if they were going to sell 100 million Muslims for some illusionary hope, it would be the greatest tragedy in the history of Great Britain. In August 1946, Jinnah called for 'Direct Action' for the creation of Pakistan. The following months witnessed the worst-ever communal riots between the two communities starting from Bengal, Bihar and the United Province reaching Delhi and culminating in Punjab. The communal divide culminated in a political divide with the Partition of India in August 1947.

1.1.6.8 Towards Partition and Independence

It was in the midst of the communal riots that broke out in Bengal following the 'Direct Action Day' that Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, invited Congress under Jawaharlal Nehru to form the Interim Government as envisaged by the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Interim Government assumed office on 2nd September 1946. Though the League initially refused to join, persuaded by the Viceroy, it also joined it on 26th October. Besides Nehru, some of the other Congress Ministers

were Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Asaf Ali, C. Rajagopalachari, John Mathai, Baldev Singh, Sir Shafat Ahmed Khan and Jagjivan Ram. The five League nominees were Liakat Ali Khan, Ibrahim Ismail Chundrigar, Abdur Rab Nishtar, Ghazanfar Ali Khan and Jogendra Nath Mandal. As was expected, the Interim Government was a house divided against itself. There was continuous deadlock in its functioning due to the negative and obstructionist tactics of Muslim League ministers. Though the League joined the Interim Government, it kept out of the Constituent Assembly which had been already elected in July 1946. The League was upset over the overwhelming majority of the Congress in the Constituent Assembly.

It was in such a circumstance that the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee made a historic announcement on 20th February 1947 that the British would transfer power to Indians by June 1948. The announcement made clear that if the League continued to boycott the Constituent Assembly, the British Government would then consider to whom it should hand over the power of the Central Government. Attlee's statement was followed by a raging campaign by the League to bring about the partition. The League resorted to unabashed violence in Assam, the Punjab and North West Frontier Province with a view to replace the non-League Ministries there. It became apparently clear that Indian unity could not be kept unimpaired any longer. The partition of India seemed an inevitable occurrence.

1.1.6.9 Mountbatten Plan of Partition

Following Attlee's historic announcement of February 1947, Lord Mountbatten was despatched to India as the new Viceroy. Lord Mountbatten, who was a man of tact, energy and determination, had been authorised to discuss with Indian leaders the details of the



proposed transfer of power. The prolonged discussions with the leaders of the Congress and League convinced Mountbatten that a political settlement of India could be achieved only through the partition of the country. Mountbatten won over the Congress leaders to that point of view and on 3 June 1947 announced his compromise plan for the Partition of India.

According to Mountbatten plan, Baluchistan, Sindh, the North Western Frontier Province: Punjab, Bengal and Sylhet district of Assam were to go to Pakistan. In the case of North Western Frontier Province and Sylhet there was to be a referendum to decide whether they should join India or Pakistan. Similarly, the Legislatures of the Punjab and Bengal were to decide whether the provinces should be partitioned or not. The Congress agreed to the partition not because it accepted the 'Two Nation Theory', but because the only alternative appeared to be the mass killing of lakhs of innocent people in the brutal communal riots. The Congress leadership sought to prevent such large-scale violence. So they helplessly accepted partition. When the proposals of the Mountbatten plan were carried out Baluchistan, Sindh, N.W.F.P., West Punjab, East Bengal, and Sylhet of Assam were to constitute the new state of Pakistan and the rest of British Indian territories to form the Indian Dominion.

In July 1947 the British Parliament passed the historic Indian Independence Act to legalise the Mountbatten plan of the partition of India. The Act provided for the establishment of two different Dominions, India and Pakistan with effect from 15 August 1947. These Dominions were to have new Governor Generals. The existing Constituent Assemblies of the Dominions would be the respective Dominion legislatures, and they would have the power to draft new constitutions and laws, and also the right to withdraw from the British Commonwealth

of Nations if so desired. Until a new constitution was framed, each Dominion would be governed by the Act of 1935. The British government would no longer possess the power of disallowing any law made by these Dominion legislatures. The Governor General would be the constitutional head who was to give assent to any ordinary law of the Legislature. Anyhow, until March 1948, the Governor General was to have adequate powers to issue orders for the effective implementation of the provisions of the Indian Independence Act. The office of the Secretary of State for India was to be abolished. The paramountcy of the British Crown over the Indian States would lapse on 15 August 1947. The Indian States would be free to join any of the Dominions, India and Pakistan. Thus partition and independence became a reality.

1.1.7 Process of Partition

The decision to partition India was very difficult to implement. Firstly there was no single belt of Muslim majority area in British India. There were two areas of their concentration—one in the west and one in the East. There was no way to join these areas. So it was decided that the two areas would be united as East Pakistan and West Pakistan geographically separated by Indian territory. Secondly, not all Muslim-majority areas wanted to be in Pakistan. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan the leader of North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and known as 'Frontier Gandhi' opposed the Two-Nation Theory. But his opposition was ignored and NWFP was merged with Pakistan. Thirdly, two of the Muslim-majority provinces—Punjab and Bengal created problems since there were areas in these provinces where the non-Muslims were in the majority.

In 1947 Britain appointed two boundary commissions, one for Bengal and one for Punjab. Sir Cyril Radcliffe was the chairman of these two boundary commissions. The

Commission consisted of a chairman and 4 members, two nominated by the Congress and two by the League. The Sikhs in Punjab had opposed the partition of the Punjab territories between Pakistan and India. In case of such an eventuality, they demanded the formation of an autonomous Sikh state. However, the Boundary Commission made no such allowances. Demography alone was considered to be the decisive factor. Lahore went to Pakistan and Amritsar to India. The province of Bengal was divided into two separate entities, West Bengal belonging to India and East Bengal belonging to Pakistan. East Bengal was renamed East Pakistan in 1955 and later became the Independent nation of Bangladesh in 1971.

1.1.7.1 Partition Riots

According to the Mountbatten Plan, the Muslim-majority areas of British India would be merged to form a new nation called Pakistan. Thus, the Muslim majority regions of Bengal and Punjab were divided with West Punjab and East Bengal forming West and East Pakistan. Indian territories lay in the midst of these two zones. This resulted in the massive and violent migration of the people across the divide. Muslims moved into Pakistan, while the Sikhs and Hindus flowed into India with the prospects of peaceful living with their own religious and ethnic identities. This mass migration involved unprecedented violence, murders, crimes, rapes and bestiality.

When India was celebrating independence communal violence broke out in different parts of the country like Calcutta, Punjab and Delhi. Gandhiji who had given the message of nonviolence to Indians, did not participate in independence day celebrations. He spent the day fasting and spinning. He had toured in the areas where communal riots broke out trying to bring comfort to people. Saddened and disheartened by communal violence he said, “Leave India to God, if that is too

much then leave her to anarchy.” Gandhiji was killed by Nathuram Godse on 30th January 1948.

It is very difficult to give an exact account of the people who became the victims of partition trauma. But its impact can be compared to that of the Great War (World War I) on Britain and the Second World War on France and Japan. It has been estimated that, partition left about 2 million dead, 75 thousand women abducted and raped, and about 12 million people displaced and made refugees. The split between India and Pakistan served to heighten hostility between the two nations, instead of bringing peace into the region. Civil tensions continued mounting for months. Thousands of families were split apart, homes burned down and villages abandoned. Some women were so embarrassed by the sexual humiliations, that they refused to return home and committed suicide. The destruction of families through murder, suicide, and kidnapping caused grievous partition trauma.

Communal riots took place throughout the country destroying lives and wealth. This caused animosity between people which proved to be very difficult to wipe out. After 15th August 1947, the minorities were directly affected in the areas of partition. The call for ‘Direct Action Day’ by the Muslim League in August 1946 resulted in the Calcutta killings and disturbances in the Noakhali district of East Bengal. Tension prevailed in Bihar and Punjab and in the NWFP. These regions witnessed massive bloodsheds. People deliberately burned others’ properties. As a result of the violence associated with partition, over 12-15 million people were displaced. These refugees moved across the borders to regions which were completely foreign to them. As part of the partition plan, the provinces of Punjab and Bengal were divided. These divisions often caused disastrous violence claiming many Hindu, Muslim and Sikh lives.



Differences of opinion between the Muslim and Sikh leadership over the prospective division of the Punjab province worsened the communal situation in that region. After the announcement of the Radcliffe Award on 17th August, there were organised attempts to drive out the Hindus and Sikhs in Western Punjab and North Western Frontier Province (NWFP). Centres like Lahore, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Gujranwala etc. witnessed serious disturbances. These instances of violence were followed by an anti-Muslim riot in Amritsar. Communal troubles also disturbed the areas such as Patiala in East Punjab and Meerut and Saharanpur in Western U.P. The states of Bharatpur, Alwar and Delhi were also affected by waves of communal disturbances. Muslims in these areas began mass exodus to the Pakistan borders.

Communal problems were also serious in the regions of East Bengal. Large scale exodus of Hindus from regions of East Bengal to the territories of West Bengal had happened. Thus, the impact of partition included the communal mass devastation, the two-way migration of the refugees and the failure of the administrative machinery to deal with the crisis.

1.1.8 Rehabilitation of the Refugees

The partition of Bengal and Punjab proved to have caused the deepest trauma of partition. The forceful alienation and estrangement of the minorities were the gravest consequences of partition. The problem of minorities was on both sides. Lakhs of Hindus and Sikhs in the areas that were now in Pakistan and Muslims on the Indian side of Punjab and Bengal found themselves homeless and abandoned. They became targets of attack having no option except to leave their home and go across the border. This resulted in the greatest mass migration in history. Millions were uprooted, killed and displaced from their homelands.

A large number of people either being directly attacked or due to fear of violence left their homes. The flow of refugees became a common phenomenon. They travelled to the other side of the border by all means—railways, roads and often by foot. Even during the journey they were attacked and killed. As the violence increased ghost trains ran across new frontiers carrying nothing but corpses. In the “land of five rivers” the waters ran with blood. The people who left their homes and crossed the borders became homeless and refugees. Freedom for these unfortunate common people meant life in refugee camps.

There were refugee camps in Delhi, Bombay, and Calcutta. Kurukshetra was the largest of the nearly 200 camps set up to house refugees from Punjab. Some people arrived before the date of the transfer of power itself, but a vast majority came after independence with nothing but the clothes on their skin. Ramachandra Guha vividly describes the details of the conduct of the refugee camp at Kurukshetra. The camp there was originally planned to accommodate 100000 refugees, but it came to accommodate three times that number. Provisions required for this camp were provided by the government free of charge.

United Council for Relief and Welfare (UCRW), a network of Indian and foreign social workers assisted the state in the efforts. Thousands of refugees made their homes in Delhi. The Hindus and Sikhs from West Punjab setup houses and shops wherever they could. The schools, colleges, temples, Gurudwaras, military barracks and gardens of Delhi were flooded with refugees. There were five refugee camps in Bombay where the refugees from Sindh and Punjab were accommodated. In Calcutta the migration transformed the urban landscape. Unlike in the Punjab where the migration happened in one big rush, in Bengal it was spread out. Displaced from their homes, refugees led a

miserable life. Some of them took possession of empty houses, others colonised vacant land, still others made their home on cities, railway stations and streets.

The worst victims of partition were women. They were raped, killed and abandoned. After independence the brothels of Delhi came to be filled with refugee women. Later the governments of India and Pakistan agreed to recover the captured women to their original families. In India, Mridula Sarabai and Rameswari Nehru took the initiative to recover the abducted women. They were supported by the government. By May 1948, 12,500 women were found and returned to their families. The partition was not merely a division of properties, liabilities and assets or a political division of the country. There was a division of its administrative machinery and financial assets. The government employees and railways were also divided.

The partition not only changed the geography of the subcontinent, but also left a deep rooted impact on the hearts of the people who had struggled for years to see the dawn of peace with a new India. Cultural wrongs of partition were really difficult to undo, an almost impossibility. Many of the sacred shrines and much-loved places of worship of different religious groups came to unattended-for or lost out of their former glory. The Nankana Sahib and Gurdwara at Lahore where the mortal remains of Ranjit Singh have been buried, the center of the Ahmadiyya sect at Qadian are examples.

As a consequence of partition, there was a large flow of refugees from across the border. Estimates say that around 85 lakhs of people migrated to India from Western Punjab, Sindh and Eastern Bengal together. These people who had lost everything had to start life all over again. The centre and the concerned state governments met the situation heroically.

1.1.8.1 Punjab

Agricultural lands in East Punjab left behind by the people who went to Pakistan were distributed among the refugees. There was a shortage in the availability of cultivable land -while Hindus and Sikhs left behind 2.7 million hectares in Western Punjab, only 1.9 million hectares were vacated by Muslims in Eastern Punjab. Moreover, Western Punjab had comparatively better irrigation facilities and more fertile soil. Nevertheless, the largest land resettlement operation was undertaken with the active involvement of the government machinery. For this purpose, a Rehabilitation Secretariat with a peak staff strength of about 7,000 operated from its head office in Jullundur. Sardar Tarlok Singh, a senior officer of the Indian Civil Service, led the operation. Initially, each refugee farming family was temporarily allotted four hectares of land. Loans were provided to help them purchase seeds and equipment. These allotments were later regularised. By November 1949, approximately 250,000 allotments had been made, and by 1950, the resettlement process was more or less complete.

1.1.8.2 Faridabad

For the migrant traders, craftsmen and labourers from Western Punjab, the government built townships at Faridabad about 30 miles west of the nation's capital Delhi. The Indian Cooperative Union (ICU) under Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, the socialist leader and Sudheer Ghosh, a social worker, supplemented the state efforts there. Hindu migrants from NWFP were most rehabilitated there. Under the initiative of the ICU, there arose many cooperatives and self-help groups, set up shops and small production units. A diesel plant was established as a source of power generation.

1.1.8.3 Delhi

In the wake of partition, many Urdu-speaking Muslim populations willingly or



unwillingly migrated from Delhi and in their place came Punjabi-speaking Hindus and Sikhs. They set up shops and homes wherever they could. In due course of time, there emerged a large number of stalls and push carts in the Connaught Place in the middle of the city. About half a million refugees came to be settled in Delhi after the partition. They crowded in camps at schools, colleges, temples, Gurdwaras, Dharmshalas, military barracks and gardens. They squatted on railway platforms, pavements and streets. Many Punjabi residential colonies arose in the city. These were named Nagars meaning townships prefixed with the names of favourite Congress leaders like Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, Lajpat Rai etc. In the course of time, these migrant settlers grew in economic might and began to gain commanding influence in the capital city.

1.1.8.4 Bombay

There were about half a million refugees in Bombay, mostly migrants from Sindh, Punjab and the North West. The influx of refugees aggravated the housing shortage problem in the city. Slums were growing apace. Many millions slept on the pavements. In crowded tenements, people lived 15 or 20 in a room. Most of the Sindhi refugees to Bombay were well off in their homeplaces with control over land, business and trading traditions. However, unlike in the case of Punjabi migrants, the Sindhis could not procure a feasible land and space to settle down as a corporate community. Nevertheless, their ingenious mercantile traditions enabled the Sindhi community to compete with the others and on this count they had to face the disgruntled from the Maharashtrians and the Gujaratis. There were five refugee camps in Bombay. The conditions of life in these camps were extremely deplorable.

Crowded filthy quarters, inadequate water, insufficient rations and insufficient support from the government were frequently raised

points of complaint by the refugees. Apart from Bombay, there were Sindhi refugee settlements in the western Indian cities like Pune, Ahmedabad etc.

1.1.8.5 Calcutta

In Calcutta, there was only a one-way flow of refugees into the West from Eastern Bengal. Many prosperous Hindu families migrated to the city before independence. But many poorer classes- workers and farmers migrated only after the date of independence. The communal riot of 1949 in East Bengal resulted in mass migration to Calcutta. As elsewhere, settling of refugees was a grave issue in Calcutta too. Refugees on many occasions resorted to blunt trespassing. Military barracks, empty houses, vacant lands along roads and railway lines, freshly cleared shrub jungle, recently drained marshes etc. were forcefully occupied and established make-shift tents as dwelling places.

The government in Bengal showed little enthusiasm for rehabilitating refugees. It was believed that the emigrants from East Bengal would return to their native places once the communal tension fell out. Here the Hindus and Muslims speak the same Bengali language and shared the same food habits so there would not be too much trouble for the communal tensions and gradually it would die out.

In September 1948, the All Bengali Refugee Council of Action was formed with a view to pressure the government to administer welfare works to the refugees. The Communists gave leadership to the refugees in organising processions and in occupying fallow lands in Calcutta. Thus in Calcutta city, there arose many impromptu settlements. These were clusters of huts built in the Eastern Bengal style, featuring thatched, tiled, or corrugated-iron roofs, bamboo mat walls, and mud floors. By early 1950, there were about 250,000 refugees in

these colonies. The refugees formed their committees, formed rules to administer their colonies and organised themselves into a vast united body. As compared to the North, refugee rehabilitation in Bengal remained as slow in pace.

Recap

- ◆ Bipan Chandra outlines communalism as three escalating belief stages
- ◆ Communal ideology culminated in violence and partition of India in 1947
- ◆ Middle-class insecurities triggered communal politics and social division
- ◆ Colonial economy fostered rivalry between Hindu and Muslim elites
- ◆ Muslim economic setbacks worsened with colonial and educational exclusion
- ◆ Hindus adapted to Western education, Muslims lagged behind
- ◆ Muslim League promoted political separation to counter Hindu dominance
- ◆ Separate electorates institutionalised religious divisions in British politics
- ◆ Lucknow Pact temporarily united Congress and Muslim League
- ◆ Khilafat movement united communities, later widened communal rift
- ◆ Jinnah's Fourteen Points set groundwork for future Pakistan
- ◆ Hindu Mahasabha pushed exclusive Hindu political identity
- ◆ Savarkar's Hindutva promoted Two-Nation Theory before Jinnah
- ◆ 1937 elections worsened Hindu-Muslim political misunderstandings
- ◆ Muslim League's complaints against Congress fuelled communalism
- ◆ Lahore Resolution formalised Muslim League's Pakistan demand
- ◆ Gandhi-Jinnah talks failed due to irreconcilable ideologies
- ◆ 1946 elections confirmed communal politics and League dominance
- ◆ Partition riots caused millions of deaths and displacements
- ◆ Refugee rehabilitation transformed cities like Delhi and Calcutta

Objective Questions

1. Who was the founder of the Muhammadan Literary and Scientific Society of Calcutta?
2. Who is regarded as the father of Muslim renaissance in India?
3. Name the English educator associated with the Aligarh College who is said to be the architect of Muslim separatism.
4. In which year the All India Muslim League was founded?
5. Which reform introduced the scheme of Separate Electorate?
6. Name the nationalist leader who popularised the Ganesh and Shivaji festivals as a means of propagating nationalist ideals to the masses.
7. In which year the Lucknow Pact was signed?
8. Name the Congress leader who initiated the formation of the Hindu Mahasabha.
9. Name the nationalist leader who stood against partition in the North Western Frontier Province.
10. Name the women social activists who made remarkable contributions to the rehabilitation of women affected by partition violence.

Answers

1. Nawab Abdool Lateef
2. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan
3. Theodore Beck
4. 1906
5. The Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909
6. Balagangadhara Tilak
7. 1916
8. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya
9. Khan Abdul Gafar Khan
10. Mridula Sarabai and Rameswari Nehru

Assignments

1. Discuss the social background that proved to be instrumental in the rise and growth of communalism in Indian politics.
2. Assess the importance of Lucknow Pact and Khilafat cause in the history of Indian national movement.
3. Briefly discuss the refugee rehabilitation in Calcutta.
4. Write a note on the impact of partition on women's lives.
5. Analyse the social consequences of the partition process.

Suggested Reading

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SGOU



UNIT

Integration of States

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ describe the political and territorial situation of India at the time of independence in 1947
- ◆ explain the constitutional and administrative challenges involved in integrating the Princely States into the newly independent Indian Union
- ◆ analyse the leadership and strategies of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and V.P. Menon in the process of political integration and nation-building
- ◆ discuss the major events and negotiations related to the accession of Hyderabad, Junagadh, and Jammu & Kashmir
- assess how the successful integration of states contributed to the political unity, territorial integrity, and federal character of postcolonial India

Prerequisites

At the time of India's independence in August 1947, the Indian subcontinent was not a single, unified country. It consisted of two main parts: British India, areas directly ruled by the British government and Native India, which comprised 565 Princely States ruled by local kings and princes. These states were under British paramountcy, meaning they had internal autonomy but recognised British supremacy in matters of defense and foreign affairs. When the Indian Independence Act of 1947 came into effect, this paramountcy lapsed. Each princely ruler was given the choice to join India or Pakistan, or to remain independent. This situation posed a serious challenge to the newly formed Indian government and how to unite these hundreds of states into a single political framework.

The task of integration was handled by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister of India, and his secretary V.P. Menon. Through a combination of persuasion, negotiation, and firm resolve, most states voluntarily acceded to India. However, a few such as Hyderabad, Junagadh, and Kashmir, required more complex political and military measures to achieve integration. The successful unification of these diverse regions laid the foundation for India's political stability and national unity, transforming a fragmented colonial structure into a modern democratic federation. Understanding this process helps learners appreciate the challenges of nation-building and the importance of leadership in shaping post-independence India.

Keywords

Integration, Cabinet Mission, Instrument of Accession, Two Nation Theory

Discussion

The Princely States of India varied widely in size and status. There were massive states among them like Kashmir and Hyderabad. But, on the other side there were many small chiefdoms consisting of territories equal to a dozen or fewer villages. The large princely states were the product of the *longue duree* of Indian history as well as British policy. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Indian states were perceived by the English East India Company as strategic allies in their struggle for commerce and empire against the other European powers such as the French, the Dutch etc.

The Company gained political significance following the decline of the Mughal Empire in the 18th century. The Company imposed treaties on Indian states, compelling them to recognise its supremacy. Although the territories governed by various Nawabs and Maharajas remained legally under their control, the British claimed the authority to appoint political residents to oversee the administration within these states. They also controlled succession in the Indian states and

extracted subsidies in lieu of the provision of administrative and military support. Very often, through forced treaties, the British government took over valuable areas from the states into its own control. For example, with few exceptions, Indian states were not allowed to have coastline boundaries under their control. There was also greater economic dependency for the Indian states upon the British government. The states relied on British India for raw materials, industrial goods and employment opportunities.

From the 1920s, the Indian National Congress (INC) had been urging the princely governments to allow political representation at least as equal to the standards in British India. For organising popular nationalist struggles in the princely states, there was the All India States Peoples Conference working under the aegis of INC with individual Praja Mandals affiliated to them. Indian princes did generally enjoy a bad reputation of fecklessness and dissoluteness with little care being invested in matters of administration. However, the princely governments in general

continued to be patrons of traditional Indian art forms.

1.2.1 Process of Integration

In 1946, there remained certain ambiguities regarding the constitutional status of the princely states in the political circles. The fate of the Princely States in India was not given significant attention during the Cabinet Mission discussions. Likewise, in Atlee's announcement of 20th February 1947 to the effect that the British Raj in India was going to end, the question of the future of Princely India was untouched. The June Third Declaration, which announced the final date of British departure from India, also avoided addressing the question concerning the position of the Princely States.

The accession and integration of the Princely States was a major challenge to the government of the newly-born Indian Union. However, this formidable task was successfully accomplished through the diplomatic skill, political wisdom, and resolute leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and V.P. Menon. Patel was the minister in charge of the States Department and Menon its secretary. In this matter, they were helped by Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy. Patel and Menon had well realised that, before actual independence came on 15th August 1947, the Princely States should be persuaded to join the Indian Union. After independence, they considered that it would be difficult to negotiate with the Princely States.

In the early months of 1947, Patel arranged a series of lunch parties with the Princely rulers through which he asked them to help the Indian National Congress and the interim government to frame a new constitution. The Princely States had to send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly that had already been in session since December 1946. There he wrote to the Diwans of large and influential Princely

States urging them to pursue their rulers to come to terms with the Congress.

The Princely State of Baroda decided to send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly. In April, Bikaner joined. The Maharaja of Bikaner urged upon all the princes to cooperate with the Constituent Assembly and thereby prove their patriotic credentials. A dozen more states, most of them from Rajasthan followed Bikaner in joining the Constituent Assembly. On June 27th 1947, the new States Department was formed replacing the Political Department of the British Raj administration. As mentioned earlier, Patel was the minister in charge and V.P. Menon was the secretary.

The geographical, defensive, and social and economic factors would not have permitted the native states as independent entities in India. The Indian States Department under Sardar Patel drew up an Instrument of Accession and invited the rulers of the native states to accede to the Indian Dominion by signing it. By the Instrument, the princes were required to hand over only the subjects of defence, foreign relations and communication. In other matters, their autonomy would be respected.

Sardar Patel appealed to the patriotism of Indian princes, urging unity for the nation's greatness and warning against disunity. He addressed the Indian princes thus, "By common endeavour, we can raise the country to a new greatness, while lack of unity will expose us to fresh calamities." To encourage cooperation, he offered Privy Purses as compensation. On 25 July 1947, Mountbatten addressed 75 major princes, stating that the Indian Independence Act had freed them from British obligations, technically making them independent. However, he warned that without new arrangements, chaos would follow. He advised the princes to align with the new dominions, emphasising practical challenges like defense, foreign affairs, and



communications that would be difficult to manage independently. The Instrument of Accession offered a solution by transferring these key powers to the Indian Union.

It is said that, due to the tremendous art of persuasion followed by Mountbatten, several princes starting with the Bikaner Raja began to sign the Instrument of Accession. As a result of the tactful approach of Mountbatten and the diplomacy of Patel and V.P. Menon, all the princely states except 3 had signed the Instrument of Accession before 15th August 1947. In the context of independence and British departure, Praja Mandals began to be active in many of the Princely States. In Mysore, a movement was started for full democratic rights. About 3000 people were arrested. In some states of Kathiawar and Orissa, protestors took possession of government properties, courts and prisons.

Vallabhbhai Patel and the Congress Party used the popular protests in princely states as an opportunity to push for their full integration into the Indian Union, which meant the end of their independent status. In return, rulers were allowed to keep their titles, privileges, and received a lifelong annual allowance known as the privy purse. Patel and V.P. Menon played key roles in this complex negotiation process, which involved diplomatic persuasion and addressing royal egos. The size of the privy purse varied based on a state's revenue, strategic importance, historical lineage, and martial traditions. Rulers were also permitted to retain their palaces and personal properties.

To reassure the princes, Sardar Patel offered a constitutional guarantee for the privy purses. V.P. Menon argued that the financial cost was minimal compared to the political and economic benefits of integration. He estimated that while the government would pay Rs.5 crores to the princes over ten years, revenues from the integrated states would be ten times higher. After

territorial integration, administrative reforms followed. Most princely states had outdated systems with no popular representation. The Ministry of States deployed trained officials from British India to implement modern governance and facilitated the formation of interim ministries ahead of elections. Several Maharajas were appointed as governors of provinces with the title 'Raja Pramukh'. In two years, over 500 autonomous states had been dissolved into 14 administrative units of the free Indian Union. Before 1947, certain Princely States stuck with reluctance to join the Indian Union. They are Travancore, Bhopal and Jodhpur.

1.2.1.1 Travancore

Travancore questioned the right of Congress to succeed the British as a paramount power. The Diwan of Travancore Sir C.P. Ramaswami Iyar expressed his belief as early as February 1946, when the British left India, Travancore would become an independent entity. The Indian Independence Act of 1947 stipulated that British Paramountcy over the princely states would cease with the withdrawal of British authority from India. On June 11, 1947, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar, the Diwan of Travancore, declared that the state intended to become an independent entity following the British departure. This declaration sparked widespread controversy both within Travancore and beyond. The state soon became the centre of intense political unrest, and the administration responded with repressive measures. A key moment in this period of turmoil was the police firing at Pettah, Trivandrum, which resulted in the deaths of three individuals, including a student named Rajendran.

Thereafter, on July 25, 1947, an attempt was made on the life of the Diwan during a public event at the Swati Tirunal Academy of Music in Trivandrum. Although he sustained only minor injuries, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar soon left Travancore permanently.

Following this incident, the Maharaja informed Lord Mountbatten, the Governor-General of India, of his decision to sign the Instrument of Accession, thereby integrating Travancore into the Indian Union.

1.2.1.2 Bhopal

Bhopal lying in central India was another state that wavered on the question of accession. Nawab of Bhopal was an opponent of Congress and an ally of Jinnah and the Muslim League. He was serving as the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. The decision of the British government to leave India deeply upset him and with great emotional anguish, he reported the perceived uncertainty of the political future of Indian princes in a letter to the Political Adviser to Lord Wavell in November 1946. In July 1947, the Nawab again corresponded with Lord Mountbatten, the then Viceroy with whom he was said to possess close friendship. He was reluctant to attend the meeting of the Chamber of Princes convened by Mountbatten on 25th July to discuss the matter of accession. In his letter to Mountbatten, the Nawab spoke about the prospect of Communist triumph in the subcontinent once the British left on 15th August 1947. In this letter, he also hinted that like Travancore, Bhopal would declare independence. But reports about the meeting of princes with Mountbatten on the 25th of July and the enormous impressions made by the Viceroy upon the princes pursuing them to accede seemed to have changed Nawab's mind. Later he wrote to Mountbatten expressing his willingness for accession with certain silly conditionalities about time.

1.2.1.3 Jodhpur

Jodhpur was an old state in Rajasthan with fairly large territory sharing borders with Pakistan. Hindu Raja of Jodhpur vacillated between joining India and Pakistan. He hoped that he would get better terms from the dominion of Pakistan. Jinnah offered him

full port facilities at Karachi, supply of arms and grain etc. While secret consultations in this regard were going on, K.M. Panikkar, a pro-nationalist bureaucrat, apprised the situation to Sardar Patel. If Jodhpur defected to Pakistan, this would have opened up possibilities for its contiguous states like Jaipur and Udaipur to follow suit. Patel intervened and obtained the consent of the Raja of Jodhpur. Persuasion from the Jodhpur nobles and village headmen and the Raja of Jaisalmer (an adjoining state) proved to be crucial in changing the mind of the Jodhpur Raja. The Raja was counselled about an uneasy situation which could have emerged for a Hindu chieftdom in an Islamic country.

Three states were reluctant to join the Indian Union on 15th August 1947. They were Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir. Of these three states, in Junagadh and Hyderabad, there were powerful political undercurrents in favour of merger with India. Political factors in Kashmir were a bit complicated by its geography and by the factor of religion of the population. On account of a variety of political situations including these aforementioned factors, its accession turned out to be a vexed issue. Let us discuss the political developments in each of these states.

1.2.1.4 Junagadh

Junagadh lies in the peninsula of Kathiawar in Gujarat. Its ruler was a Muslim Nawab with a preponderant Hindu population. It was surrounded by Indian territories on three sides and on the West, there was a coastline. Its chief port Veraval was about 325 nautical miles away from Karachi, the capital port city of Pakistan. Mohaba Khan, the Nawab of Junagadh under the persuasion of Diwan Sir Shah Nawaz Bhuto, a person closer to Muhammad Ali Jinnah on 14th of August declared that Junagadh would accede to Pakistan. It was legally possible for Junagadh to take that decision, but geographically it



didn't make any sense. It would not even stand in the face of Jinnah's 'Two Nation Theory' 'because 82 % of Junagadh's population were Hindus.

In September Pakistan accepted Junagadh's accession. It is said that Pakistan considered Junagadh as a counter-bargaining point for acceding Kashmir. It is to be noted that during this time, Kashmir with a Hindu Raja and largely Muslim population remained reluctant to join with either of the two dominions. Anyhow, Junagadh's accession to Pakistan offended the Indian leaders. V.P. Menon visited Junagadh and tried to meet the ruler. But the Nawab refused and Menon had to call upon the Diwan. He informed Sir Shah Nawaz that geographically and culturally Junagadh had closeness to India. Shah Nawaz did not dispute this, but expressed apprehension over the local public opinion, if the decision to accede was reversed. However, the Diwan agreed that a referendum would be held to decide the matter.

Meanwhile, a provisional government of Junagadh was set up at Cambay under the leadership of Samaldas Gandhi, a native of the state and a nephew of Mahatma Gandhi. This government became the vehicle of popular agitation within Junagadh. The Nawab fled to Pakistan in panic. Ten days later, Sir Shah Nawaz proposed handing over the administration of Junagadh to the Indian government, a process that was formally completed on 9 November 1947. Later a referendum was held in Junagadh in February 1948 to establish Indian legitimacy over Junagadh. In a referendum, about 91 % of the total electorate voted in favour of accession to India.

1.2.1.5 Hyderabad

The state of Hyderabad was situated in the Deccan Plateau with over 80,000 square miles of territory, and over 16 million population distributed into three language

groups Telugu, Kannada and Marathi. It was bounded in the North by the Central Provinces, in the West by Bombay and in the South and East by the Madras Presidency. 85% of the population were Hindus, but the Muslims held majority of the positions in the army, police and civil service. The ruler of Hyderabad was the Nizam Mir Usman Ali. During the period under discussion, he aspired to keep Hyderabad independent. To support his case in political circles, he enlisted the services of Sir Walter Monckton, a prominent English lawyer.

Hyderabad State Congress, Ittihad-ul-Muslimeen and the Communist Party were three important forces that dominated the political life of Hyderabad. The State Congress demanded the accession of Hyderabad to India. Kazim Razvi, an Aligarh-trained lawyer and passionate politician wedded to the idea of Muslim pride headed the Ittihad-ul-Muslimeen. This organisation was committed to protecting Muslim interests in public life. Under Razvi, Ittihad had promoted a paramilitary body called Razakars. Communists were very strong in the Telangana area. They organised armed insurrection and confiscated large estates. They distributed land to the landless peasants in areas such as Nalgonda, Warangal and Karimnagar. Thousands of villages were virtually freed from Nizam's administration.

On August 15th 1947, Congress workers raised Indian flags across Hyderabad and courted arrest. Ittihad distributed pamphlets in support of Hyderabad's independence. In England, the Conservative Party backed the case of Hyderabad in Parliament. Even Winston Churchill himself recognised the personal obligation of the British to support the interests of a state that chose to be independent of getting overborne with violence.

Jinnah too affirmed his resolve of endorsing Hyderabad's claim. Nizam was

ready to sign a treaty as an independent country with the government of India, but reluctant to sign the Instrument of Accession. In November 1947, Nizam signed a Stand Still Agreement with India. According to this, the arrangement forged between the British Raj and Hyderabad would continue with the successor government in India. The Stand Still Agreement provided the two parties some more time to settle the issue. The government of India appointed K.M. Munshi as an agent to carry forward discussions with Hyderabad. The Nizam appointed Mir Laik Ali as his new Diwan. As a good gesture Laik Ali included some Hindus in his government. But nothing less than accession satisfied the State Congress. However, Ittihad and Razakars had gained effective control over affairs in Hyderabad. By March 1948, the membership of Razakars rose to a million. Rizvi and Ittihad perceived the issue of Hyderabad as Hindu-Muslim conflict. The Congress had seen the matter as a fight between the forces of democracy and autocracy.

There had been vigorous propaganda in Hyderabad through Nizam's radio, newspaper, dramas, speeches etc. in favour of independent Hyderabad. Meanwhile consultations were going on between V.P. Menon and Laik Ali. India offered special exemptions to protect the dignity of the Nizam which included the proposal to retain troops. But none seemed to work. Former Hyderabad Diwan Sir Mirza Ismail attempted to mediate. He advised Nizam not to take the issue of Hyderabad accession to the Indian Union.

On the 21st of June 1948 Lord Mountbatten resigned from the office of Governor-General. This gave the chance for Patel to take decisive action. On September 13th a contingent of the Indian army under Colonel J.N. Chaudhuri was sent to Hyderabad. Within four days the army captured control over the state's administration. In the military operation about

45 Indian soldiers and over 2000 Razakars were killed. On the 17th of September Nizam made the radio announcement declaring a ban on Razakars and advised his people to live in cooperation with people in the rest of India. Six days later Nizam made another broadcast scorning Rizvi and Razakars. As part of the final settlement, Nizam was offered the title of *Rajapramukh*. Thus accession of Hyderabad to the Indian Union became a reality.

1.2.1.6 Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir was the most troubled Princely State as far as the integration process of the Indian Union was concerned. There were five major regions in the state; the Jammu area lies adjacent to Punjab, valley of Kashmir situated to the North of Jammu, mountains of Ladakh to the east of the valley and the thinly populated tracts of Gilgit and Baltistan. Jammu and Kashmir share borders with Afghanistan, Chinese Sinkiang and Tibet. Only a narrow tract of Afghan territories separated it from the Soviet Union. Its location gave the state a strategic importance. Since territories of the state lay contiguous to the territories of both Indian and Pakistani dominions, this importance assumed a new dimension.

The ruler of Kashmir was Hari Singh, a Hindu Raja with majority of the population being Muslims. Organised political movements in Jammu and Kashmir began with the formation of Fateh Kadal Reading Room Party in 1930. Under the auspices of the party, a memorandum representing Muslim grievances in government recruitment was about to be submitted to the Maharaja. However, one of the activists involved in the move was arrested and put to trial which led to a public agitation over the issue in 1931. In the ensuing conflict between the police and protesters, about twenty-one people had lost their lives. It was followed by communal violence in the valley in

which many Hindu shops were looted and burned. In 1932, the Jammu Kashmir Muslim Conference was formed to give shape to the growing opposition to the Maharaja. Its leading lights were Sheikh Abdulla, an Aligarh-educated political activist and Ghulam Abbas, a lawyer from Jammu. In 1938, this party transformed itself into a National Conference admitting Hindus and Sikhs to its fold. The National Conference demanded representative government in the state.

Committed to Hindu-Muslim unity and socialism, the National Conference under Sheikh Abdulla turned closer towards the Indian National Congress, particularly towards Jawaharlal Nehru. However a section of Muslim leaders under Ghulam Abbas defected from the National Conference and started organising on their own.

During the 1940s Abdulla's popularity grew. In 1946 he was imprisoned on charges of sedition following a public agitation over the question of ending monarchy in the state. Meanwhile the prospects of independence and partition became brighter. On the 15th of July 1946 Hari Singh announced that the Kashmiris would work out their destiny without dictations from outside. It is said that Prime Minister of Kashmir Ramchandra Kak was instrumental in implanting the idea of independent Kashmir in the mind of Hari Singh. Raja was repugnant to Congress and therefore could not think of joining India. He was equally disturbed over the fate of his Hindu kingdom in the Islamic state of Pakistan.

Anyhow, by the mid of August 1947, when Pakistan and India celebrated independence, Kashmir was not decided to accede with neither of the two states. Instead it was offered that Kashmir would sign a Standstill Agreement with the two dominions. Pakistan accepted the agreement, but India did not. September 1947 witnessed worsening

relations between Kashmir and Pakistan. Rail service between Sialkot in Western Punjab and Kashmir was suspended. Lorry traffic carrying goods was stopped on the Pakistani side of the border. Meanwhile, Hari Singh appointed two prime ministers in quick succession. First Kak was replaced by Janak Singh (a soldier) and later he was replaced by Mehr Chand Mahajan (a retired Punjab High Court judge). The latter had closeness to Congress.

Jawaharlal Nehru from the very beginning was particularly interested in acceding Kashmir to the Indian Union. However, Sardar Patel, though initially not disinclined towards Kashmir joining Pakistan had changed his mind after September 13th when Pakistan accepted the accession of Junagadh. On 27th of September Nehru wrote to Patel suggesting the release of Sheikh Abdulla from jail as a measure of enlisting the support of the National Conference Party to the state administration with a view to meet the challenge of Pakistani infiltration for which state administration was otherwise unequipped. On September 29, Sheikh Abdulla was released. In a speech at Hazratbal Mosque at Srinagar Abdulla called for an immediate transfer of power to the people of Kashmir. Representatives of a democratic Kashmir would decide whether the state should join India or Pakistan. The prospective government that Abdulla envisaged was one of national character including Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims.

Pakistan believed that the Muslim majority of Kashmir would ensure the state's accession to it. On the other hand, opinion on the Indian side was that since the National Conference, a non-sectarian party dominates the political scene, religion would not be a crucial factor in realising the accession of Kashmir. On the 12th of October, the deputy Prime Minister of Kashmir declared in Delhi that the state of Kashmir chose to keep friendly relations with both Pakistan and India and

would not accede to either of the two states. However, on 22nd of October, there had been tribal incursions from the border side of the Northwestern Frontier Provinces to Kashmir. Was this incursion a spontaneous one or a planned one; who inspired such an invasion, are some of the pertinent questions satisfactory answers for which still alludes. These non-clarities lay at the root of the Kashmir Issue. Indians believed that the tribals were pushed across the border by Pakistan and they were provided with rifles and ammunition. Whereas Pakistan disclaimed this and held that the tribal movement was a spontaneous one by the Pathan Muslims to the aid of co-religionists persecuted by a Hindu administration.

There was popular unrest in the Poonch district of Kashmir laying West to Srinagar sharing a border with Western Punjab, a Pakistani province. However, the NWFP (North Western Frontier Province) from where insurrections were organised lay further to the west. How far these two developments were interconnected is not clear.

In October 1947, a force of several thousand armed men invaded Kashmir from the North. On 22nd October 1947 they crossed the border that separated North West Frontier Provinces and Kashmir. They swiftly moved into the capital Srinagar. Most of these raiders were Pathans from what was now a province of Pakistan. They engaged in pillage, looting and rapine of both Hindus and Muslims alike. There was no worthy defence from the side of the Kashmir state army. The raiders moved quickly through the Jhelum valley in Kashmir. They took control of Muzaffarabad on Kishanganga near the border. On their way towards Srinagar from there, they had to face resistance from Brigadier Rajinder Singh and his forces at Uri. From Uri they advanced towards Mahuta, the site of a power station that supplied electricity to the capital city. They cut power supplies. There are

differences of opinion about the number of invaders. Some accounts hold that there were about 2000 where as some sources say they were about 13,000. They carried rifles and grenades and travelled in lorries. British officers serving in the Pakistani army and the Pakistani officials supported the campaign all along the northern route. After Mahuta, the invaders attacked the town of Baramulla. The town was looted with heavy casualties afflicted on common people irrespective of religion.

On October 24 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh wired the Indian government for military assistance. V.P. Menon was deputed for an on-site inspection. In the Defense Committee meeting where Sheikh Abdulla and M.C. Mahajan (Prime Minister of Kashmir) were also present along with Nehru, Patel and Mountbatten, it was decided that military assistance would be given to the state. As per Mountbatten's insistence Maharaja Hari Singh was asked to sign the Instrument of Accession. Accordingly V.P. Menon got the Instrument of Accession signed by the Maharaja on the 26th of October 1947. In the following days, more than 100 flights flew from Delhi to Kashmir carrying military and other supplies. With a strength of about 4000 troops in position armed with machine guns, the Indian army had thrown a protective ring around Srinagar. Gradually other pockets also began to be cleared out. During the second week of November 1947, Baramulla, Mahuta, Uri and other centers were cleared out of the raiders. With the onset of winter, the military operations were temporarily suspended. An interim government was set up in Kashmir under Sheikh Abdullah.

India could check the Pakistani aggression. Infiltrators were also driven out. Thus Kashmir became an integral part of the Indian Union. But Pakistan disputed the accession of Kashmir to India. Instead of expelling the aggressors from the occupied Kashmir (the Azad Kashmir) India referred the matter to



the U.N.O. The U.N. ordered a cease-fire on 1st January 1948. As a result, one-third of the Kashmir territory remains with Pakistan. The rest of Kashmir is with India. Now it has become an issue, the 'Kashmir Issue' between India and Pakistan.

Recap

- ◆ British treaties limited princely autonomy, ensuring strategic British control
- ◆ Congress pushed for representative governance in princely territories post-1920s
- ◆ Independence Act allowed states to join India, Pakistan, or remain independent
- ◆ Patel, Menon, Mountbatten led integration through diplomacy and persuasion
- ◆ Princes urged to accede via Instrument of Accession agreement
- ◆ Privy purses and titles offered to encourage royal cooperation
- ◆ Administrative reforms modernised princely governance post-accession to Indian Union
- ◆ Travancore sought independence, faced unrest, and later joined the Indian Union
- ◆ Bhopal's Nawab hesitated, later agreed after persuasion by Mountbatten
- ◆ Jodhpur considered Pakistan, chose India after political and noble influence
- ◆ Junagadh acceded to Pakistan, reversed after unrest and referendum
- ◆ Hyderabad resisted joining India, subdued by Indian military operation
- ◆ Kashmir's accession followed tribal invasion, triggering military intervention by India
- ◆ Kashmir dispute unresolved, with territory divided and taken to U.N.

Objective Questions

1. Which princely state was the first to declare independence rather than join India or Pakistan?
2. Which state's ruler was persuaded by promises of port access and supplies by Pakistan?

3. Who led the paramilitary Razakars in Hyderabad?
4. What was the result of the referendum held in Junagadh in 1948?
5. Who played a major role in persuading rulers through diplomacy to join India, along with Patel?
6. When did the Indian army enter Hyderabad under Operation Polo?
7. When did Junagadh officially transfer administration to India?
8. What was the name of the paramilitary force in Hyderabad?
9. When did Kashmir officially accede to India?
10. Who led the provisional government of Junagadh?

Answers

1. Travancore
2. Jodhpur
3. Kazim Razvi
4. Majority voted to join India
5. V. P. Menon
6. September 13, 1948
7. 9 November 1947
8. Razakars
9. October 1947
10. Samaldas Gandhi

Assignments

1. Write briefly about the major provisions of the Instrument of Accession drawn up by the States Department of the Government of India for the accession of Princely States in 1947.
2. Discuss the process of integration in the Princely State of Hyderabad.



3. Which were the three troubled states that resisted smooth integration to the Indian Union immediately before independence. Briefly discuss the process of their eventual integration.
4. Discuss the political scenario that led to the integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian Union in October 1947.
5. Assess the contributions of Sardar Patel and V.P. Menon in making the process of integration of Princely States a reality.

Suggested Reading

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UNIT

Assassination of Gandhi

Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ describe the socio- political context following independence and Partition
- ◆ explain the key events and circumstances that culminated in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi
- ◆ identify the major figures and organisations involved in the conspiracy
- ◆ analyse the legal and governmental responses to the assassination
- ◆ evaluate the national and international impact of Gandhi's death on India's political climate, communal relations, and moral consciousness

Prerequisites

The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on 30 January 1948 was one of the most tragic events in the early history of independent India. The nation had just gained freedom after nearly two centuries of British rule and was still recovering from the trauma of Partition, which had divided British India into India and Pakistan. The division had led to large-scale violence, forced migration, and the displacement of millions of people. In this fragile atmosphere, Gandhi remained a guiding moral force, urging people to stay calm, rebuild trust, and uphold peace among different religious communities. Although Gandhi held no official post in the new government, his influence was immense. He travelled across riot-affected areas, appealing to Hindus and Muslims to renounce hatred and violence.

Keywords

Assassination, Partition, Communalism, Non-violence, Conspiracy, Legal trial, Memorialisation



Discussion

1.3.1 Background

The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on 30 January 1948 marked a tragic turning point in India's transition from colonial rule to sovereign nationhood. Less than six months after India gained independence, this act of political violence sent shockwaves through the nation and the world. Gandhi, revered as the 'Father of the Nation', had not only led India's non-violent resistance against British rule but had also become a global symbol of peace, truth, and moral leadership.

Yet, even as India celebrated its freedom, the joy of independence was clouded by immense suffering. The Partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan in August 1947 triggered unprecedented communal violence, displacing nearly 15 million people and resulting in an estimated two million deaths. Gandhi, heartbroken by the scale of violence, immersed himself in efforts to restore communal harmony, travelling to the worst-affected areas, fasting for peace, and appealing to the conscience of all communities.

Gandhi's death, therefore, occurred not only in a time of political flux but also during one of the most emotionally volatile phases in Indian history. As Yasmin Khan, the British historian and novelist, observes, Gandhi's death became a "bridge" between the trauma of Partition and the nascent postcolonial statehood, linking the people and the government in a shared moment of mourning and reckoning.

1.3.2 Gandhi's Political Philosophy and Final Days

In the final months of his life, Mahatma Gandhi was a frail figure, yet spiritually vigorous, deeply engaged in healing a nation

wounded by Partition. His unwavering commitment to non-violence and truth, the cornerstones of his philosophy, had shaped India's freedom movement. However, as the nation took its first steps as an independent state, Gandhi found himself increasingly marginalised from the corridors of political power. Though often described as the

moral compass of India, his emphasis on unity, forgiveness, and non-violence faced resistance in a climate of rising polarisation and communal distrust.

Gandhi's philosophy of *ahimsa* (non-violence) and *satyagraha* (truth-force) had long been tools for moral awakening and political resistance. To him, these were not just political strategies but spiritual imperatives. He believed that true independence, or *swaraj*, required self-discipline and ethical living—not just the absence of colonial rulers. In his final writings, Gandhi expressed concern that India's leaders and citizens were celebrating political independence without committing to the moral and social duties that must accompany it.

As violence engulfed the newly formed nations of India and Pakistan, Gandhi did not rest. At the age of 78, he immersed himself in peace missions, first in Bengal and later in Delhi. His tools were simple: words, presence, prayer, and silence. In Delhi, he stayed at Birla House, a place that would soon become historically significant. He was actively engaging with different communities, including Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and refugees displaced by Partition. With each passing day, he sought to douse the fires of hatred that threatened to consume the fragile hope of peace.

During this time, Gandhi fasted multiple times to bring attention to communal violence

and to press for harmony. His most famous fast began on 13 January 1948. It was not just a spiritual act, but a powerful political message. “My fast,” he wrote, “is undoubtedly on behalf of the Muslim community. But it is equally for the Hindus and the Sikhs”. He called upon everyone to rise above hatred and revenge.

Despite his increasing distance from formal politics—he had refused to hold any office in the new government—Gandhi remained intellectually and emotionally involved with India’s future. On 29 January 1948, the night before his assassination, he worked late, finalising what he called his “last will and testament.” In it, he proposed that the Indian National Congress, having fulfilled its role in achieving independence, should now dissolve as a political party and transform into a volunteer organisation devoted to public service. This idea was radical—it suggested a rejection of power and politics in favour of ethical governance by the people themselves. It also risked alienating those who had only just entered positions of authority.

To Gandhi, the essence of India’s future lay in moral integrity and social harmony. His conversations, writings, and even his silences in those last months reflect a man carrying the weight of an entire nation’s conscience. He was aware that the path he offered was hard and unpopular, but he never doubted its necessity. As violence continued around him, he often said that he would rather die than see India descend into hatred. In a poignant moment just weeks before his death, he reportedly said, “If I die of disease or natural death, then my people will have failed me. But if someone kills me, then it will be my victory”.

Gandhi’s final days, then, were not of retirement but of intense engagement. Despite his age and frailty, he remained deeply immersed in guiding India’s moral

course. His belief that peace must be practised even amid provocation became not just a philosophical stance but, tragically, a fatal one. His end, as would soon be seen, would mirror his ideals—standing in prayer, refusing security, and open to all who came to him, even the one who bore a weapon.

1.3.3 The Conspiracy

The discussion of Gandhi’s assassination is incomplete without understanding the mind and motives of his killer, Nathuram Vinayak Godse. Born in 1910 in Maharashtra into a conservative Hindu family, Godse was, by profession, a tailor and editor of a small Marathi newspaper. More importantly, he was a man shaped by the ideological churnings of the time, drawn towards radical nationalist ideas that viewed Gandhi’s philosophy of non-violence and religious harmony as dangerous compromises rather than noble ideals.

Godse’s motivations, as laid out in his courtroom statement, reveal a deeply political justification for the act. He declared that the assassination was not an act of personal hatred but a political necessity. In his own words, he said he believed Gandhi had “failed the Hindu community” and blamed him for the suffering caused by Partition.

Godse was not acting alone. The conspiracy to kill Gandhi involved a group of men, many of whom were influenced by hardline interpretations of national identity and religious pride. These conspirators had planned an earlier attempt on Gandhi’s life just ten days before the actual assassination. On 20 January 1948, a failed bombing attempt at Birla House exposed the serious intent behind the plot. A man named Madanlal Pahwa, involved in this earlier attempt, was arrested and confessed that the group would try again. Despite this warning, security around Gandhi remained minimal. He had always opposed police protection for



himself, and the intelligence response was inadequately coordinated.

The group of conspirators included not only Godse but also his associate Narayan Dattatraya Apte, who was instrumental in organising logistics. Others were involved in different ways, from providing weapons to scouting Gandhi's daily movements. Their planning, although not elaborate by modern standards, was deliberate and committed. Godse obtained a Beretta pistol, sourced through underground channels, and practised with it. The group coordinated their movements in Delhi in the days leading to 30 January.

What is striking about Godse's testimony in court is the lack of remorse. He stated calmly that he bowed to Gandhi before shooting him and claimed to have fired three bullets at close range.

His confession ran over 30,000 words and took more than five hours to read. He presented himself as a patriot, convinced that Gandhi's approach was leading India to ruin. He declared his actions as an expression of nationalist duty, rather than personal vendetta.

However, many historians have pointed out that Godse's logic was not only deeply flawed but also blind to the realities of Gandhi's mission. Gandhi had always insisted on the protection of minorities, equality, and moral justice, not to please any one community, but because he believed it was the right path for India's long-term unity and dignity. Nevertheless, to men like Godse, such moral idealism appeared naive, if not outright harmful.

In examining the conspiracy, scholars have also debated how such a plot could be carried out when there had already been one failed attempt. The lack of sufficient security measures, bureaucratic lapses, and a failure to assess the seriousness of threats allowed the assassins to succeed. The inquiry

reports later revealed miscommunication between the authorities in different regions and a general underestimation of the risk to Gandhi's life.

1.3.4 The Assassination – 30 January 1948

The date of 30 January 1948 stands as one of the most defining and sorrowful moments in modern India's history. On that day, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated while walking to his regular evening prayer meeting at Birla House in New Delhi. The event was swift, shocking, and deeply symbolic—a moment when the nation, still struggling to recover from the trauma of Partition and build a stable identity, lost its most revered leader to an act of violence.

Gandhi had spent the day in quiet reflection and discussions. That evening, as he left his room slightly later than usual, he was assisted by two of his grand-nieces, Manu and Abha, whom he often referred to as his “walking sticks.” He leaned on them as he made his way across the garden towards the prayer ground. A small crowd had gathered as usual. Among them was Nathuram Godse, who had positioned himself in close proximity to Gandhi's path.

According to eyewitness accounts and verified reports, Godse stepped forward from the crowd, greeted Gandhi with a respectful gesture, and then fired three bullets at close range using a small-calibre Beretta automatic pistol. The bullets struck Gandhi in the abdomen and chest. Reports state that Gandhi, mortally wounded, brought his hands together in a gesture that some interpreted as a sign of forgiveness or reverence. He collapsed to the ground moments later.

The entire episode lasted only a few seconds. Smoke filled the air, and confusion spread rapidly. In the initial moments, many in the crowd were unaware of what had happened. It was only when Gandhi was

carried back into Birla House that the grim reality began to sink in. He was laid on a cot, his head resting in the lap of one of his nieces. Despite efforts by those present, there was no medical aid available on site that could revive him. Gandhi had passed away.

Eyewitnesses, including journalists such as Vincent Sheean and close associates like Manuben, have given detailed accounts of that moment. Their descriptions are marked by simplicity and sorrow. Sheean described how the peaceful atmosphere of the garden was suddenly shattered by gunfire. Manuben, who was walking alongside Gandhi, recounted how the prayer beads she carried fell to the ground as she was pushed aside just before the shots rang out.

Following the shooting, the assassin was overpowered by members of the crowd and taken into custody. There was initial uncertainty about who had committed the act and why. However, as more information emerged, it became clear that this was the culmination of a planned conspiracy, and not an isolated incident.

The immediate emotional impact of the assassination was profound. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing the nation by radio later that evening, spoke with a heavy heart: “The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere”. His words reflected not just personal grief but the collective sense of loss felt across the country.

Gandhi’s body was placed on public display at Birla House for the thousands who came to pay their last respects. People from all walks of life—men, women, children, farmers, workers, and officials—streamed in. His final journey on 31 January to the banks of the Yamuna River, where he was cremated, was attended by vast crowds estimated in the hundreds of thousands.

The assassination was not just a tragic loss of a national leader, it was a moment of reckoning for a young republic. It showed how fragile peace could be, even in the hands of a man who had dedicated his life to it. It also brought into sharp focus the need for stronger institutions, clearer safeguards, and a more committed pursuit of national unity.

Above all, the assassination of Gandhi was a reminder that while political freedom had been won, the moral and social values necessary to sustain it required constant vigilance and collective effort. In that silent garden of Birla House, amid prayer flags and fading sunlight, India’s first citizen of conscience fell—not in anger, not in fear, but walking calmly towards a prayer meeting, embodying the ideals he held till his final breath.

1.3.5 The Aftermath

The news of Mahatma Gandhi’s assassination on the evening of 30 January 1948 spread rapidly across India and the world, triggering a wave of shock, grief, and confusion. For a nation that had only recently gained independence, the loss of its most iconic moral figure was not just a personal tragedy—it was a national crisis. Gandhi had come to symbolise the moral foundation of India’s freedom struggle. His death, at the hands of an Indian, forced an immediate and painful introspection across all levels of society.

In New Delhi, people poured into the streets, many in disbelief. At Birla House, where Gandhi’s body lay in state, crowds began gathering within hours. As described in contemporary accounts, his body was placed on a simple wooden cot, his head resting gently on the lap of a family member. He was dressed in his familiar khadi shawl, which had been stained by blood during the shooting.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru addressed the nation that same night through an emotional radio broadcast. His words, remembered by generations since, were both an expression of grief and a call for calm:

“The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere... The Father of the Nation is no more... But the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. For a thousand years that light will be seen in this country, and the world will see it”.

Despite calls for peace, there were isolated incidents of violence in the immediate aftermath. In some regions, anger turned into mob unrest. In Bombay (now Mumbai), for example, riots broke out as shocked citizens struggled to process the magnitude of what had happened. These incidents, however, were quickly contained by local authorities. Security forces were deployed in sensitive areas to prevent further escalation, and public appeals for peace were broadcast nationwide.

Gandhi’s funeral was held on 31 January 1948. His body was taken in a procession through the streets of Delhi. The scale of public participation was extraordinary. An estimated one million people gathered along the route, with millions more lining roadsides and rooftops. People travelled from distant towns and villages, many walking long distances to have one last glimpse of the man they considered a saint.

The final rites were performed on the banks of the Yamuna River, a tributary of the sacred Ganga. As per Gandhi’s wishes, his body was cremated in a traditional manner.

Internationally, the assassination was met with widespread sorrow. Leaders from across the world paid tribute to Gandhi. U.S. President Harry S. Truman described Gandhi as “a great Indian nationalist” and a leader of global significance, noting that “not only the people of India but all peoples will be inspired by his sacrifice”. Newspapers

around the world covered the assassination with large headlines and detailed reports, underlining Gandhi’s impact far beyond India’s borders.

In India, Gandhi’s death also had immediate institutional consequences. Mourning ceremonies were observed nationwide, and flags were flown at half-mast. Public offices closed temporarily, and several states declared periods of official mourning. Yet amid the grief, there was also a growing concern about national stability. Many feared that Gandhi’s absence would create a vacuum—one that could be exploited by extremism, polarisation, or political opportunism.

Despite these fears, the days following the assassination also saw a remarkable sense of unity and collective resolve. The public grief acted as a unifying force across diverse regions and communities. In many ways, Gandhi’s death became a reaffirmation of the values he had lived for. Schools, offices, and civic organisations across the country began hosting prayer meetings and discussions about Gandhi’s ideals, particularly non-violence, tolerance, and social justice.

1.3.6 Legal Proceedings

The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on 30 January 1948 immediately prompted a high-level investigation and legal response. The Indian authorities acted swiftly to apprehend those involved, and within hours of the crime, the primary assailant, Nathuram Godse, was in police custody. Over the following days, more individuals suspected of involvement in the conspiracy were arrested. What followed was one of the most closely followed trials in the early years of independent India—a legal proceeding that aimed not only to punish the guilty but also to re-establish public confidence in law, order, and justice.

The trial began in May 1948, and was held inside the historic Red Fort in Delhi, a symbolic venue that had also hosted the trials of Indian National Army officers during the final phase of British rule. In all, nine people were charged in connection with the conspiracy to assassinate Gandhi. They included Nathuram Godse, Narayan Apte, Gopal Godse (Nathuram's brother), and several others who had assisted in planning or executing the plot.

The prosecution's case was based on a combination of eyewitness accounts, physical evidence, and the confessions of some of the accused. It was clear from the outset that this was a premeditated act involving multiple individuals. The earlier failed attempt on 20 January 1948, in which a bomb had been thrown near Gandhi during a prayer meeting, had already indicated that his life was under threat. This incident, and the information provided by the arrested conspirator Madanlal Pahwa, formed a key part of the case. Despite this warning, Gandhi had refused to accept enhanced personal security, remaining consistent with his belief in openness and non-violence.

The trial concluded in February 1949. The court found Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte guilty of murder and sentenced them to death. Six other conspirators were given life imprisonment. V.D. Savarkar was acquitted due to lack of evidence. The sentences reflected the severity of the crime but were also carefully measured in accordance with legal procedure. Importantly, the court proceedings avoided any sensationalism and were conducted in a manner that upheld judicial propriety.

Godse and Apte were hanged at Ambala Central Jail on 15 November 1949. The execution was carried out under tight security and without public spectacle. The authorities maintained a solemn and restrained approach,

mindful of the sensitive nature of the crime and its potential to provoke unrest.

The legal response to Gandhi's assassination also extended beyond the courtroom. A commission of inquiry, known as the Kapur Commission, was later set up to investigate whether the assassination could have been prevented. The Commission's report, submitted in 1969 after several years of investigation, pointed to administrative failures and communication gaps between regional police forces. It concluded that despite earlier warnings, the necessary protective measures had not been implemented, and that the security arrangements around Gandhi had been woefully inadequate.

While the trial provided legal closure, it did not erase the sense of loss or the moral shock that the assassination had inflicted on the national psyche. It did, however, reinforce the principle that acts of violence, regardless of their ideological motivations, would be dealt with under the rule of law. This commitment to constitutional justice, even in the face of profound national grief, was seen as a foundational moment for the legal and democratic institutions of independent India.

1.3.7 Reactions

The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi was more than just the loss of a national leader; it was a moment of collective soul-searching for the newly independent Indian republic. In the immediate aftermath of the event, leaders, institutions, and the general public were compelled to confront not only their grief but also difficult questions about national identity, unity, and the dangers of ideological extremism.

One of the earliest and most powerful reflections came from Jawaharlal Nehru. He also took that moment to urge Indians to reject hatred and remain steadfast in the

path of peace. This appeal was not just rhetorical—it was aimed at preventing the kind of retaliatory violence that had become tragically common during the months of Partition. His tone combined sorrow with responsibility, seeking to stabilise a grieving public and reassure them that the democratic foundations of the new republic would hold firm.

This unified response was also supported by the deliberate restraint exercised by public authorities. Law enforcement agencies across various regions were put on high alert, and preventive measures were taken to discourage inflammatory speeches or gatherings. Civic institutions worked to ensure that mourning remained dignified and non-provocative. The solemnity of Gandhi's funeral procession—attended by an estimated one million people—served as a public demonstration of grief that transcended political, regional, and religious differences.

Yet, Gandhi's death also compelled deeper reflection within India's governing structures. It exposed vulnerabilities in the state's ability to manage ideological dissent, especially when such dissent turned violent. The government initiated steps to assess the internal threats to public order and democratic stability. While maintaining its commitment to democratic values, the state also began to reinforce the boundaries of lawful conduct. This included increased attention to civic education, national integration, and the development of a legal framework to deal with violent conspiracies without compromising constitutional rights.

Public discourse during this period also underwent a shift. Newspapers, journals, and intellectual forums began to more critically examine the role of ideology in shaping public behaviour. Writers questioned how India, a country shaped by a non-violent independence movement, could produce individuals who would resort to political

assassination. These debates were conducted in academic and public spheres, often focusing on the responsibility of educational institutions, the media, and civil society in promoting a culture of tolerance and mutual respect.

In rural India, where Gandhi had focused much of his work, the shock of his death was no less profound. Reports from villages described quiet ceremonies and spontaneous gatherings where people lit lamps and offered prayers. For many, Gandhi had not just been a leader but a personal symbol of dignity and simplicity. His passing was felt in both emotional and practical terms—as a loss of guidance in a world that had suddenly become more uncertain.

The mourning rituals that followed Gandhi's death, including the immersion of his ashes in rivers across India, became important acts of national reaffirmation. Historian Yasmin Khan describes how these rituals helped “link the distant state with the people,” allowing a new kind of relationship between the citizen and the republic to emerge.

1.3.8 Memorialisation and Cultural Memory

In the years following Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, India and the world gradually transformed the memory of the event into acts of remembrance that extended far beyond the physical location of Birla House. The process of memorialisation—through monuments, rituals, literature, cinema, and educational narratives—played a significant role in shaping the public understanding of Gandhi's life, death, and legacy. This transformation was not only a tribute to a historical figure but also an attempt to embed his values into the moral framework of the newly independent Indian state.

Immediately after Gandhi's cremation on the banks of the Yamuna River, his ashes

were divided and sent to different parts of India and abroad. As historian Yasmin Khan observes, the distribution of Gandhi's ashes helped link "the distant state with the Indian people," forming a bridge between the central government and the public during a time of uncertainty and transition.

Birla House, where Gandhi had spent his final months and where he was assassinated, was later converted into a national memorial known as 'Gandhi Smriti'. The room where he lived has been preserved, and the path he took to his final prayer meeting is marked with stone footsteps. Visitors come not just to see the site, but to reflect on the ideals Gandhi stood for. The space is quiet and contemplative, reinforcing the principle that the legacy of Gandhi is not only political but deeply personal and moral.

Beyond physical sites, Gandhi's assassination left a lasting impact on cultural expression. Indian cinema, literature, and theatre have returned repeatedly to the moment of his death—not simply to portray it, but to question and reinterpret its meaning. One of the most influential portrayals came in the form of the 1982 film *Gandhi*, directed by Richard Attenborough. The film opens with the assassination and moves backward, tracing Gandhi's life and message. This cinematic representation reached audiences worldwide and contributed to a broader global understanding of Gandhi's role in Indian history.

In more introspective forms of cultural memory, artists and writers have explored the psychological and ethical dimensions of Gandhi's death. The play *Final Solutions* and films like *Hey Ram* do not only focus on the event but probe the inner tensions of a society struggling to uphold ideals in the face of

violence and change. These portrayals often present Gandhi not as a flawless saint but as a man who challenged his contemporaries and asked difficult moral questions, some of which remain unresolved even today.

Public education, too, has played a vital role in memorialising Gandhi's life and death. His biography, quotations, and philosophy are part of school curricula throughout India. National holidays such as Gandhi Jayanti (his birth anniversary, 2 October) and Martyrs' Day (30 January) are observed with solemnity in schools, offices, and government institutions. On these days, silent prayers, speeches, and community service projects are organised, keeping his ideals alive in public consciousness.

At the international level, Gandhi's image has transcended his immediate political context. Leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and the Dalai Lama have cited him as an inspiration. The United Nations recognises 2nd October as the *International Day of Non-Violence*, further elevating Gandhi's legacy from national remembrance to global ethical significance.

The stone footsteps at Gandhi Smriti, the silence observed every 30 January, the countless statues and street names—all these are designed to remind citizens of the values Gandhi lived and died for: peace, truth, justice, and compassion. In a diverse and complex democracy like India, these reminders are more than symbolic. They are calls to conscience.

In this way, Gandhi's memory continues to shape Indian public life—not as a rigid icon of the past, but as a living presence that still speaks to the aspirations, anxieties, and ethical questions of the present.

Recap

- ◆ Gandhi assassinated on 30 January 1948
- ◆ Birla House, New Delhi – site of murder
- ◆ Nathuram Godse – primary assassin
- ◆ Communal violence in post-Partition period
- ◆ Gandhi's efforts for Hindu-Muslim unity
- ◆ Fast unto death for communal harmony
- ◆ Godse's ideological roots in extremism
- ◆ Failed attempt on 20 January 1948
- ◆ Minimal security for Gandhi
- ◆ Godse's trial and 30,000-word statement
- ◆ Execution of Godse and Narayan Apte
- ◆ Role of Nehru and national mourning
- ◆ One million at Gandhi's funeral procession
- ◆ National introspection and restraint
- ◆ Birla House became Gandhi Smriti
- ◆ UN declared 2nd October as Day of Non-Violence
- ◆ Educational and artistic memorials emerged
- ◆ Gandhi's values remain guiding light

Objective Questions

1. Who was Gandhi's assassin?
2. What was the date of the assassination of Gandhi?
3. Where was Gandhi assassinated?
4. Who addressed Gandhi as 'light of the Nation'?
5. Who was the Prime Minister of India at the time of Gandhi's assassination?

6. What triggered communal violence in 1947?
7. Where was the trial of Gandhi's assassins held?
8. When were Nathuram Godse executed?
9. When did the trial of Gandhi's assassins begin?
10. When did Gandhi begin his final fast?

Answers

1. Godse
2. 30 January
3. Birla House
4. Jawaharlal Nehru
5. Jawaharlal Nehru
6. Partition
7. Red Fort
8. 1949
9. 1948
10. January 13, 1948

Assignments

1. Analyse the political and social climate that contributed to Gandhi's assassination. Discuss the factors and key events that led to this tragic moment in history.
2. Critically evaluate how Gandhi's actions during the Partition of India reflected his core values, including non-violence and religious harmony.
3. Examine the motivations behind the conspiracy to assassinate Gandhi. How was the plan conceived, and what were the driving factors for the perpetrators?



4. Assess the immediate and long-term reactions to Gandhi's assassination both within India and internationally. How did his death impact various political and social movements?
5. Discuss the legal proceedings that followed the assassination of Gandhi. What were the significant trials, and how did the judicial system handle the case?

Suggested Reading

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1. Kantha, Sachi Sri. "Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi: A 75th Anniversary Review", *International Medical Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 2023.
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BLOCK

Making of the Republic



UNIT

Legacy of National Movement

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ identify the major phases, movements, and turning points of the Indian freedom struggle
- ◆ explain the contributions of key leaders to the political, social, and ideological development of the national movement
- ◆ analyse how the Indian national movement fostered a collective sense of national identity and unity among a diverse population
- ◆ evaluate how the struggle for freedom laid the foundations for India's democratic and constitutional institutions
- ◆ assess the movement's role in shaping core modern Indian values

Prerequisites

Indian nationalism emerged as a modern political and social movement against colonial domination, combining the idea of self-rule and collective identity with mass mobilisation across regions, languages, castes, and religions. By the mid-20th century, British rule had become unsustainable due to global pressures and growing Indian resistance, and although colonialism brought administrative unity, it also created deep inequalities that strengthened the nationalist response. As independence approached in 1947, national leaders faced the challenges of ending foreign rule and building a democratic, secular, and inclusive nation. Despite internal divisions and the trauma of Partition, the movement succeeded in embedding democratic values within India's political culture. The Indian National Congress functioned as a democratic forum encouraging debate and dissent, while leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, and Patel promoted non-violence, equality, and secular citizenship, principles that later shaped

the Indian Constitution. Economically, the movement emphasised self-reliance, industrialisation, and a strong developmental state, with Gandhi supporting village industries and Nehru advocating modern planning. Thus, the national movement's legacy lies not only in securing independence but in shaping the core values and institutions of the Indian Republic, including democracy, secularism, social justice, and economic self-reliance.

Keywords

Nationalism, Non-violence, *Satyagraha*, Self-reliance, Secularism, Socialism, Democracy, *Dharma*

Discussion

2.1.1 Legacy of the National Movement

There had been a strong and abiding impact of the nationalist movement on the making of post-independent India as a free democratic nation-state. Therefore it is worthwhile to make an appreciation of the legacy of the freedom movement as a prelude to understanding the contemporary India. While India inherited its economic and administrative structures from the pre-colonial and colonial periods, the values, ideals, vision and well-defined, and comprehensive ideology that would inspire nation-building were derived from the national movement. Representing the Indian people, it incorporated various trends across the political spectrum - from the right to the left - that were committed to its ideological goals. It sought to exclude only the communalists and those ideologies loyal to the colonial rulers.

These goals and values were, moreover, not confined to the intellectuals and the middle classes. During the era of mass politics, tens of thousands of the most humble cadres disseminated them among the common people in the urban as well

as rural areas. Consequently, these ideals were to play a critical role in integrating and keeping together Indian society and polity in the last seven decades. They served to link the national liberation movement with efforts to develop India, in what Jawaharlal Nehru characterised as 'a continuing revolution.'

2.1.1.1 National Movement: Its Character

The Indian nationalist movement was one of the most significant mass movements in world history. After 1919, it was built around the basic notion that the people had to and could play an active role in politics and in their own liberation, and it succeeded in politicising and drawing into political action a large part of the Indian people. Mahatma Gandhi, who mobilised millions into politics, all his life propagated the view that the people and not leaders created a mass movement, whether for the overthrow of the colonial regime or for social transformation.

Satyagraha, as a form of struggle, was based on the active participation of the people and on the sympathy and support of the non-participating millions. In fact, unlike a violent revolution, which could be waged by a minority of committed cadres

and fighters, a non-violent revolution needed the political mobilisation of millions and the passive support of the vast majority.

It may be pointed out that it was because of the long experience of this kind of political participation by common people that the founders of the Indian Republic, who also led the freedom struggle in its last phase, could repose full faith in their political capacity. The leaders unhesitatingly introduced adult franchises despite widespread poverty and illiteracy. The Indian national movement was fully committed to a polity based on representative democracy and the full range of civil liberties for the individual. It provided the experience through which these two could become an integral part of Indian political thinking.

From the very beginning, the movement popularised democratic ideas and institutions among the people and struggled for the introduction of parliamentary institutions on the basis of popular elections. Starting from the turn of the twentieth century, the nationalists demanded the introduction of an adult franchise. Throughout, the movement struggled to expand the semi-democratic political arena and prevent the rulers from limiting the existing space within which legal political activities, peaceful political agitations, and mass struggle could be organised.

The Congress ministries formed in 1937, visibly extended civil liberties to the resurgent peasants', workers' and students' movements as well as to radical groups and parties such as the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party.

From its foundation in 1885, the Indian National Congress, the main political organ of the national movement, was organised on democratic lines. It relied upon discussion at all levels as the chief mode for the formation of its policies and arriving at political discussions. Its policies and resolutions were

publicly discussed, debated, and then voted upon. Some of the most important decisions in its history were taken after rich and heated debates and on the basis of open voting. For example, the decision in 1920 to begin the Non-Cooperation Movement was taken with 1336 votes for and 884 votes against Gandhi's resolution.

Similarly, at the Lahore session of the Congress in 1929, where Gandhi was asked to take charge of the coming Civil Disobedience Movement, a resolution sponsored by him condemning the bomb attack on the Viceroy's train by the revolutionary terrorists was passed by a narrow majority of 942 votes to 794 votes. During the Second World War, Gandhi's stand on cooperation with the war efforts was rejected by the Congress in January 1942.

The Congress did not insist on an identity of viewpoints or policy approaches within its ranks. It allowed dissent and not only tolerated but encouraged different and minority opinions to be openly held and freely expressed. In fact, dissent became a part of its style. At independence, the Congress, thus, had the experience of democratic functioning and struggle for civil liberties for over sixty years. Furthermore, the democratic style of functioning was not peculiar to the Congress. Most other political organisations in the mainstream such as the Congress Socialist party, trade unions and Kisan Sabhas, students', writers' and women's organisations and professional associations functioned in the manner of political democracies.

The major leaders of the movement were committed wholeheartedly to civil liberties. It is worth quoting them. For example, Lokamanya Tilak proclaimed that "liberty of the Press and liberty of speech give birth to a nation and nourish it". Gandhiji wrote in 1922: "We must first make good the right of free speech and free association ... We

must defend these elementary rights with our lives.” And again in 1939, Civil liberty, consistent with the observance of non-violence, is the first step towards Swaraj. It is the breath of political and social life. It is the foundation of freedom. There is no room there for dilution or compromise. It is the water of life. I have never heard of water being diluted. It thus becomes clear that Gandhiji was fully committed to liberal, democratic values-only he also saw their deficiencies and believed that the existing liberal democratic structure, as prevailing in the West, was not adequate in enabling the people to control the wielders of political power”.

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in 1936, "If civil liberties are suppressed a nation loses all vitality and becomes impotent for anything substantial". Further, the resolution on fundamental rights, passed by the Karachi Congress in 1931, guaranteed the rights of free expression of opinion through speech or the Press and freedom of association.

The consensus on the practice of non-violence during the national movement also contributed to the creation of a temper of democracy in the country. Discussion, debate, and persuasion, backed by public opinion, were emphasised for bringing about political and social change as opposed to glorification of violence which lies at the heart of authoritarianism.

The defence of civil liberties was also not narrowly conceived in terms of a single group or viewpoint. Political trends and groups otherwise critical of each other and often at opposite ends of the political or ideological spectrum vigorously defended each other's civil rights. The Moderates like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjee and others defended the Extremist leader, Tilak's right to speak and write what he liked. Congressmen, votaries of non-violence, defended Bhagat Singh and other

revolutionary terrorists being tried in the Lahore and other conspiracy cases as well as the Communists being tried in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. In 1928, the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill - aimed at suppressing trade unions, the left wing, and the Communists - were opposed in the Central Legislative Assembly not only by Motilal Nehru but also by conservatives such as Madan Mohan Malaviya and M.R. Jayakar, as well as by political spokespersons of the Indian capitalists like Ghanshyam Das Birla and Purshottamdas Thakurdas.

It was the national movement and not the bureaucratic, authoritarian colonial state that indigenised, popularised, and rooted then in India. The colonial administration and ideologies not only tampered with civil liberties and resisted the nationalist demand for the introduction of a parliamentary system based on popular elections but, from the middle of the nineteenth century, promoted the view that for geographical, historical, and social-cultural reasons, India was unfit for democracy. It was in opposition to this colonial ideology and practice that the national movement, influenced deeply by democratic thought and traditions of the enlightenment, succeeded in making democracy and civil liberty basic elements of the Indian political ethos.

If free India could start and persist with a democratic polity, it was because the national movement had already firmly established the civil libertarian and democratic tradition among the Indian people. It was this tradition which was reflected in the Indian Constitution and which proved wrong Cassandras who had repeatedly predicted that democracy and civil liberties would not survive in a society so divided by language, religion, caste and culture. It is this tradition which explains why multi-party democracy and civil liberties have met different fates in India and Pakistan, though both equally constituted colonial India. The political party (and its



politics) that brought about Pakistan was not known for its defence of civil liberties, or its functioning on democratic lines, or its tolerance towards its political opponents. Democracy was not a significant part of its political culture. Besides, the national movement and its political culture were weak precisely in the areas which came to constitute Pakistan.

Over the years, the nationalist movement successfully created an alternative to colonial and pre-colonial political culture based on authoritarianism, bureaucratism, obedience, and paternalism. Its ideology and culture of democracy and civil liberties were based on respect for dissent, freedom of expression, the majority principle, and the right of minority opinions to exist and develop.

2.1.1.2 Economic Underpinnings of the National Movement

The Indian national movement developed a complex and sophisticated critique of the basic features of India's colonial economy, especially of its subordination to the needs of the British economy. On the basis of this critique, the movement evolved a broad economic strategy to overcome India's economic backwardness and underdevelopment. This was to form the basis of India's economic thinking after independence. The vision of a self-reliant independent economy was developed and popularised. Self-reliance was defined not as autarchy but as avoidance of a subordinate position in the world economy. As Jawaharlal Nehru put it in 1946, "self-reliance does not exclude international trade, which should be encouraged, but with a view to avoid economic imperialism."

At the same time the nationalist emphasised the close link between industry and agriculture. Industrial development was seen as essential for rural development, for

it alone could reduce population pressure on land and rural unemployment. Within industrialisation, the emphasis was on creating an indigenous heavy capital goods or machine-making sector, whose absence was seen as a cause of both economic dependence and underdevelopment. Simultaneously, for essential consumer goods, the nationalists advocated reliance on medium, small-scale, and cottage industries. Small-scale and cottage industries were to be encouraged and protected as a part of the development strategy of increasing employment.

Indian nationalists were opposed to the unrestricted entry of foreign capital because it replaced and suppressed Indian capital, especially under conditions of foreign political domination. According to them, real and self-reliant development could occur only through indigenous capital. On the other hand, the nationalists averred that if India was politically independent and free to evolve its own economic policies, it might use foreign capital to supplement indigenous efforts, because of its vast capital requirements and need to import machinery and advanced technology from other countries.

During the 1930's and 1940's, a basic restructuring of the agrarian relations also became one of the objectives of the national movement. All intermediary rent-receivers such as the zamindars and other landlords were to be abolished and agriculture was based on peasant proprietors.

An active and central role was envisaged for the state in economic development by the nationalists. Rapid industrialisation, in particular, needed a comprehensive policy of direct and systematic state intervention. Economic planning by the government and the massive development of the public sector were widely accepted in the 1930's. The state was to develop large-scale and key industries apart from infrastructure, such as power, irrigation, roads, and water supply, where

large resources were needed and which were beyond the capacity of Indian capital. As early as 1931, the Resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Programme, adopted at the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress declared that in independent India "the State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport".

Interestingly, the session was presided over by Sardar Patel, the Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru and moved in the open session by Gandhi. To promote planning as an instrument of integrated and comprehensive development the Congress sponsored in 1938 the National Planning Committee while the Indian capitalists formulated the Bombay Plan in 1943.

Gandhiji was the only major nationalist leader who disagreed with the emphasis on modern industry. But, in time, even he met the dominant view half way. In the 1930's, he repeatedly asserted that he was not opposed to all machine industries but only to those which displaced human labour. He added that he would 'prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all.' But this was subject to one condition, all large-scale industries should be owned and controlled by the state and not by private capitalists.

Nevertheless, Gandhiji did not insist that the national movement should accept his economic approach or agenda, as he did in the case of non-violence, Hindu-Muslim unity, and opposition to untouchability. He also did not counterpose his views to those of other nationalists, as witnessed by his moving the resolution at the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931, which favoured the development of large-scale industry under state ownership or control. It is also significant that in 1942 he made Jawaharlal Nehru his heir despite the latter's total commitment to the development of

industry and agriculture on the basis of modern science and technology. At the same time, the nationalist movement accepted the Gandhian perspective on cottage and small-scale industries. This perspective was to find full reflection in the Nehruvian Second Five-Year Plan.

The Indian national movement was quite radical by contemporary standards. From the beginning, it had a pro-poor orientation. For example, the poverty of the masses and the role of colonialism as its source was the starting point of Dadabhai Naoroji's economic critique of colonialism. With Gandhi and the rise of a socialist current, this orientation was further strengthened. The removal of poverty became the most important objective next to the overthrow of colonialism.

From the late 1920's, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, the Congress Socialists, the Communists, the Revolutionary Terrorists and various other socialist groups strove to give the national movement a socialist orientation and to popularise the vision of a socialist India after independence. Socialist ideas assumed prominence within the movement, attracting the younger nationalist cadre and large sections of the nationalist intelligentsia, but they did not become the dominant current. Jawaharlal Nehru, the major ideologue of socialism in pre-independent India, readily conceded that the Congress had not in any way accepted socialism as its ideal. Rather the goal it sought was the creation of an egalitarian society in which all citizens would have equal opportunities and a civilised standard of life ... so as to make the attainment of this equal opportunity a reality.'

Nevertheless, even while the question of the basic economic structure of free India remained open and undecided, the socialists did succeed in giving the national movement a leftist tilt. It was committed



to carrying out basic changes in society, economy, and polity. It went on defining itself in more and more radical terms, based on equity, social justice, and greater social and economic equality. It accepted and propagated programme of reforms that was quite radical by contemporary standards: compulsory and free primary education, lowering of taxes on the poor and lower middle classes, reduction of the salt tax, land revenue and rent; debt relief and provision of cheap credit to the agriculturists; protection of tenants' rights, and ultimately, the abolition of landlordism with the principle of 'land to the tiller,' the workers' right to a living wage and a shorter working day; workers' and peasants' rights to organise themselves; and reform of the machinery of law and order. A dramatic moment in the evolution of this radical orientation of the national movement was the Karachi resolution of the Congress (1931), which declared that 'in order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions.' And to crown this growing radicalism was Gandhiji, who declared in 1942, 'the land belongs to those who work on it and to no one else.'

An aspect of its commitment to the creation of an egalitarian society was the national movement's opposition to all forms of inequality, discrimination and oppression based on sex and caste. It allied itself with and often subsumed movements and organisations for the social liberation of women and the lower castes. The national movement brought millions of women out of the home into the political arena. Its reform agenda included the improvement of their social position including the right to work and education and to equal political rights. As part of its struggle against caste inequality and caste oppression, abolition of untouchability became one of its major political priorities after 1920.

The national movement, however failed to form and propagate a strong anti-caste ideology, though Gandhiji did advocate the total abolition of the caste system itself in the 1940's. It was because of the atmosphere and sentiments generated by the national movement that, no voices of protest were raised in the Constituent Assembly when reservations for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were mooted. Similarly, the passage of the Hindu Code Bills in the 1950's was facilitated by the national movement's efforts in favour of the social liberation of women.

2.1.1.3 Secularism

From its early days, the national movement was committed to secularism. Secularism was defined in a comprehensive manner, which meant, the separation of religion from politics and the state, the treatment of religion as a private matter for the individual, state neutrality towards or equal respect for all religions, absence of discrimination between followers of different religions and active opposition to communalism. For example, to counter communalism and give expression to its secular commitment, the Congress in its Karachi resolution of 1931, declared that in free India 'every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess and practise his religion,' that all citizens would be 'equal before the law, irrespective of caste, creed, or sex,' that no disability would attach to any citizen because of caste, creed, or sex 'in regard to public employment, office of power or honour and in the exercise of any trade or calling,' and that 'the State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.'

It is true that in his early years, Gandhi, a deeply religious person, emphasised the close connection between religion and politics. This was because he believed that politics had to be based on morality and to him

all religions were the source of morality. Religion was, in fact, he believed, itself morality in the Indian sense of *dharma*. But he not only moved the Karachi resolution in 1931, but when he saw that the communists were using religion as a sectarian belief-system to divide the people, he overtly began to preach the separation of religion from politics. Thus he said in 1942, “Religion is a personal matter which should have no place in politics.” And again in 1947, he repeated, “Religion is the personal affair of each individual. It must not be mixed up with politics or national affairs.”

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote and spoke passionately and with deep understanding of communalism. He was perhaps the first Indian to see communalism as the Indian form of fascism. Interestingly, the leaders of the national movement never appealed to the people on religious grounds. Their critique of British rule was invariably economic, political, social or cultural. Independent India made secularism a basic pillar of its Constitution, as also of its state and society.

2.1.1.4 Nation-in-the-Making

The national movement recognised early on that the process of nation-formation in India was a recent one. In other words, India was a nation-in-the-making. Promoting this process through the common struggle against colonialism became a basic objective. In this respect, the leadership of the movement acknowledged the role of colonialism in unifying India economically and administratively even while it criticised its furthering all kinds of politically divisive tendencies.

From the outset the national movement emphasised its all-Indianness. For example, the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 not as a federation of the existing provincial political organisation but as a new nation-wide organisation committed

to nation-wide political mobilisation on the basis of all-India demands. Its cadres and appeal, its audience, and above all, its leadership were drawn from all over India.

To the nationalist leaders, the notion of a structured nation did not contradict its unity. They not only acknowledged but also appreciated India’s rich cultural, linguistic, religious, ethnic, and regional diversity. The emergence of a strong national identity and the flowering of other narrower identities were seen as mutually reinforcing processes. The diversity and multiple identities were not seen as obstacles to be overcome but as positive features that were sources of strength to Indian culture, civilisation, and the nation; and were integral to the emerging nationhood. These regional-cultural identities, in particular, developed not in opposition to, but as part of, the national movement and the broader all-India identity.

Indian society was also divided by class. However, while the movement did not allow the class divisions to segment it, the movement did not stand in the way of class organisations and class struggles.

Overtime, the national movement evolved the dual concepts and objectives of unity in diversity and national integration. The former was to be based on cultural diversity and cultural interaction, leading to a federal polity. National integration was to lead to a strong political centre and the weaving of the different cultural strands into an evolving composite Indian culture.

2.1.1.5 Foreign Policy

Independent India’s foreign policy was also rooted in the principles and policies evolved by the nationalists since the 1870s. Over time, Indian leaders had developed a broad international outlook based on opposition to colonialism and sympathy and support for the people fighting for their independence. In the 1930's and 1940's,



the national movement took a strong anti-fascist stand. This was put forward in a most expressive manner by Gandhi. Condemning Hitler for the genocide of the Jews and condoning violence, perhaps for the first time, he wrote in 1938, “If there ever could be a justifiable war in the name of and for humanity, a war against Germany, to prevent the wanton persecution of a whole race, would be completely justified.”

The nationalist approach to world problems during the thirties was clearly enunciated by Jawaharlal Nehru in his presidential address to the Lucknow Congress in 1936: “We see the world divided up into two vast groups today—the imperialist and fascist on one side, the socialist and nationalist on the other . . . Inevitably, we take our stand with the progressive forces of the world which are ranged against fascism and imperialism.”

It is of great significance that Indian nationalism was not chauvinist or jingoist. It did not take recourse to reverse racism even when actively opposing racism practised by the British in India. Opposing and hating British imperialism, it trained its cadre to eschew hatred or bitterness towards the British people.

2.1.1.6 Political Norms

In a mass-based struggle, ideology and its influence play a critical role. Yet, a mass movement has also to incorporate and accommodate diverse political and ideological currents in order to mobilise millions. Besides, it has to be disciplined and organisationally strong and united; yet it cannot afford to be monolithic or authoritarian.

Recognising this duality, the Congress, under whose leadership and hegemony the anti-imperialist struggle was waged, was highly ideological and disciplined while also being ideologically and organisationally open-ended and accommodative. Representing

the Indian people and not any one class or stratum, Congress could not be and was not ideologically homogeneous. Widely differing ideological and political streams coexisted within it. It is significant that at no stage did Gandhiji claim to have an ideological monopoly over it. The Congress, therefore, succeeded in uniting persons of different ideological bent, different levels of commitment and vastly different capacities to struggle together for some broad common objectives and principles.

The Congress was able to achieve this task by functioning democratically. There was a constant public debate and contention between individuals and groups which subscribed to divergent political-ideological tendencies or paradigms, even though they shared many elements of a common vision and were united in struggle. The majority view regarding the strategic and tactical framework of the movement prevailed but the minority was not decimated. It remained part of the movement, hoping one day to have its approach accepted. Even groups and movements which were outside the Congress stream evolved a complex and friendly relationship with it. The communal, casteist and loyalist parties and groups were the only ones to adopt an adversarial approach towards the Congress.

The national movement thus bequeathed to independent India the political tradition of compromise, accommodation and reconciliation of different interests and points of view. Nehru worked within this tradition in evolving national policies after independence. This approach is, however, now running rather thin. It was, of course, never easy to transfer this tradition of a mass movement to a party of governance or to parties of opposition for that matter. But it was an invaluable experience and legacy for all those who wanted to build a strong and prosperous India and a just and egalitarian society.

The highest norms of politics and political behaviour were set up by the movement. Its major leaders for example, Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Lokamanya Tilak, Gandhiji, Bhagat Singh, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Bose, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan, possessed moral integrity of the highest order. It was because of this moral authority and high moral standards of the leadership that the movement could mobilise millions. This was also true of the cadres, most of whom gave up their careers, their studies and their jobs, abandoned family life and devoted their entire lives to the movement. Also, judged in its totality, the movement was able to maintain harmony between means and ends. The movement was able to develop the capacity to evolve, renovate and change with the times. Its programmes and policies underwent continuous change and moved in a radical direction in response to the urges of the masses as they were awakened to political activity and to the changing policies of the colonial rulers. The movement was, therefore, in many ways highly original and innovative, keeping abreast with contemporary world thought, processes and movements.

The legacy of the national movement could be summarised as a commitment

to political and economic independence, modern economic development, the ending of inequality, oppression and domination in all forms, representative democracy and civil liberties, internationalism and independent foreign policy, promotion of the process of nation-in-the-making on the basis of the joyous acceptance of the diversity and achievement of all these objectives through accommodative politics and with the support of a large majority of the people.

Independent India has, on the whole, remained loyal to the basics of the legacy of the national movement. A large part of this is enshrined in the Constitution and incorporated in the programmes and manifestos of most of the political parties. The Indian people have tended to use this legacy as a yardstick to judge the performance of governments, political parties, and institutions.

A legacy, especially of a prolonged movement, tends to endure for a long time. But no legacy, however strong and sound, can last forever. It tends to erode and become irrelevant unless it is constantly reinforced and developed and sometimes transcended in a creative manner to suit the changing circumstances.

Recap

- ◆ The Indian National Movement was both a struggle for independence and a process of nation-building.
- ◆ It promoted democratic practices within political organisations and laid the foundation for constitutional governance.
- ◆ Leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, and Patel linked freedom with moral and social transformation.
- ◆ Mahatma Gandhi played a significant role in mobilising millions through Satyagraha.

- ◆ The movement promoted democratic values, including adult franchise, civil liberties and parliamentary institutions
- ◆ The Indian National Congress, since its foundation in 1885, was organised on democratic lines
- ◆ The nationalist movement established a political culture based on democracy, respect for dissent, and civil liberties, creating an alternative to colonial authoritarianism
- ◆ The Indian nationalist movement critiqued colonial economic policies and promoted self-reliance, industrialisation, and the use of indigenous capital
- ◆ Nationalists were wary of foreign capital suppressing Indian capital but accepted that foreign capital could supplement India's needs in the context of political independence
- ◆ The state was seen as crucial for economic development, with industrialisation and infrastructure relying on state intervention and planning, especially in key sectors like railways and power
- ◆ Gandhi supported small-scale industries but advocated for state control of large-scale industries
- ◆ The national movement recognised India as a nation-in-the-making and promoted unity through a common struggle against colonialism
- ◆ The movement's commitment to secularism and social justice shaped the guiding principles of the Indian Constitution.
- ◆ The national movement left behind a legacy of unity, tolerance, and participatory politics that continues to influence India's democratic life.

Objective Questions

1. When were the Congress ministries formed ?
2. When did Gandhi's stand on cooperation with the war efforts be rejected by the Congress?
3. Who proclaimed that "liberty of the Press and liberty of speech give birth to a nation and nourish it"?
4. Which session of the Congress in 1931 favoured the development of large-scale industry under state ownership or control?
5. Who said "Religion is a personal matter which should have no place in politics."?

6. When was the Indian National Congress was founded?
7. Who declared in 1942 that 'the land belongs to those who work on it and to no one else'?
8. In which session of the Congress adopted the Resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Programme?
9. Who characterised the national movement as a continuing revolution?

Answers

1. 1937
2. January 1942
3. Lokamanya Tilak
4. Karachi session
5. Gandhi
6. 1885
7. Gandhi
8. Karachi session
9. Jawaharlal Nehru

Assignments

1. Explain how the Indian National Movement contributed to the political, social, and economic transformation of India. Give relevant examples.
2. Analyse the ways in which the freedom struggle strengthened the foundations of democracy and constitutional governance in independent India.
3. Discuss the evolution of secularism during the national movement. How was it incorporated into the Indian Constitution, and what challenges has India faced in maintaining it?

4. Assess the role of political leadership, particularly Nehru, Patel, and Gandhi, in promoting the democratic and ethical principles that guided the making of the Indian Republic.
5. Reflect on how the legacy of the national movement remains relevant for addressing India's current social and political challenges.

Suggested Reading

1. Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London, New edition, 2006.
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3. -----, *History of Modern India*, Orient Blackswan, 2012.
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1. Chandra, Bipan, *Essays on Contemporary India*, Har Anand Publishers, 1993.
2. Chandra, Bipan, et. al., *India Since Independence*, Penguin Random House, India, 2008.
3. Brass Paul. R, Brass, *Politics of India Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, U K, 1990.
4. Guha, Ramachandra, *India After Gandhi: The History of World's Largest Democracy*, Picador publishers, India, 2017.
5. Mushirul, Hassan, *Legacy of A Divided Nation*, Routledge Publications, New York, 2018.



2

UNIT

The Constituent Assembly

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ identify the major historical developments and political demands that led to the creation of the Constituent Assembly of India
- ◆ explain the role of the British government, Indian National Congress, and other political groups in the establishment of the Assembly
- ◆ describe the contributions of key members in drafting the Constitution
- ◆ analyse the discussions, debates, and challenges faced by the Assembly while framing a constitution for India

Prerequisites

The Constitution of India came into force on 26 January 1950, marking the birth of the Indian Republic. This date had symbolic importance: since 1930, it had been observed as Independence Day, representing the national aspiration for complete self-rule. Turning this symbolic day into Republic Day emphasised the continuity between the freedom struggle and the establishment of constitutional democracy in independent India. The idea of a constitution for India, however, did not emerge suddenly in 1950. Its roots lay in decades of political struggle, debates on self-governance, and the national movement's demand for Swaraj. Early 20th-century leaders proposed constitutional reforms; the Nehru Report (1928) and the widespread rejection of the Simon Commission (1927) reflected the desire for a representative, Indian-made Constitution. By the 1930s, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress Working Committee articulated the idea of a Constituent Assembly elected by Indians themselves.

During World War II, constitutional discussions resurfaced with the Cripps Mission (1942), which proposed a future Constituent Assembly, though disagreements

between the Congress and the Muslim League delayed progress. Eventually, after independence and Partition in 1947, a Constituent Assembly of 389 members, drawn from British Indian provinces and princely states, began its work. The Assembly elected Dr. Rajendra Prasad as its President, adopted Nehru's Objective Resolution, and organised its tasks through numerous committees. The drafting process, from B.N. Rau's initial draft to Dr. Ambedkar's final draft, involved extensive debate and public discussion. Despite the challenges of Partition, refugee crises, and state integration, the Assembly succeeded in framing a Constitution that reflected India's commitment to democracy, rights, federalism, and social justice.

Keywords

Swaraj, Constitution, Constituent Assembly, Objective Resolution, National Demand, Drafting Committee, Federalism

Discussion

The core contribution of the national movement was not just in passing resolutions or drafting proposals for constitutional reform but in its practical political actions. This popularised among the people the notions of parliamentary democracy, republicanism, civil liberties, social, and economic justice, which were among the essential principles of the Constitution. For example, the idea of a parliamentary form of government was introduced into the Indian political consciousness by the inclusion of the term 'Congress' (the Lower House in the USA), in the name of the Indian National Congress. The actual functioning of the Congress, especially from 1920 onwards, after Gandhiji modified the Congress Constitution, was based on the elective principle. All office bearers were chosen through election, be it the president of the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) or the secretary of the village-level Congress Committee. The AICC, which consisted of delegates elected by the Provincial Congress Committees (PCCs), was the equivalent of the Lok Sabha or the Parliament, and the Working Committee was the equivalent of the Cabinet. The Congress president was the counterpart of the Prime Minister.

Thus, when the Constitution in 1950 adopted a parliamentary form of government, with a Cabinet led by a Prime Minister, it was not, as is commonly supposed, the British parliament that it was emulating. It was formalising nationalist practices, which the people were already familiar with. Even more than the form, it was the spirit of democracy, on which in the last and first resort the foundations of the Constitution rest, that was inculcated among the people by the national movement. This found expression in widespread mass participation. It ensured a place for adult franchises after independence.

The struggle for the freedom of the Press under British rule was vigorously fought by many leaders especially Lokamanya Tilak who paid a very heavy price for the combative tone of his newspapers. Many other newspapers too like the *Leader*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Bombay Chronicle*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu*, *the Tribune*, *Searchlight*, *Andhra Patrika*, *Aaj*, and *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, among others

functioned as unpaid organs of the national movement. This history ensured that freedom of expression became a fundamental right in the Constitution.

2.2.1 Evolution of the Constitution

"Swaraj . . . will not be a free gift of the British Parliament. It will be a declaration of India's full self-expression. The British Parliament, when the settlement comes, will ratify the wishes of the people of India as expressed not through the bureaucracy but through her freely chosen representatives. Swaraj can never be a free gift from one nation to another. It is a treasure to be purchased with a nation's best blood. It will cease to be a gift when we have paid dearly for it". This statement, made by Gandhiji in 1922, makes clear the British did not introduce any constitutional reforms or organs on their own initiative but always in belated and grudging response to sustained Indian nationalist pressure. There is a myth which has been carefully and often successfully purveyed by British administrators and later neo-imperialist scholars that the British initiated modern responsible and constitutional government in India and that the Constitution was merely the culmination of the series of constitutional initiatives made by them in 1861, 1892, 1909, 1919, and 1935. This can be disproved given the fact that their concessions, at every stage, fell far short of what Indians were demanding.

For example, the elective principle was first introduced by the British in the Indian Councils Act of 1892. The Congress and its nationalist precursors, and the Indian Press, had been demanding elections to the councils, elected majorities in them, and greater powers to the non-official members of councils for many years before that. Nationalist demands had already far exceeded what was granted in 1892.

It is also necessary to realise that nationalist demands were not just a little more advanced than British practice: they were far ahead. When the Congress demanded that at least half the members of the councils be elected, and that there should be male adult franchise, vote by ballot, power to the legislative councils to vote on the finance bills, etc. The actual British practice in India was that the Imperial or Central Legislative Council was a totally nominated body of a maximum of seventeen members with an official majority and a few token Indian members.

The 1892 Act introduced elected members but they were still in a minority and had very few powers. On the other hand, the nationalists' conception of the nature of India's constitutional framework was advancing rapidly. In 1895, the Constitution of India bill also referred to as the 'Swaraj Bill' was drafted by Bala Gangadara Tilak. It represented one of the earliest expression of a constitutional framework for India, emphasising the demand for self-rule and the protection of fundamental human rights. The bill outlined provisions for civil liberties including freedom of speech, the right to property and equality before law. Even the Government of India Act, of 1935, the last British enactment, failed to satisfy the repeated Indian demand, first made in 1895 for a declaration of the rights of the people of India.

The Indian leaders felt no necessity to abandon the constitutional legacy of the pre-independence period at the time of the writing of the Constitution and to start on a clean state—this was their own legacy for which they had fought hard and made many sacrifices. The Constitution could thus borrow heavily from the Government of India Act of 1935 because those who drafted the Constitution had no need to prove their independent credentials. They also believed that the advantages of familiarity



which existing institutions had should not be rejected. Since they also freely rejected what was unsuitable in the old and added much that was new, they did not hesitate to retain what was of value.

2.2.1.1 Constitutional Development

Beginning in the 1880s and 1890s with the notion that Britain must grant responsible government to India, the national movement, by the end of the second decade of the twentieth century began to espouse the doctrine of self-determination or the right of Indians to frame their own Constitution. Tilak and Annie Besant, during the First World War, had launched a Home Rule agitation (the name being inspired by the Irish Home Rule Movement). The Congress-Muslim League Scheme for constitutional reforms which emerged from the Congress-League Pact of 1916 demanded that four-fifths of the members of the provincial legislatures be elected 'by the people on as broad a franchise as possible.'

In 1918, the Congress session at Delhi resolved that, 'In view of the pronouncement of President Wilson, Lloyd George, and other British statesmen, that to ensure the future peace of the world, the principle of Self-determination should be applied to all progressive nations, this Congress claims recognition of India as one of the progressive nations to whom the principle of Self-determination should be applied.' The arguments did not impress the British rulers, and the new instalment of reforms in 1919 was introduced with the assertion that the 'timing and pace' of constitutional reform would be decided by the British alone. The Indian answer to this was the Non-cooperation Movement led by Gandhiji. After this movement ended in 1922, and sections of Congressmen now constituted the Swaraj party fought elections to the

legislative councils, the constitutional battle was joined with a renewed vigour.

One initiative in which Annie Besant, Tej Bahadur Sapru, and V.S. Srinivasa Sastri played a leading role in the Commonwealth of India Bill which was drafted in India, revised by Labour Party leaders, accepted unanimously by the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and had its first reading in the House of Commons in December 1925. It could not, however, survive the defeat of the Labour government. It is significant that the Bill, which had the support of very wide sections of Indian opinion, specified in clear terms that 'India shall be placed on an equal footing with the Self-Governing Dominions.' The Memorandum accompanying the Bill reminded the British of their history.

We seek an honourable agreement, such as Britain refusing her American Colonies and creating a Republic, but made with her other Colonies and creating peace and amity. At this juncture, a very prominent role was also played by Motilal Nehru, who introduced a resolution on 8 February 1924 in the Central Legislative Assembly which asked the government "to summon, at an early date, a representative Round Table Conference to recommend, with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities, the scheme of a Constitution for India." This scheme would be ratified by a newly-elected Indian legislature and then sent to the British Parliament to be embodied in a statute. This was the first time that the demand for a Constitution and the procedure for its adoption were spelt out in such clear terms. This resolution, which came to be known as the 'National Demand', was passed by a large majority in the Central Legislative Assembly—76 for and 48 against.

The British, showing their contempt for the 'National Demand', appointed the

all-White Simon Commission in November 1927 to recommend further constitutional changes. The move was roundly condemned by all sections of political opinion in India. Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State, while announcing the Commission in the House of Lords on 24 November 1927, also repeated his challenge to Indians, first delivered on 7 July 1925, "Let them produce a Constitution which carries behind it a fair measure of general agreement among the great peoples of India".

The challenge was accepted and, at the initiative of the Congress, an All Parties Conference was called in May 1928 which appointed a Committee chaired by Motilal Nehru 'to determine the principles of the Constitution for India.' Motilal Nehru submitted the Report, on 10th August 1928, which was in effect an outline of a draft Constitution for India. Most of its features were later included in the Constitution of India. It visualised a parliamentary system with a fully responsible government and joint electorates with time-bound reservation of seats for minorities.

The Nehru Report laid special emphasis on securing fundamental rights for the people of India. These included the right to 'the freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion,' 'the right of free expression of opinion, as well as the right to assemble peaceably and without arms, and to form associations or unions,' equal rights for men and women, the right to form unions, and the right to free elementary education. Interestingly, the secular character of the State was listed as a fundamental right. Of the nineteen rights listed in the Nehru Report, ten were incorporated into the Constitution. The Nehru Report also recommended that 'the redistribution of provinces should take place on a linguistic basis.'

The Nehru Report was followed by a boycott of the Simon Commission and mass

demonstrations wherever its members went. In December 1929, the Congress declared complete independence (*Purna Swaraj*) as its goal and followed this up with the launching of the mass Civil Disobedience Movement in April 1930 which brought hundreds of thousands onto the streets and saw around one hundred thousand in jails. It was becoming increasingly clear that Indians were unlikely to be satisfied with anything less than the right to frame their own Constitution. The idea that this should be done not through the conference method, as was the case with the Nehru Report, but via a Constituent Assembly elected for this specific purpose, on the basis of the widest possible franchise, began to gain ground.

Jawaharlal Nehru was the first national leader to articulate the idea in 1933, though M.N. Roy, the Marxist leader, had made the suggestion earlier. In June 1934, the Congress Working Committee, while rejecting the White Paper presented by the British government on further constitutional reform, resolved that the 'only satisfactory alternative to the White Paper is a Constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage or as near it as possible.'

The demand for a Constituent Assembly was repeated frequently after 1934 and included in the Congress manifesto for the 1936-37 elections. The Congress won majorities in seven out of eleven provinces and decided to form ministries. However, it made sure that this was not construed as acceptance of the existing constitutional framework. The meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Wardha on 27-28 February 1937 which decided in favour of accepting office also reminded the legislators that the solution of the Faizpur Congress had bound them to articulate the demand for a Constituent Assembly as soon as possible in the new legislatures.



From 19 to 20 March, the promised Convention of Congress legislators and AICC members was held at Delhi, with Jawaharlal Nehru in the chair. Nehru told the delegates that they had to work for a “panchayati raj, fashioned by a Constituent Assembly, a grand panchayat of the nation, elected by all our people.” In unequivocal terms, he said “this Constitution must therefore go, lock, stock, and barrel and leave the field clear for our Constituent Assembly.”

In July 1937, Nehru again, pressed the legislators to introduce resolutions in the assemblies rejecting the present Constitution and demanding a Constituent Assembly. In August, the Working Committee of the Congress accepted a draft resolution prepared by Acharya Kripalani, which was sent to Congressmen in the provincial assemblies. Between August and October 1937, all the Congress provinces-Bombay, Madras, U.P., Bihar, Orissa, Central Provinces, North-West Frontier Province as well as Sind passed this resolution which demanded that ‘the Government of India Act, 1935’ be repealed and replaced by a Constitution for a free India framed by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise.

On 17 September 1937, a resolution recommending the replacement of the Government of India Act 1935 by a Constitution framed by a Constituent Assembly was introduced in the Central Legislative Assembly. S. Satyamurti, the Congress leader who introduced it urged the British government to grasp the hand of friendship extended by Mahatma Gandhi. The Haripura session of the Congress in February 1938 repeated the same demand.

Following the outbreak of the Second World War, Congress ministries resigned in protest against their being made a party to the War without eliciting their opinion or consent. At this juncture, the ministries passed resolutions in the legislative assemblies which

asserted that ‘India should be regarded as an independent nation entitled to frame her own Constitution.’ Soon after, Gandhiji added his voice to that of Nehru and the Congress. In an article titled “The Only Way,” he declared that he was now even more enthusiastic about the Constituent Assembly than Nehru himself. He also thought that a body based on unadulterated suffrage including both men and women would do full justice to rival claims.

A discussion between Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee held at Wardha from 15-19 April 1940 brought out Gandhi’s outstanding qualities of foresight and pragmatism. While Jawaharlal Nehru maintained that the British government must first declare India independent and then call a Constituent Assembly. Gandhiji felt that the Assembly could be called first and be left free to decide on the issue of independence. As it happened, and not for the first time, Gandhi’s view was closer to the actual turn of events.

The ‘August Offer’ made by Viceroy Linlithgow in 1940 in an attempt to secure Indian cooperation in the War effort for the first time conceded that the framing of the new Constitution should be primarily (though not solely) the responsibility of Indians themselves. It also offered to set up, after the conclusion of the War, ‘a body representative of the principal elements in India’s national life in order to devise the framework of the new Constitution.’ How this body was to be constituted—by direct or indirect elections based on adult or restricted franchise, or by nomination—was not spelt out.

The August Offer was spurned by all the major political parties in India. The Congress proceeded in December 1940 to launch the Individual Civil Disobedience campaign to register its protest against being made a

party to the War without its consent. The party refrained from active obstruction of the war effort since it sympathised with the aims of the War. What it denied was the right of Britain to presume co-operation on India's behalf. The door was still left open for negotiations.

In March 1942, in the wake of the British collapse in South-East Asia and three days after the fall of Rangoon, Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Britain, announced the dispatch to India of Sir Stafford Cripps, a prominent Labour Party member of the War Cabinet and a friend of Nehru. The Cripps proposals, as these constitutional concessions came to be called, for the first time clearly spelt out the procedure for the setting up of the Constituent Assembly.

The Cripps' proposals were a major advance in the position of the British government. For the first time, it was clearly accepted that the Constitution would be the sole responsibility of Indians alone. The idea of a Constituent Assembly was also unambiguously accepted and its modalities spelt out. However, other aspects of the Cripps proposals, which had divisive potential, stood in the way of the scheme being accepted by Congress.

The failure of the Cripps' Mission led to another round of confrontation between the nationalists and the British. The famous AICC resolution of 8 August 1942 which asked the British to 'Quit India' and exhorted the Indians to 'Do or die', also said that the provisional government of free India would evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly. The mass upsurge that followed left the British in no doubt that the time for the final negotiations had arrived. Therefore, soon after the War ended in Europe in May 1945, a White Paper on India was issued. This was followed by the abortive Simla Conference in June-July 1945.

The victory of the Labour Party in the British elections in July 1945 provided the opportunity for a fresh initiative. The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, announcing the India policy of the new government on 19 September 1945, promised to convene a Constitution-making body as soon as possible. On 19 February 1946, the British government declared that they were sending a Cabinet Mission to India to resolve the whole issue of freedom and Constitution-making.

The Cabinet Mission, which arrived in India on 24 March 1946, held prolonged discussions with Indian leaders. On 16 May 1946, having failed to secure an agreement, it announced a scheme of its own. It recognised that the best way of setting up a Constitution-making machinery would 'be through an election based on the adult franchise, but any attempt to introduce such a step now would lead to a wholly unacceptable delay in the formulation of the new constitution.' Therefore, it was decided that the newly-elected legislative assemblies of the provinces were to elect the members of the Constituent Assembly on the basis of one representative for roughly one million of the population. The Sikh and Muslim legislators were to elect their quota on the basis of their population. There were numerous other details about procedures and suggestions about the powers of the Union and the provinces.

Particularly important were the provisions relating to grouping of provinces into sections A, B, and C. Section A consisted of Madras, Bombay, U.P., Bihar, the Central Provinces and Orissa - the 'Hindu-majority' provinces. Sections B and C similarly consisted of the 'Muslim-majority' provinces of Punjab, North Western Frontier Province and Sind in the west and Assam and Bengal in the east. The Cabinet Mission scheme proposed that the Constituent Assembly, after meeting to elect the chairman and complete other formalities, should divide into sections. The provincial representatives meeting



in their respective sections should first decide the Constitutions of the constituent provinces and also whether they want to adopt any group Constitution. It was only after this process had been completed that the representatives of all the provinces and those of the princely states were to meet again to settle the Constitution of the Union. The Union of India was to deal with foreign affairs, defence and communications.

The Congress responded to the Cabinet Mission scheme by pointing out that in its view the Constituent Assembly, once it came into being, would be sovereign. It would have the right to accept or reject the Cabinet Mission's proposals on specifics. Though an assurance on those lines was not forthcoming from the British, the Congress nevertheless decided after a great deal of debate to accept the scheme and try to work it, as there was a feeling that outright rejection would again delay the process of transfer of power. This is what the Muslim League hoped to achieve by its intransigence. The League continued to oppose the Constituent Assembly at every stage, before, as well as after it was constituted.

2.2.1.2 The Constituent Assembly

The Constituent Assembly was to have 389 members. Of these, 296 were to be from British India and 93 from the Princely Indian states. Initially, however, the Constituent Assembly consisted only of members from British India. Elections of these were held in July-August 1946. Of the 210 seats in the general category, the Congress won 199. It also won 3 out of the 4 Sikh seats from Punjab. The Congress also won 3 of the 78 Muslim seats and the 3 seats from Coorg, Ajmer-Merwara, and Delhi. The total Congress tally was 208. The Muslim League won 73 out of the 78 Muslim seats.

Especially since the Constituent Assembly was not elected on the basis of

universal adult franchise and was thus not as truly representative in character as the Congress had wished and demanded, and also because only Muslims and Sikhs were recognised as 'minorities' deserving special representation, a special effort was made to see that the Assembly did indeed reflect the diversity of perspectives present in the country. The Congress Working Committee in early July 1946 specifically instructed the Provincial Congress Committees to include representatives of Scheduled Castes, Parsis, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, tribals and women in the Congress list for the general category.

Another important consideration in choosing names for election to the Assembly was that the very best talent available in the country must be involved in the task of the framing of the Constitution. The lead was given by Gandhi himself who suggested the names of sixteen eminent persons for inclusion in the Congress list. Altogether thirty people who were not members of the Congress were thus elected on the Congress ticket. Further, 'the ideological spectrum of the Assembly was broadened by the diverse nature of the Congress membership itself.'

Having failed to prevent the election of the Constituent Assembly, the Muslim League concentrated its energies on refusing to join its deliberations. The Congress, and Jawaharlal Nehru, as president of the interim government, continued to make conciliatory gestures, but to no avail. Accordingly, on 20 November 1946, the decision to convene the first session of the Constituent Assembly on 9 December 1946 was announced.

The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, in fact, had seemed reluctant to call the Assembly and it was Congress, which insisted that now that the Assembly had been elected, it was necessary that it begin to function, regardless of the wishes of those who chose to stay away. Nehru had also to firmly quash the Viceroy's

desire to appoint the provisional president of the Assembly and issue invitations to the members to attend the first session in his own name. At Nehru's insistence, the oldest member of the Assembly, Dr. Sachchidanand Sinha, became the provisional President and invitations were issued in the name of the secretary of the Constituent Assembly. In doing this, Nehru was establishing, for all to see, the independence of the Assembly from British control. It would hardly be fair if the Constituent Assembly, which from conception to fulfilment was an achievement of the Congress and particularly of Nehru, should be finally presented to the world as a child of the British government.

On 9 December 1946, the Constituent Assembly of India began its first session. For all practical purposes, the chronicle of independent India began on that historic day. Independence was now a matter of dates. The real responsibility of deciding the constitutional framework within which the government and people of India were to function had been transferred and assumed by the Indian people with the convening of the Constituent Assembly.

The first session was attended by 207 members. The Muslim League, having failed to prevent the convening of the Assembly, now refused to join its deliberations. Consequently, the seventy-six Muslim members of the League stayed away and the four Congress Muslim members attended the session. On 11 December 1946, Dr Rajendra Prasad was elected the permanent Chairman; an office later designated as President of the Assembly.

On 13 December 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru moved the famous Objectives Resolution, which was debated till 19 December but its adoption was postponed to enable the representatives of the Muslim League and the princely states to join. At the next session, which took place from 20-22 January 1947,

it was decided to not wait any longer for the League, and the Objective Resolution was passed. The third session was held from 28 April to 2 May 1947 and the League still did not join.

On 3 June, the Mountbatten Plan was announced which made it clear that India was to be partitioned. This completely altered the perspective of the Constituent Assembly, as the Cabinet Mission Plan, the essence of which was a compromise with the League, was no longer relevant.

With India becoming independent on 15 August 1947, the Constituent Assembly became a sovereign body and also doubled as the legislature for the new state. It was responsible for framing the Constitution as well as making ordinary laws. Its function as a legislature as well as its large size did not come in the way of effectively performing its duties as a Constitution-making body due to the enormous preparatory work as well as organisational skills and hard work of its leading members.

The work was organised into five stages: first, Committees were asked to present reports on basic issues; second, B.N. Rau, the Constitutional adviser, prepared an initial draft on the basis of the reports of these committees and his own research into the Constitutions of other countries; third, the drafting committee, chaired by Dr Ambedkar presented a detailed draft Constitution which was published for public discussion and comments; fourth, the draft Constitution was discussed and amendments proposed; fifth, and lastly the Constitution was adopted.

In addition, a critical role was played by the Congress Party. It had asked a Committee of Experts to prepare material and proposals for the Constitution as early as 4 July 1946. The Committee was chaired by Nehru and had Asaf Ali, K.T. Shah, D.R. Gadgil, K.M. Munshi, Humayun Kabir, R. Santhanam and N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar as members.



Nehru drafted the Objectives Resolution and the Congress Working Committee and AICC ratified it on 20 and 21 November 1946 well in time for its introduction in the first session of the Assembly. This practice continued till the Constitution was adopted, with the Congressmen thoroughly discussing and examining each provision in their party forums, in addition to participating fully in the debates in the Assembly.

The Congress Assembly Party was the unofficial, private forum that debated every provision of the Constitution, and in most cases decided its fate before it reached the floor of the House. Everyone elected to the Assembly on the Congress ticket could attend the meetings whether or not he was a member of the party or even close to it.

Jawaharlal Nehru, who drafted the Objectives Resolution, which spelt out the philosophy and basic features of the Constitution, set a formidable example by his keen involvement in every aspect of the process. Sardar Patel's interest was second, if at all, only to Nehru's. He played the decisive part in bringing in the representatives of the erstwhile princely states into the Constituent Assembly, in seeing to it that separate electorates were eliminated and in scotching any move for reservation of seats for religious minorities.

Rajendra Prasad won acclaim for his impartiality and dignity as President of the Assembly. Maulana Azad brought his formidable scholarship and philosophical mind to bear on issues of grave importance. Above all, Congress brought great credit to itself and enormous benefit to the nation by adopting a completely non-sectarian approach, freely recruiting the best available talent, and always striving for consensus rather than imposing its will through numbers. Informed by a strong sense of its historic role in laying the foundations of independent India, the Congress tried

hard to do its best for the people it had led to freedom.

2.2.1.3 Adoption of the Constitution

The Indian Constitution contains 395 articles, 12 schedules and 22 parts. It is one of the longest constitutions in the world. It has been framed over a period of about 3 years (from December 1946 to December 1949). During this period, its drafts were discussed close by close in the Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly held 11 sessions in 165 days. The Assembly formed various committees and subcommittees to frame the drafts one by one. The proceedings of the Constituent Assembly have been published in 11 bulky volumes. These volumes give us insight into the debates carried out in the making of the Constitution. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was nominated as the President of the Assembly.

All sections of Indian society were given representation in the Assembly. Even though the Muslim League had boycotted the Constituent Assembly, the Congress had nominated independent members of different caste and religious groups. There were 9 women members in the Constituent Assembly. Every care was taken to ensure the representation of all quarters of public opinion in the forum. Besides, suggestions were invited from the public.

The Constituent Assembly consisted of more than 300 members. The Objective Resolution was presented by Jawaharlal Nehru on 13th December 1946. This Resolution proclaimed India to be a sovereign democratic republic. It sets forth the aim of the Constitution as to guarantee its citizens socio-economic, and political justice, equality of status, opportunities, and rule of law, and freedom of speech, thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, association, vocation or action subject to the law and public morality.

It also aims to secure special protection for minorities, backwards, and tribal areas, and depressed, and other backward classes. On 22nd July 1947, Nehru moved the resolution adopting the tricolor design as the national flag of India. Vallabhbhai Patel moved the

resolution relating to minority rights in the Assembly. Other crucial personalities associated with the making of the Constitution were Dr. Ambedkar, K. M. Munshi, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar, B. N. Rau and S. N. Mukherjee.

Recap

- ◆ The Constituent Assembly emerged from decades of national struggle for responsible and constitutional government.
- ◆ It included leaders with diverse backgrounds, who debated issues of democracy, rights, federalism, and social justice.
- ◆ The Assembly adopted the Objective Resolution, which later became the guiding philosophy of the Constitution's Preamble.
- ◆ The drafting process drew on committee reports, expert inputs from B.N. Rau, and the detailed draft prepared by Dr. Ambedkar.
- ◆ Despite the difficulties posed by Partition, the Assembly produced a Constitution that balanced unity with diversity, and liberty with social responsibility.

Objective Questions

1. When was the Constitution of India Bill, also known as the Home Rule Bill, introduced?
2. Which British Viceroy made the 'August Offer' in 1940?
3. When did the Congress declare complete independence (*Purna Swaraj*) as its goal?
4. Who presented the Objective Resolution on 13th December 1946?
5. When did the Constituent Assembly of India begin its first session?
6. When did the Constitution of India come into force?
7. Who played the decisive part in bringing in the representatives of the erstwhile princely states into the Constituent Assembly?
8. How many members attended the first session of the Constituent Assembly?



9. Who was nominated as the president of the assembly?
10. How many volumes of the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly have been published?

Answers

1. 1895
2. Viceroy Linlithgow
3. December 1929
4. Jawaharlal Nehru
5. 9 December 1946
6. 26 January 1950.
7. Sardar Patel
8. 207 members
9. Dr. Rajendra Prasad
10. 11 volumes

Assignments

1. Explain the significance of the Constituent Assembly in guiding India's transition from colonial rule to a democratic republic.
2. Analyse the major functions and responsibilities of the Constituent Assembly. How did it address questions of governance, democracy, and fundamental rights?
3. Discuss the major challenges faced by the Constituent Assembly, such as Partition, communal tensions, and the integration of princely states, and evaluate how these were managed.

4. Examine how the Assembly debated and resolved issues related to federalism, separation of powers, and the protection of individual rights. Why are these provisions still important today?
5. Explain how the Constituent Assembly navigates the challenges posed by the partition and the integration of princely states into the Indian Union.

Suggested Reading

1. Austin, Granville. *Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation*. New edition, Oxford University Press, 2011.
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UNIT

Salient Features of the Indian Constitution

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ analyse the key ideals of the Preamble
- ◆ identify and explain the structure and significance of the Fundamental Rights, and assess their role in protecting individual freedoms
- ◆ analyse how key features of the Constitution contribute to national integration
- ◆ examine the federal system of India and evaluate the unitary features that ensure national unity and administrative efficiency

Prerequisites

Framing a Constitution was one of the most important responsibilities undertaken by independent India. The Constitution of India, which came into effect on 26 January 1950, reflects the political, social, and economic ideals that guided the freedom struggle. It draws from India's long historical experience with colonialism, the vision of national leaders, and global constitutional traditions. The Constitution seeks to build a modern nation founded on the values of democracy, justice, equality, liberty, secularism, and social welfare. These ideas are clearly expressed in the Preamble and reinforced through Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy, and the framework of federal governance.

Keywords

Preamble , Sovereign , Republic, Secular, Democracy, Fundamental Rights, Adult Suffrage , Federalism, Directive Principles, Fundamental Duties

Discussion

2.3.1 The Constitution of India

The Constitution of India is a unique document. It has several salient features that distinguish it from other constitutions of the world. These features form the basis of the Indian political system, are as follows.

2.3.1.1 A Detailed Constitution

The Indian Constitution is the most lengthiest and detailed of all the written constitutions of the world. It consists of 395 articles, 22 parts and 12 schedules. The founders of the Indian Constitution were familiar with the workings of the important constitutions of the world. They included the suitable provisions of those constitutions in the Indian Constitution. Our Constitution contains provisions relating to the Union government and the state governments. It includes provisions of Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy, Elections, All India Services, Emergency provisions, affirmative actions for the weaker sections of the society etc. It defines the organisation and functioning of the different organs of Government. viz the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary. It explains the division of powers into three detailed lists, the Union list, the State list, and the Concurrent list. It also explains the centre-state relations.

2.3.1.2 Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic

The Preamble of our Constitution declares India to be a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic. The term 'Sovereign' implies that India is free from any other powers in her domestic as well as foreign affairs. India is free to follow its own foreign and domestic policies. Our government enjoys supreme powers over all the individuals

and associations within the territory of our country. The term 'Socialist' was included in the Preamble by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1976. The word implies some form of state ownership of the means of production and distribution. It aims for a society free from all forms of exploitation. The word 'Secular' is also included in the 42nd Amendment. The important features of Indian secularism are (a) the state will not have any official religion. (b) The state guarantees all citizens the right to profess and practice any religion of their choice. (c) The state will not show any discrimination to anybody on account of their religion. The term 'Democratic' implies that the Constitution has established a democratic system of government. In this system, the government derives its power from the will of the people. The rulers are elected by the people and they are accountable to them. Justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity which are the basic pillars of democracy, are declared as the objectives of our Constitution. The term 'Republic' signifies that there shall be an elected head of the state who will be the chief executive head. In India, the President is the head of the state. The President of India is elected by an electoral college of representatives in the Parliament as well as in the state legislative assemblies.

2.3.1.3 Parliamentary System of Government

The Constitution adopted a parliamentary form of government for India. India was familiar with the British system of parliamentary government. The essence of the parliamentary system was the responsibility of the executive to the legislature. In India, though the President is the head of the state, real powers are vested in the council of ministers under the Prime Minister. The



executive can enjoy the office as long as it enjoys the confidence of the legislature. A similar system is followed in the states as well. In this system, close cooperation and understanding between the legislature and the executive are needed.

2.3.1.4 A Unique Blend of Rigidity and Flexibility

A rigid Constitution is one in which special procedures are required to amend its provisions. In a flexible Constitution, all provisions can be changed by the normal legislative procedure. The Indian Constitution is both rigid and flexible. Only a few provisions in our Constitution require the consent of half of the state legislatures after the amendment bill is passed by the Parliament. Most of the provisions can be changed by a special majority of Parliament.

2.3.1.5 Fundamental Rights

Fundamental Rights are included in Part 3 of the Indian Constitution. They are the constitutional guarantee against the encroachment of the state upon individual rights. Fundamental Rights are based on the idea that all individuals are entitled to certain rights as human beings. The enjoyment of such rights does not depend on the will of any particular section of society. The Fundamental Rights are justiciable in nature. The violation of Fundamental Rights invites legal actions. Following are the Fundamental Rights incorporated in Part 3 of the Indian Constitution.

- ◆ Right to Equality
- ◆ Right to Freedom
- ◆ Right Against Exploitation
- ◆ Right to Freedom of Religion
- ◆ Cultural and Educational Rights
- ◆ Right to Constitutional Remedies

2.3.1.6 Directive Principles of State Policy

The Directive Principles of State Policy are incorporated in Part 4 of the Constitution. They are the aims and objectives to be achieved by the state in the governance of the country. They strengthen the basic principles of our Constitution like equality, justice, democracy and so on. The Directive Principles are the combination of the Liberal, Socialistic, and Gandhian ideals. Unlike the Fundamental Rights, they are not justiciable. No legal action can be taken against the state in case of its violation.

2.3.1.7 A Federal Polity with a Strong Unitary Tendency

The Constitution provides for a federal system of government in India. However, during the declaration of emergency, the Constitution acquires a unitary character. The normal division of power between the centre and the states as per the Union, State and Concurrent lists undergoes change. Then the Union Parliament will have the right to enact any law on subjects mentioned in the state list as well. Thus during emergencies, our political system assumes a unitary character.

2.3.1.8 Universal Adult Suffrage

Dr. Ambedkar said in the Constituent Assembly that “by parliamentary democracy, we mean one man one vote.” The framers of our Constitution believed in Universal Adult Suffrage irrespective of sex, property, taxation, caste, creed, language, and the like. This is particularly remarkable in the context of India’s vast poverty and illiteracy.

2.3.1.9 Independence of Judiciary

The Constitution establishes an independent judicial system in India with powers of judicial review. The judicial

system of India is a single integrated one, with jurisdiction over all kinds of laws, civil, criminal, and constitutional. It not only settles disputes but also may interpret the Constitution and review legislations whenever necessary. The Supreme Court is at the apex of the Indian judiciary. The word of the Supreme Court is the final law of the land.

2.3.1.10 Fundamental Duties

By the 42nd amendment of 1976, a code of 10 fundamental duties is included in the Constitution.

2.3.1.11 Single Citizenship

Though the Constitution of India is federal in character, it provides for single citizenship

all over India. In India, the Parliament has the power to make legislation relating to the acquisition and termination of citizenship.

2.3.1.12 Official Language

India is home to several languages, with 22 recognised as official languages. Among them, English serves as the link language.

The Constitution of India is a comprehensive document. It cannot be shaped into any particular mould or style. While the constitutions of many nations formed after the Second World War have collapsed, the Indian Constitution with its dynamism and growth potential still survives.

Recap

- ◆ The Constitution declares India a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic, emphasising popular sovereignty and social justice.
- ◆ The Preamble expresses the guiding values of the Republic: Justice, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.
- ◆ Fundamental Rights (Part III) guarantee individual freedoms such as equality, freedom of speech, and protection against exploitation.
- ◆ Directive Principles (Part IV) guide the state in promoting social welfare, though they are not legally enforceable.
- ◆ India follows a federal system with a division of powers, but it also contains strong unitary features, especially during emergencies.
- ◆ Universal Adult Suffrage ensures that all adult citizens can vote regardless of caste, class, gender, or religion.
- ◆ The judiciary is independent, with the Supreme Court acting as the final interpreter of the Constitution.
- ◆ The 42nd Amendment introduced Fundamental Duties, emphasising civic responsibility.
- ◆ India has single citizenship, reinforcing unity despite its federal structure.



Objective Questions

1. Which is the most lengthiest and detailed of all the written constitutions of the world?
2. Which part of the Constitution declares India to be a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic?
3. When did the term 'Socialist' be included in the Preamble?
4. Which amendment introduced the word 'Secular' in our Constitution?
5. Who is the head of the state in India?
6. Who said "by parliamentary democracy, we mean one man, one vote"?
7. Which is the apex authority of the Indian judiciary?
8. Through which amendment the fundamental duties are included in the Constitution?
9. How many schedules are there in the Indian Constitution?

Answers

1. Indian Constitution
2. Preamble
3. 1976
4. 42nd amendment
5. President
6. B.R Ambedkar
7. The Supreme Court
8. 42nd amendment of 1976
9. 12 Schedules

Assignments

1. Explain the federal structure of the Indian Constitution.
2. Analyse the importance of the Preamble. What values does it articulate, and how do these values shape India's governance and political culture?
3. Discuss the role and relevance of the Directive Principles of State Policy. How have they influenced social and economic policies in post-independence India?
4. Examine the idea of socio-economic justice in the Constitution. In what ways does the Constitution attempt to address historical inequalities and promote welfare?
5. Discuss the advantages and challenges of having a detailed written Constitution.

Suggested Reading

1. Austin, Granville. *Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation*. New edition, Oxford University Press, 2011.
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SGOU



UNIT

Language Issues

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the historical context behind language debates and the demand for linguistic state reorganisation in independent India
- ◆ analyse the significance of language as a marker of cultural identity and its influence on political mobilisation and state formation
- ◆ describe the formation, objectives, and key recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC)
- ◆ evaluate how the creation of linguistic states shaped national integration, regional identity, and federal politics in India

Prerequisites

In the first two decades after independence, language became one of the most sensitive and divisive issues in Indian politics. In a country as linguistically diverse as India, people viewed their language not only as a means of communication but as a vital part of their cultural identity. As a result, questions related to language naturally influenced political participation, education, employment opportunities, and access to state power. Two major debates emerged- What should be the official language of the Indian Union? Should Indian states be reorganised on the basis of language? Although the Indian National Congress had supported linguistic provinces before independence, after Partition the leadership feared that reorganising states on linguistic lines might weaken national unity. Early committees, the Linguistic Provinces Commission (1948) and the JVP Committee (1948), recommended postponing linguistic reorganisation. However, strong public demand, especially after the death of Potti Sreeramulu during a fast for a Telugu-speaking state, led to the creation of Andhra Pradesh in 1953, marking the first linguistic state. This set

the stage for broader restructuring. In 1953, the government appointed the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) to examine the issue. Its recommendations led to the States Reorganisation Act of 1956, which reorganised state boundaries largely along linguistic lines, setting the pattern for India's present federal map.

Keywords

Official Language, Linguistic States, States Reorganisation Commission, Federalism, Regional Identity, Potti Sreeramulu

Discussion

The Indian Constitution recognises sixteen major languages, including English and Sanskrit. In addition, there are a myriad of languages spoken by the tribals and others, with or without their own scripts. The model that independent India has adopted is not that of assimilation into, or suppression of the many languages by one of them. This is in any case impossible in a democratic polity. The feasible option is to accept and live with this 'multiplicity' in a manner that conflict situations do not emerge or persist for long. The problem posed to national consolidation by linguistic diversity has taken two major forms.

- i. The dispute over the official language of the union, and
- ii. The linguistic reorganisation of the states

2.4.1 Linguistic Reorganisation of the States

The Constitution of India abolished the distinction between the provinces and the Indian states. It designated all the units as states and union territories. The Constitution initially classified states into three groups Part A, Part B and Part C. Part A comprised

those states under the administrative headship of governors. The Part B states were under the Rajapramukhs and the Part C regions were under lieutenant governors.

Very soon, the government of India was faced with the demand for the linguistic reorganisation of the states. People who supported this demand pointed out that linguistic basis was the scientific principle for the formation of states in India. During the British period, provinces were created on political, military and defence considerations.

2.4.1.1 Historical Background

The reorganisation of the states on the basis of language, a major aspect of national consolidation and integration came to the fore almost immediately after Independence. During colonial rule, the state boundaries were drawn on the basis of administrative convenience. No attention was paid to linguistic considerations. After Independence the demand for linguistic states was very strong. Language is closely related to culture and therefore to the customs of people. Besides, the spread of education and the growth of literacy can only occur through the medium of the mother tongue. Democracy can be real to the people only when administration is conducted through their mother tongue.

So, it is very important to form a state on the basis of such a predominant language.

Our national leadership had already realised the importance of linguistic principles. After 1919 the Congress undertook political mobilisation in the mother tongue and the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1920 decided to organise Provincial Congress Committees on a linguistic basis. The Congress was fully committed to the drawing of boundaries on a linguistic basis. But things changed after Independence. Partition, the war-like situation with Pakistan and Kashmir problem had created economic, political and law and order problems. The Government felt that their most important task was to consolidate national unity. Leaders like Nehru feared that the effort undertaken to redraw the boundaries would disrupt the unity of India.

Still fully committed to the formation of linguistic states, the Constituent Assembly appointed a Linguistic Provinces Commission headed by S.K. Dar in 1948. Its task was to enquire about the desirability of linguistic states. The Commission was against the formation of linguistic states for the time being because it might threaten national unity. The decision of national leadership was challenged by the proponents of linguistic patriotism. They started agitations which were strong, especially in the South. To appease the agitators the Congress appointed a committee known as the JVP Committee in December 1948, consisting of Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, and Pattabhi Sitaramayya to examine the question. This Committee submitted its report and advised against the linguistic formation of states. The Commission emphasised that unity, national security and economic development should be the primary concerns of the national government.

Meanwhile, the demand for a separate Telugu-speaking state gathered force. In

1953, the Indian government was compelled to create the state of Andhra due to a powerful movement advocating for it. On 19 October 1952, a popular freedom fighter Potti Sriramalu went on a fast unto death for the creation of a separate Andhra Pradesh. It resulted in his death after 58 days. His death created violent riots, demonstrations, and hartals all over Andhra. The Government immediately announced the formation of Andhra State in October 1953.

The formation of Andhra Pradesh paved the way for demand from other regions for the formation of linguistic states. The Central Government appointed a States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in 1953 to study the matters. Its members were Justice Fazl Ali, K.M. Panikkar and Hridayanath Kunzru. The SRC submitted its report in October 1955 and recognised linguistic principle as the basis for redrawing of state boundaries. The Central Government passed the States Reorganisation Act in November 1956. This led to the creation of fourteen states and six union territories. There were demands for the creation of new states by bifurcating the existing ones. Thus Gujarat was formed out of Bombay, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh created out of Punjab and Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh were carved out of Assam. In 2000 three new states were formed: Uttaranchal from U.P., Chhattisgarh from M.P., and Jharkhand from Bihar. Thus, the Indian Union came to have 14 states and 6 centrally administered territories.

Several existing states disappeared. A few new states emerged. The 14 states were Kerala, Madras, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, Bombay, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam. The Union Territories were Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Lakshadweep Islands and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The States Reorganisation Act abolished



the institution of Rajapramukh. Later, on the grounds of linguistic considerations and development concerns, many new states were created in India.

One of the most important concerns of the Indian Government was that the demand for separate states would affect the unity of the nation. It was feared that the linguistic state may create separatism. However, the linguistic formation of states changed the nature of democratic politics. The path to politics was now open to people other than the small English-speaking elite. It underlined the acceptance of the principle of diversity. Linguistic states did not lead to the disintegration of the country. On the contrary, it strengthened national unity.

2.4.1.2 The Official Language

The controversy on the language issue became most virulent when it took the form of opposition to Hindi and tended to create conflict between Hindi-speaking and non-Hindi-speaking regions of the country. The dispute was not over the question of a national language, that is one language which all Indians would adopt after some time since the view that one national language was essential to an Indian national identity had already been rejected overwhelmingly by the secular majority of the national leadership. India was a multilingual country and it had to remain so.

The Indian national movement carried on its ideological and political work through the different Indian regional languages. Its demand then was for the replacement of English by the mother tongue as the medium for higher education, administration and courts in each linguistic area. Jawaharlal Nehru had clearly put across this view in 1937: “Our great provincial languages are ancient languages with a rich inheritance, each spoken by many millions of persons, each tied up inextricably with the life and

culture and ideas of the masses as well as of the upper classes. It is axiomatic that the masses can only grow educationally and culturally through the medium of their own language. Therefore, it is inevitable that we lay stress on the provincial languages and carry on most of our work through them. Our system of education and public work must therefore be based on the provincial languages.”

The issue of a national language was resolved when the Constitution-makers virtually accepted all the major languages as ‘languages of India’ or India’s national languages. But the matter could not end there, for the country’s official work could not be carried on in so many languages. There had to be one common language in which the central government would carry on its work and maintain contact with the state governments. The question arose: what would be this language of all-India communication? Or what would be India’s official and link language? Only two options were available for the purpose: English and Hindi. The Constituent Assembly heatedly debated which one should be selected. But the choice had already been made in the pre-independence period by the leadership of the national movement, which was convinced that English would not continue to be the all-India medium of communication to free India.

For example, even while appreciating the value of English as a world language, through which Indians could access world science and culture and modern Western ideas, Gandhiji was convinced that the genius of a people could not unfold nor could their culture flower in a foreign language. In fact, Gandhiji, during the 1920’s emphasised that English is “a language of international commerce, it is the language of diplomacy, it contains many rich literary treasures, and it gives us an introduction to Western thought and culture.” But he argued English occupied

India “an unnatural place due to our unequal relations with Englishmen. And he wrote in 1946: “I love the English tongue in its own place, but I am its inveterate opponent if it usurps a place which does not belong to it. English is today admittedly the world language. I would therefore accord it a place as a second, optional language.” Nehru echoed these sentiments in his 1937 article on ‘The Question of Language’ and also during the Constituent Assembly debates.

Hindi or Hindustani, the other candidate for the status of the official or link language, had already played this role during the nationalist struggle, especially during the phase of mass mobilisation. Hindi had been accepted by leaders from non-Hindi-speaking regions because it was considered to be the most widely spoken and understood language in the country. Lokamanya Tilak, Gandhiji, C. Rajagopalachari, Subhas Bose, and Sardar Patel were some of Hindi’s enthusiastic supporters. In its sessions and political work, the Congress had substituted Hindi and the provincial languages in place of English.

In 1925, Congress amended its Constitution to read: “The proceedings of the Congress shall be conducted as far as possible in Hindustani. The English language or any provincial language may be used if the speaker is unable to speak Hindustani or whenever necessary. The proceedings of the Provincial Congress Committee shall ordinarily be conducted in the language of the Province concerned. Hindustani may also be used.”

Reflecting a national consensus, the Nehru Report had laid down in 1928 that Hindustani which might be written in Devanagari or Urdu script would be the common language of India, but the use of English would be continued for some time. It is interesting that ultimately the Constitution of free India was to adopt this stand, except for replacing Hindustani with Hindi. The real debate in

the Constituent Assembly occurred over two questions: Would Hindi or Hindustani replace English? And what would be the time frame for such a replacement to happen?

Sharp differences marked the initial debates as the problem of the official language was highly politicised from the beginning. The question of Hindi or Hindustani was soon resolved, though with a great deal of acrimony. Gandhiji and Nehru both supported Hindustani, written in Devanagari or Urdu script. Though many supporters of Hindi disagreed, they tended to accept the Gandhi-Nehru viewpoint. But once the Partition was announced, these champions of Hindi were emboldened, especially as the protagonists of Pakistan had claimed Urdu as the language of Muslims and Pakistan. The voters of Hindi now branded Urdu ‘as a symbol of secession.’ They demanded that Hindi in Devanagari script be made the national language. Their demand split the Congress party down the middle.

In the end, the Congress Legislative Party decided for Hindi against Hindustani by 78 to 77 votes, even though Nehru and Azad fought for Hindustani. The Hindi bloc was also forced to compromise; it accepted that Hindi would be the official and not the national language. The issue of the time frame for a shift from English to Hindi produced a divide between Hindi and non-Hindi areas. The spokespersons of Hindi areas were for the immediate switchover to Hindi, while those from non-Hindi areas advocated the retention of English for a long if not indefinite period. In fact, they wanted the status quo to continue till a future parliament decided to shift to Hindi as the official language. Nehru was for making Hindi the official language, but he also was in favour of English continuing as an additional official language, making the transition to Hindi gradual and actively encouraging the knowledge of English because of its usefulness in the contemporary world.



The case for Hindi rested on the fact that it was the language of the largest number, though not of the majority, of the people of India; it was also understood at least in the urban areas of most of northern India from Bengal to Punjab and in Maharashtra and Gujarat. The critics of Hindi talked about it being less developed than other languages as a literary language and as a language of science and politics. But their main fear was that Hindi's adoption as the official language would place non-Hindi areas, especially South India, at a disadvantage in the educational and economic spheres, particularly in competition for appointments in government and the public sector. Such opponents tended to argue that the imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi areas would lead to their economic, political, social, and cultural domination by Hindi areas.

The Constitution-makers were aware that as the leaders of a multilingual country, they could not ignore, or even give the impression of ignoring, the interest of any one linguistic area. A compromise was arrived at, though this led to the language provisions of the Constitution becoming 'complicated, ambiguous, and confusing in some respects.' The Constitution provided that Hindi in Devanagari script would be India's official language. English was to continue for use in all official purposes till 1965 when it would be replaced by Hindi. Hindi was to be introduced in a phased manner. After 1965, it would become the sole official language. However, the parliament would have the power to provide for the use of English for specific purposes even after 1965.

The Constitution laid upon the government the duty to promote the spread and development of Hindi and provided for the appointment of a Commission and a Joint Committee of the Parliament to review the progress in this respect. The state legislatures were to decide the matter of official language

at the state level, though the official language of the Union would serve as the language of communication between the states and the Centre and between one state and another.

Implementation of the language provisions of the Constitution proved to be a formidable task even though the Congress party was in power all over the country. The issue remained a subject of intense controversy which became increasingly acrimonious with the passage of time, though for many years nobody challenged the provision that Hindi would eventually, become the sole official language.

The Constitution-makers had hoped that by 1965 the Hindi protagonists would overcome the weaknesses of Hindi, win the confidence of non-Hindi areas and hold their hand for a longer period till such time they had done so. It was also hoped that with the rapid growth of education, Hindi too would spread and resistance to Hindi would gradually weaken and even disappear. But, unfortunately, the spread of education was too slow to make an impact in this respect.

Moreover, the chances of Hindi's success as an official language were spoiled by the proponents of Hindi themselves. Instead of taking up a gradual, slow, and moderate approach to gain acceptance of Hindi by non-Hindi areas and to rely on persuasion, the more fanatics among them, preferred imposition of Hindi through government action. Their zeal and enthusiasm tended to provoke a counter-movement. As Nehru told the Parliament in 1959, it was their over-enthusiasm which came in the way of the spread and acceptance of Hindi for "the way they approach this subject often irritates others, as it irritates me."

Hindi suffered from the lack of social science and scientific writing. In the 1950's, for example, there were hardly any academic journals in Hindi outside the literary field. Instead of developing Hindi as a means

of communication in higher education, journalism and so on, the Hindi leaders were more interested in making it the sole official language.

A major weakness of the Hindi protagonists was that, instead of developing a simple standard language which would get wide acceptance or at least popularise the colloquial Hindi as spoken and written in Hindi areas as also in many other parts of India, they tried to Sanskritise the language, replacing commonly understood words with newly manufactured, unwieldy and little understood ones in the name of the 'purity' of language, free of alien influences. This made it more and more difficult for non-Hindi speakers (or even Hindi speakers) to understand or learn the new version.

All India Radio, which could have played an important role in popularising Hindi, instead took to Sanskritising its Hindi news bulletins that many listeners would switch off their radios when the Hindi news was broadcast. Nehru, a Hindi speaker and writer, complained in 1958 that he was unable to understand the language in which his own Hindi speeches were being broadcast. However, the purifiers of Hindi did not relent and resisted all attempts to simplify the Hindi of news broadcasts. This led many uncommitted persons to join the ranks of the opponents of Hindi.

Nehru and the majority of Indian leaders however remained committed to the transition to Hindi as the official language. They believed that, though the study of English was to be encouraged, English could not continue forever as India's official language. In the interests of national unity as well as economic and political development, they also realised that a full transition to Hindi should not be time-bound and should await a politically more auspicious time when the willing consent of the non-Hindi areas could be obtained. The non-Hindi leaders

also became less and less open to their opposition to Hindi increased with time. One result of this alienation of non-Hindi language groups was that they too were not open to rational arguments in favour of Hindi. Instead, they veered towards an indefinite continuance of English.

Sharp differences on the official language issue surfaced during 1956-60, once again revealing the presence of disruptive tendencies. In 1956, the Report of the Official Language Commission, set up in 1955 in terms of a constitutional provision, recommended that Hindi should start progressively replacing English in various functions of the central government with the effective change taking place in 1965.

The Commission's Report was reviewed by a special Joint Committee of the Parliament. To implement the recommendations of the Joint Committee, the President issued an order in April 1960 stating that after 1965 Hindi would be the principal official language but that English would continue as the associate official language without any restriction being placed on its use. Hindi would also become an alternative medium for the Union Public Commission examinations after some time, but for the present, it would be introduced in the examinations as a qualifying subject. In accordance with the President's directive, the central government took a series of steps to promote Hindi. These included the setting up of the Central Hindi Directorate, publication of standard works in Hindi or Hindi translation in various fields, compulsory training of central government employees in Hindi, and translation of major texts of law into Hindi and promotion of their use by the courts.

All these measures aroused suspicion and anxiety in the non-Hindi areas and groups. Nor were the Hindi leaders satisfied. Similarly, in March 1958, C. Rajagopalachari, ex-president of the Hindi Pracharini Sabha



in the South, declared that “Hindi is as much foreign to the non-Hindi speaking people as English to the protagonists of Hindi.” On the other hand, two major champions of Hindi, Purshottam Das Tandon and Seth Govind Das, accused the Joint Parliamentary Committee of being pro-English. Many of the Hindi leaders also attacked Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Minister of Education, for dragging their feet in implementing the constitutional provisions and deliberately delaying the replacement of English. They insisted that the deadline for the changeover to Hindi laid down in the Constitution must be rigidly observed.

In 1957, Dr Lohia’s Samyukta Socialist Party and Jan Sangh launched a militant movement, which continued for nearly two years, for the immediate replacement of English by Hindi. One of the agitational methods adopted by the followers of Lohia on a large scale was to deface English signboards of shops and in other places.

Fully aware of the danger that the official language issue could pose to Indian polity, the leadership of the Congress took the grievances of the non-Hindi areas seriously and handled the issue with great care and caution. Nehru made it clear that an official language could not and would not be imposed on any region of the country and that the pace of transition to Hindi would have to be determined keeping in view the wishes of the non-Hindi people. In this, he was supported by the leaders of the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and Communist Party of India (CPI).

PSP criticised Hindi extremism and said that “it might severely strain the unity of a multilingual country like India.” The highlight of Nehru’s approach was a major statement in the Parliament on 7 August 1959. To allay the fears of the non-Hindi people, he gave a definite assurance: “I would have English as an alternate language as long as the people require it, and I would leave the

decision not to the Hindi-knowing people, but to the non-Hindi-knowing people.” He also told the people of the South that “if they do not want to learn Hindi, let them not learn Hindi.” He repeated this assurance in the Parliament on 4th September 1959.

In pursuance of Nehru’s assurances, though with delay caused by internal party pressures and the India-China war, an Official Languages Act was passed in 1963. The object of the Act, Nehru declared, was “to remove a restriction which had been placed by the Constitution on the use of English after a certain date, namely, 1965.” But this purpose was not fully served as the assurances were not clearly articulated in the Act. The Act laid down that ‘the English language may . . . continue to be used in addition to Hindi. The non-Hindi groups criticised the use of the word ‘may’ in place of the word ‘shall.’ This made the Act ambiguous in their eyes; they did not regard it as a statutory guarantee. Many of them wanted a cast iron guarantee not because they distrusted Nehru but because they were worried about what would happen after Nehru, especially as the pressure from the Hindi leaders was also growing.

The death of Nehru in June 1964 increased their apprehensions which were further sparked by certain hasty steps taken and circulars issued by various ministries to prepare the ground for the changeover to Hindi in the coming year. For example, instructions were given that the central government’s correspondence with the states would be in Hindi, though in the case of non-Hindi states, an English translation would be appended.

Lal Bahadur Shastri, Nehru’s successor as Prime Minister, was unfortunately not sensitive enough to the opinion of non-Hindi groups. Instead of taking effective steps to counter their fears of Hindi becoming the sole official language, he declared that he

was considering making Hindi an alternative medium in Public Service examinations. This meant that while non-Hindi speakers could still compete in the all-India services in English, the Hindi speakers would have the advantage of being able to use their mother tongue.

Many non-Hindi leaders in protest changed their line of approach to the problem of official language. While previously they had wanted a slowing down of the replacement of English, now they started demanding that there should be no deadline fixed for the changeover. Some of the leaders went much further. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and C. Rajagopalachari, for example, demanded that the Constitution should be amended and English should be made the official language of India.

As 26 January 1965 approached, a sense of fear gripped the non-Hindi areas, especially Tamil Nadu, creating a strong anti-Hindi movement. On 17 January, the DMK organised the Madras State Anti-Hindi Conference which gave a call for observing 26 January as a day of mourning. Students, concerned about their careers and apprehensive that they would be outstripped by Hindi-speakers in the all-India services, were the most active in organising a widespread agitation and mobilising public opinion. They raised and popularised the slogan: “Hindi never, English ever.” They also demanded an amendment to the Constitution. The students’ agitation soon developed into state-wide unrest.

The Congress leadership, though controlling both the state and the central governments, failed to gauge the depth of the popular feeling and the widespread character of the movement and instead of negotiating with the students, made an effort to repress it. Widespread rioting and violence followed and led to the large-scale destruction of railways and other properties. So strong was the anti-Hindi feeling that

several Tamil youths, including four students, burned themselves to death in protest against the official language policy.

Two Tamil ministers, C. Subramaniam and Alagesan, resigned from the Union Cabinet. The agitation continued for about two months, taking a toll of over sixty lives through police firings. The only eminent central leader to show concern for the agitators was Indira Gandhi, then the Minister for Information and Broadcasting. At the height of the agitation, she flew to Madras, ‘rushed to the storm centre of trouble.

Efforts were made by Jan Sangh and the SSP to organise counter-agitation in the Hindi areas against English, but they did not get much public support. The agitation forced both the Madras and the Union governments and the Congress party to revise their stand. They now decided to yield to the intense public mood in the South, change their policy and accept the major demands of the agitators. The Congress Working Committee announced a series of steps which were to form the basis for a central enactment embodying concessions and which led to the withdrawal of the Hindi agitation. This enactment was delayed because of the Indo-Pak War of 1965, which silenced all dissension in the country.

With the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri in January 1966, Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister. As she had already won the trust of the people of the South, they were convinced that a genuine effort would be made to resolve the long-festering dispute. Other favourable factors were Jan Sangh’s muting of their anti-English fervour and the SSP’s acceptance of the basic features of the agreement worked out in 1965. Despite facing economic problems and the weakening of the Congress’s position in Parliament in the 1967 elections, Indira Gandhi moved the bill to amend the Official Language Act 1963 on 27 November. The Lok Sabha adopted



the bill, on 16 December 1967, by 205 to 41 votes. The Act gave an unambiguous legal fortification, to Nehru's assurances of September 1959. It provided that the use of English as an associate language in addition to Hindi for the official work at the Centre and for communication between the Centre and non-Hindi states would continue as long as the non-Hindi states wanted it, giving them full veto powers on the question. A virtual indefinite policy of bilingualism was adopted.

The Parliament also adopted a policy resolution laying down that the public service examinations were to be conducted in Hindi and English and all the regional languages with the provision that the candidates should have additional knowledge of Hindi or English. The states were to adopt a three-language formula according to which, in the non-Hindi areas, the mother tongue, Hindi and English or some other national language was to be taught in schools while in the Hindi areas a non-Hindi language, preferably a southern language, was to be taught as a compulsory subject.

The Government of India took another important step on the language question in July 1967. On the basis of the Report of the Education Commission in 1966,

it declared that Indian languages would ultimately become the medium of education in all subjects at the university level, though the time frame for the changeover would be decided by each university to suit its convenience.

The use of Hindi as an official language has also been growing though English is still dominant. Simultaneously, English, as a second language has been spreading fast, including in the Hindi-speaking areas. A witness of this is the number of private English-medium schools, however poor in staff and other facilities, which now dot the countryside from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. The standards of spoken and written English have fallen but the English-knowing classes have multiplied manifold. Both English and Hindi are likely to grow as link languages just as regional languages are more and more occupying the official, educational and media space. The proof of the growth of Hindi, English and regional languages lies in the rapid growth of newspapers in all of them. In fact, English is not only likely to survive in India for all times to come, but it remains and is likely to grow as a language of communication between the intelligentsia all over the country, as a library language, and as the second language of the universities.

Recap

- ◆ Language became one of the most contested issues in early independent India due to its strong link to cultural identity.
- ◆ Debates focused on adopting a national official language and reorganising states along linguistic lines.
- ◆ The Constitution of India initially classified states into three categories: Part A, Part B, and Part C
- ◆ A demand for linguistic reorganisation arose, advocating for states based on language, a principle rooted in the post-independence context

- ◆ The Congress had supported the linguistic basis for state formation before independence, but national unity concerns arose after partition and other crises
- ◆ A Linguistic Provinces Commission in 1948 and the JVP Committee in 1948 both advised against linguistic states, citing national unity concerns
- ◆ In 1952, the demand for a separate Telugu-speaking state led to violent protests, prompting the creation of Andhra Pradesh in 1953
- ◆ The formation of Andhra Pradesh triggered further demands for linguistic states, leading to the appointment of the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in 1953.

Objective Questions

1. Who headed the Linguistic Provinces Commission in 1948?
2. Who led the movement for the creation of the state of Andhra Pradesh in 1953?
3. Which commission submitted its report in 1955 and recommended the linguistic principle for redrawing state boundaries?
4. When did the Government pass the States Reorganisation Act, which led to the creation of new states and union territories?
5. When did the Congress appoint the JVP Committee?
6. Who moved the bill to amend the official language Act 1963?
7. When did the Official Languages Act was passed?
8. Which Act laid down that 'the English language may continue to be used in addition to Hindi.' ?
9. Which Act abolished the institution of Rajapramukh?
10. Who declared that "Hindi is as much foreign to the non-Hindi speaking people as English to the protagonists of Hindi?"

Answers

1. S.K. Dar
2. Potti Sriramalu
3. States Reorganisation Commission (SRC)
4. 1956
5. December 1948
6. Indira Gandhi
7. 1963
8. Official Languages Act
9. The States Reorganisation Act
10. C. Rajagopalachari

Assignments

1. Discuss the role of the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in redefining India's internal boundaries. How did its recommendations influence the federal structure of the country?
2. Evaluate the political and administrative impact of linguistic reorganisation on the representation of India's diverse linguistic communities.
3. Analyse both the positive and negative effects of linguistic state formation on India's cultural and social fabric.
4. Discuss how the States Reorganisation Act (1956) addressed the concerns of linguistic minorities.

Suggested Reading

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BLOCK

Legacy of Nehru



UNIT

Concept of Development

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the idea of a mixed economy
- ◆ describe Jawaharlal Nehru's vision for nation-building and his contribution to India's economic planning
- ◆ analyse the key principles and outcomes of Nehruvian Socialism, especially in relation to industrialisation, planning, and social welfare
- ◆ evaluate the strengths and limitations of Nehru's economic policies within the socio-political context of independent India

Prerequisites

In 1947, when India became independent, the country faced enormous socio-economic challenges. Large sections of the population lacked access to education, healthcare, and basic infrastructure, and the economy was mostly agricultural and underdeveloped. At the same time, the world was entering a bipolar Cold War era, dominated by the USA and the Soviet Union. India, under Jawaharlal Nehru, decided to remain non-aligned and chart its own path of development. Nehru drew inspiration from Fabian Socialism and global examples of planned development. He believed that India's progress required a strong state role, modern industries, and long-term planning. His vision combined socialist principles such as social justice, welfare, and reducing inequality with democratic values. Nehru's approach led to the creation of a mixed economy, where both the public and private sectors coexisted, but the state controlled key industries and guided national priorities. Policies such as land reforms, public sector expansion, and the introduction of Five-Year Plans formed the core of the Nehruvian model. These strategies significantly influenced India's development path in the decades following independence.

Keywords

License Raj, Mixed Economy, Five-Year Plans, Planned Economy, Nehruvian Socialism, Scientific Temper, Public Sector Undertakings

Discussion

India's economy was heavily exploited by the British colonial government for over 200 years. The exploitative policies of the British government led to the economic impoverishment of India, which was exacerbated by the Bengal famine of 1943, in which an estimated three million people died. The economic policies of the British government were opposed by many Indian leaders, including Dadabhai Naoroji. Naoroji was the first Indian to be elected to the British Parliament, and he exposed the economic exploitation of India by the British government.

In 1947, as India stood on the brink of independence, its economy was deeply rooted in agriculture and severely hindered by colonial exploitation. Nearly 80% of the population relied on agriculture for their livelihood; however, outdated farming methods, low yields and the exploitative zamindari system left farmers impoverished and vulnerable. Industrial development was stunted, contributing a mere 7.5% to national income. The few existing industries focused on jute, cotton textiles and iron and steel were clustered in urban centres like Bombay (now Mumbai) and Calcutta (now Kolkata). Infrastructure, though present, was built primarily to serve colonial interests, such as the transport of raw materials and military troops, rather than to boost economic integration or prosperity for the masses.

Socially, the country faced profound challenges. Literacy rates hovered at an alarming 12%, leaving the majority of the population without the tools for upward

mobility or meaningful participation in governance. Life expectancy was a mere 32 years, with limited healthcare contributing to high mortality rates and widespread suffering. Poverty was a grim reality for about 70% of the population, who lived well below the subsistence level. The rigid social structures further compounded the hardships, with deeply entrenched caste and gender inequalities, restricting opportunities, and perpetuating cycles of deprivation.

Amidst these challenges, India was poised for a difficult journey of rebuilding and self-reliance, facing the monumental task of breaking free from the legacies of colonial exploitation and building a more equitable society for its people.

3.1.1 Nehruvian Socialism

Nehruvian Socialism refers to the socio-economic framework laid out by Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, which aimed to build an equitable and self-sufficient nation in the aftermath of independence in 1947. At its core, Nehruvian Socialism is defined by its emphasis on a mixed economy, where both the state and private sector played significant roles, but with the state exercising substantial control over key areas of the economy to prevent the concentration of wealth and ensure social welfare. The model aimed to harmonise economic growth with social justice, seeking not just economic progress but the upliftment of all sections of society.

The inspiration for Nehruvian Socialism stemmed from a blend of diverse and

influential sources. One significant influence was Fabian Socialism, a British movement that promoted gradual, democratic means to achieve socialist goals, contrasting with more radical and revolutionary approaches. Nehru admired the Fabian emphasis on state intervention to reduce inequality and uplift the underprivileged, aligning with his vision of a socially just India.

The success of the Soviet Union's state-led industrialisation also played a crucial role in shaping Nehru's thinking. Observing how rapid industrial growth had transformed the Soviet economy inspired Nehru's belief in the necessity of strong state planning for economic development. However, Nehru was careful to differentiate his approach from the Soviet model by rejecting authoritarianism and promoting democratic principles within India's framework.

Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy added a uniquely Indian dimension to Nehru's socialism. Gandhi's vision of self-reliant, village-centred development and his emphasis on social harmony resonated with Nehru's aim to create a society where economic growth was inclusive and balanced. This blend of Western socialist thought, Soviet-style planning and Gandhian values formed the backbone of Nehruvian Socialism, driving his policies towards building a modern, equitable and self-sufficient nation while upholding democratic ideals.

Key components of Nehruvian Socialism included a strong emphasis on public sector enterprises, and state-led economic planning through the introduction of Five-Year Plans and policies aimed at reducing socio-economic disparities. Nehru believed in directing state resources into developing heavy industries like steel, energy and infrastructure as the backbone of India's modern economy. Land reforms and measures to promote education and healthcare were also part of the model, intended to foster a

society where economic benefits reached the wider population.

The context for Nehruvian Socialism was set against the backdrop of India's colonial experience, which had left the country impoverished, underdeveloped and marked by stark inequalities. The economic exploitation under British rule had dismantled traditional industries and agriculture was mired in low productivity and feudal practices. Nehru envisioned socialism as a way to break these chains, promote rapid industrialisation.

Nehru's economic policy was implemented through a series of Five-Year Plans, which were designed to guide India's economic development. The First Five-Year Plan, which was launched in 1951 focused on agriculture, irrigation, and power, while subsequent plans emphasised industrialisation, infrastructure development and social welfare.

3.1.1.1 The Planned Economy

Evolution of Nehru's Economic Policy

Nehru believed that a centrally planned economy would enable India to achieve rapid economic development and social justice. He believed that planning was necessary to allocate resources in a way that would promote balanced economic growth and equitable distribution of resources. Nehru emphasised the importance of public ownership of key industries, which he believed would enable the government to control the direction of economic development and ensure that the benefits of economic growth were shared by all.

The basic principles of Nehru's planned economy were outlined in the "Objectives Resolution" that was passed by the Constituent Assembly in 1946. The "Objectives Resolution" marked a turning point in shaping India's economic vision for its future as an independent nation. It



highlighted the commitment to a planned economy infused with socialist principles, aimed at ensuring fair distribution of wealth and resources to tackle the glaring inequalities that had gripped the country after colonial rule.

A key element of this resolution was the emphasis on planning. This meant that India's economic development would not be left entirely to market forces. Instead, the state would take on an active role in guiding the economy to promote balanced and inclusive growth. This approach was designed to confront deep-seated issues like poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment, which had been worsened by colonial exploitation.

The resolution also called for public ownership of essential industries such as steel, coal and energy. By placing these critical sectors under state control, the aim was to prevent monopolies, curb the concentration of wealth and ensure that the economic gains were shared equitably across the society.

Moreover, the "Objectives Resolution" recognised the importance of nurturing and promoting small-scale industries. This was intended to strengthen local economies, create job opportunities and foster grassroots self-reliance. These principles embodied a vision of economic development that was not only growth-oriented but also rooted in social justice and widespread prosperity.

3.1.1.2 The Five-Year Plans

One of the first major steps was the establishment of the Planning Commission in 1950, tasked with formulating India's Five-Year Plans. These plans set clear targets for economic development, focusing on key sectors such as agriculture, industry and infrastructure. The government also nationalised key industries, including coal, steel and electricity, while promoting the development of small-scale industries.

Nehru's concept of a planned economy shared several similarities with Stalin's Five-Year Plans, which were implemented in the Soviet Union in 1928. Both plans aimed at transforming their respective countries into industrialised nations through state-led economic development. Both leaders emphasised large-scale state investment in industry and infrastructure, with the goal of achieving self-sufficiency and reducing reliance on imports. In both cases, heavy industry, particularly steel and machinery was prioritised over consumer goods.

However, there were key differences between the two systems. Stalin's Five-Year Plans were characterised by strict central planning, authoritarian control, and the use of forced labour in some sectors. In contrast, Nehru's planned economy operated within a democratic framework, focusing on a mixed economy that included both public and private sectors. Nehru's policies also placed significant emphasis on social welfare programmes, including education and healthcare, while Stalin's plans were more focused on military and industrial power.

Five-Year Plans under Nehru

The First Five-Year Plan (1951-1956) was primarily focused on agriculture, irrigation and power projects. Given that India's economy was predominantly agrarian at the time, the plan aimed to increase food production, alleviate food shortages and reduce the dependence on imports. It prioritised irrigation projects to boost agricultural productivity, alongside the establishment of power plants to provide a stable energy supply essential for industrialisation. The plan also laid the groundwork for the development of basic infrastructure like roads, railways and communication networks to facilitate the movement of goods and resources across the country. Economists like P.C. Mahalanobis, who played a significant role in the design of

these plans also promoted the idea of using state intervention to guide the economic process.

The Second Five-Year Plan (1956-1961) shifted focus towards industrialisation, particularly the development of heavy industries such as steel, chemicals and machinery. This plan sought to reduce India's dependence on imported goods and aimed for greater self-sufficiency. The establishment of large industrial complexes, such as the Bhilai Steel Plant (with Soviet assistance) and the development of public sector enterprises were key features of this period. The plan also emphasised the construction of infrastructure to support industrial growth, such as power plants, ports and airports, which were essential for India's long-term industrial development. Economists like Mahalanobis, a strong advocate of industrialisation, influenced the approach to target the expansion of the public sector, focusing on long-term industrial capacity rather than immediate consumer goods.



Fig. 3.1.1 Nehru at the Royal Enfield Madras factory in 1956

The Third Five-Year Plan (1961-1966) aimed at balancing industrialisation with rural development. The plan placed a strong emphasis on increasing agricultural productivity, with a focus on irrigation, rural electrification, and providing financial credit to farmers. It also sought to improve the

living standards of rural populations through the creation of rural infrastructure and social welfare schemes. The plan aimed to enhance industrial growth, especially in sectors such as cement and chemicals and also sought to increase exports. However, the Third Plan faced challenges, including the impact of the Sino-Indian War (1962) and the subsequent Indo-Pakistan War (1965), which strained resources. Despite these setbacks, the plan underscored the importance of creating a balance between the urban industrial sector and rural development.

3.1.2 Impact of Nehru's Economic Policies

Under Nehru, India's economy grew at an average rate of 4% per year during the First Five-Year Plan, which was higher than the pre-independence growth rate. The impacts of the first three five-year plans under Nehru are as follows:

Positive Impacts of Nehru's Economic Policies

1. Industrialisation

Nehru recognised that industrialisation was key to India's economic development and sovereignty. His policies prioritised the establishment of heavy industries and the development of a strong public sector. Under his leadership, India set up large public sector undertakings (PSUs) such as Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). These industries helped reduce India's dependency on imports, especially in critical areas like defence and infrastructure. The establishment of steel plants, such as the Bhilai Steel Plant (1955) was crucial in building a domestic industrial base. The development of hydroelectric power plants also ensured a stable energy supply, essential for industrialisation.



Fig. 3.1.2 The Bhilai Steel Plant was established in 1955



Fig. 3.1.3 Hybrid varieties of food crops kickstarted the Green Revolution

2. Green Revolution

In the 1950s, India was facing chronic food shortages due to population explosion and was heavily dependent on food aid from the USA and the UK. The country's agriculture was vulnerable to fluctuating weather conditions and there was limited rural infrastructure. To address these challenges, Nehru's government focused on modernising agriculture, introducing the Green Revolution in the 1960s. The policy involved the use of high-yielding crop varieties, the development of extensive irrigation systems and the adoption of modern farming techniques, such as chemical fertilisers and pesticides. The introduction of high-yielding varieties like IR-8 (a semi-dwarf variety of rice) and later wheat varieties helped significantly increase food production. Irrigation infrastructure was expanded to ensure reliable water supply to farmlands, enabling multiple cropping seasons. As a result, India transitioned from being a food-deficient country to achieving food self-sufficiency, particularly in rice and wheat production. This transformation helped reduce dependence on food imports and alleviated rural poverty by providing employment and increasing farmers' incomes. By improving agricultural productivity, the Green Revolution also contributed to India's growing population's nutritional needs and helped achieve long-term food security.

3. Education

Nehru placed a high priority on education as the foundation for India's economic and social development. Recognising that an educated and skilled workforce was essential for industrialisation and overall progress, he implemented policies aimed at expanding both basic and higher education. Nehru's vision led to the creation of numerous educational institutions, with a particular focus on professional and technical education. The establishment of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in 1951 and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) in the 1960s were pivotal in producing highly skilled professionals in engineering, technology, and management. These institutions helped foster innovation and contributed significantly to the economic growth of India's post-independence period. Nehru's government also focused on universal primary education to improve literacy rates across the country. By the time of his death in 1964, India's literacy rate had nearly tripled. This increase in literacy contributed to a rise in employment opportunities, poverty reduction, and an improvement in the living standards of the Indian population. Nehru's policies in education laid the groundwork for future advancements in science, technology, and industry.



Fig. 3.1.4 IIT Kharagpur, established in 1951

Negative Impacts of Nehru's Economic Policies

1. Red Tape

Nehru's government implemented a system of licenses and permits for the establishment of industries, which led to bureaucratic delays and corruption. This policy led to an era infamously known as License Raj, which stifled entrepreneurship and innovation, and resulted in a lack of competition that adversely affected the country's economic growth. The system of licenses and permits was also prone to rent-seeking behaviour, which led to a culture of corruption and nepotism. Unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, reservation of key industries to the public sector, and high tariffs led to the private sector being classified into the consumer sector which was still underdeveloped.

2. Protectionism

Nehru's government implemented policies that protected domestic industries from foreign competition, which led to a lack of competitiveness and innovation in the economy. The policy of import substitution

led to the development of inefficient and low-quality industries, which could not compete with foreign products. This policy also led to a lack of access to new technology and best practices, which hampered the country's economic growth.

3. Fiscal Mismanagement

Nehru's government implemented policies that led to fiscal mismanagement, which adversely affected the country's economic growth. This emphasis on state-led industrialisation led to substantial government spending on inefficient and often corrupt public sector industries. The government also provided subsidies to various sectors, including agriculture, which further increased the fiscal deficit. Nehru's policies discouraged foreign investment and trade leading to a shortage of foreign exchange and a decline in exports. After an initial surge in economic growth, these factors later contributed to high inflation, a balance of payments crisis in 1958 and economic instability in the 1960s. By the 1970s, the country had already entered a period of economic stagnation, during which calls for economic reform grew louder.

Recap

- ◆ Nehruvian Socialism aimed to build an equitable and self-reliant nation.
- ◆ India adopted a mixed economy, combining private enterprise with strong state control over key sectors.
- ◆ Nehru's ideas were shaped by Fabian Socialism, Soviet-style industrialisation, and Gandhi's emphasis on self-reliance.
- ◆ The state-led planning system, implemented through Five-Year Plans, prioritised industrialisation, agriculture, and social welfare.
- ◆ Major sectors such as steel, coal, transport, and energy were nationalised to prevent private monopolies and ensure equitable growth.
- ◆ The emphasis on small-scale and cottage industries reflected a commitment to grassroots development.
- ◆ The Green Revolution later helped raise agricultural productivity and ensure food security.
- ◆ Nehru's policies also faced criticism for encouraging bureaucratic controls, inefficiency, and excessive protectionism.

Objective Questions

1. What was the primary focus of Nehruvian Socialism?
2. Who was the first Indian to be elected to the British Parliament and exposed to the economic exploitation of India?
3. What percentage of India's population relied on agriculture for their livelihood in 1947?
4. What was the average life expectancy in India in 1947?
5. Which movement inspired Nehru's vision of a socially just India?
6. What was the main objective of India's Five-Year Plans introduced after independence?
7. Which industry did Nehru prioritise for development in the First Five-Year Plan?

8. Which international economic model influenced Nehru's economic policies?
9. What was the primary objective of the Green Revolution in India?
10. Which institution was established by Nehru in 1951 to foster technical education in India?

Answers

1. Mixed economy
2. Dadabhai Naoroji
3. 80%
4. 32 years
5. Fabian socialism
6. Economic development
7. Agriculture
8. Soviet model
9. Food self-sufficiency
10. IIT

Assignments

1. Analyse the long-term impact of Nehruvian economic policies on India's development. How did these policies shape India's response to later global economic crises?
2. Select a specific Five-Year Plan. Identify its main objectives and evaluate the extent to which these objectives were achieved.

3. Analyse the Green Revolution in India. How did it contribute to or diverge from the aims of planned economic growth?
4. Examine how Nehruvian Socialism attempted to address social inequalities in independent India.

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UNIT

Industrialisation

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ♦ describe the industrial policies adopted by India from independence to the 1991 economic reforms
- ♦ explain the evolution of India's industrial development strategy
- ♦ analyse the relationship between the public sector and private sector within India's mixed economy framework
- ♦ evaluate the impact of the Green Revolution on agricultural productivity, rural economy, and industrial growth
- ♦ reflect on how industrialisation shaped India's socio-economic transformation in the post-independence period

Prerequisites

At the time of independence, India inherited an economy shaped by nearly two centuries of colonial exploitation. The British policy of economic extraction left India overwhelmingly dependent on agriculture, which employed most of the population but suffered from low productivity, outdated methods, and frequent food shortages. Much of India's agricultural output consisted of cash crops like cotton and jute, grown primarily to serve British industries. This focus weakened food security and contributed to devastating famines, including the Bengal Famine of 1943. Industrial development was similarly limited. Only a handful of large industries, most notably textiles, jute mills, and early iron and steel plants, existed, and many were controlled by British capitalists. India became a market for British manufactured goods, leading to de-industrialisation and unemployment among local

artisans and craftsmen. High taxes, restrictive tariffs, and policies that favoured British imports further weakened local industry.

Dadabhai Naoroji exposed the economic “drain of wealth” during colonial rule, and national leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that independent India needed rapid industrialisation to overcome poverty, unemployment, and economic backwardness. With few industries, limited infrastructure, and a rapidly growing population, India’s early governments prioritised planned industrial growth, public sector expansion, and import substitution to build a self-reliant economy.

Keywords

License Raj, Import Substitution, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), Hybrid Seeds, Power Generation, Green Revolution

Discussion

3.2.1 The Industrial Policy

Jawaharlal Nehru believed that industrialisation was key to India’s development and worked towards creating a self-reliant, modern, and industrialised economy. His industrial policy aimed at promoting public sector industries and using them to create the necessary infrastructure for industrial growth.

One of the primary goals of Nehru’s industrial policy was the establishment of public sector units (PSU). He believed that the state should play a leading role in industrial development and that state-owned enterprises would be better equipped to create large-scale industries that could contribute to the country’s development. A number of public sector enterprises in various sectors, such as steel, heavy engineering, power, and transportation were established in the 1950s. These industries were given preferential treatment over private firms in terms of access to credit, raw materials, and technology.

The government also provided them with a protective environment through licensing and import controls essentially stripping away the need for profit and prioritising service.

Nehru’s industrial policy was based on the concept of a mixed economy, where both the public and private sectors could coexist and contribute to economic growth. The public sector was viewed as the primary driver of industrial growth, while the private sector was expected to play only a complementary role.

After Nehru’s death in 1964, Lal Bahadur Shastri continued his economic policies, Shastri’s death in 1965 pushed Nehru’s daughter, Indira Gandhi to leadership. Under the Indira phase, the policy of mixed economy continued. However, the policy also underwent several changes over the years, reflecting the changing economic and political climate in the country. Therefore, the economic history of the country can be classified into three eras;

1. The Nehruvian Era (1951-1965)

During this phase, the government aimed to promote industrialisation by creating a public sector, developing heavy industries and controlling the private sector. The focus was on import substitution and achieving self-sufficiency in production.



Fig. 3.2.1 Jawaharlal Nehru inspecting the new ordnance factory in Aruvankadu

2. The Indira Gandhi Era (1966-1984)

This phase saw the introduction of new economic policies such as bank

nationalisation, the abolition of the privy purse and the nationalisation of certain key industries. The government also started promoting small-scale industries and cottage industries and eventually allowed more breathing space for private and foreign firms.



Fig. 3.2.2 Godrej Typewriter Factory, Bombay (1984)

3. The Post-Indira Gandhi Era (1984-1991)

During this phase, the government started to liberalise the economy and reduce state control over industry. This period saw the introduction of several reforms aimed at attracting more foreign investment and promoting material exports.



Fig. 3.2.3 Rajiv Gandhi receives the Soyuz T-10 spacecraft capsule as a gift to commemorate the 1984 Soviet-Indian joint space flight

3.2.1.1 Public Sector Dominance

The public sector was envisioned as a critical driver for India's industrial and economic development. The aim was to create a foundation for industrial growth, facilitate self-sufficiency and provide employment to the growing population. This approach led to the establishment and expansion of state-owned enterprises across a range of industries, each with specific goals and mandates. Some of the major industries reserved for the public sector and their notable developments are mentioned below:

Heavy Industries

Jawaharlal Nehru placed significant emphasis on the development of heavy industries as he considered them the backbone of a modern, self-reliant economy. Major public sector enterprises were set up to spearhead industrial progress in areas such as steel, power, and engineering:

- ◆ **Steel Industry:** The government established the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) to oversee the production and distribution of steel, an essential material for infrastructure and industrial projects. Major steel plants were built in collaboration with countries like the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom, including the Bhilai Steel Plant, Rourkela Steel Plant, and Durgapur Steel Plant.
- ◆ **Engineering Sector:** Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) founded in 1964, emerged as a premier engineering and

manufacturing company focused on power generation equipment and heavy electrical machinery.

- ◆ **Power Generation:** The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) was set up in 1975 to enhance power generation and address the increasing demand for electricity across the nation.

Infrastructure

Recognising the importance of a robust infrastructure to support industrial expansion, Nehru's government invested in large-scale public sector projects in transport, energy and communication:

- ◆ **Transport and Communication:** Public sector enterprises were established to build and maintain essential infrastructure such as railways, ports, airports and telecommunications. Indian Railways managed by the government played a crucial role in connecting industrial hubs and facilitating the movement of goods.
- ◆ **Hydroelectric and Irrigation Projects:** The Bhakra-Nangal Dam Project was a landmark initiative aimed at providing irrigation and power. Started in 1948 and completed in 1963, it spanned the Sutlej River in Punjab and became a vital source of water and electricity for the region. This project exemplified India's drive to harness natural resources for comprehensive development.



Fig. 3.2.4 The Bhakra-Nangal Project under construction in 1960

Oil and Gas

Reducing dependence on imported oil was a strategic priority for Nehru's government leading to the establishment of public enterprises focused on the exploration and development of domestic energy resources:

- ◆ **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC):** Founded in 1956, ONGC played a pivotal role in discovering and exploiting oil and gas reserves. One of its significant achievements was the development of the Bombay High offshore oil field, which commenced operations in 1974. This field located off the coast of Mumbai became a cornerstone of India's oil production, contributing approximately two-thirds of the country's crude oil output.



Fig. 3.2.5 The Bombay High Offshore oil extraction platform

Banking

A well-functioning financial system was seen as essential for supporting industrial and economic activities. Under Nehru's leadership, the financial sector was increasingly brought under state control.

- ◆ **Refining and Petrochemicals:** State-owned refineries and petrochemical plants were built to support the production and processing of oil and gas contributing to energy security and industrial growth.
- ◆ **Nationalisation of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI):** The RBI was nationalised in 1949 to allow the government to direct monetary policy in line with national development goals.
- ◆ **Expansion of Public Sector Banking:** In 1969, under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, 14 major commercial

banks were nationalised. This move was intended to increase credit availability for priority sectors

such as industry and agriculture while extending banking services to underserved rural areas.



Fig. 3.2.6 Times of India News report

Atomic Energy

Nehru was an ardent advocate of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and establishing India as a pioneer in atomic energy.

- ♦ **Atomic Energy Commission:** Set up in 1948, the Commission laid the groundwork for research and development in nuclear science and technology. This initiative led to the creation of entities like the Nuclear Power Corporation

of India Limited (NPCIL) and Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI), which were instrumental in advancing India's nuclear energy capabilities.

- ♦ **Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC):** Established in Trombay in 1956, BARC became the leading centre for atomic research contributing to the development of nuclear reactors and advancing India's expertise in nuclear technology.



Fig. 3.2.7 BARC in Trombay

3.2.1.2 The Private Sector

While Jawaharlal Nehru's industrial policy emphasised the central role of the public sector in driving economic growth, he acknowledged the significance of private investment and enterprise in the overall development process. His approach to the private sector included regulation and collaboration, with the aim of fostering growth while maintaining social and economic control.

Regulation

Nehru was convinced that the private sector needed to operate within a framework that aligned with national interests. To achieve this, the government implemented several regulatory measures:

Industrial Licensing: To regulate the private sector and ensure efficient resource allocation, the government implemented a system of industrial licensing. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 categorised industries into three schedules:

- ◆ **Schedule A:** Industries exclusively reserved for the state, such as defence production and atomic energy.
- ◆ **Schedule B:** Industries where the state would take the lead in establishing new undertakings but private enterprises could contribute to supplement state efforts.
- ◆ **Schedule C:** Industries left to private sector operations subject to state regulation.

This system required companies to obtain licenses to establish or expand industrial ventures, which aimed to promote balanced growth and prevent economic power concentration.

Import Substitution: The government adopted an import substitution policy to reduce reliance on foreign goods and

promote domestic industries. High tariffs and import restrictions were imposed to protect local industries from international competition. The goal was to encourage domestic production of goods that were previously imported. For instance, heavy duties were placed on imported machinery and consumer goods, which fostered the growth of local manufacturing sectors. This approach supported industries such as automotive manufacturing, textiles and electronics leading to self-sufficiency in certain sectors over time.

Monopolies and Foreign Exchange

Control: Legislation such as the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act (MRTP Act) was introduced to curb monopolistic practices and promote fair competition. Access to foreign exchange was also strictly regulated to ensure that essential imports were prioritised and foreign currency was used judiciously.

Price and Production Control: The government regulated the prices and production quotas of certain key commodities to prevent hoarding and ensure that the private sector operated in a manner that served the broader public interest.

Collaboration

Despite the regulatory measures, Nehru understood the value of private sector participation in driving industrialisation. His policy promoted collaboration between public and private entities:

- ◆ **Joint Ventures and Partnerships:** The government encouraged partnerships between public sector enterprises and private companies to leverage the expertise, technology and capital that private enterprises could provide. For example, collaborative projects in the automobile and engineering sectors saw private companies working alongside public entities.



- ♦ **Encouragement of Private Industry:** Nehru's administration provided incentives to stimulate private sector growth in industries that were not designated for the public sector. This included sectors such as consumer goods, textiles, and light engineering. Companies such as Tata and Birla benefited from these policies and expanded their operations during this period.
- ♦ **Supportive Measures:** To incentivise private sector participation, the government offered various benefits such as tax holidays, financial subsidies and priority access to credit. These measures encouraged investment in industries deemed important for economic development and creating employment opportunities.

Small-Scale Industries: After economic stagnation in the 1960s, the government shifted focus to promoting small-scale and cottage industries as a means of generating employment and supporting rural development. Small-scale industries were given preferential treatment through measures like concessional credit, tax exemptions and subsidised raw materials. Programmes such as the Small-Scale Industries Development Programme and various state-level incentives were introduced to foster this sector. This policy provided an avenue for regional economic growth and

enabled local artisans and entrepreneurs to contribute to the economy.

Foreign Investment: Initially, the Indian government adopted a cautious stance towards foreign investment to safeguard national interests. However, by the late 1970s and 1980s, particularly during Indira Gandhi's second tenure, the economy saw partial liberalisation to attract foreign capital. Policies aimed at easing bureaucratic procedures and offering tax incentives were introduced to create a more investment-friendly environment. For instance, joint ventures between Indian and foreign companies became more common, facilitating technology transfer and market expansion. Companies such as Suzuki partnered with Indian firms like Maruti to establish a presence in the automotive industry.

Examples of Private Sector Growth

Tata Group: The Tata Group, led by J.R.D. Tata was one of the most prominent private sector entities during this era. It flourished despite the challenges of the Licence Raj, producing a range of goods from trucks (in collaboration with Mercedes-Benz) to steel and other essential commodities. The Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) played a significant role in supplying materials for industrial development. Tata was one of the few private companies to flourish during the License Raj era.



Fig. 3.2.8 Tata-Mercedese- Benz trucks outside the Jamshedpur factory in the late 1950s

3.2.1.3 Consequences

India entered into the 1980s with the same economic issues plaguing it the decade before, the 1980s was also the decade of instability, with the nation finding itself involved. India's involvement in Sri Lanka and the dual threat of Pakistan and China forced the government to increase defence expenditure. This affected the economic situation of the nation as foreign reserves started depleting, debts increased and exports rapidly decreased. The average economic growth rate slid to below 2% by the end of the 1980s, despite government efforts to introduce more foreign investment and allow a larger playing field for the private sector. The low level of economic growth led to large-scale unemployment that in turn, fed the political instability plaguing the country.

Two case studies can be analysed to understand the consequences of the socialist policies followed by the state:

The Automotive Sector

Suzuki Motor Corp in partnership with the government-owned Maruti Udyog, introduced the Maruti 800 in 1983. The vehicle was a basic, bare-bones entry-level car in the international market, but it was technologically ahead of its domestic competitors such as Premier Automobiles and Hindustan Motors. The Indian companies that had benefited from protectionism and dominated the market until then were unable to compete even with basic international products. The small Japanese budget car offered by the company was at least two decades ahead in technology of what domestic companies could offer. Within five years of Maruti Suzuki's entry into the Indian market, Indian automotive giant Standard along with the ambitious upstart Sipani, collapsed.



Fig. 3.2.9 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, with Rajiv Gandhi and ND Tiwari in the background, inspects a model car before inaugurating the Maruti factory in Delhi on December 14, 1983

Hero, tied up with Japanese automotive giant, Honda Motorcycles to manufacture affordable two-wheelers in India, their product, the Hero-Honda CD 100, a motorcycle that was basic at best, took the market by storm just like the Maruti 800. Within the decade, several Indian two-wheeler manufacturers had closed down or run into huge losses as the economy opened up.

Even the manufacturers that had tied up with foreign firms, soon found out that the system of import substitution and the policy of protectionism that aided them to create a market of few competitors, restricted them from accessing new technologies, increasing production and adopting best practices. The waiting period for a scooter in the 1970s was at least 5 years. The collapse of numerous industries in the 1980s, triggered by decades of restrictive practices culminated in the balance of payments crisis of 1991 and the resulting liberalisation of the Indian economy.

Union Carbide and the Bhopal Disaster

The Union Carbide disaster also known as the Bhopal gas tragedy, occurred in December 1984 in Bhopal, India. A gas leak from a pesticide plant owned by Union Carbide Corporation resulted in the deaths of thousands of people and affected many more with long-term health complications, in what was one of the worst industrial disasters in history.

Union Carbide entered into a joint venture with an Indian company to establish a pesticide plant in Bhopal in 1969. The Indian government approved the establishment of the plant and provided significant incentives, including tax breaks and a reduced royalty rate on the sale of pesticides.

India's socialist economic policies known as the License Raj, involved heavy government regulation and control over industry. Under this policy, companies were required to obtain licenses from the government to operate and the government had a significant role in setting prices and

controlling production. However, the government lacked the capacity to effectively monitor and regulate industry, resulting in a lack of emphasis on safety and environmental concerns. These factors led to the company taking dangerous shortcuts. The plant was designed and constructed using outdated technology and inadequate safety measures, with the workers not adequately trained in safety procedures. There was also a lack of proper maintenance and monitoring, which was alarming as the company was handling volatile and toxic chemicals.



Fig. 3.2.10 The abandoned Union Carbide Factory in Bhopal

On the intervening night of December 2-3, a large amount of water entered into one of the storage tanks containing the toxic chemical Methyl-Isocyanate (MIC). The water triggered a chemical reaction, causing a rapid increase in temperature and pressure inside the tank. The pressure release valve, which was designed to release the gas in case of an emergency, malfunctioned and failed to operate as intended. The tank ruptured, releasing a large amount of toxic gas, including MIC and other harmful chemicals into the surrounding area. The toxic gas cloud, which was heavier than air, spread throughout the city, affecting several nearby communities. Thousands of people died in the immediate aftermath

of the disaster, with the exact number of deaths estimated to be between 3,000 and 16,000. Thousands more who survived that night died in the following decades due to complications from the leak.

The state's dominant role in the economy created an environment where public and private sector companies operated with limited oversight. This lack of stringent regulation meant that companies, like Union Carbide, were not held fully accountable for safety violations or environmental damage leading to incidents such as the infamous Bhopal gas tragedy in 1984, which highlighted the gaps in corporate responsibility.

Despite these issues, Nehru's industrial policy had a lasting impact on India's growth trajectory. The public sector industries established during his tenure, particularly in steel, energy, and infrastructure formed the backbone of India's industrial base. These enterprises not only helped reduce India's dependence on imports but also created the foundation for the country's future industrial capabilities.

Moreover, Nehru's investment in scientific and technical education was pivotal. The establishment of premier institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) played a significant role in nurturing a skilled workforce. This investment in education paid dividends in the long term, as India became a global leader in the IT and software industries.

The focus on infrastructure such as roads, railways and power plants also proved invaluable. It facilitated the movement of goods and services across the country, laying the groundwork for future industrial growth and economic development. Though Nehru's policies had flaws, they undeniably shaped India's modern industrial landscape.

3.2.2 The Green Revolution in India

Nehru visited the US in 1949 at the invitation of President Truman. He hinted to Truman that India was in critical need of food. Truman was receptive to his request. In spite of imports from the US, year after year, the food shortages persisted. At this juncture, Prime Minister Nehru made his famous statement, "Everything else can wait, but not agriculture." India had to ask for large quantities of food from the US under the PL-480 programme and that continued until the 1960s. At the time, India's agricultural sector was heavily reliant on traditional farming methods and farmers

were using low-yielding crop varieties that were susceptible to disease and pests.

The government understood that this "Ship to Mouth" policy not only did little to solve food shortages, but could result in India's sovereignty being compromised by the USA. Nehru tasked the government to find a way to increase agricultural production regardless of external factors, to which agriculture in the country was at mercy.

3.2.2.1 Dr.M.S Swaminathan and the Revolution

The task fell to Indian Agronomist, Dr.M.S Swaminathan. Swaminathan recognised the need for modernising India's agricultural sector and began researching the development of high-yielding crop varieties that were resistant to disease and pests. He collaborated with other scientists and farmers to develop new crop varieties that were better adapted to the local growing conditions and produced higher yields. He worked closely with American agronomist Norman Borlaug, who had developed a new strain of hybrid wheat for Mexico that was resistant to disease and produced high yields. Hybrid crops are developed by cross-breeding two different varieties of the same species of plant to produce offspring that possess the desired traits of both parents. Hybridisation can result in plants with desirable characteristics such as high yield, disease resistance, drought tolerance and improved quality of produce. After Dr. Swaminathan had identified the dwarf varieties that were looking very promising among the many sent by Norman Borlaug to him, the Indian Minister of Food and Agriculture, C. Subramanian and Dr. Swaminathan invited Borlaug to India in 1963.

Borlaug and Short Stalked Wheat in Punjab

In 1966, a high-yielding, disease-resistant variant of wheat was shipped into Punjab



from Mexico, it was an epoch-making event, ushering India into the Green Revolution that would rescue it from an impending mass famine and also over-dependence on foreign aid that hindered diplomatic independence. Swaminathan recognised the potential of this new wheat variety and worked to adapt it to the Indian growing conditions. He conducted field trials and encouraged farmers to adopt this new variety, which helped to increase wheat yields significantly. The subsequent years saw deep collaborative efforts by American universities and Indian universities in levelling land in Punjab, the theatre of the Green Revolution.



Fig. 3.2.11 Dr. M.S Swaminathan with Dr. Norman Borlaug

Punjab, which enjoyed a steady supply of water owing to the Bhakra Nangal project and the pioneering efforts of the Punjab Agricultural University in adapting the HYV seeds to local conditions was perhaps the only State in India at that time to take advantage of the new experiment. The State government purchased 90,000 diesel pump sets, dug a record number of tube wells and developed new practices required to manage the produce.

In 1968, the efforts paid off brilliantly. From being a “ship-to-mouth” shortage economy, whose Prime Minister (Lal Bahadur Shastri) had once infamously asked Indians

to miss a meal on Mondays, the country saw schools and cinema halls being shut down to make storage room for surplus foodgrains. Rice yields in India jumped from about two tonnes per hectare in the 1960s to six tonnes per hectare in the mid-1990s.

M.S. Swaminathan also played a key role in promoting the use of modern agricultural practices, such as the use of fertilisers and irrigation techniques. He recognised the importance of providing farmers with the necessary tools and knowledge to improve their productivity and helped to establish agricultural extension services that provided farmers with access to new technologies and practices.

3.2.2.2 Government Initiatives

National Seeds Corporation

It was established in 1963 to produce and distribute high-quality seeds to farmers. The government also introduced modern irrigation systems such as tube wells and electric pumps, to improve irrigation and increase crop yields.

Fertiliser Corporation of India

It was established in 1951. The use of chemical fertilisers helped increase crop yields and improve soil fertility to a large scale with the introduction of incentives, subsidies and the introduction of new hybrid varieties of wheat and rice that required chemical fertilisers.

The ICAR

It established several agricultural universities and research institutes across the country to conduct research and provide training to farmers. The government also established the Agricultural Extension Service to provide farmers with the latest agricultural technologies and practices.

Agricultural Prices Commission

The Commission was tasked with determining the minimum support price for various crops, which ensured that farmers received fair prices for their produce. This measure encouraged farmers to adopt high-yielding varieties and modern technologies and helped increase agricultural productivity. This led to the creation of the Agricultural Products Marketing Committees (APMC).

Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation

In 1969, the government nationalised 14 major commercial banks, which enabled farmers to access loans at affordable interest rates. The government also established the Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation to provide credit to agricultural cooperatives.



Fig. 3.2.12 The use of tractors and other mechanised equipment rose significantly during the Green Revolution

Food for Work Programme

In 1977, the Food for Work Programme was introduced. The programme aimed to provide employment opportunities to rural people by creating infrastructure such as roads, canals and dams. The programme helped alleviate poverty in rural areas and encouraged the adoption of modern agricultural practices.

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development

The government also launched the National Watershed Development Programme in 1985

to conserve soil and water resources and promote sustainable agriculture.

3.2.2.3 Results

Positive Results

The Green Revolution in India led to a significant increase in food production, particularly of wheat and rice. This was achieved through the use of high-yielding varieties of crops, improved irrigation and fertilisation techniques and better pest and disease management practices. For example, the introduction of high-yielding varieties of wheat in Punjab state led to a six-fold increase in wheat production between 1960 and 1970. The increase in food production brought about by the Green Revolution helped to improve food security in India. The availability of food increased and hunger and malnutrition rates declined. The government also implemented various programmes to distribute food and provide nutrition assistance to vulnerable populations.



Fig. 3.2.13 Dr. Norman Borlaug was instrumental in the introduction of hybrid crops in the country

The development of the agricultural sector created new employment opportunities in agriculture and related industries, leading to increased income for farmers and rural communities. The introduction of new technologies and agricultural practices, such as mechanisation, improved seed varieties and modern irrigation systems. The Green Revolution in India led to a diversification of crops, with farmers growing a wider range

of crops beyond just wheat and rice. This helped to improve soil health and reduce the risk of crop failure due to pests or disease.

The revolution in India was supported by government policies that provided farmers with access to credit and financial assistance. This helped to support the adoption of new technologies and practices and also helped farmers cope with the risks associated with agricultural production. The Green Revolution in India also involved investments in rural infrastructure, such as roads, electricity and irrigation systems. This helped to improve access to markets and services and also helped to reduce rural isolation.

The Negatives

Punjab was the first state in India to adopt the high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice. The high-yielding varieties of crops require large amounts of water, fertilisers and pesticides. The excessive use of these inputs has led to the depletion of soil fertility and contamination of water resources. The indiscriminate use of pesticides has also led to the destruction of beneficial insects and the emergence of pesticide-resistant pests. Moreover, the Green Revolution has encouraged the cultivation of cash crops like wheat and rice leading to the displacement of traditional crops and the loss of biodiversity.



Fig. 3.2.14 The consistent use of chemicals has degraded the fertility of the soil and the nutritional value of the crops

The revolution benefited large farmers who had the resources to adopt new technologies and access to credit. Small and marginal farmers, who form the majority of the farming community in India, have been left behind. The high cost of inputs like seeds, fertilisers and pesticides has made it difficult for them to adopt new technologies, and they have not been able to realise the full benefits of the Green Revolution. Concentration of land and resources in the hands of a few large farmers, leads to the marginalisation of small and marginal farmers. The large farmers have been able to accumulate wealth and power, while the small farmers have been pushed into poverty and debt. This has widened income disparities and created social unrest in rural areas.

The excessive use of pesticides has led to health hazards for farmers and farm workers. Prolonged exposure to pesticides has been linked to several health problems like cancer, respiratory diseases, and reproductive disorders. The contamination of water resources has also led to the spread of water-borne diseases like diarrhoea and cholera. The Green Revolution has also led to the displacement of traditional crops like millets and pulses, leading to the loss of biodiversity.

The Green Revolution has created a dependence on external inputs like fertilisers, pesticides and seeds. The high cost of these inputs has made farmers vulnerable to fluctuations in global markets, leading to economic uncertainties. Moreover, the dependence on external inputs has led to the loss of traditional knowledge and practices, leading to the homogenisation of agricultural practices.

3.2.2.4 Agriculture After 1991

The Green Revolution had a significant impact on the country's agriculture and economy. It led to a significant increase in

food production and helped India achieve self-sufficiency in food production. However, post-1991, the agriculture sector in India faced several challenges due to a lack of government support.

One of the primary reasons for the lack of government support towards agriculture post-1991 was the shift in focus towards industrialisation and service sectors. The government introduced economic liberalisation policies, leading to a reduction in subsidies and support for the agriculture sector. As a result, farmers faced several challenges, including rising input costs, lack of access to credit and inadequate infrastructure.

The lack of government support also led to a decline in the growth rate of agriculture, contributing to increased rural poverty. The

declining growth rate was primarily due to inadequate investments in research and development, poor infrastructure and low productivity. The government's lack of investment in agriculture also led to the neglect of rural areas, contributing to a widening urban-rural divide. At the height of India's economic bull run in 2009, while the economy grew at over 9%, the base of the economy, the agricultural sector grew just by a paltry 1.6%.

The declining growth rate of agriculture and lack of government support had several adverse effects on farmers. Many small and marginal farmers struggled to make ends meet, leading to increased indebtedness and distress. The lack of government support also led to a decline in the area under cultivation and reduced cropping intensity.

Recap

- ◆ Nehru viewed industrialisation as essential for building a self-reliant, modern economy.
- ◆ The early development model emphasised public sector enterprises (PSUs) in heavy industries like steel, energy, and transport.
- ◆ India adopted a mixed economy, balancing private enterprise with strong state regulation.
- ◆ Industrial licensing, known as the License Raj, restricted private sector expansion but aimed to prevent monopolies.
- ◆ Some private groups, like Tata, still grew despite regulatory barriers.
- ◆ Excessive protectionism slowed innovation, especially in sectors like automobiles.
- ◆ The arrival of Maruti-Suzuki transformed the Indian car industry, while companies like Hero-Honda reshaped the two-wheeler market.
- ◆ Import-substitution limited access to new technologies and reduced competitiveness.

- ◆ Industrial negligence, exemplified by the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, highlighted regulatory and safety weaknesses.
- ◆ Nehru's agricultural strategy relied on external food aid, eventually leading to the Green Revolution.
- ◆ Dr. M.S. Swaminathan pioneered agricultural modernisation through high-yield seeds.
- ◆ The Green Revolution improved food security and rural incomes but caused environmental degradation and regional inequality.

Objective Questions

1. Which public sector company oversees steel production in India?
2. What was the primary objective of the Bhakra-Nangal Dam Project?
3. In what year was the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) established?
4. What was the purpose of the Industrial Licensing System in India?
5. Which company was set up to explore and develop India's oil and gas resources?
6. When was the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) nationalised?
7. Which sector did Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) primarily focus on?
8. Which law was introduced to curb monopolistic practices in India?
9. What was the primary goal of the government's import substitution policy?
10. Who was the Indian agronomist who played a pivotal role in the Green Revolution in India?
11. In which year the high-yielding varieties of wheat from Mexico to Punjab introduced?
12. What was the primary goal of the PL-480 programme in the 1950s?
13. Which state in India was the first to adopt high-yielding varieties of wheat during the Green Revolution?
14. Which organisation was established in 1963 to produce and distribute high-quality seeds to farmers in India?

15. Who collaborated with Dr. M.S. Swaminathan to introduce high-yielding wheat varieties to India?
16. Which government programme was introduced in 1977 aimed at providing employment and infrastructure in rural India?

Answers

1. Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)
2. Irrigation and hydroelectric power
3. 1975
4. Regulate industrial growth
5. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)
6. 1949
7. Power generation equipment
8. Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act (MRTP Act)
9. Reduce dependence on imports
10. M.S. Swaminathan
11. 1966
12. Import food from the USA
13. Punjab
14. National Seeds Corporation
15. Norman Borlaug
16. Food for Work Programme

Assignments

1. Assess the impact of Nehru's industrial policy on employment generation and regional economic disparities in India.
2. Discuss the positive and negative consequences of the Green Revolution. How did it enhance food security and rural livelihoods, and what environmental or social challenges emerged?
3. Identify the major challenges India faced during the early phase of industrialisation. Support your answer with relevant examples.
4. Evaluate the environmental consequences of rapid industrialisation in post-independence India. How can India integrate sustainable industrial practices into future development strategies?

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UNIT

Foreign Policy

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the core principles of non-alignment and assess how they shaped India's global position during the Cold War
- ◆ examine the Panchsheel principles and analyse their influence on India-China relations and broader international diplomacy
- ◆ evaluate India's role in global decolonisation and its efforts to support anti-imperialist movements across Asia and Africa
- ◆ assess the key challenges, contradictions, and outcomes of Nehru's foreign policy, particularly in relation to neighbouring countries and major powers

Prerequisites

In the years immediately following independence, India's foreign policy was shaped by both internal vulnerabilities and a rapidly changing international environment. India emerged from British rule with significant economic challenges, social divisions, and unresolved territorial disputes, most notably with Pakistan over Kashmir. The global political order was also shifting, with the Cold War dividing the world into two rival blocs led by the United States and the Soviet Union. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru envisioned a foreign policy that would safeguard India's sovereignty by avoiding military alliances and maintaining independence in international affairs. This approach laid the foundation for non-alignment, although implementing it was difficult due to regional tensions, limited military capacity, and the pressures of global power politics. India's challenges included the Chinese takeover of Tibet (1950), deteriorating relations with Pakistan, and the difficulty of balancing ties with both Washington and Moscow. While India aimed to remain neutral, it occasionally faced

isolation and strategic disadvantages. These issues, combined with border tensions, later contributed to conflicts such as the 1962 Sino-Indian War. Despite these obstacles, India used diplomacy to support decolonisation and assert its identity as a newly independent nation committed to peace and international cooperation.

Keywords

Non-alignment, Panchsheel Agreement, Bandung Conference, Operation Vijay, Sino-Indian War, Indo-Soviet Treaty, Nuclear Test

Discussion

3.3.1 India and Non Alignment

India's foreign policy between 1950 and 1965 was marked by a commitment to non-alignment, regional cooperation and the promotion of peace and security. During this period, India's leaders sought to balance their relations with the major powers of the world, while also advocating for the rights of developing countries in the era of decolonisation. One of the key priorities of India's foreign policy during this period was to promote peace and stability in South Asia. India had just gained independence from

British colonial rule and was facing several challenges in establishing itself as a stable and prosperous nation. Its leaders recognised the importance of regional cooperation and sought to build closer ties with its neighbours, including Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka. In 1951 India signed the Delhi Agreement with Pakistan, which recognised the rights of each country to develop its hydroelectric projects in the Indus basin, while also ensuring that the other country's water supply was not affected.



Fig. 3.3.1 On his 65th birthday, Nehru releases a white pigeon symbolising peace at a children's rally (Nov. 18, 1954)

Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, India played a prominent role in supporting the Indonesian struggle for independence during the Indonesian National Revolution (1945–1949). The Dutch had sought to reassert control over Indonesia after World War II, but the Indonesian nationalists led by Sukarno, fought for independence. In this context, Nehru's government extended crucial support to the Indonesian Republic.

India provided substantial material assistance to Indonesia, including food, clothing and arms, which were flown to Jakarta despite the Dutch-imposed blockade. This support was symbolic of India's commitment to the anti-colonial cause. The Indian radio station, Radio India played an important role by functioning as the de facto broadcasting centre for the Indonesian government, offering a platform for the Republican leaders to communicate with the world. In 1949, Nehru proposed that Indonesia's Republican government relocate its capital to New Delhi temporarily, as Jakarta was under siege by Dutch forces. Although this proposal did not materialise, it highlighted India's solidarity with Indonesia's independence movement.

In addition to these material contributions, Nehru also sought diplomatic avenues to support Indonesia's cause. After the Dutch had captured Jakarta, Nehru organised the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in 1947, which mobilised support for Indonesian independence. Nehru used the forum to emphasise Pan-Asian cooperation, particularly focusing on the need to combat colonialism in Asia. As part of his support, India refused to grant the Dutch permission to transit their ships and planes through Indian territory, further showcasing India's opposition to Dutch colonialism in Indonesia.

India's stance on Indonesia was reflective of its broader foreign policy approach during the early years of independence. Nehru sought

to maintain a position of non-alignment in the increasingly polarised world of the Cold War. While the United States and the Soviet Union were vying for global influence, Nehru and other Indian leaders recognised the risks of being drawn into this ideological conflict. They emphasised the importance of maintaining an independent stance, which would allow India to advocate for the interests of developing countries, particularly those emerging from colonial rule.

A key manifestation of this policy was the Bandung Conference of 1955, hosted by India in Indonesia. The conference brought together leaders from 29 newly independent countries across Asia and Africa. This meeting marked the formal inception of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which was established as a platform for nations that wished to avoid aligning with either the United States or the Soviet Union. The primary concerns of the conference included anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and economic development. During the conference, Nehru also advocated for the Panchsheel Agreement with China, which was signed on April 29th, 1954. The agreement aimed to resolve the border dispute between India and China. The agreement, which laid down five key principles, became a cornerstone of India's foreign policy and also provided a moral framework for the Non-Aligned Movement. The Five Principles were:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
2. Mutual non-aggression
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful coexistence

These principles were meant to promote cooperation among nations while respecting

their sovereignty, ensuring peaceful relations and fostering economic cooperation without imposing ideologies or interfering in the internal politics of sovereign states.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was officially formed in 1961, with Nehru, Josip Tito of Yugoslavia, and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt playing pivotal roles in its establishment. The movement sought

to provide an alternative to the Cold War bloc system, where countries were forced to choose between the United States and the Soviet Union. The NAM advocated for the independence of member states from both superpowers, ensuring that they could maintain their sovereignty, pursue economic development and avoid becoming pawns in the global Cold War competition.



Fig. 3.3.2 Nehru with the leaders of the Third World at the Non-Aligned Movement summit, Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955

NAM has sought to “create an independent path in world politics that would not result in member States becoming pawns in the struggles between the major powers.” It identifies the right to independent judgment, the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism, and the use of moderation in relations with all big powers as the three basic elements that have influenced its approach. The purpose of the organisation was enumerated in the Havana Declaration of 1979 to ensure “the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of non-aligned countries” in their struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign subjugation.

3.3.2 India's Shift

India's foreign policy underwent significant changes following the war with

China (1962), which marked a turning point in India's international relations. The defeat in the war led to a reassessment of India's security and diplomatic strategies and this reevaluation would gradually shift India's foreign policy away from its traditional non-alignment and closer towards major global powers.

3.3.2.1 Trouble with China and the West

One of the primary factors driving India's shift in foreign policy was the growing threat from China. The Sino-Indian War in 1962 exposed India's military vulnerabilities and underscored the need for a more robust defence strategy. The conflict left India feeling isolated, particularly in terms of diplomatic support from its traditional allies. The Soviet Union, which had maintained close ties with India since the 1950s, was

perceived as not doing enough to assist India during the war, especially since the Soviet Union maintained relations with China. In the wake of the war, India reassessed its security requirements and began moving closer to the United States, which, despite initial reservations about India's non-alignment, was seen as a potential counterbalance to China's growing power in Asia.

This shift was further influenced by the broader geo-political context of the Cold War. The Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s complicated India's relations with both China and the Soviet Union. As China moved closer to the West, including NATO, India found itself increasingly seeking support from the United States. However, the United States was initially reluctant to align with India, given its non-aligned stance and historical ties with the Soviet Union. Despite this, the growing threat from China prompted India to seek closer economic and strategic ties with the West to modernise its economy and reduce its dependence on Soviet aid.

India's military intervention in Goa on 17th December 1961, codenamed Operation Vijay aimed to end Portuguese colonial rule in Goa, Daman and Diu, which had remained under Portuguese control despite India's independence in 1947. The swift defeat of Portuguese forces led to the annexation of Goa into the Indian Union. The military action was met with mixed international reactions. Western countries, particularly NATO allies of Portugal, criticised India's actions, viewing the military intervention as an infringement on sovereignty and a violation of international law. However, India justified its actions on the grounds of national unity and the liberation of a region still under foreign colonial rule.

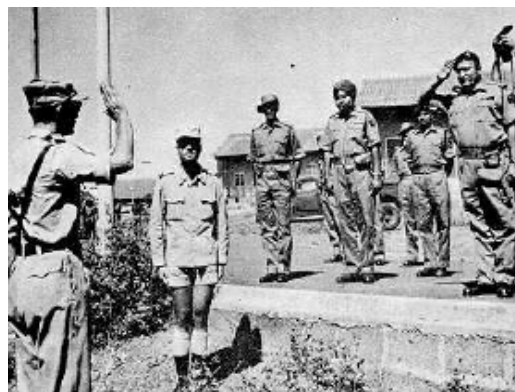


Fig. 3.3.3 Portuguese forces surrendered Goa to India, on December 19th, 1961

India's move was widely praised in the Third World, particularly by newly independent nations in Asia and Africa that were still struggling against colonial domination. Many saw India's intervention as a bold step towards ending colonialism in the region, applauding India's commitment to anti-imperialism. The capture of Goa was seen as a demonstration of India's leadership in the struggle for decolonisation and as a reflection of its growing influence on the world. The Soviet Union also supported India's actions, praising India's stance against colonialism.

Another key development that influenced India's foreign policy was the United States' support for Pakistan during the 1965 India-Pakistan war. This further alienated India from the United States, leading it to strengthen ties with the Soviet Union, which had supported India during the conflict. The Cold War dynamics, coupled with shifting alliances saw India moving closer to the Soviet Union in the late 1960s and 1970s.



Fig. 3.3.4 Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, inspecting a captured Pakistani Tank (September 1965)

3.3.2.2 Internal Issues and Economic Challenges

Domestically, India was facing a series of economic challenges, political instability and social unrest, which contributed to the reevaluation of its foreign policy. The non-aligned approach, which had been adopted in the 1950s as a way to balance competing global interests, was increasingly seen as ineffective in addressing India's pressing economic and security issues. By the 1970s, India's economic struggles and the growing threat from China and Pakistan highlighted the limitations of the non-aligned stance.

The economic challenges included the need for greater industrialisation, technological advancement and the modernisation of infrastructure. India's heavy dependence on foreign aid, particularly from the Soviet Union created a situation where it was difficult to maintain a purely non-aligned position. There was also political instability, marked

by the rise of populist movements and social unrest, which added to the urgency of a shift in India's foreign policy. These factors played a crucial role in pushing India to seek closer ties with more powerful nations to secure both its economic and security interests.

3.3.2.3 The 1971 War and the Nuclear Test

The 1971 war resulting in the creation of Bangladesh was a pivotal moment in the history of South Asia. India's intervention in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was crucial in supporting the independence movement. The Pakistani military crackdown on Bengali nationalists had sparked a humanitarian crisis, with millions of refugees fleeing to India. India's military intervention, supported by the Soviet Union through the Indo-Soviet Treaty led to the defeat of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. Indian forces, alongside the Mukti Bahini, captured Dhaka on December 16, 1971, resulting in Pakistan's surrender.



Fig. 3.3.5 Indian armoured regiments advance deep within Pakistani territory (Dec 10th 1971)

The war also deepened India's alignment with the Soviet Union, with the treaty providing crucial military and diplomatic support. Conversely, Pakistan, traditionally a key U.S. ally, found itself isolated internationally. The U.S. had long supported Pakistan as a strategic partner during the

Cold War, providing military and economic aid, but it did not intervene in the conflict despite Pakistan's plea. The U.S. maintained its alliance with Pakistan throughout the Cold War, but this period marked the beginning of shifting global alliances, as India's influence in South Asia grew and its relationship with

the Soviet Union strengthened. Pakistan's defeat significantly impacted its foreign policy and military posture in the years that followed.

The war also led to India's decision to develop its nuclear capabilities. In 1974, India conducted its first nuclear test, codenamed 'Smiling Buddha', which was a clear departure from its previous stance on nuclear non-proliferation. India had long advocated for global disarmament but chose to assert its status as a major power by demonstrating its nuclear capability. This test was seen as a strategic move to strengthen India's security, especially in the face of potential threats from China and Pakistan and also to challenge the existing global nuclear order dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union.

India's growing security concerns, particularly following the 1962 war with

China, were further compounded by the political and strategic developments of the 1970s. As a result, India increasingly relied on the Soviet Union for military and economic support. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 was a key example of this new alignment. The Soviet Union provided India with critical military assistance, including advanced weaponry and played an important role in ensuring that India had diplomatic support on the international stage.

During the 1970s and 1980s, India developed close strategic and military ties with the Soviet Union, with the Soviet Union becoming India's primary partner in defence technology, including the supply of military aircraft, tanks, and missiles. This shift reflected India's desire to counterbalance the influence of China and the United States in the region.

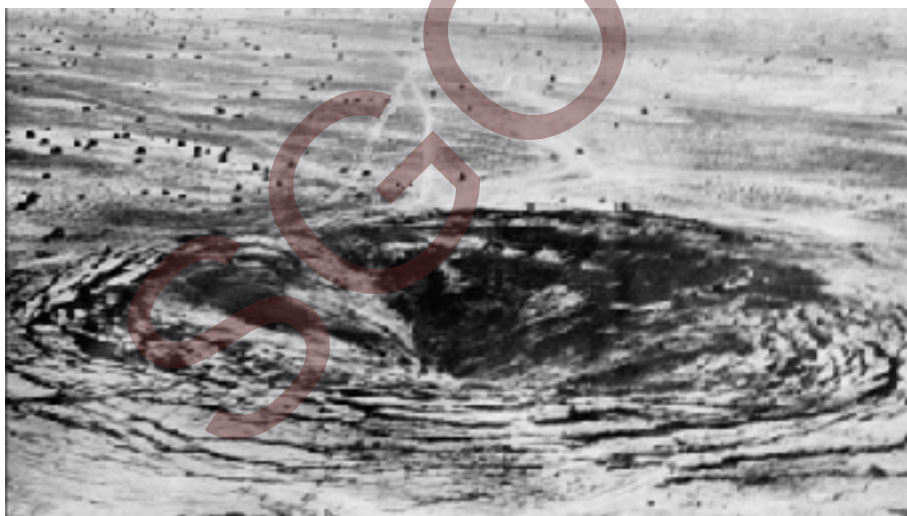


Fig. 3.3.6 The crater left by India's first nuclear test (1974)

Recap

- ◆ India's foreign policy emphasised non-alignment, peaceful coexistence, and regional cooperation.
- ◆ Early agreements, including the Delhi Agreement (1951) with Pakistan, aimed to stabilise relations.

- ◆ India supported anti-colonial movements, including Indonesia's independence struggle.
- ◆ The Bandung Conference (1955) strengthened Afro-Asian solidarity and led to the formation of the Non- Aligned Movement (NAM).
- ◆ The Panchsheel Agreement (1954) set out five principles for peaceful coexistence, shaping India–China diplomacy.
- ◆ The liberation of Goa (1961) highlighted India's commitment to ending colonial rule.
- ◆ The Sino-Indian War (1962) marked a major turning point, forcing India to reassess its defence and foreign policy strategies.
- ◆ Cold War dynamics, including U.S. support to Pakistan, moved India closer to the Soviet Union.
- ◆ The 1971 India-Pakistan War resulted in Bangladesh's creation and strengthened India's regional leadership.
- ◆ India's first nuclear test (1974) marked a shift toward strategic autonomy.
- ◆ The 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty deepened military and political cooperation with the USSR.
- ◆ Internal and external pressures prompted India to refine its interpretation of non-alignment.

Objective Questions

1. Which agreement was signed between India and Pakistan in 1951 concerning the Indus basin?
2. What role did Radio India play during the Indonesian National Revolution?
3. The Asian Relations Conference of 1947 was organised by Nehru to mobilise support for which cause?
4. The Bandung Conference of 1955 was instrumental in the formation of which movement?
5. Who were the three primary leaders behind the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement?
6. Which year marked the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)?

7. What was the primary reason behind India's shift in foreign policy post-1962?
8. Which operation marked India's military intervention in Goa in 1961?
9. Which treaty strengthened India's alliance with the Soviet Union during the India-Pakistan War?
10. In which year India conducted its first nuclear test?
11. What was the codename for India's first nuclear test?

Answers

1. Delhi Agreement
2. Acted as the broadcasting centre for the Indonesian government
3. Indonesian independence
4. Non-Aligned Movement
5. Nehru, Tito, and Nasser
6. 1961
7. The 1962 Sino-Indian War
8. Operation Vijay
9. Indo-Soviet Treaty
10. 1974
11. Smiling Buddha

Assignments

1. Discuss the significance of the Bandung Conference (1955) in shaping the Non-Movement. How did it influence newly independent nations?
2. Analyse how the Sino-Indian War (1962) transformed India's foreign policy approach and impacted its relations with major powers.
3. Evaluate India's military intervention in Goa (1961). How did it reinforce India's anti-colonial position internationally?

4. Examine the motivations behind India's first nuclear test (1974). What were the regional and global consequences of this decision?
5. Assess the role of the Non- Aligned Movement during the Cold War.

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UNIT

Advances in Science and Technology

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain Jawaharlal Nehru's vision for scientific and technological self-reliance in post-independence India
- ◆ describe the development of India's nuclear programme and early institutional frameworks supporting atomic research
- ◆ analyse the role of the Five-Year Plans in expanding scientific research, industrial capacity, and technological innovation
- ◆ evaluate the long-term impact of Nehru's emphasis on scientific temper and technological advancement in shaping modern India's industrial and economic growth

Prerequisites

India's engagement with science and technology has deep historical roots. From ancient times, Indian scholars made pioneering contributions in fields such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, metallurgy, and architecture. Concepts like the zero, the decimal system, early forms of binary mathematics, and sophisticated astronomical observations were developed in India long before they became known in other parts of the world. These achievements formed a strong intellectual heritage for modern India. After independence in 1947, building a scientific and technological foundation became a central goal of nation-building. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, believed that progress required a modern, rational outlook, what he called the "scientific temper". He saw science as essential not only for economic development but also for social reform and overcoming superstition. To promote scientific research, the government expanded institutions such as the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and established new ones like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). The creation of the Department of Atomic Energy

(1958) and later the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in 1969 marked major milestones in nuclear and space development. Under scientists like Homi Bhabha, Vikram Sarabhai, and Satish Dhawan, India pursued peaceful nuclear energy, satellite development, and indigenous aerospace capabilities. These early efforts laid the foundation for India's emergence as a technologically capable nation, influencing fields ranging from agriculture and energy to defence and space exploration.

Keywords

IITs, CSIR, Self-Reliance, Atomic Energy, Five-Year Plans, Scientific Temper, Industrialisation, ISRO

Discussion

3.4.1 Scientific Temper

In 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru invoked the “temper of science” almost as a meta concept in the realm beyond reason and the application of science. “There appears to be a definite stopping place beyond which reason ... cannot go,” he wrote in *Discovery of India*. “Realising these limitations of reason and scientific method, we still have to hold on to them with all our strength.”

Nehru elaborated:

“The applications of science are inevitable and unavoidable...But something more than its application is necessary. It is the scientific approach, the adventurous yet critical temper of science, the search for truth and new knowledge, the refusal to accept anything without testing and trial, the capacity to change previous conclusions in the face of new evidence, the reliance on observed fact and not pre-conceived theory...[This] should be, a way of life, a process of thinking, a method of acting and associating with our fellowmen...It is the temper of a free man. We live in the scientific age, so we are told, but there is little evidence of this temper in people anywhere or even in their leaders.”

Nehru defined scientific temper as a way of thinking that encourages individuals to observe and analyse the world around them in a logical, rational, and unbiased manner. He believed that this approach could help people make informed decisions and solve complex problems. It involves questioning established beliefs and dogmas, seeking evidence-based solutions and being open to new ideas and perspectives. He believed that a scientific temper could help individuals and society to overcome superstitions, prejudices, and irrational beliefs, which often hinder progress and that in turn would improve the standard of living, eradicate poverty and achieve social and economic development.

3.4.2 Science and Tech Infrastructure

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), under Nehru's guidance, became a cornerstone of this mission. Tasked with promoting research in medicine, agriculture, and engineering, CSIR spearheaded initiatives to address India's pressing developmental challenges through science and innovation. Similarly, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore,



envisioned as a centre of excellence, attracted top talent from India and abroad to conduct cutting-edge research in physics, chemistry, and biology.

Recognising the potential of nuclear energy, Nehru established the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) with a mandate to develop nuclear technology for peaceful applications, including electricity generation and medical uses. This forward-thinking approach also extended to the establishment of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), which emerged as a hub for research in physics, mathematics, and computer science.

Nehru's policies extended to space exploration, reflecting his aspiration for India to harness advanced technology for societal benefit. The establishment of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in 1969, though after Nehru's tenure, was a culmination of his emphasis on leveraging space technology for communication, meteorology and remote sensing.

Beyond national priorities, Nehru advocated for the use of science to empower developing nations. His leadership in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) stressed the importance of scientific collaboration among nations to achieve self-reliance and economic independence. Nehru's belief that scientific research could serve as a tool for economic growth and political sovereignty resonated globally, inspiring developing nations to invest in science and technology as a pathway to progress.

3.4.3 Going Nuclear

India's nuclear programme was marked by significant developments in both peaceful and later, military applications of nuclear energy. The programme was led by Homi Bhabha, a renowned physicist and a close associate of

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Bhabha's vision was to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to establish India as a leader in nuclear technology.

Bhabha played a key role in establishing the Atomic Energy Commission of India (AEC) in 1948, which was responsible for promoting nuclear research and development in India. Under his leadership, the AEC established several research institutions, including the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).



Fig. 3.4.1 Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha (1909-1966)

Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha (1909-1966)

The first significant achievement of India's nuclear programme was the construction of the Apsara reactor in 1956. The reactor was India's first nuclear research reactor and it marked the beginning of India's quest for nuclear energy. The programme was initially focused on developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, such as electricity generation and medical applications.

However, India's nuclear programme took a different turn in the 1960s, when

India faced growing security concerns due to the Chinese nuclear test at Lop Nur in 1964. China became just the fifth nation to test a nuclear weapon and the first in Asia. The test came just two years after the Sino-Soviet split and the Sino-Indian war. It was a wake-up call for India.

Bhabha argued that India needed to develop nuclear weapons to ensure its national security and to deter potential aggressors. Nehru was initially reluctant to pursue a nuclear weapons programme, as he believed in India's commitment to nuclear disarmament and peaceful coexistence. However, Nehru eventually gave in to Bhabha's reasoning and authorised the development of a weapons programme. Nehru's death that year and Bhabha's untimely demise as a result of a plane crash in the Alps in 1966, put the project on the back burner until the mantle was taken up by Indira Gandhi. Indira Gandhi's tilt towards the USSR, the United States' unwavering support for Pakistan and later, China's actions rekindled India's interest restarted in nuclear testing.

3.4.3.1 The Peaceful Nuclear Explosion

India, a leading voice for nuclear disarmament under Nehru, recognised that the major powers possessing nuclear weapons capabilities had no genuine intention of disarming especially when the world was divided into two opposing camps. Though the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and inflating defence budgets brought the major powers to accept that rapid nuclear proliferation was not the way to go, disarmament seemed unlikely as they were content with establishing restrictions on the number of warheads and their delivery systems.



Fig. 3.4.2 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at the Pokhran Test Site (May 18th, 1974)

The nuclear device was detonated in secrecy on May 14th 1974 and many within the cabinet were allegedly not aware until it was announced on radio. The test was conducted underground, in secret at Pokhran in the middle of the Thar Desert and it took the world by surprise, shocking even the nation's allies. The test made India the first non-nuclear weapon state to develop nuclear weapons. The "Smiling Buddha" test was a major achievement for India's nuclear programme, but it also brought India under intense international scrutiny. The United States, which had been aiding India for its peaceful nuclear programme imposed sanctions on India, which severely affected India's nuclear progress, further pushing the nation towards the Soviet Union. Despite the sanctions, India continued to pursue its nuclear programme in the 1980s and 1990s. India conducted several more nuclear tests in 1998 (Pokhran II) establishing India as a nation with the capability of building nuclear weapons.

3.4.4 The Computer Age

India's tryst with computers started in 1955 when the Indian government set up the

Electronics Committee, which recommended the establishment of the Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) and the creation of a computer industry in the country. ECIL was established in 1967 and became the pioneer of computing in India. Under this initiative in 1960, the first computer in India was installed at the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in Kolkata. The machine was built by the Canadian company, Ferranti and was used for statistical analysis. In the same year, a significant milestone in India's technological development occurred when a small computer was built at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in Mumbai. This computer, known as the TIFR Automatic Calculator, was India's first indigenous computing machine. Developed under the leadership of Dr. Rajaram S. N. and supervised by Dr. M. P. V. Ramaswami, it was a critical step towards advancing the country's scientific and technological capabilities. The TIFR Automatic Calculator was a product of Indian ingenuity, marking the beginning of India's journey in computer science and laying the foundation for future innovations in the field.



Fig.3.4.3 TIFRAC (Tata Institute of Fundamental Research Automatic Calculator) was formally commissioned on 22nd Feb, 1960

In 1964, the Indian government established the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Kanpur, which became one of the leading centres for computer science education and

research in the country. By the end of the decade, all IITs offered computer science programmes.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Indian government initiated several projects to develop indigenous computer hardware and software. In 1968, the government established the Computer Maintenance Corporation (CMC) to provide maintenance services for imported computers and to develop indigenous hardware and software. The government also established the Electronics Research and Development Centre (ER&DC) in Trivandrum in 1974 to develop computer hardware and software.

In 1974, the Indian government established the Department of Electronics (DOE) to promote the development of the electronics industry in the country. The DOE played a key role in the development of the Indian computer industry and it established several institutions to support the industry, including the Centre for Electronics Design and Technology (CEDT) in 1979 and the Semiconductor Complex Limited (SCL) in 1983.

In the 1980s, several Indian companies began to manufacture computers, including Hindustan Computers Limited (HCL) and Wipro. These companies initially focused on manufacturing IBM-compatible PCs, but they later developed their own hardware and software. The development of software in India began in the 1970s, with the establishment of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in Mumbai in 1968. TCS initially focused on providing IT consulting services, but it later began to develop software for clients. In the 1980s, several software companies were established in India, including Infosys, Satyam, and NIIT. These companies focused on developing software for export and they became known for their expertise in software development.

In 1984, the government launched the Computer Aided Design (CAD) programme, which aimed to develop indigenous hardware and software for CAD. The programme was successful and several Indian companies began to manufacture CAD software and hardware.

In 1988, the government established the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) to provide infrastructure and other support services to software companies. The STPI played a key role in the development of the Indian software industry and it helped to attract foreign investment to the country.

The establishment of computer infrastructure in India also facilitated research in various scientific fields. Computer simulations and modelling became more accessible, which allowed scientists to perform complex simulations and analyses that were previously not possible. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) used computer simulations to design and test satellite systems, while the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) used computers to model and analyse nuclear reactions.

In the field of medical research, the establishment of computer infrastructure in India contributed to the development of bioinformatics, which played a critical role in the analysis of genomic data. The Indian government established the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics (CDFD) in 1995, which was responsible for the development of bioinformatics infrastructure and technology in the country. The establishment of CDFD facilitated research in genetics and genomics, which led to the development of diagnostic tools for various genetic disorders.

The development of computer infrastructure in India also led to the growth of indigenous efforts in medical research. Indian pharmaceutical companies used

computer simulations to design and test drugs, which led to the development of several life-saving drugs at a lower cost. The Indian government also established the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) in 1992, which was responsible for the development of computational biology research in the country.

The development of computer infrastructure in India laid the foundation for the growth of the IT sector in the country. The liberalisation of the Indian economy in 1991 created significant opportunities for the IT sector and Indian companies quickly capitalised on these opportunities. The IT sector quickly became one of the most significant contributors to the Indian economy, with the sector's revenue growing from \$1.2 billion in 1991 to \$181 billion in 2021.

The IT sector has contributed significantly to the Indian economy, creating jobs, and generating revenue for the country. The sector's contribution to India's GDP grew from 1.2% in 1998 to 7.7% in 2021.

3.4.5 Hindustan Aeronautics Limited

The HAL HF-24 "Marut" took to the skies on 17th June 1964 making India one of the few nations and the first in Asia that possessed the capability to design, build and successfully induct a jet fighter. The development of the HAL Marut began in the 1950s, at a time when India was seeking to develop its own defence capabilities. India's then-Defence Minister, V.K. Krishna Menon, initiated the project to develop an indigenous fighter aircraft and HAL was given the responsibility to undertake the project. The design team led by Dr. Kurt Tank, a German aviation engineer, worked on developing the aircraft's design. The jet fighter was inducted into the Indian Air Force in 1967 and even though the aircrafts



role differed from what it was intended for, the HAL Marut played a significant role in India's defence capabilities during the 1971 war with Pakistan. The aircraft was used in ground-attack missions and provided close air support to the Indian Army.

The development of the HAL Marut also had a significant impact on India's aerospace

industry. The project provided a platform for the development of indigenous technologies and expertise in the field of aeronautics. The development of the aircraft helped establish HAL as a leading aerospace company in India and it paved the way for the development of other indigenous aircraft such as the HAL Tejas and the HAL Dhruv.



Fig. 3.4.4 A squadron of HAL HF-24 "Marut" (1969)

The establishment of HAL was initiated by the British government during World War II, to manufacture military aircraft for the Allied forces. The company was founded by Walchand Hirachand, an Indian industrialist and was originally named Hindustan Aircraft Limited. The company's first aircraft, the Harlow Trainer, was manufactured in 1942 and it was followed by a series of military aircraft, including the HAL Ajeet and the HAL Tejas.

HAL's contributions to the Indian aerospace industry are manifold. The company has developed and manufactured a wide range of aircraft, including fighters, trainers, and transport aircraft. HAL's aircraft have played a crucial role in India's defence operations and they have been used in various conflicts, including the 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan wars.

In addition to its contributions to the aerospace industry, HAL has also played a crucial role in the development of India's scientific research capabilities. The company has been involved in the development of advanced scientific research facilities and it has provided platforms for conducting scientific experiments. HAL has contributed to various research fields, including atmospheric research, space research, and high-energy physics.

3.4.6 Indian Space Research Organisation

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was established in 1969, succeeding the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR), which was formed in 1962. The primary objective of ISRO was to develop indigenous technologies and expertise in the field of space research and

to use them for national development. The establishment of ISRO was a significant milestone in India's technological development and it helped establish the country as a leading space-faring nation.

During the space race, India was inspired by the efforts of the United States and the Soviet Union in exploring space. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru saw space research as a means of promoting India's national development and technological advancement. Nehru recognised the importance of space research and its potential to contribute to the country's economic, social and strategic growth.

Vikram Sarabhai was the founding father of India's space programme and his contributions were significant in establishing ISRO. Sarabhai was a visionary scientist and industrialist who recognised the potential of space research in promoting India's national development. He played a crucial role in establishing INCOSPAR and later, ISRO.

Under his leadership, India launched its first satellite, Aryabhata. Aryabhata was India's first satellite, named after the ancient Indian mathematician and astronomer, Aryabhata. It was launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in 1975, marking a significant milestone in India's space research programme. The satellite played a crucial role in the development of India's space technology and in establishing the country as a leading space-faring nation.

The Aryabhata satellite was designed and developed entirely by Indian scientists and engineers, making it the country's first completely indigenous satellite. The satellite weighed around 360 kilograms and was placed in a near-earth orbit of 619 kilometres. It was equipped with a variety of scientific instruments, including X-ray detectors, gamma-ray detectors and cosmic ray detectors. The satellite also carried out experiments to study the Earth's magnetic field and the ionosphere.



Fig. 3.4.5 The satellite Aryabhata depicted on the inverse of a two rupee note (1983)

It was the first time that an Indian-made satellite had been launched into space and it demonstrated the country's ability to develop and launch advanced technology. The launch of the satellite also marked India's entry into the exclusive club of space-faring nations. It provided a platform for the development of indigenous technologies and expertise in the field of space research. The satellite

helped establish ISRO as a leading space agency in the world and it paved the way for the development of other advanced space technologies. The satellite also played a crucial role in advancing India's scientific research capabilities. The experiments conducted by the satellite provided valuable data on the Earth's magnetic field, the ionosphere, and cosmic radiation. The satellite's X-ray and

gamma-ray detectors helped scientists study the universe's high-energy phenomena and furthered our understanding of the universe.

Satish Dhawan succeeded Vikram Sarabhai as Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in 1972 and played a crucial role in its development. He oversaw significant advancements in India's space capabilities, including the successful development and launch of the Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-3), India's first satellite launch vehicle. In 1980, the SLV-3 successfully placed the Rohini satellite into orbit, making India the tenth country in the world to achieve this feat using its own

technology. This marked a major milestone in ISRO's journey, demonstrating its growing capabilities in space research and satellite technology.

Under Dhawan's leadership, ISRO also laid the groundwork for further developments in space technology, expanding its programmes to include remote sensing and communications. Notably, the Indian National Satellite System (INSAT) was developed, revolutionising telecommunications and broadcasting in India. Moreover, ISRO's Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) satellites helped in resource management, agriculture and disaster monitoring.

Recap

- ◆ Nehru promoted the idea of scientific temper, a rational, evidence-based approach to life and decision-making.
- ◆ He viewed science as essential for social reform, modernisation, and overcoming superstition.
- ◆ CSIR expanded research in engineering, medicine, and agriculture.
- ◆ Nehru supported nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and India's atomic programme began under Homi Bhabha.
- ◆ ISRO (est. 1969) signaled India's entry into space research, led by Vikram Sarabhai.
- ◆ India launched its first satellite, Aryabhata, and gradually became a global leader in space exploration.
- ◆ In aerospace, HAL's Marut fighter jet (1964) demonstrated growing indigenous capability.
- ◆ India's computer industry began with ECIL (1967) and expanded rapidly after 1991.
- ◆ The nuclear test of 1974 marked a turning point in India's strategic and scientific development.
- ◆ Nehru's emphasis on science shaped planning, industrialisation, and long-term technological growth.

Objective Questions

1. When did the HAL Marut make its first flight?
2. Who led the development of the HAL Marut aircraft?
3. When was the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) established?
4. Which satellite was launched by India in 1975?
5. Who is considered the founding father of India's space programme?
6. Which mission made India the first country to reach Mars on its first attempt?
7. When was the Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) established?
8. What was the name of India's first satellite?
9. Where was the Indian Statistical Institute situated?
10. When did ISRO successfully launch the Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) or Mangalyaan?

Answers

1. 1961
2. Dr. Kurt Tank
3. 1969
4. Aryabhata
5. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai
6. Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan)
7. 1967
8. Aryabhata
9. Kolkata
10. On November 5th 2013

Assignments

1. Examine Nehru's vision for science and technology in post-independence India. To what extent was it achieved through institutions and policies?
2. Discuss the role of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in building India's scientific and industrial infrastructure.
3. Analyse how Nehru's policies contributed to the establishment of India's nuclear and space programmes.
4. Evaluate the idea of scientific temper. How did Nehru seek to cultivate it, and what impact has it had on Indian society?
5. Assess the contribution of ISRO and the Department of Atomic Energy in strengthening India's scientific self-reliance.

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SGOU



BLOCK

Nation After Nehru



UNIT

Democracy Tested

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the political, economic, and social circumstances that led to the declaration of the emergency in 1975
- ◆ describe the challenges faced by India's democratic institutions during the emergency period
- ◆ analyse the key decisions, events, and actors that shaped the emergency and its aftermath
- ◆ evaluate the impact of the emergency on civil liberties, constitutional rights, and the functioning of the Indian state

Prerequisites

From 1973 onwards, India experienced a severe and prolonged political and economic crisis. High inflation, rising food prices, unemployment, scarcity of essential commodities, and the global oil shock created widespread public distress. The refugee influx from the Bangladesh Liberation War intensified economic pressures, while persistent strikes, protests, and labour unrest disrupted everyday governance. Political instability also grew in states like Gujarat and Bihar, where mass movements demanded transparency, accountability, and electoral reforms. These agitations, led by Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), soon gained nationwide momentum and drew various opposition parties into a united platform against the ruling Congress government. The situation escalated when the Allahabad High Court (1975) found Prime Minister Indira Gandhi guilty of electoral malpractice and invalidated her election. As opposition protests intensified and calls for her resignation grew louder, the government claimed that law and order were deteriorating and that national security was under threat. In this charged environment, Indira Gandhi proclaimed a National Emergency on 25 June 1975, fundamentally altering democratic governance in India for the next 21 months.

Keywords

Emergency, Total Revolution, MISA, Indira Gandhi, Twenty-Point Programme, Congress Party, Civil Liberties, Political Protests, Elections, Authoritarianism

Discussion

The greatest threat to democracy since India became independent came on 25th June 1975 when the President of India, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed declared an emergency in the country under Article 352 of the Constitution. The declaration followed the advice of Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, in response to what she described as internal disturbances threatening the nation's stability. On 26th June, Indira Gandhi convened a meeting of the Union Cabinet to approve the emergency and later went to the studios of All India Radio to announce it to the nation. In her address, she explained that the emergency was a necessary response to a widespread conspiracy that had been brewing, particularly in the wake of her government's progressive policies that she believed were benefiting the common man and woman of India. She cited the rising forces of disintegration, including communal tensions, which she argued were threatening the unity of India. Indira Gandhi expressed hope that the situation would improve swiftly, allowing for the emergency to be lifted as soon as conditions allowed.

4.1.1 Crisis under Indira

Indira Gandhi's popularity began to decline by the beginning of 1973 itself. There were sharp inequalities in the economic sector, caste and class oppression was deepening in the countryside, and rural and urban poverty was rising. There was growing discontent everywhere in the country. The worsening of the economic situation has made matters much more complicated. Growing inflation and unemployment, scarcity of foodstuffs,

and recession created a grave crisis. Nearly ten million refugees came to India after the Bangladesh war. The burden of feeding them depleted the grain reserves of the country's budgetary deficit. Foreign exchange reserves were also drained. The failure of monsoons in 1972 and 1973 caused severe droughts in various parts of the country which also fuelled the price of available food grains. Power generation was reduced due to droughts and it led to industrial recession and a rise in unemployment. The heavy increase in the price of crude oil all over the world in 1973 fuelled the price of petroleum products and fertilizers. The prices rose to exorbitant rates in 1972-73 alone. This coupled with the scarcity of essential articles of consumption mostly affected the poor and the middle class. There was large-scale industrial unrest in different parts of the country in 1972 and 1973. The all-India railway strike in May 1974 lasted for twenty-two days though it was broken in the end. The law and order situation also deteriorated. Protests, strikes and popular demonstrations were widespread. Several colleges and universities were closed for long periods due to strikes. In the clash between the Provincial Armed Constabulary and the armed forces in Uttar Pradesh in 1974, about thirty-five constables and soldiers were killed. A stern leadership that could handle the situation effectively was not forthcoming.

Other factors also led to the worsening of the political situation. Differences among the members of the ruling party were widening. Corruption was rampant at various levels of administrative setup. Even Sanjay Gandhi, the younger son of the Prime Minister was

accused of corruption when he was given the license to manufacture Maruti cars. The major social groups that had hitherto supported the Congress Party began to detach themselves from it. The land reform policies, the talk of socialism, the nationalisation of banks and the coal mining sector, anti-monopoly measures, rising prices, and corruption alienated the rich peasantry, capitalists, and middle classes from the government. Even the opposition parties were not in a position to offer a united and strong challenge to the Congress Party. They were ideologically and programmatically weak, after being thoroughly defeated in the general elections of 1971 and the state assembly elections of 1972.

The greatest challenge to the government came from Gujarat and Bihar unrest against the Congress government in these states, as well as from the leadership of the Bihar movement by Jayaprakash Narayan. In Gujarat, a major unrest arose against the government in 1974 due to the rise in the price of food grains, cooking oil and other articles of daily consumption. Strikes, protests, looting, riots and arson engulfed almost the whole state for more than ten weeks starting in January. The protesters clashed with the police in several instances. When the situation ran out of control, the central government asked the state government to resign, suspended the assembly and imposed the President's rule in the state. Later Morarji Desai undertook a fast unto death in 1975. At last, the central government dissolved the assembly in March 1975 and announced fresh elections in June.

4.1.1.2 Bihar Agitation

A similar agitation was started by the students in Bihar in March 1974. It was the students who spearheaded the movement first. The opposition parties also soon joined with the agitators who clashed with the police at several places resulting in the death of

twenty-seven people in one week. There were two important features of this movement in Bihar. Jayaprakash Narayan took the leadership of the movement and gave a call for 'Total Revolution'. He demanded the resignation of the state government and the dissolution of the assembly. The students and the people were exhorted to put pressure on the then legislators to resign, paralyse the government, gherao the state assembly and administrative apparatus, set up parallel governments and pay no taxes to the government. Indira Gandhi firmly refused to concede the demand for the dissolution of the state assembly. Thereafter Jayaprakash Narayan (hereafter the abbreviation 'JP' would be used instead of the full name) repeatedly toured the entire country to organise a powerful movement against corruption and for the removal of Indira Gandhi and the Congress from power.

JP attracted large crowds in North India. The movement attracted wide support from students, middle classes, traders and almost all non-left political parties. These parties saw in him a credible leader who could bring them as a powerful alternative to congress. Indira Gandhi challenged JP to test their popularity in the polls. But soon Indira Gandhi had to face another serious trouble. In the election petition filed by Raj Narayan, she was convicted by Justice Sinha for having indulged in corrupt practices in the election campaign and declared her election invalid. So, she could not seek election in parliament or hold office for six years. Therefore, she could not continue as prime minister. She refused to resign and appealed to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court was set to hear her appeal on 14th July. But on 24th June, Justice V.R Krishna Iyer, the vacation judge of the Supreme Court announced his decision that until the final disposal of her appeal by the full bench of the Supreme Court, she could stay in office and speak in Parliament but could not vote.

The results of the Gujarat Assembly elections were another severe blow. The Janata front who got the highest number of seats succeeded in forming a government. Both these events stirred the opposition movement. JP and the opposition parties were not ready to wait till the decision of the Supreme Court on Indira Gandhi's appeal. They demanded her resignation and called for a countrywide campaign to drive her out of office. They organised a rally in Delhi on 25th June and announced a nationwide one-week campaign of mass mobilisation and civil disobedience to force the prime minister to resign. The movement was decided to begin on 29th June. In his speech at the rally, he exhorted the general public, police, armed forces, and bureaucracy to rise against the government.

4.1.2 Declaration of the Emergency

Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency under Article 352 of the constitution on the morning of 26th June. The normal political process was suspended but promised to return to a normal position when the situation became normal. The federal provisions of the Constitution, fundamental rights and civil liberties were suspended. The press was strictly censored. All the main leaders of the opposition including Jayaprakash Narayan, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and dissident leaders of the Congress like Chandra Sekhar were arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. Several academics, trade union leaders, and student leaders were also put behind bars. Those organisations that were banned included RSS, Anand Marg, Jamaat-i-Islami, and Maoist CP[ML]. A large number of anti-social elements including smugglers, black marketers, and hoarders were also arrested.

The functioning of the Parliament was utterly ineffective. The speeches in parliament were not allowed to be reported by the press.

The state governments were kept under rigid control. The DMK government in Tamilnadu and the Janata government in Gujarat were dismissed in 1976. The Congress chief ministers of Uttar Pradesh, and Odisha were replaced. Internal democracy within the Congress Party was completely controlled. Even the Congress Party became sidelined by the Youth Congress led by Sanjay Gandhi. Judiciary was crippled by several decrees, laws, and constitutional amendments. The Defence of India Act and MISA were amended to cut down civil liberties. The 42nd amendment of the Constitution in 1976 was to change the basic civil libertarian structure. The judicial review of the Constitution was brought to an end. The parliament was given unlimited power to amend the Constitution. Fundamental Rights were made subordinate to a revised version of the Directive Principles of State Policy. The prime minister was embodied with unlimited power of the state which she exercised through a selected group of politicians and bureaucrats around her.

The initial response to it by the public was passive and sometimes seemed to be supportive, though a major section of the intelligentsia faced it with severe hostility. Only by the beginning of 1976 did the emergency become unpopular. It might be due to several factors. Since the dawn of independence, people never had experienced authoritarian rule. There was a sort of fear among the people. In the beginning, most of the repressive measures were directed against anti-social elements, the extreme communal right or the microscopic left, who had little popular support. The number of persons arrested in the beginning was not large and they were released within a short span of time. Many well-publicised emergency measures were also taken during the time which promised fruitful benefits to the people. Public order and discipline were restored after a long period of restlessness. That was a relief to the public. In the cities crime was controlled, gharaos and demonstrations came

to an end, campuses returned to normalcy, students and teachers went back to classrooms and workers in factories returned to their normal work. At least in the initial months the emergency returned to India a kind of peace and calm that the country had lost for several months. In the functioning of administration also, there was a general improvement with every office functioning on time and the government servants being more considerate to the people. Stern action was taken against smugglers, hoarders, black marketers and tax evaders who were brought before the law under MISA. The economy was also well improved due to some of the earlier policies and various measures taken during the emergency.

The Twenty-Point programme which aimed at uplifting the social and economic life of the vast mass of rural poor was announced by the prime minister on July 1, 1975 raising the hopes among the people. It aimed to liquidate the debt of landless labourers, small farmers, and rural artisans; provide them with new loans; abolish bonded labour; strictly implement land ceiling laws; distribute surplus land to the landless; protect the handloom industry; reduce the prices of commodities; provide housing sites for weaker sections; revised minimum wages for agricultural labourers; increase production; prevent smuggling and tax evasion; and raise the income tax exemption limit while making investment procedures more liberal. The government took all possible steps to make the programme a success. The results were seen in the case of reduction of prices, availability of essential items, and check on black-marketing and tax evasion. The landless and the Dalit population received about three million house sites. The landless received about 1.1 million acres of available surplus land, though it amounted only to a small fraction of the total surplus land. A moratorium was placed on the recovery of debts from the landless labourers and small farmers. In certain cases, liquidation

of debts was also provided. However the hold of the money lenders was still on the poor people as the nationalised banks and rural co-operative institutions provided only meagre credit to them. Though minimum wages for agricultural labourers were enhanced, they were not implemented in the strict sense. The bureaucracy, large landowners and rich peasants often tried to hinder its progress.

To the public, the emergency was an interim measure, a temporary suspension of the normal rules of democracy. It was not seen as a means to impose dictatorship in the country. Throughout the emergency, Indira Gandhi asserted that it was only a temporary measure to solve the abnormal situation in the country caused by the disintegrative forces and that democratic institutions would take their place as soon as the country returned to normal pace. The people of the country stood by her words. But popular discontent arose from mid 1976 onwards. There were several reasons for that. The economic progress achieved in the first year of emergency was not sustained. The increase in production began to fall and prices rose by the end of 1976. Black marketing and hoarding again came to the surface. The rural and urban poor were discontented with their slow progress and workers were unhappy over the limits on wages, bonuses and dearness allowance and the restrictions placed on their right to strike. Government servants and teachers were also agitated due to the compulsion on them to fulfil the quotas ascribed to them in various fields of work. No real progress was seen in the development of the society as proclaimed. The implementation of the Twenty-Point Programme and other developmental activities were entrusted to the same old bureaucracy and politicians. No new agencies of social change or forces for popular mobilisation were created by Indira Gandhi or the Congress. As there was no means of expressing their protest or voicing their grievances for redressing it,



the common people began to turn against the government. They also began to join the ranks of the intellectuals and political workers.

The bureaucracy and the police got increased power which was checked by none including the press, court, elected representatives of people or popular movements. There was wide scale abuse of power by both sections. The poor were the most affected, especially in northern India. The government was also kept in complete ignorance of what was happening in different corners of the country due to the censorship of the press and the silencing of protests. People also no longer trusted the censored cries in the press or radio and turned to rumours and started to believe the worst regarding the different policies of the government.

4.1.2.1 Growing Discontent

The common people began to groom over the loss of civil liberties. They had to face the harassment of petty officials. Fear began to grow in the minds of the people that an authoritarian rule might be established. The election to parliament was postponed by one year in 1976. It created a fear in the minds of the people that the authoritarian structure of government might continue long or would be made permanent. The 42nd amendment of the Constitution was seen as a deliberate step to alter the basic structure of the Constitution. It was seen by the intelligentsia, middle class, teachers, professionals, and journalists as an effort to dismantle the edifices of democracy. Another reason for the unpopularity of the emergency was the concentration of power in the hands of Sanjay Gandhi, the younger son of Indira Gandhi who held no office in the government or Congress Party. He emerged as a parallel centre of power exercising his authority in the functioning of government. He directed the cabinet ministers, chief ministers of states,

Congress leaders and senior civil servants.

In July 1976, Sanjay Gandhi put forward his 'Four Points' which gained more prominence than the official Twenty Points Programme. They were: not to take dowry at the time of marriage; practise family planning and have only two children; to plant trees; and to promote literacy. He also cleared the slums and removed all impediments to roads, bazars, parks, monuments etc. Family planning was promoted more vigorously by the government in an authoritarian manner. People were compelled and coerced to undertake family planning and compulsory sterilisation was undertaken. Fixed quotas of sterilisation were allotted to government servants, teachers, and health workers so that the people should be motivated. The police and the administration added their might to the enforcement of the quotas. The rural and the urban poor resorted to all forms of protest including hiding and rioting. The already existing conditions of fear and repression was further aggravated by the excesses committed by Sanjay Gandhi.

4.1.3 Restoration of Democracy

Meanwhile, on 18 January 1977, Indira Gandhi announced that elections to the Lok Sabha would be held in March. After that the country saw the release of political prisoners, removal of censorship of the press and other restrictions on political activity such as holding of public meetings etc. Free campaigning of political parties was allowed. The elections were held in a free and fair atmosphere on March 16. The Congress party was swept away in the polls. Both Indira Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi lost their seats. She accepted the verdict of the people. There has been a great deal of speculation of why she lifted the emergency. It was seen as an expression of her underlying commitment to democracy. She is said to have realised the excesses of emergency and found that matters were getting worse

and decided to end the trauma even if at the cost of losing power. The imposition of emergency was legitimised by constitutional provisions and needed to be further done by elections. Resorting to authoritarianism and increasing ruthlessness and brutality could not be prolonged in a country as large as India and also rooted in the tradition of democracy for too long. So returning to the democratic process might have seemed more plausible. Indian democracy not only withstood the Emergency period but also

the JP movement and emerged stronger. All talk of dictatorship to end corruption and advancement in economic progress was pushed to the background. Indian democracy not only withstood the Emergency period but also the JP movement and emerged stronger. All talk of dictatorship to end corruption and advancement in economic progress was pushed to the background. Once again, the forces of democracy were upheld by the nation as a whole irrespective of class distinctions.

Recap

- ◆ The Emergency was declared on 25 June 1975 citing threats to national unity and internal stability.
- ◆ Economic stagnation, inflation, unemployment, and drought from 1973 onwards created public discontent.
- ◆ Widespread protests and strikes paralysed government functioning.
- ◆ Congress faced internal divisions and declining support from students, workers, and the middle class.
- ◆ Movements in Gujarat and Bihar under Jayaprakash Narayan demanded a “Total Revolution”.
- ◆ Indira Gandhi’s conviction for electoral malpractice intensified political tensions.
- ◆ Opposition leaders were arrested under MISA, and civil liberties were suspended.
- ◆ Press censorship was imposed, and constitutional amendments, especially the 42nd Amendment, expanded executive power.
- ◆ The Twenty-Point Programme aimed to improve economic conditions but was overshadowed by abuses of power.
- ◆ Forced sterilisation drives, associated with Sanjay Gandhi, created widespread fear and resentment.
- ◆ Popular discontent grew, leading to free elections in 1977, which ended the Emergency and restored democratic rule.

Objective Questions

1. On which date was the Emergency declared in India?
2. Who was the President of India when the Emergency was declared?
3. Which constitutional article was used to impose the Emergency in 1975?
4. Which political leader launched the Total Revolution movement against the government?
5. When was the Emergency period revoked?
6. When was the twenty point programme announced?
7. The Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) was enacted during the government of which Prime Minister?
8. Which Constitutional Amendment was passed to validate the actions taken during the Emergency?
9. Which laws were amended to restrict civil liberties during the Emergency?

Answers

1. 25th June 1975
2. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed
3. Article 352
4. Jayaprakash Narayan
5. 1977
6. July 1st 1975
7. Indira Gandhi
8. 42nd Constitutional Amendment
9. Defence of India Act and MISA

Assignments

1. Analyse the economic, political, and social factors that contributed to the imposition of the Emergency in 1975.
2. Discuss the reasons behind the weakening support for the Congress Party among students, workers, and the middle class during this period.
3. Evaluate the impact of the Emergency on India's democratic institutions. Which constitutional rights and civil liberties were most affected?
4. Critically assess the role of Indira Gandhi in both the declaration and execution of Emergency policies.
5. Examine the forms of public resistance and popular discontent during the Emergency. How did these shape the political outcome of the 1977 elections?

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SGOU



UNIT

J.P. Movement & Janata Experiments

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the origins, goals, and significance of the JP movement in the political history of india
- ◆ identify the social, political, and economic factors that contributed to the rise and spread of the movement
- ◆ trace the stages through which the movement evolved from student unrest to a nationwide call for transformation
- ◆ analyse the political atmosphere in India when elections were announced after the lifting of the emergency in 1977
- ◆ describe the formation of the janata party and evaluate its role in India's experiment with non-congress coalition government
- ◆ assess the policies, achievements, and limitations of the janata government, and its impact on india's political and economic structure

Prerequisites

The political crisis of the early 1970s created fertile ground for new forms of political mobilisation. Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) emerged as the central figure in the opposition to the Congress government. Known for advocating political morality, social justice, and participatory democracy, JP inspired a broad movement for systemic change. The unrest began with the Gujarat (Nav Nirman) and Bihar student protests, driven by corruption, unemployment, price rise, and administrative failures. JP took leadership of the Bihar movement and transformed it into a mass struggle demanding clean governance, electoral reforms, and accountability. He called for a

“Total Revolution”, which aimed at transforming political, social, educational, and economic structures and encouraged active participation from youth and citizens.

The Emergency declared in 1975, marked by censorship, arrests, and suspension of civil liberties, strengthened JP’s role as the voice of democratic resistance. When the Emergency was lifted in January 1977, opposition groups united to form the Janata Party, which achieved a historic victory by defeating the Congress in the general elections. Morarji Desai became Prime Minister, marking India’s first national-level non-Congress government. The Janata Government introduced reforms to strengthen federalism, restore democratic rights, and reverse Emergency-era policies. However, internal conflicts, ideological differences, and social tensions weakened the coalition, leading to its collapse and eventual dissolution.

Keywords

Emergency, JP Movement, Janata Experiment, Total Revolution, Nav Nirman , Chatra Samraksh Samiti , Belchi Killings , Nehruvian Policy

Discussion

In 1973-74, the troubles and turbulent extremities were somewhat quiet in Kashmir and Nagaland. Sheik Abdullah was preparing to re-join the system in Kashmir, and many rebel Naga leaders emerged from hiding and participated in the elections. But then trouble arose in the heartland, which had long considered themselves as an integral part of the Republic of India in terms of history, politics, tradition and language. Of these, the Gujarat and Bihar uprising was the most serious. In Gujarat, the state was run by a Congress regime. In January 1974, a movement began in the state demanding the dismissal of the state government. It was led by students in the beginning to which other sections of the society joined together. It called itself *Nav Nirman*, the Movement for Regeneration. For more than ten weeks the state faced an anarchical situation with strikes, looting, rioting, and arson. Indiscriminate arrests and frequent recourse to lathi charge took place. Many government offices and public buildings

were burnt. When the situation went out of control, Chimanbhai Bai was forced to resign and the state came under President’s rule.

4.2.1 The Bihar Agitation

The events in Gujarat inspired the students in Bihar to launch a struggle against misgovernance in their state. Bihar had witnessed a great deal of political instability, with many governments made and unmade by defections. The Congress government came to power in 1972, but it was highly inefficient and corrupt. In the villages there was the tension of land relations and poverty; and in the cities there was steep discontent by a steep rise in the increase of prices. A common front was formed against the left-wing groupings led by the Communist Party of India. It was known as The Bihar State Struggle Committee of Workers and Employees against Price Rise and Professional Tax. The front organised a series of protests and mass demonstrations

demanding jobs and food. There arose another stream of protests led by ABVP, the student wing of the Jan Sangh. Other non-communist student groups came together with ABVP and formed the Chatra Sangharsh Samiti (CSS). This grew rapidly in the state, having its branches open at several places. Campus life was hit badly, with classroom instructions almost coming to a standstill.

On 18th March 1974, the CSS marched to the state assembly at Patna, which turned violent. They clashed with the police and set fire to government buildings and newspaper offices. Several students were badly hurt in the clash with the police, in which two of them succumbed to injuries. This news spread like wildfire which provoked clashes between students and the police across the state. The next turn in the movement was the invitation given to Jayaprakash Narayan to step in and lead the movement. He was a veteran of militant and peaceful movements and the upholder and instigator of many worthy causes. In the then years he had worked for reconciliation in Nagaland and Kashmir, persuaded the notorious bandits of Chambal valley to lay down their arms and had advocated a sympathetic understanding of the Naxalite issue. He could not refuse the call from the students as he himself was a radical student who was a source of inspiration to many. He was a great friend of Jawaharlal Nehru who chastised and scolded him in the need of the hour. When Indira Gandhi came to power, he applauded her and gave her unsolicited advice. She was supported for her leadership in the Bangladesh war, but did not approve of her stand during the Presidential elections and the suspension of the judges of the Supreme Court. JP agreed to take the leadership of the movement on two conditions, that it should strictly adhere to the code of non-violence and it should not be restricted to Bihar.

4.2.1.1 JP's Total Revolution

Immediately after the clashes at Patna, he was not ready to remain as a silent spectator of what was going on in different regions. He decided to raise his voice against corruption, misgovernment, authoritarianism, black marketing, hoarding and abuses happening anywhere, whether it was Bihar or Delhi or elsewhere. He was determined to fight for the overhaul of the education system and for a real democracy of the people. His entry to the leadership of the movement changed the entire situation. The struggle got a great boost and what was still then the Bihar Movement changed into the JP Movement. He exhorted the students to boycott classes, to leave their studies for a year and to work for raising the consciousness of the common people. The students tried to close the educational institutions and the authorities made all possible efforts to keep it open with police force. The support for the struggle was widespread in the cities. In Gaya, even housewives who were rarely seen in protests took to the streets with their small children. When the authorities attempted to clear the streets, it triggered violence and clashes with the police, who opened fire. This led to the deaths of three people and left several others severely injured. Following the Gaya incident in mid-April 1974, demands for the dissolution of the state assembly and the imposition of President's Rule intensified.

On June 5, Jayaprakash Narayan led a massive procession through the streets of Patna. Addressing a large gathering at Gandhi Maidan, he issued a powerful call for a 'Total Revolution' to fulfil the unkept promises of the freedom movement. He declared that injustice, rampant corruption, and hunger must end. Urging students to dedicate a year to rebuilding Bihar and India, he warned that this struggle would require sacrifice, resilience in the face of police brutality, and even imprisonment. JP promised the emergence of a true people's government



within a year and called upon the youth to spearhead a movement to transform the nation and eradicate all forms of corruption.

At the same time, the country was paralysed by a railway strike led by the socialist leader George Fernandes which lasted for about three weeks. It brought the movement of people and goods to a complete halt. It was estimated that about a million workers participated in the strike. The western railways which serviced the industrial hub of India was the worst hit. In many towns and cities, there were militant demonstrations which called the army to maintain peace. While the strike was underway, India conducted its first nuclear test in May 1974, which shifted national attention and sparked a wave of patriotic pride across the country. To certain others, the membership of the elite nuclear club was not an answer to India's crisis at that time, and she was ranked 102nd at the time among the nations of the world in terms of per-capita income. It was also a setback to the normalisation of the relations between India and Pakistan. Indira Gandhi and Jayaprakash Narayan exchanged a series of letters regarding the situation. JP criticised her insincerity, noting that she had accused him of associating with the rich. Indira Gandhi clarified that she was referring to the corruption of Sarvodaya leaders and it was the newspapers that added their own interpretations. She challenged his claim to be the nation's moral conscience.

In August, JP toured the Bihar countryside receiving a grand welcome from the people. Everywhere people cheered for him who was driven in procession. After the tour, he called for a conference of all opposition parties to channelise the enthusiastic opposition of the people to a nationwide people's movement. One opposition party was already in the JP Movement-the Jana Sangh and its student wing the ABVP. On November 1 1974, Indira Gandhi had a long meeting with JP

at New Delhi. The Prime Minister agreed to dismiss the Bihar ministry on condition that the movement would drop its demand for the dissolution of other state assemblies. But the compromise did not work. The meeting failed. Three days later JP was manhandled by the police while on his way to a public meeting at Patna. He stumbled to the ground while warding off a baton. The picture, which splashed across the newspapers the next day, provoked much outrage among the public. Even, the Bihar administration was compared to its colonial predecessor.

By the end of 1974, the Bihar Movement was poised to be a national one. JP received wide popular support from the country. Prominent politicians from different parts of the country came to see JP and promised to take the idea of the struggle back to their states. In the last week of November, JP convened a meeting of the opposition parties in New Delhi and advocated to bring radical changes all round, involving specific changes in the centre as well as in the states. The polarisation between JP and Indira Gandhi was nearly complete by the end of 1974. In the first week of January 1975, L.N. Mishra, a key aide of the Prime Minister was assassinated in JP's home state of Bihar. The Prime Minister blamed it on the 'cult of violence,' allegedly promoted by JP and his associates. JP decided to organise a march to parliament in the spring, when the climate would be more hospitable to protestors from across the country. He toured across the length and breadth of the country in January and February 1975, to solicit support from the people. He urged the people to remain non violent as any untoward incidents would help the Prime Minister to assume dictatorial powers. He predicted his arrest at any time and warned the government of its dire consequences. Indira Gandhi said that she was not certain what the movement stood for, but only against herself and against her party.

Some members of the congress party including Chandra Sekhar and Mohan Dharia called for a national dialogue on rising prices, corruption, and unemployment issues. At that time, an accord was reached between Sheikh Abdullah and the Congress Party for having a government in Kashmir. According to it the Congress Legislature Party of Jammu and Kashmir would elect him as their leader, and hence also as their chief minister. Two days before he assumed office he went to seek the blessings of Jayaprakash Narayan. The photograph of the two hugging together was published in all the newspapers. JP welcomed Sheikh's return to power in Kashmir. But Jan Sangh attacked the accord and expressed their difference with JP in it. Very soon, JP called for a 'national stir' to oust the corrupt Congress leaders from power. The Jan Sangh joined with him, although they had differences on the Kashmir issue. On 2nd March, Indira Gandhi removed Mohan Dharia from her cabinet. He had requested her to resume the talks with Jayaprakash Narayan. JP responded by asking the senior minister's like Y.B. Chawan and Jagjivan Ram resigned in protest and to save the party from destruction by restoring its traditional values.

In the mean-time, there was a meeting of the Delhi police on 3rd March on how to handle the coming influx of protestors. The entry of trucks and buses into Delhi was forbidden by the government. Despite the ban, people came to the city in huge crowds. They stayed in a rented camp outside the Red Fort, then named it Jayaprakash Nagar. The Boat Club Lawns adjacent to the Houses of Parliament was fixed as the venue of the public meeting. On the morning of the 6th March, people began to march towards the venue led by Jayaprakash Narayan in an open jeep. Huge crowds assembled on the way to greet JP with garlands and showered petals on him. Leaders of the opposition parties followed him in other jeeps. It was one of the largest processions seen in Delhi.

The largest number of protestors came from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, though there were representatives from all over India. JP greeted the huge gathering at the Boat Club Lawns and asked the crowd to be prepared for a long struggle. After the meeting, he led a delegation to Parliament and presented to the Speaker a list of demands, which included the dissolution of the state assembly in Bihar electoral reforms and the setting up of a tribunal to investigate the allegations against Congress corruption. Two days later, in a speech at Rourkela, Indira Gandhi said that the agitators were trying to destroy the fabric of democracy, and the movement was nourished by foreign donations.

4.2.2 Rolling Back the Emergency

On 18 January 1977, Indira Gandhi announced her decision to hold elections to the Lok Sabha. Recalling the past, she stated that "some eighteen months ago, our beloved country was on the brink of disaster." The Emergency, she explained, had been imposed because the nation was far from normal, and now, as it was being "nursed back to health," elections had become possible. The following day, President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, acting on the Prime Minister's advice, issued an order dissolving the Fifth Lok Sabha. The historic announcement ending the Emergency was welcomed both in India and abroad. The four major opposition parties, the Congress(O), the Jan Sangh, the Bharatiya Lok Dal and the Socialist Party decided to fight the forthcoming elections together. The representatives of these parties met together and on 20 January 1977, they formed the Janata Party and decided to contest the elections under the banner of the new party. All of them had different political philosophies. The single point that united them together was to fight Indira Gandhi and the Congress party. On 23rd January, the Janata party was formally launched, at a news conference in the presence of Jayaprakash

Narayan. On February 2 1977, Jagjivan Ram, the minister for Agriculture in Indira Gandhi's cabinet resigned from the Congress party and formed the Congress For Democracy (CFD). H.N Bahuguna, Nandini Satpathy, and K.R Ganesh soon joined him. The sudden defection of these leaders was a severe blow to Congress. Along with the DMK, Akali Dal, and CPM, it forged a common front with the Janata Party against the Congress and its allies the AIADMK, and CPI.

The Emergency and its excesses were the main issues raised by the opposition parties. The opposition campaign's mass rally in New Delhi was a grand success. A million people assembled there to hear Jayaprakash Narayan and Jagjivan Ram speak. The chief protagonists of the conflicts of 1973-75 were also the chief campaigners in the elections of 1977. Despite the difficulties of his age and ill health, JP was the chief propagandist. Everywhere he exhorted the audience to remember that it was the last free election if the Congress was voted to power. Indira Gandhi admitted that there were excesses during Emergency, but she defended it as the need of the hour. The elections were seen as a referendum on the policies and programmes of the period, especially that of compulsory sterilisation. On the night of 20th March 1977, the election results were announced.

4.2.3 The Janata Government

Congress was thoroughly defeated in the North and both Indira Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi lost their seats. The popular upsurge was in favour of the Janata Party. Together with its allies, they came out victorious with 330 out of 542 seats. Congress got only 154 seats, out of which 92 seats were from South India. The Congress party faced a rout in the Northern States of U.P, Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh. It retained its pre-eminent position in the South, while the Janata Party got only six

seats from the four Southern States. The CFD merged with the Janata Party soon after the elections. There were differences over the issue of prime ministership between the three aspirants, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram. The senior leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan and J.B Kripalani stood in favour of Morarji Desai who had unparalleled administrative experience as well as a spotless personal record. On March 24, 1977, Morarji Desai was sworn in as Prime Minister of India. The Defence Portfolio was given to Jagjivan Ram, Home Ministry to Charan Singh, Finance to H.M Patel, External Affairs to Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Railways to Madhu Dandhivate.

One of the first steps taken by the new government was to consolidate its hold over the state governments. The argument put forward was that the Congress Party, having lost its mandate in the elections, had no right to rule the state governments where they were in power. In April 1977, Union Home Minister Charan Singh appealed to the chief ministers of nine Congress-ruled states to advise their governors to dissolve the state assemblies, as the ruling party's candidates in these states had been rejected by the people in the Lok Sabha elections. Thirty-five MPs submitted a memorandum to Acting President B.D Jatti, requesting him to refer the matter to the Supreme Court. The nine Congress-ruled state governments were dissolved by the government and fresh elections were announced. In the elections held in June 1977, Janata and its allies won all these states except Tamilnadu, where AIADMK emerged victorious. The majority in Lok Sabha and state assemblies helped the Janata government to get its candidate, Neelam Sanjeev Reddy elected as the President of the Union in July 1977.

The government took immediate measures to remove the authoritarian features of emergency and to restore democratic ideals. The government restored fundamental

rights, and full civil liberties to the press, political parties, and individuals. The 44th Constitutional Amendment was passed which repealed those provisions of the 42nd Amendment that altered the basic structure of the constitution. The right of judicial review was restored. The regime was determined to make Indira Gandhi pay for having imposed an Emergency. Several Commissions of enquiry were appointed headed by retired Judges, the famous being the Shah Commission, set up to punish those guilty of the excesses of Emergency. They dealt with the corruption of Congress Chief Ministers, treatment of JP in jail and one with the possible maltreatment of Ram Manohar Lohiya back in 1967 in a government hospital.

But soon the Janata Party began to face several crises. A sense of disillusionment crept into various organs of government. It was seen in the administrative set up, implementation of developmental policies and realisation of social justice. There were several reasons for this. There was rapidly growing tension in the rural areas and the atrocities on rural poor and scheduled castes went on increasing. The rich and middle peasants belonging to intermediate castes, large landowners of upper class, urban, and rural shopkeepers, businessmen, petty bourgeoisie were the main supporters of the party. With the Janata government at the centre and state, the rural landowners felt to be armed with a sense of extra power in the rural areas. At the same time the rural poor, mostly landless labourers and those belonging to the lower castes was also conscious of their rights about the working of democratic institutions and the exercise of adult franchise. They tried to protect the benefits accrued to them under the Twenty-Point Programme of the earlier government. The landowners in many states used several means to take back the lands given to the landless peasants during the Emergency. Those debts cancelled during the Emergency was reclaimed by the moneylenders. This

led to growing violence and caste tensions in Northern India.

Violent attacks were perpetuated on scheduled caste people, the killing and torching of Harijans at Belchi in Bihar being the most violent. On 27 May 1977, nine Harijans were burnt to death by an upper caste mob. The leader of Opposition in parliament, Y.B.Chavan announced that he would go to the spot to conduct an enquiry. When he failed to keep his word, it was the erstwhile prime minister who chose to proceed instead. It actually drove her back to action. She went to Belchi from Patna in a car, then in a jeep, then in a tractor and then on elephants back as the road had been washed away after the rains. This brought her back to the centre of the political stage once again. Her image as a friend of the poor and lowly was refurbished. Communal violence went unabated in various regions. Agitations and lawlessness affected the functioning of colleges and universities also. Police and paramilitary forces also resorted to strikes and mutinies. The government arrested Indira Gandhi in October 1977 on the charge of corruption. But when she was brought before the Magistrate, he threw the charge sheet away as flimsy and insubstantial. It badly affected the image of the Janata government.

The Nehruvian policy of economic development was based on large scale industry, modern agriculture, and advancement in science and technology. This was repudiated by the Janata government and at the same time it also failed to evolve an alternate strategy for economic and social development or that could solve the problems of underdevelopment. Their economic policy highlighted rural development rather than industry-oriented growth. It had three important aspects: labour intensive small-scale industry to replace large scale industries, decentralisation in place of national planning and agricultural development to be spear-headed by rich



peasants supported by subsidies, reduction in land revenue and massive allocation of resources to the rural sector by shifting it from industry. But it favoured only a low economic development. Their earlier demands for land reform and promise of higher wages to agricultural workers were not fulfilled. The Food for Work programme provided employment to the rural poor that enabled them to improve the infrastructure in villages by improving roads, schools, and public tanks etc. within a year of Janata rule, the economy was marked by slow rates of growth with lopsided agricultural and industrial development. The economy was severely affected by devastating floods and droughts in 1978 and 1979. There was also a rise in the price of food grains as its stock began to deplete with its use in the Food for Work Programme. The boom in the international price of petroleum products also aggravated the situation. A heavy deficit budget was presented in 1979 which flamed up inflation. The shortage of kerosene and other daily goods of consumption became widespread. The five year plans was replaced by Rolling Plans in 1978. Every year the performance of the plan was to be assessed and changes were to be made according to it.

In the field of foreign relations, the government did not deviate from the ongoing framework or devise new initiatives. Their tenure was very brief to have an impact in the relations with foreign powers. The government favoured 'genuine non-alignment' which implied strengthening ties with the US and Britain and moderating its close relationship with the USSR. The Janata leaders had no prospect of rejecting the Soviets for the Americans, but to maintain equidistant from the two powers. In October 1977, Morarji Desai and A.B. Vajpayee visited the Soviet Union to underline their smooth relationship. On the other side Jimmy Carter came to India in January 1978, the first American president to do so since Eisenhower. In November 1977, India and

Bangladesh signed an agreement to share the water of the Ganga, despite the opposition of the state government of West Bengal. The Foreign Minister Vajpayee visited Pakistan in February 1978 and a year later visited China also.

The Janata Party was involved in a factional struggle which paralysed the smooth functioning of the government. Both in the centre and in the states, each group in the party tried to occupy the available space. The Jan Sangh had their own ideologies which were often termed communal and maintained close ties with RSS. The Congress(O) and BLD were secular, but did not have an all-India base. Charan Singh, the Home Minister was forced to resign from the cabinet in June 1978 and he was brought back as Finance minister in January 1979. In the February 1978 elections to the state assemblies of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, the Janata and its allies were defeated by Congress. The several efforts of the government to punish Indira Gandhi for the excesses of the Emergency slowly created a favourable atmosphere for her. The government failed to understand her growing popularity and the attitude of the rural and urban poor, women, and marginalised sections in support of her. In November 1978 she was elected to the Lok Sabha from the Chikmagalur constituency. The former Chief Minister of Karnataka, Veerendra Patil was her opponent. She won the elections amidst tight competition in which the opposition threw all their might in Patil's favour. The government used all its might to expel her from the House for breach of privilege and contempt. A parliamentary committee having the majority of Janata members reported that she had deliberately obstructed an inquiry into Sanjay's Maruti factory back in 1974 and also misled the Parliament in doing so. The House committed her to jail for a week. She had to resign her seat. This precipitated another by-election in Chikmagalur in which she contested and won.

In July 1979, Charan Singh with the help of socialists broke up the party and the government resigned on 15th July 1979. A new government was formed by Charan Singh with a section of Congress(U) and Socialists and with the outside support of Congress(I) and CPI. But the new government did not face the Parliament because on the day before the confidence vote, Indira Gandhi withdrew her support. On the advice of Charan Singh, the President dissolved the Lok Sabha and announced fresh elections.

When the Janata Party came to power it was seen as a kind of second freedom

from authoritarian rule and a means of restoring democracy. But from the beginning the goodwill of the party was squandered in different ways. Both at the centre and states the ministers were alleged to be fond of power and luxury. Complex party squabbles and intra-party rivalries tarnished their reputation. But after their victory the process of rectifying the wrongs done to the constitution during the Emergency was begun under the supervision of the Law Minister Shanti Bhushan and was completed in due course.

Recap

- ◆ Kashmir and Nagaland remained relatively stable, but Gujarat and Bihar witnessed major student uprisings.
- ◆ JP assumed leadership and launched the call for Total Revolution.
- ◆ The railway strike led by George Fernandes brought national transport to a standstill.
- ◆ India's 1974 nuclear test heightened political tensions and nationalistic sentiments.
- ◆ Opposition meetings organised by JP expanded the movement beyond regional agitation.
- ◆ Attempts at compromise between JP and the government failed.
- ◆ The assassination of L.N. Mishra and widespread protests increased instability.
- ◆ The march to Parliament symbolised growing national anger against the government.
- ◆ The 1977 elections turned into a referendum on Emergency rule.
- ◆ The Janata Party secured a historic victory; Congress lost its strongholds in North India.
- ◆ Morarji Desai became Prime Minister and restored civil liberties and democratic processes.

- ◆ Rising social tensions, including atrocities against Dalits, challenged the new government.
- ◆ Economic stagnation and factionalism led to internal breakdown.
- ◆ Charan Singh briefly formed a government before the Lok Sabha was dissolved.

Objective Questions

1. What was the name of the political movement that began in Gujarat in 1974?
2. What triggered the students' movement in Bihar in 1974?
3. Who led the students' struggle in Bihar in 1974?
4. What was the name of the student organisation formed during the Bihar movement?
5. What slogan did Jayaprakash Narayan coin during the Bihar movement?
6. What event intensified the Bihar movement in 1974?
7. Who led the railway strike in 1974?
8. When was the Janata Party formally launched?
9. Who was appointed as the Prime Minister of India after the 1977 elections?
10. What was the main factor that led to the downfall of the Janata Party government in 1979?

Answers

1. Nav Nirman Movement
2. Corruption and misgovernance
3. ABVP and non-communist groups
4. Chatra Sangharsh Samiti (CSS)
5. Total Revolution slogan

6. Gaya police firing
7. George Fernandes
8. 23rd January 1977
9. Morarji Desai
10. Janata party's internal factionalism

Assignments

1. Analyse the social, economic, and political factors that contributed to the Gujarat and Bihar uprisings of 1974. How did student movements shape these protests?
2. Discuss the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan in the Bihar Movement. How did he transform a local student agitation into a national democratic movement?
3. Examine the impact of the 1974 railway strike on India's economy and political stability.
4. Evaluate Indira Gandhi's response to the JP Movement. How did her actions influence the political climate leading up to the Emergency?
5. Discuss the concept of Total Revolution. What changes did JP envision, and how did this philosophy influence Indian politics and society in the 1970s?

Suggested Reading

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SGOU



UNIT

Debate on Mandal Commission

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ analyse the role of caste identity and social stratification in shaping electoral politics in post-independence India
- ◆ explain the historical, political, and social context behind the formation of the backward classes commission
- ◆ evaluate the recommendations of the mandal commission and their impact on Indian politics, society, and public policy
- ◆ examine the debates, protests, and judicial interventions that emerged during the implementation of the commission's recommendations

Prerequisites

From the 1960s onwards, India saw a significant shift in its political landscape as Other Backward Classes (OBCs) began asserting their rights and challenging upper-caste dominance in public life. These communities increasingly formed the social and political base of several non-Congress parties, reshaping regional and national politics. A turning point came in 1977, when the newly formed Janata Government appointed the Mandal Commission to identify socially and educationally backward classes and recommend measures for their upliftment. The Commission proposed 27% reservation for OBCs in central government jobs, in addition to existing reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, with the aim of addressing long-standing historical inequalities. However, political instability delayed the implementation of these recommendations. It was only in 1989, under the National Front government led by V. P. Singh, that the Mandal Commission's proposals were finally announced. This triggered widespread protests, particularly among upper-caste youth in North India, some of which escalated into violence. The Supreme Court temporarily stayed the order, leading to prolonged legal debates. In its landmark 1992 Indra Sawhney

judgment, the Supreme Court upheld OBC reservations but introduced the concept of the creamy layer, excluding economically advanced OBCs from the quota benefits. The verdict also placed a 50% cap on total reservations, shaping India's reservation policy for decades to come.

Keywords

OBC, DMK, Mandal Commission, Anti-Mandal Agitation, Reservation Policy, Creamy Layer, Social Justice

Discussion

Caste has always played a determining role in Indian society. It continued with the same vigour in most parts of the country even after the establishment of democratic institutions in the country. However, urban areas witnessed an increase in inter-dining and inter-marriages. The association between caste and occupation, which was once rigid also became weakened with the growth of democratic institutions. There was a growing salience of caste and caste identity in the domain of electoral politics.

4.3.1 The Mandal Commission

The rise of the 'backward castes' was a striking feature of Indian politics in the 1960's and 70's. They were positioned between the Scheduled Castes at the bottom and the Brahmins and other higher castes at the top. *Yadavas* in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, *Jats* in Punjab and Haryana, *Marathas* in Maharashtra, *Vokkaligas* in Karnataka, and *Gounders* in Tamilnadu and several other castes were classified as Other Backward Castes (OBC) under Indian law.

It was these OBC castes that provided the social base and leadership of the parties that successfully challenged the dominance of the Congress Party. The Non-Congress governments formed in North India and the DMK government in Tamilnadu in

the 1960's were in essence OBC parties. Ten years later, these backward classes asserted themselves on the national stage. The two major components of the Janata collective i.e., the Lok Dal and the Socialist Party were OBC parties. They have gained economic power through land reforms and the Green Revolution and political power through elections. It was next the need of administrative power for them which was lacking. When the Janata government came to power, they appointed the Socially and Economically Backward Classes Commission headed by B. P. Mandal, which thereafter came to be known as the Mandal Commission. The Commission stated that caste was still then a main indicator of backwardness. As many as 3,743 castes were identified as backward castes based on state surveys. They constituted more than fifty per cent of the population. Yet they were poorly represented in the administrative set up, especially at the higher levels. The commission calculated that they constituted only a little more than 12% of all posts in central government and only less than 5% of class 1 jobs. To redress the above said anomaly the Mandal Commission recommended that 27% of all posts in central government should be reserved for these castes, in addition to the 22.5% already set apart for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The Janata government did not get time to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission as the government fell soon. It was kept in the darkness by the Congress regimes that followed headed by Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi respectively. After the general elections of 1989, the National Front government came to power headed by V.P.Singh. He was the head of a minority coalition government. There were many internal differences among the members of the ruling party including Deputy Prime Minister, Devi Lal, Ajith Singh, Arun Nehru, Arif Mohammed Khan and others. Devi Lal was dismissed from the ministry in August 1990. He gave a call for a big peasant rally in New Delhi on 9th August to show his true strength. Two days before the commencement of the rally, V.P. Singh announced in Parliament that the report of the Mandal Commission, appointed by the Janata government and quietly ignored by the successive Congress governments, would be implemented. He was aware of the rising power of the OBCs. Henceforth, 27 per cent of all vacancies in the central government would be reserved for those belonging to the 'socially and educationally' backward classes as identified by the commission.

4.3.2 Debate over Implementation and Resistance

It sparked a lively debate in intellectual circles. One group argued that the criteria for job reservation should be the family income rather than belonging to a particular caste. Others argued that the efficiency and reliability of public institutions would be at risk if it was implemented. Others considered it as a corrective measure to end the dominance of the upper caste in the public sector. The Constitutional validity of the commission's recommendations was questioned in the Supreme Court in September 1990. Three main arguments were raised by

the petitioner: the Constitutional guarantee of equality of opportunity was violated by the extension of reservation; caste cannot be taken as an indicator of backwardness for reservation; and the efficiency of public institutions was at risk. The bench issued a stay of execution on the government order. Arguments in favour and against the policy were debated in newspapers and courts. When it was taken to the streets it became violent. One student of Delhi University set himself on fire in protest against the acceptance of the commission report. Though he was badly burnt, he survived. Other students soon followed his example. All the self-immolators were said to be upper caste people who were afraid to lose hope of getting government jobs if the reservation was implemented.

Other collective protests included organising rallies and demonstrations, shutting down schools, colleges and shops, attacking government buildings and estrangement from the police. Police resorted to force to suppress the situation. This led to police firing in six states claiming the lives of more than fifty persons. The prime minister's appeal to students to desist from violence and self-immolation went unheard. For a major part, anti-Mandal protests were free of caste overtones, but in the later stages there developed a very negative tendency for caste-favoured abuses to be traded in campuses and hostels. The space which had been a major forum for dissolving caste identities had become the centre for its rebirth. The protest ended when the Supreme Court gave a stay on the implementation of the commission report on 1 October 1990.

The protests were much more stronger in Northern India when compared to the South. Affirmative action programmes had been long in existence in the South. There was also a thriving industrial sector offering opportunities to the educated youth who were no longer dependent on the public sector alone. In the South, the

upper caste constituted less than ten percent of the population, while in the North, it was more than twenty per cent. The strongest supporters of the Mandal Commission were two rising politicians. One was Mulayam Singh Yadav of Uttar Pradesh and Lalu Prasad Yadav of Bihar. Both came from poor peasant families and became politically active during university, joining the still-influential socialist movement. During the Emergency, both were jailed and soon joined the Janata party after it was over. Both were from the Yadava community scattered across North and Western India. After independence, they steadily rose up in the ladder of social and economic prestige and political power. They actively reached out to the Muslim population in their states. As each comprised ten per cent of the population. They were a great force to be reckoned with in the polls.

4.3.3 Implementation of the Commission

As India's most populous states at that time, UP and Bihar had 139 members in the Parliament. In the first four general elections, Congress won a majority of seats there. In the 1977 elections following the Emergency, the party was wiped out, but again regained in the 1980 and 1984 elections. The 1989 elections were a disaster for Congress, winning only nineteen seats in both states. When midterm elections were held two years later, the condition became worse for the party getting only five seats in UP and one in Bihar. When V.P. Singh announced the implementation of the report, the Congress Party reacted lukewarmly.

The party returned to power in the 1991 elections with a good performance in the South. If the party was to regain its ground in the North it had to woo the backward classes. Accordingly, the then Congress Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao issued a new government order on 26th September 1991 endorsing the Mandal Commission report but adding a fresh clause that allotting 27 per cent of jobs to OBCs preference shall be given to candidates belonging to the poor sections among them.

After several hearings on the petition filed before it, the Supreme Court delivered its final verdict on 16th November 1992. The petition was dismissed by a majority of seven judges, who upheld the constitutional validity of the commission. Three judges dissented, arguing that caste-based classification was 'unconstitutional' and that income should be used as the criterion for identifying disadvantaged sections. The Supreme Court added two caveats in upholding the government order, that reservations should not exceed fifty per cent of the jobs in government, and caste criteria would apply only in recruitment, not in promotions.

It was the Janata Party that constituted the Mandal Commission in 1978, and its new form, the Janata Dal implemented its recommendations in 1990. Though its enthusiasm was not shared by the rival parties at that time, they were prepared to accept it at the time when the Supreme Court passed the judgement. They might have realised the political implications of it and the political costs of opposing it.

Recap

- ◆ OBCs gained political prominence during the 1960s–70s, supported by communities such as Yadavs and Jats.
- ◆ The Janata Government appointed the Mandal Commission in 1979.
- ◆ The Commission recommended 27% job reservation for OBCs.
- ◆ V. P. Singh's government implemented the recommendations in 1990.
- ◆ Mass protests erupted across North India, including cases of self-immolation.
- ◆ Mandal reforms received strong support from leaders like Lalu Prasad Yadav and Mulayam Singh Yadav.
- ◆ The Congress Party suffered political decline in states such as UP and Bihar.
- ◆ The Supreme Court's 1992 verdict upheld reservations, introduced the creamy layer exclusion, and set a 50% cap on total reservations.

Objective Questions

1. Name two major political parties associated with OBC mobilisation during this period.
2. What was the objective of the Mandal Commission, established in 1978?
3. What percentage of central government jobs did the Mandal Commission recommend reserving for OBCs?
4. Who announced the implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations in 1990?
5. What were the main arguments made against the Mandal Commission's recommendations?
6. Which two politicians from UP and Bihar strongly supported the Mandal Commission?
7. What additional condition did P.V. Narasimha Rao include while endorsing the report in 1991?
8. What was the long-term political impact of the Mandal Commission report?

Answers

1. Lok Dal, Socialist Party
2. Identify and uplift OBCs
3. Twenty-seven percent
4. V.P. Singh
5. Equality and efficiency concerns
6. Mulayam, Lalu Prasad
7. Economic criteria within OBCs
8. Strengthened OBC political power

Assignments

1. Discuss the historical role of caste in shaping Indian society, occupation, and political participation.
2. Analyse the socio-political context behind the rise of backward caste politics in the 1960s and 1970s.
3. Examine the major recommendations of the Mandal Commission and evaluate the political responses to its implementation.
4. Critically evaluate the protests and public debates surrounding the implementation of the Mandal Commission report.
5. Assess the impact of the 1992 Supreme Court verdict on reservation policy, caste politics, and the broader democratic landscape of India.

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UNIT

Dalit Assertion

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the origins, objectives, and organisational strategies of BAMCEF in mobilising dalit communities
- ◆ analyse the contributions of Kanshi Ram and Mayawati in strengthening dalit political identity and ensuring representation
- ◆ evaluate the rise and expansion of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) as a major political force, especially its coalition strategies in Uttar Pradesh
- ◆ assess how dalit political assertion transformed from symbolic representation to a powerful social and electoral movement in post-independence India

Prerequisites

After the death of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in 1956, Jagjivan Ram emerged as the most influential Dalit leader within the Congress Party. For several decades, Dalits remained a loyal electoral base of the Congress, but this began to change by the 1970s and 1980s as new forms of Dalit assertion emerged outside mainstream political parties. A major shift occurred under Kanshi Ram, who founded BAMCEF (Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation) to mobilise educated Dalits and other marginalised communities. He later established the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) to convert this social mobilisation into effective political power. The BSP aimed to challenge caste-based discrimination, promote social justice, and give Dalits an independent political voice. Under Mayawati's leadership, the BSP redefined Dalit politics by building broad social coalitions. Her rise as India's first Dalit woman Chief Minister symbolised a new phase of empowerment. Over time, the BSP transformed Dalits from a passive vote bank into a decisive political force, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, where the party repeatedly shaped government formation through strategic alliances.

Keywords

Bahujan Samaj Party, Dalit Panthers, BAMCEF, Dalit Assertion, Kanshi Ram, Mayawati

Discussion

The rise of the Dalits in the 1990's was led by the Bahujan Samaj Party, founded by Kanshi Ram. The stalwart of the untouchables, B.R. Ambedkar died in 1956. After his death, Jagjivan Ram emerged as their most prominent leader. He was in the Congress Party and it was mainly due to his influence, the lower castes were viewed as a safe vote bank of the party for several decades. A challenge was posed to it only by the Republican Party founded in Maharashtra and later by the militant Dalit Panther Organisation. During this time 'Dalit' replaced the official 'Scheduled Caste' or the Gandhian 'Harijan' as the preferred word for the low caste people. It can be seen they mostly voted for the Congress Party from the 1950's to 80's. The banner of the downtrodden was carried by Jagjivan Ram for decades till his death in 1988. His death left a void which was impossible to fill easily by some others.

4.4.1 The Bahujan Samaj Party

Kanshi Ram was born in 1932 in Punjab. After his studies, he joined the government service and worked in a laboratory in Maharashtra. There he was introduced to the teachings of B.R. Ambedkar. This radicalised his thoughts and he quit the job in 1971 and formed an organisation to represent government employees from a disadvantaged background. It was known as the All-India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF). Several branches of the organisation came up in different states due to his relentless work. By the early 1980's BAMCEF had a membership

of 200,000 men, many of them graduates and postgraduates.

The cradle of BAMCEF's growth was Northern India. Its rallies attracted huge crowds in North India, especially Uttar Pradesh. The success of the organisation emboldened Kanshi Ram to start a political party in 1984. The new party came to be called the Bahujan Samaj Party. The word Bahujan was indicative of all belonging to the backward sections of the society including the scheduled castes, OBCs, and other minority groups. Several decades of affirmative action after independence had created a strong middle class among the Scheduled Castes. Though they were mainly recruited to menial jobs at the beginning in the state machinery, they came to be better represented at the higher level. The statistics show that more than two million Dalits were recruited to government service by 1995. Of course, the majority of them were still living in degraded social situations and were economically impoverished. But then a sizeable middle class was there to take their case forward. It was they who rallied behind BAMCEF and occupied leading roles in the Bahujan Samaj Party.

The BSP made its debut in the 1984 general election. Though no seat was gained by the party, it won a million votes. They became successful in the subsequent elections, winning eleven seats in 1996 and fourteen in 1999. It was in the elections in Uttar Pradesh the party made a real impression among the masses. The party activists successfully wooed the masses, warning them that the other parties wanted only them to act as vote banks. The BSP stood



for 'social justice' and 'social transformation.' The dignity, pride, and prospects of the Dalits could be enhanced only by a party of their own. The message was carried by Dalit lawyers, teachers, and officers to their less privileged. These intellectuals published a series of tracts explaining to them their heroic history rather than holding meetings, rallies and demonstrations. Alternative narratives of ancient history projecting their role were constructed. Their strenuous efforts in resisting the suppression throughout the times were projected and published in booklets that were widely distributed in UP in the 1990 s.

4.4.1.2 Rise to Power

The growth of social conscience and political organisation enabled BSP to make impressive results in the assembly elections of Uttar Pradesh. Between 1989 and 2002 the state witnessed five assembly elections. The party won 13, 12, 69, 67, and 98 seats respectively in these polls. It was the Congress Party which suffered much due to the success of BSP. The party nurtured by the Dalits became one of the three major political groups in the state, the others being the Samajwadi Party of Mulayam Singh and the Bharatiya Janata Party. By this time Mayawati supplanted Kanshi Ram as BSP's main political leader. She was born in New Delhi as the daughter of a government clerk. Though her ambition was to join the Indian administrative service, she entered politics after meeting Kanshi Ram at a BAMCEF rally. Her oratorical skills attracted huge crowds at the public meetings. She had already become the public face of the party by the 1990's. In 1993 she supported the Samajwadi Party headed by Mulayam Singh Yadav to form a coalition government. On 2nd June 1995, she withdrew her support to Mulayam Singh's government and formed a new government with the support of the BJP.

Mayawati was the first female Dalit chief

minister in the country and the youngest chief minister in the state. When BJP withdrew their support She had to resign in October 1995. She became chief minister again from March 1997 to September 1997 and then from May 2002 to August 2003 in coalition with the BJP. In 2001 Kanshi Ram named her as his successor to the party leadership. She was sworn in as chief minister for the fourth time in May 2007 and completed the term till 2012. It was the first ministry in Uttar Pradesh to complete its full five-year term. The new government announced an agenda to provide social justice to the weaker sections of society rather than distributing money to the unemployed. The anomalies in the recruitment of police officers during the previous regime were rectified by removing over 18,000 policemen from their jobs. In August 2007 the BSP government introduced 30 percent reservation in the private sector. Though a quota for promotions was introduced, it was quashed by the Supreme Court. Several schemes such as the Bhim Rao Ambedkar Rural Integrated Development Programme, Ambedkar Gram Vikas Yojana scheme, and Manyawar Shri Kanshiram Ji Shahri Garib Awas Yojana for improving the living standards of village people and poor sections. More than a thousand hectares of agricultural land were distributed to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Additionally, many memorials and statues were erected across different parts of the state.

After the 2012 assembly elections in UP, BSP never came to power. BSP became the third largest national party in India in terms of percentage of votes in the 2014 national elections, but gained no seats. In the 2019 elections to Lok Sabha, a Grand Alliance was formed by BSP, along with the Samajwadi Party of Akhilesh Yadav, and Rashtriya Lok Dal of Ajit Singh and several other political parties in different states of India. It was called Mahagathbandhan and won 15 out of 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh.

Recap

- ◆ BSP founded by Kanshi Ram in 1984.
- ◆ Dalit Panthers and Republican Party contributed to early Dalit mobilisation.
- ◆ After Jagjivan Ram's death, a leadership vacuum emerged.
- ◆ Ambedkar's ideology strongly shaped Kanshi Ram's movement.
- ◆ BAMCEF was formed to organise and politically awaken marginalised communities.
- ◆ BSP sought to represent SCs, STs, OBCs, and other marginalised groups.
- ◆ BSP contested its first general election in 1984.
- ◆ The party emphasised social justice, dignity, equality, and political empowerment.
- ◆ Developed a strong Dalit support base in Uttar Pradesh.
- ◆ Mayawati became the key leader and a symbol of Dalit empowerment.
- ◆ BSP formed alliances with major political parties like the SP and BJP at different points.

Objective Questions

1. Who founded the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)?
2. What does BAMCEF stand for?
3. In which year was the BSP founded?
4. Who was the first Dalit woman Chief Minister of India?
5. Which political party did Jagjivan Ram belong to?
6. What was the main aim of the BSP?
7. In which state did the BSP achieve significant political success?
8. What was the objective of the Dalit Panther Organisation?
9. Whom did the BSP support to form the government in Uttar Pradesh in 1993?

10. How many seats did the BSP win in the 1996 general elections?
11. In which year did Mayawati become Chief Minister for the first time?
12. What was BAMCEF's main contribution to Dalit assertion?
13. Which major national party did the BSP form a coalition with in 1995?
14. What is the Mahagathbandhan?
15. In which year did the BSP complete a full five-year term in Uttar Pradesh?

Answers

1. Kanshi Ram
2. All-India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation
3. 1984
4. Mayawati
5. Indian National Congress
6. Social justice, social transformation
7. Uttar Pradesh
8. Fight against Dalit injustice
9. Samajwadi Party
10. Eleven seats
11. 1995
12. Mobilised disadvantaged government employees
13. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
14. Grand alliance of regional parties
15. 2007–2012

Assignments

1. Discuss the circumstances that led to the formation of BAMCEF and its early objectives.
2. Evaluate the role of BAMCEF in strengthening Dalit political consciousness and organisation.
3. Analyse the contributions of Kanshi Ram and Mayawati in shaping modern Dalit politics and challenging caste hierarchies.
4. Explain the rise, strategy, and electoral success of the BSP in Uttar Pradesh since the 1980s.
5. Discuss how the shift from the term “*Harijan*” to “*Dalit*” influenced the self-respect, identity, and political awareness of Scheduled Castes.
6. Examine the BSP’s coalition politics with parties such as the SP and BJP. How did these alliances affect governance and Dalit representation in Uttar Pradesh?

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UNIT

Identity Politics

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the historical conditions and lived experiences of dalit communities in India
- ◆ trace and analyse the different phases through which dalits asserted their social, cultural, and political identity
- ◆ examine major organisations, movements, and leaders who played crucial roles in dalit empowerment
- ◆ evaluate how regional variations shaped distinct forms of Dalit mobilisation across India

Prerequisites

Dalits have historically experienced deep-rooted social discrimination and exclusion in Indian society. Even after independence, their socio-economic conditions remained largely unchanged, making the struggle for equality a long and ongoing process. Over time, however, Dalit communities began to assert their identity more forcefully through social movements, political organisations, and cultural expressions.

Maharashtra emerged as a major centre of early Dalit mobilisation. The formation of the Republican Party of India (RPI) and the rise of the Dalit Panther Movement marked significant steps in challenging caste oppression and promoting a new Dalit consciousness. In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Dalit struggles increasingly intersected with Naxalite movements, reflecting a more radical approach to demanding social justice. In Uttar Pradesh, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) provided an influential political platform that transformed Dalits from a marginalised community into a decisive political force.

These diverse movements reflect the broader evolution of Dalit identity—from resistance and protest to political participation and cultural assertion.

Keywords

Adi-Hindu, Adi-Andhra, Adi-Dharma, Jajmani, Vetti, Dalit Assertion, Dalit Panthers, BSP

Discussion

Domination, social segregation, and violence were once regular features in the daily lives of Dalits in India. Dalits constitute about one-sixth of the country's total population, with the largest numbers residing in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh, followed by Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Punjab.

Historically and regionally, Dalits have used different terms for self-reference. In Uttar Pradesh, they were known as 'Adi-Hindu', in Andhra Pradesh as 'Adi-Andhra', and in Punjab as 'Ad-Dharma'—with *adi* signifying "original inhabitants." From 1936 onwards, the colonial state introduced the term "Scheduled Castes" to categorise the untouchables—a term that continues to be officially used by the Indian government. Dalit writers later coined the term "Untouched" to convey a sense of purity, in contrast to the stigma of "Untouchable." Since the 1970s, however, activists and intellectuals have increasingly adopted the term "Dalit" to describe and assert their identity, resistance, and collective struggle.

4.5.1 Dalit Political Assertion

Caste-based conflict underlies many of India's enduring social problems. The liberal democratic principles of equality, freedom, fraternity, and social justice have historically been denied to large sections of

the population, particularly the lower castes. However, the encounter with modernity and colonial legal reforms spurred the rise of several movements advocating for the rights and dignity of these communities. In Punjab, the Ad Dharm movement led by Mangoo Ram sought to empower the Dalits. The Satnami movement among the Chamars of Chhattisgarh aimed at challenging caste hierarchies and asserting social identity. In Kerala, the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) movement, led by Sri Narayana Guru, called for social reform and equality for the Ezhava community. Tamil Nadu witnessed the rise of the Dravidian movement under the leadership of Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, with the Dravidar Kazhagam at its forefront, challenging Brahmanical dominance and advocating rationalism and self-respect. In western India, Jyotirao Phule championed the cause of education and social upliftment for the lower castes and women. These and many other regional movements laid the foundation for a broader struggle for social justice across India.

They had an overriding similarity in the way they attempted to engage with issues of religion and caste in the context of modernity. Some movements rejected Brahmanism as a foreign imposition brought by the Aryan invasion and asserted that the Dravidians were the original inhabitants of the land, while others sought to make traditional practices accessible to the excluded masses.

They all threw up an array of possibilities in their engagement with both tradition and modernity. These movements addressed the interests of particular communities. Faced with the challenge of European modernity, the movements of reform in India engaged with religion and produced an array of possibilities. One such possibility was the development of South Indian Buddhism. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar projected Buddhism as the religion best suited to the untouchables. He saw the power of modern ideas and principles and a section of the Indian population kept away from having access to such ideas. This evolved as a dual focus of his movement. He sought to have a political identity for them.

In Maharashtra, the movement for asserting the identity of Dalits is associated with the formation of several organisations. The Republican Party of India was formed in 1975 which replaced the Scheduled Caste Federation. It was meant to be a broad-based party advocating the aspirations of all those segments of Indian society subjected to social discrimination and social deprivation. They upheld the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity as the basis of the new party. They intended the party to be based on the idiom of modernity and civil society. The party was inaugurated in October 1957. The first manifesto of the party was prepared by Shankar Rao Kharat, the famous Dalit intellectual. It delineated a class-based approach and broadly divided the Indian population into two classes, the oppressing and the oppressed classes, and emphasised the similarities accruing among the oppressed in India.

The first split in the Republican party took place in 1958 as a section of the party felt that the interest of the untouchables and the problems faced by them should have a separate concern rather than collating it with other oppressed classes. By 1970 they split into four factions. The party played a significant role in enabling the Dalits of Maharashtra

to get actively engaged in electoral politics. It enhanced the consciousness and political mobilisation of the Dalits. It paved the way for the development of the political elite within them.

4.5.1.1 Dalit Literature in Maharashtra

Dalit literature grew as a distinct genre of Marathi literature and got wide acceptance for its specificity. It comprised works of poetry, plays, short stories, life stories, folk songs and novels. It sought the growth of a composite Dalit identity through literary and cultural development. It perceived a close connection between literature and the society at large. Their initial revolt was against mainstream Marathi literature and was a rejection of the social order from where such literature originated. They tried to expose the actual social condition of Indian society and to reveal the broken promises of independence and unrealised dreams. Social justice and the transformation of society were the important themes in Dalit writings. The irrationality and superstitions of religion were heavily criticised. They opposed the ugly face of Varna ideology. It revolutionised Marathi literature and highlighted the reality of lower caste existence in the villages and cities of Maharashtra. It vividly portrayed the Dalit lifeworlds, ranging from life in slums to offices.

There have been various Dalit literary organisations from 1950 onwards. The literary journal called *Asmita Adarsh* remained a prominent forum for the publication of Dalit literary works. The Dalit literature also emphasised scientific outlook, rationality, and a concern for a pedagogy of the masses. There was also a debate among the Dalit writers regarding the focus of their writings. While one group argued that they needed to focus on the larger domain of the Dalits, another group needed specific Buddhist literature.

4.5.1.2 Dalit Panther Movement

The disintegration and growing irrelevance of the Republican Party of India Movement favoured the growth of the Dalit Panther Movement. A radical section of the Dalit writers was the main inspiration behind it. Arjun Dangle, Raja Dhale, and Namdeo Dhasal were the leading figures. They opposed the electoral politics of the Republican party and wanted to revive the class model of mobilisation. They stood for allying with all the poor, downtrodden, and oppressed communities without regard to caste and to mobilise the rural poor to effect a radical shift of power in Indian politics. They organised a march in Mumbai on August 15, 1973, describing it as a 'Black Independence Day'. They followed a dual strategy of opposing the government for the growing atrocities on Dalits and the Republican Party for its ineffective politics. They also came into conflict with the Shiv Sena over the issue of unemployment, as the primary supporters of both groups were unemployed youth in the early 1970s.

The Dalit Panthers split by the end of 1974 owing to the differences between Raja Dhale and Namdeo Dhasal. While Dhale emphasised the Buddhist identity of the Dalits, Dhasal favoured communist ideas. Dhale and his group considered Ambedkar an extraordinary political leader and tried to ascribe supra-human status to him. He saw untouchability as originating from the varna and jati systems of the Hindu religion. Dhasal saw it as primarily a socio-economic problem, and hence a class issue. He wanted religion to be separated from the organisation of the Dalits. Both tried to legitimize their diverging emphasis on the legacy of Babasaheb (Ambedkar). In 1975 the faction led by Dhasal split into two groups, one led by Dhasal and his supporters and the other by Divakar, and Dige. Dhale's faction split into two groups in 1976, one led by Mahatekar, and Sangare and other by Dhale and his associates. Though Dhale initiated

a mass movement in 1977, the following years show the waning influence of the Dalit Panther Movement. However, the ideology that fired the movement had inspired the Dalit consciousness in Maharashtra to a great extent.

In the Andhra, and Telangana regions the Jajmani system was a caste based economic coercive exploitation in which the lower castes only have duties or obligations to render free services called *vetti* to the upper caste landlords. Those Dalits who came to the cities educated themselves and diversified their economic activities in cities. They later led the anti-untouchability movements. They started the 'Adhi-Andhra' self-respect movement. The main leaders were Madari Bhagaiah, Bhagya Reddy Verma and Venkat Rao. Dalits also tried to assert their identity through the Naxalite movement in the early 1970's and 80's. The movement for self-respect, wages, and land reforms was taken up by them for mobilising them. The Naxalites in Andhra used violent means to achieve their end. The left parties also asserted that improvement in the economic condition of Dalits would naturally improve their social conditions. People's War group, Party Unity, and Indian People's Front were some of the Naxalite organisations that worked for Dalit assertion. They took up multiple struggles against the oppression structured around the rural agrarian society. The CPI(ML) was able to mobilise the Dalits to participate in revolutionary political activity. The Andhra Pradesh state unit of the Republican Party of India tried to organise the landless Dalit workers. The Dalit youths formed Ambedkar Yuvajana Sanghams for asserting their activities. The Dalit MahaSabha was formed in 1985 to organise the people to fight for their rights. In the elections of 1994, they tied up with Bahujan Samaj Party, but did not succeed.

The rise of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in Uttar Pradesh was the culmination of the

Dalit's struggle for identity that started from the earlier period. Kanshi Ram had succeeded in organising BAMCEF-All India Backward and Minority Employees Federation and mobilised the lower caste people to a great extent. The Dalit leader Mayawati became the first woman Dalit chief minister of India when the BSP government was formed in 1995. The various policies adopted by the Mayawati government from 2007 to 2012

were designed for the specific progress of Dalits in the state.

The political assertion of the Dalits has enabled them to enjoy the fruits of democratic institutions in the country. With the rise of political organisations, they became more mobilised and organised. But still, there are major challenges before the Dalit movement today to bring all into its fold and elevate them.

Recap

- ◆ Dalits across regions used varied self-referential terms such as Adi-Hindu, Adi-Andhra, and Adi-Dharma.
- ◆ The term Scheduled Castes was introduced during the colonial period.
- ◆ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar promoted Navayana Buddhism as a path to social liberation.
- ◆ The Republican Party of India emerged but later experienced multiple splits.
- ◆ A vibrant Dalit literary movement grew in Maharashtra, using literature as a tool of resistance.
- ◆ Central themes included justice, equality, identity, and social transformation.
- ◆ The Dalit Panthers initiated a radical anti-caste movement and promoted unity among oppressed groups.
- ◆ Internal ideological differences, Buddhism vs. Marxism, led to splits within the Panthers.
- ◆ Dalit assertion strengthened significantly after 1977.
- ◆ The Jajmani system oppressed Dalits in Andhra Pradesh; the Vetti system enforced unpaid labour.
- ◆ Naxalite movements influenced Dalit struggles in Andhra and Telangana.
- ◆ BAMCEF and the BSP mobilised Dalits nationally.
- ◆ Mayawati became India's first Dalit woman Chief Minister, marking a major political milestone.

Objective Questions

1. What term did Dalit writers use instead of 'untouchable'?
2. Which state in India was at the forefront of Dalit assertion movements?
3. Who prepared the first manifesto of the Republican Party of India?
4. In which year was the Republican Party of India formed?
5. What was the name of the prominent Dalit literary journal?
6. Which leader projected Buddhism as the most suitable religion for Dalits?
7. When did the first split in the Republican Party of India occur?
8. Who were the leading figures behind the Dalit Panther Movement?
9. When did the Dalit Panther Movement split into two factions?
10. What was the caste-based economic exploitation system in Andhra and Telangana called?
11. Who were the main leaders of the Adi-Andhra Self-Respect Movement?
12. In which year was the Dalit MahaSabha formed?
13. Who founded the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)?
14. Who became the first Dalit woman Chief Minister of India?
15. What was the primary aim of the Bahujan Samaj Party?

Answers

1. Untouched
2. Maharashtra
3. Shankar Rao Kharat
4. 1957
5. Asmita Adarsh
6. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
7. 1958
8. Arjun Dangle, Raja Dhale, Namdeo Dhasal

9. 1974
10. Jajmani system
11. Madari Bhagaiah, Bhagya Reddy Verma, Venkat Rao
12. 1985
13. Kanshi Ram
14. Mayawati
15. Political mobilisation of the oppressed communities

Assignments

1. Explain the emergence of Dalit literature in Maharashtra and its role in shaping Dalit consciousness.
2. Compare and contrast the ideological differences within the Dalit Panther Movement, especially between the Buddhist and Marxist factions.
3. Evaluate Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's contribution in shaping modern Dalit identity and the importance of his adoption of Buddhism.
4. Examine how the Naxalite movement influenced Dalit mobilisation in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
5. Assess the rise and political impact of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) on Dalit assertion and Indian politics.

Suggested Reading

1. Ambedkar, B.R. *The Annihilation of Caste*. Navayana, 2014.
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BLOCK

Challenges Within the Nation



UNIT

Land Question - Naxalbari Movement

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the socio-economic and political factors that led to the emergence of the naxalite movement in India
- ◆ analyse the significance of tribal, peasant, and agrarian struggles in shaping revolutionary politics
- ◆ identify and describe the major naxalite movements, including Naxalbari and Srikakulam, and their ideological foundations
- ◆ evaluate the long-term legacy of the naxalite movement and its impact on contemporary left-wing extremism

Prerequisites

Since independence, India's rural landscape has witnessed several agrarian struggles driven by unequal land distribution, exploitation, and social injustice. Early movements such as the Telangana peasant uprising and the PEPSU tenants' struggles highlighted the deep-rooted issues faced by farmers, labourers, and tribal communities long before the 1960s. By the late 1960s, frustrations over slow land reforms, rising inequalities, and exploitative agrarian systems created conditions that led to the rise of the Naxalite movement, a radical left-wing rebellion inspired by Maoist ideology. Beginning in Naxalbari in West Bengal in 1967, the movement spread to various regions and became a defining chapter in India's revolutionary politics. This unit explores the socio-economic roots of these movements, the ideological influences shaping them, and their long-term legacy in the history of rural resistance and left-wing extremism in India.

Keywords

Naxalbari Uprising, Srikakulam Movement, Adhiar System, Maoism, Peasant Struggles

Discussion

The Naxalite movement represents one of the most significant political movements in post-independence India. Despite its fragmented structure, it remains the longest-standing insurgency, characterised by ideological continuity. While variations exist in its strategic approaches and modes of mobilisation, a consistent ideological framework underpins its actions. Notably, the movement primarily engages the most marginalised and socially oppressed segments of society, bringing to the forefront the deep-seated fissures within India's socio-political and economic landscape that might otherwise remain obscured.

The term “Naxal” or “Naxalite” serves as a broad designation for various militant Communist groups operating across different regions of India. These groups assert that their struggle is centred on advocating for the rights of marginalised and socio-economically disadvantaged populations, who have been largely excluded from the electoral process and remain unaffected by India's developmental initiatives. Among these oppressed groups are the Adivasis, Dalits, and the most impoverished segments of society, including landless labourers who frequently receive wages below the legally mandated minimum. The Naxalites position their movement as a resistance against systemic oppression and exploitation, with the overarching goal of establishing a classless society. They claim their ultimate political objective is to construct a leftist alternative by mobilising the masses against growing imperialist influences and the pro-imperialist policies adopted by the Indian government.

5.1.1 Naxalbari Movement

On March 2, 1967, West Bengal witnessed its first non-Congress government, the United Front (UF), which brought together the CPI, CPM, and Bangla Congress. One of its key promises was land reform, led by Harekrishna Konar, the CPM's Land Revenue Minister. He advocated for legal land redistribution and announced plans to quickly distribute surplus land to the landless and protect sharecroppers from being evicted. Konar also encouraged peasants to take an active role in ensuring these changes were implemented. This gave hope to people experiencing poverty but created anxiety among small and middle landowners, who feared losing their land. However, the process proved complicated, with legal disputes. While CPM attempted to operate within the legal constraints, some members, especially in the Naxalbari, became frustrated with the slow progress and pursued more direct and radical measures, which paved the way for the unrest in these areas.

The Naxalbari region in Darjeeling district, North Bengal, had been a hub of sharecroppers and tea estate labour movements since the 1950s. British companies owned the tea estates, and there was a long history of land disputes. The workers in these plantations were from tribal communities like the Santhals, Oraons, and Rajbansis and faced harsh conditions under the *adhiar* system. According to this system, the landlords (jotedars) provided ploughs, bullocks, and seeds in exchange for a crop share.

In 1967, with the rise of the United Front (UF) government, the landlords feared their

land would be given to sharecroppers. Charu Mazumdar, a CPM leader who led the peasant organisation, Krishak Samiti, was at the forefront of the uprising. In late March 1967, the Samiti organised protests against landlords who had evicted tenants or hoarded grain. Leaders like Santosh Rana had a key role in the armed struggle of the Naxalites led by Charu Mazumdar. Unlike many factions that adhered strictly to armed resistance, the CPI-ML (PCC) under Rana's leadership was among the first Naxalite groups to engage in electoral politics.

Inspired by Mao Zedong, Mazumdar believed that legal land reforms were pointless and only suppressed the revolutionary potential of peasants. For him, the actual change required violent land seizures and armed resistance. Leaders like Kanu Sanyal and tribal activist Jangal Santhal supported this. With their support, Mazumdar organised a peasant's conference in April 1967. The conference called for ending landlords' land monopoly, redistributing land through peasant committees, and resisting the state and central governments through armed struggle.

The movement gained momentum between April and May 1967. According to the reports provided by Bipan Chandra, 15,000-20,000 peasants became full-time activists, forming peasant committees that functioned as local governance and armed defence units. These groups occupied lands, burned land records, punished the landlords, and established a parallel administration. These peasants were armed with traditional weapons like bows, arrows, and spears. The villages of Hatigisha, Buraganj, and Chowpukhuria, under the Naxalbari, Kharibari, and Phansidewa police stations, became the strongholds of this rebellion.

CPM leaders quickly realised that the Naxalbari peasants were heading into a dangerous conflict with the state. The CPM

needed help to stay in the government and support the Naxalbari actions. They tried to persuade the leaders first. Harekrishna Konar went to Siliguri and, according to his version, got the leaders to agree to stop all illegal activities, surrender people wanted by the police, and work for legal land distribution. However, this agreement was denied by the local leaders, who began encouraging the peasants to resist the police. This led to a cycle of violence where they attacked police. The CPM found itself in a challenging position, balancing support for the rebels with pressure from the police. They even sent a cabinet mission of the UF government to negotiate. According to the sources, the peasants did negotiate, but Charu Mazumdar rejected the talks. Eventually, the CPM had to expel the rebellious leaders or leave the government. They chose to expel them, which led to the formation of the CP(ML) and a radical left-wing movement.

By July, the peasant movement was effectively crushed, with many leaders, including Jangal Santhal, getting arrested. The movement moved from rural peasant uprisings to urban militancy in Kolkata, with students and workers joining. The late 1960s and early 1970s saw violent encounters in universities, factories, and cities. According to Bipan Chandra, the Naxalite movement shifted focus to the towns, where students became prominent supporters. However, it turned into a violent clash between armed gangs of Naxalite supporters and the youth groups from CPM or Congress.

Ramachandra Guha says, "Naxalbari quickly became a symbol of Indian revolution. The village's name came to represent not just the region but anyone willing to use arms to fight against the state on behalf of the oppressed. "Naxalite" became a term synonymous with "revolutionary," evoking both admiration and romanticism from some and scorn from others."

5.1.2 Srikakulam Movement

In Srikakulam, another group of revolutionaries, drawing inspiration from the speeches and writings of Mao Zedong and the legacy of earlier peasant struggles against landlords, mobilised for armed resistance. These Andhra 'Naxalites' were active in two regions: Telangana, which had already experienced a major Communist insurgency in 1946-49, and the Srikakulam district, bordering Orissa. In both areas, the central issues were land and forests. The main exploiters were the state and landlords, while the victims were peasants, particularly tribals.

The tribal population in this region, the Jatapu and Savara tribes, had been organised by Communist activists working in areas like Parvatipuram, Palakonda, Patapatnam, and Kottur since the early 1950s. From 1957 to 1967, a movement that organised tribals into Girijan Sanghams and Mahila Sangams had secured many of their demands, like reclaiming the land taken by non-tribal money lenders, securing higher wages, and fair prices for forest products and debts. As a result, the tribals gained confidence and participated in rallies held in nearby towns. However, there is no indication of them using militancy.

In Srikakulam, the struggle was led by Vempatapu Satyanarayana, a school teacher who became a key figure in organising the tribals. He led a series of labour strikes and organised the seizure of grain from the fields

of wealthy farmers, reallocating it to people in need. By the end of 1967, the landlords, feeling helpless by the growing movement, approached the police for help. As a result, hundreds of protesters were arrested. Later, Satyanarayana and his supporters decided to take arms, determined to continue their struggle for justice. They raided the homes of landlords and money lenders and often destroyed records and papers that they believed were the symbols of exploitation. From this point, the movement took a violent form of resistance. According to Bipan Chandra, "they targeted eliminating individual class enemies."

The course of the movement changed with the creation of the CP(Marxist Leninist). The focus shifted from armed struggle to targeting specific individuals. According to government reports, about 48 people were killed, which include money lenders, landlords and forest officials. By January 1970, 13 leaders had been killed and several others arrested.

In June 1970, the police launched a large-scale operation, arresting 1,400 people. On July 10, 1970, two of the key leaders, V. Satyanarayana and Adibhatla Kailasam, were killed, which ended the movement. In 1971, Indira Gandhi launched Operation Steeplechase, deploying the army and police to suppress Naxalite activity in Kolkata, Andhra, Bihar, and Kerala. By 1972, Charu Mazumdar was arrested and died in custody, leading to the movement's decline.

Recap

- ◆ The United Front government in West Bengal promised land reforms, raising expectations among peasants.
- ◆ Naxalbari, in the Darjeeling district, had a long history of tenant and labour protests.
- ◆ Sharecroppers and plantation workers suffered under the adhiar system, which allowed landlords to extract high rents and labour.
- ◆ With the rise of the United Front government, landlords feared losing land to sharecroppers, creating tension.
- ◆ The Naxalbari movement was led by Charu Mazumdar, supported by Kanu Sanyal and Jangal Santhal.
- ◆ The movement advocated armed struggle inspired by Mao Zedong's revolutionary model.
- ◆ The CPM attempted mediation but eventually distanced itself as the movement became more radical.
- ◆ The Srikakulam movement in Andhra Pradesh focused on the exploitation of tribal communities by landlords and forest officials.
- ◆ It was led by Vempatapu Satyanarayana and became another important centre of Naxalite activity.

Objective Questions

1. When did West Bengal witness its first non-Congress government?
2. Who was the Land Revenue Minister in the United Front government of West Bengal?
3. What system required sharecroppers to give a portion of their crops to landlords?
4. Which region became the stronghold of the Naxalbari uprising?
5. Which three villages in Naxalbari became strongholds of the peasant rebellion?

6. Who led the peasant organisation Krishak Samiti during the Naxalbari uprising?
7. What was considered as the primary ideological influence on the Naxalite movement?
8. Which tribes were involved in the Srikakulam movement?
9. Who was the leader of the tribal uprising in Srikakulam?
10. Which CPM leader claimed to have initially persuaded Naxalbari leaders to stop illegal activities?

Answers

1. 1967
2. Harekrishna Konar
3. Adhinar System
4. Naxalbari in Darjeeling district, North Bengal
5. Hatigisha, Buraganj, Chowpukhuria
6. Charu Mazumdar
7. Mao Zedong's Thought
8. Jatapu and Savara
9. Vempatapu Satyanarayana
10. Harekrishna Konar

Assignments

1. Describe the socio-economic conditions that led to the emergence of the Naxalbari Movement.
2. Compare the Naxalbari and Srikakulam movements in terms of causes, strategies, and outcomes.
3. Discuss the ideological role of Charu Mazumdar in shaping the Naxalbari uprising.

4. Analyse how the Indian state's response to the Naxalbari Movement shaped the trajectory of left-wing extremism in later decades.

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UNIT

Problems of Regionalism

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the concept of regionalism and differentiate it from local or cultural pride
- ◆ analyse the socio-political movements that shaped regional identities in post-independence India
- ◆ describe the meaning and implications of the “sons of the soil” doctrine
- ◆ evaluate how regional aspirations have influenced national integration, federal relations, and economic development

Prerequisites

In the early decades after independence, many believed that regionalism could threaten India’s unity. However, regional identities have always been part of India’s cultural fabric, and in most cases they coexisted peacefully with national identity. As historian Bipan Chandra notes, it is important to distinguish between *regional pride*, which celebrates language, culture, and tradition, and *regionalism*, which can sometimes include political demands that challenge national cohesion. Regional pride does not necessarily create conflict. Over time, however, economic inequalities, uneven development, and cultural movements shaped regional politics differently across states. This unit explores how regionalism evolved in independent India, including the role of social and cultural movements, economic disparities, and political mobilisation. It also examines how regional aspirations influenced national unity, federalism, and economic policy.

Keywords

Regionalism, Sons of the Soil Doctrine, Dravida Nadu, Dravidian Movement, Federal Structure, Migration

Discussion

Bipan Chandra, the prominent historian, opined that efforts to develop one's region, reduce poverty, and achieve social justice should not be considered regionalism. Similarly, he insisted that protecting India's federal structure, advocating for a separate state, or decentralising power is not regionalism. If these demands create conflict or put one region's interest above the nation or other region, then they can be seen as regionalism. Therefore, regionalism could have flourished in India if the state had felt it was being culturally dominated or discriminated against—for example, the Dravida movement in Tamil Nadu.

For instance, a regional challenge emerged in the south with the rise of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), a party rooted in the Dravidian movement initiated by E.V. Ramaswami Naicker, popularly known as 'Periyar.' Periyar strongly opposed the northern dominance in Indian politics, culture, and religion, advocating for creating a separate nation in South India called Dravida Nadu. The DMK was founded by some of his former followers, who turned to parliamentary politics as a platform to voice their secessionist demands.

5.2.1 The Problem of Economic Imbalances

According to Bipan Chandra, economic inequality among states in India poses a challenge, but it has yet to lead to regionalism. At the time of Independence, leaders recognised that certain regions were more developed than others. Industrial development was concentrated in a few areas

like Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, while agriculture stagnated in regions, particularly in eastern India.

To address regional economic disparities, the Indian government emphasised balanced regional development. Some were the Industrial Policy Resolution (1956) and the National Integration Council of 1961. The Industrial Policy Resolution stressed that accomplishing higher living standards across the country required a synchronised development of industrial and agricultural sectors. The National Integration Council recognised that addressing economic differences was crucial for maintaining national unity. It emphasised the need to focus on the rapid development of economically underdeveloped regions, urging both national and state governments to prioritise the upliftment of these areas.

5.2.2 Evolution of Regionalism and Constitutional Provisions

Regionalism in India has developed due to linguistic, economic, and political factors. One of the earliest official responses to regional demands was the appointment of the States Reorganisation Commission (1953), which recommended restructuring states along linguistic lines. This led to the enactment of the States Reorganisation Act (1956), addressing regional aspirations while maintaining national unity. Despite this, regional political movements continued to influence Indian politics. The rise of parties such as the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and

the Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh reflected the assertion of regional identities in electoral politics.

Economic liberalisation in 1991 further deepened regional disparities, as industrial and service sector growth became concentrated in certain urban centres. This led to increased migration and shifting regional concerns, where economic grievances sometimes overshadowed linguistic or cultural identities. The Assam Movement (1979–1985), led by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), illustrated how regional identity could be shaped by economic and demographic anxieties, particularly regarding immigration and employment.

The Indian Constitution provides mechanisms to address regional aspirations. Article 371 and its sub-clauses grant special provisions to certain states to safeguard their cultural and economic interests. These constitutional safeguards have played a role in balancing regional concerns with national unity. While regionalism has posed challenges, it has also strengthened India's federal structure by accommodating diverse aspirations.

5.2.3 The "Sons of the Soil" Doctrine

The *Sons of the Soil Doctrine*, prevalent since the 1950s, is a form of regionalism asserting that a state belongs exclusively to its leading linguistic group, considered the “sons of the soil.” Others, whose mother tongue differs, are considered “outsiders.” This belief gained a grasp in cities due to unequal economic development in post-1952. With the rise in economic opportunities, the locals commanded a preference for jobs and education, marginalising outsiders. This competition for resources increased communalism, casteism, nepotism, and elimination based on language.

The issue strengthened in certain cities and regions where speakers of the state's primary

language were either a minority or held only a slight majority. The migration to major cities after 1951 added complexities to this issue. The “sons of the soil” movements have often gained momentum when competition for industrial and middle-class jobs has intensified between migrants and locally educated youth. This issue became more severe in regions where “outsiders” had better access to higher education and gained government service and profession.

The problem worsened in the 1960s and 1970s as the economy struggled to create enough job opportunities for the growing numbers of educated youth. With most middle-class jobs after 1952 emerging in government services and public sector enterprises, local linguistic groups began using democratic means and public pressure to demand preferential access to these opportunities. Some groups used the “sons of the soil” sentiment for political gain.

In rural areas, “outsiders” have often been more numerous, working as agricultural labourers or in low-paid traditional industries like jute or cotton textiles, compared to cities. However, “sons of the soil” sentiments have been largely absent in these contexts, as these jobs did not involve middle-class competition. However, with the rise of technologically advanced industries offering higher salaries and requiring education and skills, competition between migrants and locals began to emerge.

According to Bipan Chandra, a region's migration history has played a key role in determining the presence or absence of anti-migrant movements. States with a tradition of middle-class migration, such as West Bengal, Kerala, Punjab, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh, have shown minimal resistance to immigration. Contrariwise, areas lacking this tradition, like Maharashtra, Assam, and Telangana (in the former state of Andhra Pradesh), have witnessed prominent “sons of the soil” movements.



Recap

- ◆ Regionalism is not simply pride in one's region; it can include demands for autonomy or social justice.
- ◆ The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) emerged from Periyar's Dravidian movement, reshaping Tamil identity and politics.
- ◆ Post-independence economic disparities contributed to regional grievances.
- ◆ Policies such as the Industrial Policy Resolution and the National Integration Council (1961) sought to reduce regional imbalances.
- ◆ The Sons of the Soil Doctrine argued that specific states belong to their linguistic population, framing migrants as "outsiders".
- ◆ States like West Bengal and Kerala showed limited anti-migrant sentiment.
- ◆ In contrast, states such as Maharashtra and Assam witnessed strong sons-of-the-soil movements.

Objective Questions

1. Who founded the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)?
2. What was the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's (DMK) goal?
3. What policy emphasised coordinated development of industrial and agricultural sectors?
4. Name two states where the "sons of the soil" movements were most prominent.
5. In which year was the National Integration Council established?
6. Name the policy that aimed to ensure balanced industrial and agricultural growth in post-independence India.
7. Which commission was appointed in 1953 to examine the reorganisation of states in India?
8. Which article of the Indian Constitution grants special provisions to certain states to protect their cultural and economic interests?
9. Which major political party in Tamil Nadu emerged as a result of the Dravida movement?

Answers

1. E.V. Ramaswami Naicker
2. Creation of Dravida Naḍu
3. Industrial Policy Resolution
4. Maharashtra and Assam
5. 1961
6. Industrial Policy Resolution
7. States Reorganisation Commission
8. Article 371
9. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)

Assignments

1. Examine the impact of the Dravidian movement on regional identity and political developments in Tamil Nadu.
2. Explain the aims of the Industrial Policy Resolution and the National Integration Council (1961) in addressing regional disparities.
3. Describe the concept of the “sons of the soil” doctrine and discuss how it contributed to regional tensions.
4. Discuss how economic inequalities among Indian states intensified regionalism after independence.
5. Analyse the factors that strengthened sons-of-the-soil movements in Maharashtra and Assam.

Suggested Reading

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2. Guha, Ramachandra., *India After Gandhi: The History of World's Largest Democracy*, Picador publishers, India, 2017.



UNIT

Kashmir- Punjab -North East

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the political history and constitutional issues that shaped conflicts in Kashmir, Punjab, and the north-eastern states
- ◆ analyse the political complexities linked to regionalism, autonomy movements, and identity-based struggles
- ◆ evaluate the role of communal politics and its influence on separatist and ethnic movements in post-independence India
- ◆ examine the roots, demands, and trajectories of major ethnic, insurgent, and separatist movements

Prerequisites

To understand the conflicts in Kashmir, Punjab, and the North-East, it is essential to revisit the historical context of independence and Partition. These events left unresolved political, cultural, and territorial issues that shaped regional aspirations and tensions. Kashmir became a focal point of dispute between India and Pakistan, while linguistic and religious identities contributed to movements for autonomy and statehood in Punjab and the North-East. The Government of India attempted to preserve national unity by recognising cultural diversity, extending constitutional safeguards, and intervening when violence escalated. This unit provides an overview of regional histories and ethnic struggles to help learners understand why these regions became centres of political conflict.

Keywords

Instrument of Accession, Sheikh Abdullah, Secessionist Movements, Farooq Abdullah, Operation Blue Star, Akali Dal, Assam Accord, ULFA

Discussion

5.3.1 Kashmir

After India attained independence in 1947, the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir emerged as one of the most strategically significant regions in the process of national integration. Its geographical location and cultural diversity contributed to a complex political landscape, particularly during the transitional phase following Partition. The ruler of the region faced growing uncertainty and pressure regarding the decision to align with either of the newly formed neighbouring nations.

Initially, the leadership of the state explored the possibility of remaining independent. However, following external incursions and rising instability in the region, the leadership formally sought assistance from the Government of India. This request resulted in the signing of the Instrument of Accession in October 1947, thereby integrating the region into the Indian Union.

Since then, the region has remained central to the diplomatic relationship between the two neighbouring countries. It has also posed internal challenges for the Indian state, particularly in terms of balancing national integration with regional aspirations. Scholars have noted that the issue came to symbolise deeper questions related to constitutional values and national identity. As historian Bipan Chandra observed, had the region aligned with the other neighbouring country in 1947, the Indian government might have accepted the decision. However, following

the external incursions and with support from local leadership, the state chose to accede to India. The subsequent contestation over this decision transformed the matter into a broader national and international concern.

In an effort to address the situation democratically, the Indian government proposed a plebiscite to ascertain the will of the people, on the condition that external forces vacate the territory. However, as the withdrawal of these forces did not take place, the proposed plebiscite could not be conducted. During the early years of the Cold War, the geopolitical dynamics surrounding this issue intensified, particularly as international alliances began to form in the region. Bipan Chandra noted that the emergence of global strategic alignments during the early 1950s further complicated the matter.

By the end of 1956, the Indian government made it clear to Pakistan and the international community that the situation in Kashmir and Indo-Pak relations had changed, and Kashmir's accession to India had become a settled matter. Since then, for India, Kashmir has been considered an irrevocable part of the country.

5.3.1.1 Status of Jammu and Kashmir Post-independence

Following the signing of the Instrument of Accession in October 1947, Jammu and Kashmir was granted a special temporary status within the Indian Union under the provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution.

This arrangement permitted the region to retain autonomy over internal matters, while subjects such as defence, foreign affairs, and communications were administered by the central government. The region was also allowed to convene its own Constituent Assembly, draft a separate constitution, and establish distinct constitutional positions, including a regional head of state and council head with titles differing from those in other Indian states. At this stage, certain central institutions and provisions, such as the Fundamental Rights, Supreme Court jurisdiction, and Election Commission authority, did not initially extend to the region.

In 1956, the Constituent Assembly of the region officially reaffirmed the decision to join the Indian Union. Over subsequent years, changes in administrative and constitutional arrangements led to the gradual extension of central laws and institutions to the region. This included the application of provisions related to Fundamental Rights, the jurisdiction of national constitutional bodies, and the alignment of state services with national frameworks. Additionally, constitutional titles were brought into alignment with the rest of the country, reflecting broader administrative integration.

These developments, however, were not uniformly received. In some areas, there was resistance to the perceived dilution of autonomy, while in other regions, movements emerged calling for complete integration with the national framework. Some segments advocated for enhanced representation, access to employment opportunities, and administrative restructuring. Over time, the differing aspirations within the region led to political agitation and calls for reconfiguration, which sometimes gave rise to social tensions.

5.3.1.2 Sheikh Abdullah

Sheikh Abdullah was a pivotal figure in shaping the political trajectory of the Jammu and Kashmir region in the decades following India's independence. According to historian Bipan Chandra, the period was marked by contrasting aspirations within the region—some advocating for closer integration with the Indian Union and others expressing differing views on autonomy. Within this context, Sheikh Abdullah's political stance evolved. Initially, he began to express concerns regarding the nature of the state's relationship with the Union and advocated for greater internal autonomy.

Historian Ramachandra Guha offers a nuanced perspective, suggesting that Sheikh Abdullah maintained a strong commitment to the region's association with India. In May 1948, he organised a public celebration in Srinagar to commemorate the idea of unity with India. The event featured cultural performances and tributes to those who had contributed to the region's defence and stability. During this period, Sheikh Abdullah made public statements distancing himself from alternative political alignments and expressed confidence in India's constitutional framework to support progressive and reform-oriented governance.

However, by mid-1953, differences emerged between Sheikh Abdullah and the central leadership. His public remarks on the region's political future led to internal dissent within his party and administration. Subsequently, he was removed from office on charges of administrative impropriety and replaced by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed as the head of the state government. Abdullah was taken into custody, although he continued to hold significant popular support within the region.

In 1958, efforts by Prime Minister Nehru resulted in Abdullah's release, but he resumed political activities that reignited controversy,



leading to his re-arrest. His release again in 1964 did not alter his viewpoint, and by 1965, he was placed under house arrest until 1968.

Following geopolitical developments in the early 1970s, including shifts in the subcontinent's regional landscape, Abdullah adopted a more reconciliatory approach. Initiatives were taken by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to re-engage with him, resulting in renewed dialogue. Sheikh Abdullah agreed to focus on negotiating enhanced regional autonomy rather than raising issues of plebiscite or political disengagement.

In February 1975, as part of a political accord, Sheikh Abdullah returned to public office as Chief Minister. He led his party, the National Conference, to a decisive victory in the 1977 state elections and continued in this role until his death in 1982. Thereafter, his son, Farooq Abdullah, assumed leadership.

5.3.1.3 Farooq Abdullah

Since 1982, Farooq Abdullah has played a central role in the governance of Jammu and Kashmir, leading the state for multiple terms, except during periods when the region was under direct central administration. In the 1983 mid-term elections, he secured a significant victory. However, tensions with the central government soon escalated. In 1984, Farooq Abdullah was replaced by G.M. Shah, following a political realignment. Shah's administration, however, faced criticism over governance issues and its inability to control rising unrest, leading to its dismissal in 1986 and the subsequent imposition of central rule.

In 1987, a political alliance between the ruling party at the Centre and Farooq Abdullah led to a renewed electoral victory for him. Nonetheless, dissatisfaction with administrative performance and growing unrest in the region gave rise to calls for greater political autonomy. During this period, various organised groups, both from

within the region and supported externally, engaged in activities targeting administrative institutions and public infrastructure. These developments led to significant instability, including internal displacement and a deterioration of law and order.

In response, the government at the Centre once again assumed direct control of the region. Farooq Abdullah returned to electoral politics in 1996 and formed the government, though he was later succeeded by a coalition administration led by the People's Democratic Party in alliance with the national-level party in 2002.

Over the decades, Jammu and Kashmir has experienced recurring phases of political instability, marked by frequent changes in leadership, direct governance by the central authority, and ongoing efforts to address the region's administrative and developmental challenges.

5.3.2 Punjab

During the 1980s, Punjab witnessed a phase of intense political unrest that escalated into a prolonged period of violence and instability. Historians such as Bipan Chandra have described this as a serious national challenge, characterising it as a "low-intensity conflict" that posed significant concerns for the democratic and federal fabric of India. He referred to the situation as the "Punjab Crisis," which, in his view, evolved from identity-based political movements into a broader demand for greater regional autonomy.

The roots of the issue can be traced to the socio-political developments that unfolded in Punjab during the 20th century, particularly in the years following India's independence in 1947. Political discourse in the state increasingly focused on questions of cultural recognition, linguistic rights, and regional self-determination. Before the creation of the Punjabi-speaking state

in 1966, the Shiromani Akali Dal emerged as a leading political party advocating for these causes. Many leaders within the party emphasised the close connection between cultural identity and political expression, and the party came to be seen as articulating the collective aspirations of a significant section of Punjab's population.

Leaders and supporters of the Akali Dal expressed concerns regarding the preservation of cultural and linguistic heritage, as well as fair representation in administrative and public institutions. These concerns included perceptions of under-representation and fears of cultural dilution. However, a government-appointed commission in 1961 under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru found that specific claims of systemic discrimination in public services lacked substantial evidence. Political scientist Baldev Raj Nayar noted that, despite forming a relatively small percentage of India's total population, the community had a notable presence in key national institutions, including the armed forces and civil services. Within Punjab, their representation in legislative bodies, administrative services, and the state cabinet was also significant.

A distinct feature of the political mobilisation during this period was the use of religious institutions and symbols. The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), a statutory body responsible for managing major religious sites in the state, played a role in supporting the broader movement. Religious and cultural spaces became venues for political communication and mobilisation, reflecting the historical interweaving of identity and politics in the region.

The political landscape of Punjab at the time was also marked by internal disagreements and factionalism within leadership circles. Competing groups within the broader movement vied for influence

over key institutions, including prominent religious sites such as the Golden Temple. These internal dynamics added layers of complexity to an already sensitive and evolving political situation.

5.3.2.1 Post-1947 Scenario

Two key issues, originally framed around administrative and cultural concerns, significantly shaped the political discourse in Punjab until 1966. The first was the debate over the official state language and its use in administration and education. While a section of the population supported Hindi, others advocated for Punjabi to be recognised and promoted, especially in the Gurmukhi script. To address these differing views, the government proposed a division of the state into two linguistic zones, one for Punjabi and one for Hindi. However, differences arose over making Punjabi compulsory in educational institutions and official communication within the Punjabi-speaking areas. Another point of contention was the script used for Punjabi. While Punjabi had historically been written in multiple scripts, including Urdu, Gurmukhi, and Devanagari, discussions emerged over whether to standardise the official script. Supporters of Gurmukhi preferred its exclusive use, whereas others suggested a bilingual script policy.

The second major issue was the demand for a Punjabi Suba, or a separate Punjabi-speaking state. In 1956, an agreement between the Akali Dal and the central government led to the merger of Punjab with the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU). Subsequently, under the leadership of Master Tara Singh, the Akali Dal initiated a movement advocating the reorganisation of Punjab along linguistic lines. While proponents of the demand argued it was a matter of cultural and linguistic recognition, some political groups opposed it, expressing concerns about potential regional imbalances in governance and representation.



Within the larger debate, there were differing perspectives even among various social groups. Some sections of the agricultural labour community, particularly the Mazhabi Sikhs, expressed reservations about the proposed state, fearing socio-economic marginalisation under dominant landed groups.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru initially declined the demand for a Punjabi Suba, viewing it as potentially divisive in the broader context of national integration. However, the movement gained renewed momentum when Sant Fateh Singh, who succeeded Master Tara Singh as a prominent leader, clarified that the demand was centred on linguistic and administrative reorganisation rather than religious identity. Around the same time, there were parallel demands from neighbouring regions, such as Haryana and Kangra, for separate administrative recognition based on linguistic and cultural identity. Responding to these developments, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced in March 1966 the formation of a Punjabi-speaking state of Punjab and a Hindi-speaking state of Haryana, with Kangra district becoming part of Himachal Pradesh.

Following the reorganisation, the status of Chandigarh remained unresolved. In 1973, the Working Committee of the Akali Dal passed the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, requesting that Chandigarh be transferred to Punjab. To address this, the central government appointed a boundary commission, which recommended that Chandigarh and some adjoining areas be allocated to Haryana. As a compromise, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi designated Chandigarh as a Union Territory to serve as the shared capital of both Punjab and Haryana. Further negotiations led to an announcement in 1970 proposing the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab, with two adjoining areas—Fazilka and Abohar—being reassigned to Haryana. However, due to

differing responses from the stakeholders, the arrangement was not fully implemented.

5.3.2.2 Indira Gandhi and Operation Blue Star

Indira Gandhi's approach to managing the escalating unrest in Punjab during the early 1980s has been the subject of differing historical assessments. While some scholars viewed her stance as cautious and conciliatory, others criticised it for lacking decisive measures in addressing growing tensions. Her efforts included engaging in dialogue with regional political leaders and attempting to negotiate a peaceful resolution. However, the situation continued to deteriorate due to a combination of political instability and acts of violence.

A significant turning point occurred in 1983 with the killing of A.S. Atwal, a senior police official, within the precincts of the Golden Temple complex. The incident generated widespread concern and public unrest. By 1984, the security environment had further worsened, with heightened activity by armed groups. Reports indicated that some political organisations were in dialogue with influential figures in the movement at the time, including Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

In response to the increasing intensity of the crisis, the central government initiated a military operation, Operation Blue Star, launched on 3 June 1984. The aim of the operation was to remove armed individuals from the Golden Temple complex, which had become a centre of activity. On June 5, the army entered the premises. Tragically, the operation resulted in significant loss of life, including that of religious staff and civilians caught in the crossfire. Parts of the temple complex, including the Akal Takht, sustained severe damage, despite efforts to minimise harm to the religious structures. Bhindranwale and several of his associates were killed in the course of the operation.

The aftermath of the operation led to deep anguish among many members of the Sikh community, both in India and abroad. For many, the events were perceived as deeply distressing, given the spiritual and historical significance of the Golden Temple. While the operation curtailed certain militant activities, it also intensified public sentiment and led to widespread discussions on governance and national integration.

Subsequently, on 31 October 1984, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two members of her personal security detail. This incident led to a tragic chain of events, including violent reprisals in several parts of the country. In Delhi alone, large-scale violence ensued, resulting in the loss of more than 2,500 lives, with members of the Sikh community being the primary victims.

Following these developments, the newly appointed Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, initiated measures aimed at restoring normalcy and political stability in Punjab. His efforts included the release of detained political leaders and the negotiation of the Punjab Accord, which sought to address several regional concerns including administrative boundaries and inter-state resource sharing.

Despite these efforts, peace remained elusive, and by 1987, President's Rule was imposed in the state. In the years that followed, the central government adopted a more security-focused approach to address the continuing unrest. One such operation, Operation Black Thunder in 1988, was conducted to remove armed elements from the Golden Temple complex with minimal force and greater coordination, and it was considered more restrained in comparison to earlier efforts.

5.3.3 North-East India

The reorganisation of the state in the northeastern region was challenging and often violent, unlike other parts of India.

The primary demand was the separatist demand from non-Hindu tribal groups. The reorganisation of Assam and the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) happened in stages. This led to the creation of four tribal-majority states: Nagaland (1963), Meghalaya (1972 for Garo, Khasi, and Jaintia tribes), Arunachal Pradesh (1972), and Mizoram (1987).

5.3.3.1 Naga-Mizo movements

The political movement in the Naga Hills began around the time of India's independence, when Angami Zapu Phizo, a prominent leader from the region, advocated for a separate political path. This stance was linked to differing interpretations of earlier understandings between the Naga National Council (NNC) and the Assam government. The NNC, having played a significant role in the region's political life, sought recognition as a primary administrative authority. As tensions escalated, the situation took a confrontational turn, prompting the central government to initiate both administrative responses and engagement with regional leaders. Efforts to find a constitutional solution led to the creation of Nagaland as a full-fledged state in 1963. Nonetheless, periodic unrest and armed activity continued in some parts of the region into the late 1970s.

In Mizoram, a separate movement emerged in 1959, triggered by widespread dissatisfaction over the response to a famine that affected large parts of the area. This led to the formation of the Mizo National Front (MNF) under the leadership of Laldenga. In 1966, the MNF declared a demand for independent status, which prompted a serious security response from the central government. To address the situation and recognise regional aspirations, Mizoram was made a Union Territory, providing it with increased administrative autonomy. However, political instability and episodes of violence persisted in the following years.



Following the 1972 elections, a government was formed in Mizoram under the Congress Party, but it encountered political opposition from the People's Conference, led by T. Sailo. Recognising the need for a long-term resolution, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi initiated dialogue with MNF leader Laldenga. In 1982, he was invited to New Delhi for negotiations, a move that opened the door for further engagement. Political dynamics shifted in 1984, when the Congress secured victory in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly elections, partly supported by renewed efforts at reconciliation.

The breakthrough came in 1986, when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Laldenga signed the Mizoram Accord, a historic agreement that led to the granting of full statehood to Mizoram. As part of the political arrangement, Laldenga assumed the role of Chief Minister, marking a transition to a more inclusive and democratic political framework in the region.

5.3.3.2 The Assam movement

Another, more serious, movement for self-government was taking shape in Assam. They faced turmoil due to fears of losing their Assamese identity. Assam shares its borders with West Bengal, several northeastern states, and the countries of Bangladesh and Bhutan. Assamese is the state language, though Bengali is also widely spoken. The unrest can be explained in two ways. Firstly, the Assamese believed the underdevelopment in the state was due to neglect and unfair treatment by the central government, which was accused of depriving Assam of its rightful share of revenues from industries like crude oil, tea, and plywood. Secondly, relations between speakers of Assamese and Bengali have been marked by significant aggression. The Bengalis exercised significant control over the indigenous Assamese population during the colonial era. This fear of losing the Assami identity sparked riots in the 1950s

and 1960s aimed at expelling the immigrants.

In response to the initial struggle, a movement emerged in the 1950s demanding job preference for Assamese speakers, making Assamese the sole official language and the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. Bengalis, especially in the Cachar district, opposed this, supporting the continuation of Assamese and Bengali as official languages practised since 1871. This movement eventually led to a language riot in July 1960. Bengalis were attacked in both urban and rural areas, and their homes were looted and burned.

That same year, the Assam state assembly passed a law, making Assamese the sole official language, despite opposition from Bengali speakers and tribal groups. Bengali thus remained as an additional official language in Cachar. In 1972, Assamese also became the sole medium of instruction in colleges under Guwahati University. Eventually, the effort to establish Assamese as the dominant language obstructed the creation of a more inclusive Assamese identity. It isolated tribal communities and fuelled demands from several hill tribes for separation from Assam.

In 1979, significant migration from other parts of East Bengal became the major grievance of the state, culminating in the anti-foreigner movement. Assamese peasants and tribal communities feared losing their land and felt culturally, linguistically, and politically threatened. These issues led to the anti-immigration movement of the 1980s. The Assam movement aimed to secure a new economic policy ensuring that the resources of the state would benefit its residents, creating local income and employment. However, its immediate focus was the removal of immigrants from the voter's list.

The All-Assam Students Union (AASU) and Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (Assam People's Struggle Council) led the anti-illegal

migration movement. The leaders of the movement estimated that illegal immigrants made up 31–34% of Assam's population. They demanded the central government to seal Assam's border to stop further migration and remove illegal immigrants from the voter's list, postpone elections until this was accomplished, and deport all migrants who had arrived after 1961. The massive support for the movement troubled the electoral process, stopping elections in 14 of 16 parliamentary constituencies.

Between 1979 and 1985, Assam experienced significant political uncertainty, including the collapse of state governments, the imposition of President's Rule, violent protests, frequent strikes, civil disobedience campaigns, and widespread ethnic violence. For several years, there were numerous rounds of talks between the leaders of the movement and the central government, but no agreement was achieved.

The effort of the central government to conduct a constitutional election for the state assembly in 1983 resulted in a total boycott, widespread disorder, and severe violence rooted in tribal, linguistic, and communal tensions. It is estimated that nearly 3,000 people were killed in the violence. However, the election was unsuccessful, with fewer than 2% of eligible voters in Assamese-majority constituencies casting their votes. Although the Congress party formed the government, it had no genuine legitimacy.

The violence of 1983 prompted fresh negotiations. Ultimately, the Rajiv Gandhi government agreed with the leaders on August 15, 1985. Under the Accord, foreigners who entered Assam between 1951 and 1961 would be granted full citizenship, including voting rights. Those who arrived after 1971 would be deported, and those who came between 1961 and 1971 would retain other citizenship rights but lose voting privileges for ten years. The agreement also focussed on economic development, including establishing a second oil refinery, a paper mill, and an institute of technology. Additionally, the central government guaranteed legislative and administrative measures to protect the Assamese people's cultural, social, and linguistic identity.

Following the agreement, the process of revising the electoral rolls was initiated. The existing assembly was dissolved, and new elections were held in December 1985. A new political party, the Assam Gana Parishad (AGP), formed by leaders of the anti-foreigner movement, won 64 out of the 126 assembly seats. Prafulla Mahanta, an AASU leader, became the youngest Chief Minister of independent India at 32. This marked the end of intense political turmoil in Assam. However, later, the Bodo tribes demanded a separate state, and the secessionist United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) rose.

Recap

- ◆ Kashmir- In October 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession, bringing Jammu & Kashmir into the Indian Union.
- ◆ Sheikh Abdullah became central to Kashmir's politics and rejected the idea of joining Pakistan.

- ◆ The 1971 Bangladesh War and the weakening of Pakistan influenced Kashmir's political climate.
- ◆ In 1975, Sheikh Abdullah returned as Chief Minister under the Indira - Sheikh Accord.
- ◆ Farooq Abdullah took office in 1982 but was dismissed in 1984 by G. M. Shah, deepening political instability.
- ◆ Punjab- During the 1980s, Punjab experienced rising separatism, militancy, and political violence.
- ◆ The Akali Dal mobilised support through organisations like the SGPC.
- ◆ Punjab was reorganised: Punjab (Punjabi-speaking) and Haryana (Hindi-speaking); Chandigarh became a Union Territory.
- ◆ Operation Blue Star (1984)- Indira Gandhi's military action inside the Golden Temple- intensified tensions.
- ◆ Rajiv Gandhi later attempted reconciliation through the Punjab Accord.
- ◆ North-East- The Naga National Council (NNC) spearheaded a long insurgency demanding secession.
- ◆ The Mizo National Front (MNF) declared independence in 1966 before peace was restored in 1986.
- ◆ Assam witnessed protests over migration and cultural identity, culminating in the Assam Accord, which provided citizenship to migrants who entered before 1961.
- ◆ The Bodo movement demanded a separate state, while ULFA pushed for secession through armed struggle.

Objective Questions

1. Which constitutional article granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir?
2. Who signed the Instrument of Accession for Jammu and Kashmir in 1947?
3. Who was appointed as Chief Minister after Sheikh Abdullah's dismissal in 1953?

4. In which year did the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir confirm accession to India?
5. Which political leader succeeded Sheikh Abdullah as Chief Minister in 1975?
6. What was the name of the 1984 military operation at the Golden Temple?
7. Who led the separatist movement in Punjab demanding a Sikh homeland?
8. What was the name of the resolution passed by the Akali Dal in 1973?
9. Who signed the Mizoram Accord with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi?
10. What was the key demand of the Assam Movement?
11. What agreement ended the Assam Movement in 1985?
12. Who became India's youngest Chief Minister following the Assam Accord?

Answers

1. Article 370
2. Maharaja Hari Singh
3. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed
4. 1956
5. Sheikh Abdullah
6. Operation Blue Star
7. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale
8. Anandpur Sahib Resolution
9. Laldenga
10. Detection and deportation of illegal immigrants
11. The Assam Accord
12. Prafulla Mahanta

Assignments

1. Analyse the impact of Article 370 on Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional relationship with the Indian Union.
2. Evaluate the socio-political and economic factors behind the rise of the separatist movement in Punjab.
3. Assess the significance of the Assam Accord in addressing the issues of migration and regional identity.
4. Examine the political role of the Akali Dal and how it shaped Punjab's regional and religious politics.
5. Discuss the common features and differences among separatist movements in Kashmir, Punjab, and the North-East.

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SGOU



UNIT

Resurgence of Communal Ideology

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the historical context behind the communal mobilisation
- ◆ analyse the legal, political, and constitutional processes that shaped the communal dispute over time
- ◆ examine the social and communal consequences arising from the conflict and its mobilisation

Prerequisites

India's democratic framework accommodates immense social, cultural, and religious diversity. While this pluralism enriches the nation, it also produces tensions when religious identities become politicised. Communal ideology in India has deep historical roots, shaped by colonial policies, socio-religious reform movements, and the politics of identity in the post-independence period. While the Indian Constitution envisioned a secular nation that respected all faiths, tensions between religious communities occasionally surfaced in public life. Over time, ideological narratives such as Hindutva gained momentum, positioning Hindu identity at the centre of national belonging. This shift became particularly significant in the late 20th century, when political mobilisation around religion intensified, leading to major turning points like the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, and later communal conflicts across the country. The dispute not only intensified Hindu-Muslim polarisation but also reshaped electoral politics, public discourse, and the strategies of political parties. This unit examines the historical origins, legal developments, political mobilisation, and social consequences of the Ayodhya dispute. Understanding these processes is crucial for analysing how communal ideologies evolve and how conflicts rooted in religion impact democratic institutions and social harmony.

Keywords

Babri Masjid, Ram Janmabhoomi, Ayodhya Agitation, Communalism, Hindutva, Demolition, Secularism, Communal Violence

Discussion

5.4.1 Historiographical Perspectives

The Ayodhya dispute and the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992 stand as one of the most debated episodes in modern Indian history. Many historians critically analysed the ideological, political, and historical narratives surrounding it. It led to an extensive academic debate focusing on questions of historical evidence, archaeology, memory, and communal mobilisation.

K. N. Panikkar offers a crucial historiographical perspective on the Babri Masjid demolition, arguing that it was a watershed in the history of contemporary India which marked a break from the historical tradition of inter-community accommodation and coexistence. He situated the demolition within a long historical trajectory, stating that it was “the culmination of a long process of Hinduisation” originating from nineteenth-century revivalist–reformist movements. For Panikkar, the act was not an isolated event but an organised political project tied to the construction of a Hindu nation. He argues that Hindutva politics attempted to rewrite the past by merging Hindu identity with Indian identity through a Hindu-centric lens and selectively appropriating the past to legitimise the Ram temple demand. According to him, the movement depended on constructing Muslims as the “other”, using history as a tool to cultivate hostility through narratives that portrayed the medieval period as a dark age and emphasised ‘Hindu victimhood’. Panikkar also contends that the state played a facilitative role, with government policies

emboldened the communal forces to attempt the demolition. He emphasises that the event strengthened a new form of nationalism that was “not only Hindu-centric but quite openly anti-minorities,” compelling minorities to prove their patriotism and loyalty in public life. Panikkar asserts that the dispute must be detached from religiosity and handing the land to secular authority, i.e., the state, to prevent further communal strife. While Panikkar highlights the ideological conditioning that enabled the demolition, Irfan Habib moves the discussion toward the question of evidence, evaluating the claims surrounding a pre-existing temple at the site.

Irfan Habib critically challenges the popular argument that the Babri Masjid replaced a Ram temple, asserting that “there’s no acceptable proof that the Babri Masjid had been built at the site of a Hindu temple”. He asserts that no contemporary Persian inscriptions from the original construction period (1528-29) mention temple destruction. He emphasises that the earliest claims linking the mosque to a demolished shrine surfaced more than two centuries after its construction, a fact corroborated by an 1811 British account which considered such claims “very ill-founded.” Habib also raises concerns about the methodological neutrality of archaeological investigations, and argues that artefacts from different eras may be selectively interpreted to suit temple narratives. He emphasises that findings ranging from the 7th to 16th centuries cannot logically represent remains of a single temple, and that sculptures publicised during levelling in 1992 were not reported to



ASI, suggesting their origin may lie outside the site itself. Habib further critiques B.B. Lal's "pillar-base" theory was speculative and notes that it was later challenged by archaeologist D. Mandal. He recalls that the Indian History Congress 1993 opposed using presumed prior religious structures as justification for altering monuments, warning that legitimising such logic would jeopardise heritage sites nationwide. For Habib, the central danger lies in archaeology being mobilised to legitimise communal claims, making the fight for evidence-based history a long and ongoing struggle.

Romila Thapar extends the debate to the judicial and epistemological plane. Thapar critiques the Ayodhya verdict for relying primarily on faith and belief rather than verifiable historical evidence. She argues that the court's acceptance of the site as the birthplace of Ram lacks empirical foundation, and such reasoning sets a potentially dangerous precedent, allowing belief to override historical method. She is critical of the selective use of archaeological findings, pointing out that the ASI report was contested, and yet one interpretation was privileged despite disagreement from other archaeologists and historians. She notes that the destruction of the mosque, which was a 500-year-old monument, received little condemnation, despite its significance to India's cultural heritage. She warns that accepting divine-birth claims as legal justification could open doors to similar disputes elsewhere.

In the work *Babri-Masjid Ramjanambhoomi Controversy*, Asghar Ali Engineer argues that the dispute surrounding the Babri Masjid is primarily a politically driven issue rather than an ancient religious conflict. He maintains that the controversy gained prominence in the twentieth century as political groups mobilised religious sentiments for electoral advantage, allowing faith to overshadow historical reasoning.

Engineer emphasises that claims about Ram's exact birthplace rest largely on belief, with historical and archaeological evidence remaining inconclusive. He stresses the need for dialogue and reconciliation, asserting that communal harmony and human life hold greater value than contestation over religious sites.

5.4.2 Early Evolution of Hindutva Politics

After India gained independence in 1947, the newly formed nation faced the critical task of managing cultural and religious diversity while upholding secular and democratic values. In this context, Hindutva, also called Hindu nationalism, began to gain attention. The term *Hindutva* was strongly promoted by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in his famous 1923 work *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*. Savarkar argued that India should be seen primarily as a Hindu nation, stressing the cultural unity of Hindus. His idea tended to keep Muslims, Christians, and other religious groups outside the idea of national identity, which later became a matter of debate.

Even though Hindutva appeared during the pre-independence period, it became politically more visible after 1947 with organisations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). In the initial decades, the RSS did not hold a strong place in politics, but slowly began to expand its influence, especially after the 1960s. It presented itself as an alternative to the secular policies of the Indian National Congress, accusing Congress of favouring minorities and ignoring Hindu interests. Later, other affiliated groups such as the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal mobilised Hindus on cultural-religious lines, often arguing that secular policies privileged minorities over the majority population.

A major shift occurred in the 1980s with the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP),

which emerged from the Janata Party but carried strong ideological links with the RSS. Leaders like L. K. Advani helped the party grow by using religious and caste-based identity politics to popularise Hindutva in mainstream political discourse. During this time, the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi dispute at Ayodhya became a major national issue. The BJP, along with the RSS and VHP, led mass campaigns demanding the construction of a Ram temple at the site where the Babri Masjid stood. This movement aimed at bringing Hindus together emotionally and politically.

These developments eventually led to the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, resulting in widespread communal violence across the country. The event became a turning point in modern Indian politics, marking the resurgence of communal ideology and identity-based mobilisation in Indian society.

Historians argue that this period marks a shift from cultural nationalism toward identity-based mass mobilisation. K. N. Panikkar, for instance, sees the Ayodhya movement as a continuation of a longer Hindu revivalist narrative dating back to the 19th century reform movements. He suggests that the demolition of Babri Masjid was not an isolated event but rather “the culmination of an aggressive cultural mobilisation that sought to conflate Indian identity with Hindu identity”.

5.4.3 The Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi Dispute

The Ayodhya site became a highly contested religious and political symbol. While many Hindus believe the spot to be the birthplace of Lord Ram and claim that a temple once stood there, historians emphasise the need for evidence-based evaluation. Irfan Habib notes that no inscriptions from the mosque’s construction period (1528-29)

mention a demolished temple, and that the claim of temple destruction emerges only centuries later, gaining political traction during the colonial period. He further argues that archaeological findings such as pillar bases or sculptures have been interpreted differently by experts, cautioning that material evidence must be critically assessed rather than assumed.

The dispute has historical roots going back several centuries. According to a section of the Hindu community, a Hindu temple once stood at this spot, which they believe was demolished in the 16th century when the Mughal emperor Babur built the Babri Masjid there. While this view has not been universally accepted, it gradually gained strength among Hindu religious groups, especially from the 19th century onward.

During the British colonial period, both Hindu and Muslim groups claimed rights over the site, leading to occasional clashes. However, the issue took a major political turn only in the 1980s, when organisations like the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), along with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), began campaigning for a Ram temple at the disputed location. They portrayed the mosque as evidence of historical injustice against Hindus and argued that rebuilding a temple there would restore Hindu pride and correct the wrongs of the past.

5.4.4 Rise of Political Mobilisation

By the late 1980s, the movement gathered large-scale public support. A crucial moment was L. K. Advani’s rath yatra in 1990, a symbolic chariot-like journey across India. The yatra aimed to unite Hindus emotionally and politically around the demand for a Ram temple. It attracted massive crowds and brought the Ayodhya issue into national attention, especially in Uttar Pradesh, where Ayodhya is located.



The growth of the BJP during this period was closely linked to the increasing influence of Hindutva ideology, which emphasised India as a nation rooted in Hindu culture. The Babri Masjid issue was no longer treated only as a religious matter, it became a political symbol of Hindu identity and nationalism. For the BJP and other Hindu nationalist groups, building a Ram temple at Ayodhya became part of a larger effort to assert Hindu dominance in the cultural and political sphere.

However, this movement also led to strong opposition from Muslim organisations and secular political groups, who viewed the campaign as a threat to communal peace. The Congress Party, which had ruled India for most years after independence, tried to manage the situation cautiously but was unable to prevent the growing polarisation. As support for the temple movement rose, the dispute increasingly turned into a Hindu-Muslim conflict, shaping national politics and deepening communal divisions.

K. N. Panikkar argues that this mobilisation worked by reframing medieval history as an era of Hindu humiliation under Muslim rule, thereby justifying the demolition as an act of historical correction. He further states that the symbolic acts preceding demolition, Ram Shila Puja, karsevak mobilisation, rath yatras, reveal long-term planning and ideological preparation rather than spontaneous action.

Another incident that escalated communal identity politics during the same decade was the Shah Bano case. In 1985, Shah Bano, a 62-year-old Muslim woman, approached the Supreme Court seeking maintenance after being divorced through triple talaq. The Court granted her alimony under Section 125 CrPC, calling it a matter of justice and equality. While many saw this as a progressive step for Muslim women's rights, conservative Muslim leaders opposed it, claiming it interfered with Muslim personal law. Under pressure, the Rajiv Gandhi

government passed the Muslim Women's Act (1986), limiting maintenance to the iddat period. The move sparked criticism from secular groups and women's rights activists and was widely viewed as appeasement of conservative Muslim bodies. This controversy strengthened Hindu nationalist politics and further deepened communal polarization becoming a key turning point in identity politics and communal mobilisation.

Asghar Ali Engineer interprets the Shah Bano episode as a critical moment that fuelled communal tensions and directly contributed to the rise of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. He argues that Hindu resentment following the 1986 Act "greatly strengthened Hindu communal forces," providing ideological ground for temple mobilisation. Engineer further states that to counter accusations of pro-Muslim appeasement, the government tilted towards Hindu sentiment, reflected in the decision to unlock the Babri Masjid gates in 1986, which he links to the political atmosphere emerging after the Shah Bano controversy. For him, the Babri Masjid dispute gained major traction from the 1980s onward, when religion increasingly became a tool in electoral politics used by both Hindu and secular political parties.

5.4.5 The Demolition of the Babri Masjid

In 1986, a turning point came when a court ordered the Babri Masjid gates to be opened, allowing Hindus to perform worship inside. Many interpreted this move as the Congress government trying to balance the criticism it received after the Shah Bano reversal by 'appeasing Hindu sentiments'. This reopening gave new strength to the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, led by the BJP, RSS, and VHP. BJP leader L. K. Advani played a central role when he began his Rath Yatra in 1990, travelling across India to mobilise people for building a Ram temple in Ayodhya. The campaign created massive

enthusiasm among many Hindus but also heightened communal polarisation. The late 1980s saw a rise in Hindu-Muslim riots, particularly in cities like Meerut, Bhagalpur, and Ahmedabad. During this period, the BJP's political influence grew rapidly, increasing its seats in the Lok Sabha from 2 in 1984 to 85 in 1989, marking its arrival as a national political force.

The conflict reached its peak on 6 December 1992, when thousands of karsevaks from the VHP, BJP, and RSS gathered in Ayodhya. The mob stormed the site and demolished the Babri Masjid. The event was broadcast across the country and was followed by violent communal riots, leading to thousands of deaths, mostly Muslims, and widespread fear and destruction. For many Hindus who supported the movement, the demolition symbolised the restoration of Ram's birthplace. However, for Muslims, it was a traumatic experience, seen as an attack on their religious identity and safety. The incident deeply damaged India's secular image and intensified communal divisions. For K.N. Panikkar, the event marked the shift from cultural nationalism to assertive majoritarian identity politics.

After 1992, the BJP rose sharply in national politics, using the Ram temple movement and Hindutva ideology as its central agenda. The party transformed from a small opposition presence into a major political force, riding on the support generated through the Ayodhya campaign.

The demolition of the Babri Masjid led to a long legal struggle over the ownership of the disputed land. Criminal cases were also filed against several BJP leaders and activists, including L. K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, and Uma Bharti. However, these cases moved slowly due to political pressure and the sensitive nature of the issue. After nearly three decades of legal disputes, the Supreme Court delivered a judgement

in 2019. Rejecting the earlier High Court proposal to divide the land among three parties, the court ruled in favour of allocating the entire disputed site to a trust that would oversee the construction of a temple.

The Supreme Court, after examining documentary evidence, oral testimonies, and the ASI report, observed that the site has religious significance for both Hindus and Muslims, and noted that Hindus had "worship at the Ram Chabutra and Sita Rasoi in the outer courtyard". The Court recorded that an underlying structure "not of Islamic origin" existed beneath the mosque according to ASI findings, though it clarified that archaeology "does not prove that the structure was demolished for the purpose of constructing the mosque." At the same time, the Court stated that the placing of idols in December 1949 was an "act of desecration" and the demolition of the mosque in 1992 was "a serious violation of the rule of law." However, as part of the resolution, the court ordered that a separate five-acre plot of land be allotted to the Sunni Central Waqf Board for the purpose of constructing a mosque. This judgement was welcomed by Hindu nationalist groups and marked the official beginning of the Ram temple construction. Yet, it also raised concerns about the future of India's secular values and the position of minorities, especially Muslims.

While many Hindus viewed the verdict as a final resolution to the long conflict, for many Muslims it remained a painful memory of the demolition and the violence that followed. Romila Thapar later argued that the Ayodhya judgement marked a shift where faith was prioritised over historical and archaeological validation, despite scholarly disagreement on interpretations of the ASI findings. She warns that accepting birthplace-claims as legal basis could lead to future disputes over other religious sites. Thapar emphasises that responsible history-writing must rely on verifiable sources rather than

retrospective belief, and that protecting historical monuments is essential for plural cultural heritage. Irfan Habib similarly cautions that archaeology around Ayodhya became vulnerable to political pressures, selective interpretation, and the desire to validate belief with material evidence.

5.4.6 Communal Riots

Two major communal riots in recent history, the Gujarat riots of 2002 and the Delhi riots of 2020, reflect how deeply Hindutva politics has shaped the nation's social and political environment. The Gujarat riots began after the burning of the Sabarmati Express at Godhra, where 59 Hindu pilgrims returning from Ayodhya died. This incident was followed by large-scale violence against Muslims across the state, resulting in the death of over 1,000 people, mostly Muslims. Human rights groups later reported that the violence appeared organized, and accused the state administration of failing to control the situation. This gave rise to serious criticism about state complicity and police inaction.

The Delhi riots of 2020 occurred during protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), a law criticised for excluding Muslims from citizenship benefits. Violence broke out soon after a provocative speech by a BJP leader, leading to attacks on Muslim neighbourhoods. About 50 people were killed, many of them Muslims, and mosques, homes, and shops were destroyed. Like Gujarat, there were complaints that the police acted slowly, and in some cases, were seen supporting the mobs.

5.4.7 Political Impact

Both riots changed the political landscape of India. In Gujarat, Narendra Modi's response to the violence, focusing on development instead of apologising, strengthened support for him among Hindu nationalist groups. This helped the BJP consolidate Hindu votes in the 2014 and 2019 national elections, contributing to Modi's rise to national leadership. The Delhi riots highlighted how communal tensions could be used during politically sensitive moments. The violence widened the Hindu-Muslim divide and reinforced long-term majoritarian politics in the country. The role of state institutions in both riots remains debated. In many cases, police action was weak, late, or biased. Though some people were later punished for Gujarat violence, several key accused were acquitted. In Delhi, many survivors still wait for justice, showing how impunity encourages future communal violence.

One of the most worrying outcomes of these riots has been the social divide. In Gujarat, many displaced Muslims could never return to their old neighbourhoods, leading to ghettoisation, reduced interaction with Hindus, and long-term segregation. In Delhi too, Muslim communities suffered heavy losses and continue to live with fear and insecurity. The growing acceptance of communal violence as a political tool threatens the idea of secular and inclusive democracy.

Recap

- ◆ The Ayodhya dispute originated in the mid-19th century due to conflicting religious claims over the Babri Masjid site, believed by many Hindus to be the birthplace of Lord Ram.

- ◆ Hindutva ideology, rooted in Savarkar's writings, gained momentum after independence and especially from the 1980s.
- ◆ Organisations like RSS, VHP, and later BJP played key roles in promoting cultural nationalism.
- ◆ The Ram Janmabhoomi issue became the centre of Hindu mobilisation and identity politics.
- ◆ The Shah Bano case intensified debates on secularism, minority rights, and state neutrality.
- ◆ The opening of Babri Masjid in 1986 strengthened the Ram Temple campaign.
- ◆ L.K. Advani's Rath Yatra transformed Ayodhya into a mass political movement.
- ◆ Babri Masjid was demolished on 6 December 1992, causing nationwide violence and trauma.
- ◆ Historians like Habib and Panikkar question temple-demolition claims and highlight communal mobilisation.
- ◆ The 2019 Supreme Court verdict permitted Ram Temple construction and allocated land for a mosque.

Objective Questions

1. Who authored *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu*?
2. In what year was the Babri Masjid demolished?
3. Who led the 1990 Rath Yatra mobilising support for Ram Temple?
4. Which historian criticised the Ayodhya verdict for prioritising faith over evidence?
5. Name the act passed in 1986 in response to the Shah Bano judgement.
6. In which year did the Supreme Court deliver the final verdict on the Ayodhya land dispute?
7. Which movement contributed to the rise of Hindutva politics in the 1980s-90s?

8. Which organisation initiated the Ram Shila Puja and mobilised karsevaks before the demolition?
9. Which year did the gates of Babri Masjid open for worship?
10. What was provided to Muslims as compensation land after the 2019 Ayodhya verdict?

Answers

1. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar
2. 1992
3. L. K. Advani
4. Romila Thapar
5. Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986
6. 2019
7. Ram Janmabhoomi movement
8. Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP)
9. 1986
10. A separate five-acre plot of land was allotted to construct a mosque.

Assignments

1. Discuss the evolution of Hindutva ideology from the pre-independence period to its rise in electoral politics after the 1980s.
2. Examine the role of the Shah Bano case in shaping communal identity politics and debates on secularism in India.
3. Evaluate the Babri Masjid demolition with reference to historical interpretations provided by scholars like Irfan Habib, Romila Thapar, and K. N. Panikkar.

4. Explain how the Ram Janmabhoomi movement changed the political landscape and contributed to the rise of the BJP.
5. Analyse the impact of communal riots such as Gujarat 2002 and Delhi 2020 on India's social harmony and democratic values.

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SGOU



UNIT

Federalism and Interstate Water Disputes

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the major interstate water disputes in India and the political, social, and ecological factors underlying them
- ◆ assess the significance of the interstate water disputes act in addressing water-sharing conflicts
- ◆ analyse the role and effectiveness of tribunals constituted to resolve interstate water disputes
- ◆ explore and evaluate key case studies such as the Cauvery water dispute and Ravi-Beas water dispute

Prerequisites

Following independence, India integrated over 571 princely states into a federal union. The States Reorganisation Act of 1956 reorganised these territories into fourteen states and six union territories, largely on linguistic grounds. Over time, further political and cultural demands led to shifting state boundaries, altering jurisdiction over land, rivers, and natural resources. Because rivers commonly flow across multiple states, changing political boundaries created complex challenges for water-sharing and resource management. Conflicts often emerged when states claimed competing rights over the same river water for irrigation, drinking water, hydropower, or industrial use. To manage these disputes, the Union Government enacted two major laws in 1956- the River Boards Act and the Interstate Water Disputes Act. This unit examines these legal frameworks, the functioning of tribunals, and major disputes such as the Cauvery, Ravi-Beas, Mullaperiyar, Krishna, Godavari, and Narmada river issues.

Keywords

River Boards Act, Interstate Water Disputes Act, Cauvery Dispute, Ravi-Beas Dispute, Mullaperiyar, Krishna Tribunal, Federalism

Discussion

5.5.1 Interstate Water Dispute Acts

The shifting state boundaries of India have led to various disputes over state resources, especially regarding the sharing of river water. The Union Government passed two important laws in 1956 to address these issues. The Interstate (River) Water Disputes Act and the River Boards Act aimed to help manage and resolve river water disputes.

5.5.1.1 The Interstate (River) Water Disputes Act

The Interstate (River) Water Disputes Act was created under Article 262 of the Indian Constitution. Its main features include:

- a. If a state government has a water dispute with another state, it can ask the central government to refer the issue to a tribunal.
- b. If the central government believes the dispute cannot be resolved through negotiations, it will refer the matter to a tribunal.
- c. The tribunal consists of a chairman and two other members, all appointed by the Chief Justice of India from the current Supreme Court judges.
- d. The tribunal can appoint assessors to assist in the proceedings.
- e. The tribunal investigates the dispute, decides, and publishes a final report.

- f. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and other courts is limited to disputes referred to the tribunal.
- g. The central government can create a scheme to enforce the tribunal's decision.

5.5.1.2 The River Boards Act of 1956

The River Boards Act of 1956 establishes river boards to manage inter-state rivers and their valleys. Key points include:

- a. The central government can create river boards if state governments request them to advise on managing inter-state rivers or valleys.
- b. Different boards can be set up for rivers or valleys.
- c. Each board has a chairman and members with expertise in fields like irrigation, engineering, and flood control appointed by the central government.
- d. The board advises on water conservation, irrigation, flood control, navigation, and pollution prevention. However, it does not make decisions.
- e. The board must consult all relevant governments, seek their agreement, and help create plans, but these plans are optional. The central government can help carry them out.

5.5.2 Cauvery Water Dispute

The issue of water disputes can be illustrated by the Cauvery conflict between the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over the sharing of the Cauvery River's waters. The river originates in Karnataka through the state and into Tamil Nadu, where it meets the Indian Ocean. In the 1970s and 1980s, the central government organised several discussions to find a fair way to divide the Cauvery waters. Between 1968 and 1990, 26 ministerial meetings were held, but no agreement was reached.

In June 1990, following a Supreme Court order, the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal was formed with three judges. On June 25, 1991, the tribunal issued an interim order directing Karnataka to release 205 million cubic feet of water annually to Tamil Nadu until a final resolution. However, ten days later, the Karnataka assembly unanimously rejected the order. The state government also instructed officials to prioritise Cauvery waters for Karnataka's farmers.

The matter returned to the Supreme Court, which ruled that Karnataka's order was unconstitutional in 1955. The central government then published the tribunal's temporary order in the official gazette. In response, S. Bangarappa, Karnataka's Chief Minister, declared a strike, closing schools and colleges. Soon, protests turned violent, forcing the Tamils to flee from localities in Bangalore. It has been recorded that approximately 50,000 Tamils fled the state.

Karnataka's attitude triggered a strong response from Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister, J. Jayalalitha. When the Supreme Court Chief Justice called for establishing the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, he stressed that such conflicts could intensify state tensions. He urged the central government to act swiftly to resolve them. The final resolution remains a subject of intense debate.

5.5.3 Ravi-Beas Issue

The Ravi-Beas dispute involves the allocation of water from the Ravi and Beas rivers, which flow through the states of Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan. The issue came to the forefront in the early 2000s when Punjab's decision to withdraw from the water-sharing agreement sparked tension between the states.

The Ravi-Beas tribunal was established under the Inter-State Water Disputes Act 1956 to verify water usage. In July 2004, the Punjab Assembly passed a resolution invalidating its water-sharing agreements with other states. It intended to use as much of the Ravi and Beas rivers as necessary before allowing the water to flow to Haryana and Rajasthan. This move conflicted with the principles of Indian federalism. This decision was seen as unconstitutional by various stakeholders, as it undermined the inter-state agreement and could set a dangerous precedent for other states. The Ravi-Beas dispute was referred to a tribunal under the Interstate (River) Water Disputes Act, and its resolution is still pending.

5.5.4 Mullaperiyar Water Dispute

In addition to the major river water disputes mentioned above, the Mullaperiyar Dam issue is a major water dispute that has garnered significant attention in recent years. The dam, located on the Periyar River in Kerala, is a subject of contention between Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The dispute revolves around the safety of the dam and the allocation of water between the two states.

Kerala has raised concerns about the structural integrity of the 120-year-old dam, especially after the 2011 earthquakes in the region. Tamil Nadu, however, insists that the dam is safe and seeks to increase its storage capacity. The matter has been taken to the

Supreme Court, and various committees have been formed to assess the safety and water-sharing aspects. This issue shows the challenges in managing inter-state water disputes that involve both technical and political factors.

5.5.5 Other Water Disputes

Apart from the aforementioned disputes, India has witnessed several other interstate water-sharing conflicts, including the Narmada Water Dispute and the Krishna Water Dispute. These disputes typically involve issues of water availability, agricultural needs, and the development of irrigation infrastructure.

The Narmada Water Dispute arose between Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya

Pradesh over the sharing of water from the Narmada River. In 2000, the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDT) issued a final award that allocated the river's waters between the three states. However, disputes over the implementation of the award and concerns about environmental impacts continue to surface.

The Krishna Water Dispute involves the sharing of water from the Krishna River, which flows through Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. The dispute has been ongoing for decades, with several tribunals and agreements attempting to resolve the issue. In 2010, the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal made an award to allocate water to the three states, but there have been persistent challenges in implementing the decision.

Recap

- ◆ Shifting state boundaries have contributed to recurring disputes over water-sharing.
- ◆ The River Boards Act (1956) enables the central government to create boards for coordinated river management.
- ◆ The Interstate (River) Water Disputes Act (1956) allows states to request the Centre to establish tribunals for dispute resolution.
- ◆ The Cauvery Water Dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu is a major example of long-standing river conflict.
- ◆ The Ravi-Beas dispute centres on water-sharing among Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan.
- ◆ The Mullaperiyar Dam dispute pits Kerala's concerns over safety against Tamil Nadu's water needs.
- ◆ Disputes over the Krishna, Godavari, and Narmada rivers highlight broader issues of federalism and resource distribution.
- ◆ Tribunals and central interventions aim to manage conflicts, though resolutions often face delays and political challenges.

Objective Questions

1. Which Article of the Indian Constitution authorises the creation of the Interstate (River) Water Disputes Act?
2. What was the purpose of the Interstate (River) Water Disputes Act of 1956?
3. Who appoints the tribunal members under the Interstate (River) Water Disputes Act?
4. Which body can create a river board under the River Boards Act of 1956?
5. In which year was the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal formed?
6. Which state rejected the interim order of the Cauvery Tribunal in 1991?
7. Which state was severely affected by the protests after Karnataka rejected the Cauvery Tribunal's order?
8. Which state intended to use as much water from the Ravi and Beas rivers before allowing the water to flow to other states?
9. Which political party in Punjab passed the resolution invalidating the Ravi-Beas water-sharing agreements in 2004?
10. Which states are involved in the Mullaperiyar Dam dispute?

Answers

1. Article 262
2. To resolve inter-state river water disputes
3. The Chief Justice of India
4. Union Government
5. 1990
6. Karnataka
7. Tamil Nādu
8. Punjab
9. Shiromani Akali Dal
10. Kerala and Tamil Nadu

Assignments

1. Discuss how climate change, declining rainfall, and rising water demand could intensify future interstate water disputes in India.
2. Examine the potential impact of interstate water conflicts on India's agricultural productivity, energy security, and overall economic growth.
3. Evaluate the role and effectiveness of the central government in resolving water disputes through legislation, tribunals, and negotiation.
4. Analyse the Cauvery or Ravi-Beas dispute as a case study to understand the relationship between federalism and resource sharing.
5. Discuss whether the Interstate Water Disputes Act needs reform to address contemporary challenges.

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SGOU



UNIT

Environmentalism: Chipko Movement & Narmada Bachao Andolan

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ describe the origins, objectives, and historical context of the Chipko movement and the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)
- ◆ analyse the social, ecological, economic, and political dimensions of these movements
- ◆ explain the crucial role played by women and local communities in shaping these grassroots environmental struggles
- ◆ evaluate how these movements contributed to new forms of environmental consciousness and shifted public debates on sustainable development in India

Prerequisites

Rapid industrialisation and technological expansion in post-independence India intensified pressure on natural resources. Large-scale deforestation, land degradation, and pollution threatened both ecosystems and the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. Indigenous groups and rural populations, who relied directly on forests, rivers, and land, were disproportionately affected by commercial logging, mining, and dam construction. In response, several grassroots environmental movements emerged to protect natural resources and defend the rights of local communities. Among the most influential were the Chipko Movement in the Himalayan region and the Narmada Bachao Andolan in central India. Both movements drew national and international attention for their non-violent methods, mass mobilisation, and strong participation of women. These movements highlighted critical issues such as displacement, ecological sustainability, development ethics, and the rights of marginalised communities. This unit explores their origins, leadership, strategies, and their overall contribution to shaping India's environmental discourse.

Keywords

Narmada Bachao Andolan, Chipko Movement, Sustainable Development, Ecofeminism, Sardar Sarovar Project, Environmental Justice

Discussion

5.6.1 Chipko Movement

According to Gail Omvedt, an American-born Indian sociologist and human rights activist, the Chipko Movement, which emerged in the foothills of the Himalayas in Tehri Garhwal, Uttar Pradesh, was a multifaceted social and ecological struggle that embodied elements of a peasants' movement, a women's movement, and an ecological movement. At the centre, the movement was a resistance against deforestation and the commercial exploitation of the forests of the region, which were vital to the livelihoods of local communities.

Historically, the area had been a site of peasant resistance to British colonial policies, particularly against the commercialisation of forests. Omvedt viewed these earlier struggles as not environmental issues, but they focused on subsistence, with peasants opposing the destruction of forests for profit. Mira Behn, a European follower of Gandhi who lived in the region, was one of the first to highlight the destruction of the environment and talk about the impacts of deforestation. Her account highlighted that the unsustainable practices caused ecological damage and social disorder in the region.

By the 1960s, environmental issues like floods became serious in these regions. The major flood of 1970 encouraged the people to take action, eventually leading to the Chipko Movement. The movement began when the forest department refused to allow villagers to cut ash trees to make agricultural tools but allowed sports manufacturers to cut the

same trees. In response, villagers, led by local Gandhian activists, began "tree-hugging," preventing them from being cut. Chandini Prasad Bhatt and Sunderlal Bahuguna led the movement. He argued that the primary gift of the Himalayas was water, and that cutting down trees for commercial purposes should stop for 10-15 years to allow the forest to recover. He was also against sawmills, which he believed contributed to environmental destruction.

The Chipko Movement grew into a larger protest against the commercial exploitation of forests. In this, the women played a key role. They led efforts to stop trees from being cut down in 1974. Their involvement was motivated by environmental concerns in the region and their strong connection to the forest, which provided all resource materials for daily life. The movement officially began on December 2, 1978, but gathered significant momentum when Bahuguna began a hunger strike on January 9, 1979. The movement followed non-violent methods, with villagers taking turns on night duty to prevent logging.

The movement's name, "Chipko," meaning "to hug" or "to cling to," symbolised the act of villagers physically embracing the trees to stop their destruction. Over time, the Chipko Movement shifted from a localised struggle into a significant ecological and social movement. The movement drew national and international attention, showing the importance of sustainable development and forest conservation. The significance of the movement lies in the fact that it was the first ecofeminist movement that relied



completely on the active participation of women, where women played an active role in the success of the movement.

The movement sparked debates as well, especially around its connection to women. Some, like Vandana Shiva, argued that it was a women's movement, while others, like Ramachandra Guha, disagreed. He said that the role of women in hill families is shaped by their culture, not merely as a result of changing ecological conditions

The debates also showed different ideologies. Vandana Shiva, associated with Bahuguna, emphasised the ecological perspective, while Guha supported Uttarkhand Sangarsh Vahini (USV), influenced by Marxism and Gandhism. Omvedt observed that studies showed women tended to focus more on subsistence and ecological issues, while men were often more interested in commercial development.

5.6.2 Narmada Bachao Andolan

The Narmada Valley project was the largest and most prestigious of the government's irrigation projects. It involved 30 large dams, 135 medium-sized projects, and over 3,000 minor ones on the river and its tributaries. However, it would also submerge vast areas, displacing over 100,000 villagers, primarily in Madhya Pradesh.

Narmada Bachao Andolan began when Achyut Yagnik, Medha Patkar and Waharu Sonavane formed the Narmada Dam Evictees Support Committee. In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi invited prominent environmentalist Anil Agrawal to speak with his cabinet about ecological issues. In Maharashtra, a left-led Committee of Dam and Project Evictees organised a large demonstration in Bombay three months later with the slogan "First rehabilitation, then the dam." Early opposition to the Narmada dam followed this approach.

In April, the Sardar Sarovar project received environmental clearance from the central government. By then, Medha Patkar had parted ways with Yagnik and started the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) or Save Narmada Movement. This movement was based on Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh committees where the dam would submerge villages.

The Narmada project symbolised both progress and the benefits of powerful industries. However, it also became a symbol of environmental destruction, relocating indigenous communities and damaging ecosystems.

The movement intensified its efforts when a new extremism emerged in 1987-88. The movement began organising protests, attempting to mobilise workers at the dam site, and seeking media attention. Over time, it shifted its demands from demanding justice for evictees and workers to a full-scale environmental opposition to the dam. This radical shift was linked to the growing influence of Gandhian social worker Baba Amte. In 1989, he proposed the creation of "Green Front". He then moved to the village, which was flooded by the Narmada project, and declared he would not leave until his death. Soon, he became the face of the movement.

The opposition of NBA to the Narmada dam was rejected by various groups, including Gujarati activists like the Sangarsh Vahini, Maharashtrian organisations, and left-wing groups like the Committee of Dam and Project Evictees and Shramik Mukti Dal (SMD). SMD argued that a comprehensive alliance was needed to unite those who were affected by the displacement and those profiting from the project. They believed that the movement required to address practical issues such as rehabilitation, water distribution, and accountability. However, NBA activists focussed on a more thorough stance, leading

to tensions within the movement. Despite these challenges, the NBA held a large rally in Harsud, Madhya Pradesh, with 25,000 people. The rally is considered the largest environmental rally in India. However, it was seen as insufficient for political change.

The Harsud rally marked the foundation of Vikas Andolan, a national movement for the development of people. Despite limited attendance, the rally signified a turning point for the anti-Narmada movement. Several

important events followed. Medha Patkar led militant campaigns, organising protests, hunger strikes, and marches. In 1991, Patkar's fast-to-death gained national attention to the movement but did not result in concrete policy changes. Later, the movement shifted its aim from advocating for local political self-sufficiency with the slogan "Our village, our rule." The anti-Narmada campaign was pivotal in shifting the environmental movement onto a more political terrain.

Recap

- ◆ Chipko Movement -Originated in Tehri Garhwal, in the Himalayan foothills.
- ◆ Aimed at resisting commercial deforestation and preserving local ecosystems.
- ◆ Led by Chandi Prasad Bhatt and Sunderlal Bahuguna.
- ◆ Gained momentum after Bahuguna's 1979 hunger strike.
- ◆ Women played a central role, physically embracing trees to prevent felling.
- ◆ The movement employed non-violent protest rooted in Gandhian philosophy.
- ◆ Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)- Formed to oppose the Narmada Valley Project, including the Sardar Sarovar Dam.
- ◆ Medha Patkar emerged as the leading figure of the movement.
- ◆ Baba Amte joined and supported the cause, proposing the "Green Front".
- ◆ The Harsud Rally became the largest environmental mobilisation in India, marking the birth of the *Vikas Andolan*.
- ◆ The NBA later advocated for local autonomy with the slogan "Our village, our rule."
- ◆ Raised questions about displacement, rehabilitation, ecological damage, and sustainable development.

Objective Questions

1. Where did the Chipko Movement originate?
2. Who were the key leaders of the Chipko Movement?
3. What does the word “Chipko” mean?
4. When did the Chipko Movement officially begin?
5. Who first highlighted the destructive environmental impact of deforestation in the Chipko region?
6. Which feminist perspective views the Chipko Movement as an ecofeminist movement?
7. What does “Narmada Bachao Andolan” mean?
8. Who were the key leaders of the NBA?
9. What was the slogan of the NBA in its early years?
10. Who proposed the creation of the “Green Front”?
11. In Which year did the Sardar Sarovar project receive environmental clearance?
12. Which was the largest environmental rally in India?

Answers

1. Tehri Garhwal
2. Chandni Prasad Bhatt and Sunderlal Bahuguna
3. To hug or cling to
4. December 2, 1978
5. Mira Behn
6. Vandana Shiva
7. Save Narmada Movement
8. Medha Patkar, Achyut Yagnik, and Baba Amte

9. “First rehabilitation, then the dam”

10. Baba Amte

11. 1987

12. Harsud Rally

Assignments

1. Discuss the contributions of Chandi Prasad Bhatt and Sunderlal Bahuguna to the Chipko Movement. How did their leadership shape the movement’s philosophy and methods?
2. Explain the significance of the Narmada Bachao Andolan in the broader context of India’s environmental and social justice movements.
3. Define the term “eco-feminism” and discuss how the Chipko Movement reflects eco-feminist ideals.
4. Analyse the role of media in shaping public perception of the Chipko Movement and the Narmada Bachao Andolan.
5. Evaluate the relevance of these movements for contemporary debates on sustainable development and climate justice.

Suggested Reading

1. Guha, Ramachandra , *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in Himalaya*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989.
2. Omvedt, Gail, *Reinventing Revolution: New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India*, London, 1993.
3. Shiva, Vandana , *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India*, Zed Books, New Delhi, 2002.
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SGOU

BLOCK

Challenges From Outside



UNIT

India-Pakistan Relations

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the historical background of India-Pakistan relations after partition
- ◆ identify and analyse the major political and territorial issues that created conflict between India and Pakistan
- ◆ describe key military confrontations between the two countries, including the wars of 1947-48, 1965, 1971, and the 1999 Kargil conflict
- ◆ evaluate the outcomes of these conflicts and their long-term impact on bilateral relations and regional stability

Prerequisites

After independence in 1947, India aimed to maintain friendly relations with all neighbouring countries. While these efforts were largely successful, relations with Pakistan deteriorated almost immediately. Although Indian leaders accepted Partition in the hope of resolving communal tensions, the violence, displacement, and mistrust that followed deeply affected the relations between the two new nations. The situation worsened when tribal militias supported by Pakistan invaded Kashmir in October 1947, prompting the Maharaja to sign the Instrument of Accession with India. This event marked the beginning of a long-standing territorial dispute over Kashmir. Over the next decades, geopolitical developments, such as Pakistan's alignment with the United States during the Cold War and India's policy of non-alignment, further complicated diplomatic relations. This unit examines the key wars, peace agreements, and turning points that shaped India-Pakistan relations from 1947 to the Kargil conflict of 1999.

Keywords

Kashmir, Instrument of Accession, Tashkent Declaration, Simla Agreement, Kargil Crisis, Indo-Pak Wars

Discussion

6.1.1 The Accession of Kashmir

The accession of Kashmir to India was challenging. When the British withdrew, most princely states, which had been under indirect British rule but nominally governed by Indian princes, chose to join either India or Pakistan. However, a few princely states delayed their decisions, with their rulers often influenced by British officers or Pakistan, fostering independence ambitions. Among these were Hyderabad, Junagadh, and Kashmir. While Hyderabad and Junagadh had slight choice but to join India, Kashmir offered a more complex situation. It shared a border with Pakistan, which had a Muslim-majority population and a Hindu ruler. These factors created a space for conflict.

Initially, the Maharaja of Kashmir sought a standstill agreement for one year to decide where to join. Pakistan formally accepted this proposal, while India maintained that the decision should reflect the people's will, likely through elections. However, fearing that a popular vote would not favour its claims, Pakistan defensively acted by sending tribal fighters from its Frontier Province, supported by regular Pakistani forces, to attack Kashmir. Faced with this violence, the Maharaja appealed to India for assistance. India agreed to interfere militarily on the condition that Kashmir formally accede to India. The Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession on October 26, 1947, which marked Kashmir's integration into India. Indian troops were then sent to Srinagar.

India managed to push back the Pakistani forces significantly and also filed a complaint with the United Nations, accusing Pakistan for aggression. The British aligned with Pakistan. The United States, seeking Pakistan as a strategic ally against the Soviet Union, also sided with it. While the Soviet Union remained neutral. Despite these disadvantages, India accepted the UN resolution calling for an armistice.

Nehru later faced criticism for approaching the UN and offering to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir. However, Bipan Chandra argued that both criticisms were invalid. He viewed that Pakistan could have approached if India had not gone to the UN, and the UN might have still called for a plebiscite. Moreover, India's denial of holding a plebiscite later was based on the conditions set by the UN resolution of August 1948. This resolution specified two requirements: first, Pakistan should withdraw all its forces from Jammu and Kashmir, and second, the Srinagar administration authority be restored over the entire state. Since Pakistan never fulfilled these conditions, the plebiscite could not take place.

In the meantime, Kashmir moved forward by holding elections for its Constituent Assembly, which voted for the state's accession to India and drafted a constitution declaring Kashmir an integral part of India. Kashmir took part in Indian general elections and held its state elections, making the plebiscite issue less important.

1953–54, there was a brief hope for resolving the Kashmir issue. When Mohammed Ali Bogra became Pakistan's Prime Minister, he and Nehru held cordial talks, and a joint statement was issued on August 20, 1953, agreeing to hold a plebiscite. However, Cold War politics disrupted this. Pakistan joined alliances like CENTO, SEATO, and the Baghdad Pact in 1954, while India stayed non-aligned and resisted U.S. pressure. The Soviet Union backed India by using its veto in the UN Security Council to block resolutions that were unfavourable to India. This support helped India to manage international pressure on Kashmir.

The 1962 Chinese attack forced India to seek Western help, making it harder to resist U.S. and British pressure. Pakistan outplayed by demanding almost all of Kashmir. Followed by this in 1962, Pakistan aligned with China, creating a dual threat to India. The Indo-Pak Wars in 1965 and 1972 and the Kargil crisis (1999) further aggravated the relations.

6.1.2 Indo-Pak War of 1965

In 1965, India and Pakistan engaged in their second war after 1948. In 1965, Pakistani President Field Marshal Ayub Khan decided to pursue a military solution to the Kashmir issue. Two military conflicts occurred in 1965- one in the Rann of Kutch and the second in Jammu and Kashmir.

The conflict in Kutch, marked by periodic battles, ended with a cease-fire on June 30, 1965. India and Pakistan agreed to resolve the boundary issue through ministerial talks or an international tribunal. India's Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, also proposed a 'No War Pact', but Pakistan rejected it.

Pakistan's plan for Jammu and Kashmir in August 1965 involved infiltrating thousands of tribal fighters and armed groups from the NWFP and Pakistani-held Kashmir into Indian territory. Their goals were to

disrupt communication networks, attack military bases, seize airports and strategic roads, and gain local support to overthrow the government of G.M. Sadiq. They aimed to establish a "Revolutionary Governing Council" that would declare Kashmir's independence from India and its intention to join Pakistan. The infiltration began on the night of August 5, 1965, with thousands of operatives crossing the armistice line.

From August 5 to 10, 1965, Pakistan's plan, Operation Gibraltar, failed as the people of Jammu and Kashmir resisted the infiltrators. Instead of supporting them, locals helped Indian forces by providing information, leading to the capture of many infiltrators. By the end of August, it was clear the plan was failing. Pakistan then launched a direct military attack on September 1, 1965, targeting the Chhamb district near the ceasefire line. This aimed to cut off Indian forces in Jammu and Kashmir from their bases and disrupt communication between Jammu, Srinagar, and Poonch.

India responded by using its Air Force and ground troops to counter the attack in Chhamb and Jaurian. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri unexpectedly decided to expand the war beyond Jammu and Kashmir. Indian forces launched attacks across the international border into Pakistan's Punjab, targeting Lahore and Sialkot. This forced Pakistan to divert its forces from Chhamb to defend its key cities.

The war lasted until September 22 and saw heavy losses on both sides. India captured 720 square miles of Pakistani territory, while Pakistan held 220 square miles of Indian land. Both countries lost soldiers, tanks, and aircraft, with casualties in the thousands.

6.1.2.1 UN and Tashkent Declaration

UN Secretary-General U Thant worked hard to end the 1965 India-Pakistan War.

He held Pakistan responsible for crossing the ceasefire line and asked India to show restraint. In the meantime, the Soviet Union offered to mediate and organise talks. On September 20, the UN called for a ceasefire, and by September 22, the fighting ended. The ceasefire officially took place in December 1965, and in January 1966, they planned to hold talks in Tashkent. On 10 January 1966, they signed the Tashkent Declaration, agreeing to withdraw forces to their positions as of 5th August 1965, return Haji Pir and other India occupied territories during the war to Pakistan, and commit to promoting good relations, avoiding war, and resolving disputes through peaceful means.

6.1.3 Indo-Pak War of 1971

The tensions and civil war in East Pakistan in 1971 led to huge numbers of refugees coming to India, putting immense strain on the country's resources and security. In December 1971, tensions intensified further when Pakistan's air force launched a preventive strike on eight Indian airfields, from Srinagar to Barmer, on the Western front. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared, "A war has been forced on us." While an Awami League-led government-in-exile existed near Calcutta, India had refrained from recognising it. Three days after Pakistan's airstrike, on 6 December 1971, India recognised Bangladesh as an independent nation.

The war was brief but intense, culminating in the liberation of Bangladesh. Indian forces imposed heavy damage on Pakistan, capturing about 15,000 square kilometres of territory and destroying the Pakistani navy at Karachi harbour. The war lasted 13 days. On 16 December 1971, Pakistani commander General A.A.K. Niazi surrendered in Dhaka. A total of 90,000 Pakistani military personnel surrendered to the Indian Army and Mukti Bahini, marking the largest military surrender since World War II. Following the victory,

India declared an end to hostilities. Indira Gandhi assured Pakistan that India's ambitions were not territorial, revengeful, or expansionist.

On 2nd August 1972, India and Pakistan signed the Simla Agreement, under which India agreed to release all 93,000 Pakistani prisoners of war. The Simla Agreement agreed to (i) a mutual commitment to peacefully resolve all issues through direct bilateral talks, (ii) the aim to build a cooperative relationship focusing on people-to-people contacts, and (iii) the recognition of the inviolability of the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.

6.1.4 Kargil Crisis

After India conducted the Pokhran nuclear tests, Pakistan responded with its nuclear tests, increasing tensions between the two countries. In early 1999, relations appeared to improve when Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee took a symbolic step by travelling to Pakistan on the inaugural bus service. This "bus diplomacy" was a high-profile effort to strengthen ties between the two nations. Before Prime Minister Vajpayee's bus trip to Lahore in 1999, Pakistan's military and militants had already started infiltrating Indian territory. By May 1999, it was revealed that Pakistani forces had crossed the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir and captured strategic peaks in the Kargil region.

India launched a difficult operation to reclaim the captured positions in Kargil. The operation was successful but came at a cost, with many soldiers and officers losing their lives. In the final week of July, the Indian army, in coordination with the air force, launched its decisive attacks and successfully cleared the Drass subsector of all Pakistani forces. The fighting ended on 26th July 1999, and the day is remembered as 'Kargil Vijay Diwas'.



By the end of the conflict, Pakistan was bound to withdraw due to mounting international pressure and the continuing pressure of the ongoing battle are heavy casualties. The Kargil War marked a significant failure for Pakistan's military and political leadership. The international response to the Kargil crisis unpredictably and devastatingly supported India. Even traditional allies of Pakistan, such as the United States, Britain, and China, exercised pressure on Pakistan to withdraw from Indian territory.

The Kargil crisis had a mixed impact on India. Politically, it increased the BJP's popularity and helped in the elections held a few months later. However, it also elevated serious concerns about governance and security. It became evident that Pakistani incursions had started as early as the autumn of 1998, leading to questions about why no action had been taken for months.

Brigadier Surinder Singh, commander of the 121 Brigade in Kargil, claimed with evidence that intelligence about the intrusions was available as early as August 1998. He asserted that repeated warnings were sent to senior army officials and the government, but were ignored. While these claims, partially supported by reports, they also sparked criticism that the BJP government may have underestimated or delayed an early response. In Pakistan, the outcome of the Kargil conflict led to a major political upheaval. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was exiled in a military coup on October 12, 1999, led by General Pervez Musharraf. He was later exiled to Saudi Arabia in December 2000 following a political agreement.

6.1.4.1 Kandahar Incident

Indo-Pakistani relations took a severe decline following the Kandahar hijacking

incident. On Christmas Eve of 1999, an Indian Airlines plane from Kathmandu to Delhi was hijacked by terrorists who demanded the release of thirty-six militants and a ransom. The plane was allowed to take off from Amritsar in Punjab, India, where it had landed and stayed for forty minutes. The plane eventually landed in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and one passenger was killed by the hijackers to make their intentions clear. Negotiations were carried out with the help of the Taliban. India's Minister for External Affairs, Jaswant Singh, personally escorted Maulana Masood Azhar, a prominent leader of the terrorists, along with two others, on a special flight to Kandahar. The hijackers, along with the released militants, were all based in Pakistan, which further strained relations between the two countries.

The incidents chosen from the Indo-Pakistani conflicts offer a clear view of the major events that shaped the relationship between India and Pakistan after independence. From the 1947 Instrument of Accession to the 1999 Kargil conflict, these events show not just the military clashes, but also the diplomatic efforts to resolve them. The Kashmir dispute has been at the heart of this tension from the very beginning. During the Cold War, Pakistan allied with the United States, while India remained non-aligned. This made the situation even more complicated. Though the United Nations tried to step in, they couldn't resolve the main issue, especially the question of a plebiscite in Kashmir. These incidents are important because they highlight the ongoing challenges India and Pakistan face, both in terms of territorial disputes and the balance between military action and talks.

Recap

- ◆ 1947-48 Conflict
- ◆ Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession after Pakistani tribal forces invaded Kashmir.
- ◆ India approached the United Nations, which called for a ceasefire and a future plebiscite.
- ◆ The plebiscite was never held due to Pakistan's failure to withdraw troops from the occupied areas.

Between the First and Second Wars

- ◆ Talks between Nehru and Pakistan's PM Mohammed Ali Bogra offered temporary hope.
- ◆ Cold War dynamics intensified mistrust: Pakistan with the US-led military blocs, while India pursued non-alignment.

1965 War

- ◆ Pakistan launched Operation Gibraltar to infiltrate Kashmir and incite rebellion, but the plan failed.
- ◆ The Indo-Pak War of 1965 followed; it ended with a UN-mandated ceasefire and the Tashkent Declaration (1966).

1971 War and Aftermath

- ◆ India intervened in East Pakistan due to the refugee crisis and humanitarian concerns, leading to the creation of Bangladesh.
- ◆ The Simla Agreement (1972) established a commitment to resolve issues bilaterally.

1999 Kargil Conflict

- ◆ Pakistani forces and militants crossed the LoC and occupied Indian territory in Kargil.
- ◆ India responded militarily and regained control; international pressure forced Pakistan to withdraw.
- ◆ Later in 1999, the Indian Airlines hijacking further strained relations, leading to the release of Pakistan-based terrorists.

Objective Questions

1. What was the name of the operation in which Pakistan deployed its regular army after the failure of “Operation Gibraltar”?
2. Which operations aimed to capture Jammu and Kashmir?
3. What document formalised Kashmir’s accession to India?
4. Which country supported Pakistan during India’s complaint to the UN in 1948?
5. Which war led to the liberation of Bangladesh?
6. What agreement was signed after the 1971 War?
7. Which Pakistani Prime Minister held cordial talks with Nehru in 1953?
8. What operation in 1965 involved infiltrating tribal fighters into Kashmir?
9. Which UN official worked to mediate the 1965 India-Pakistan war?
10. When was the Tashkent Declaration signed?
11. Which international alliance did Pakistan join during the Cold War?
12. Which event severely strained Indo-Pakistani relations in 1999?

Answers

1. Operation Grand Slam
2. Operation Gibraltar and Operation Grand Slam
3. Instrument of Accession
4. United States
5. 1971 War
6. Simla Agreement
7. Mohammed Ali Bogra
8. Operation Gibraltar
9. U Thant

10. 1966
11. CENTO
12. Kandahar hijacking

Assignments

1. Analyse the evolution of Indo-Pak nuclear relations and assess their implications for South Asian regional security.
2. Discuss the political and military challenges associated with Kashmir's accession to India in 1947.
3. Examine the role of the United Nations in the first Kashmir conflict and evaluate the effectiveness of its resolutions and mediation.
4. Evaluate the role of international pressure during the 1999 Kargil conflict. How did global responses influence the resolution of the conflict?
5. Assess how the wars of 1965 and 1971 reshaped the strategic and diplomatic relationship between India and Pakistan.

Suggested Reading

1. Brass, Paul R., *Politics of India since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1990.
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SGOU



UNIT

Birth of Bangladesh

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the historical, political, and socio-economic causes behind East Pakistan's independence movement
- ◆ analyse the linguistic, cultural, economic, and ethnic tensions between east and west Pakistan
- ◆ describe India's diplomatic, humanitarian, and military response to the crisis
- ◆ evaluate the role of international politics- including the cold war- in shaping the Bangladesh crisis
- ◆ examine the major events of the 1971 Bangladesh liberation war and assess its outcomes for south asia

Prerequisites

At the time of Partition in 1947, Pakistan emerged as a geographically divided nation composed of West Pakistan and East Pakistan, separated by nearly 1,600 kilometres of Indian territory. Although East Pakistan had a Bengali-speaking population that formed the majority of Pakistan's total population, political and economic power remained concentrated in the Punjabi-dominated West Pakistan. Language became the first major flashpoint. While Pakistan could have been a bilingual nation with Urdu and Bengali as official languages, the government declared Urdu as the sole national language. This rejection triggered widespread protests in East Pakistan, leading to Bengali being accepted as an official language only after intense agitation in 1954. Economic inequality, political exclusion, and cultural discrimination deepened the divide. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the demand for autonomy, spearheaded by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League, transformed into a full-scale

struggle for independence. The 1971 crisis resulted in civil war, mass displacement, and eventually India's intervention, culminating in the creation of Bangladesh.

Keywords

Bangladesh Liberation War, Mukti Bahini, Simla Agreement, Autonomy, Yahya Khan, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Discussion

6.2.1 Bangladesh Liberation War

Pakistan was founded on the belief that Muslims in India formed a separate nation due to their faith. However, religious unity alone proved insufficient to bridge the deep cultural, linguistic, and regional differences—particularly between the Punjabi-speaking population of West Pakistan and the Bengali-speaking people of East Pakistan. Over time, the political and economic elite from West Pakistan gained control over the country's military, bureaucracy, economy, and governance, leading to the economic and political disregard of East Pakistan. Over time, the people of East Pakistan developed a movement for democracy in Pakistan and greater autonomy for East Pakistan. The elites of West Pakistan decided to suppress this movement, which ultimately resulted in the independence struggle of East Pakistan.

In the 1970 parliamentary elections, the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won 169 out of 313 seats in Pakistan, but he was denied the position of prime minister. However, with the support of West Pakistan's leading politician, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the army and Yahya Khan refused to allow the Awami Party to form a government. In response, the Awami Party launched a civil disobedience movement to uphold constitutional provisions.

On March 25, 1971, Yahya Khan ordered a military crackdown on East Pakistan. General Yahya Khan arrested Mujib and imposed martial law in East Pakistan. Throughout 1970-71, East Pakistan was embroiled in a civil war, with its civil and military institutions dominated by West Pakistanis. A strong ethnic nationalism took root in East Pakistan, leading to revolt and the formation of the Mukti Bahini, which took up arms against the Pakistani regime. This league was formed by the Awami League leaders who managed to escape to Calcutta and formed a government-in-exile for Bangladesh.

The remaining Hindus in East Pakistan faced brutal treatment from the army, subjecting them to genocide. Alongside Hindus, a significant number of Muslims, Christians, and Buddhists were also compelled to flee, seeking refuge in India's West Bengal, Assam, and Meghalaya. By November 1971, the refugee population from East Pakistan had increased.

In India, there was deep compassion for the people of East Pakistan, and there was an increasing demand for decisive action against Pakistan. However, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, recognising that war with Pakistan was likely, abstained from acting quickly. She took a cautious approach to avoid Pakistan's claim that India was behind East Pakistan's autonomy movement and rebellion.

According to Bipan Chandra, Indira Gandhi's policy of restraint was guided by two key considerations. First, she believed that war should occur during India's chosen time. This required careful planning. Military operations in East Pakistan were impossible during the monsoon due to flooding. Waiting for winter would block the Himalayan passes with snow, preventing China from sending troops to support Pakistan. The Mukti Bahini also needed time to strengthen and face the Pakistani army in regular battle. Second, Indira Gandhi understood the importance of international opinion. She highlighted India's challenges with the refugee crisis, emphasising the economic and political tension it placed on the country. Over the next eight months, Indira Gandhi followed a four-pronged strategy. India provided sanctuary to the Bangladesh government-in-exile and supported the Mukti Bahini with military training, funding, and equipment. The government also extended significant humanitarian aid to the refugees despite the heavy strain on resources.

India's campaign gained significant support from Western media, intellectuals, students, and ultimately from Western European governments, the Soviet Union, and other Communist countries in Europe. However, the United States and China adopted an insensitive and even hostile attitude towards India. Despite India's protests, the US continued supplying arms to Pakistan and framed the Bangladesh issue as a 'bilateral dispute' between India and Pakistan rather than a fight for Bangladesh's independence. China, now a strong ally of Pakistan, fully supported its actions.

India swiftly signed the 20-year Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation on August 9 to counter potential US-China intervention in the event of war. This treaty assured mutual consultations and effective measures in case of a military threat to either country. Indira Gandhi was initially

reluctant to strike first, even though the Indian Army was ready and had set December 4 as the planned date for direct intervention in Bangladesh.

The decision was made easier when Yahya Khan launched a preventive strike. Frustrated by the Mukti Bahini's strengthened guerrilla warfare and Indian military invasions, Yahya Khan ordered a surprise air attack on December 3, targeting eight Indian airfields in the west. He aimed to weaken the Indian Air Force and internationalise the conflict to speed up UN intervention. However, his efforts failed. The Indian Air Force, forestalling such an attack, had already moved to safer interior bases, and the damage was minimal.

India responded immediately by recognising Bangladesh and launching a robust military attack. The Indian strategy focused on securing Pakistani forces in the western sector while executing a swift campaign in the east. This approach aimed to force the Pakistani army in East Pakistan to surrender before the US, China, or the UN could intervene.

Under the leadership of General J.S. Arora, the Indian Army, in alliance with the Mukti Bahini, advanced through East Bengal. Within eleven days, they reached Dacca, the capital, and surrounded the Pakistani garrison stationed there. Despite U.S. President Nixon's efforts to intervene—guided by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's remark that Nixon 'didn't want the Paks to lose'—India continued its advance. The U.S. government labelled India the aggressor, halted economic aid, and introduced two UN Security Council resolutions calling for a ceasefire and troop withdrawals. However, these resolutions were vetoed by the Soviet Union, with Britain and France abstaining.

China avoided direct military action. As a final attempt to influence the situation, President Nixon ordered parts of the U.S.



Seventh Fleet to move toward the Bay of Bengal on December 9 to pressure India into slowing its advance on Dacca. Unmoved by this show of force, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi instructed General Manekshaw, the Chief of Army Staff, to accelerate the military campaign. By December 13, Indian forces had surrounded Dacca, resulting in the surrender of 93,000 Pakistani troops in Bangladesh on December 16.

Following this victory, India declared a unilateral ceasefire on the western front on December 17. The United States, China, and the UN were expected to strengthen their involvement, and even the Soviet Union dejected further conflicts. Pakistan quickly agreed to the ceasefire and subsequently released Mujibur Rahman, who assumed leadership in Bangladesh on January 12, 1972.

6.2.2 The Result

The Bangladesh War brought significant developments for India. It redesigned the balance of power in South Asia and established India as a pre-eminent power. The refugee crisis was efficiently resolved as they were transported to their homes in Bangladesh. The war served to restore India's national self-esteem and counter the psychological impact of the 1962 defeat. India succeeded over a worrying neighbour and established its independence in foreign policy and its skill to defend its national interests. This victory reinforced India's position as a strong political entity on the global stage.

The war also underscored the strength of Indian secularism, as people of all faiths,

including Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs, united during the crisis, standing together against an old foe. Additionally, the Two-Nation theory suffered a substantial blow.

The Bangladesh War marked a significant personal and political victory for Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Her decisive leadership in resolving the crisis gathered enormous respect, uplifting her acceptance in India and internationally. Her image in the global stadium reached new heights, with many describing her as “at the pinnacle of her power and glory.”

The war had resolved, and a truce was in place, but true peace remained vague. India still held over 90,000 prisoners of war and controlled approximately 9,000 square kilometres of Pakistani territory. Meanwhile, Pakistan had yet to recognise Bangladesh officially. A summit between Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan's newly elected Prime Minister, was held in Simla to address these issues in June 1972. After intense negotiations, the two leaders signed the Simla Agreement. As part of the agreement, India returned most of the occupied Pakistani territory but kept some key areas in Kashmir. In exchange, Pakistan agreed to honour the Line of Control (loc) in Kashmir. Both countries settled disputes through direct talks without involving the UN or other powers. India's agreement to return the prisoners of war was contingent upon Pakistan's formal recognition of Bangladesh—a step Pakistan took in August 1973.

Recap

- ◆ Major linguistic and cultural differences existed between West Pakistan (Punjabi-speaking) and East Pakistan (Bengali-speaking).
- ◆ West Pakistan controlled political and economic power, leading to resentment in the East.
- ◆ The Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, demanded autonomy.
- ◆ In the 1970 elections, the Awami League won a majority but was prevented from forming the government by Yahya Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.
- ◆ On 25 March 1971, Pakistan launched a brutal military crackdown in East Pakistan and arrested Mujib.
- ◆ Awami League leaders formed the Mukti Bahini, which led the armed resistance.
- ◆ Millions of refugees fled to India, creating a humanitarian crisis.
- ◆ India secured diplomatic support from the Soviet Union and Western European countries.
- ◆ India signed a 20-year Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with the USSR.
- ◆ On 3 December 1971, Pakistan launched an airstrike on India, prompting India's full-scale intervention.
- ◆ Indian forces, alongside the Mukti Bahini, defeated Pakistan; on 16 December 1971, Pakistani forces surrendered.
- ◆ Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation.
- ◆ The Simla Agreement (1972) established the Line of Control in Kashmir and set the framework for bilateral negotiations.
- ◆ Pakistan formally recognised Bangladesh in 1973.

Objective Questions

1. Who led the Awami League during the 1970 parliamentary elections?
2. What was the Mukti Bahini?
3. Where did the Awami League form its government-in-exile?
4. Which treaty did India sign with the Soviet Union in 1971?
5. Which nations supported Pakistan in the war?
6. Who was the Prime Minister of India during the Bangladesh Liberation War?
7. Which major Western powers abstained from UN Security Council resolutions on the war?
8. Which year was the Simla Agreement signed between India and Pakistan?

Answers

1. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
2. A liberation army formed by the Awami League
3. Calcutta
4. Indo-Soviet Treaty
5. United States and China
6. Indira Gandhi
7. Britain and France
8. 1972

Assignments

1. Describe the reasons behind the linguistic and cultural divide between East and West Pakistan. How did these tensions shape the autonomy movement?
2. Analyse the role of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League in mobilising the people of East Pakistan.
3. Discuss India's diplomatic and military role in the 1971 crisis. How did India balance humanitarian concerns and strategic interests?
4. Reflect on the legacy of the Bangladesh Liberation War. How did the creation of Bangladesh reshape South Asian geopolitics?
5. Evaluate the significance of the Simla Agreement in redefining India-Pakistan relations after 1971.

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UNIT

War with China

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ analyse the evolution of India-China relations from the early years of Independence to the 1962 war
- ◆ explain the political, territorial, and diplomatic factors that contributed to the deterioration of bilateral relations
- ◆ evaluate the impact of the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict on India's foreign policy, defence preparedness, and regional security
- ◆ examine the broader consequences of the war, including India's military reforms and shifts in global alliances
- ◆ discuss the role of international actors, especially the United States and Britain, during the conflict

Prerequisites

At independence, India sought to build a close and friendly relationship with China. Indian leaders had long supported China's anti-imperialist struggles; the Indian National Congress even sent a medical mission to China in the 1930s and advocated boycotts of Japanese goods during Japan's occupation of Chinese territories. After the Chinese Revolution, India became the first non-socialist country to recognise the People's Republic of China on 1 January 1950. Despite this early goodwill, several developments strained the relationship, most notably China's takeover of Tibet in 1950, border disagreements, and contrasting security interests. This unit examines the events and policies, including India's defence strategy under Prime Minister Nehru, that gradually transformed friendly relations into war in 1962.

Keywords

Panchsheel Agreement, Dalai Lama, 1962 Sino-Indian War, Forward Policy, NEFA, Aksai Chin

Discussion

6.3.1 India-China Relations

India adopted a friendship policy with China from the very beginning. It was also the first country to recognise the People's Republic of China on January 1, 1950. Prime Minister Nehru envisioned a partnership between the two nations rooted in their shared history of colonial oppression, poverty, and underdevelopment. He hoped India and China would collaborate to secure Asia's rightful place on the global stage.

India expressed disappointment when China occupied Tibet in 1950 without prior consultation. Although India did not challenge China's claims over Tibet—acknowledging its historical subjugation by China—India remained diplomatically cautious. In 1954, India formally recognised China's sovereignty over Tibet through a treaty, with both nations agreeing to conduct their relations based on the principles of Panchsheel.

Relations continued to be cordial with China. Nehru made significant efforts to highlight China and Chou Enlai's role at the Bandung Conference. However, in 1959, a major uprising occurred in Tibet, leading the Dalai Lama to flee to India along with thousands of refugees. While India granted him asylum, he was not permitted to establish a government-in-exile or engage in political activities. Still, this displeased the Chinese.

In October 1959, tensions escalated further when Chinese forces fired on an Indian patrol near the Kongka Pass in Ladakh, killing five Indian police officers and capturing others.

Despite an exchange of letters between the two governments, no resolution was made. Chou Enlai was subsequently invited to Delhi for talks in April 1960, but little progress was made.

6.3.2 The 1962 Chinese Attack

In the third week of July 1962, clashes erupted between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley of Ladakh. Then, a conflict emerged in early September over the Dhola/Thag La ridge, located in the Namka Chu river valley, about sixty miles west of Tawang. This area was significant as it marked the convergence of India, Tibet, and Bhutan borders, and the exact alignment of the McMahon Line remained a subject of dispute. India claimed the ridge lay south of the line, while China argued it was within their territory. In June, a squad of Assam Rifles had set up a post at Dhola as part of India's continuing Forward Policy.

On September 8, 1962, Chinese forces attacked the Thag La Ridge, repositioning Indian troops and establishing their post. This resulted in an exchange of letters between Peking and New Delhi. On the ground, Indian commanders were split on how to proceed with the attack. Some recommended forcing the Chinese out of Thag La, while others cautioned that it would be difficult due to the terrain, as Thag La was about 2,000 feet higher than Dhola. Meanwhile, the Chinese troops used a megaphone to communicate with the Indians, chanting "Hindi-Chini bhai bhai" ("Indians and Chinese are brothers-in-arms") and then declaring, "Ye zamin



hamara hai. Tum vapas jao” (“This land is ours, so you should leave”).

For three weeks, the two sides faced each other across a narrow river, uncertain if their leaders were trying to make peace or preparing for war. On 3rd October, Lieutenant General Umrao Singh was replaced as corps Commander B. M. Kaul. Commander Kaul moved two battalions up from the plains despite the troops being lightly armed, with only three days’ worth of rations, no mortars or rocket launchers.

On the afternoon of 9th October, Indian soldiers arrived in the Namka Chu valley. Exhausted and needing rest, they set up a post in a herder’s hut. The next morning, the Chinese launched an attack. Despite their brave efforts, the Indian soldiers—weakened by the long march and outnumbered and outgunned—could do little against the heavy mortars employed by the Chinese.

Nehru attended a conference in London and, after returning to India, left for Colombo on October 12. Just a week later, the Chinese army launched a large-scale assault, overrunning Indian positions in the eastern sector of NEFA (North-East Frontier Agency), now Arunachal Pradesh. Indian forces, facing overwhelming challenges such as the terrain and limited resources, were compelled to retreat, leaving the region vulnerable to Chinese advances.

In the western sector, on October 20, the Chinese captured 13 forward posts in the Galwan Valley and posed a threat to the Chushul airstrip. The country erupted in panic, fearing they might invade the plains and occupy Assam and beyond. The New York Times reported that a “smouldering situation burst into flame” as heavy battles broke out in both disputed areas. Reports indicated eight posts had fallen in Ladakh and nearly twenty in NEFA. Tawang itself was now under Chinese control.

On 24th October, the Chinese halted their advance, and Chinese Premier Chou En-lai wrote to Nehru, proposing a way to “stop the border clashes” and “reopen border negotiations.” Both the leaders exchanged their letters, but nothing was achieved. Nehru accused Peking of making a “deliberate, cold-blooded decision” to “enforce their alleged boundary claims by military invasion of India.” He viewed Chou’s offer as an attempt to strengthen Chinese gains.

On November 9, Nehru wrote two urgent letters to President Kennedy, describing the situation as “really desperate” and requesting extensive military aid. He also sought support from Britain. As a result, Britain and the U.S. began sending transport planes with arms and ammunition. However, just 24 hours later, China announced a unilateral withdrawal.

6.3.2.1 The Aftermath

Bipan Chandra observed that India took a long time to recover from the blow to its self-respect, and it was arguably only the victory over Pakistan in the Bangladesh War that helped restore a sense of national pride. The nonalignment policy appeared temporarily in jeopardy following the attack. Nehru was critiqued for his actions by the right wing. The Third Five-Year Plan suffered as resources were redirected toward defence. The Congress party also lost three consecutive parliamentary by-elections, and in August 1963, Nehru faced a no-confidence motion.

The Chinese aggression created issues in India’s foreign relations. During the crisis, the US and the UK extended assistance, making it difficult for India to distance itself from them afterwards. Bipan Chandra opined that the US began to impact India’s military matters. American intelligence used this situation to establish bases under the pretext of opposing the Chinese threat, even

implanting a nuclear device in the Himalayas to monitor the Chinese military activities.

In response, Nehru reinforced ties with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Pakistan aligned with China and, miscalculating India's vulnerability initiated the 1965 war.

After the Chinese attack, many blamed Nehru for China's betrayal. Some saw him as a "naive idealist" who failed to protect India's interests. In contrast, others, like Neville Maxwell in India's China War, claimed Nehru was a stubborn nationalist who rejected Chinese border proposals and provoked the attack with his "Forward Policy."

Bipan Chandra noticed that Nehru recognised the tensions after Tibet's annexation and the Dalai Lama's arrival in India. Most experts now agree that the defeat was not due to Nehru's neglect of defence. Between 1949 and 1962, India's armed forces grew significantly, and the 1965 war with Pakistan was fought with the same equipment. Nehru had warned of potential border clashes with China since 1959, but neither political nor military leaders predicted any attack. India also failed to plan to use its Air Force, which could have dominated the skies in the region. Therefore, structural issues in defence planning further intensified the failure.

Ramachandra Guha viewed the failure of the Chinese capture of the Indian post as being due to their advanced military skills and experience in fighting in high mountains. Additionally, the access from Tibet made the army move faster. The geographical advantage was entirely with China. While Indian forward posts were poorly equipped, relying on airdrops for supplies and helicopters for survival.

6.3.3 Second Chinese Attack

The second attack occurred on 15

November, spanning a 500-mile front in NEFA. Fierce battles occurred at Walong, where soldiers from the Dogra and Kumaon regiments nearly reclaimed a crucial ridge from the Chinese. There was also strong resistance in Ladakh, forcing the Chinese to suffer heavy losses. However, in most of NEFA, the Indian forces collapsed. The Indian commanders were unsure where to make their stand. Tawang was considered but rejected, and Bomdi La, farther south, was suggested because supply lines were easier. Ultimately, the Indians decided to defend at Se La, fifteen miles from Tawang. The decision to protect Se La came from General Kaul.

The Chinese took control of Tawang on 25 October, and when they stopped there, the Indians wrongly thought they were not taking further action. In reality, the Chinese were improving their road to Se La. On 14th November, the Indians launched a counter-attack on a Chinese post near Walong but fighting broke out north of Se La, where the Chinese gained the advantage. In a panic, a commander ordered a retreat, and his brigade pulled back toward Bomdi La, only to realise that the Chinese had already blocked their escape route by bypassing Se La. Se La was swiftly captured, followed by Bomdi La soon after.

The fall of Bomdi La sparked panic in Assam. However, on 22 November, China declared a unilateral ceasefire. In NEFA, the Chinese withdrew north of the McMahon Line, and in Ladakh, they returned to their positions before the conflict began. Why did the Chinese withdraw? Some believed they were discouraged by the unification of all political factions in India, including the communists, in support of the government and Western backing in the form of arms and ammunition. The approaching winter, which would make it challenging to sustain supply lines, was also a factor. Guha viewed

that one reasonable explanation is that the superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, were preoccupied with the Cuban missile crisis, allowing China to act without fear of retaliation.

Recap

- ◆ India initially followed a friendly and cooperative approach towards China.
- ◆ Relations deteriorated after China occupied Tibet (1950), altering the geopolitical situation.
- ◆ The Panchsheel Agreement (1954) recognised China's control over Tibet and established the framework of peaceful coexistence.
- ◆ In 1959, the Dalai Lama fled to India after a Tibetan uprising, further increasing tensions.
- ◆ Border disputes escalated, particularly in Ladakh (Aksai Chin) and the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA).
- ◆ The 1962 war was triggered by clashes at Galwan Valley, Dhola Post, and Thag La Ridge.
- ◆ China launched a full-scale attack in October 1962, overwhelming India's poorly prepared forces.
- ◆ Prime Minister Nehru sought emergency military assistance from the United States and Britain.
- ◆ Following the conflict, India strengthened ties with the Soviet Union for military and strategic support.
- ◆ China declared a unilateral ceasefire on 22 November 1962.
- ◆ Critics later blamed Nehru's Forward Policy, inadequate intelligence, and weak defence planning for India's defeat.

Objective Questions

1. What was the name of the treaty signed in 1954 that recognised China's sovereignty over Tibet?
2. When did India recognise the People's Republic of China?

3. Which Chinese region did the Indian soldiers clash with Chinese forces in 1962?
4. Which ridge was the centre of the conflict between India and China in 1962?
5. Which Chinese leader proposed a way to stop the border clashes?
6. Which country did India approach for military aid after the Chinese invasion in 1962?
7. When did China announce a unilateral withdrawal from the conflict after the Sino-Indian War in 1962?
8. Which region did China take control of after the attack in 1962?
9. Where did the 1959 Kongka Pass clash occur?
10. Who replaced Lieutenant General Umrao Singh as corps commander in 1962?
11. Which Indian Prime Minister was in power during the 1962 war?
12. What major global event coincided with the 1962 war?
13. Which Indian region panicked due to Chinese advances?
14. Where did Indian troops make their final stand in NEFA?
15. Who critiqued Nehru for being a “naive idealist” after the 1962 defeat?

Answers

1. Treaty of Panchsheel
2. 1950
3. Galwan Valley
4. Thag La Ridge
5. Zhou Enlai
6. United States and Britain
7. November 9, 1962
8. Tawang
9. Ladakh

10. B. M. Kaul
11. Jawaharlal Nehru
12. Cuban Missile Crisis
13. Assam
14. Se La
15. Neville Maxwell

Assignments

1. Describe the political, territorial, and strategic factors that contributed to the deteriorating relationship between India and China before 1962.
2. Explain the significance of the Panchsheel Agreement. How did it shape early India-China relations?
3. Critically assess Prime Minister Nehru's handling of the Sino-Indian conflict. Discuss the major criticisms levelled against his policies after the war.
4. Evaluate the role of international actors, particularly the United States and Britain, during the 1962 crisis.
5. Analyse how the 1962 war transformed India's foreign policy and defence priorities in the following decades.

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UNIT

Sri Lankan Tamil Issues

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the historical background of the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict in Sri Lanka
- ◆ analyse how British colonial policies contributed to ethnic tensions
- ◆ evaluate key political developments and their impact on the conflict
- ◆ examine the rise, objectives, and role of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) in Sri Lankan politics
- ◆ reflect on the long-term consequences of the civil war for ethnic relations and regional stability

Prerequisites

The Tamil-Sinhalese conflict in Sri Lanka is one of South Asia's most prolonged and violent ethnic struggles. Though tensions between the two communities have historical roots, these relations were not always hostile. Under British colonial rule, Tamils, particularly the Jaffna Tamils, were favoured in education and government employment, creating resentment among the Sinhalese majority. This colonial imbalance laid the foundation for post-independence ethnic conflict. After Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948, successive governments introduced policies that marginalised the Tamil population. The most controversial among these was the "Sinhala Only Act" of 1956, which declared Sinhala as the sole official language. Over time, protests, discrimination, and political exclusion radicalised sections of the Tamil population. By the late 1970s, ethnic tensions escalated into violent conflict, leading to the emergence of the LTTE, which sought a separate Tamil state called *Tamil Eelam*. The conflict intensified through the 1980s, culminating

in the Black July riots (1983), which triggered a full-scale civil war. India became involved through diplomacy and military intervention, particularly after the Indo–Sri Lanka Accord (1987). This unit explores the historical, cultural, and political dynamics that shaped the conflict and influenced regional geopolitics.

Keywords

Sinhala Only Act , Tamil Eelam, LTTE, Black July , Indo-Sri Lanka Accord , Civil War

Discussion

6.4.1 Origin of the Conflict

The origins of the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict are debated. The conflict can be related to different historical events, depending on one's viewpoint. Some trace it back to South Indian invasions, while others focus on Sri Lanka's independence from Britain in 1948.

The conflict was primarily between the Sinhalese-led Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a group seeking an independent state for the Tamil minority.

While the common narrative attributes the war to ethnic tensions between Sinhalese and Tamils, a broader perspective links the conflict to the legacy of British colonialism. This view suggests that ethnic clashes were symptoms of a larger struggle, rejecting the notion that Sinhalese and Tamils have always been in opposition due to inherent differences. Instead, the post-colonial analysis argues that both groups fought to regain dignity and power during and after British rule. For the Sinhalese, the colonial era marked a loss of their “golden age,” Tamils saw their decline after enjoying opportunities provided under the British administration.

During British rule, the Sinhalese felt marginalised as the British favoured Tamils by setting up English-language schools in

Tamil areas and giving them better access to civil service and professional jobs. Tamils also profited from these connections in the British colonies. This made the Sinhalese feel left out and resentful. After Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948, these dynamics changed drastically, deteriorating tensions between the two groups.

6.4.2 Post-Independence Developments

The problem escalated when Prime Minister S.W.R.D Bandaranaike implemented the “Sinhalese Only” language policy of 1956, intended to remove Tamils from major government positions and open them for the Sinhalese. Over the years, various agreements were concluded between Tamil leaders and Sinhalese-dominated governments. Many Tamils felt that the real change could only be achieved through Tamil Eelam, an independent Tamil state. They believed that it could be achieved through armed struggle.

Tamil Eelam movement sought to ratify this geographical divide, believing that Tamils and Sinhalese were distinct ethnic groups. However, post-colonial analysis suggests that the actions of both communities in the post-independence era were less about conflicting differences and more about competing for power over limited opportunities.



6.4.2.1 Emergence and Rise of the LTTE

Peaceful Tamil protests in the 1950s and 1960s had failed to bring results. Violent “race riots” occurred in 1956, 1958, 1978, and most devastatingly in July 1983, when 1,000 Tamils were killed, and tens of thousands were left homeless. These events contributed to the rise and persistence of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the most militant Tamil resistance group. The LTTE was inspired by Che Guevara and his guerrilla warfare strategies. The group adopted terror tactics such as suicide bombings, the invention of the suicide belt, and female-led suicide attacks, leading the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to label it a terrorist organisation.

The LTTE eliminated rival groups like the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) to establish itself as the “sole representative of the Tamils.” This became the main reason behind the civil war of July 1983. The period is known in history as “Black July.” The conflict lasted for three decades and ended in May 2009 when the Sri Lankan government announced the death of the LTTE leader.

6.4.2.2 India’s Involvement and the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord

In 1983, issues escalated when thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils fled to Tamil Nadu in India following the suppression by the Sri Lankan government on Jaffna, the stronghold of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Public sentiment in India, especially in Tamil Nadu, strongly supported the Sri Lankan Tamils. Tensions strengthened when Sri Lanka obstructed Jaffna, sealing essential supplies. India tried to send essentials via fishing boats, but the Sri Lankan Navy stopped them. In response, India air-dropped supplies using planes. This pressure led Sri

Lanka to permit supplies to reach Jaffna by boat.

Meanwhile, the Tamil insurgency continued, and Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene sought assistance from Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. This led to the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in July 1987. The agreement proposed merging the Tamil-majority northern and eastern provinces into a single entity, decentralising significant powers to the region, dissolving the LTTE, disarming its fighters, and allowing Indian military assistance at Sri Lanka’s request.

However, the accord weakened. The LTTE, which had unwillingly agreed to the terms, distrusted the Sri Lankan government and refused to disarm. With the LTTE resisting, Jayewardene called on the Indian Army to enforce the accord. This drew the Indian military into a conflict with the Tamil guerrillas, who had superior knowledge of the terrain and strong local support. The Indian Army faced dislike from both sides: the Tamil population opposed its actions against the LTTE, while many Sri Lankans opposed the presence of foreign troops in their land.

The situation worsened when Ranasinghe Premadasa succeeded Jayewardene as President and demanded the withdrawal of Indian forces. Rajiv Gandhi agreed to a phased withdrawal, which began in mid-1989 and concluded after the Indian general elections of 1989. However, the Sri Lankan crisis ultimately cost Rajiv Gandhi his life.

As mentioned before, the final phase of the conflict culminated in May 2009, when the Sri Lankan government declared the defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the death of its leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran. This marked the end of the armed confrontation that had persisted for nearly three decades, primarily from the early 1980s. The period under discussion,

therefore, spans the origins of the conflict to its military conclusion in 2009. While the cessation of hostilities brought an end to large-scale violence, the post-war period continues to witness discussions around reconciliation, development, and political inclusion.

Recap

- ◆ British colonial rule favoured Tamils in education and administration, creating Sinhalese resentment.
- ◆ After independence, discriminatory policies such as the Sinhala Only Act (1956) marginalised Tamil-speaking populations.
- ◆ Political tensions escalated into violent conflicts and uprisings.
- ◆ The LTTE emerged as a powerful militant organisation advocating for an independent Tamil state.
- ◆ Ethnic violence reached its peak during Black July (1983), when widespread anti-Tamil riots broke out.
- ◆ The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord (1987) attempted to bring peace but led to India's military involvement, which complicated the conflict further.
- ◆ The civil war ultimately ended in 2009, with the Sri Lankan government defeating the LTTE.

Objective Questions

1. When did Sri Lanka gain independence from Britain?
2. Which policy, introduced in 1956, marginalised Tamils in Sri Lanka?
3. What was the LTTE's primary goal?
4. Which period in history is called "Black July"?
5. What agreement sought to merge Tamil-majority provinces and disarm the LTTE?
6. Who implemented the Sinhalese Only policy?
7. Which country became involved in the Sri Lankan conflict through the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord?
8. What event led to large-scale Tamil migration to Tamil Nadu in 1983?

9. Who was the Indian Prime Minister in the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord?
10. Which organisation did the LTTE eliminate to establish itself as the sole Tamil representative?
11. When did the Sri Lankan Civil War end?
12. Which guerrilla warfare leader inspired the LTTE?

Answers

1. 1948
2. Sinhalese Only Act
3. Creating an independent Tamil state (Tamil Eelam)
4. 1983
5. Indo-Sri Lanka Accord
6. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike
7. India
8. Black July riots
9. Rajiv Gandhi
10. Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO)
11. 2009
12. Che Guevara

Assignments

1. Discuss the main objectives of the Indo–Sri Lanka Accord (1987). Why did it fail to achieve long-term peace?
2. Analyse the impact of Black July (1983) on the escalation of the Sri Lankan Civil War.

3. Explain how India's diplomatic and military involvement shaped the trajectory and outcome of the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict.
4. Discuss what the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict reveals about the challenges of managing ethnic diversity in post-colonial societies.
5. Evaluate the role of the LTTE in both advancing Tamil political demands and intensifying the civil war.

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UNIT

India and Globalization

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ explain the economic crisis of 1991 and its historical roots
- ◆ describe and analyse the key components of the 1991 economic reforms introduced under liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation (LPG)
- ◆ evaluate the impact of economic reforms on India's growth trajectory, employment patterns, and structural transformation
- ◆ assess the challenges that emerged in the post-reform period, including inequality, regional disparities, and sectoral imbalances

Prerequisites

By the mid-1960s, India began facing serious economic difficulties despite early achievements under the first three Five-Year Plans. Consecutive droughts in 1965 and 1966, high defence expenditure after the wars with China (1962) and Pakistan (1965), a sharp fall in foreign exchange reserves, rising debt obligations, and the devaluation of the rupee in 1966 all contributed to a growing crisis. Political changes in 1967 prompted Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to introduce bold measures such as bank nationalisation, tighter control over key industries, and policies that strengthened the public sector. The Green Revolution also improved food security and reduced dependence on imports. However, by the 1980s, India struggled with protectionist policies, inefficient public sector undertakings (PSUs), sluggish industrial growth, and failure to adapt to global economic shifts. While East Asian economies took advantage of globalisation, India continued to face slow growth and rising external debt.

In 1991, a severe balance of payments crisis forced India to reconsider its economic strategy. Under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, India introduced sweeping reforms that liberalised trade, reduced state control, encouraged foreign investment, and integrated India into the global economy. This unit explores the crisis, the reforms, and their long-term implications.

Keywords

Globalisation, Liberalisation, Manmohan Singh, FERA, FEMA, Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB), LPG Reforms

Discussion

6.5.1 Economic Crisis of 1991

Indian economy faced a major fiscal and balance of payments crisis in 1991, resulting in long-lasting issues and challenges. This crisis stimulated India to start economic reforms and operational adjustments. These significant changes were implemented by a minority government led by Narasimha Rao, with prominent economist Manmohan Singh as the finance minister. In the 1960s, Manmohan Singh courageously argued that “India’s pessimism towards exports was unjustified and recommended a more open economy with fewer controls.”

After Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980, she attempted liberalisation by deregulating industrial licensing and reducing restrictions on large companies. When Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister in 1984, He pursued faster industrial deregulation, exchange rate flexibility, and some relaxation of import controls.

6.5.2 Economic Reforms of 1991

In July 1991, a new industrial policy was introduced, declaring that industrial licensing

would be abolished for all industries except those critical to national defence or hazardous to the environment and human health, such as cigarette and alcohol production. This marked a significant shift from previous policies that reserved many industries for the state and the small-scale sector.

Let’s check the significant policy changes of 1991

- ◆ In July 1991, the rupee was devalued by around 20% to align exchange rates with global standards and incentivise exporters to counter the effects of import barriers.
- ◆ The rupee was partially made exchangeable under the Liberalised Exchange Rate Management System (LERMS).
- ◆ The FDI regulations were liberalised, allowing foreign investors to invest equity in selected industrial sectors.
- ◆ Import duties were reduced to encourage trade.
- ◆ The import of capital goods was allowed without a specific license.



- ◆ Several sectors were opened to private companies. This marked the commencement of the decentralisation.
- ◆ Foreign Institutional Investors (FII) were allowed to invest in Indian capital markets.
- ◆ The Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) of 1973 was amended to line up with liberalised industrial, trade, and exchange rate policies, eliminating restrictions on companies. FERA was replaced by the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).
- ◆ The Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) was created to facilitate and promote foreign investment in India.

However, the reforms' full implementation was delayed for several reasons. Bipan Chandra opined that the government faced challenges, like Rajiv Gandhi after the Bofors scandal (weapon-contract scandal), Indira Gandhi during the Punjab crisis, and Narasimha Rao after the Babri Masjid destruction, were reluctant to implement reforms. The intense ideological opposition from the left, which failed to recognise global economic changes, also played a role in obstructing progress. Ramachandra Guha observed that, in a 1989 book, a Harvard Business School professor described how the entrenched interests of politicians, bureaucrats, and native entrepreneurs sustained India's economy. These interests hindered meaningful economic reforms. While countries like South Korea combined market discipline and foreign capital to achieve rapid growth, India's state remained "paralyzed," with local entrepreneurs "blind to the need for reform."

The 1991 crisis allowed the Narasimha Rao government to break from traditional thinking and pursue a comprehensive reform

agenda. The reforms initiated in 1991 included a necessary fiscal correction, aligning the exchange rate, liberalising trade, and industrial controls to allow liberal imports, dismantling the industrial licensing system, and abolishing the MRTP Act. The public sector underwent reforms, including gradual privatisation, while the capital markets and financial industry were restructured.

6.5.2.1 Positive Results

Despite the challenges, the results in the first few years of reform were impressive. India made one of the fastest recoveries from a deep macroeconomic crisis. The industrial production reached a height of 12.8% in 1995-96. The capital sector also showed a boom. The abolition of the MRTP Act did not negatively impact the small-scale industrial sector. The period also witnessed agricultural growth of over 3% annually. Along with this, India's debt situation also improved. After 1991, the stock market reform showed a skyrocketed result.

India's foreign exchange position has significantly strengthened. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Foreign Institutional Investment (FII) have contributed to this stability. Other emerging sectors during the period were the IT, financial, and retail sectors. Alongside manufacturing, these sectors have strengthened the Indian economy, enhanced its global reputation, and generated employment opportunities for the educated workforce.

6.5.3 Challenges Beyond Economic Growth

1. Poverty and Inequality

Globally, the gap between rich and poor has grown significantly. From 1950 to 2000, income disparities widened. Globalisation has benefited chiefly those with education, skills, and resources, while unskilled and poor workers have yet to be left behind. The

benefits of globalisation are concentrated in urban areas of a few states. Many rural regions and poorer states have yet to see much improvement.

2. Employment and Unemployment

Globalisation has created job opportunities in IT, IT-enabled services, financial services, and retail sectors. However, most jobs are at lower levels, particularly in business process outsourcing (BPO). Between 1993 and 2004, employment growth slowed in rural areas compared to the pre-reform period (1983-93). Urban job growth has been primarily in the unorganised sector, with lower wages and job security. The share of organised sector jobs has declined, now representing only 7% of the labour force compared to over 10% before liberalisation. Public sector employment has decreased, while private sector growth has been uncertain.

India has introduced several job creation initiatives, such as the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP).

3. Agriculture

Growth in agriculture has slowed after economic improvements. Efficiency has fallen due to smaller land holdings. Problems like low public investment, out-of-date farming practices, and poor seed supply affected the

growth during the period. While some farmers benefited, many faced financial struggles and huge debts due to market changes and SEZs.

4. Education and Healthcare

While significant progress has been made in education and healthcare, the country has faced substantial challenges, particularly in rural areas, concerning the quality and accessibility of these services. The accessibility of education in rural areas and poor quality of education due to shortages of teachers and insufficient infrastructure caused significant challenges. Healthcare facilities need to be enhanced, especially in rural areas, where Primary Health Centres (PHCs) suffer from shortages of doctors, medicines, and infrastructure. These challenges were faced with the cooperative efforts of both government and public entities.

India must first understand its strengths before focusing on areas where it needs to improve to alleviate doubts and meet the expectations of a prosperous future. A successful future relies on the competitive advantage of firms across all sectors of the economy. This competitive advantage depends on critical elements common to various industries, such as transportation, skilled labour, energy, education, and health. This improvement is a precondition for expanding technical possibilities. In this context, globalisation would become a crucial factor.

Recap

- ◆ India faced a severe fiscal and balance of payments crisis in 1991 due to structural weaknesses and immediate external pressures.
- ◆ A minority government initiated far-reaching liberalisation and globalisation reforms.
- ◆ The New Industrial Policy (1991) dismantled the Licence Raj.

- ◆ The MRTP Act lost its restrictive powers.
- ◆ The Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) was replaced by the more flexible Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).
- ◆ The Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) was set up to attract foreign direct investment.
- ◆ Post-reform growth was driven by sectors such as IT, finance, telecommunications, services, and retail.
- ◆ Despite growth, major challenges persisted: rising inequality, rural distress, agricultural slowdown, urban–rural divides, and inadequate investment in human development (education and health).
- ◆ Globalisation created new opportunities but also exposed India to economic volatility and social disparities.

Objective Questions

1. What was the cause of India's 1991 economic crisis?
2. Who was the Finance Minister during the 1991 economic reforms?
3. When was the new industrial policy introduced?
4. Which act was replaced by the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)?
5. What percentage was the rupee devalued in 1991?
6. Which sector saw significant growth post-reforms?
7. What was the growth rate of agricultural output during the reform period?
8. Which employment scheme was introduced to address rural unemployment post-reforms?
9. Which act was abolished to encourage industrial growth?
10. What factor strengthened India's foreign exchange reserves post-reforms?

Answers

1. Balance of payments crisis and fiscal issues
2. Manmohan Singh
3. July 1991
4. Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA)
5. 20%
6. IT and financial services
7. 3%
8. National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP)
9. MRTP Act
10. FDI and FII

Assignments

1. Discuss the immediate and structural causes of India's 1991 economic crisis.
2. Explain the major reforms introduced under the 1991 New Industrial Policy. How did they change India's economic structure?
3. Analyse the dual impact of globalisation on urban and rural India, with specific attention to employment and income inequality.
4. Evaluate the long-term effects of liberalisation on India's economic sovereignty and global competitiveness.

Suggested Reading

1. Ahamed, Aijaz, *On Communalism and Globalization*, Three Essays Collective, 2008.
2. Anand, S., *Thought and Vision of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Anamika Publishers, 2005.
3. Chandra, Bipan, et al., *India Since Independence*, Penguin Random House, India, 2008.
4. Ganguli, Ramanuj, *Globalization in India: New Frontiers and Emerging Challenges*, PHI Learning Private Limited, New Delhi, 2010.
5. Guha, Ramachandra, *India After Gandhi: The History of World's Largest Democracy*, Picador Publishers, India, 2017.
6. Panikker, K. N., *Communal Threat, Secular Challenge*, Earthworm Publishers, 1997.
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8. Sen, Amartya and Bardwan, Pranab, *The Political Economy of Development in India*, OUP India, 1998.

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1. Chandra Bipan , et. al., *India Since Independence*, Penguin Random House, India, 2008.
2. Guha, Ramachandra, *India After Gandhi: The History of World's Largest Democracy*, Picador publishers, India, 2017.
3. Sodhi, J. S., "An Analysis of India's Development: Before and after Globalisation", *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, Jan. 2008, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Jan. 2008), pp. 317-354.

MODEL QUESTION PAPER SETS





SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE:

Reg. No:

Name :

FOURTH SEMESTER B.A (Honours) HISTORY EXAMINATION

MAJOR DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC ELECTIVE

SGB24HS201ME – SITUATING INDEPENDENT INDIA

2024-25 - Admission Onwards

MODEL QUESTION PAPER - SET A

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

SECTION A

*Answer any **eight** questions of the following. Each question carries **one** mark.*

(08 X 1 = 8 Marks)

1. Who introduced the Objective Resolution in the Constituent Assembly?
2. Who was the chief architect of the integration of princely states?
3. The Panchsheel Agreement was signed between India and which country?
4. Name the first state created on the basis of language after independence.
5. What is the meaning of Non-Alignment?
6. Who went on a hunger strike for a separate Telugu state?
7. Who pioneered the Green Revolution in India?
8. What does ISRO stand for?
9. When was the National Emergency declared in India?
10. Name the commission associated with OBC reservations.

SECTION B

*Answer any **six** questions of the following. Each question carries **two** marks.*

(06X2 =12 Marks)

11. What was the objective of Pakistan's Operation Gibraltar during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War?
12. What was the significance of the Shimla agreement 1972 between India and Pakistan?



13. What is the importance of the Preamble to the Constitution of India?
14. What do you mean by a mixed economy?
15. Explain the emergence of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.
16. What was the JP Movement?
17. What was the main objective of India's First Five-Year Plan?
18. Define the "Sons of the Soil" doctrine.

SECTION C

*Write a short note on any **six** questions of the following. Each question carries **five** marks.*

(06X5= 30 Marks)

19. India's first Nuclear test
20. Green Revolution
21. The functioning and achievements of the Constituent Assembly
22. Linguistic Reorganization of States
23. Two Nation theory
24. Bandung Conference
25. The rise of the Bahujan Samaj Party
26. Cauvery Water Dispute

SECTION D

*Answer any **two** questions of the following. Each question carries **ten** marks.*

(02X10 =20 Marks)

27. Discuss the process of Partition and evaluate its long-term social and political consequences.
28. Analyse the major features of the Indian Constitution and their importance in national integration.
29. Examine Nehru's foreign policy objectives and assess the challenges India encountered during the Cold War.
30. Critically evaluate the Emergency and its impact on India's democratic institutions.





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SGB24HS201ME – SITUATING INDEPENDENT INDIA

2024-25 - Admission Onwards

MODEL QUESTION PAPER - SET B

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

SECTION A

*Answer any **eight** questions of the following. Each question carries **one** mark.*

(08 X 1 = 8 Marks)

1. Who chaired the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution?
2. Name the first satellite launched by India.
3. Who is known as the father of the Green Revolution in India?
4. In which year did Hyderabad accede to India?
5. When was the Non-Aligned Movement established?
6. Who led the Naxalbari uprising?
7. What is the Interstate Water Disputes Act?
8. What does BAMCEF stand for?
9. Who was the king of Kashmir when the Instrument of Accession was signed?
10. Who was the founder of BSP?

SECTION B

*Answer any **six** questions of the following. Each question carries **two** marks.*

(06X2 =12 Marks)

11. Give any two causes for communal riots during Partition.
12. What is meant by Federalism in the Indian context?
13. Write a brief note on Fundamental Rights.



14. What do you understand about Operation Blue Star?
15. Why was the Mandal Commission constituted?
16. Short note on the Chipko Movement.
17. What is the Assam Accord?
18. What was the main objective of India's First Five-Year Plan?

SECTION C

*Write a short note on any **six** questions of the following. Each question carries **five** marks.*

(06X5= 30 Marks)

19. Lahore Resolution
20. JP Movement
21. States Reorganisation Commission
22. Green Revolution
23. The 1971 Indo-Pak War
24. Cauvery water dispute
25. Suppression of civil liberties and media during the Emergency period
26. Narmada Bachao Andolan

SECTION D

*Answer any **two** questions of the following. Each question carries **ten** marks.*

(02X10 =20 Marks)

27. Discuss the role of the national movement in shaping democratic values in India .
28. Evaluate the importance of scientific and technological advancement in post-independence India.
29. Analyse the rise and decline of the Janata Government.
30. Assess the development of environmentalism in post-independence India with reference to Chipko and Narmada Bachao Andolan.



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ഗ്രഹപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
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Govt. Brennen College
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Ph: 04902990494
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Ph: 04842927436
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**DON'T LET IT
BE TOO LATE**

**SAY
NO
TO
DRUGS**

**LOVE YOURSELF
AND ALWAYS BE
HEALTHY**



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Kollam, Kerala Pin- 691601, email: info@sgou.ac.in, www.sgou.ac.in Ph: +91 474 2966841

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