Contemporary India

COURSE CODE: M21HS11DC

Postgraduate Programme in History
Discipline Core Course
Self Learning Material

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Contemporary India

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Semester - IV

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(With Model Question Paper Sets)

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Rest assured, the university's student support services will be at your disposal throughout your academic journey, readily available to address any concerns or grievances you may encounter. We encourage you to reach out to us freely regarding any matter about your academic programme. It is our sincere wish that you achieve the utmost success.

Warm regards.
Dr. Jagathy Raj V.P.   01-01-2025

Contents

Independence and After

UNIT 1

The Legacy of Indian National Movement

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

♦ understand the character and legacy of the National Movement
♦ explore the emphasis on civil liberties within the national movement and its enduring impact on India's democratic framework
♦ analyse how the principles of the Indian nationalist movement were incorporated into the Constitution
♦ investigate the movement's approach to India's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and its efforts to embed secularism and unity within the national fabric

Background

The Indian National Movement was one of the most significant mass movements in modern history, uniting diverse socio-economic and ideological groups in the struggle against colonial rule. Unlike other revolutionary movements that sought sudden transformations, the Indian National movement was characterised by a long, sustained resistance grounded in democratic principles, civil liberties and non-violent protest. It provided a platform for different political ideologies to coexist, debate and contribute to the broader goal of national liberation. Inspired by Gandhian political strategies and broader anti-imperial sentiments, the movement fostered an unprecedented consensus on the principles of anti-colonialism and national unity. This consensus was not an inherited reality but an outcome of continuous political and ideological negotiation, making the movement unique in its approach to political change.

The legacy of the Indian National Movement extends beyond independence, deeply influencing India's political, social and constitutional framework. It laid the foundation for democratic governance, civil rights and social justice, which became integral to the Indian Constitution. The movement's commitment to secularism, civic liberties and inclusive nationalism ensured that post-independence India remained committed to pluralism and democratic values. This unit explores these characteristics of the national movement, examining how the movement shaped modern Indian identity and continues to influence contemporary debates on governance, social justice and national unity.

Discussion

1.1.1 The Uniqueness of the National Movement

♦ *Inspired diverse social groups*

One of the most important mass movements in contemporary history, the Indian National Movement inspired millions of people from a wide range of ideological and socio-economic backgrounds to take up political causes. It was crucial in opposing and eventually overthrowing a strong colonial empire. Therefore, in addition to the revolutions in France, Russia, China, Cuba and Vietnam, the Indian independence movement is also very important for people who want to change the current political and social order. Various dimensions of the Indian national movement, particularly Gandhian political strategies, offer significant insights for movements within societies that operate largely within the framework of the rule of law and are marked by democratic governance and fundamental civil liberties.

♦ *Transformed democratic structures*

The Indian national movement stands as the only historical instance in which a semi-democratic or democratic political structure was successfully transformed through sustained struggle. It uniquely exemplifies the practical application of a broadly Gramscian strategy of positional warfare, not as a singular revolutionary event but as a prolonged popular movement rooted in moral, political and ideological contestation. Over time, counter-hegemonic forces were systematically cultivated through progressive stages, with periods of active resistance interspersed with phases of relative passivity.

♦ *United diverse ideologies*

A prime example of a wide-ranging movement that brought disparate political and ideological currents together behind a single goal is the Indian National Movement. It offered a forum where opposing ideologies could live side by side, discuss issues and compete for supreme political and ideological control. Although spirited debates on core topics were promoted, the movement's unity and effectiveness were unaffected by this diversity and intellectual competition. Rather, its power came from its dedication to open discourse and a multicultural atmosphere.

The Indian National Movement occupies a position in Indian history comparable to that of the French Revolution in European history and the Russian Revolution in Russian history. After 1920, under Gandhi's leadership, the movement fostered an unprecedented consensus that played a crucial role in sustaining its legacy. This consensus was not an inherited or pre-existing reality; rather, it emerged organically through the movement's evolution. It was built upon two fundamental pillars: anti-imperialism and a conception of national unity.

1.1.2 Characteristic of Indian National Movement

Indian nationalism, which emerged in the latter half of the 19th century, was a distinct manifestation of the broader global phenomenon of nationalism. However, it developed several unique characteristics. It was territorial rather than ethnic, civic rather than religious, pluralistic rather than monocultural and notably, non-coercive in its approach. Rather than imposing unity from above, it sought to cultivate national cohesion organically. While it exhibited a homogenising tendency, which is inherent in all nationalist movements, it remained largely non-coercive. As previously noted, the foundations of Indian nationalism rested on two primary pillars: anti-imperialism and national unity.

The Indian nation, as it emerged, was fundamentally a creation of the national movement and remains its most significant legacy. It is crucial to recognise that a unified Indian nation did not pre-exist but had to be actively constructed. The national movement was not merely a representative of an already-formed nation; rather, it played a pivotal role in its very creation. This process was particularly significant given that several British scholars, ethnographers and commentators had largely dismissed the possibility of nationhood for India. They doubted the capacity of the Indian people to develop a shared national identity.

The Indian nationalist response in the 19th century was to assert that the Indian people constituted a "nation-in-making," a concept first articulated by the prominent moderate leader Surendranath Banerjea. This perspective acknowledged that, while India's population was divided along regional, linguistic, caste and religious lines, it was actively progressing towards the formation of a unified national identity. The assertion challenged the notion that Indians were inherently incapable of nationhood and emphasised that these internal diversities did not pose an insurmountable obstacle to the development of a cohesive national consciousness.

With India's independence in 1947, anti-imperialism — one of the two foundational pillars of Indian nationalism — lost its operative significance and ceased to be a defining element of national identity. This shift raised a critical question: what would now constitute the essential character of Indian nationalism? Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first Prime Minister, engaged deeply with this issue. He envisioned Indian nationalism as being rooted in economic development and the emotional integration of its people. Nehru recognised that the process of modern economic development, particularly in a vast and pluralistic society like India, would inevitably generate initial disparities and social dislocations. He acknowledged that India's transition to industrial prosperity would not be free from the challenges and disruptions inherent in such a transformation.

There was an inherent risk of civil unrest with such a change, which may have destabilised Indian society. Indian nationalism was expected to act as a unifying factor and lessen the negative impacts of industrialisation. In other words, nationalism was supposed to offer the required stability, even while contemporary industrial progress had the potential to upset the balance of society. In a public speech in 1957, Nehru emphasised this worry and warned against acts that would threaten national unity, saying: "We are all in one boat, and we must move forward together. If some people start acting carelessly, the boat will not go forward and will eventually capsize."

It is difficult to evaluate how well India has performed this function since gaining independence. Nonetheless, social cohesion and political agreement were highly prevalent in 1950s Indian society, which were crucial preconditions for economic expansion. But during the ensuing decades, India saw a great deal of upheaval and this harmony gradually deteriorated. In addition, some social groups started to doubt the legitimacy of the Indian nation. Indian nationalism now faces new difficulties as a result of the country's economy being more globally integrated and the swift social changes that have occurred since the 1990s. In the end, the future will show how the Indian country handles the new difficulties. Today, it is important to recognise that nation-building is still a work in progress. There are forces in society that are both in favour of and against this process. National unity is progressing more quickly due to some tendencies, but it is also being disrupted by others. As one of the main legacies of the national movement, Indian nationalism will undoubtedly continue to have a big impact on how Indian society develops in the future.

1.1.2.1 The Question of Civic Rights and Liberty

The focus on civil liberties is a noteworthy legacy of the national movement. The movement's founders have vowed to uphold basic civil rights, especially the freedom of the press, speech and association, since its founding. Since early nationalist leadership mostly used the press to perform their political operations, press freedom was particularly important to them. One of the earliest Indian leaders to acknowledge education as a basic human right was Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Although Gopal Krishna Gokhale had consistently opposed the heavy taxation imposed by the British, he expressed willingness to support the existing taxes provided the British government took responsibility for implementing compulsory primary education. Surendranath Banerjea was the first nationalist leader to be imprisoned for his critique of the British through journalistic writings.

♦ National movement emphasised civil rights

Later, under Gandhi's leadership, voluntarily courting arrest became a prominent form of political activism within the national movement, with thousands of individuals offering themselves for imprisonment. Although adult suffrage was not granted in Britain until 1928, Lokmanya Tilak began advocating its introduction in the early 20th century. Indian leaders, particularly Tej Bahadur Sapru and Motilal Nehru, drafted a national constitution in 1928 as part of their dedication to human rights. Often referred to as the Nehru Report, this document suggested establishing an independent court, a parliamentary system, adult suffrage and a proclamation of fundamental rights. The Nehru Report firmly demonstrated the national movement's unwavering commitment to civil liberties and human rights, despite the British rejection of it.

♦ Nehru Report

In 1936, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Civil Liberties Union (ICLU) was established on a non-partisan basis to promote civil liberties. The Union's inaugural circular, drafted by Nehru, outlined its purpose: *"It is proposed to establish an Indian Civil Liberties Union, whose sole function will be the protection of civil liberties across all areas of national life… The primary objective of this Union will be to collect and disseminate information. Subsequent activities will include organising public opinion to resist any encroachments on civil liberties."* The ICLU served as a precursor to the major civil liberties and human rights organizations that later emerged in independent India.

♦ Indian Civil Liberties Union

But more than anybody else, Gandhi offered the most precise and unambiguous definition of what a human right ought to be. "We must first make good the right of free speech and free association,"

he wrote in his monthly Young India in 1922. We must risk our lives to protect these fundamental rights, he said. In his words, "freedom of the press can be said to be truly respected when the press can comment in the harshest terms on and even misrepresent matters; freedom of speech means that it is unassailable even when the speech hurts. Freedom of association is truly respected when assemblies of people can discuss even revolutionary projects."

The Indian national movement established the groundwork for the pursuit of a robust human rights framework in India after independence. But over time, the nation's human rights situation has not been steady or uniform. Human rights and liberties have occasionally been lacking in Indian society as a whole, either as a result of the state's institutions' tendency towards authoritarianism or because of intolerance displayed by some social groups towards others. However, it is important to recognise that India has upheld a comparatively high level of civil and human rights respect when compared to many other societies. Without a doubt, the human rights framework — albeit one that is only partially implemented — is a holdover from the norms put in place during the national struggle.

Democratic Values

From the beginning, the movement was instrumental in promoting democratic values and advocating the establishment of parliamentary systems based on popular elections. In the early 20th century, nationalist leaders pushed for universal suffrage. The movement also worked to protect freedom of the press and speech, resisting colonial attempts to suppress them, while advancing political and economic reforms. Over time, it expanded the semi-democratic political system, fighting against efforts to limit legal political activities and peaceful mass movements. The Congress ministries formed in 1937 played a significant role in enhancing civil liberties, supporting the revival of peasants, workers, students and radical political groups like the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party.

The Indian National Congress (INC), established in 1885, was organised on democratic principles, promoting open discussion and debate for policy-making and political decisions. As Bipan Chandra mentions, the major resolutions, such as the 1920 Non-Cooperation Movement and the 1929 Civil Disobedience Movement, were the result of debates and voting within the party. During the Second World War, Congress also opposed Gandhiji's stance on cooperating with the war effort in January 1942. The INC encouraged dissent and diverse viewpoints, fostering a democratic environment. This democratic approach was not exclusive to the

Congress but was also practiced by other political organisations such as Congress Socialist Party, trade unions and social organisations, contributing to India's political culture.

The key figures in the movement were committed to civil liberties, as reflected in their statements. Lokamanya Tilak highlighted the importance of the press and freedom of speech for a nation's growth. In 1922, Gandhi emphasised the need to protect the right to free speech and association, pledging to defend these rights at all costs. Later, in 1939, he linked civil liberty with nonviolence, stating it was essential for Swaraj and a foundation for political and social life. Gandhi supported democratic principles but criticised Western liberal democracy for failing to hold political power accountable. Similarly, Jawaharlal Nehru, in 1936, stated that restricting civil liberties would harm a nation's vitality. In 1931 the Karachi Congress resolution on Fundamental Rights also reinforced the importance of free speech, the press and association.

The national movement's commitment to non-violence significantly contributed to the development of a democratic mindset in India. It emphasised dialogue, debate and persuasion, backed by public opinion, as the main tools for political and social change, contrasting with violence, often linked to authoritarianism. The defence of civil liberties was also inclusive, bridging ideological divides. Political groups, typically opposed to one another, came together to protect the rights of others. For instance, Bipan Chandran stated that Moderates like Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Surendranath Banerjea supported the freedom of the Extremist leader Tilak, while Congress supporters of non-violence defended figures like Bhagat Singh and communists in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. In 1928, the Public Safety Bill and Trade Disputes Bill, designed to suppress trade unions, left-wing groups and Communists, was opposed not only by Motilal Nehru but also by Conservatives such as Madan Mohan Malaviya, M. R. Jayakar and business leaders like Ghanshyam Das Birla and Purshottamdas Thakurdas in the Central Legislative Assembly.

The concepts of popular sovereignty, representative government and civil liberties were not traditionally part of India's political culture, nor were they simply introduced by colonial influence, as is often claimed. Instead, it was the national movement, not the colonial rulers, that introduced and seated these principles in Indian society. The colonial government not only restricted civil liberties but also opposed the idea of a parliamentary system with popular elections. They argued that India was unsuitable for democracy because of its geography, history and socio-cultural context. In contrast, the national movement, inspired by Enlightenment ideals,

♦ *Key figures advocated civil liberties*

♦ *Non-violence shaped India's democratic mindset*

♦ *National movement introduced civil liberties*

made democracy and civil liberties central to India's political system.

The success of India's democratic system after independence can be attributed to the nationalist movement's establishment of a tradition of civil liberties and democracy. This tradition was enshrined in the Indian Constitution, challenging predictions that democracy would not succeed in a society divided by language, religion, caste and culture and lacking Western-style economic development. The different outcomes of democracy and civil liberties in India and Pakistan reflect their historical paths, with Pakistan's founding political party not committed to democratic principles or civil liberties. On the other hand, India's nationalist movement built a culture of democracy, civil liberties and respect for dissent, freedom of expression and minority rights, shaping its political ethos.

1.1.2.2 Public Participation in the National Movement

The national movement in India recognised the country's ongoing process of nation-building. Uniting its diverse regions and communities against colonial rule became a central goal. While the movement acknowledged the role of colonialism in bringing economic and administrative integration, it also criticised the political divisions it created. From the start, the movement focused on India's unity, with the Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, serving as a nationwide platform to rally support for national demands. Alongside other political parties and organisations, the Congress promoted national unity, which was essential for integrating princely states after independence.

Nationalist leaders valued India's cultural, linguistic, religious and regional diversity, seeing it as a source of strength that enriched the nation's identity. They did not view this diversity as a barrier but as something that contributed to India's emerging unity. Regional and cultural identities were key to the national movement and helped shape the idea of a united India.

Though class divisions were present in society, the movement did not focus on dividing people along class lines. Instead, it supported class struggles and organisations. Over time, the movement developed two main principles: unity in diversity and national integration. Unity was to be achieved through cultural exchange and diversity, while national integration aimed to create a strong central government and merge India's varied cultures into a unified national identity.

♦ *India's democracy rooted in nationalism*

♦ *National unity was central*

♦ *Regional identities shaped unity*

♦ *Principles of unity and integration*

1.1.2.3 Values of Secularism and Democracy

Secularism was a key principle in the nationalist movement, emphasising Hindu-Muslim unity. Although the movement could not prevent communalism or the partition of India, this failure was not due to abandoning secularism but rather due to, as Bipan Chandra said, strategic missteps and a limited understanding of communalism's roots in socio-economic and ideological factors. The movement also opposed caste-based oppression and, after 1920, added the abolition of untouchability to its agenda. However, it lacked a consistent anti-caste stance and did not focus much on women's liberation.

♦ *Hindu-Muslim unity was prioritised*

The national movement recognised India's diversity and saw the country as still in the process of nation-building. The shared experience of colonial rule created both material and emotional unity for the independence struggle. The movement's political and ideological actions were essential in shaping the nation, while also respecting regional, religious, caste, ethnic and linguistic differences. The cultural needs of linguistic groups were recognised and from 1921, Congress reorganised its provincial committees based on language rather than British administrative divisions.

♦ *Unity arose from national movement*

From the beginning, the national movement was committed to secularism, which meant separating religion from politics and the state. It viewed religion as a personal matter, with the state staying neutral and treating all religions with equal respect. The goal was to eliminate religious discrimination and oppose communalism. Pattabhi Sitaramayya mentioned in his work *The History of the Indian National Congress (1885–1935)* mentioned that in the Karachi Resolution of 1931, the Congress reaffirmed its secular position, declaring that in a free India, every citizen would have the right to freedom of conscience and the freedom to practice their religion. It also ensured legal equality for all citizens, regardless of caste, creed, or gender and guaranteed no discrimination in public employment or personal matters. The state would remain neutral towards all religions.

♦ *Congress affirmed secularism in 1931*

According to Bipan Chandra in his early years, Gandhi, a deeply religious individual, highlighted the strong connection between religion and politics, believing that politics must be rooted in morality, which he found in all religions. He considered religion, particularly in the Indian context of *dharma*, to be synonymous with morality. However, after observing how communalists were using religion as a divisive tool, Gandhi began advocating for the separation of religion from politics. By 1942, he asserted that religion was a personal matter with no place in politics and reiterated in 1947 that it should not interfere with national affairs.

♦ *Gandhi's evolving stance on religion*

Jawaharlal Nehru, too, was a strong critic of communalism, recognising it as India's form of fascism. Notably, leaders of the national movement refrained from invoking religion to rally the people, focusing instead on the economic, political, social and cultural critiques of British rule.

The national movement faced challenges in dealing with communal forces and lacked a clear strategy to counter them, contributing to the Partition and the communal violence of 1946–47. Nevertheless, the movement's commitment to secularism played a crucial role in ensuring that secular principles became a core part of India's constitution and its social and political structure.

1.1.2.4 Constitution of India

The Constitution of India came into effect on 26 January 1950, which is now celebrated annually as Republic Day. Before 1950, this date was observed as Independence Day, a tradition that began in 1930, when people across India united to pledge for full independence from British rule. Therefore, it was symbolic for the Republic of India to be established on this date, connecting the country's path to independence with the adoption of its republican constitution. The development of India's constitution started long before 1950, arising from the struggle for freedom from British rule and movements advocating constitutional governance in the princely states.

The core contribution of the national movement went beyond passing resolutions or suggesting constitutional reforms; it was grounded in practical political actions. These efforts brought key principles like parliamentary democracy, republicanism, civil liberties and social and economic justice to the forefront, which later became the foundation of the Indian Constitution. For example, the idea of a parliamentary government was introduced to the Indian public through the use of the term "Congress," akin to the U. S. Lower House, in the Indian National Congress. According to Bipan Chandra from 1920, after Gandhiji's changes to the Congress constitution, the organisation functioned on an elective system, with office-bearers chosen through elections at all levels. The All India Congress Committee (AICC), made up of delegates elected by Provincial Congress Committees (PCCs), functioned like the Lok Sabha, while the Working Committee resembled the Cabinet. The Congress president was like the Prime Minister. Thus, in 1950 when the Constitution adopted a parliamentary system, it was not simply copying the British model, but formalising practices already experienced during the nationalist movement.

The national movement played a key role in fostering democratic values, which became the foundation of the Indian Constitution. This democratic spirit was evident in the widespread involvement of the masses, which led to the inclusion of adult suffrage after independence. The fight for the freedom of the press during the British rule was championed by leaders like Lokamanya Tilak, who paid a personal price for the bold stances taken by his newspapers. Publications like *Leader*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Bombay Chronicle*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu*, *Tribune*, *Searchlight*, *Aaj* and *Ananda Bazar Patrika* were strong supporters of the national movement. This legacy led to the inclusion of freedom of expression as a fundamental right in the Constitution.

In 1922, Gandhiji argued that constitutional reforms in India were not voluntarily introduced by the British but were a response to ongoing pressure from Indian nationalists. He disputed the idea that the British had initiated modern constitutional governance, pointing out that their reforms, such as the Indian Councils Act of 1892, did not meet the aspirations of the nationalists. While the British made some electoral changes, nationalist demands for universal suffrage and greater power for councils went beyond these reforms. The Indian nationalist vision, as seen in the Constitution of India Bill 1895, called for fundamental rights and freedoms, which the British reforms failed to address. After independence, Indian leaders kept parts of the British constitutional system because they were familiar with it and had fought for it, while also introducing new ideas for governance.

The Indian national movement progressed from demands for responsible governance in the 1880s and 1890s to calls for self-determination and the creation of an independent Indian constitution by the early 20th century. Leaders like Tilak, Annie Besant and the Congress-Muslim League collaboration pushed for reforms, with the Congress-League Pact in 1916 advocating elected provincial legislatures. In 1918, the Congress formally demanded self-determination, inspired by global movements. Despite the British opposition, Indian leaders continued pursuing constitutional reforms, leading to the Commonwealth of India Bill (1925), which sought equal status for India as a self-governing dominion. Motilal Nehru's 1924 proposal for a roundtable conference to discuss a new constitution was ignored by the British, who appointed the all-white Simon Commission in 1927. In response, the Nehru Report of 1928 called for a parliamentary system, fundamental rights and minority protection. The failure of the Simon Commission and growing national protests culminated in the Civil Disobedience Movement, demanding full independence.

By the mid-1930s, the demand for a Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage gained momentum, with Nehru and Gandhi advocating this model. The Congress Working Committee formalised this demand in 1937, while Congress ministries were formed in protest. The "August Offer" in 1940 and the "Quit India" resolution in 1942 further advanced the demand for constitutional self-determination. The Cripps Mission in 1942 proposed a Constituent Assembly with Indian representation, but its divisive elements were rejected. After World War II, the British attempts to resolve constitutional issues included the White Paper in 1945 and the Cabinet Mission in 1946, which offered elections based on provincial legislatures. While Congress accepted the proposal, asserting the Assembly's sovereignty, the Muslim League opposed it, continuing resistance even after the Constituent Assembly was established.

The Congress Party worked to ensure that India's diversity was represented in the Constituent Assembly, including Scheduled Castes, women and minority groups. Nehru and Gandhiji focused on selecting the most qualified individuals, with several non-Congress members elected on Congress tickets. The Assembly faced challenges due to the Muslim League's decision not to participate and the partition of India in 1947, which affected its role.

After India's independence, the Assembly functioned as both a constitutional body and legislature, following a structured process to draft the constitution. This included forming committees, preparing drafts and debating provisions. The Congress Party played a key role in reviewing each aspect, though some critics argued the process was overly formal. Leaders like Nehru, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Maulana Azad were crucial in the process, promoting non-sectarianism and consensus-building. The Congress aimed to attract the best talent and ensure the constitution reflected the will of the people. As Granville Austin noted, the Congress Party was central to the Assembly's functioning, which mirrored India's one-party system at that time.

The Indian Constitution establishes a democratic, parliamentary framework of government, defining both Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles. Fundamental Rights safeguard citizens from government interference, while Directive Principles guide the state's efforts to implement reforms that protect these rights. The decision to adopt a parliamentary system was a topic of debate, with proponents of decentralised, panchayat-based governance, such as Gandhians, voicing their opposition. Ultimately, the majority favoured a centralised parliamentary model. Although

many members supported socialism, they chose not to explicitly include it in the constitution, instead opting for a democratic framework with a socialist orientation that would allow the country to gradually progress towards socialism as needed.

Adult Suffrage

The Congress had long supported adult suffrage and with the opportunity available, it was determined to put this policy into practice. While some suggested limiting adult suffrage to panchayat elections with indirect elections for higher bodies, most preferred direct elections. This marked a significant advancement in a society largely controlled by the Brahminical, upper-caste, male elites and characterised by widespread illiteracy.

♦ *Congress strongly backed adult suffrage*

Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, a key constitutional expert, saw adult suffrage as a sign of trust in ordinary citizens and in democracy. K. M. Panikkar pointed out that adult suffrage had not just political implications, but also social ones. It empowered marginalised communities to realise their potential and participate in the political processes. This shift continues to influence political involvement, with lower social groups increasingly pushing for their rights. This was especially significant because, as Granville Austin said, under British rule, only about 15 percent of the population could vote, based on property and education criteria.

♦ *Marginalised groups gained political voice*

Preamble

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution reflects its core values and is inspired by the Objectives Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru. This resolution was presented to the Constituent Assembly on December 13, 1946 and adopted on January 22, 1947. The Preamble highlights the goals of ensuring justice (social, economic and political), liberty (of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship), equality (of status and opportunity) and fraternity (promoting individual dignity and national unity). The focus on justice, especially social and economic justice, as a priority shows its central role in shaping the Constitution's framework.

♦ *Inspired by Objectives Resolution*

Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles

The Indian Constitution aims to foster social transformation through its Fundamental Rights (Part III) and Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV). While Fundamental Rights are enforceable by law, Directive Principles are non-justiciable, signifying the immediate protection of civil and political rights while gradually working towards economic and social justice. This distinction reflects both global influences and India's colonial legacy, balancing individual freedoms with social progress.

♦ *Distinction between rights and justice*

Fundamental Rights, covered in Articles 12–35, protect citizens from arbitrary state actions and private abuses. These rights address issues like untouchability, discrimination and forced labour and are enforceable in courts, with remedies such as writs. On the other hand, Directive Principles guide future legislation on areas like resource distribution, education, gender equality, workers' rights and environmental protection. The balance between these principles has sparked debates, particularly on land reforms and property rights. Amendments like the First Amendment (1951) redefined property rights and supported social reforms such as the abolition of zamindari. Over time, the courts and constitutional amendments have managed the tension between individual rights and social justice, as illustrated by the landmark case Minerva Mills v. Union of India (1980), which emphasised the equal importance of both Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles.

♦ *Balance between rights and reforms*

This dynamic relationship highlights the Constitution's flexibility in aiming for an egalitarian society, where personal freedoms are safeguarded while promoting social progress, as stated by Nehru: Directive Principles guide social development and Fundamental Rights protect individual freedoms.

♦ *Constitution aims for social equality*

Secular State

The Indian Constitution defines India as a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic. While the terms "secular" and "socialist" were officially added in the 42nd Amendment of 1976, the Constitution's basic principles have always been secular. In 1973, the Supreme Court confirmed that secularism is a fundamental aspect of the Constitution. The Fundamental Rights in the Constitution prohibit religious discrimination and guarantee the freedom to practice, profess and spread one's religion. It also protects cultural and educational rights, especially for minorities.

♦ *Constitution defines India as secular*

Indian secularism differs from the western model, which grew out of the separation between church and state. In India, secularism emerged from the nationalist movement's fight against communal forces trying to divide the country by religion. Jawaharlal Nehru described Indian secularism as the freedom of religion and conscience, including the right to be non-religious and emphasised that religious practices should not interfere with each other or with the state's core values. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, former President and philosopher, explained that Indian secularism reflects the country's ancient traditions, ensuring equality for all citizens without favouring any religion.

♦ *Indian secularism arose from nationalism*

The legacy of the national movement is defined by its focus on political and economic independence, modern development,

ending inequality and oppression, establishing representative democracy and civil liberties, promoting internationalism and an independent foreign policy and building a united nation despite its diversity. These goals were pursued through inclusive politics with broad public support. After independence, India has largely followed these core principles, many of which are reflected in the Constitution and the platforms of political parties. The Indian public continues to use this legacy as a standard to assess the performance of governments, political parties and institutions.

Summarised Overview

The Indian national movement, one of the most remarkable mass movements in history, served as a cornerstone for shaping modern India. Emerging after 1919, it transformed Indian society by involving people from diverse regions and backgrounds in the fight for independence. Mahatma Gandhi's leadership was pivotal in this movement, emphasising non-violence and mass participation as a strategy for resistance. He believed in the collective strength of the masses rather than the influence of individual leaders. This ethos of inclusion not only strengthened the movement but also laid the foundation for a democratic mindset and universal adult suffrage in India.

The movement's commitment to civil liberties was unwavering, challenging colonial restrictions on free speech, press and association. Leaders like Tilak, Gandhi and Nehru consistently linked these liberties to the growth of the nation. Gandhi argued that civil liberties were essential for Swaraj (self-rule), while Nehru saw them as a prerequisite for social and economic progress. The Congress Party, embodying democratic principles, encouraged open debates and voting within its structure. This culture of dissent and freedom of expression became the bedrock of India's political philosophy and was later enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

Secularism and democracy were integral to the national movement's vision. Leaders prioritised Hindu-Muslim unity and worked to dismantle caste-based discrimination, though challenges like communalism and untouchability persisted. The movement's secular ethos shaped India's constitution, ensuring equal rights for all citizens regardless of religion, caste, or gender. The reorganisation of Congress committees along linguistic lines and its recognition of cultural diversity further reinforced the idea of unity in diversity, which became a hallmark of Indian nationalism.

The legacy of the national movement is profoundly reflected in the Constitution of India, which embodies its principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. The movement's emphasis on civil liberties, democratic values and non-violence provided the framework for a parliamentary democracy. Through its inclusive approach, the national movement instilled confidence in the Indian people, enabling them to actively participate in nation-building. This legacy continues to inspire and guide India, empowering individuals to contribute to its democratic ethos with minimal external support.

Assignments

1. Analyse how the values and practices of the Indian National Movement laid the foundation for democratic system in post-independence India.

2. How did the Indian national movement promote democratic values and advocate for representative government? Discuss with examples.

3. Analyse how the Indian national movement used cultural, linguistic, religious and regional diversity as strengths for achieving national unity.

4. Evaluate the role of secularism in the Indian national movement.

5. Discuss how the principles of the Indian national movement, such as civil liberties, democracy and secularism, were reflected in the Indian Constitution. Provide specific examples.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

UNIT 2

Partition and its Aftermath

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

♦ critically analyse the partition of India and communal riots during the partition
♦ assess the complexities of mass migration and refugee rehabilitation
♦ evaluate the roles of prominent leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru in addressing communal tensions and facilitating integration during and after Partition
♦ investigate the integration of princely states into the Indian Union

Background

The Partition of India in 1947 stands as a watershed moment in South Asian history, symbolising both the triumph of independence and the tragedy of division. For centuries, the Indian subcontinent was a mosaic of diverse religions, cultures and traditions, where Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and other communities coexisted, often in harmony, but not without tensions. Colonial policies during British rule, such as separate electorates and religiously defined politics, sowed seeds of division that blossomed into communal polarisation in the early 20th century.

As the clamour for independence grew louder, the demand for a separate Muslim state by the All-India Muslim League created irreconcilable fissures. The vision of a united India espoused by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru was countered by Muhammad Ali Jinnah's insistence on Pakistan. This ideological and political discord culminated in the division of British India into two nations: India and Pakistan.

The partition triggered unprecedented upheaval. Mass migrations ensued as millions crossed newly drawn borders to join religious majorities, leading to one of the largest and most tragic human displacements in history. The period was marked by horrific violence, mass killings and abductions, particularly in Punjab and Bengal. Amidst the chaos, leaders like Gandhi strove to heal the wounds of communalism, but the scars run deep.

Beyond the immediate violence and displacement, India faced the herculean task of integrating over 500 princely states into a single, sovereign nation. This complex and often contentious process involved negotiations, diplomacy and, at times, military interventions. Visionary leaders such as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and V. P. Menon played critical roles in forging a united India.

This unit provides an understanding of the historical background and legacy of India's Partition, emphasising the political and social factors that led to communal divisions. It examines the large-scale violence, mass migrations and the immense human suffering that accompanied partition. We also explore the complex process of integrating princely states into independent India, highlighting the diplomatic and administrative efforts led by Sardar Patel and V. P. Menon.

Keywords

Partition, Migration, Rehabilitation, Integration of Native States, Dhar Committee, J.V.P. Committee

Discussion

1.2.1 Historical Context

By purposefully giving preference to one community over another, the British divide and conquer strategy aimed to keep Indians from banding together against colonial control. The 1909 acceptance of the Muslim League's demand for separate electorates, which significantly altered India's political landscape until independence in 1947, was a notable example of this strategy. According to some academics, the Muslim League's 1906 deputation to the Viceroy was planned to further colonial objectives and the League was soon founded by an elite group looking to further its own goals. Later, the Sikh community was also subject to this policy of sectarian partition.

♦ *Separate electorates altered politics*

In 1932, Mahatma Gandhi and B. R. Ambedkar reached a compromise that successfully countered a British attempt to create a division between the epressed lasses and upper-caste Hindus by proposing separate electorates for the former. The debate surrounding this issue has since expanded beyond the institutional mechanisms of representative government that the British gradually

♦ *Gandhi-Ambedkar pact resisted division*

introduced in India. Contemporary historians and anthropologists contend that British classification practices not only shaped the political representation of Indians based on caste and religion but also influenced their self-perception and identity within these categories.

♦ *Census reinforced rigid divisions*

By methodically listing diverse castes and communities throughout India, the colonial census helped to establish majority and minority divisions in various areas and strengthen the idea of "enumerated communities." This process forced groups with complicated and diverse identities to fit into a single category, replacing fluid and overlapping identities with rigid, monolithic classifications. Furthermore, opinions of the unique features of Indian society were significantly shaped by British Orientalist scholarship. By favouring a textual and upper-caste interpretation of legal and religious activities, the codification of Hindu law helped to ossify the historically fluid and dynamic character of Hindu society and culture. The historically important function of judicial discretion in Islamic jurisprudence was also diminished by the strict legal interpretations enforced by the codification of Muslim law. Additionally, colonial history narratives were essential in forming collective identities that eventually solidified in the minds of the general public. Perceptions of sectarianism and separation were reinforced by the British understanding of Indian society through the prism of religious and cultural differences, which frequently exacerbated problems.

♦ *Separate electorates deepened identities*

Before British control was established in India, Hindus and Muslims had lived in harmony, as Gandhi noted in Hind Swaraj. However, the two communities' divisions were made worse by colonial rule. Historiographical accounts frequently highlighted times of conflict while ignoring the far longer stretches of social tranquility. The idea of separate communities was developed and formalised over time by the British colonial government. This process was accelerated by the establishment of representative government and separate electorates, which gave the state the chance to strengthen and solidify communal identities.

♦ *Communal boundaries became rigid*

By the early twentieth century, the logic of political competition had intensified, leading to the solidification of more rigid communal boundaries. In their effort to extend their rule in India, the British actively supported Jinnah's Muslim League after 1940, aiming to weaken the national movement and obstruct Congress's participation in governance during the war. Their willingness to entertain not only the partition of India but also its potential fragmentation reflects their broader strategic interests. British policy towards India was increasingly influenced by the shifting

geopolitical landscape of Asia following World War II and the onset of the Cold War.

1.2.2 Partition

The Partition of India in 1947 led to the migration of nearly six million refugees into India, many of whom lost everything. This period saw widespread violence, with over 500,000 lives lost and property worth billions destroyed. Communities across India and Pakistan faced brutal attacks and minorities were targeted in both countries, causing immense social and emotional suffering. Even in Delhi, under the central government's watch, violence against Muslims continued for days.

♦ Massive refugee migration and violence

The situation posed significant challenges for the government and the people of India. The main concern was that the communal tensions caused by Partition could become a permanent part of Indian politics. However, Indian nationalism proved resilient. Despite the pressure of communal forces, the country's leaders, especially Jawaharlal Nehru, worked to uphold the secular foundation of the nation. Nehru's firm leadership and personal efforts, including the threat of resignation, were instrumental in preserving India's unity and secular values during this critical time.

♦ Nationalism resisted communal forces effectively

The communal violence that followed India's Partition was brought under control through strong political and administrative actions. In August and September 1947, the situation in Delhi was stabilised by deploying the army and giving the police authority to act strictly, including shooting at mobs involved in violence and looting. Despite some challenges, the Indian government, under Nehru's leadership, managed to protect the Muslim minority effectively. This contributed to 45 million Muslims choosing to stay in India.

♦ Violence controlled through strict measures

Although communalism was controlled, it was not fully eliminated. Nehru viewed communalism as a major threat to India's unity, often warning against its dangers. He called communalism India's version of fascism, likening it to Nazi ideology. In 1947, Nehru pointed out how the communal hatred spread by the Muslim League had been mirrored by calls for a Hindu state, reflecting a broader trend of adopting fascist methods and beliefs. India's freedom came after long and difficult negotiations, but it also brought devastating violence and loss of life. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were not just negotiators but also participants in the tragic bloodshed that followed.

♦ Freedom accompanied by communal violence

Gandhiji felt helpless and frustrated during the Partition of India. The main reason for his helplessness was the rise of communalism

in Indian society. On June 4, 1947, Gandhiji admitted that Congress accepted Partition, not because they wanted it, but because it reflected the will of the people. Without united public support, Gandhiji could not lead a movement against communalism. Unlike the Quit India Movement of 1942, he found no strong public force to back him in 1947. He acknowledged his inability to create a situation for change and decided to wait for better conditions. Meanwhile, political developments like the Mountbatten Plan moved forward quickly. Facing the reality of riots and the government's inability to control them, Gandhiji reluctantly advised Congress to accept Partition but asked them to oppose it emotionally and morally.

♦ *Gandhiji faced helplessness amid communalism*

♦ *Gandhiji promoted peace and unity*

Even after the Partition, Gandhiji worked tirelessly to heal the nation. He travelled to violence-hit areas, promoted peace and undertook fasts to stop riots. Though he often worked alone, he remained hopeful in people's goodness. His actions reflected the message of his favourite song, *Ekla Chalo Re* — "Walk alone if no one responds to your call."

♦ *Gendered notions shaped Partition recovery*

The mass migration, violence and destruction following the Partition of India in 1947 were on an unimaginable scale. While independence was expected to bring prosperity, it instead led to widespread bloodshed. Amid this chaos, women became central figures in the discourse, seen both as victims of violence and symbols of national honour. Many women, abducted and raped, expressed a desire to stay with their captors, which complicated efforts to restore order. Families and communities pressured the State to recover these women, even if they did not want to return. The debate shifted from material concerns, like property recovery, to the honor of the nation, symbolised by "Bharatmata" (Mother India). The abduction and recovery of women were seen as affronts to national honour and their return to "legitimate" families became crucial. This narrative reinforced gendered notions of purity and national integrity, with the State prioritising these symbolic actions over women's autonomy. The Partition was framed as a loss of the national body and the recovery of women was seen as a way to restore the nation's moral order, reducing women to symbols of national pride and silencing their voices for the sake of a larger political agenda.

1.2.3 Fratricidal War in Punjab, UP and Bengal

1.2.3.1 Bengal

Calcutta

The violence of August–September 1946, instigated by the Muslim League under Mohammad Ali Jinnah, sought to

deepen divisions between Hindus and Muslims, pressuring the British to hasten the partition of India. Jinnah, once a Congress member, believed the Congress primarily represented Hindu interests, ignoring Muslim concerns. The violence in Calcutta led to a strong backlash in Bihar, with Hindus, supported by local Congress leaders, retaliating violently. This fuelled the belief that partition was inevitable. Disturbed by the violence, Gandhi visited the affected areas, walking long distances to comfort victims and prevent further bloodshed. He feared Muslim reprisals and worked to break the cycle of vengeance. As independence neared, the violence continued, leading Gandhi to remain in Calcutta to mediate and restore peace.

The communal riots in Calcutta, particularly the "Great Calcutta Killing" of August 1946, represent some of the most devastating episodes of violence during the Partition of India. These riots were ignited by the Muslim League's declaration of "Direct Action Day" on August 16, symbolising the peak of intensifying Hindu-Muslim tensions as India neared independence. Mohammad Ali Jinnah's controversial proclamation — "Today we have forged a pistol and are in a position to use it" — captured the incendiary rhetoric that fuelled the tragic events. On August 16, violence erupted across the congested streets of Calcutta, initiated by supporters of the Muslim League and their volunteer forces targeting Hindus and Sikhs. In response, Congress sympathisers and Hindu groups retaliated, escalating the unrest into widespread riots. The violence-ravaged key localities such as Park Circus, Lower Circular Road, Vivekanand Road and Strand Road, leaving these areas in ruins.

Official records estimated the death toll at around 4,000, with 10,000 injured, although independent accounts suggest fatalities ranged between 7,000 and 10,000. The riots continued for nearly a week, bringing the city to a standstill and deepening communal mistrust. The inability of H. S. Suhrawardy's Muslim League-led administration to quell the violence resulted in its dismissal, leading to the imposition of the Viceroy's rule to restore order. The repercussions of the "Great Calcutta Killing" extended beyond the city, triggering further violence across Bengal, most notably in Noakhali in October 1946. Referred to as the "Noakhali genocide," these events involved widespread killings, forced conversions, destruction of property and atrocities against women, leaving a trail of devastation in their wake.

The Calcutta riots exposed the deep-seated communal divisions that had been brewing for years. The Muslim League's rhetoric fostered a sense of alienation among Muslims, portraying Hindus as oppressors, while many Hindus viewed the demand for Pakistan

as a betrayal of national unity. These mutual perceptions of enmity culminated in Calcutta, foreshadowing the brutal violence that would accompany partition. Far from being a spontaneous outbreak of hatred, the riots were exacerbated by political manipulation and a failure of leadership to defuse mounting tensions. The weakened British colonial administration, burdened by post-World War II challenges and preparing to leave India, proved incapable of curbing the violence. Years of divisive colonial policies, including religious segregation and separate electorates, had fractured the social fabric, setting the stage for this calamity.

The violence in Calcutta and Noakhali became grim precursors to the widespread massacres, displacements and communal atrocities that accompanied partition. These events underscore the devastating human cost of political failures and decisions leading up to independence. Reflecting on the Calcutta riots highlights the dangers of communalism and the exploitation of religious identities for political objectives. Gandhi's efforts to promote peace, exemplified by his mission to Noakhali, demonstrated his unwavering commitment to nonviolence and unity, though they were unable to reverse the tide of sectarianism.

Role of Gandhi

According to Bipan Chandra, as India's Independence Day neared, Gandhi's mood was sombre. When a reporter from the Hindustan Times asked for a message, he replied that he had "run dry." The BBC also requested his participation in recording a message, highlighting its global audience through translations. Bipan Chandra mentioned that Gandhi declined, suggesting they approach Jawaharlal Nehru instead and added, "Ask them to forget I know English." On 15 August 1947, Gandhi observed a 24-hour fast, unable to celebrate the independence he had fought for, as it came with the painful consequences of Partition. The previous year had been marked by widespread violence between Hindus and Muslims, starting in Calcutta in August 1946 and spreading to regions such as Bengal, Bihar, the United Provinces and finally Punjab, where the bloodshed reached unprecedented levels.

Two weeks before India's independence, Mahatma Gandhi departed from Delhi and spent some time in Kashmir before travelling to Calcutta, where communal violence was still raging. Unrest broke out in Bengal, particularly with riots in Noakhali and Calcutta. On the 13th, he relocated to the Muslim-majority area of Beliaghata to foster peace. In Beliaghata, violence resulted in over fifty deaths. Gandhi, determined to bring peace, decided to fast, believing that he could control the violence in Calcutta. On the 15th, Gandhi initiated a fast and prayer session and by afternoon,

♦ *Deep-rooted divisions fuelled enmity*

♦ *Riot trauma shaped generations*

♦ *Partition overshadowed Independence celebrations*

reports surfaced of Hindus and Muslims joining in the celebration, adorning their homes and streets with flags and palm leaves and marching through the streets chanting the nationalist slogan "Jai Hind." The rioters started surrendering their weapons and peaceful processions for communal harmony took place throughout the city. This display of unexpected unity uplifted Gandhi's spirits. He decided to address a gathering of 10,000 to 30,000 people at Rash Bagan Maidan, expressing his hope that the peace between the communities was genuine and not just a fleeting occurrence. He believed this reconciliation could be the key to permanently resolving communal tensions in Calcutta. Leaders from the Congress, Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha assured Gandhi that the violence would end, leading him to break his three-day fast.

The calm in Calcutta on August 15th was both a relief and a surprise. In the weeks before Independence, the city had been tense due to the finalisation of the partition of Bengal. The Partition Award divided Bengal, with the eastern part going to Pakistan and the western part staying with India. As the main city in the province, Calcutta became a focal point of conflict. The decision by the Boundary Commission to place Calcutta in India raised fears of violence on the eve of independence.

Noakhali

On October 10, 1946, communal riots broke out in the Noakhali and Tipperah districts of Bengal (now in Bangladesh), mainly targeting the Hindu community. This event stands out as one of the most devastating events of the partition era. In 1946, as British rule neared its end, tensions rose over the Muslim League's demand for a separate Muslim state, which was opposed by the Indian National Congress. This demand led to widespread communal unrest in mixed-population regions. These riots unfolded against a backdrop of escalating Hindu-Muslim tensions and epitomised the widespread polarisation that engulfed the Indian subcontinent as independence and Partition loomed. Initially rooted in socio-political strife and economic grievances, the violence rapidly escalated into systematic attacks, with the minority Hindu community bearing the brunt.

The Muslim League's "Direct Action Day" on August 16, 1946, triggered the Great Calcutta Killings. Although Noakhali initially remained calm, violence erupted there on October 10, affecting areas like Ramganj, Raipur, Lakshmipur in Noakhali, Chandpur, Laksham in Tipperah. The violence, led by Muslim National Guards and private militias, involved killings, forced conversions, rapes and destruction of property. The Bengal government, led by

Marginal notes:

♦ *Gandhi fasted to curb violence*

♦ *Partition fears heightened Calcutta's tensions*

♦ *Polarisation escalated as Partition neared*

Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, faced criticism for delayed action and some accused it of inaction to support the demand for Pakistan. Reports of the riots were suppressed, including an account by retired judge Edward Skinner Simpson. What set Noakhali apart was the organised nature of the violence, which involved forced conversions, destruction of property and assaults on women. Numerous Hindus were coerced into renouncing their faith or fleeing the region. The participation of local leaders and landowners in orchestrating the atrocities underscored entrenched socio-economic inequalities.

♦ *Organised violence included forced conversions*

By October 14, law enforcement intervened, but the damage was severe. Approximately 5,000 Hindus were killed, many forcibly converted and women subjected to atrocities. Revolutionary leader Lalmohan Sen was among the victims. Relief efforts were organised by groups like the Bharat Sevashram Sangha and the Indian National Congress. Mahatma Gandhi visited Noakhali, advocating peace and non-violence. Though his efforts offered some comfort, large-scale displacement followed. Around 50,000 people were left homeless, with many fleeing to Calcutta, Assam, Tripura and West Bengal.

♦ *Gandhi's peace efforts brought comfort*

The violence in Noakhali subsided by November 1946 but left deep scars. After the partition in 1947, Noakhali became part of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The riots in Bihar and the United Provinces later in 1946 were seen as reactions to the Noakhali violence. The Noakhali riots are a significant yet often overlooked chapter in the history of communal tensions in the Indian subcontinent.

♦ *Bihar riots echoed Noakhali violence*

Mahatma Gandhi's response to these events highlighted his unwavering commitment to non-violence and interfaith solidarity. He launched a peace mission in the affected areas, travelling from village to village to foster reconciliation and communal harmony. While Gandhi's efforts yielded some temporary respite, the underlying tensions remained unresolved, exacerbated by political manipulations and the impending Partition.

♦ *Gandhi promoted reconciliation through non-violence*

The Noakhali riots also revealed the shortcomings of the Congress Party's secular ideals. Despite Gandhi's intervention, the political leadership struggled to effectively address the violence or its underlying causes. Simultaneously, the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan further deepened communal divisions, consolidating its support base among Muslims in Bengal and beyond. From a broader perspective, these riots exposed the inadequacies of colonial governance in maintaining law and order during critical moments. With the British administration focused on its impending departure, its response to the violence was largely passive, leaving local communities to navigate the chaos independently. This failure

♦ *British passivity worsened tensions*

to intervene only intensified the mistrust between Hindus and Muslims, perpetuating the cycle of violence.

In the aftermath, the Hindu population experienced widespread displacement and profound insecurity, with many migrating to India and contributing to the refugee crisis accompanying Partition. The riots left an indelible scar on the region's collective memory, symbolising the devastating human toll of political and religious strife. The Noakhali riots remain a sobering reminder of the destructive potential of communalism and the fragility of inter-community relationships. They underscore the urgency of addressing socio-economic disparities and fostering inclusive political systems to avert such tragedies. While deeply tragic, the legacy of Noakhali emphasises the importance of sustained efforts towards reconciliation and justice in the face of historical wounds.

♦ *Displacement fuelled the Partition refugee crisis*

1.2.3.2 Punjab

The communal violence in Punjab during the partition of India in 1947 is one of the most harrowing chapters in South Asian history. It was marked by intense bloodshed, mass displacement and ethnic cleansing, leaving a lasting scar on the subcontinent. Punjab, a historically diverse region with Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs living together, became the epicentre of this violence. The capital of Punjab, Lahore, a city with a rich blend of religious and cultural influences, found itself in turmoil as the future of the Punjab region hung in the balance under British rule. Once the centre of the Mughal Empire, with iconic landmarks like the Badshahi Mosque, Lahore had also served as the capital of the Sikh Empire and a key centre for the Arya Samaj, a Hindu reform movement. With the British preparing to partition Punjab, the city's fate seemed to lean towards being allocated to Pakistan, as Muslims were the dominant community. A new governor for West Punjab had been appointed and celebrated in Lahore on the evening of the 15th.

♦ *Lahore faced uncertainty during Partition*

However, the celebration quickly turned to chaos. Power outages plunged the city into darkness, with only the glow from nearby fires illuminating the scene. Gunfire rang out, though its source remained uncertain. Despite the unrest, the governor downplayed the situation, while Mahatma Gandhi, speaking from Beliaghata, voiced his deep concern about the violence engulfing Lahore and questioned when and how it would end. He expressed hope that the peace achieved in Calcutta might inspire a similar resolution in Punjab and across India.

♦ *Unrest in Lahore worsened rapidly*

By the end of 1946, Punjab remained one of the few provinces in India relatively untouched by widespread violence. The unionist government, a coalition of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh landlords,

struggled to maintain peace amidst rising tensions. They faced opposition from the militant Muslim League and the Sikh Akali Dal. Sporadic outbreaks of violence began in January, escalating after the Unionists were ousted in early March. By May, Punjab had become the new centre of violence, shifting away from eastern India. A report to the House of Lords revealed that between November 18, 1946 and May 18, 1947, a total of 4,014 people were killed in riots across India, with 3,024 of those fatalities occurring in Punjab.

◆ *Punjab violence intensified post-1946*

The unrest began escalating in early 1947 and reached its peak after the announcement of partition. Rawalpindi was among the first districts to witness violence, with organised attacks by Muslim mobs, some supported by groups like the Muslim National Guards and elements within the police and army. Hindus and Sikhs in Rawalpindi faced brutal atrocities and women were particularly targeted. Many chose to end their lives rather than face dishonor, with tragic incidents of self-immolation and mass suicides in wells. The "Rape of Rawalpindi" set a grim tone for the ethnic cleansing that spread across Punjab.

◆ *Rawalpindi violence escalated atrocities*

The violence in Punjab took three main forms: the destruction of villages through looting, arson and mass killings; attacks on refugee trains, where explosives derailed trains before passengers were massacred; and ambushes on refugee columns travelling on foot. Even with military escorts, these groups often lacked sufficient protection and were left vulnerable to violence. In western Punjab, Hindus and Sikhs were targeted, with their properties destroyed and lives upended. Many were forced to flee to safer regions. In eastern Punjab, where Hindus and Sikhs were the majority, similar violence was inflicted upon Muslims. Armed Sikh groups attacked Muslim villages, killing indiscriminately. Impoverished Muslims who could not flee were particularly vulnerable.

◆ *Violence targeted trains and villages*

Communal tensions, inflamed by political leaders, fuelled the riots. The Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, used religious appeals to rally support for Pakistan, while Hindu and Sikh leaders responded with calls for vengeance. As partition approached, the violence escalated. The British administration, preoccupied with its departure, failed to contain the unrest, leaving a power vacuum that allowed the violence to spiral out of control.

◆ *Political tensions fueled Partition violence*

The aftermath of partition saw the near-complete ethnic cleansing of certain areas. Hindus and Sikhs fled to India from regions that became Pakistan, while Muslims fled to Pakistan from India. Millions were displaced, leaving their homes and belongings behind. Refugee trains became sites of horrific massacres and

women suffered unimaginable atrocities, including abduction, rape and forced conversions. Many women were abducted and others died amidst the chaos. The violence devastated communities, tearing apart the social fabric of Punjab and leaving deep scars. The Partition of Punjab was more than just a division of territory — it was a profound human tragedy, a stark reminder of the devastating effects of communal hatred and religious division. Its legacy of bitterness continues to shape the relationship between India and Pakistan, influencing their history and politics to this day.

♦ *Partition caused mass displacement, violence*

On 1 August, the Punjab Boundary Force was established under Major General T. W. 'Pete' Rees, a Welsh officer, to manage the rising violence. The team included advisers from Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities. In his first report, Rees warned that the boundary award would be controversial, especially among Sikhs. By 14 August, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, commander-in-chief of the British Indian Army, expressed concern over the delayed announcement, which had fuelled rumors and heightened tensions.

♦ *Boundary Force created to manage violence*

The scorching heat added to the difficulties, particularly for Muslims fasting during Ramzan. Rees humorously asked his Muslim driver about the delay in the monsoon, to which the driver replied, "God too is displeased." On 16 August, the boundary award was revealed, causing widespread anger. Muslims were upset that the Gurdaspur district was assigned to India instead of Pakistan, while Sikhs were distressed by the loss of Nankana Sahib to Pakistan. Violence escalated throughout the region. Armed Sikh groups in eastern Punjab targeted Muslims, forcing many to flee to West Punjab, where violence continued. Refugees arriving in Lahore brought horrific stories of brutality, with some showing visible signs of violence. From March to July, Rees reported 4,500 civilian deaths in Punjab, with 2,500 wounded. In August alone, official figures recorded 15,000 deaths, though the actual number was likely even higher.

♦ *Boundary award sparked anger and violence*

In late August, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, expressed deep concern over the unrest in Punjab and its wider implications. He visited the region three times, meeting people on both sides of the border and conducting aerial surveys. Nehru condemned the violence, emphasising that both sides were equally brutal, with acts of extreme savagery. Rees described the violence as "pre-medieval," but it could be seen as a mix of medieval and modern brutality, given the variety of weapons used — from primitive axes to advanced firearms.

♦ *Nehru actively addressed Punjab violence*

On September 2, the Punjab Boundary Force was disbanded

due to its inefficiency, caused by divided authority and the lack of martial law. Responsibility for law and order was handed over to the governments of India and Pakistan. However, violence and mass migration continued, with Hindus and Sikhs being expelled from West Punjab and Muslims from East Punjab. The violence was noted to be equally brutal on both sides. Millions of refugees moved across the region, some under military protection, while others faced great risk. Nehru witnessed a refugee convoy of 100,000 people stretching ten miles from Jullundur to Lahore. Fearing further conflict, he suggested rerouting the convoy around Amritsar, where 70,000 refugees from West Punjab were already gathered in distress. This migration is considered the largest in history.

The situation in the province worsened due to the biased approach of Sir Francis Mudie, the Governor of West Punjab, who strongly opposed the Congress. Mudie believed in governing autonomously, which led him to block his Cabinet's efforts to ease the tensions between West and East Punjab and between Pakistan and India. Unfortunately, Pakistani politicians avoided addressing religious extremism, staying quiet in public despite their private concerns. On the other hand, India's leaders, Nehru and Gandhi, gained significant support from the Muslims of West Punjab for defending minority rights.

Bengal and Punjab, two key provinces involved in the events of 1946–47, shared notable similarities. Both had Muslim majorities, which led to their claim for inclusion in Pakistan. However, both also had significant Hindu populations. Ultimately, both provinces were divided, with Muslim-majority districts being assigned to East or West Pakistan, while areas with predominant religious minorities were allocated to India.

1.2.3.3 Uttar Pradesh (United Provinces)

The communal violence that occurred in Uttar Pradesh during the Partition of India in 1947 stands as a significant reflection of the religious and political tensions of that period. Though these riots are less documented than those in Punjab or Bengal, they had important consequences due to UP's central role in shaping Muslim nationalism. Unlike other regions, Uttar Pradesh lacked a prominent, unified Muslim landlord class or influential leaders as those in Punjab or Bengal. Despite this, the province's urban centres became key sites for communal mobilisation, fuelled by the Muslim League's rhetoric and the counter-movements led by Hindu nationalists. The unrest arose from long-standing social and economic inequalities, as well as divisive colonial policies. Partition escalated fears, leading to mass migrations and uncertainty about communal futures.

Political groups like the Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha deepened religious divides by prioritising sectarian identities over shared goals. Violence, especially in cities like Meerut, Aligarh and Moradabad, included arson, killings and sexual assaults, often driven by local elites seeking dominance. Weak responses from British authorities worsened the crisis.

The 1946 elections marked a crucial turning point when the Muslim League gained significant support in urban areas, especially among city-based Muslims. However, this trend was not universal, as rural Muslims and weaving communities largely aligned with the Congress, highlighting the deep class and geographical divisions within the Muslim population of Uttar Pradesh. Religious leaders, especially the ulama, had a complex and varied role in these events. While many opposed the Muslim League, their fragmented positions weakened their ability to present a unified counter-narrative.

The riots in Uttar Pradesh mirrored the broader communal polarisation of the time. In cities like Meerut and Lucknow, violence was often exacerbated by rumours, retaliatory acts and the breakdown of intercommunal trust. Unlike the mass migrations seen in Punjab, the violence in UP remained primarily localised, but had a profound psychological impact. Families were often torn apart, with members adopting opposing ideological stances, leading to long-lasting divisions, even among those who chose to remain in their homes.

The response to the violence was shaped by the Congress leadership's priorities, particularly their focus on consolidating power amidst the chaos. Leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel condemned the violence but struggled to address its underlying causes. Mahatma Gandhi's efforts to promote communal harmony were met with significant opposition, both from hardliners within the Hindu and Muslim communities and from factions within the Congress. As Partition seemed inevitable, Gandhi's vision of a pluralistic India gradually lost support.

The colonial legacy further contributed to the unrest. British administrators, preoccupied with facilitating their withdrawal, refrained from decisive action to curb the violence. The system of separate electorates and communal categorisation established under colonial rule entrenched divisions, which leaders from both communities manipulated. The colonial government's inability to maintain law and order only worsened the situation.

Cultural and literary figures of the time, such as Saadat Hasan Manto and Amrita Pritam, captured the human cost of these events. Through their works, they chronicled the displacement, pain and

loss endured by ordinary people. These writers emphasised the futility of violence and the enduring scars left on survivors, many of whom struggled to rebuild their lives in the fractured post-Partition society. The communal riots in Uttar Pradesh highlighted the vulnerability of India's pluralistic fabric when subjected to political manipulation, religious divisions and a lack of grassroots peace-building efforts. These events serve as a poignant reminder of the human cost of Partition and the challenges faced in nation-building amidst deep communal divisions.

♦ *Violence exposed pluralistic fragility*

The violence in Uttar Pradesh, particularly the Garhmukteshwar massacre during the 1946 religious fair, exposed the intensity of communal hatred. Hindu pilgrims targeted and killed Muslims within and around the festival grounds, leading to an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 casualties. This incident was a stark reflection of the deep animosity and volatile nature of inter-communal relations during this period. Such incidents were part of a broader pattern of unrest across the province. The Muslim League's direct-action campaigns and inflammatory rhetoric, combined with the breakdown of dialogue between the Indian National Congress and the League, further deepened the communal divide. The League's portrayal of the Congress as a Hindu-centric organisation contributed to Muslims' growing distrust and resentment.

♦ *The Garhmukteshwar massacre symbolised hatred*

Women and children, among the most vulnerable victims of the violence, suffered mass killings, sexual assault and abductions. Entire families were displaced, villages destroyed and survivors left to deal with trauma and loss. Though the violence in UP was smaller in scale than that in Punjab or Bengal, it shared similar patterns of destruction and suffering.

♦ *Vulnerable groups endured severe atrocities*

The events in Uttar Pradesh were indicative of the broader fault lines that ultimately led to the creation of Pakistan. Reconciliation efforts failed, as Gandhi's calls for unity and non-violence were overshadowed by the growing demands for a separate Muslim homeland. The riots in UP thus became part of the larger Partition tragedy, making the province a microcosm of the subcontinent's communal struggles.

♦ *UP reflected Partition's broader fault lines*

The long-lasting effects of these riots continued to shape communal relations in Uttar Pradesh for many years. Incidents like the Garhmukteshwar massacre remain stark reminders of the destructive potential of communal politics. Ultimately, the riots during Partition revealed the fragility of communal harmony in the face of political opportunism and underscored the significant challenges of uniting a diverse and divided society. The lessons from these events remain vital, emphasising the dangers of

♦ *Communalism challenged India's unity*

communalism and the enduring importance of fostering unity in pluralistic societies.

Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi called for unity and worked to reduce violence, but local leaders sometimes fuelled tensions. Administrative failures, including unprepared police and military forces, made the situation worse. The riots had a lasting impact, deepening communal divisions in UP and underscoring the need for secular governance in independent India. However, as scholars like Hasan point out, the violence also entrenched mistrust and communal politics, challenges that continue to influence India's future.

♦ Deepening communal divisions

1.2.4 Migration and Rehabilitation

The partition of India in August 1947 resulted in one of the most significant mass migrations in recorded history, driven by intense religious divisions and pervasive communal violence. Approximately 15 million individuals were displaced, as Hindus and Sikhs sought refuge in India while Muslims migrated to Pakistan. This upheaval was accompanied by severe hardship, including widespread starvation, disease and brutal violence. Refugee convoys, often comprising tens of thousands of people, navigated perilous landscapes, frequently encountering ambushes and massacres. Trains transporting migrants became targets of violent attacks, often leaving passengers dead or severely injured.

♦ Violence plagued refugee convoys, trains

The Punjab region was particularly affected, bearing the brunt of the partition's impact. With its population sharply divided along religious lines, the division of Punjab into Indian and Pakistani territories intensified violence instead of mitigating it. Muslims were forced to leave East Punjab in India, while Hindus and Sikhs fled West Punjab in Pakistan. By November 1947, within just three months of partition, approximately 8 million people had crossed the border between India and West Pakistan in both directions. Within a year, this number rose to 12 million, leaving behind a trail of devastated towns and villages.

♦ Punjab faced severe partition violence

Bengal experienced a somewhat distinct scenario. While communal tensions had plagued Bengal before partition, the actual division of the region was relatively peaceful, largely due to Mahatma Gandhi's presence in Calcutta. Nevertheless, a significant migration of Hindus from East Bengal to India began before partition and continued thereafter, with over a million crossing the border by the end of 1948. In contrast to Punjab, Bengal witnessed primarily one-directional migration, as relatively few Muslims left West Bengal for East Bengal. Renewed communal unrest in 1950 triggered another wave of migration, adding 2.25 million refugees to the tally.

♦ Gandhi ensured Bengal's peaceful partition

The scale of the crisis overwhelmed both the Indian and Pakistan governments, which were unprepared for the magnitude of the population exchange. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru acknowledged the lack of prior planning for such an unprecedented movement. Despite this, both governments acted swiftly to address the disaster. Emergency measures included the establishment of ministries for refugee rehabilitation, the creation of temporary tent settlements and the use of public buildings to accommodate evacuees. By November 1947, more than 1.25 million refugees were being sheltered in over 150 camps across India, with comparable numbers in Pakistan.

♦ *Governments unprepared for population exchange*

Rehabilitation efforts presented formidable challenges, especially in urban areas. In rural regions, refugees were often resettled on abandoned agricultural land, although land availability was more favorable in Pakistan. Urban centres faced acute housing shortage, particularly in India, where the influx of refugees far outnumbered those departing. Pakistan's economy suffered from the abrupt departure of skilled professionals, while India grappled with an oversupply of trades people and shop keepers. New townships like Faridabad and Nilokheri were developed in India to alleviate these challenges and both nations introduced loans and retraining programmes for the displaced.

♦ *New townships built to aid refugees*

Despite substantial rehabilitation efforts, the refugee crisis left enduring scars. By 1951, nearly 15 million people had been permanently uprooted, with approximately 7.5 million refugees each in India and Pakistan. Although many were resettled, the economic, social and psychological losses were profound. The refugee crisis also exacerbated tensions between India and Pakistan, with disputes over abandoned property and the status of abducted women and children further straining relations. While large-scale migrations diminished after 1950, the legacy of partition continues to represent a deeply contentious and painful chapter in the history of both nations. Resettling these refugees demanded immense time, resources and effort, driven by idealism and determination. While building a new India included acts of heroism and ambition, it also faced numerous challenges. The integration of princely states and refugees involved pain and difficulties, some of which remained unresolved. Yet, these tasks were completed through the collective efforts of Indians.

♦ *Integration achieved despite challenges*

1.2.4.1 Refugee Issue

The partition of India in 1947 led to one of the largest and most rapid migrations in human history, displacing an estimated 14.5 million people over just four years. This unparalleled event sharply divided migration along religious lines, with Hindus and Sikhs

moving from the newly created Pakistan to India and Muslims travelling in the opposite direction. The western border experienced the most intense demographic shifts, with Indian Punjab seeing its Muslim population decline from approximately 30% in 1931 to just 1.75% by 1951. Similarly, in Pakistani Punjab, the proportion of Hindus and Sikhs dropped from 21.7% to a mere 0.16% during the same period.

Migration along the eastern border, while significant, was comparatively smaller in scale. In Indian West Bengal, 6.31% of the population emigrated, replaced by an influx of 8.47% migrants. Meanwhile, in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), 6.5% of the population left, with incoming migrants comprising only 1.66% of the population by 1951. Religious demography played a critical role, as districts with substantial minority populations experienced higher migration rates. For instance, Amritsar in Indian Punjab recorded over 500,000 Muslims in 1931, but this number dwindled to just 4,000 by 1951. Similarly, in the Gujrat district of Pakistani Punjab, the Hindu and Sikh population decreased from 130,000 to only 100.

A striking pattern of "relative replacement" emerged in certain areas, where incoming refugees nearly equalled those who left. In Delhi, for example, approximately 450,000 people departed, while 500,000 refugees arrived, making up 28% of the city's population by 1951. Proximity to the border was a major factor influencing migration, with districts closer to it experiencing greater exchanges. Urban centers like Karachi in Pakistan and Delhi in India became key destinations for refugees, although this trend was less pronounced in Bangladesh, where migration was more scattered.

The migration crisis was accompanied by severe mortality. Along the Punjab border, approximately 2.2 million individuals were classified as "missing," a term that included deaths and untraceable migrations. The mortality rate was alarmingly high, with 16.1% of migrating Muslims and 15.6% of Hindus and Sikhs presumed dead. Although the eastern border experienced less violence, issues like famine and internal displacement added to the suffering. While the western border witnessed an almost total exchange of populations, the eastern border's dynamics were more complex. The Indian government's efforts to prevent large-scale population exchanges in Bengal further complicated the situation, leading to ongoing migration beyond 1951. These population movements reshaped the subcontinent's demographic structure and left lasting socio-economic and cultural consequences for both India and Pakistan.

Ramachandra Guha mentioned that Kurukshetra, once the site of the Mahabharata battle, later served as a temporary haven for millions of Hindus and Sikhs fleeing West Punjab during the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan. Refugees were accommodated in extensive camps, where the government, aided by social workers, provided food, shelter and recreational activities, including films, to alleviate their hardships. Among nearly 200 refugee camps, Kurukshetra became the largest, with most refugees arriving destitute, many being farmers in search of land to cultivate. The government facilitated their resettlement in land vacated by Muslims in East Punjab, but there was insufficient land to accommodate all claims. A land allocation system was established based on a "standard acre" to adjust for varying soil and climate conditions. However, refugees received less fertile land and the gap between land lost and land available was substantial.

♦ *Resettlement faced land shortages*

Despite these challenges, refugees demonstrated remarkable resilience and by 1950, the depopulated countryside had been revived. However, the emotional scars of partition persisted, with refugees unable to reclaim sacred sites such as gurdwaras and shrines in Pakistan. The loss remained deeply felt, symbolised by the empty religious landmarks like Nankana Sahib and Qadian, which served as enduring reminders of the pain and displacement caused by partition, even as the refugees rebuilt their lives.

♦ *Sacred sites symbolised emotional losses*

After the 1947 partition of India, a large number of refugees, mostly farmers, artisans, traders and laborers from West Punjab, moved to India. To accommodate them, the government set up new townships like Faridabad, located 20 miles south of Delhi. The Indian Cooperative Union (ICU), led by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, played a key role in organising cooperatives and self-help groups to help refugees build their homes. However, tensions with the Public Works Department (PWD) arose due to inefficiency and corruption, leading refugees to construct 40% of the houses themselves.

♦ *Faridabad was built for refugee resettlement*

As part of Faridabad's development, social worker Sudhir Ghosh facilitated the installation of a diesel power plant, which was originally intended for Calcutta but was redirected to Faridabad as a gift from German war reparations. The plant was assembled with help from a German engineer and local labour and was inaugurated by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1951, marking Faridabad's industrial growth.

♦ *Punjabi refugees reshaped Delhi's economy*

In Delhi, which had been a Muslim-majority city before 1947, large numbers of refugees, mainly Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs, arrived and settled across the city. Areas like Connaught Circus transformed into busy, vibrant markets. The influx of refugees

changed Delhi's demographic makeup, with many initially living in temporary camps or public spaces before being allocated land on the city's outskirts. Punjabi-majority colonies began to form, often named after Congress leaders. Over time, the refugees' entrepreneurial spirit led them to become influential in trade and commerce and by the 1950s, they had helped shape Delhi into a predominantly Punjabi city.

♦ *Refugees'
entrepreneurial
spirit*

The partition of India deeply affected Bombay (now Mumbai), leading to significant social and cultural changes. By July 1948, around half a million refugees from Sindh, Punjab and the Frontier region arrived, exacerbating the city's already overcrowded housing situation. Almost a million people had to sleep on the streets, while slums grew rapidly. The Sindhi refugees, who had lost land and control over businesses, faced unique challenges. Unlike Punjabi refugees, who could return to East Punjab, Sindhi refugees had no place to rebuild their lives.

♦ *Punjabi
refugees
reshaped Delhi's
economy*

Many refugees, especially children, resorted to street vending, creating tensions with the local Gujarati and Maharashtrian populations. Refugee camps, such as Kolwada, were overcrowded and lacked proper sanitation and facilities. In 1950, a riot broke out in Kolwada due to the poor living conditions.

♦ *Overcrowded
camps caused
riots*

Sindhi refugees expressed frustration with the government's inadequate response and the mistreatment they faced from the local population, particularly Gujaratis and Muslims. While they respected Prime Minister Nehru, they criticised the inefficiency and corruption within the bureaucracy, which they felt had failed to meet their needs.

♦ *Sindhis
resented local
hostility*

The post-partition refugee influx had a significant impact on Calcutta, especially as working-class and agricultural families from eastern Bengal sought refuge in the city. Unlike the abrupt migration in Punjab, the movement of refugees into Bengal was gradual, with a peak following the 1949–50 communal riots, which saw 1.7 million refugees arrive. Many were forced to live in railway stations, streets or abandoned military barracks, with minimal government assistance. This lack of support led to the rise of refugee movements advocating for compensation and citizenship.

♦ *Bengal
migration peaked
after riots*

The refugees faced harsh living conditions. While some turned to religious organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha for help, it was the communists who gained significant influence by organising the refugees into squatter colonies. By early 1950, about 200,000 refugees had settled in these colonies, establishing their infrastructure and schools and demanding legal recognition

♦ *Bengal
refugees resented
Punjab bias*

and state support. They expressed frustration over the preferential treatment given to Punjabi refugees, highlighting the disparities in living conditions. Unlike the more structured resettlement in Punjab, conditions in Bengal remained unstable, fueling discontent that the communists capitalised on.

The 1947 partition had a significant impact on women, who suffered violence, abductions and abandonment. Women from Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities were taken by members of opposing groups, leading to widespread displacement and trauma. Many were forced into brothels in cities like Delhi and Bombay and faced rejection from their families due to the violence they endured. In response, the Indian and Pakistan governments worked together to reunite abducted women with their families, with leaders like Mridula Sarabhai and Rameshwari Nehru taking the lead. Jawaharlal Nehru personally reassured these women, emphasising that their honor was intact and ensuring their dignified return.

The recovery process was challenging, as women were often located and brought back against their wishes. Some had found stability in their new lives, with some even pregnant and were afraid of rejection because of the stigma surrounding their abductions. The forced repatriation caused further distress, as many felt abandoned by the authorities during their initial captivity.

1.2.4.2 Rehabilitation

The refugee issue and rehabilitation in the context of the Partition of India (1947) represents a multifaceted crisis involving immense human suffering and the complex interplay of individual resilience, community support and government intervention. The process of rehabilitation began with a massive influx of refugees from Pakistan to cities like Delhi. These refugees, uprooted from their ancestral homes, crossed the border amidst communal violence, often bringing only a few possessions. The migration was initially perceived as temporary, but the scale of displacement soon necessitated long-term planning and resettlement.

Delhi became a significant destination due to its status as the national capital and its commercial potential. Refugees arrived by trains, trucks, or even on foot, often facing attacks, starvation and natural calamities along the way. Their initial days were marked by extreme hardship. The government established camps such as Kingsway, Purana Qila and Tis Hazari, where refugees were provided temporary shelter and rations. However, these camps were overcrowded, unsanitary and lacked basic privacy, particularly for women. Refugees also took shelter in schools, temples and abandoned houses, leading to tensions with locals and

the government.

The government's role in rehabilitation included distributing rations, issuing temporary ration cards and organising large-scale transportation through trains and airplanes. Despite these efforts, resources were limited and corruption in administrative processes aggravated the refugees' struggles. Those with political or social connections were often able to secure better facilities, while the poorer and marginalised refugees were left to fend for themselves. Illegal occupation of abandoned Muslim properties became widespread, leading to confrontations with authorities. Eventually, the government legalised such occupations in return for rent and taxes.

♦ *Government's role in refugee relief*

The refugees demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. They formed associations to voice their grievances and negotiate with the government. These associations, such as the Refugee Teachers Association and the Delhi Sindhi Association, played a vital role in securing resources and representation for their members. Women refugees, in particular, showed extraordinary courage. They took on jobs and responsibilities traditionally reserved for men, breaking social norms to ensure their families' survival. This marked a significant shift in gender roles and challenged patriarchal structures.

♦ *Refugees formed associations for support*

The influx of refugees brought profound changes to Delhi's demographic, economic and cultural landscape. The city's population grew rapidly, with refugees comprising nearly 28.4% of the population by 1951. The exodus of Muslims and the arrival of Hindu and Sikh refugees transformed the city's communal composition. Refugees, many of whom were skilled and educated, established businesses and contributed to the city's economic growth. New markets like Karol Bagh and Lajpat Nagar emerged as centers of refugee enterprise. Culturally, the refugees introduced new traditions, cuisines and languages, reshaping Delhi's identity. Despite the challenges, the refugees succeeded in rebuilding their lives and integrating into their new environment. Their resilience, combined with government support and community solidarity, helped them transform Delhi into a vibrant and diverse metropolis. Their story is one of survival, determination and the human spirit's ability to overcome adversity.

♦ *Rapid demographic and economic changes*

The experience of refugees from East Bengal, particularly Hindus fleeing East Pakistan (later Bangladesh), adds another layer of complexity. Many East Bengali refugees settled in Kolkata and West Bengal, with migration continuing long after the partition. Early arrivals, often middle-class bhadralok elites, relied on social

networks for resettlement, while later arrivals, predominantly from lower-caste and labourer backgrounds, faced greater hardships due to a lack of such networks and insufficient government support. Many of these refugees ended up in overcrowded camps or unauthorised colonies with inadequate living conditions. Attempts to relocate them to remote areas, such as the Andaman Islands or Dandakaranya in central India, often failed due to resistance and unsuitability of the relocation sites.

The government made significant efforts to provide relief, resettlement and rehabilitation for nearly six million refugees from Pakistan, who lost everything during their displacement. By 1951, the challenges of rehabilitating refugees from West Pakistan were largely resolved. However, addressing the situation of refugees from East Bengal was more difficult. The migration from East Bengal was different from the mass movement of Hindus and Sikhs from West Pakistan in 1947. It happened gradually over decades due to repeated communal violence, continuing until 1971. This sustained flow made it challenging to provide shelter, jobs and emotional support.

In West Punjab, refugees could settle on lands vacated by Muslim migrants, easing their resettlement. On the other hand, East Bengali refugees struggled in West Bengal, where land redistribution options were limited. Linguistic and cultural similarities helped Punjabi and Sindhi refugees integrate into areas like Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan. In contrast, East Bengali refugees were mostly confined to West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. Many displaced agricultural workers had to shift to semi-urban and urban livelihoods, often joining the underprivileged class. This contributed to the economic and social challenges in West Bengal.

The rehabilitation efforts for displaced populations exhibited considerable variation, shaped by the distinct circumstances of each group and the conditions they encountered in their new environments. In Eastern India, for instance, the refugee experience prominently involved the migration of Bengali Hindus from East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) to West Bengal, particularly metropolitan Calcutta. These refugees grappled with severe housing shortages, prompting the establishment of refugee camps and resettlement programs. Over time, their presence significantly influenced local politics and urban development, leaving an indelible mark on the sociopolitical fabric of West Bengal.

Concurrently, a reverse migration occurred as refugees moved from various parts of India to East Pakistan. This group, including Muslims from Assam, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, has received

comparatively less scholarly attention. Often settling in rural areas or towns like Rajshahi, these individuals faced challenges such as language barriers and cultural adaptation. Many arrived in East Pakistan after experiencing violence or discrimination in India, carrying little beyond the hope of starting anew. Non-Bengali refugees in East Pakistan also contributed to urban growth, introducing changes in areas such as cuisine, transportation and economic activities.

In India, the refugee crisis presented a formidable challenge to the newly established government, which quickly created a Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation to address the emergency. Similarly, Pakistan established a Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation. Both governments launched large-scale efforts to provide immediate relief, including food, shelter and medical assistance. Makeshift camps were set up to house millions of displaced individuals in both countries. By November 1947, over 1.25 million refugees were being accommodated and provided for in more than 150 camps across India, while Pakistan handled a comparable number of refugees. Punjab, which was divided between the two nations, became densely packed with refugee camps, resembling an extensive tent city during this period.

Rehabilitation initiatives focused on resettling refugees and integrating them into society. In rural areas, land abandoned by those who fled in the opposite direction was redistributed to incoming refugees, a relatively straightforward process in agricultural regions. However, urban rehabilitation was significantly more complex. The sudden influx of urban refugees led to severe housing shortages in India, prompting large-scale construction efforts. Entirely new townships, such as Faridabad and Nilokheri, were developed, while the infrastructure in cities like Delhi was strained to accommodate the newcomers.

The economic challenges were immense. Many urban refugees lacked the skills needed to integrate into the local economy, exacerbating unemployment. India faced the challenge of filling the gap left by skilled Muslim artisans and professionals who had departed, while Pakistan struggled with the loss of Hindu traders and merchants who had been vital to its economy. To address these issues, both governments provided loans to refugees for starting businesses and implemented re-education programs to bridge occupational mismatches.

Despite these efforts, significant challenges persisted. Both nations grappled with disputes over properties left behind by refugees, an issue that remains a source of tension between India

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Margin notes:

♦ *Reverse migration of Muslims to East Pakistan*

♦ *Governments established ministries for relief*

♦ *Rural land redistribution for refugees*

♦ *Skill gaps created economic challenges*

and Pakistan to this day. Many refugees themselves struggled to achieve lasting stability, with some continuing to live in camps or resettlement colonies even decades after the partition. Over time, the refugee crisis significantly reshaped the demographic and economic landscapes of both India and Pakistan. While considerable progress was made in resettling refugees, many remained marginalised and their struggles highlight the profound human cost of partition. The enduring legacy of displacement continues to shape South Asia's socio-political fabric.

The rehabilitation process was inherently multifaceted, encompassing both formal and informal mechanisms. While some refugees relied on familial and community networks for support, others benefited from government assistance in the form of ration supplies, housing and resettlement in designated locations. A notable feature of this period was the practice of property exchange, wherein Muslims in India and Hindus in Pakistan swapped properties to secure livelihoods across the border. However, this process was fraught with logistical challenges, including securing valid land documents and overcoming resistance from local populations in the new settlements.

The refugee experience was characterised by remarkable resilience, as individuals and communities adapted to unfamiliar environments and often formed cooperative networks for survival. Despite these efforts, the trauma of displacement and the socioeconomic disruptions caused by Partition continue to influence the region's history and collective memory. The refugee issue stands as a powerful reminder of the profound human cost of political decisions and the lasting consequences of forced migration.

1.2.5 The Integration of Native States

Integrating post-partition India with the princely states under a unified administration was a major challenge for the political leadership. Before independence, about 40% of colonial India was governed by 56 princely states with varying degrees of autonomy under British paramountcy. This arrangement protected the rulers from internal dissent and external threats, provided they served British interests.

When British rule ended in 1947, the future of these states became uncertain. Some larger princely states wanted independence, claiming that British paramountcy could not be transferred to India or Pakistan. These ambitions were encouraged by British Prime Minister Clement Attlee's statement in 1947 that Britain would not transfer its paramountcy obligations and by M. A. Jinnah, who

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♦ *Disputes over refugee properties persisted*

♦ *Rehabilitation involved formal and informal mechanisms*

♦ *Refugees showed resilience in adaptation*

♦ *Integration was a key challenge*

suggested that princely states could choose independence. However, Indian nationalist leaders rejected the idea of independent princely states, arguing it would threaten India's unity. They emphasised that sovereignty lay with the people, not the rulers and that the princely states were an integral part of the nation. The States' Peoples' Conference also supported democratic reforms and integration with India.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel led the effort to integrate the princely states into the Indian Union. As head of the newly formed States' Department in 1947, he worked with V. P. Menon to prevent disunity. Patel persuaded the rulers to accede to India on matters like foreign relations, defence and communications, while warning of stricter measures for those who resisted. Through a mix of diplomacy and firm action, Patel successfully brought most princely states into the Indian Union, overcoming resistance from states like Travancore, Bhopal and Hyderabad. His efforts were crucial in maintaining India's political unity during a critical period. Concerned about the rise of popular movements, the Congress' radical faction and Patel's firm reputation, most princely states accepted Patel's appeal. By 15 August 1947, all states except Junagadh, Jammu Kashmir and Hyderabad had joined the Indian Union. By the end of 1948, these states also integrated into India.

1.2.5.1 Junagadh

Junagadh, a small princely state on the Saurashtra coast, had no direct geographical link with Pakistan and was surrounded by Indian territory. By 15 August 1947, Junagadh, a princely state in the Kathiawar Peninsula of western India, had not yet joined India. Unlike Bhopal, where a Muslim Nawab ruled over a mostly Hindu population, Junagadh was surrounded by Hindu-majority states on three sides, with a coastline on the fourth. The ruler of Junagadh, Nawab Mohabat Khan, was known for his unusual love for dogs, owning a collection of 2,000 pedigree dogs. When two of his dogs mated, he declared a public holiday and spent heavily on their "wedding." Junagadh also housed significant Hindu shrines like Somnath and Girnar, which attracted pilgrims from across India and was home to the last Asiatic lions, which the Nawab protected.

In the summer of 1947, while the Nawab was in Europe, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, a prominent leader of the Muslim League, became the dewan and pressed for Junagadh's independence from India. On 14 August, Junagadh declared its decision to accede to Pakistan, despite its population being 82% Hindu. This move went against Jinnah's "two-nation" theory. Pakistan accepted the accession on 13 September, possibly to use Junagadh as leverage for Jammu and Kashmir's uncertain status at the time. This decision

angered Indian leaders, particularly Vallabhbhai Patel, who had personal connections to the region. In response, Patel facilitated the accession of Junagadh's tributary states, Mangrol and Babariawad, whose Hindu rulers wanted to join India. The Indian government sent a small military force to support these rulers, challenging the Nawab's claim of sovereignty over the states.

In mid-September, V. P. Menon visited Junagadh to discuss its future with the Nawab, but the Nawab, claiming illness, refused to meet him. Menon instead spoke with the dewan, urging Junagadh's accession to India on both cultural and geographical grounds. While agreeing, Sir Shah Nawaz raised concerns about local feelings, which had been influenced by the Gujarati press and suggested holding a referendum. At the same time, a provisional government led by Samaldas Gandhi, a relative of Mahatma Gandhi, was set up in Bombay. This government became the centre of local protests in Junagadh. In response, the Nawab fled to Karachi, leaving the dewan to manage affairs. On 27 October, Sir Shah Nawaz informed Jinnah that, although there had been strong Muslim support for Pakistan initially, local Muslims had become indifferent.

♦ Menon urged accession on cultural grounds

Ten days later, Sir Shah Nawaz offered to transfer Junagadh's administration to the Indian government and this was officially completed on 9 November. However, Mountbatten in Delhi was unhappy that the transfer had happened without his consultation. To strengthen India's claim, the government held a plebiscite on 20 February 1948, where 91% of voters supported Junagadh's accession to India. India, committed to the principle of popular sovereignty, favoured resolving such disputes through a plebiscite. However, Pakistan accepted Junagadh's accession, disregarding this approach. The people of Junagadh opposed the Nawab's decision, leading to a mass movement, the Nawab's flight and the establishment of a provisional government. The Dewan, Shah Nawaz Bhutto, eventually sought India's help. Indian forces entered the state and a plebiscite in February 1948 confirmed the people's overwhelming decision to integrate with India.

♦ Transfer to India completed on 9 November

1.2.5.2 Kashmir

The princely state of Kashmir, situated between India and Pakistan, was governed by Hari Singh, a Hindu ruler, while around 75% of the population was Muslim. Singh, concerned about India's democratic system and Pakistan's communalism, decided not to accede to either country to maintain Kashmir's independence. Meanwhile, the National Conference, led by Sheikh Abdullah, pushed for Kashmir's integration with India. Indian leaders, adhering to the principle of self-determination, avoided pressuring Kashmir and emphasised that the decision should reflect the will

♦ Kashmir had a Muslim-majority population

of the people. This approach aligned with their stance in Junagadh and Hyderabad and was supported by Mahatma Gandhi, who, in August 1947, asserted that Kashmir had the right to choose its future.

The princely state of Kashmir, ruled by the Hindu monarch Hari Singh, was located between India and Pakistan, with a Muslim-majority population of around 75%. Hari Singh initially chose not to accede to either country, hoping to maintain independence due to concerns over India's democratic system and Pakistan's communal nature. Meanwhile, Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference supported Kashmir's integration with India. Indian leaders, respecting the principle of self-determination, did not pressure Kashmir to join and emphasised that the decision should reflect the will of the people. This approach was consistent with their stance in Junagadh and Hyderabad and was supported by Mahatma Gandhi, who confirmed in August 1947 that Kashmir had the freedom to decide its future.

After Kashmir acceded to India, the Indian Cabinet decided to deploy troops to Srinagar immediately, with Mahatma Gandhi supporting the move. Gandhi advised Prime Minister Nehru that the raiders must be driven out. On 27 October 1947, around 100 aircraft were used to airlift troops and supplies to Srinagar to assist in defending the region. Although Srinagar was initially secured, the raiders continued to control parts of Kashmir, prolonging the conflict.

Fearing a full-scale war with Pakistan, the Indian government, following Lord Mountbatten's suggestion, decided on 30 December 1947 to take the Kashmir issue to the United Nations Security Council, calling for Pakistan's withdrawal. However, Nehru later regretted this decision as the Security Council, influenced by Britain and the United States, seemed to favour Pakistan. Despite India's objections, the issue was reframed as a broader "India-Pakistan dispute," and the Council passed several resolutions. On 31 December 1948, both nations agreed to a ceasefire, establishing a dividing line that persists today. Nehru, disappointed with the outcome, criticised the Security Council's biased stance in a letter to Vijay Laxmi Pandit in February 1948, particularly blaming Britain's influence behind the scenes.

In 1951, the United Nations passed a resolution calling for a referendum in Kashmir, to be held under UN supervision, provided Pakistan withdrew its forces from the part of Kashmir it controlled. However, this resolution has not been implemented because Pakistan has refused to withdraw from the region, known

♦ *Gandhi supported Kashmir's right to self-determination*

♦ *India airlifted troops to defend Kashmir*

♦ *India took the Kashmir issue to the UN*

as Azad Kashmir. As a result, Kashmir has remained a key obstacle to improved relations between India and Pakistan. India insists that Kashmir's accession to India is final and non-negotiable, while Pakistan continues to challenge this claim. Over the years, Kashmir has also become a symbol of India's commitment to secularism, as it was seen by Jawaharlal Nehru as critical to securing the victory of secularism over communalism in the country.

1.2.5.3 Hyderabad

Hyderabad, the largest state in India, was surrounded by Indian territory. The Nizam of Hyderabad was the third Indian ruler to resist joining India before August 15, 1947 and instead sought to maintain independence. With encouragement from Pakistan, he began to strengthen his military forces. However, Sardar Patel chose not to make a hasty decision, as Lord Mountbatten aimed for a negotiated settlement. Patel believed that time was on India's side, especially since the Nizam had secretly agreed not to join Pakistan and the British government refused to recognise Hyderabad as a separate dominion. Despite this, Patel emphasised that India would not allow any entity to weaken the newly formed Union.

In November 1947, the Indian government signed a standstill agreement with the Nizam, hoping that negotiations would eventually lead to a representative government in the state. However, the Nizam hired British lawyer Sir Walter Monckton to delay the process, aiming either to secure his sovereignty or accede to Pakistan amidst the ongoing Kashmir conflict. During this period, significant political developments occurred within Hyderabad. The Muslim communal group Ittihad ul Muslimin, along with its paramilitary wing, the Razakars, gained strength with state support. On August 7, 1947, the Hyderabad State Congress launched a satyagraha demanding democratisation, leading to the imprisonment of nearly 20,000 satyagrahis. Attacks by the Razakars and state repression forced thousands to flee to India. At the same time, a Communist-led peasant movement in the Telangana region, previously suppressed, regained strength as peasants defended themselves from the Razakars, attacked landlords and redistributed land to the landless.

By June 1948, Sardar Patel was becoming frustrated with the ongoing negotiations with the Nizam of Hyderabad. From his sickbed in Dehradun, he informed Nehru that it was time to demand full acceptance of Hyderabad's accession to India and the formation of a stable government. Despite provocations from the Nizam and his militia, the Razakars, the Indian government remained patient for several months. However, as the Nizam delayed further and escalated tensions, including importing arms, the Indian Army

♦ *Pakistan refused to withdraw forces*

♦ *Nizam resisted joining India before 1947*

♦ *Standstill agreement hoped for negotiations*

intervened on September 13, 1948. After three days of fighting, the Nizam surrendered and officially joined the Indian Union in November. The Indian government chose not to punish the Nizam, allowing him to remain as the formal ruler with a privy purse of Rs 5 million, keeping much of his wealth. Hyderabad's accession marked the final integration of princely states into the Indian Union, strengthening its authority. This event was also a strong statement of India's secularism, as many Muslims in Hyderabad and across the country supported the government's actions, though it left Pakistan and the Nizam's supporters disappointed. As Patel reported to Suhrawardy on September 28, Indian Muslims' backing of the government played a crucial role in shaping national sentiment.

Other Princely States

The second phase of integrating the princely states into the Indian Union began in December 1947, with Sardar Patel leading the process. Within a year, most smaller states were either merged with neighboring regions or reorganised into new unions such as Madhya Bharat, Rajasthan, PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab State Union), Saurashtra and Travancore-Cochin. States like Mysore, Hyderabad and Jammu and Kashmir remained separate entities within the Union. In return for giving up their power, rulers of the larger states were granted privy purses, which were tax-free allowances, totaling Rs 4.66 crore in 1949. These were constitutionally guaranteed and the rulers retained privileges like the right to succession, royal titles, personal flags and ceremonial gun salutes. Though criticised, these measures were considered necessary for the smooth political and territorial integration of the states, especially after Independence and partition. The integration also helped to compensate for the loss of territories to Pakistan.

Two major challenges remained: the French and Portuguese colonies along India's coasts, particularly Pondicherry and Goa. The French were cooperative and transferred Pondicherry to India in 1954. However, the Portuguese resisted, backed by NATO allies such as Britain and the US. India initially sought a peaceful resolution, but after a failed non-violent movement and rising domestic pressure, Indian forces entered Goa on December 17, 1961. The Portuguese surrendered without resistance, completing the territorial and political integration of India, a process that took over fourteen years to resolve.

♦ *Military intervention*

♦ *Integration of states under Patel's leadership*

♦ *Pondicherry & Goa*

Summarised Overview

The partition of India in 1947, driven by religious and political tensions, led to widespread communal violence, displacements and a significant refugee crisis. Punjab and Bengal became epicenters of this tragedy, with millions uprooted as Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims moved to align with the newly created nations of India and Pakistan. Punjab, historically a diverse region, experienced horrific violence marked by mass killings, ethnic cleansing and attacks on refugee convoys. Bengal's experience differed slightly, with Gandhi's presence in Calcutta aiding in relatively peaceful migrations, though East Bengal saw a gradual exodus of Hindus facing communal tensions.

The refugee crisis resulting from partition was one of the largest in history, with around 15 million displaced. Governments on both sides implemented emergency relief and rehabilitation programs, building camps, providing rations and redistributing abandoned lands. Refugees demonstrated resilience by adapting to new environments, forming cooperative networks and contributing to economic growth. However, challenges such as housing shortages, unemployment and communal tensions persisted, leaving lasting scars on the affected regions.

The princely states presented challenges to India's political unity. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel played a pivotal role in integrating these states into the Indian Union through diplomacy and strategic action. States like Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir faced complex issues due to their rulers' resistance or geopolitical concerns. Junagadh acceded to India after local opposition and a plebiscite, while Hyderabad's integration required military intervention. Kashmir's accession sparked conflict with Pakistan, leading to a prolonged dispute that remains unresolved.

Assignments

1. How did Mahatma Gandhi attempt to address communal violence during the Partition and what were the outcomes of his efforts?

2. Describe the impact of the Partition on the Punjab region.

3. How did the integration of princely states of Junagadh, Kashmir and Hyderabad shape the political history of post-Partition India?

4. What challenges did India face in the rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees following the mass migrations of 1947?

5. Critically analyse the communal riots in Bengal and UP during the partition of India.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

UNIT 3

Linguistic Reorganisation

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

♦ analyse the historical context and significance of linguistic reorganisation in India
♦ assess the challenges and strategies involved in balancing linguistic diversity with national unity
♦ analyse the role of committees and commissions in addressing linguistic demands
♦ critically evaluate the creation of states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Punjab
♦ discuss the challenges faced by Indian leaders, such as Jawaharlal Nehru, in reconciling linguistic and national priorities

Background

In the early years of independent India, the issue of language posed a major challenge to national unity. Language, deeply intertwined with cultural identity, influenced political movements centered on education, employment and governance. Recognising this, the Indian National Congress supported the creation of linguistic provinces, formalised by the establishment of provincial committees based on linguistic zones in 1920. Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders believed such an approach would strengthen national unity while fostering regional identity.

After independence, however, the Partition and associated challenges like refugee crises, national security and administrative consolidation led leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru to prioritise unity over linguistic reorganisation. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel were cautious about linguistic reorganisation, fearing it might fragment the newly formed nation. The Dhar Commission (1948) and the J. V. P. Committee (1949) initially opposed linguistic states, prioritising national unity over linguistic considerations. However, persistent public demands, especially from regions like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Punjab, kept the issue alive. The fast-unto-

death by Potti Sriramulu in 1952 intensified the movement, eventually compelling the government to create Andhra Pradesh, marking a turning point in India's linguistic reorganisation. The reorganisation of states on linguistic lines has been a defining feature of India's political and administrative history.

The States Reorganisation Commission (SRC), established in 1953, conducted extensive consultations and proposed restructuring based on linguistic and administrative considerations. Its recommendations were implemented through the States Reorganisation Act of 1956, creating 14 states and six union territories. While the reorganisation initially faced opposition and challenges, including violent protests in Bombay and Punjab, it ultimately addressed key grievances and strengthened India's federal structure. By aligning state boundaries with linguistic identities, the reorganisation facilitated governance, reduced regional discord and reinforced the unity of the nation.

This unit examines the historical factors behind the linguistic reorganisation of states in India and the political movements that influenced the administrative framework of India. It also emphasises the significance of language in shaping national identity and governance, illustrating how linguistic unity fostered political participation rather than division.

Keywords

Constitution, Dhar Commission, J. V. P. Committee, State Reorganisation Commission, Andhra Pradesh, Akali Dal, Samyukta Maharashtra, Telugu

Discussion

1.3.1 Regional Languages and Cultures

♦ *Language as a cultural and political force*

In the early years of independent India, language became a major challenge, raising concerns about its impact on the nation's political and cultural unity. Language is closely linked to cultural identity, making it a strong force in India's multilingual society. This diversity often fuels political movements focusing on issues like education, jobs and political power.

♦ *Coexistence instead of linguistic uniformity*

The Indian Constitution recognises 22 major languages, including English and Sanskrit, alongside many regional and tribal languages, some without written scripts. Instead of enforcing uniformity, India has chosen coexistence, managing linguistic diversity to reduce conflicts. Two key challenges have

emerged: deciding the Union's official language and reorganising states based on language. These issues are explored in separate sections.

Indian nationalists recognised the power of the mother tongue in mobilising people and acknowledging India's linguistic diversity. Instead of denying this, the Congress Party aimed to accommodate it. By 1917, the party had already supported the idea of linguistic provinces and this was formalised in 1920 with the establishment of provincial Congress committees based on linguistic zones. Mahatma Gandhi supported this idea, believing linguistic provinces would promote unity and strengthen the nation.

♦ *Congress supports linguistic provinces*

However, by 1947, following India's partition, Jawaharlal Nehru expressed concerns that creating states based on language might further fragment the country. He suggested that maintaining larger, multilingual states could foster unity, with language diversity being a unifying force rather than a divisive one. Nehru's view gained support from Gandhi, who agreed that while linguistic provinces were desirable, they should be delayed until after communal tensions had subsided.

♦ *Nehru opposes linguistic states post-partition*

In the aftermath of partition, the immediate concerns of nation-building took precedence, including managing refugee crises and securing national unity. Gandhi's vision of linguistic provinces remained a long-term goal, but the creation of new states was postponed. Key leaders like Vallabhbhai Patel and C. Rajagopalachari, supported by a committee of jurists, argued that the priority should be strengthening national unity. The committee concluded that while language played a significant role, it should not hinder the country's cohesion in the early years following independence. The decision to delay the formation of linguistic states caused dissatisfaction among regional Congress members who sought states based on their languages, such as Marathi, Telugu and Gujarati speakers. This led to the establishment of a new committee, the J. V. P. Committee, which ultimately rejected the idea of linguistic provinces, emphasising that national unity and security were paramount in the post-independence context.

♦ *Nation-building prioritised over linguistic states*

In 1948-49, movements advocating linguistic autonomy gained momentum across India. The campaign for a united Kannada state sought to consolidate Kannada-speaking populations from Madras, Mysore, Bombay and Hyderabad. A parallel struggle, Samyukta Maharashtra, aimed to unite Marathi speakers into one political entity. The Malayalis demanded a state formed by merging Cochin, Travancore and Malabar, while the Mahagujarat movement sought a unified Gujarat. The demand for a separate Sikh state in Punjab

♦ *Diverse movements demand separate states*

was distinct, combining religious and linguistic concerns, as Sikhs, who had lost significant lands during Partition, sought to assert their identity amidst a predominantly Hindu Punjab.

By the 1950s, Sikhs made up about 35% of Punjab's population, with a significant linguistic divide: the eastern region was largely Hindi-speaking and Hindu-dominated, while the western region was Punjabi-speaking, with Sikhs as the majority. While many Hindus also spoke Punjabi, they often saw it as a dialect of Hindi, whereas Sikhs viewed it as a distinct, sacred language, written in the Gurmukhi script. The Akali Dal, led by Master Tara Singh, has represented Sikh political and religious interests since the 1920s. Tara Singh, born in 1885 to a Hindu family, was a prominent figure in the movement to reform Sikh shrines and was a key leader in the fight for Sikh autonomy. He became the head of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee in 1931 and was a staunch advocate for the Sikh community's political rights. Tara Singh, who had opposed both Muslim and Hindu domination, called for independence to protect Sikh religion and culture, positioning himself as the champion of Sikh political autonomy.

♦ *Punjab's linguistic divide and Sikh identity*

However, Tara Singh's rhetoric about 'independence' was ambiguous, as he sought a Sikh-majority province within India, not full secession. While his strong stance garnered support from upper-caste Jat peasants, his position alienated low-caste Sikhs and some Jats who sided with the Congress. In the 1951 census, many Punjabi-speaking Hindus claimed Hindi as their mother tongue, further complicating the situation. Despite his efforts, the Akali Dal's defeat in the 1951 Punjab Assembly election, where they won only 14 out of 126 seats, was a major setback for Tara Singh's movement.

♦ *Tara Singh's ambiguous stance on independence*

1.3.2 Demand for Formation of State on Linguistic Lines

The reorganisation of states based on language was an important step in uniting India after independence. During British rule, provincial boundaries were drawn without considering linguistic or cultural unity, creating diverse, multilingual provinces. The integration of princely states added to this complexity. The demand for linguistic states was strong because language is closely tied to culture and daily life. Education and literacy efforts are more effective in the mother tongue and governance becomes more accessible when conducted in the local language. This required states to be reorganised based on linguistic majorities to support education, administration and judicial processes. Recognising this, the Indian National Congress began using regional languages for

♦ *States reorganised for linguistic unity*

political mobilisation after 1919 and reorganised its branches along linguistic lines in 1921. Congress leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi, supported linguistic reorganisation to strengthen regional languages while promoting national unity. This made linguistic reorganisation a widely expected move after independence.

♦ *Leaders prioritised unity*

After independence, India's leadership reconsidered the linguistic reorganisation of states due to pressing challenges. The Partition caused major administrative, economic and political disruptions. Additionally, the aftermath of World War II brought economic instability, law-and-order issues, the Kashmir conflict and tensions with Pakistan. National leaders prioritised unity, fearing that redrawing state boundaries might disrupt governance, slow economic growth, fuel regional rivalries and threaten stability. On November 27, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru stressed the need to focus on India's security and stability, placing linguistic reorganisation as a low priority.

Dhar Commission

♦ *Dhar Commission rejected linguistic states*

Initial discussions in the Constituent Assembly led to the creation of the Linguistic Provinces Commission in 1948, a three-member Linguistic Provinces Commission chaired by Justice S. K. Dar. The Commission was assigned to review the proposal for creating linguistic states in southern India, including Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra. In its report, the Commission acknowledged the legitimacy of these demands but cautioned that granting them could undermine national unity, leading to the rejection of the proposals. This position likely aligned with the views of the Congress's central leadership. The commission advised against forming linguistic states, citing risks to national unity and administrative efficiency. As a result, the linguistic principle was excluded from the Constitution.

J.V.P. Committee

♦ *J.V.P. Committee and rejected delayed linguistic states*

However, growing public demand, especially in southern India, kept the issue alive. To address this, the Congress formed the J. V. P. Committee in December 1948, including Nehru, Sardar Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya. The committee reaffirmed the decision to delay linguistic states, emphasising the immediate focus on unity, security and economic progress. The Congress leadership initially took a cautious approach to demands for linguistic states. According to the J. V. P. report, new states could be formed only if the demand was strong, consistent and acceptable to other linguistic groups. This policy led to widespread movements for state reorganisation across India until 1960.

1.3.2.1 Andhra Pradesh

The Telugu-speaking population of Andhra Pradesh led a strong movement for linguistic autonomy in post-independence India. Telugu, with a large number of speakers and a rich literary tradition, was closely tied to Andhra's cultural identity, including its historical connection with the Vijayanagara Empire. Before independence, the Andhra Mahasabha had already worked to unite Telugu speakers in the Madras presidency, fighting against perceived discrimination by Tamils. After independence, the demand for a separate Telugu-speaking state grew stronger, with protests, petitions and fasts becoming common tactics. In 1950, T. Prakasam's resignation from the Congress Party highlighted the movement's intensity. By 1951, the push for Andhra Pradesh gained momentum, especially after protests during Nehru's campaign and the Congress party's poor performance in the Madras Legislative Assembly. Swami Sitaram played a key role in reviving the Andhra movement, but both Nehru and Madras Chief Minister C. Rajagopalachari opposed the formation of the state and resisted including Madras city. Nehru's ambiguous stance only fuelled impatience among supporters.

♦ T. Prakasam's resignation marked intensification

The turning point came in October 1952 when Potti Sriramulu began a fast-unto-death to demand the creation of Andhra Pradesh. His activism during the independence movement earned him respect and his fast garnered widespread support across Telugu-speaking areas. As protests intensified, Sriramulu's death on December 15, after 58 days of fasting, led to chaos and violent demonstrations. Facing escalating unrest, Nehru and the Congress leadership reluctantly agreed to create Andhra Pradesh, which was officially formed on October 1, 1953, with a ceremony in Kurnool. Despite political tensions, Nehru attended the event, marking the resolution of the long-standing demand for a separate Telugu-speaking state.

♦ Potti Sriramulu's fast led to Andhra formatio

The formation of Andhra Pradesh was a contentious issue, as anticipated by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. He had warned that the decision would lead to significant unrest and backlash. As expected, the creation of Andhra Pradesh led to similar demands for the reorganisation of states along linguistic lines. In response, the Indian government established the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in 1953 to address the linguistic division. Between 1954 and 1955, the commission visited 104 cities and towns, interviewed over 9,000 individuals and received more than 150,000 written submissions.

♦ Andhra's creation sparked similar demands

1.3.2.2 Maharashtra

One significant submission came from the Bombay Citizens Committee, led by industrialists such as Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas and J. R. D. Tata, along with influential professionals like lawyers, scholars and doctors. The committee's primary goal was to keep Bombay separate from the proposed state of Maharashtra. They submitted a 200-page report that included historical, economic, sociological and geographical arguments. The report emphasised that Bombay's diverse population had minimal Maharashtrian immigration before the late 19th century, with Marathi speakers making up only 43% of the population. It highlighted Bombay's economic importance as the center of industry, finance and foreign trade and its role as India's primary international gateway. The committee also pointed out the city's multicultural nature and geographical isolation, as it is surrounded by mountains and the sea, distinguishing it from the Marathi-speaking region.

♦ *Bombay Citizens Committee opposed Maharashtra*

The early settlers of Bombay were Europeans, but its main traders and business leaders were Gujaratis and Parsis, with Parsis also playing an important role in philanthropy. The city's growth was largely influenced by non-Maharashtrians and even in the working class, Marathi speakers were often fewer than North Indians and Christians. The Bombay Citizens Committee opposed the idea of Bombay and North Konkan being part of the Maratha region, as proposed by some supporters of Samyukta Maharashtra. Despite its cosmopolitan reputation, the "Save Bombay" movement was mainly led by Gujaratis, who feared that if Bombay became part of a larger Maharashtra, political power would shift to Marathi speakers. This concern was shared by the Bombay Citizens Committee, which was largely composed of Gujaratis. Prime Minister Nehru and RSS leader M. S. Golwalkar warned about the potential risks of linguistic states, with Nehru emphasising national unity and Golwalkar advocating a unified "Hindu" identity.

♦ *Gujaratis feared political shift in Bombay*

In contrast, the Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad, formed in 1946, campaigned for a united Maharashtra with Bombay as its capital. The Parishad, which included leaders from various political backgrounds, supported decentralising Bombay's industries while keeping it as the state's economic hub. Leaders like D. R. Gadgil and G.V. Deshmukh argued that without Bombay, Maharashtrians would be at a disadvantage in several fields. The Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad argued that Bombay was historically and culturally linked to Marathi speakers and its separation from Maharashtra was unthinkable. They emphasised that Bombay had long been a center of Marathi culture and economy, with

♦ *Samyukta Maharashtra pushed for Bombay's inclusion*

the surrounding Marathi-speaking areas relying heavily on the city. On the other hand, the Citizens Committee argued that Bombay had been shaped by non-Maharashtrians and should be made a separate city-state. In June 1954, a meeting between Shankarrao Deo of the Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad and Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, a prominent Gujarati leader, failed to reach an agreement. Eventually, the issue was referred to the States Reorganisation Commission for resolution.

1.3.3 The State Reorganisation Commission

The States Reorganisation Commission, which included jurist S. Fazl Ali, historian and civil servant K. M. Panikkar and social worker H. N. Kunzru was established without any formal connections to the Congress Party. After 18 months of deliberation, the Commission presented its report in October 1955. The report suggested a balanced approach to creating linguistic states, recognising linguistic homogeneity as important for administrative efficiency but not the only factor. It also emphasised the need to consider national unity and security.

The Commission recommended reorganising southern states based on major linguistic groups — Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam — by adjusting districts and taluks to match the dominant language. It also proposed dividing the large Hindi-speaking area of northern India into four states: Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, with minimal changes to the eastern provinces. The Commission rejected proposals for separate tribal states in Bihar and Assam, as well as the creation of a Sikh state. It also denied the request to allocate Madras City to Andhra. One of the most debated decisions was the refusal to create a unified Maharashtra. Instead, the Commission suggested forming a separate Vidarbha state for Marathi-speaking districts, while Bombay would remain a bilingual province with both Gujarati and Marathi speakers. Although the Samyukta Maharashtra movement's demands were acknowledged, the Commission emphasised the importance of considering the concerns of other communities.

In October 1955, the SRC submitted its report, recommending that states be reorganised mainly based on language, along with administrative and economic considerations. However, it opposed dividing Bombay and Punjab. While the report received mixed reactions, its key proposals were implemented through the States Reorganisation Act of November 1956. This act reshaped India into 14 states and six union territories. Major changes included the creation of Kerala, the merger of Telangana with Andhra Pradesh,

♦ *SRC was independent of the Congress Party*

♦ *Southern states reorganised based on language*

♦ *SRC report led to 1956 Act*

the expansion of Mysore with Kannada-speaking areas and the enlargement of Bombay to include Kutch, Saurashtra and Marathi-speaking regions.

The recommendation by the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) to make Bombay the capital of a bilingual state was debated in Parliament on November 15, 1955. S. K. Patil, a prominent MP from Bombay, proposed that Bombay be made a city-state, highlighting its cosmopolitan character and the diverse contributions of its population. He suggested that such a city-state could serve as a model for secularism and mutual understanding in India, aligning with international standards. Patil also proposed that Maharashtrians relinquish their claim to Bombay in the interest of compromise.

♦ *Patil proposed Bombay as the city-state*

However, N. V. Gadgil, a Congress MP from Pune, strongly opposed Patil's view, arguing that compromise had its limits, particularly when it came to self-respect. Gadgil emphasised the historical contributions of Maharashtrians to India's national movement and the development of national institutions. He rejected the SRC's suggestion to sacrifice Bombay for national unity, calling it unjust. Gadgil warned that ignoring Marathi sentiments could lead to unrest, as was evident in the growing protests within the Marathi-speaking community.

♦ *Gadgil rejected the compromise for Bombay*

The States Reorganisation Act and the SRC's recommendations faced strong opposition in Maharashtra, leading to widespread protests and violence. In January 1956, police firings in Bombay claimed 80 lives, fueling public outrage. Supported by students, workers and businesses, the protests pressured the government to propose dividing Bombay State into Maharashtra and Gujarat, with Bombay City as a centrally administered territory. This proposal, however, was rejected by Maharashtrians, leading to another plan for a bilingual Greater Bombay, which neither Maharashtra nor Gujarat accepted. Movements like the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and Maha Gujarat Janata Parishad gained traction, demanding unilingual states. Violence also erupted in Gujarat, resulting in casualties.

♦ *Greater Bombay proposal rejected*

The unrest soon spread beyond Parliament and onto the streets of Bombay, fuelled by political leaders from across the spectrum, including communists, socialists and dissident Congress members. These protests led to the formation of the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, a coalition that sought to secure Bombay as the capital of a united Maharashtra. The shift in the coalition's name from "Parishad" (organisation) to "Samiti" (society) reflected a more inclusive and participatory approach to the movement.

♦ *Samiti formed for United Maharashtra*

On January 16, 1960, fearing unrest, the Bombay police arrested around 400 members of the newly formed All-Party Action Committee for Samyukta Maharashtra. This sparked a general strike on January 18, which saw businesses close and transportation services shut down. Protesters took to the streets, burning effigies of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Morarji Desai, the Gujarati-speaking Chief Minister of Bombay. A European journalist captured a photo of Nehru's portrait being destroyed and onlookers cheered, expressing their discontent with the government.

Violent clashes broke out between police and protesters on January 16, leading to widespread looting and chaos. For almost a week, Bombay came to a halt, with 15,000 police officers deployed to control the situation. The riots resulted in more than a dozen deaths and caused significant damage to property, marking one of the worst outbreaks of violence in recent history. The events had a profound impact on Nehru, who acknowledged the gravity of the linguistic issue, calling it even more urgent than the challenges of partition. The All-India Congress Committee, meeting in Amritsar, condemned the violence, which harmed both Bombay and India's image. Nehru and other Congress leaders emphasised the need for national unity and rejected divisive forces. To promote stability, Congress chief ministers from Bihar and West Bengal proposed merging their states to counter separatism and encourage economic development. While Nehru's allies, including Home Minister G. B. Pant and Morarji Desai, argued that the protesters sought to take control of the city, N. V. Gadgil criticised the government's heavy-handed response. Gadgil compared the police's actions to the British atrocities at Jallianwala Bagh in 1919, claiming that the excessive force only alienated the Maharashtrian people from the Congress party, damaging its reputation.

The discontent among Maharashtrians persisted, with the popular slogan "Lathi goli khayenge, phir bhi Bambai layenge" (We will endure sticks and bullets, but will eventually claim Bombay). On Republic Day, January 26, black flags were raised in several working-class areas of Bombay. During Jawaharlal Nehru's visit in February, the Samyukta Maharashtra movement presented a petition signed by 100,000 children, urging Nehru with the slogan "*Chacha Nehru, Mumbai dya*" ('Chacha Nehru, give us Bombay'). However, Nehru, under heavy security, did not meet with the press or the children.

In June 1956, during a Congress session in Bombay, Nehru was greeted by black flags at the airport and along his route. Tension increased outside the meeting hall, with crowds throwing stones

at Congress members, prompting a police response with tear gas. Nehru also faced growing discontent within the Maharashtrian faction of the Congress Party. C. D. Deshmukh, the Union Finance Minister, resigned in protest against the city's exclusion from Maharashtra, followed by other resignations.

By the summer of 1956, both sides were awaiting the central government's decision on Bombay. While the Cabinet had accepted the States Reorganisation Commission's other recommendations, there were rumours that Nehru and Home Minister Pant favoured making Bombay a separate union territory, a plan considered impractical. On November 1, the new language-based states were formed and Bombay became a bilingual state. The only concession to the protesters was the replacement of Chief Minister Morarji Desai with 41-year-old Maratha leader Y. B. Chavan.

Eventually, after continued agitation and a narrow Congress win in the 1957 elections, the government revisited the issue. In May 1960, Bombay State was divided into Maharashtra, with Bombay as its capital and Gujarat, with Ahmedabad as its capital. Similarly, linguistic reorganisation in Punjab was challenging. The 1956 merger of PEPSU with Punjab created a trilingual state, sparking demands for a Punjabi-speaking state (Punjabi Suba). The Akali Dal framed this as a Sikh demand, while the Jan Sangh opposed it, denying Punjabi as their language. Nehru and the Congress dismissed the demand as communal rather than linguistic. However, in 1966, Punjab was divided into Punjabi-speaking Punjab and Hindi-speaking Haryana, with Chandigarh as a shared Union Territory. Parts of Punjab, like Kangra and parts of Hoshiarpur, were merged with Himachal Pradesh.

After more than a decade of struggles and public mobilisation, India's linguistic reorganisation was largely completed, enabling greater political engagement. Events after 1956 showed that loyalty to language and nation worked together, addressing key grievances that could have led to fragmentation. By reorganising states based on language, national leaders helped reduce potential divisions, promoting unity. While tensions arose during the reorganisation, language has not dominated state politics since. The restructuring did not harm India's federal system or weaken central authority, as many feared. Instead, states have worked together with the Centre on planning and development, strengthening the national government.

As political scientist Rajni Kothari observed, the reorganisation streamlined India's political landscape, reducing discord and making governance more efficient. The linguistic divisions, rather than dividing the nation, became a unifying factor. While issues like boundary disputes, linguistic minorities and economic challenges

persist, the reorganisation has removed a major source of national discord.

The formation of linguistic states in India marked a significant victory for public sentiment. Despite initial opposition from Jawaharlal Nehru, the 58-day hunger strike by Potti Sriramulu played a key role in this change. Nehru largely ignored the fast for the first 55 days, focusing on other issues, but Sriramulu's protest brought attention to the cause. Eventually, Nehru agreed to the creation of Andhra Pradesh and set up the States Reorganisation Commission, signaling a shift towards organising India's political structure based on linguistic identities. The demand for linguistic states highlighted the strong emotional ties people had to their language, which acted as a unifying force, even more so than caste or religion, for communities like the Kannadigas, Andhras, Oriyas and Maharashtrians. This connection was evident in both the struggles these communities faced and their reactions once their demands were fulfilled.

♦ *Language united communities over caste or religion*

Summarised Overview

The linguistic reorganisation of states in India was a pivotal step in addressing the complexities of regional languages and cultural identities following independence. Language, deeply tied to cultural identity, posed challenges for the newly formed nation, balancing unity with diversity. The Indian Constitution recognised multiple languages, promoting coexistence over uniformity. Although the Congress Party initially supported linguistic provinces, leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel prioritised national unity, delaying state reorganisation in the face of post-Partition challenges. However, regional demands for linguistic states persisted, emphasising the importance of governance, education and cultural preservation in native languages.

Movements like the Andhra agitation, led by Potti Sriramulu's 58-day hunger strike, highlighted public sentiment for linguistic states. Sriramulu's sacrifice catalysed the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1953, prompting similar demands across India. The States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) was established to address these issues systematically. The SRC emphasised linguistic homogeneity while balancing administrative efficiency and national unity. By 1956, its recommendations were implemented through the States Reorganisation Act, creating 14 states and six union territories, including Kerala and Andhra Pradesh and reorganised regions in Bombay and Punjab.

Despite the challenges, such as violent protests in Maharashtra and Gujarat over Bombay's status, linguistic reorganisation ultimately strengthened India's federal structure. Leaders like Nehru recognised that accommodating linguistic identities would reduce fragmentation and enhance political stability. The resolution of these demands reinforced the integration of regional identities within a unified nation, with language serving as both a cultural anchor and a unifying force.

Assignments

1. Explain the significance of linguistic reorganisation in post-independence India. How did it help in addressing cultural and administrative challenges?

2. Discuss the challenges faced by Jawaharlal Nehru and other Indian leaders in managing linguistic diversity immediately after independence. How did they address these issues?

3. Analyse the events leading to the creation of Andhra Pradesh in 1953. What role did Potti Sriramulu play in this process?

4. Describe the Samyukta Maharashtra movement and its role in the linguistic reorganisation of Bombay State.

5. What were the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC)? How did its report impact the linguistic reorganisation of states in 1956?

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

The Story of Progress

BLOCK-02

The Question of Development

Learning Outcomes

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

♦ explain the importance of having an ideal model of development in a democracy
♦ analyse impact of the Planning Commission's policies on various sectors, such as agriculture, industry and social welfare
♦ identify the successes and challenges of the Planning Commission in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth
♦ analyse the establishment of the Planning Commission and its role in shaping India's planned economic development

Background

The year 1947 marked the beginning of a transformative era of change and progress in Indian history. Naturally, this brought about new challenges, often stemming from the changes themselves that added to existing issues and demanded innovative solutions. The significant questions revolved around the nature of these problems and how, when and with what consequences they were addressed. As Gandhi had predicted on the eve of independence, "with the end of slavery and the dawn of freedom, all the weaknesses of society are bound to come to the surface." Yet, he also urged calm and confidence, remarking, "if we keep our balance at such a time, every tangle will be solved." In the years to come, historians will assess how effectively the aspirations inspired by the freedom struggle such as national unity, democracy, secularism, independent economic development, equality and the eradication of poverty have been substantively realised.

The task of nation-building was embraced by the Indian people and their leaders with enthusiasm, determination and confidence in their ability to succeed. Jawaharlal Nehru's iconic speech "Tryst with Destiny," delivered on the eve of independence on August 14, 1947 embodied this optimistic spirit. The foundation of India's development was laid upon a broad social consensus regarding its envisioned identity rooted in the values of nationalism, secularism and democracy, alongside the goals of rapid economic progress and transformative social change. These principles and objectives had been shaped over more than seventy years by the national movement. However,

there was a clear recognition that this consensus needed to be continuously expanded and strengthened. Nehru's leadership and the ideas he championed played a pivotal role in this ongoing process.

Keywords

Development, Self-sustainability, Planning, Mixed Economy, Modernisation

Discussion

2.1.1 Nehru, Gandhi and Meghnad Saha - A Debate on Development

♦ *Development debate*

In a democracy, having an ideal model of development is a fundamental prerequisite. The formulation and implementation of policies heavily depend on the chosen model of development. Around the time of India's Independence and the framing of its Constitution, extensive debates unfolded within political circles regarding the nation's developmental trajectory. The goal of establishing an ideal development framework was not only to uphold democratic principles but also to create the necessary social and political conditions for comprehensive progress. These debates reflect differing ideologies, priorities and strategies among policymakers, intellectuals and the public.

2.1.1.1 Jawaharlal Nehru: Development Through Modernisation

♦ *Economic independence*

A country's independence was directly linked to its economic strength. With this goal in mind, Nehru successfully endeavored to create an independent and self-reliant economy, striving to break free from the colonial legacy of underdevelopment. His efforts focused on ensuring self-sustaining and self-generating growth in agriculture and industry. Nehru emphasised the importance of self-reliance, cautioning against dependence on foreign nations. He viewed rapid industrialisation, especially the growth of heavy industries, along with planning, public sector development, atomic energy, science and technology, technical modernisation and the training of a large technical and scientific workforce as essential components of India's pursuit of independent economic

development and self-sufficiency.

Nehru's development strategy rested on three key pillars, which reflected "a fairly widespread intellectual consensus of the time": planning for rapid industrial and agricultural growth, a public sector to develop strategic industries and a mixed economy. He popularised the concept of planning, making it a central part of India's national consciousness. Above all, the Second and Third Five-Year Plans reinforced the commitment to a socialistic pattern of society. However, Nehru flexibly interpreted this, while consistently emphasising the modernisation of the economy and a focus on increasing production.

2.1.1.2 Mahatma Gandhi: Development Rooted in Sustainability and Self-Reliance

Gandhi's concept of development is fundamentally individual-centric, emphasising the full independence of individuals and their capacity to establish *Swaraj* (self-rule). His model encompasses all dimensions of development, including fulfilling basic needs, ensuring political participation, promoting economic equality and fostering social harmony. In Gandhi's vision, individuals are not merely material beings but also spiritual entities and thus, moral and economic progress must advance hand in hand. This type of development focuses on empowering individuals to achieve their ultimate goal of self-realisation. Gandhian economic philosophy offers several prescriptions to create a developed and harmonious social order, emphasising sustainability, equality and the integration of moral values into economic practices. Gandhi proposed various economic principles and programmes to achieve the ideals of development. This included village development, a self-sufficient village economy, decentralisation, promotion of *khadi* and village industries, as well as other operational mechanisms to put these principles into practice, such as *Panchayati Raj*, cooperation, trusteeship and *Buniyadi Shiksha* (basic education).

For Gandhi, the primary purpose of development was self-reliance and true freedom, which he emphasised through *Swadeshi* (indigenous self-sufficiency). He believed the essence of *Swadeshi* lay in producing enough cloth to clothe every Indian, achievable through mass participation in spinning and weaving. He also supported small-scale and cottage industries to foster economic development in villages. However, this did not mean Gandhi was opposed to technology; he believed in its use when aligned with the needs and welfare of the masses.

Gandhi envisioned Indian villages as self-reliant, ensuring that no villager would need to leave the village to fulfill their basic

♦ Planned economy

♦ Individual-centric development

♦ Self-sufficiency

needs. His concept of *Gram Swaraj* was rooted in the idea of a complete democracy, where individuals would be independent in meeting their essential requirements. However, for needs that necessitate collective effort, cooperation and synergy among villagers would be essential. In this way, Gandhi's vision of an ideal village emphasised mutual collaboration and harmony, reflecting his aspirations for a self-reliant and interdependent rural community.

In Gandhi's model of development, he introduced the concept of *Sarvodaya*, meaning "welfare for all." He believed that true *Sarvodaya* could only be achieved through the establishment of *Village Swaraj* (self-reliant villages), which required a strong foundation of decentralisation. According to Gandhi, *Village Swaraj* could be realised if political power was exercised directly by the villagers themselves. This principle of self-governance should extend beyond villages to the district and state levels, ensuring a participatory and decentralised system of governance.

2.1.1.3 Meghnad Saha: Development Through Science and Equity

Throughout his life, Meghnad Saha was driven by the dual motivations of advancing science for the nation and national liberation. He was also deeply inspired by the humanising potential of science. He played a major role in founding the Indian Science News Association. Through this association, he launched *Science and Culture*, a journal that he edited until he died in 1956. Modelled after the renowned British journal *Nature*, the journal aimed to emphasise the social role of science and combat ignorance by making scientific knowledge accessible to a broader audience. Saha envisioned the journal as a platform to present science in simple, non-technical language, introduce new scientific ideas and promote the planned use of science to address India's challenges. This approach sought to integrate humanist and cultural values, serve the interests of all people regardless of caste or class and provide a space for critical discussions of government policies.

The presidential address delivered by Professor Saha at the 3rd Annual General Meeting of the Indian Physical Society in January 1937 highlights his deep concern for India's economic and social development and emphasises the role of scientists in discovery, planning and reform. Saha significantly contributed to fostering a scientific temper and culture within the society. He was a strong advocate for social and economic planning in India, particularly in the fields of science, industry and technology.

Through *Science and Culture*, Saha became a vocal critic

♦ *Gram Swaraj*

♦ *Sarvodaya*

♦ *Scientific humanism*

♦ *Scientific planning*

of the Indian government's science policies, particularly those championed by Jawaharlal Nehru. Saha believed that Nehru was too eager to establish a scientific and industrial foundation and that Nehru's elitist approach overlooked India's existing cultural realities. While Nehru was a visionary, he lacked the scientific expertise that Saha possessed. Additionally, Saha's humble background, in stark contrast to Nehru's, gave him a deeper understanding of the needs of the common people.

◆ *Scientific critique*

As early as August 12, 1945, Saha wrote to Nehru regarding the Indian National Congress, "I believe the time has come for the Congress to formally outline its agenda should they come to power. The current programme is too closely tied to outdated ideologies, such as the spinning wheel and homespun and the division of power along medieval lines. We must present the country with new slogans focused on providing a decent living for India's masses, leveraging science to its fullest potential, developing power resources, chemical, mineral and agricultural industries and using land and water in a collective and multipurpose way. We must rebuild society on a foundation of work."

◆ *Scientific progress*

Saha's critique of the Indian National Congress emphasised the need to discard "old world ideologies" and focus on using science, technology and planning to improve the lives of "India's masses", the non-elite and subaltern sections of society. Through his scientific work, Saha transitioned from being a lower-caste, lower-class individual to becoming a part of India's intelligentsia, the *bhadralok*. Despite this, he remained deeply empathetic toward the masses and consistently highlighted their needs whenever possible.

◆ *Scientific upliftment*

2.1.2 Planning Commission

In 1934, N. R. Sarkar, President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the foremost organisation representing Indian capitalists, declared: "The days of undiluted *laissez-faire* are gone forever." Reflecting the views of the capitalist leadership, he emphasised that for a backward country like India, a comprehensive economic development plan encompassing all sectors, agriculture, industry, power, banking and finance was essential. He called for the establishment of a high-powered "National Planning Commission" to coordinate efforts and enable India to break free from its past and realise its full growth potential.

◆ *Planned economy*

In 1938, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, a staunch advocate of planned economic development, the National Planning Committee (NPC) was established. Over the following decade, the NPC conducted extensive deliberations and developed

a comprehensive development blueprint, with its sub-committees producing twenty-nine volumes of detailed recommendations. The Planning Commission, established on March 15, 1950, operated within this framework, despite wielding considerable *de facto* power under Nehru's chairmanship.

First Five-Year Plan (1951-56): In 1951 the Planning Commission released a draft of India's first Five-Year Plan, which primarily focused on agriculture, the sector most affected by partition. In addition to boosting food production, the plan emphasised the development of transport and communications, as well as the provision of social services. When presenting the proposals in Parliament, Jawaharlal Nehru hailed the plan as a groundbreaking effort that brought together India's agricultural, industrial, social and economic sectors into a unified framework. He noted that the Commission's work had made the entire country "planning conscious."

The First Five-Year Plan (1951–56) focused primarily on completing ongoing projects and addressing the immediate challenges of the post-war crisis. Independence had been accompanied by the upheaval of partition. It was a monumental task to manage a massive refugee influx, the largest mass migration in history. Following the first general election, the sense of urgency grew. Leaders from both the left and the right criticised the first Five-Year Plan for lacking vision and ambition. While food-grain production saw significant increases, output in other sectors fell short of the targets.

The Second Five-Year Plan (1956–61): The second Five Year Plan marked the implementation of the renowned Nehru-Mahalanobis strategy, shaped significantly by Professor P. C. Mahalanobis and this approach continued into the Third Five Year Plan (1961–66). Central to this strategy was the rapid development of heavy and capital goods industries, predominantly in the public sector. During the Second Plan, for instance, three major steel plants were established under public ownership. The Germans were to construct one in Rourkela, Odisha, the Russians in Bhilai, Madhya Pradesh and the British in Durgapur, West Bengal.

In the Second Five-Year Plan, Mahalanobis outlined eight key objectives. The first was to achieve rapid national economic growth by expanding the public sector, thus advancing towards a socialist society. The second objective focused on developing essential heavy industries for producing goods to establish a foundation for economic independence. Other objectives, likely of lesser priority, included increasing the production of consumer goods by both

factories and households, boosting agricultural productivity and improving housing, health and education services.

Third Five-Year Plan (1961-66): At the time of its conception, it was believed that the Indian economy had entered a "takeoff stage." The aim was to transform India into a "self-reliant" and "self-generating" economy. Drawing on the lessons from the first two plans, where agricultural production was identified as a main constraint to India's economic development, agriculture was given top priority to support exports and industry. However, the Plan failed to meet its targets due to unforeseen events, including the Chinese attack in 1962, the Indo-Pak war in 1965 and the severe drought of 1965-66. As a result of these challenges, the focus shifted in the later phase from development to a combination of defence and development.

♦ *Self-reliance setback*

Three Annual Plans (1966-69)

The failure of the Third Plan, coupled with the devaluation of the rupee (intended to boost exports) and an inflationary recession, led to the postponement of the Fourth Five-Year Plan. Instead, three Annual Plans were introduced. The ongoing agricultural crisis and severe food shortages necessitated a focus on agriculture during these Annual Plans. A new agricultural strategy was implemented, which involved the widespread distribution of high-yielding variety seeds, extensive use of fertilizers, the utilisation of irrigation systems and soil conservation efforts. These Annual Plans helped the economy absorb the shocks caused by the Third Plan and laid the foundation for future planned growth.

♦ *Agricultural recovery*

Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-74): The Fourth Five-Year Plan commenced in April 1969. This period marked one of the most vulnerable phases of the Indian economy, characterised by high inflation, critically low foreign exchange reserves, dangerously depleted food stocks threatening famine in some regions and a heavy reliance on foreign aid to cover nearly half of its imports. At this juncture, the United States, India's most significant donor at the time, suspended aid in response to the Indo-Pak war of 1965 and declined to renew the PL-480 wheat loan agreement on a long-term basis.

♦ *Economic crisis*

Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79): The final draft of the Fifth Five-Year Plan was prepared and launched by D. P. Dhar against the backdrop of an economic crisis caused by runaway inflation, driven by rising oil prices and the government's failed attempt to take over the wholesale wheat trade. The plan aimed to achieve two primary objectives: the "removal of poverty" (Garibi Hatao)

and the "attainment of self-reliance." Promoting a high rate of growth, improving income distribution and significantly increasing the domestic savings rate were seen as crucial strategies. However, due to high inflation, the cost projections for the plan were entirely off and the original public sector outlay had to be revised upwards. Following the declaration of the Emergency in 1975, the focus shifted to implementing the Prime Minister's 20-Point Programme and the Five-Year Plan was pushed aside. In 1978 the Fifth Five Year Plan was ultimately terminated.

♦ *Garibi Hatao*

Rolling Plan (1978 - 80): There were two Sixth Plans. The Janata Government presented a plan for 1978-1983, focusing on employment, in contrast to the Nehru Model, which the government criticised for concentrating power, widening inequality and exacerbating poverty. However, this government lasted only two years. In 1980, the Congress Government returned to power and launched a different plan aimed at directly addressing poverty by fostering the conditions for an expanding economy.

♦ *Policy shift*

Sixth Five-Year Plan(1980-85): The Sixth Plan focused on increasing national income, modernising technology and ensuring a continuous reduction in poverty and unemployment through programmes like TRYSEM (Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment), IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme) and NREP (National Rural Employment Programme) for employing during slack seasons. It also aimed at controlling population growth, among other objectives. Overall, the Sixth Plan can be considered a success, as most targets were met, although in the final year (1984-85), many regions of the country faced severe famine conditions and agricultural output fell below the record levels of the previous year.

♦ *Poverty reduction*

Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985- 90): The Plan aimed to accelerate food grain production, increase employment opportunities and enhance productivity, with a focus on "food, work and productivity." It proved highly successful, as the economy achieved a 6% growth rate, surpassing the targeted 5%.

♦ *Economic growth*

Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992- 1997): The Eighth Plan was delayed by two years due to political instability at the Centre. The significant issues at the time included a worsening balance of payments, rising debt, widening budget deficits, industrial recession and inflation. To address these challenges, the plan implemented significant policy reforms, including liberalisation, under the leadership of Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao. The goal was to achieve an annual average growth rate of 5.6%. During the Eighth Plan period, India experienced rapid economic growth, with the

♦ *Economic reforms*

highest annual growth rate recorded so far at 6.8%. There was substantial growth in agriculture, allied sectors and manufacturing, as well as in exports and imports. Trade and current account deficits improved, despite a significant decline in the public sector's share of total investment, which fell to around 34%.

Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002): The Ninth Plan prepared under the United Front Government, focused on "Growth with Social Justice and Equality." It aimed at relying primarily on the private sector, both Indian and foreign (FDI) with the state taking on a role as a facilitator. The government was also expected to increasingly engage in the social sector, including education, health and infrastructure, where private sector involvement was likely to be limited. The plan prioritised agriculture and rural development, aiming to generate sufficient productive employment and eradicate poverty.

♦ *Growth with social justice and equality*

Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-2007): Recognising that economic growth cannot be the sole objective of a national plan, the Tenth Plan set "monitorable targets" for several major development indicators in addition to the 8% growth target. These targets included reducing gender gaps in literacy and wage rates, lowering infant and maternal mortality rates, improving literacy, ensuring access to potable drinking water and cleaning major polluted rivers. Governance was seen as a crucial factor for development, with agriculture identified as the primary driver of the economy. The role of states in planning was emphasised, with increased involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The plan aimed for balanced development across all states by setting state-specific targets for growth and social development.

♦ *Balanced development*

Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007- 2012): The Eleventh Plan was focused on faster and more inclusive growth, following the UPA's return to power with the promise of aiding the Aam Aadmi (common man). By the end of the Tenth Plan, India had emerged as one of the fastest-growing economies. The savings and investment rates had increased, the industrial sector had adapted well to global competition and foreign investors showed a keen interest in India. However, the growth was not seen as sufficiently inclusive for many groups, particularly SCs, STs and minorities, as reflected in data on various issues such as poverty, malnutrition, mortality and daily employment.

♦ *Inclusive growth*

Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2012-17): The Twelfth Plan began at a time when the global economy was grappling with a second financial crisis, triggered by the sovereign debt issues in the Eurozone, which emerged in the final year of the Eleventh

Plan. This crisis impacted countries worldwide, including India. India's rate slowed to 6.2 percent in 2011-12 and the deceleration continued into the first year of the Twelfth Plan, with an estimated growth of only 5 percent. As a result, the Twelfth Plan prioritised restoring rapid growth while ensuring that it is both inclusive and sustainable. The Plan's vision and objectives are reflected in its subtitle: "Faster, Sustainable and More Inclusive Growth." Inclusiveness would be pursued through poverty reduction, promoting equality among groups, regional balance, reducing inequality and empowering individuals. Sustainability focused on environmental conservation, human capital development (through improvements in health, education, skill development, nutrition and information technology) and strengthening institutional capacities and infrastructure, such as power, telecommunications, roads and transportation.

♦ *Sustainable inclusion*

2.1.3 Mixed Economy

Immediately after independence, India developed its economic model, a mixed economy, which balanced the roles of both the state and the market, fostering a complementary relationship between the public and private sectors. By the last decade of the millennium, India had successfully carried out this model. The mixed economy is regarded as one of Nehru's significant development strategies. The mixed economy was intended as a transitional phase, with the private sector continuing to play a significant role within the framework of planning. Ultimately, the state was to dominate the economy, controlling or owning all major industries and strategic sectors. Nehru also emphasised the importance of cooperatives, advocating their increasing role in trade, industry and agriculture.

♦ Nehru's *Mixed economy* strategy

Nehru's ultimate goal was to build an independent, self-reliant economy, as economic strength and the ability to resist external economic and political control were crucial to real independence. He prioritised rapid industrialisation, agricultural self-sufficiency, planning, a robust public sector, heavy and capital goods industries, minimal reliance on foreign capital and aid, advancements in science and technology, the development of a large scientific and technical workforce and nuclear energy. Nehru saw these as essential components of India's journey toward economic independence. His policies were largely successful, enabling India to transition from a colonial to an independent economy, albeit one that retained capitalist elements. Despite some later challenges, Nehru's economic policies were foundational to India's substantial economic progress.

♦ *Economic self-reliance*

2.1.3.1 PSU's

It was widely recognised that developing capital goods and other heavy industries, which require large investments and long periods to show returns, would need significant public sector involvement.

♦ *Public sector*

While Nehru and the Left-leaning nationalists, on one hand and the capitalist class, on the other, agreed on the importance of the public sector in reducing external dependence, they differed in their vision of its scope and purpose. Nehru and the left saw public sector initiatives as steps toward socialism, whereas capitalists viewed them as tools to foster independent capitalism and preempt socialism by balancing equity with growth. This ideological tension between the two perspectives persisted, particularly in the early post-independence years.

In 1947, the Economic Programme Committee, appointed by the AICC and led by Jawaharlal Nehru outlined the areas such as defence, key industries and public utilities that should be initiated in the public sector. The Committee also stated that the transfer of existing private enterprises to public ownership should begin after five years, which caused significant alarm and protests among

♦ *Industrial policy*

capitalists. A more accommodating approach emerged in 1948 with the Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR), which defined specific roles for the public and private sectors. It also mentioned that the issue of nationalsing existing industries would be reviewed after ten years, based on the circumstances at the time.

Even after the Indian Parliament adopted the "socialist pattern of society" as the goal of social and economic policy in December 1954 and the Congress elaborated a sharper leftward shift during the Avadi session of 1955, the IPR (1956) and the Second Plan, while expanding the public sector, did not call for the nationalisation of existing industries. Instead, they envisioned a 'mixed economy,'

♦ *Mixed economy*

where both public and private sectors would not only coexist but complement each other, with the private sector encouraged to grow freely within the broader objectives of the national plan. However, the significant focus on heavy and capital goods industries in the Second Five-Year Plan naturally led to a greater role for the public sector, as these were areas generally agreed to be best developed by it.

However, Nehru was clear that over time, the public sector needed to generate additional resources. According to the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956, which he played a significant role in

♦ *Pragmatic socialism*

drafting, the public sector was to "augment the revenues of the state and provide resources for further development in new areas." Taking a pragmatic approach, Nehru also believed that where

the public sector performed well, it should continue, but where it failed, it should be reformed or replaced.

2.1.4 Achievements of Five-Year Plans

Several significant advancements were made during the Nehru era, including the formulation of the first three Five-Year Plans, although the full impact of many initiatives would become evident in the years following his death. Substantial progress was achieved across various sectors during this initial phase of development, covering the first three Plans up to the mid-1960s. The Indian economy demonstrated impressive performance compared to the colonial period. From 1951 to 1964-65 (excluding the final year of the Third Plan, which was marked by a severe drought and war), India's national income or Gross National Product (GNP) grew at an average annual rate of about 4%. This was approximately four times the growth rate recorded during the last 50 years of colonial rule.

♦ *Economic progress*

India's post-independence growth rate compared favourably with those of advanced countries during similar stages of early development. Achieving a higher growth rate required a significant increase in the investment rate. One of the notable accomplishments during this period was the substantial rise in savings and investment rates. Based on preliminary data, the Draft Outline of the Fourth Plan estimated that domestic savings and total investment in the Indian economy were both around 5.5% of national income in 1950–51, increasing to 10.5% for savings and 14% for investment by 1965–66. The gap between domestic savings and investment in later years was bridged partly by depleting foreign exchange reserves, primarily the substantial sterling balances of approximately ₹16 billion that Britain owned India in 1947 due to wartime forced credit and partly through foreign borrowing and aid. Total investment in 1965–66 was estimated to be nearly five times the 1951–52 level in nominal terms and more than three times in real terms.

♦ *Investment growth*

On the agricultural front, several transformative initiatives were undertaken. Comprehensive land reform measures introduced after independence, the establishment of an extensive network for agricultural extension and community development at the village level and significant infrastructural investments in irrigation, power and agricultural research created favourable conditions for agricultural growth during this period. Over the first three Five-Year Plans (excluding 1965–66), Indian agriculture achieved an annual growth rate exceeding 3%, which was 7.5 times higher than the growth rate during the last 50 years of colonial rule.

♦ *Agricultural transformation*

This performance is compared favourably with other countries in similar stages of development, such as China and Japan. For instance, Japan recorded a growth rate of less than 2.5% between 1878 and 1912 and an even lower rate until 1937.

♦ Land reforms

India's achievement in implementing land reforms and fostering agricultural growth stands out as particularly noteworthy, as it was accomplished within the framework of civil liberties and a modern democratic system, a contrast to countries like China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, the Soviet Union and Britain. However, despite this commendable progress, agricultural growth during this period fell short of meeting the rising demand for produce. This shortfall necessitated increasing food grain imports throughout the first three Five-Year Plans.

From 1956 onwards, India relied heavily on food imports from the United States under the controversial PL - 480 Scheme. It was only with the onset of the Green Revolution in the late 1960s that this dependence on imports began to diminish. (The broader issues of land reforms and agricultural growth deeply impacted the majority of the Indian population reliant on agriculture and the overall economy). Meanwhile, industrial growth during the first three Five Year Plans outpaced agricultural growth, achieving an impressive compound annual growth rate of 7.1% between 1951 and 1965. This industrial expansion was driven by rapid import substitution, initially focusing on consumer goods and later shifting, particularly from the Second Plan onward, to capital goods and intermediate goods. This shift was evident in the allocation of Plan expenditure on industry during the Second Plan, when 70% was directed toward metal, machinery and chemical industries, a figure that rose to 80% in the Third Plan.

♦ Industrial expansion

♦ Reduced dependence

As a result, the aggregate index of industrial production in India witnessed a threefold increase between 1951 and 1969. This growth was driven by a 70% rise in consumer goods industries, a fourfold increase in intermediate goods production and an extraordinary tenfold expansion in the capital goods sector, a remarkable achievement by any standard. It also highlights the rapid expansion of intermediate and capital goods industries such as basic metals, chemicals, transport equipment and electrical and non-electrical machinery. These industries grew significantly faster than consumer goods industries like textiles, particularly during the two decades between 1951 and 1971. This growth trajectory significantly reduced India's near-total dependence on advanced countries for basic goods and capital equipment essential for investment and the creation of new capacities. At the time of independence, almost all equipment required for capital investment had to be imported.

For instance, in 1950, 89.8% of India's machine tool requirements were met through imports.

By 1960, the share of imported equipment in total fixed investment had dropped to 43% and by 1974, it was just 9%. Meanwhile, the value of fixed investment in India increased approximately 2.5 times during this period. By the mid - 1970s, India was producing more than 90% of its equipment requirements domestically, a major milestone that significantly enhanced the nation's autonomy from advanced countries in determining its rate of capital accumulation and growth. This achievement, combined with the food security attained through the Green Revolution, empowered India to maintain an independent foreign policy and resist substantial external pressures.

♦ *Economic self-reliance*

India maintained a relatively low dependence on external resources, foreign aid and private foreign investment. During the First Plan, net aid utilized was only 0.4% of Net National Product (NNP) at factor cost, rising to 2.25% in the Second Plan and 3.17% in the Third Plan, before declining sharply after the late 1960s. Importantly, most external resources came as official aid. Between 1948 and 1961, net aid outpaced net foreign private investment in a ratio of 6:1.

♦ *Low foreign dependence*

In the First Plan, over 71% of foreign aid was allocated for wheat loans. By contrast, during the Second and Third Plans, nearly 98% of foreign aid was directed towards iron and steel projects, industrial development, transport, communication and power. Across the first three Plans, these sectors, industry, transport and power absorbed approximately 95% of the foreign aid. Notably, funds generated through the PL - 480 food aid from the United States were similarly channelled into these areas. Additionally, Soviet aid during this period was aligned with Second Plan priorities, focusing on core and basic industries, exclusively within the public sector. The public sector's role in the Indian economy expanded rapidly, taking control of the "commanding heights" and further diminishing the presence of an already small foreign sector. Unlike certain Latin American countries, India's public sector growth did not involve collaboration with foreign private capital or multinational corporations. The share of government companies in the total paid-up capital of the corporate sector rose significantly, from 3.4% in 1951 to 30% in 1961, reaching approximately 50% in the early 1970s and an impressive 75% by 1978.

♦ *Public sector expansion*

Beyond industry and agriculture, early planners prioritised infrastructure development, including education and health areas long neglected under colonial rule. During the first three

Five-Year Plans, the average actual expenditure on transport and communication was about ₹13 billion per Plan, accounting for approximately 26% of total Plan expenditure. Similarly, social and community services received ₹9.4 billion (19.9%), while power infrastructure was allocated ₹6.16 billion (10.6%). Over time, investments in these sectors (and irrigation) proved crucial in boosting private investment and enhancing productivity, as demonstrated by the transformative impact of the Green Revolution on agriculture.

By 1965-66, compared to 1950-51, India's installed electricity capacity had increased 4.5 times, the number of electrified towns and villages had risen 14-fold and hospital beds had grown 2.5 times. School enrollment was nearly three times higher and admission capacity for technical education at the degree and diploma levels had expanded sixfold and 8.5 times, respectively, while the population had increased by just over one-third during the same period.

Jawaharlal Nehru and the early Indian planners were keenly aware of India's lag in science and technology, an area intentionally neglected during the colonial rule. To address this, they made significant efforts to bridge the gap. Nehru envisioned the "temples of modern (secular) India" not only as steel plants, power stations and irrigation dams but also as institutions of higher learning, particularly in scientific fields. During the First Plan, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) established high-powered national laboratories and institutes to conduct fundamental and applied research in areas such as physics, chemistry, fuel, glass and ceramics, food technology, drugs, electro-chemistry, roads, leather and construction. In 1948, the establishment of the Atomic Energy Commission laid the groundwork for India's notable progress in nuclear science and related fields. These initiatives were complemented by a remarkable expansion of educational opportunities in science and technology through universities and specialised institutes.

National expenditure on scientific research and development grew rapidly with each successive Plan, rising from ₹10 million in 1949 to ₹4.5 billion in 1977. Over the same period, India's pool of scientific and technical manpower expanded more than twelvefold, from 190,000 to 2.32 million. This remarkable growth positioned India, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as the second-largest country in the world in terms of scientific and technical workforce. This achievement was significant despite challenges, including a decline in the quality of education, particularly within universities and the substantial "brain drain" of top talent, primarily

♦ *Infrastructure investment*

♦ *Infrastructure investment*

♦ *Scientific institutions*

♦ *Scientific progress*

to the United States. Nevertheless, it underscores India's forward-looking investment in human resource development, especially in science and technology. As knowledge increasingly becomes a significant factor in production, this foundational effort has enabled India to participate in the globalised, high-technology economy with a measure of competitiveness and parity. The emphasis placed on education and capacity building since independence has been pivotal in preparing India to engage effectively in the knowledge-driven global economy.

♦ *India as a frontrunner*

The Nehruvian era laid the foundation for modern independent development by creating essential physical and human infrastructure. The opportunities available today are a direct outcome of those foundational achievements, not developments that occurred despite them. The Nehruvian phase must also be understood in the global historical context of its time. As Dr. Manmohan Singh, the visionary economist and former finance minister and Prime Minister, who initiated India's structural adjustment programme in 1991, once acknowledged: "In 1960, if you had asked anybody which country would lead the Third World by 1996 or 1997, India was considered the frontrunner." This sentiment was echoed by a broad spectrum of economists, including prominent Western figures such as W. W. Rostow, Rosenstein-Rodan, Wilfred Mandelbaum, George Rosen, Ian Little and Brian Reddaway. They widely regarded the direction of Indian planning as highly positive and full of potential. During that time, it was common to praise India's democratic developmental path in contrast to the totalitarian model pursued by China.

Summarised Overview

The development debate in India revolved around different models proposed by prominent leaders. Nehru emphasised modernisation, industrialisation and planning for economic self-reliance. Gandhi advocated sustainability, self-sufficiency and decentralised village-based development. Meghnad Saha championed scientific progress, planning and equity, critiquing Nehru's elitist approach. These contrasting visions shaped India's post-independence developmental phase.

The Planning Commission of India was established in 1950 under Jawaharlal Nehru's chairmanship to oversee planned economic development. Inspired by earlier planning initiatives, the Commission launched a series of Five-Year Plans focusing on agriculture, industry, social welfare and economic growth. The First Plan (1951–56) prioritised post-partition recovery, while the Second Plan (1956–61) emphasized heavy industry under the Nehru-Mahalanobis strategy. Later plans tackled self-reliance, poverty reduction and economic liberalisation, culminating in the Twelfth Plan (2012–17) with a focus on

sustainable and inclusive growth. The Planning Commission was eventually replaced by the NITI Aayog in 2015.

India adopted a mixed economy after independence, combining state led planning with private sector participation. Nehru emphasised rapid industrialisation, agricultural self-sufficiency and scientific advancements to achieve economic self-reliance. Public sector expansion, Five-Year Plans and strategic investment in heavy industries reduced foreign dependence, while land reforms and infrastructure development boosted productivity. Despite successes, challenges like food shortages and reliance on foreign aid persisted. By the 1970s, India's industrial base had strengthened and scientific and technical manpower had grown significantly, laying the foundation for long-term economic progress and positioning India as a main player in global economic development.

Assignments

1. Discuss the role of the Planning Commission in shaping India's economic development post-independence. How did it contribute to the country's economic planning?

2. Evaluate the impact of the Planning Commission's policies on industrialization, agriculture and social welfare in India.

3. Describe the major challenges India faced in its economic development immediately after gaining independence. How did the country address these challenges through planning?

4. Critically analyse the achievements of the First, Second and Third Five-Year Plans. What were the major successes and failures in each plan?

5. Assess the advantages and disadvantages of India adopting a mixed economy in its early stages of development.

6. Discuss the role of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in the Indian economy. How did they contribute to the industrialization and modernization of India?

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

The Post-Nehruvian Phase

Learning Outcomes

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

♦ explain the concept of the Green Revolution and its significance in transforming Indian agriculture
♦ explain the reasons behind the nationalisation of banks in India in 1969
♦ analyse the constitutional and political implications of the Emergency, including the suspension of fundamental rights
♦ describe the origins, objectives and key events of the JP Movement
♦ analyse the role of technology missions in advancing sectors like agriculture, education and health

Background

The demise of Jawaharlal Nehru in May 1964 posed a critical challenge to the stability and continuity of the Indian political system. The transition of leadership was facilitated by a faction within the Indian National Congress, commonly referred to as the Syndicate. This influential group, established in 1963, comprised eminent political figures. The Syndicate played a decisive role in opposing Morarji Desai's candidacy for the premiership and instead endorsed Lal Bahadur Shastri as Nehru's successor. Upon assuming office, Shastri largely retained the composition of Nehru's Cabinet, implementing only minimal modifications.

In August, the Pakistani government deployed well-trained infiltrators into the Kashmir Valley, aiming to incite a pro-Pakistan uprising and create conditions for military intervention. Recognising the gravity of this Pakistan-backed infiltration, Shastri ordered the army to cross the ceasefire line, block the passes used by the infiltrators and capture key strategic positions such as Kargil, Uri and Haji Pir. Following the ceasefire agreement and with the mediation of the Soviet Union, General Ayub Khan, the President of Pakistan and Shastri met in Tashkent, Soviet Union, on January 4, 1966 and signed the Tashkent Declaration. The Tashkent Conference had a tragic outcome. Shastri, suffered a sudden heart attack and died in Tashkent on January 10,

just nineteen months into his tenure as prime minister. Shastri's death once again raised the question of succession. On January 19, 1966, a secret ballot was conducted within the Congress parliamentary party, in which Indira Gandhi defeated Desai with a vote count of 355 to 169.

Keywords

Regionalism, Economic Liberalism, Green Revolution, Nationalisation, Emergency

Discussion

2.2.1 Indira Gandhi's Government

Between the mid -1960s and the late 1980s, India achieved notable economic progress, with Indira Gandhi playing a significant role. These achievements must be considered in the context of numerous severe internal and external challenges during this period. For instance, after the mid -1960s crisis, India faced the genocide in East Pakistan (Bangladesh), which brought the immense burden of over 10 million refugees, nearly half the population of a country, seeking shelter in India. This was followed by the 1971 war with Pakistan, droughts in 1972 and 1974, the 1973 oil shock that quadrupled international oil prices, the 1979 oil shock that doubled prices again, the disastrous 1979 – 80 harvest due to the worst drought since independence and successive widespread droughts in 1987 and 1988. In response, significant efforts were made to address significant issues, including improving the balance of payments, achieving food security, implementing anti-poverty measures and reducing dependence on critical imports like oil.

♦ *Economic resilience*

A key aspect of Indira Gandhi's politics was her deep connection to the country and its people, her pride in India's greatness and her unwavering confidence in its future. She was highly attuned to India's national interests and committed to preserving its prestige on the global stage. Fully aware that true national greatness and independence stem from a country's intrinsic strength, she worked tirelessly, despite significant domestic economic and political challenges, to make India self-reliant and independent in economic, political, cultural, technological and military spheres. She instilled a sense of confidence in the nation's capacity to achieve these goals. Under her leadership, India was one of the few countries to successfully navigate the oil shock of the seventies.

♦ *National self-reliance*

2.2.1.1 Green Revolution

The Green Revolution is often associated with India's transformation from a food deficient nation to one that achieved self-sufficiency and food surpluses, driven by significant agricultural reforms introduced in the mid-1960s. These reforms, known as the New Agricultural Strategy have sparked debates about their timing, political motivations and socio-economic impact, particularly on rural classes and governance.

♦ *Agricultural revolution*

By the mid-1960s, India faced a severe food crisis due to stagnant agricultural growth, rapid population increase and rising demand for food. Despite achieving 3% annual agricultural growth from 1949–1965, food shortages persisted, necessitating massive food imports under the US PL-480 Scheme. This dependency coupled with geo-political pressures, including the 1962 and 1965 wars and successive droughts highlighted the urgent need for food self-sufficiency. In response, the New Agricultural Strategy was launched marking the advent of the Green Revolution. Supported by leaders like Lal Bahadur Shastri, C. Subramaniam and Indira Gandhi, this initiative focused on high-yielding seeds, chemical fertilizers, modern equipment, assured irrigation and institutional credit. Initial efforts prioritised 10% of cultivated land with favourable conditions. This led to rapid agricultural transformation including increased foodgrain production, reduced imports and surplus stocks by the 1980s.

♦ *Food crisis*

While the Green Revolution helped India achieve self-reliance, regional disparities and social inequalities emerged. Prosperity initially concentrated in developed regions like Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, later spreading to other areas. Concerns about class polarisation and rural inequalities also arose, with mechanisation and modern inputs benefiting wealthy farmers over small holders and labourers. However, over time, the spread of technology reduced regional disparities and increased overall agricultural growth, contributing to rural prosperity and securing India's independence in food. Recent studies have shown that most initial concerns about the New Agricultural Strategy, including fears of regional inequality, were largely unfounded. From its inception, there was a clear recognition that measures were needed to ensure that small farmers and agricultural labourers benefited from the new technology. Early warnings from sections of the Indian intelligentsia about potential adverse effects on the poor helped raise awareness and guide preventive efforts.

♦ *Equitable development*

As part of Indira Gandhi's *Garibi Hatao* campaign in the late 1960s and 1970s, several programmes were launched to support the rural poor, small farmers and landless workers. Initiatives like

♦ *Rural upliftment*

the Rural Works Programme (RWP), Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Scheme (MFAL) provided financial assistance through loans and subsidies. Institutional credit availability increased significantly, benefiting millions of small farmers and ensuring credit reached poorer sections.

♦ *Inclusive farming*

Despite some weaknesses, these programmes had a significant impact. By 1979, economist Raj Krishna observed that small farmers utilised more productive assets and inputs per unit of land than larger farmers. The Green Revolution technology proved scale-neutral, with small farmers achieving higher productivity by applying more inputs per unit of land. This enabled small farmers to sustain their livelihoods, reducing distress sales to larger landowners.

♦ *Employment growth*

While landless tenants without tenure security faced challenges due to rising rents and land values, secure tenants and sharecroppers also benefited from the new technology. Concerns about rural unemployment due to mechanisation were misplaced, as demand for labour increased alongside wages. Studies, such as those by Wolf Ladejinsky, highlighted the growing demand for casual labour in regions like Punjab, driven by higher cropping intensity. Over time, the Green Revolution generated significant non-agricultural employment through agro-industries, trade, transportation and manufacturing. Rural demand for consumer goods also boosted urban factory employment. For example, Punjab experienced a 50% increase in urban employment between 1971 and 1981, partly due to agricultural growth.

♦ *Poverty alleviation*

While employment generated by the Green Revolution could not fully meet the needs of a growing rural population, it enabled large-scale poverty alleviation programmes using surplus foodgrain stocks. These efforts had a transformative impact, especially in agriculturally backward areas. The substantial economic progress achieved between the mid-1960s and the late 1980s owed much to the leadership of Indira Gandhi, often too simplistically dismissed as populist. These achievements must be assessed against the backdrop of significant internal and external shocks during this period.

On the agricultural front, rapid improvements were evident. The Green Revolution, which introduced a package of high-yield variety (HYV) seeds, fertilizers and other inputs in targeted regions, yielded immediate benefits in food security and poverty reduction. Between 1967–68 and 1970–71, foodgrain production surged by 35%. Net food imports dropped dramatically from 10.3

million tonnes in 1966 to 3.6 million tonnes in 1970, while food availability rose from 73.5 million tonnes to 89.5 million tonnes in the same period. This upward trend continued with food availability reaching 110.25 million tonnes in 1978 and 128.8 million tonnes in 1984. By the mid-1980s, food stocks had exceeded 30 million tonnes, effectively ending India's "begging bowl" image and establishing substantial food security even in extreme crises.

This newfound resilience was evident during the severe consecutive droughts of 1987–88. The economy managed to absorb the shocks without significant spikes in food prices or reliance on imports. Remarkably, rural poverty indices continued to decline during these years of crisis, as government programmes utilised surplus food stocks to sustain rural employment and incomes. For the first time since independence, rural poverty did not worsen during a drought or poor harvest, marking a significant milestone in India's economic journey.

Beyond achieving food self-sufficiency, several developments indicated greater autonomy and self-reliance in the Indian economy. The fiscal deficit was significantly reduced, dropping from 7.3% of GDP in 1966–67 to 3.8% in 1969–70. The balance of payments positions also improved markedly. This was due to a combination of reduced food and other imports, modest growth in exports and a substantial rise in remittances from Indian workers in the oil-rich Middle East during its economic boom.

2.2.1.2 Nationalisation of Banks

In the 1967 elections, the Congress party suffered a significant setback at both the national and state levels. In response, the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi adopted a more radical approach, which led to internal divisions in the Congress and ultimately resulted in a split in November 1969. After the split, Indira Gandhi was able to retain power only with the support of the Communist parties and some regional parties, which further intensified the radical shift in her policies. In December 1970, she called for a general election and campaigned on the slogan "*garibi hatao*" (eradicate poverty) and promising radical socialist policies, she achieved a landslide victory in March 1971.

The post-1967 period saw the launch of a series of radical economic policies that would have long-term implications for India's development efforts. After removing Desai, a well-known opponent of bank nationalisation, from the Finance Ministry, Indira Gandhi issued an ordinance declaring the nationalisation of fourteen privately owned banks. Desai had previously told Parliament that it would "severely strain the administrative resources of

Margin notes:
- ♦ *Food security*
- ♦ *Drought resilience*
- ♦ *Economic autonomy*
- ♦ *Radical shift*
- ♦ *Bank nationalisation*

the government while leaving the basic issues untouched." He believed that the state takeover of banks would diminish resources for economic development and increase bureaucracy and red tape.

In her explanation on All-India Radio, she stated that India, while an ancient country, is a young democracy that must remain constantly vigilant to prevent a few from dominating the social, economic or political systems. The nationalisation aimed to ensure that major banks would be not only socially controlled but publicly owned, providing credit not just to large businesses, but also to millions of farmers, artisans and other self-employed people. The nationalisation was challenged in the Supreme Court and the challenge was upheld. However, the judgement was immediately nullified by a new ordinance signed by the President. In the first six months of state control, the banking sector saw a massive expansion, with over 1,100 new branches opened, many of them in remote rural areas that had previously been underserved by formal credit.

♦ *Bank expansion*

2.2.2 Pre-Emergency Period

India faced its most significant political crisis since independence when the Internal Emergency was declared on June 26 1975. By early 1973, Indira Gandhi's popularity began to decline as people's expectations went unmet. There was little progress in addressing rural or urban poverty, economic inequality or the persistence of caste and class oppression in the countryside. The immediate trigger for growing discontent was the sharp deterioration in the economic situation. A combination of recession, rising unemployment, rampant inflation and food scarcity created a serious crisis. The strain of accommodating nearly 10 million refugees from Bangladesh in 1971 had depleted grain reserves and the costs of the Bangladesh war had led to a significant budgetary deficit. The war had also depleted foreign exchange reserves. Additionally, the monsoon failed for two consecutive years in 1972 and 1973 causing a severe drought in many parts of the country and leading to a massive shortage of foodgrains, which drove up prices. The drought also resulted in a decline in power generation and combined with the drop in agricultural production and the demand for manufactured goods led to industrial recession and a rise in unemployment.

♦ *Economic turmoil*

In 1973, the infamous oil shock occurred as global crude oil prices surged four fold, causing a sharp increase in the prices of petroleum products and fertilizers. This further drained foreign reserves, exacerbated the budgetary deficit and deepened the economic recession. As a result, prices continuously rose with a 22 percent increase in 1972-73 alone. This price surge which affected

both the poor and the middle class, was accompanied by shortages of essential goods leading to food riots in several regions of the country. The economic recession, rising unemployment, inflation and scarcity of goods triggered widespread industrial unrest and a wave of strikes across the country in 1972 and 1973, culminating in a nationwide railway strike in May 1974. The strike lasted for 22 days but was eventually broken, further eroding Indira Gandhi's popularity among workers.

Law and order deteriorated, particularly during 1974-75, as strikes, student protests and public demonstrations often turned violent. Many colleges and universities were closed for extended periods. In May 1973, a mutiny erupted in Uttar Pradesh involving the Provincial Armed Constabulary, which clashed with the army sent to suppress it. The confrontation resulted in the deaths of more than thirty-five constables and soldiers.

The political situation was further complicated by other factors. The Congress, as an organisation, was in decline and proved unable to handle the political crisis at the state and grass roots levels. The government's ability to resolve the crisis was significantly hampered by the growing corruption in various sectors of society and the widespread belief that the higher echelons of the ruling party and administration were complicit. Even Indira Gandhi herself was tainted by the perception of corruption, especially when her inexperienced younger son, Sanjay Gandhi was granted a license to produce 50,000 Maruti cars annually.

A significant development during this period was the increasing detachment of three major social groups from Congress. While the poor still supported the party, though more passively, the middle classes turned against it due to rising prices and the growing perception of corruption. The rich peasantry was concerned about the threat of land reforms and the capitalists, alarmed by the talk of socialism, nationalisation of banks and coal mining and anti-monopoly measures also distanced themselves from the Congress and Indira Gandhi. The opposition parties' desperation further weakened the political system.

2.2.3 Internal Emergency

On the morning of 26 June, Indira Gandhi declared a state of Internal Emergency under Article 352 of the Constitution, suspending normal political processes but promising to restore normalcy when conditions allowed. The proclamation suspended federal provisions of the Constitution, along with fundamental rights and civil liberties. The government imposed strict censorship on the press and suppressed all forms of protest and opposition. In

the early hours of 26 June, hundreds of opposition leaders were arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) including Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), Morarji Desai, Atal Behari Vajpayee and the Congress dissidents like Chandra Shekhar.

Many academics, journalists, trade unionists and student leaders were also imprisoned. Over time, many of the detainees were gradually released, with JP being freed in 1975 on health grounds and others including Charan Singh and Vajpayee released in 1976. Several extremist communal and ultra-left organisations, such as the RSS, Anand Marg, Jamaat-i-Islami and the Maoist CP (ML) were banned. Arrests continued throughout the Emergency, though most detainees were released after a few days or months. In total, over 100,000 individuals were arrested during the nineteen months. Among those detained were also a significant number of criminals, including smugglers, hoarders, black marketeers and known goondas.

During the Emergency, the functioning of Parliament was rendered ineffective. The opposition of the few brave MPs who had not been arrested was rendered futile, as their speeches were not allowed to be reported in the press. State governments were tightly controlled. The non-Congress governments of the DMK in Tamil Nadu and Janata in Gujarat were dismissed in January and March of 1976, despite their compliance. Additionally, Congress chief ministers in Uttar Pradesh and Orissa were replaced for not being deemed reliable enough. The Congress party itself was also strictly controlled with internal democracy effectively stifled.

A series of decrees, laws and constitutional amendments severely restricted the judiciary's ability to oversee the executive's actions. The Defence of India Act and the MISA were amended in July 1975 to further limit citizens' liberties. In November 1976, an attempt was made to alter the fundamental civil rights structure of the Constitution through the 42nd Amendment. This amendment ended judicial review of constitutional amendments arguing that the judiciary was hindering pro-poor socio-economic reforms like land reform legislation under the guise of defending fundamental rights. The amendment also stipulated that Parliament's power to amend the Constitution would be unlimited. The Fundamental rights were indirectly undermined by being made subordinate to an expanded version of the Directive Principles of State Policy included in the Constitution. Thus, the Emergency centralised unchecked state and party power in the hands of the Prime Minister to be wielded through a small group of politicians and bureaucrats surrounding her.

Indira Gandhi later claimed that faced with an extra-constitutional challenge, she had no other choice. Resigning, she argued, would have empowered the forces threatening the democratic process and pushing the country toward anarchy and chaos. Furthermore, she believed there was no legal, political or moral reason for her to step down during the appeal process. However, she did have another democratic option. She could have announced the dissolution of the Lok Sabha and called for fresh elections in October-November. If Jaya Prakash and the opposition had accepted her offer, it would have opened the door to a democratic resolution of the political dead lock through a public mandate. If they had rejected the offer and insisted on her resignation, she could have justifiably declared an Internal Emergency as the only viable response to their extra-constitutional challenge.

♦ *Democratic options*

Indira Gandhi could have announced that the Emergency would be lifted as soon as the opposition dropped its demand for her resignation, agreed to abide by the Supreme Court or Parliament's judgement and accepted the electoral process as the test of their claims. In any event, there was no justification for the prolonged duration of the Emergency of about nineteen months once the perceived threat to law and order had dissipated nor for the harsh nature of the Emergency measures. The political tragedy was that both the JP Movement and Indira Gandhi rejected the option of elections, which in a democracy serve as the means for legitimising a political regime and expressing the will of the people. This outcome was partly a result of how the political conflict of 1974-75 unfolded, creating an atmosphere in which dialogue and compromise between the opposing sides became impossible.

♦ *Political conflict*

2.2.3.1 Public Reaction to the Emergency

While a section of the intelligentsia reacted to the Emergency with strong hostility, the majority of the public initially responded with passivity, acquiescence, acceptance or even support. The main reason for the people's acceptance of the Emergency was its constitutional, legal and temporary nature. It was declared under Article 352 of the Constitution, approved by Parliament and legitimised by the courts. The unpopularity of the Emergency began to grow only in early 1976. What caused this delayed reaction? One reason was that, since independence, the people had no recent experience with authoritarian rule. This unfamiliarity led to confusion and personal fear of the unknown. Furthermore, apart from the arrest of opposition leaders, most repressive measures were targeted at anti-social elements or the extreme communal right and the small far-left factions, which had little popular support and were already known for their anti-democratic views.

♦ *Passive acceptance*

With the restoration of public order and discipline, many people felt relieved that the country had been saved from disorder and chaos. Crime rates in the cities dropped; gheraos and uncontrolled, often violent, demonstrations ceased; there was a noticeable reduction in tension and calm returned to the campuses as students and teachers resumed their classes. There was also an immediate and widespread improvement in administration, with government employees arriving at work on time and being more considerate toward the public. Quick, dramatic and highly publicised actions were taken against smugglers, hoarders, black marketers, illegal foreign currency traders and tax evaders, with thousands of them incarcerated under the MISA. The economy saw a significant, though somewhat exaggerated, improvement, partly due to the measures taken during the Emergency, but also because of favourable policies implemented before the Emergency. Most notably, the price situation saw a dramatic improvement. The costs of essential goods, including foodstuffs, dropped and their availability in stores improved.

♦ *Administrative improvement*

Public hopes were raised and the Emergency became more acceptable with the announcement of the comprehensive Twenty-Point Programme by Indira Gandhi on July 1 1975, which focused on the socio-economic upliftment of the vast rural poor. The Programme promised to eliminate the existing debts of landless labourers, small farmers and rural artisans, while offering alternative credit options. It aimed to abolish bonded labour, enforce agricultural land ceiling laws and redistribute surplus land to the landless. It also promised to provide housing sites for landless labourers and marginalised groups, raise the minimum wages for agricultural workers, support the handloom industry, reduce prices, combat tax evasion and smuggling, boost production, streamline the distribution of essential goods, raise the income tax exemption limit to Rs 8,000 and ease investment procedures.

♦ *Socio-economic upliftment*

Efforts were made to implement the Twenty-Point Programme, yielding some immediate results in terms of price reductions, better availability of essential goods and action against hoarding, smuggling and tax evasion. Progress was made in this area as well, with three million housing sites provided to the landless and Dalits and around 1.1 million acres of surplus land distributed, though this was less than 10% of the total surplus land. Bonded labour was officially declared illegal, but the practice persisted. Several states introduced laws to temporarily halt debt recovery from landless labourers and small farmers and in some cases, to scale down or write off their debts.

♦ *Rural upliftment progress*

However, within a few months, the people began to lose their

enthusiasm for the Emergency. By mid-1976, popular discontent had reached its peak and by the end of the year the dissatisfaction had grown considerably. Several factors contributed to this shift. The economic growth seen in the first year of the Emergency was not sustained. Agricultural output fell and prices rose by 10 percent by the end of 1976. As the initial shock of the Emergency wore off, corrupt practices, black-marketeering and smuggling activities resumed. The poor became disillusioned with the slow pace of welfare improvements, while workers grew unhappy with restrictions on wages, bonuses, dearness allowances and their right to strike. Government employees and teachers also became dissatisfied, as they were subjected to stricter discipline in their workplaces and in many cases, forced to meet sterilisation quotas.

No real progress was made in fulfilling the proclaimed goals of the Emergency, as Indira Gandhi and Congress failed to create new institutions for social change or public mobilisation. The implementation of the Twenty-Point Programme and other initiatives was left to the same corrupt, inefficient bureaucracy and discredited politicians. For the general public, the situation worsened, as there were no channels for protest or grievance redressal leading to widespread fear and insecurity.

The increased power of the bureaucracy and police unchecked by criticism or exposure from the press, courts or political opposition resulted in abuse of power, particularly affecting the poor, especially in northern India. The strict press censorship and suppression of protest left the government uninformed about the situation and the public, aware of the censorship, lost trust in the media, turning to rumours and suspicions about the government's actions. The denial of civil liberties began to affect everyday life, as common people experienced harassment and corruption from petty officials. The delay in lifting the Emergency sparked fears that the authoritarian rule might become permanent especially after Indira Gandhi secured a one-year postponement of elections in November 1976. The intelligentsia, teachers, journalists, professionals and small-town lawyers and the middle classes saw the 42nd Amendment passed in September 1976 as an attempt to undermine democracy by altering the fundamental structure of the Constitution.

A key factor in the growing unpopularity of the Emergency regime was the rise of an extra-constitutional center of power centered around Indira Gandhi's younger son, Sanjay Gandhi, who held no official position in the government or the Congress. By April 1976, Sanjay had established himself as a parallel authority intervening freely in the workings of the government and

♦ *Growing public disillusionment*

♦ *Unfulfilled goals*

♦ *Authoritarian crackdown*

♦ *Sanjay's influence*

administration. He was courted and obeyed by Cabinet ministers, Congress leaders, chief ministers and senior civil servants. Within the Congress, he became the leader of the Youth Congress which quickly gained political weight often rivalling the main party.

In July 1976, Sanjay introduced his four-point agenda, which gradually overshadowed the official Twenty-Point Programme. These points were: the abolition of dowry in marriages; promotion of family planning, with a two-child limit; planting of trees and promoting literacy. Additionally, Sanjay was determined to improve the cities by clearing slums and unauthorised structures that obstructed roads, markets, parks and monuments. Driven by Sanjay Gandhi, the government intensified its push for family planning in an increasingly arbitrary, illegitimate and authoritarian manner. Government employees, school teachers and health workers were given fixed quotas for the number of individuals they needed to "motivate" to undergo sterilisation. The police and administration were mobilised to enforce these quotas. The rural and urban poor were the most affected, often responding with protests, fleeing or even rioting. In addition, due to press censorship, both true and false stories about forced vasectomies and violent resistance spread rapidly. As a result, the already prevalent climate of fear, repression, corruption and abuse of authority was exacerbated by the excesses carried out under Sanjay Gandhi's direction.

Indira Gandhi defended her decision to impose the Emergency by citing national political concerns, offering three main justifications. First, she argued that India's stability, security, integrity and democracy were at risk due to the disruptive nature of the JP Movement. Citing JP's speeches, she accused the opposition of inciting the armed forces to mutiny and the police to revolt. Second, she emphasised the need to implement a rapid economic development programme aimed at benefiting the poor and underprivileged. Third, she warned of foreign intervention and subversion designed to weaken and destabilise India.

2.2.4 JP Movement

Jayaprakash Narayan was widely respected for his integrity, lack of personal ambition, fearlessness, selflessness and lifelong commitment to civil liberties and social justice. From the early 1950s, he became a critic of parliamentary politics and democracy. For years, he attempted to promote the idea of a "party-less democracy." During 1974-75, he also advocated a "Total Revolution" *(Sampooran Kranti)*. Both of these concepts were vague and poorly defined and at no point did he clarify what a political system without parties would look like or how the will

Margin notes:
♦ *Sanjay's four point agenda*

♦ *Justification for Emergency*

♦ *Total Revolution*

of the people would be expressed or implemented. Similarly, the socio-economic and political agenda of the "Total Revolution" was never properly articulated.

♦ *Democratic risks*

At the same time, JP was a democrat, not an authoritarian leader. The movement he led in 1974-75 was not inherently authoritarian or fascist. However, it did create an environment where such elements could gain traction. JP's advocacy for a party less democracy and Total Revolution, along with his critique of parliamentary democracy, while vague and unclear, had the potential to be dangerous. His ideas fostered cynicism, disdain and disillusionment towards democratic institutions, which could pave the way for authoritarianism and fascism, similar to the political climates that emerged in Italy and Germany after 1919 and in Pakistan and Indonesia in the 1960s.

♦ *Ideological inconsistency*

The lack of clarity in JP's politics and ideology is evident in his decision to align with political parties and groups that had little in common in terms of policies and were ideologically incompatible. The JP Movement attracted a wide range of factions, including the communal Jan Sangh, Jamaat-e-Islami, the neo-fascist RSS, the conservative and secular Congress (O), Socialists and even extreme left Naxalite groups. The movement's approach was predominantly negative, focused solely on ousting Indira Gandhi without offering a coherent alternative programme or policies.

♦ *RSS influence*

In its later stages, the movement relied heavily on the RSS-Jan Sangh for organisation, as they were the only faction with a strong, structured network, trained cadres and branches across the country, especially in northern and central India. In Bihar, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), an RSS affiliate, formed the backbone of JP's primary political force, the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsha Vahini. While JP remained the chief mobiliser, the movement gradually became dominated by the RSS-Jan Sangh, which led to a shift in the movement's political character. Instead of focusing on policy changes or state governments, the movement's primary aim became the removal of Indira Gandhi. The primary justification for the JP Movement was its goal to eliminate corruption from Indian life and politics which was seen to stem from Indira Gandhi herself and to protect democracy, which was perceived to be under threat due to her authoritarian tendencies and political style. Furthermore, it developed a potentially undemocratic character, both in its demands and the methods it employed or planned to employ.

The objective of the JP Movement was not to influence specific government policies, but rather to undermine the government of Bihar initially and later the central government. It sought the dissolution of democratically elected legislatures and governments,

not through elections, but through extra-constitutional mass agitations, predominantly in urban areas. This approach amounted to a covert demand for a fundamental shift in the political system. The tactics employed by the JP Movement were also extra-constitutional and undemocratic. Beyond peaceful protests, demonstrations and public rallies, the strategy in Bihar, mirroring earlier actions in Gujarat was to force the government to resign and dissolve the legislatures by gheraoing government offices, the assembly and the Governor, thereby paralysing the administration. This approach aimed to intimidate and coerce elected legislators into resigning. The same tactics were planned for use at the central level in June-July 1975.

♦ *Undemocratic tactics*

A more serious issue was JP's incitement to the army, police and civil services to rebel. On several occasions during the movement, he urged them to disregard orders that were "unjust and beyond the call of duty," or "illegal and unconstitutional," or that went "against their conscience." The decision to deem orders unconstitutional or unjust was to be made by the individuals themselves. However, these exhortations could be viewed more as a reflection of JP's unclear thinking rather than a direct call for rebellion.

♦ *Rebellious incitement*

The peak of the JP Movement occurred on 25 June 1975, when a public call was made for a nationwide civil disobedience campaign that would culminate in a gherao of the Prime Minister's residence, either forcing her to resign or provoking a violent response akin to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, an act that she would never be able to live down. The situation created by the JP Movement resembled insurrection without revolution. The tactics it developed over time were revolutionary in nature, but it lacked the essential components of a true revolution, namely, a revolutionary party, organisation, ideology or programme to provide direction and leadership. It amounted to a revolution relying on a mix of ideologically uncommitted cadres from the Chhatra Vahini, conservative elements from Cong (O), the BKD and the Swatantra Party, alongside the communal neo-fascist forces of the RSS - Jan Sangh.

♦ *Insurrectionary tactics*

The adoption of revolutionary rhetoric and extra-legal, often violent methods by a popular movement is incompatible with the functioning of a democratic political system. However, more importantly when such rhetoric and methods are not part of a coherent plan to fundamentally change the socio-economic order and when masses engage in a disorganised movement without the guidance of a properly structured revolutionary party, it leads to the destruction of faith in the existing political system without creating confidence in an alternative.

♦ *Destruction of faith*

In any case, the democratic options available to the Opposition were: (i) to wait for the Supreme Court's ruling and if it went against Indira Gandhi, demand its implementation; (ii) to wait for the general elections to the Lok Sabha, scheduled for early 1976, while using peaceful agitation and propaganda to undermine Indira Gandhi's popularity; (iii) to demand fresh elections immediately, arguing that the Allahabad judgement had abolished Indira Gandhi's mandate to rule, suggesting elections in October-November 1975.

Those in the opposition who preferred to defeat Indira Gandhi through the electoral process triumphed in October-November 1974 when JP accepted Indira Gandhi's challenge to let the next general elections determine the fate of his movement's demands. However, one year or even six months is a long time in politics and a popular movement could either gain or lose momentum during that period. There was also no certainty of success in the upcoming elections, especially considering that the Congress still maintained strong support in South India and among the rural poor, women and minorities. Even in the Gujarat elections in early June, while the Congress failed to secure a majority, neither did the opposition Janata combine, despite JP and Morarji Desai leading its campaign. The Allahabad judgment marked a turning point in this situation. Sensing the real possibility of Indira Gandhi's immediate removal, JP, Morarji and others shifted toward the *coup d'état* approach.

2.2.5 Technology Missions and IT Revolution

Rajiv Gandhi, son of Indira Gandhi and grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru, assumed office as India's Prime Minister on October 31, 1984, following the assassination of Indira Gandhi on the same day. Rajiv Gandhi's advisers largely came from outside the realm of traditional politics. Among them were Arun Singh and Arun Nehru, two of his friends from the corporate world, who were appointed as ministers. Like Rajiv Gandhi, they were young, English speaking and comfortable with modern technology. They openly expressed their vision of propelling India from the sixteenth century straight into the twenty first, leaping from the age of bullock carts to the era of personal computers. While some sections of the media mocked them as "Rajiv's computer boys," others praised their efforts drawing comparisons between Rajiv Gandhi and John F. Kennedy. Like Kennedy, Rajiv was seen as a symbol of youth and a beacon of hope for a new generation assembling a "team of the best and the brightest" to shape a forward looking future for the nation.

Despite initial challenges, his administration began with a series of positive initiatives. His most notable effort was the establishment

of six "technology missions," symbolising his modern and technology driven vision for India. These missions aimed to address under development through scientific solutions with the goal of transforming India into a modern nation by the turn of the millennium.

Rajiv Gandhi's missions included the Drinking Water Mission, aimed at providing potable water to all villages using advanced technologies like satellites and biochemistry; the Literacy Mission, focused on combating illiteracy by leveraging an expanded rural television network and other media tools, which later led to the impactful Total Literacy Campaign and the Immunisation Mission, targeting widespread immunisation of pregnant women and children, which laid the groundwork for campaigns like the mass polio immunisation drive. Other missions targeted agricultural and rural advancements, including the White Revolution to boost milk production, the promotion of edible oil production to reduce imports and the ambitious goal of connecting every village with a telephone by the end of the century.

The technology missions were spearheaded by Sam Pitroda, a US trained telecommunications expert who served as Rajiv's technology adviser. Pitroda also led the Centre for the Development of Telematics (C-DOT), which played a pivotal role in India's telecom advancements. Rajiv Gandhi also prioritised computerisation, reducing import duties on components, encouraging domestic production, welcoming foreign manufacturers and promoting computer use in offices and schools. Despite criticism about computers in a labour surplus society, Rajiv pushed ahead, recognising the importance of India's participation in the global information and communication revolution. His efforts laid the foundation for India's booming software industry and its role as a major foreign exchange earner.

2.2.5.1 Economic Liberalism

One of the boldest moves by Prime Minister Rajive Gandhi was in the realm of economic policy. Rajiv Gandhi appointed V. P. Singh, a politician from Uttar Pradesh known for his integrity, as finance minister. The government's first budget presented in March 1985, aimed to relax some of the stringent controls that had defined one of the most regulated economies in the world. The trade regime was liberalised with reduced duties on various imports and incentives for exporters. Key industries such as machine tools, textiles, computers and pharmaceuticals were deregulated, while the licensing system was simplified. Restrictions on the assets of individual companies were eased and corporate and personal income tax rates were lowered. These reforms were intended to

boost production and enhance competitiveness.

In February 1985, Rajiv Gandhi highlighted the need for these changes, arguing that the Indian economy had become "caught in a vicious circle of creating more and more controls," which led to corruption and delay problems his government sought to eliminate. While left-wing intellectuals criticised the budget for favouring the wealthy and argued that trade liberalisation would increase India's dependence on foreign capital, the policies were enthusiastically received by the business community and the growing middle class. By this time, the middle class was estimated to number around 100 million people, creating an expanding market for consumer goods such as refrigerators and cars, which had previously been accessible only to the elite. In 1984–85, sales of scooters and motorcycles grew by 25%, while car sales rose by an impressive 52%. The period also witnessed a surge in new trades and businesses, a booming real estate and housing market and the proliferation of restaurants and shopping complexes.

♦ *Market expansion*

The latter half of the 1980s proved to be a prosperous period for Indian businesses. Industry experienced robust growth averaging 5.5% annually with the manufacturing sector performing even better at an impressive 8.9% per year. Market capitalisation soared from ₹68 billion in 1980 to ₹550 billion by 1989. Among the many success stories of the era, Reliance Industries stood out as the most remarkable. Its founder, Dhirubhai Ambani, who had once worked as a petrol pump attendant in Aden, returned to India to embark on a business journey. He initially ventured into the spice trade and later expanded into nylon and rayon exports. Over time, he transitioned to manufacturing textiles and eventually diversified his portfolio to include petrochemical factories, engineering firms and advertising agencies, establishing Reliance as a powerhouse in the Indian corporate domain.

♦ *Business boom*

2.2.6 Regionalism

In the 1950s, many viewed regionalism as a significant threat to Indian unity. However, in reality, regionalism was never a major force in Indian politics and administration and over time, its importance diminished. To fully appreciate its role in Indian politics, it is essential to first understand what regionalism truly means. Local patriotism and loyalty to one's locality, region or state along with its language and culture, do not constitute regionalism, nor do they pose a threat to national unity. In fact, they are entirely compatible with national patriotism and loyalty to the nation. Taking pride in one's region or state is not regionalism. One can embrace their distinct regional identity whether as a Tamil, Punjabi, Bengali or Gujarati, while still being equally proud of being Indian

♦ *Regional identity*

and without harbouring hostility toward people from other regions. This was aptly expressed by Gandhi in 1909 :"As the basis of my pride as an Indian, I must have pride in myself as a Gujarati. Otherwise, we shall be left without any moorings."

♦ *Unified movement*

The Indian national movement was also based on this understanding. From the very beginning, it operated as a unified all India movement rather than as a federation of regional national movements. It did not position national identity in opposition to regional identities; instead, it acknowledged and respected both, seeing them as harmonious rather than in conflict. Striving to develop one's state or region or working to eliminate poverty and promote social justice there should not be considered regionalism. In fact, some degree of inter-regional rivalry in the pursuit of such positive goals would be beneficial and in reality, we have too little of it. Additionally, local patriotism can help individuals rise above divisive loyalties to caste or religious communities.

♦ *Regional assertion*

Defending the federal aspects of the Constitution should not be regarded as regionalism. The demand for a separate state within the Indian union, an autonomous region within an existing state, or the devolution of power below the state level may be contested on practical grounds, but not as regionalism, unless it is presented with hostility towards the rest of the population of a state. However, if the interests of one region or state are asserted in opposition to the nation as a whole or to another region or state, in a hostile manner that promotes conflict based on these alleged interests, it can be considered regionalism. In this regard, there has been very little inter regional conflict in India since 1947, with the notable exception being the politics of the Dravida Munnetta Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu during the fifties and early sixties. The DMK has gradually moved away from its regionalist stance over the years. Some point to the example of Punjab in the eighties, but the situation in Punjab was driven by communalism, not regionalism.

♦ *Cultural autonomy*

Regionalism could have thrived in India if any region or state had felt culturally dominated or discriminated against. In 1960, Selig Harrison, a US scholar and journalist, in his renowned work *India-The Most Dangerous Decades*, predicted a major threat to Indian unity due to conflicts between the national government and the regions as the latter asserted their distinct cultural identities. However, the Indian nation has been quite successful in accommodating and even celebrating, in Nehru's words, its cultural diversity. The various regions of India have enjoyed cultural autonomy and have been able to fulfil their legitimate aspirations. The linguistic reorganisation of India and the resolution of the official language issue have played a crucial role in this, removing

a significant cause of cultural loss or domination and thereby reducing inter-regional conflict.

Many regional disputes do exist and have the potential to threaten inter-state hostility. There has been tension between various states over the sharing of river waters such as between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and Punjab and Haryana and Rajasthan. Boundary disputes have also emerged with the creation of linguistic states as seen in the cases of Belgaum and Chandigarh. The construction of irrigation and power dams has led to further conflicts. However, while these disputes can persist for extended periods and occasionally stir strong emotions, they have generally remained within narrow and acceptable limits. The central government has often managed to act as a mediator, occasionally incurring the displeasure of the parties involved, but ultimately preventing more intense inter-regional conflicts. Economic inequality among different states and regions could potentially lead to trouble. However, despite fostering discontent and placing pressure on the political system, this issue has not given rise to regionalism or feelings of regional discrimination.

♦ *Inter-state tensions*

At the time of independence, the leadership acknowledged that some regions were more underdeveloped than others. Only a few areas around Calcutta, Bombay and Madras had experienced modern industrial development. For instance, in 1948, Bombay and West Bengal together accounted for over 59% of the country's total industrial capital and more than 64% of its industrial output. Under colonial rule, agriculture had stagnated, particularly in eastern India more than in northern or southern India. Regional economic disparities were also evident in per capita income. In 1949, while West Bengal, Punjab and Bombay had per capita incomes of Rs 353, 331 and 272 respectively, Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan had significantly lower per capita incomes of Rs 200, 188 and 173 respectively.

♦ *Economic disparities*

From the outset, the national government felt a responsibility to address the imbalance in regional development. For example, the 1956 Industrial Policy Resolution of the Government of India stated that "only by ensuring balanced and coordinated development of the industrial and agricultural economy in each region can the entire country achieve higher standards of living." Similarly, recognising that regional balance in economic development was crucial for promoting national integration, the National Integration Council of 1961 emphasised that priority should be given to the rapid development of economically backward regions in any state, at least to ensure that all states reached a minimum level of development within a specified period.

♦ *Balanced development*

From the beginning, the central government implemented a variety of policies aimed at influencing the growth rates in poorer states and regions to reduce their economic gap with wealthier states and regions. A significant tool in achieving this was the transfer of financial resources to the less affluent states. A crucial mechanism in this process was the Finance Commission established by the Constitution and appointed periodically by the President. The Commission determines the principles for the distribution of central taxes and other financial resources from the central government to the states. Over the years, various Finance Commissions have not only sought to ensure fairness among states but also worked to reduce inter-state disparities by giving preferential treatment to poorer states, allocating larger grants than their population size would suggest and transferring resources from wealthier states to those in need.

♦ *Financial redistribution*

Planning was also viewed as a powerful tool for addressing regional inequality. The Second Five Year Plan emphasised this goal and it was reiterated in subsequent plans. The Third Five Year Plan explicitly stated that "balanced development of different parts of the country, extending the benefits of economic progress to less developed regions and the widespread distribution of industry are among the primary objectives of planned development." To address regional inequality, the Planning Commission allocated increased plan assistance to the more backward states. This assistance was provided through both grants and loans based on a formula that gives significant weight to a state's level of backwardness. Over time, the preference for backward states in the allocation of resources from the Centre including both financial and plan transfers have grown.

♦ *Balanced development*

Public investment by the central government in key industries such as steel, fertilizers, oil refining, petrochemicals, machinery manufacturing, heavy chemicals and in infrastructure projects like power and irrigation, roads, railways, post offices and other facilities has been a key strategy for reducing regional disparities. Since the Second Five-Year Plan in 1957, India has relied heavily on public investment with a clear effort of prioritising backward states in these investments. In the planning and placement of public sector enterprises, promoting balanced regional growth has been a key consideration, even though this has sometimes resulted in additional economic costs for the enterprises involved. Bihar and Madhya Pradesh have benefited the most from such investments, while states like Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and the northeastern states have also gained significantly, particularly from the development of infrastructure such as roads.

♦ *Balanced growth*

The government has provided incentives to the private sector to encourage investment in backward areas through subsidies, tax concessions and concessional banking and institutional loans at reduced rates. The system of licensing for private industrial enterprises, which was in place from 1956 to 1991 was also used by the government to guide the establishment of industries in underdeveloped regions.

♦ *Targeted development*

Following the nationalisation of banks in 1969, the expansion of their branch networks was leveraged to benefit backward areas. Banks and other public sector financial institutions were encouraged to promote investment in these regions. Additionally, various ministries introduced schemes aimed at developing underdeveloped areas. Notably, poverty alleviation programmes, such as the Food for Work programme and the Intensive Rural Development programme launched in the 1970s, along with education, health, family planning initiatives and the public distribution system have all favoured poorer states.

♦ *Uneven progress*

However, one area where the principle of reducing regional disparities has not been prioritised is an investment in irrigation and agricultural subsidies. This became particularly evident after the 1960s with the onset of the Green Revolution, which saw investments in rural infrastructure and technological innovation concentrated in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh regions where irrigation was readily available or could be easily implemented. As a result, investment in rain-fed, dryland agriculture was neglected, leading to increased regional agricultural disparities. The spread of Green Revolution technologies in the 1970s to states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, eastern Uttar Pradesh and parts of Rajasthan and in the 1980s to the eastern states of Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Assam helped to reduce this regional imbalance to some extent.

♦ *Migration benefits*

Economic mobility, through the migration of unskilled labour from backward regions and skilled labour to those regions, can also help reduce regional disparities and the Indian Constitution guarantees this mobility. There has been significant migration between states. Some states, such as Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar and Kerala have benefited from out-migration, while states like Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra have gained from in-migration. Additionally, states like Punjab and Karnataka have benefited from both out-migration and in-migration.

While there has been some marginal improvement, regional inequality, particularly in terms of per capita income, remains a significant feature of the Indian economy. The situation may have

been much worse if not for the government's interventions, which have prevented the economic gap between states and regions from widening further. There are also other aspects to consider regarding the impact of these policies. For one, there has been a noticeable decline in industrial disparity between states, particularly in the organised manufacturing sector. Social welfare indicators, such as life expectancy, infant mortality and literacy also show less disparity, though states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have made much more progress. While the proportion of people below the poverty line has consistently decreased across all states, it is in the more advanced states that the most significant progress has been made, resulting in an increasing inter-regional disparity in poverty levels. Overall, while all states have experienced economic growth, the rates of growth have varied significantly leading to persistent and widening inter-state disparities.

♦ *Economic disparity persists*

Some backward states have managed to improve, while others have struggled, resulting in changes in the development hierarchy and per capita income across states. For example, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa remain at the bottom, while Maharashtra, Punjab and Gujarat continue to lead. States like Haryana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have seen progress, while Assam, West Bengal, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh have faced setbacks, with Uttar Pradesh moving to the lowest rank and West Bengal slipping to a mid-tier position. Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan have stagnated, remaining just above the bottom. Overall, Haryana stands out as an example of improvement, while Bihar is one of the states whose position has worsened.

♦ *State disparities persist*

The primary constraint does not appear to be geographical, such as disparities in size or natural resources. For instance, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa are all well-endowed by nature with populations known for their industriousness. This has led to their people being welcomed not only in other parts of India but also overseas in places like the West Indies, Mauritius and Fiji, where many have migrated. The primary reason for the ongoing regional disparity at the all-India level has been the low rate of economic growth. Addressing this issue requires a high rate of national growth to generate substantial revenues that can be allocated to the development of backward regions without hindering overall national growth. From the end of the seventies through the eighties, the Indian economy grew at a rate of around 3.5% and 5% respectively, which was insufficient to significantly reduce regional inequality, despite policies specifically designed to favour backward regions. It is only in recent years that the growth rate has reached 7%, while population growth has also slowed. A reduction in economic inequality could occur, provided that the appropriate

♦ *Sustained growth necessary*

regional developmental policies continue to be implemented.

However, we believe that the roots of backwardness in some states lie in their socio-economic and political structures. For instance, the agrarian systems in Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh are highly regressive and land reforms in many parts of these states have been poorly executed. The feudal mindset remains strong in these areas. Additionally, land consolidation in Bihar and Orissa has been slow, which played a crucial role in the agricultural development seen in Punjab and Haryana.

♦ *Feudal structures hinder progess*

The backward states have a lower level of infrastructure, including power, irrigation, roads, telephones and modern markets for agricultural produce, all of which are crucial for development and need to be built by the states themselves, as they are primarily State subjects. Additionally, these states invest less in social services like education, public health and sanitation which are also State subjects. Furthermore, they face a shortage of financial resources to meet their plan expenditures and while central financial assistance has increased, it cannot fully address this limitation. This creates a vicious cycle: low economic development and production lead to fewer financial resources and limited spending on infrastructure, development planning and social services. As a result, this insufficient spending further hampers production and the generation of financial resources.

♦ *Cycle of underdevelopment*

Political and administrative shortcomings also contribute to backwardness. Bihar and U. P. are prime examples of states plagued by high levels of corruption, poor administration and deteriorating law and order. As a result, any central assistance available is often misused or diverted to non-developmental expenditure. The development of infrastructure, such as roads and electricity, is neglected and existing infrastructure suffers from inefficiency and corruption. This discourages private sector investment, which plays a crucial role in the development of more prosperous states. The importance of administrative efficiency is highlighted by the higher economic growth rates in the relatively better-managed states of South and Western India, compared to Bihar and U. P.

♦ *Corruption and mismanagement*

It is also worth noting that disparities in development exist within individual states. In many cases, this inequality has led to tensions and given rise to sub-regional movements calling for separate states, greater autonomy or special treatment in areas such as employment, education and allocation of financial resources. Examples of such sub-regional movements include those in Telangana (Andhra Pradesh), Vidarbha (Maharashtra), Saurashtra (Gujarat), Chhattisgarh (Madhya Pradesh), Uttarakhand and Bundelkhand

♦ *Sub-regional movement*

(U.P.), Gorkhaland (West Bengal), Bodoland (Assam), Jharkhand (Bihar) and areas consisting of the old princely states of Orissa.

Regional economic inequality is undoubtedly a significant threat to national unity and political stability. However, it is not the result of domination or exploitation of the poorer states by the more advanced ones, nor is it due to discrimination by the national government. It is noteworthy that the politically significant Hindi-speaking states of India's heartland, U. P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan together hold nearly 37 percent of the Lok Sabha seats but remain economically underdeveloped. In contrast, high-income states such as Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat and Maharashtra with only about 17 percent of the seats present a different picture. Therefore, any claims of dominance by the Hindi-belt states over the rest of the country cannot be taken seriously.

♦ *Political influence*

On the other hand, the politically influential Hindi-belt states hold so much clout that it is difficult for them to accuse the central government or non-Hindi states of domination or discrimination. Interestingly, accusations of central domination have mainly come from the relatively more developed states of Punjab and West Bengal, typically for political rather than economic reasons. In the all-India services, such as the I.A.S., the Hindi-speaking areas are not overrepresented. States like Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal have higher representation than their population would suggest.

♦ *Political power dynamics*

Another reason for the lack of regionalism or feelings of discrimination in poorer states is the awareness among their intelligentsia that their poverty and underdevelopment are largely due to the actions of their own political and administrative classes. Feelings of deprivation and stagnation are typically voiced by the intelligentsia. Meanwhile, the majority of the people in these poorer states remain largely unaware of their relative poverty and under development compared to other regions. This leads to a lack of dissatisfaction with their current situation and minimal efforts to achieve parity with the more developed states. However, with the spread of education and the increasing influence of visual and print media, such as television and newspapers, this state of affairs is likely to change.

♦ *Growing regional awareness*

2.2.6.1 Sons of the Soil Doctrine

Since the 1950s, a harmful form of regionalism has emerged, known as the "Sons of the Soil" Doctrine. This idea is based on the belief that a state belongs exclusively to its dominant linguistic group or that the state serves as the 'homeland' for the speakers of its primary language, who are considered the "sons of the soil'

♦ *Exclusionary regionalism*

or 'residents.' Anyone who lives in the state but does not speak its primary language is labelled an "outsider," regardless of how long they have resided there or whether they migrated recently.

♦ *Regional exclusion*

The unequal development of economic opportunities across different regions, especially in Indian cities, became prominent following the surge in economic progress after 1952. As new employment and educational opportunities emerged, preference for the local population or sons of the soil over outsiders became widespread. In the competition for economic resources, communalism, casteism and nepotism were often used to secure advantages. Additionally, loyalty to language and regional identity were exploited to systematically exclude "outsiders" from participating in the state's or city's economic life.

♦ *Urban tensions*

The issue became more pronounced in several cities and regions where the speakers of the state language were either in a minority or barely constituted a majority. For instance, in Bombay in 1961, Marathi speakers made up only 42.8% of the population. In Bangalore, Kannada speakers accounted for less than 25%. In Calcutta, Bengalis held a narrow majority and in Assam's urban areas, only about 33% were Assamese. After 1951, the rate of migration into cities increased leading to tensions targeted at certain migrant and linguistic minority groups, while others were largely unaffected. Additionally, certain job sectors were targeted, while others were not and there was a focus on technical and professional education over arts education. The conflict between migrants and non-migrants, as well as between linguistic minorities and majorities was not inherent or inevitable. The two groups have generally coexisted peacefully in most states. Specific conditions led to the emergence of these conflicts.

♦ *Economic competition*

The "sons of the soil" movements have primarily emerged and become more intense when there is actual or potential competition for industrial and middle-class jobs between migrants and local, educated, middle-class youth. The friction has been particularly pronounced in states and cities where outsiders had greater access to higher education and occupied more middle-class positions in government service, professions and industry as well as small businesses like small-scale industry and retail. These movements have also been driven by lower-middle-class individuals, workers and wealthy or middle peasants who are not under immediate threat, but increasingly aspire to secure middle-class status for their children. These social groups also seek to provide their children with higher education, particularly in fields like engineering, medicine and commerce.

The economy's failure to create enough job opportunities for the newly educated led to a severe shortage of employment, sparking fierce competition for limited openings during the 1960s and 1970s. The major middle-class job prospects that emerged after 1952 were in government service and public sector enterprises. As a result, the majority linguistic group could use popular mobilisation and the democratic political process to pressure the government for greater access to employment and educational opportunities. Some groups exploited the "sons of the soil" sentiment to gain political power. The Communist Party in Calcutta resisted leveraging anti-migrant sentiments due to its ideological stance, which is one reason the city did not experience a major "sons of the soil" movement. Similarly, while the Congress Party may have taken a compromising and opportunistic position when confronted with such movements, it did not initiate or actively support them.

In rural areas, outsiders have often been more numerous as agricultural labourers or workers in low-paid traditional industries, such as jute or cotton textiles, compared to urban areas. In these regions, however, the sentiment of "sons of the soil" and hostility towards outsiders have been largely absent, as these jobs did not involve middle-class positions. The locals did not compete with the outsiders for these roles. As a result, large-scale migration of labourers from Bihar and U.P. to Punjab, Haryana or Bombay or workers from Bihar to the jute mills in Calcutta or from Bihar and Orissa to the tea plantations in Assam and Bengal or Oriya construction workers to Gujarat has caused little conflict with the local population. In fact, in the case of domestic workers, the middle classes have benefited and often facilitated this migration. However, in more recent times, with the increase in salaries, education and skills required in technologically advanced industries, competition between migrants and locals for employment has increased.

Another factor influencing the emergence or absence of anti-migrant movements in a region has been the presence or absence of a migration tradition. In states where migration is common, particularly among the middle classes, there has been little resistance to the arrival of migrants. This has been observed in West Bengal, Kerala, Punjab, Bihar and U.P. In contrast, "sons of the soil" movements have thrived in places like Maharashtra, Assam and the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh, where there has been no longstanding tradition of migration.

The Indian Constitution offers some ambiguity regarding the rights of migrants. Article 15 prohibits discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, while Article 16 forbids discrimination in employment or public office based on "descent,

♦ *Political exploitation*

♦ *Migration tensions*

♦ *Migration tradition*

place of birth or residence." However, Parliament, though not state legislatures, can enact laws that mandate residence within a state for eligibility in state-specific appointments. Taking advantage of this constitutional ambiguity, many states have implemented policies reserving jobs or providing preference in employment with state and local governments, as well as in educational institutions for residents. The period of required residence is typically specified in these cases. Moreover, although the Constitution allows preferences in state employment based on residence rather than language, some state governments have gone further by restricting such preferences to individuals whose mother tongue is the state's language. This has led to discrimination against long-term migrants, their descendants and even residents who speak the state language but whose native language is a minority within the state, which is a violation of constitutional provisions. Additionally, many state governments have directed private employers to prioritise residents for employment in their enterprises.

♦ *Constitutional ambiguity*

The primary justification for reserving jobs and educational opportunities for residents has been that these individuals are socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged, making it difficult for them to compete with more advanced migrant communities. Furthermore, in technical colleges and universities, local students from less privileged backgrounds would be outpaced by the more advanced students from other states. Because of these concerns, even the central government in the post-Nehru era has supported preference for state residents in employment within central public sector enterprises and in colleges and universities. Courts have also upheld such residence-based reservations. However, reservations for tribal people fall into a separate category.

♦ *Residence-based reservations*

While reserving jobs in state administrations and seats in higher education institutions for locally disadvantaged residents may be seen as somewhat justifiable, it is undesirable from the standpoint of national integration. On the other hand, there was no justification for the anti-migrant movements of the 1960s, which sought to limit the flow of migrants from other states and openly expressed hostility towards them. These militant anti-migrants and "sons of the soil" movements were primarily concentrated in the urban areas of Assam, Telangana (Andhra Pradesh), Karnataka, Maharashtra and Odisha.

♦ *Anti-migrant movements*

The most extreme example was the movement led by the Shiv Sena, which promoted intense regional chauvinism and took on fascist characteristics. Founded in 1966 by Bal Thackeray, the Shiv Sena demanded that preference in jobs and small businesses be given to Maharashtrians, defined as those whose mother tongue was

Marathi. With the slogan "Maharashtra for the Maharashtrians," the Shiv Sena organised a militant and often violent campaign targeting South Indians, particularly Tamils, accusing them of occupying an excessive share of office jobs, such as clerks and typists in private firms and small businesses like tea shops and eateries.

In 1969, the Shiv Sena introduced fascist violence to Bombay by orchestrating arson and terror against South Indians, looting and destroying their tea stalls and restaurants, overturning the cars of Tamils and tearing down Tamil signs from shops. However, the Shiv Sena was unable to sustain its anti-South Indian campaign or become a significant political force beyond Bombay nor did it gain support from any national political party. As a result, it eventually shifted its ideological focus toward Hindu communalism. This change allowed it to expand its political base and form an alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The "sons of the soil" movements in Assam and Telangana, which also grew in intensity and complexity, had additional and distinctive characteristics. While protective and preferential policies have been common since the late 1960s, the antagonism, hostility and violence against migrants have significantly decreased in recent years. The issue posed by the "sons of the soil" doctrine remains relatively minor and there is no cause for pessimism on that front. Even at its peak, only a few cities and states were deeply affected and it never seriously threatened the unity of the country or the nation-building process. Moreover, its impact on the Indian economy has been minimal, migration within the country has continued unabated with inter-state mobility actually on the rise. However, the problem is likely to persist until economic development can effectively address unemployment, particularly among the middle class and reduce regional inequality.

Regional movements, such as the DMK, were subdued after 1967, with the focus shifting to renaming Madras state as Tamil Nadu and Madras city as Chennai. Tribals, feeling secure within the Indian union have gained cultural and economic autonomy as well as greater political support over time. The process of nation-building is progressing and the national identity of being Indian is now widely accepted across the subcontinent. The unity of India is now firmly established and is irreversible.

2.2.7 Coalition Politics

The fourth general elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies held in February 1967, had a profound impact on Indian politics. Both the lead-up to the elections and the elections themselves were marked by several notable features. The Congress party had lost

♦ *Decline of the Congress*

its mandate and its identity as a vehicle for social and institutional change. Widespread dissatisfaction emerged, particularly with its senior leaders, due to allegations of corruption and their extravagant lifestyles. Many regional and local Congress leaders were seen as being more focused on securing positions of power, engaging in political maneuvering and indulging in factional conflicts rather than addressing public concerns.

♦ *Congress factionalism*

At the same time, there was frustration among the electorate over the lack of a viable alternative to the Congress. The opposition parties failed to highlight significant social issues during their campaigns, concentrating instead on the goal of defeating the Congress. Despite this, there was a remarkable political awakening among the people, reflected in the voter turnout. At 61.1%, it was the highest recorded up to that point. The Congress party had been in decline since 1964 and entered the elections under the leadership of the Syndicate in a weakened, divided and faction-ridden state. The leadership appeared largely unaware of the party's waning public support and credibility. Previously, factionalism was mainly confined to the states, but it had now spread to the central leadership. In the past, the central leadership acted as a mediator to resolve state-level conflicts, ensuring dissident factions did not feel marginalised. However, the current central leadership aligned itself with dominant state factions to secure its position, further exacerbating divisions.

Factionalism within the Congress party was evident in the selection of candidates. The process of ticket distribution was heavily influenced by the Syndicate members, who acted with pronounced bias. As a result, nearly a thousand Congress members were denied party tickets and chose to contest against official Congress candidates either as independents or as part of newly formed dissident groups at the state level. A notable feature of the 1967 elections was the collaboration among opposition parties, some of which formed anti-Congress fronts in certain states. In other instances, they reached electoral agreements by sharing seats and avoiding direct contests. Dissident Congress factions and groups often participated in this process as well.

♦ *Unity of opposition*

♦ *Ideological compromises*

However, these alliances were typically ideologically and programmatically diverse, united only by their shared objective of defeating the Congress. The Lohia Socialists were particularly opportunistic, forming alliances with both the communal Jan Sangh and the right-wing Swatantra Party. Similarly, in many states, the secular Swatantra Party joined hands with the communal Jan Sangh. In some cases, even ideological divides were bridged. For example, in Tamil Nadu, the Swatantra Party, CPM, Muslim League and the

DMK allied. In Kerala, the CPM allied with the Muslim League, while in Punjab, the Jan Sangh, Akalis and CPM joined forces. The 1967 election results were striking, dealing a significant blow to the Congress party. While Congress managed to retain control of the Lok Sabha, winning 284 out of 520 seats, its majority was sharply reduced from 228 seats in 1962 to just 48.

♦ *Rise of opposition*

Outside of West Bengal and Kerala, where leftist parties made gains, the primary beneficiaries of Congress's decline were communal, feudal, right-wing and regional parties. The Congress also lost its majority in the legislative assemblies of eight states: Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras and Kerala. The opposition landscape shifted as Jan Sangh emerged as the leading opposition party in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana; Swatantra gained prominence in Orissa, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat; SSP took the lead in Bihar and the Communists became dominant in West Bengal and Kerala.

♦ *Peasant defection*

The 1967 elections highlighted several long-term trends and had significant long-term consequences. In addition to the widespread dissatisfaction with the Congress, the defection of wealthy and middle-class peasants from the Congress fold played a crucial role in the party's downfall in the northern states. The land reforms of the early 1950s gradually shifted land ownership and social power to the rich peasants. However, they perceived their newly acquired economic status and social influence, tied to land ownership, as being threatened by Congress's proposed foodgrain procurement policies, land reforms and populist rhetoric, particularly from Indira Gandhi and the Congress leftists.

♦ *Rural divide*

At the same time, a growing class divide in rural areas further heightened their concerns. Any political awakening or increased bargaining power among landless labourers posed a direct challenge to the dominance of the rich peasants in village affairs. These wealthy peasants sought to assert a far greater hegemonic role in the class alliances the Congress had built and aimed to influence government policies to align more closely with their interests.

♦ *Regional contrast*

In South India, the class and caste structure differed significantly from that in the North and the strong presence of the Communists helped keep rural landowners aligned with the Congress. Additionally, there were no alternative parties representing the interests of rich peasants. In contrast, in states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, parties such as the SSP, BKD and Akali Dal emerged as platforms to champion the interests of wealthy peasants. Although the Congress was not inherently opposed to the rich peasants, it was perceived as such in North India due to its

radical rhetoric. At the same time, Congress found itself unable to fully cater to the demands of the rich peasants without alienating the rural poor or jeopardising its commitment to economic development and industrialisation.

Rich peasants held a distinct advantage by garnering the support of large segments of middle and even small peasants. They shared a common ideology centered on peasant proprietorship and a shared aspiration to own and control land. To some extent, they also aligned on economic interests, such as agricultural product pricing and their relationship with agricultural labourers. Additionally, these groups often belonged to the same intermediate or backward castes, further solidifying their unity. Over time, rich peasants gained control over rural vote banks, effectively influencing the votes of marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. They gradually replaced feudal and semi-feudal landlords in this role. With their growing dominance, they also wielded the necessary muscle power to intimidate or prevent agricultural labourers, many of whom were Dalits (Scheduled Castes) from reaching polling booths.

The 1967 elections marked the beginning of an era where rich and middle-class peasants gained greater prominence in Indian politics, establishing their dominance over the rural social, economic and political scenario. Their aversion to both the Congress and the Communists became entrenched and continues to this day. The only viable challenge to this hegemony could come from a coalition of small peasants and agricultural labourers. Recognising this, Indira Gandhi sought to build such an electoral coalition in 1971, while carefully avoiding any confrontation with the interests of the rich peasantry.

The 1967 elections marked the beginning of an era characterised by short-lived coalition governments and the rise of defections in politics. While the elections broke Congress's monopoly of power in the states, it was not replaced by a single party in any state. Instead, a range of parties, groups and independents took the place of the Congress. Coalition governments were formed in all opposition-led states, except Tamil Nadu. In Punjab, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh opposition governments included parties such as Swatantra, Jan Sangh, BKD, Socialists and CPI. Although the CPM did not formally join these governments, it actively supported them. As a result, these coalitions were ideologically diverse with the traditional left-right and secular-communal divides largely bridged.

In some states where the Congress was reduced to a minority, it too formed coalition governments by allying with independents and breakaway groups from opposition parties. Except for the DMK

♦ *Peasant dominance*

♦ *Electoral realignment*

♦ *Coalition era*

government in Tamil Nadu and the Swatantra-led government in Orissa, coalition governments in other states, whether formed by the Congress or the opposition, proved highly unstable and unable to maintain power for long. These governments were plagued by constant tensions and internal conflicts due to the diverse nature of their partners. In most cases, except in West Bengal and Kerala, the bargaining among coalition partners focused not on policies but on ministerial positions, patronage and interest group support, often resulting in bloated cabinets.

♦ *Unstable coalitions*

♦ *Political instability*

These governments were frequently formed, they collapsed due to shifting loyalties of MLAs and then re-formed. Parties, including the Congress, would overthrow existing governments, change alliances and form new ones. During these periods, states sometimes experienced President's Rule or mid-term elections, which rarely altered the balance of power in the assembly. Between the 1967 general elections and the end of 1970, Bihar had seven governments, Uttar Pradesh had four and Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and West Bengal each had three, while Kerala saw two changes of government, with a total of eight spells of President's Rule across these seven states. In this constant cycle of governments being toppled and re-formed, small parties and independents played a crucial role.

♦ *Defection politics*

Another significant aspect of the coalition governments during this period was the rise of the politics of defection. Many of the changes in government in northern states were driven by defections or floor-crossings by individual legislators, including both party members and independents. Corrupt lawmakers engaged in horse trading, frequently switching sides in exchange for positions or money. In Haryana, where the defection trend first emerged, defecting legislators became known as "Aya Ram" and "Gaya Ram" (referring to those coming and going, respectively). As a result, party discipline began to break down, except for the two Communist parties and Jan Sangh. Between 1967 and 1970, nearly 800 assembly members defected and around 155 of them were rewarded with ministerial positions.

♦ *Defection crisis*

The issue of defections became a long-term and persistent problem, as defectors who changed sides and brought down governments for personal and often corrupt reasons were rarely punished by voters and were frequently re-elected. It was only with the passage of the anti-defection law by the Rajiv Gandhi government in 1986 that some control was imposed on the defection trend. Despite the rise and fall of many state governments, the central government remained stable, even though the ruling party held only a slim majority. Defections did not occur at the Centre,

despite the absence of an anti-defection law. Even though at one point nearly half of the states were governed by the opposition, the federal system continued to function largely as before. Even in the states, the instability of governments did not result in a collapse of administration.

Anti-Congress sentiment gained significant traction in the 1967 elections, both among opposition parties and a large segment of the intelligentsia. It is important to distinguish anti-Congressism as a political phenomenon from mere opposition to Congress, which typically arose from ideological, policy or programmatic differences. Anti-Congressism, in contrast, reflected "a weariness with Congress and a longing for almost anything else." Intellectuals opposed to Congress, as well as Socialists, were willing to support any party from CPM to BKD to Jan Sangh to weaken the Congress. The CPM and CPI also increasingly adopted this stance. The leading figure of anti-Congressism was Rammanohar Lohia, who in the words of political scientist Rajni Kothari, dedicated himself to "the mission of destroying the Congress monopoly of power by uniting all anti-Congress forces in the country." Lohia succeeded in polarising the political landscape in 1967 along the Congress versus anti-Congress lines, but the outcomes were neither positive nor lasting.

Anti-Congressism also overlooked the reality that most opposition parties were more aligned with a particular wing of the Congress than with other opposition parties. For instance, the Communists and Socialists were closer to the Congress left, while Swatantra aligned more with the Congress right. On the other hand, Jan Sangh, due to its communal ideology, opposed both Congress and other secular opposition parties. The significant setbacks suffered by Congress led many commentators to predict the beginning of the end of its dominance in Indian politics. The Congress remained not only the largest party in the country with a majority in parliament, but also the only nationwide party with a broad organisation and support base. Moreover, there was no cohesive opposition and opposition parties failed to maintain power in states where the Congress had become a minority.

At the same time, it was clear that the Congress now had to find new ways to appeal to the public, who were increasingly disillusioned with promises and demanded tangible results. The party could no longer rely on its legacy from the freedom struggle or its achievements during the Nehru era; it needed to reinvent itself. The 1967 elections significantly altered the internal power dynamics of the Congress. The dominant leadership of the Syndicate suffered a major blow, with several key figures such as Kamaraj (President

♦ *Political polarisation*

♦ *Congress resilience*

of the Syndicate), Atulya Ghosh (West Bengal) and S. K. Patil (Bombay) losing their influence. Most of the Syndicate's loyal followers failed to secure election to parliament or state assemblies leaving them unable to control the government formation process at the Centre, as they had in 1964 and 1966. Despite the setbacks faced by the Congress, Indira Gandhi's position within the party and the government was not weakened. In fact, it was further strengthened, as Kamaraj and the Syndicate, having lost their influence, were no longer able to challenge her. While she had not yet reached the stature of a towering leader like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi had become the central figure in the party, the primary all-India campaigner and the key vote-getter for the Congress.

♦ *Congress reinvention*

♦ *Indira's dominance*

Indira Gandhi's independent and strong standing within the party was evident in her undisputed leadership of the Congress parliamentary party and her relative autonomy in shaping her Cabinet and allocating portfolios. The only challenge to her leadership, posed by Morarji Desai, quickly fizzled out as he avoided a direct contest and instead negotiated for a position as Deputy Prime Minister. Given the party's slim majority in parliament, Indira Gandhi conceded to Desai's demand. However, the title of Deputy Prime Minister was largely symbolic, offering status but no special powers within the Cabinet, aside from his role as finance minister. The years 1967-1969 were essentially a transitional period, an interregnum as the government stagnated while Congress moved toward a split in 1969, signalling a new phase in Indian political development.

Summarised Overview

Indira Gandhi's leadership was marked by economic modernisation, political centralisation and significant crises. She strengthened India's economy through bank nationalisation and the Green Revolution and led the country to victory in the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. However, economic struggles and political unrest led to the imposition of the Emergency (1975–1977), during which civil liberties were suspended and opposition leaders were jailed. After a brief defeat, she returned to power in 1980 but faced growing challenges, including the Punjab crisis, before her assassination in 1984.

A movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan emerged in the 1970s as a mass movement against corruption and Indira Gandhi's authoritarianism. Though it mobilised widespread support, its reliance on extra-constitutional methods and ideological contradictions contributed to political instability.

The 1967 elections marked a turning point in Indian politics, leading to the decline of Congress dominance. Factionalism, corruption and growing opposition led to coalition governments in several states, but instability and defections weakened these alliances. The elections also saw the rise of rich peasants as a political force. Despite setbacks, Indira Gandhi emerged stronger, setting the stage for the Congress split and further political realignment.

Regionalism in India has remained within manageable limits, as regional identities coexist with national unity. While economic disparities persist, constitutional provisions and government policies have helped maintain balance. Addressing regional inequalities remains key to ensuring long-term national cohesion.

Assignments

1. Analyse the outcomes of the Green Revolution in India.
2. Examine the causes that led to the declaration of Emergency in India.
3. Outline the background and key events of the Movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan.
4. Analyse the factors contributing to the IT revolution in India and its global implications.
5. Evaluate the challenges and opportunities posed by regionalism for India's unity and development.
6. Critically analyse the concept of coalition government in a diverse democracy in India.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

The Growth of Social Movements

Learning Outcomes

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

♦ explain the concept of development and how it creates social and economic disparities
♦ gain insights into the socio-economic and cultural challenges faced by tribal communities
♦ analyse the role of gender in shaping access to opportunities, resources and rights
♦ analyse the role of grassroots activism in addressing environmental challenges

Background

Over the past three decades, numerous studies have examined social movements in India. However, their quantity remains limited compared to other fields of research and the actual prevalence of movements. Most of these studies have emerged relatively recently, primarily after the mid-1960s. They are predominantly authored by historians, sociologists, political activists or journalists, while political scientists have largely neglected this area until recent years. Historians traditionally focused on political history, emphasising the narratives of rulers and elites. Influenced by British historians, Indian historians initially centered their work on the actions of the British in India, relegating the country to a peripheral role. The development of social history occurred much later and for a long time, it avoided political elements, concentrating instead on topics such as government social policies, educational and cultural history, reform movements and the growth of the middle class. Recently, however, social historians have contributed highly insightful studies on social movements, with particular emphasis on peasant movements.

The term "social movement" became prominent in European languages during the early nineteenth century, a time marked by significant social upheaval. Unlike historical movements, tendencies or trends, social movements represent a distinct phenomenon. However, it is important to acknowledge that these tendencies, trends and the role of unconscious or irrational factors in human behaviour can be crucial in understanding

and interpreting the dynamics of social movements. The main components of social movements include objectives, ideology, programmes, leadership and organisation. These elements are interconnected and have a mutual influence on one another.

David Bayley (1962) categorises "coercive public protest" into two types: legal and illegal protests, each of which can be further divided into violent and non-violent forms. Others classify movements based on their scale, distinguishing between grassroots and macro movements. Social movements are also categorised according to the issues that mobilise participants, such as "forest," "civil rights," "anti-untouchability," "linguistic," "nationalist" and similar movements. Additionally, movements can be classified based on the participants involved, such as peasants, tribals, students, women, Dalits and others. Often, the participants and the issues they represent are closely interconnected.

Keywords

Dalit Panthers, Assamisation, Untouchability, Bishanois, Insurgency, Nari Bahini

Discussion

2.3.1 Development and its Disparities

Since 1947, critics and admirers, both Indian and foreign, have doubted India's ability to sustain its democracy, unity and development citing challenges such as its vast diversity, poverty, inequality and social rigidity. Sceptics predicted the collapse of India's political system, disintegration into fragments or the rise of authoritarianism. The emergence of regional parties and crises like wars, assassinations, communal violence and secessionist movements sparked these doubts. Prominent figures like Selig S. Harrison and Neville Maxwell forecast the failure of Indian democracy and the Emergency of 1975 seemed to reinforce such pessimism for some. Economic development was also questioned, with critics arguing that meaningful progress required coercion or revolution. Left-wing sceptics envisioned inevitable revolutionary change due to persistent social and economic inequalities.

Despite these challenges, India's resilience confounded critics. Many overlooked the democratic foundations laid by the freedom struggle and the Indian intelligentsia. While doomsayers were wrong about collapse, their critiques highlighted systemic issues. Analysts advocating structural reforms drew from Gandhian

♦ *Enduring scepticism*

and Nehruvian ideals, emphasising deepening democracy and achieving equitable social development. Another notable feature was the uneven distribution of industrial development, with industries concentrated in only a few regions and cities. This resulted in significant regional income disparities and hindered regional integration.

Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders regarded economic development as crucial for national integration. Shortly after independence the India government established the Planning Commission and initiated measures for planned economic growth. While these efforts did not eliminate regional economic disparities, they ensured a relatively equitable distribution of economic resources among states. Generally, the Central government adopted accommodative policies toward the states. As a result, despite occasional grievances and discontent, no significant dissatisfaction or separatist sentiment was stemming from perceived discrimination by the central government.

The Indian Constitution laid the foundation for reducing social disparities by prohibiting discrimination based on religion, caste or gender. Upholding the national movement's commitment to marginalised communities, it introduced reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in education, employment and legislatures. Following independence, several social reform and welfare laws were enacted, including the abolition of landlordism, land redistribution and a law criminalising untouchability. However, the absence of a concerted struggle against the hierarchical caste system allowed caste discrimination and oppression to persist.

Simultaneously, casteism using caste solidarity for political and electoral gains began to grow. By the early 1950s, the momentum for social reform had waned. Addressing social oppression, discrimination and exploitation based on caste, religion, language or ethnicity, along with tackling economic inequality, remains the most underdeveloped aspect of national integration efforts.

Economic inequality among states and regions has the potential to cause unrest. However, while it has bred discontent and pressured the political system, it has not yet resulted in significant regionalism or perceptions of discrimination. At independence, the leadership acknowledged the disparity, with modern industrial development concentrated in enclaves around Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. In 1948, Bombay and West Bengal accounted for over 59% of industrial capital and 64% of industrial output. Agriculture too stagnated under colonial rule, with eastern India more affected than northern or southern regions. Per capita incomes in 1949 highlighted these disparities, ranging from Rs 353 in West Bengal

to Rs 173 in Rajasthan. From the outset, the national government aimed to address regional imbalances.

The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 emphasised balanced industrial and agricultural development across regions to improve living standards. Similarly, the National Integration Council (1961) prioritised rapid development in economically backward areas to promote national integration. The central government implemented various policies to support growth in poorer regions, including financial resource transfers. The Finance Commission established by the Constitution, played a significant role in determining the allocation of central taxes and resources, ensuring justice among states and prioritising poorer regions. Preferential treatment included larger grants and resource transfers from wealthier states.

♦ *Balanced development*

Planning was another tool used to combat regional inequality. The Second Five Year Plan underscored this goal and subsequent plans reiterated it. The Third Five Year Plan explicitly aimed for balanced regional development, equitable economic progress and widespread industrial growth. There has been a noticeable decline in inter-state industrial disparity, particularly in the organised manufacturing sector. Social welfare indicators, such as life expectancy, infant mortality and literacy have also shown reduced disparities, although states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have advanced significantly further. Agricultural disparities are gradually diminishing, though rain-fed and dry regions continue to lag. While poverty levels have declined steadily across all states, the most significant progress has been in advanced states, resulting in growing inter-regional disparities in poverty distribution.

♦ *Five Year Plans*

2.3.1.1 Tribal Issues

India's rich diversity is well-known, encompassing a wide range of linguistic, cultural and geographic-economic zones. It is home to followers of various religions including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Judaism, along with numerous tribal communities with diverse belief systems. The 1971 Census identified over 400 tribal communities in India, numbering nearly 38 million people and comprising 6.9% of the population. These tribes are dispersed nationwide, with the highest concentrations in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, the Northeast, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Except in the Northeast, they are minorities in their respective states. Historically, most tribes lived in hills and forests, maintaining distinct traditions and cultures while interacting with non-tribal neighbours over centuries.

♦ *Cultural diversity*

Colonial rule significantly altered their lives. Market forces

♦ Influence of Colonial rule

and British administrative integration disrupted their isolation, bringing moneylenders, traders and officials who undermined traditional lifestyles. Tribals faced increasing debt, loss of land and displacement, often becoming agricultural labourers or tenants. While laws to prevent land alienation were introduced, they were largely ineffective in reversing these trends.

♦ Tribal integration

The government's policy of tribal integration prioritised preserving the rich social and cultural heritage of tribal communities. Jawaharlal Nehru, who played a pivotal role in shaping the government's approach towards tribal affairs, emphasised this in his vision. He stated: "The first problem we have to face there (in the tribal areas) is to inspire them (the tribal people) with confidence and to make them feel at one with India and to realise that they are part of India and have an honoured place in it." Furthermore, Nehru believed: "India to them should signify not only a protecting force but a liberating one."

♦ Tribal assimilation

Nehru's perspective highlighted that Indian nationalism could embrace the uniqueness of tribal cultures. However, two contrasting approaches emerged regarding the integration of tribal communities into Indian society. One approach advocated leaving the tribal people undisturbed, preserving their way of life free from external modern influences. The other approach sought to assimilate them swiftly into mainstream Indian society, viewing the disappearance of their traditional lifestyle as a welcome sign of their "upliftment."

♦ Tribal protections

To implement the government's policy for tribal welfare, the Constitution laid a foundational framework. Article 46 mandated the state to prioritise the educational and economic advancement of tribal communities and protect them from social injustice and exploitation through special legislation. Governors of states with tribal areas were entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding tribal interests. They were empowered to amend central and state laws as applicable to tribal regions and frame regulations to secure tribal rights over land and shield them from exploitation by moneylenders. To achieve this, adjustments were made to the application of fundamental rights. The Constitution also granted full political rights to tribal people and provided for the reservation of seats in legislatures and administrative positions for Scheduled Tribes, similar to the provisions for Scheduled Castes. Additionally, Tribal Advisory Councils were established in states with tribal populations to offer guidance on tribal welfare issues. A Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was appointed by the President to monitor the implementation of these safeguards.

State governments took both legislative and executive measures to prevent the transfer of tribal lands to non-tribals and to curb the exploitation of tribals by moneylenders. Special programmes and facilities were developed by central and state governments to enhance the welfare of tribal communities. These initiatives included promoting cottage and village industries and creating employment opportunities. Significant financial allocations were made for tribal development in the national Plans, with a notable increase in funding after 1971.

♦ *Tribal welfare measures*

Despite Constitutional safeguards and government efforts, tribal welfare and development have been slow and disappointing. Outside the North-East, many tribal communities remain poor, indebted, landless and unemployed. Poor implementation of policies, divergence between central and state government approaches and administrative inefficiencies have hindered progress. Mismanagement of funds and ineffective Tribal Advisory Councils further exacerbate the situation. Administrative officials often lack proper training or are biased against tribals, while well-meaning officials face frequent transfers due to external pressures. Tribals struggle with legal injustices and land alienation as laws protecting their rights are often circumvented. Industrialisation, mining and deforestation worsen their plight, curtailing access to forests and traditional livelihoods, leading to unemployment and displacement.

♦ *Persistent neglect*

Educational progress among tribals has been slow, with limited promotion of tribal languages and neglect in some states. Tribal society has seen the emergence of class divisions, where a small elite benefits disproportionately from development efforts. However, advancements such as protective legislation, reservations, literacy programmes and political participation have fostered greater confidence and demands for a larger role in national development among the tribals . Frustration over inadequate development has promoted tribal protests, some turning violent, drawing attention to their grievances but achieving limited results. Rising antagonism between tribals and non-tribals is another concern. While some non-tribals exploit tribal areas, many contribute positively as settlers, teachers and workers. Cooperation between tribals and non-tribals is essential for mutual economic and social progress, as isolation is neither feasible nor beneficial in the long term.

♦ *Tribal empowerment*

2.3.1.2 The Tribal Dynamics of North-East India

The tribal communities of North-East India, comprising over a hundred groups, differ significantly from other tribal areas due to their majority population status in their regions and limited non-

tribal penetration. After independence, the Indian government guided by Nehru sought to integrate these tribes while respecting their autonomy. The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution granted self-governance to tribal areas in Assam through autonomous councils. North East Frontier Agency (present Arunachal Pradesh) exemplified successful administration, balancing development with cultural preservation. However, cultural differences and fears of "Assamisation" among hill tribes led to demands for greater autonomy. The imposition of Assamese as the official language in 1960 escalated tensions, resulting in protests and calls for separate states. Prolonged negotiations culminated in the creation of Meghalaya in 1972, followed by statehood for Manipur, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh. While these transitions were largely peaceful, secessionist movements in Nagaland and Mizoram posed significant challenges. Overall, the region highlights a complex balance between integration, autonomy and the preservation of tribal identity.

♦ *Northeast autonomy*

Nagaland

The Nagas, inhabiting the Assam-Burma border region, were isolated under British rule, which permitted Christian missionary activity, but limited integration with the rest of India. After independence, the Indian government aimed to integrate the Naga areas with Assam and India. However, under the leadership of A. Z. Phizo, a faction, demanded independence, leading to a violent rebellion in 1955. The Indian government adopted a dual strategy: military suppression of the armed insurgency and efforts to win over moderate leaders by granting autonomy. Nehru emphasised integration while respecting Naga cultural autonomy, refusing to negotiate with secessionists but engaging with moderate leaders. By 1963, this approach led to the creation of Nagaland as a state within India. Though the rebellion lost popular support after Nagaland's statehood, sporadic insurgency and terrorist activity persisted, sparked by external training and support. While the Indian Army largely maintained discipline, occasional instances of misconduct harmed civilian relations, despite significant sacrifices in counterinsurgency efforts. The formation of Nagaland marked progress in integrating the region while underscoring the challenges of addressing separatist sentiments.

♦ *Integration of Nagaland*

The Mizo Insurgency

In Mizoram, secessionist sentiments emerged in 1947 but initially lacked strong support, with Mizo leaders focusing on democratisation, development and representation. Discontent grew after the Assam government's inadequate famine relief in 1959 and the Official Language Act of 1961 favouring Assamese.

This led to the formation of the Mizo National Front (MNF), led by Laldenga, which combined electoral politics with a militant agenda supported by East Pakistan and China. In 1966, the MNF declared independence and launched an armed rebellion. The Indian government responded with swift military action, regaining control within weeks, though guerilla activity persisted. By 1973, moderates reduced their demand to statehood within India and Mizoram was made a Union Territory. Renewed insurgency in the late 1970s was again suppressed by the army. A peace accord was reached in 1986, with the MNF agreeing to disarm and participate in constitutional politics. In return, Mizoram was granted full statehood in 1987 ensuring cultural and legislative autonomy. Laldenga became the first Chief Minister of the newly formed state, marking the resolution of the conflict.

♦ *Mizo reconciliation*

The Jharkhand Movement

Jharkhand, comprising Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas has long sought state autonomy. Its major tribes like Santhal, Ho, Oraon and Munda have settled agriculturists facing land loss, debt and low productivity. Tribals make up a minority in the region, but their grievances align with those of the non-tribal poor, creating shared struggles against exploitation and inequality. The movement for a separate tribal state began in the 1930s and gained momentum with the founding of the Jharkhand Party in 1950 under Jaipal Singh. Initially successful in elections, the party faced setbacks due to tribal minority status and rejection of its demands by the States Reorganisation Commission in 1955. By the 1960s, internal divisions and disillusionment led many leaders to join the Congress.

♦ *Jharkhand autonomy*

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), formed in 1972 under Shibu Soren, revived the demand for statehood by appealing to both tribals and non-tribals, focusing on economic issues such as land rights, labour conditions and exploitation. While adopting a radical stance, the movement faced splits and challenges, including tribal-non-tribal tensions and the difficulty of balancing tribal identity with broader regional demands. Despite setbacks, the movement achieved limited promises of regional autonomy but struggled to secure full statehood, reflecting persistent challenges in reconciling diverse interests within Jharkhand.

♦ *Balancing tribal identity*

2.3.2 Dalit Question

After independence, significant efforts were made to address caste injustice and inequality. The Constitution granted equal political rights to all citizens, regardless of religion, caste, gender, language or race including Scheduled Castes. Article 17

explicitly abolished untouchability, declaring its practice illegal and punishable by law. In 1955, the Untouchability (Offences) Act was enacted, imposing penalties such as fines, cancellation of licenses and revocation of public grants for violations. This was strengthened in 1976 through the Protection of Civil Rights (Amendment) Act, which introduced harsher penalties, appointed officers and established special courts to address offenses. It also provided legal aid for victims of caste-based discrimination. The Constitution further mandated reservations for Scheduled Castes in legislatures, educational institutions and government jobs. Initially intended for ten years, these reservations have been consistently extended over time.

♦ *Caste reforms*

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar played a key role in shaping Constitutional and legal reforms. Despite ideological differences with the Congress in the pre-independence period, he was appointed the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution and served as a law minister in Nehru's Cabinet. However, disagreements led to his resignation, after which he formed the All India Scheduled Castes Federation. The Party contested elections but struggled to compete with Congress candidates in reserved constituencies. In 1956, Ambedkar reaffirmed his stance on religious conversion, leading a large-scale movement where he, along with approximately half a million followers, mainly Mahars from his community, embraced Buddhism. This was partly feasible because Buddhist converts retained their reservation benefits, unlike Scheduled Castes who converted to Christianity or Islam.

♦ *Ambedkar's legacy*

Ambedkar passed away later in 1956, leaving no clear successor. In 1957, the Republican Party of India (RPI) was founded based on his posthumously published vision. It initially achieved some success in elections to the Bombay Legislative Assembly but soon faced internal splits due to personality clashes and other issues. Over time, many RPI factions either merged with or allied themselves with the Congress, which, under leaders like Y.B. Chavan actively sought to integrate them.

♦ *Post Ambedkar period*

In the early 1970s, the Dalit Panthers emerged in Maharashtra during a wave of radical politics across the country. Representing the aspirations of Scheduled Castes, who began identifying as "Dalits" (meaning downtrodden), the movement initially gained momentum through creative literature before transitioning into politics. Established as a political organisation in 1972, the Dalit Panthers drew ideological inspiration from Ambedkar's teachings and primarily mobilised urban youth and students. Although they advocated revolution, the movement lacked a clear strategy. One significant episode was the agitation to rename Marathwada

♦ *Anti- Dalit riots*

University as Ambedkar University, which led to anti-Dalit riots in 1978. These riots were instigated primarily by middle-caste Maratha Kunbi peasants in rural Maharashtra.

♦ *Dalit fragmentation*

By the 1980s, internal divisions began to surface in the Dalit Panthers over issues such as whether to include non-Dalit poor, non-Buddhist Dalits and whether to prioritise cultural or economic struggles. Conflicts between prominent leaders like Raja Dhale and Namdeo Dhasal further deepened the splits. Over time, as with the Republican Party earlier, various factions aligned with or joined the Congress. In 1990, Prakash Ambedkar, B. R. Ambedkar's grandson, attempted to unite Dalit organisations to contest the Maharashtra Assembly elections. A massive rally of 500,000 people was held in Bombay, but internal disagreements eventually resurfaced, hindering the unification effort.

♦ *Emergence of BSP*

In the 1980s, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) emerged in North India under the leadership of Kanshi Ram, later succeeded by Mayawati, who became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. The BSP declared electoral power as its primary goal, aiming to represent Dalits, Backward Castes and minorities under the umbrella of a "Bahujan Samaj." However, in practice, it evolved into a Dalit focused party willing to ally with any political force, be it the BJP, Congress, Janata Dal or Samajwadi Party if it served its electoral interests.

♦ *Dalit empowerment*

This approach brought notable successes, such as Mayawati's appointment as Chief Minister of U. P. in 1995 through a deal with the BJP. The Party's strategic alliances, including withdrawing support for V.P. Singh to back Devi Lal and Chandra Shekhar in 1990, underscored its pragmatic focus on gaining political power. The BSP has since established a strong support base among Scheduled Castes in U. P., Punjab and Madhya Pradesh becoming a significant player in electoral calculations, particularly in fragmented political scenarios. A defining aspect of its ideology has been its sharp rhetoric against upper castes, though proximity to power has gradually softened its stance. Beyond the BSP, non-Dalit parties and organisations have also contributed to Dalit empowerment by addressing issues like agricultural wages, employment guarantees, child labour abolition and access to education. Additionally, Dalit specific organisations, such as Ambedkar Sanghams formed by rural Dalit youth have further bolstered self-confidence and collective action among Dalits.

In urban areas, Dalits have formed associations of students, teachers, youth and office workers to advance their members' interests. However, these groups have limited connections with

♦ *Urban mobilization*

rural communities or the urban poor. Despite the efforts of Dalit-centric parties, most Dalits still vote for the Congress, driven by practical realities rather than simplistic notions of co-option or betrayal. Understanding these voting patterns remains crucial for Dalit ideologues aiming for change.

♦ *Religious dynamics*

In rural areas, Dalit Buddhist converts have blended their new faith with traditional Hindu practices, often adding Ambedkar and Buddha to their worship alongside Hindu deities. Celebrating previously restricted Hindu festivals publicly has angered upper castes, as it symbolises defiance of caste norms rather than religious conversion itself. This validates Gandhi's emphasis on achieving religious equality through access to Hindu temples. However, converts to Christianity or Islam also face caste-based discrimination within their new religious communities, highlighting that conversion alone does not eradicate caste barriers.

♦ *Internal competition*

Reservations in jobs and education have had limited impact due to their reach; only a small percentage of the population benefits, higher education and government employment remain inaccessible to most Dalits due to poverty and rural backgrounds. Electoral seat reservations for Dalits have brought some positive changes, but representatives often fall prey to personal gain or co-option, like their higher-caste counterparts. A growing challenge is competition among Dalit sub-castes, such as Mahars and Mangs in Maharashtra or Chamars and Chuhras in North India. The better-off sub-castes often reap the benefits of reservation, prompting disadvantaged groups to demand sub-quotas. This intra-caste rivalry reflects the inherent limitations of the reservation system, where securing a larger share of limited benefits becomes a key strategy for advancement.

♦ *Social transformation*

The status of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in India has significantly improved over time, but this progress stems more from broader social and economic changes than from conversion or reservation policies alone. Factors like industrialisation, urbanisation, agricultural growth and rural employment opportunities have played a pivotal role. The Government initiatives, such as primary education, health programmes, anti-poverty schemes and land allocation efforts have further supported this transformation. Measures like adult franchise and land distribution have empowered Dalits by enhancing their economic and social standing. While untouchability has drastically declined, particularly in urban and prosperous rural areas, caste-based atrocities persist as reactions to Dalit assertion. Inequalities remain in education, employment and access to opportunities. Literacy rates among SCs, especially women, continue to lag significantly behind national averages, except in progressive states

like Kerala. Education, particularly for women is vital for social mobility and reducing inequality and continued focus on universal education and anti-poverty programmes is essential.

The issue of Backward Castes (BCs) differs significantly from SCs. Backward Castes comprising intermediate castes like Yadavs and Kurmis were historically disadvantaged in ritual status but often held land and economic resources, unlike the SCs. The land reforms introduced after independence empowered many BCs, enhancing their political and economic influence. However, BCs often exploit SCs in rural areas, highlighting the stark differences between these groups. The Mandal Commission's reservation policies for BCs have faced criticism for flawed methodologies and outdated notions of caste. Scholars argue that modern caste dynamics are not adequately reflected in these policies, which often serve political interests rather than advancing social justice.

♦ *Caste dynamics*

2.3.3 Women and Gender

Significant transformations have occurred in the legal, political, educational and social status of women since independence. These changes were anticipated as the issue of improving women's position had been central to the social reform movement since the early 19th century, when reformers like Ram Mohan Roy began challenging social orthodoxy. Furthermore, the freedom struggle, particularly from the 1920s and 1930s onwards, actively harnessed the creative and political energies of Indian women. Mahatma Gandhi's remark to Mridula Sarabhai in the mid-1930s, "I have brought the Indian women out of the kitchen; it is up to you (the women activists) to see that they don't go back," was neither an idle claim nor a hollow directive. Women's participation in marches, acts of civil disobedience and imprisonment often without male family escorts challenged traditional gender roles and established their right to seek employment, vote and even inherit parental property. Women actively participated in peasant movements, trade union struggles and the establishment of separate women's organisations. Among these, the All India Women's Conference founded in 1926 stood out as the most significant.

♦ *Women's empowerment*

After independence, efforts shifted to consolidating the achievements of the long struggle by focusing on securing women's legal and constitutional rights. The Indian Constitution guaranteed complete equality for women, fulfilling a promise made by the national movement. Women gained the right to vote alongside men, without any qualifications based on education, property or income, a privilege that women in many Western countries had to fight for over decades. This monumental achievement came to

♦ *Legal equality*

Indian women in a single stride.

In the early 1950s, Nehru spearheaded the enactment of the Hindu Code Bill, a reform long demanded by women since the 1930s. A Committee led by B. N. Rau, the constitutional expert who drafted the first version of the Indian Constitution had already reviewed the matter and presented a draft code in 1944. Another Committee under B. R. Ambedkar, the then law minister, proposed a bill that raised the age of consent and marriage, endorsed monogamy, granted women the right to divorce, maintenance and inheritance and recognised dowry as *stridhan* (women's property). However, strong resistance from conservative segments of society and reluctance from some senior Congress leaders, including President Rajendra Prasad, delayed its passage. Despite significant support from most Congress members, women activists and social reformers, the bill was eventually split into four separate acts: the Hindu Marriage Act, the Hindu Succession Act, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act.

♦ *Hindu Code Reforms*

While extending legal rights to Hindu women was an important milestone, it was far from sufficient. The difficulty of achieving similar reforms for other religious communities highlighted this limitation. For instance, the Shah Bano case in 1985, nearly 40 years after Hindu law reforms, showcased these challenges. In this case, the Supreme Court granted minimal maintenance to Shah Bano, a divorced Muslim woman, sparking significant social and political debates. There was a significant uproar among conservative Muslim groups, leading to immense pressure on the Rajiv Gandhi government, which eventually capitulated by introducing legislation to overturn the Supreme Court's verdict in the Shah Bano case. While it is both necessary and fair to criticise the government for its lack of resolve, it is important to note the disparity in public support; while opponents of the judgement mobilised hundreds of thousands in protests, Shah Bano's supporters could gather only a few hundred.

♦ *Legal Reform Challenges*

While some legal rights for women have been actively exercised, others remain largely unclaimed. The right to vote has been embraced with enthusiasm, particularly by rural women, who are acutely aware of its power. However, other rights, such as inheritance of parental property are often left unexercised. It is still common for women, both rural and urban, to relinquish their claims to parental property. The widespread practice of *patrilocal* residence (living in the husband's home) plays a significant role in this trend. This custom also explains why many women are reluctant to forgo dowries, as dowries often represent their only

♦ *Uneven Exercise of Rights*

tangible share of parental property. The legal right to divorce has seen increased use, particularly in urban areas, although social stigma surrounding divorce persists and the challenges of establishing oneself as a single woman remain significant.

2.3.3.1 Women's Movements in India After 1947

Following independence, as the diverse political forces of the national movement charted their own paths, the women's movement also diversified. Many women leaders turned their attention to government led or institutional activities aimed at women's welfare. These efforts included the rehabilitation and recovery of women who were displaced or abandoned during the mass migrations and riots following Partition, establishing working women's hostels in urban areas and setting up vocational training centers for women. In 1954, Communist women broke away from the All-India Women's Conference to establish the National Federation of Indian Women, which evolved into a party aligned forum rather than a broad, united platform for women. It is perhaps unsurprising that the women's movement appeared subdued during the 1950s and 1960s, leading to the perception that there was no significant activity until the renewed momentum of the 1970s.

♦ *Post-independence shifts*

Women have also played pivotal roles in various peasant, tribal, farmer, trade union and environmental movements leveraging these platforms to address women's issues. For instance, during the Tebhaga peasant movement in Bengal (1946–47), women organised separately under the banner of the Nari Bahini, where they managed shelters and maintained communication lines. Communist women activists mobilised rural women on issues such as access to finances and property rights, forming village level Mahila Atma Raksha Samitis (women's self-defense committees) that also addressed domestic violence and wife-beating. Similarly, in the Communist led peasant struggle in Telangana (Hyderabad State) from 1946 to 1950, women participated significantly and the leadership acknowledged some issues affecting women, such as domestic violence. However, no distinct women's organisations emerged from this movement. Reports suggest that women faced discouragement from joining guerrilla forces and those who managed to participate felt they were not fully accepted. Additionally, Communist women in other regions later voiced concerns about being pushed toward the "women's front" or encouraged to marry male comrades rather than being fully integrated into leadership roles on their own merits.

♦ *Women in Leftist Movements*

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, India experienced a wave of political ferment that gave rise to numerous new movements and trends including the Naxalite movement, the JP movement, the Chipko movement and the anti-price rise movement. The anti-

price rise movement of 1973–75, spearheaded by Communist and Socialist women in urban Maharashtra, saw the participation of thousands of housewives. Women who could not leave their homes joined the protests symbolically by beating *thalis* (metal plates) with *lathas* (rolling pins). The movement eventually spread to Gujarat, merging with the Nav Nirman movement inspired by Jayaprakash Narayan's call for "Total Revolution." Although these movements did not directly address women-specific issues, the mass participation of women had a liberating impact, building their self-confidence and laying the groundwork for tackling deeper issues related to patriarchy and women's oppression.

♦ *Women in Mass Movements*

♦ *Women's Economic Empowerment*

A significant development in Gujarat during this period was the establishment of the women's wing of the Textile Labour Association (TLA) known as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA). Initially part of the TLA, SEWA eventually became an independent organisation. It was unique in organising women in the unorganised sector, including vendors, hawkers and home-based workers within the putting-out system. SEWA not only engaged in collective bargaining but also provided training, credit and technical assistance to its members. Under the able leadership of Ela Bhatt, SEWA expanded to cities like Indore, Bhopal, Delhi and Lucknow and remains one of the most prominent success stories of Indian women's empowerment.

♦ *Tribal Women's Anti-Liquor Struggles*

In 1972, a unique movement emerged in the Shahada tribal area of Dhulia district, Maharashtra. Initially led by Gandhian Sarvodaya workers and later joined by Maoist activists, the movement focused on drought relief and land rights with Bhil tribal women playing a prominent role. This effort culminated in a militant anti-liquor campaign, where women viewing alcohol as a primary cause of domestic violence took direct action by breaking liquor pots in drinking dens and publicly punishing men who abused their wives.

♦ *Uttarakhand Women's Anti-Liquor Movement*

Similarly, in the hill regions of Uttarakhand (then part of Uttar Pradesh) during the early 1960s, a comparable movement arose under the influence of Gandhians like Vinoba Bhave and Gandhiji's followers Sarla Behn and Mira Behn, who had established ashrams in Kumaon after independence. Local Gandhian leader Sunderlal Bahuguna, later famous for the Chipko movement, also played a significant role. Women participated in large numbers, picketing liquor vendors and demanding the prohibition of liquor sales.

Anti-liquor movements have re-emerged periodically in various regions, including the powerful wave of protests led by poor rural women in Andhra Pradesh during the mid-1990s. These protests ultimately resulted in the implementation of prohibition and

♦ *Impact of Anti-Liquor Movements*

subsequent restrictions on liquor sales. Gandhiji's understanding of women's consciousness was evident in his decision to make liquor boycotts a key part of the nationalist agenda, entrusting women with its implementation. This strategy has had enduring relevance in movements addressing issues of domestic violence and substance abuse.

♦ *Chipko Movement*

From 1974, women in Uttarakhand played a pivotal role in the Chipko movement, which derived its name from the women's practice of hugging trees to prevent their felling by timber contractors. This movement became a landmark environmental campaign, highlighting the strong connection between women and nature. It underscored how environmental issues often disproportionately affect women, such as the loss of forests forcing them to travel long distances for fuelwood, fodder and water.

♦ *Labour and Land Rights Movements*

In Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, women were at the forefront of the Chhattisgarh Mines Shramik Sangh, established in 1977 to oppose mechanisation policies at the Bhilai steel plant that threatened women's employment. This struggle birthed the Mahila Mukti Morcha, which became a platform for women's rights. Similarly, in Bodh Gaya, Bihar during an agricultural labourers' struggle led by the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini, women actively demanded land registration in their names. This progressive idea gained momentum, leading to government policies in some states granting land and tree ownership titles to women.

♦ *Industrial and Farmers' Movements*

The Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangathan emerged as a leading force in seeking justice for victims of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy. In Maharashtra, the Samagra Mahila Aghadi, the women's wing of the Shetkari Sanghatana, played a significant role in the farmers' movement during the 1980s. In 1986, over 100,000 women participated in a session condemning the brutalisation of politics and resolved to field all-women panels in local elections.

♦ *Autonomous Women's Movements*

Another wave of activism arose with autonomous women's groups in urban areas during the mid 1970s. These groups, often composed of women disillusioned by the decline of the Maoist and Naxalite movements, began focusing on gender relations and women's rights within political organisations. Notable groups like the Progressive Women's Organisation in Hyderabad, Purogami Stree Sangathana in Pune and Stree Mukti Sangathana in Bombay were among the pioneers. The United Nations' declaration of 1975 as International Women's Year sparked further activism, with celebrations of International Women's Day becoming more widespread.

The post Emergency period in 1977 saw increased activism,

including the establishment of *Manushi*, a journal led by Madhu Kishwar that documented the women's movement and provided a platform for self-reflection and literary expression. Women from the Janata Party formed the Mahila Dakshata Samiti, which played a significant role in the anti-dowry campaign alongside Delhi-based Stri Sangharsh and the Janwadi Mahila Samiti. The anti-dowry movement peaked between 1979 and 1984, with street rallies, demonstrations and campaigns for legal reform. Amendments to the Dowry Prohibition Act were enacted in 1984, but the persistence of dowry practices left many activists disillusioned. Simultaneously, the anti-rape movement gained momentum, prompted by high-profile cases like the Rameeza Bee, Mathura and Maya Tyagi cases. Legal reforms in 1983 introduced harsher penalties for custodial rape and shifted the burden of proof to the accused, significantly improving the chances of conviction.

♦ *Post-Emergency Women's Activism*

However, by the mid-1980s, the movement's energy began to wane. Complex issues, such as the Shah Bano case and the Roop Kanwar sati controversy, further exposed ideological and strategic divisions within the women's movement. Hindu communal groups' involvement in these issues often muddled the agenda, leaving women's rights activists struggling to maintain focus. Despite these challenges, grassroots efforts continued. In Rajasthan, Arya Samaj leaders like Swami Agnivesh mobilised against *sati*, challenging its supposed religious sanction. Gandhian activists in Orissa organised massive rallies to expose the lack of scriptural support for *sati*, demonstrating the enduring resilience of women's activism across India.

♦ *Challenges and Resilience in Women's Activism*

By the 1980s, autonomous women's groups shifted their focus from mass campaigns to more sustained activities, such as establishing legal aid centres, counselling services, research institutes and publications. Groups like Saheli in Delhi emphasised celebrating women's joys through art and culture, while others addressed issues like women's health, foeticide and the rights of the girl child. Organisations also tackled urban challenges like housing and water for women in slums, while fostering gender studies in academic settings, exemplified by Anveshi in Hyderabad and the Centre for Women's Development Studies in Delhi. This period saw the institutionalisation of the women's movement, with its ideas diffusing into wider society, but sometimes losing ideological sharpness. Challenges included internal divisions over goals and strategies, accusations of foreign influence and a persistent gap between urban and rural women's priorities. However, these efforts significantly influenced government policies.

♦ *Institutionalisation in Women's activism*

The significant initiatives included the National Perspective

Plan for Women (1988), the introduction of the Panchayati Raj Bill (passed in 1993) reserving one-third of seats for women in local governance and schemes like Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA) and Mahila Kosh to empower rural women through skill-building and access to credit. These programmes provided a platform for poor rural women to organise and advocate for their needs, often with support from voluntary groups and activists. Efforts to enhance women's political participation continue, with reserved seats in panchayats leading to training programmes for women leaders. The ongoing push for reserving one-third of seats in parliament for women has sparked considerable debate and garnered widespread support from women's groups and political entities.

♦ *Women's political participation*

2.3.4 Environmental Movements

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, 1972, laid the foundation for numerous studies and reports on environmental conditions and their impact on present and future generations. It emphasised the need to protect and improve the environment for both current and future populations. The rise of "green politics," "eco-greens" and the "green movement" in Germany and North America in the early 1980s contributed to the growth of the "green network" and environmental movements globally, including in India. Numerous action groups, research institutes and documentation centers were established to study and raise public awareness on environmental issues.

♦ *Green Movements*

By this time, material on environmental conditions, including sectors like air, land, forests, water and marine resources had proliferated, ranging from popular literature to scientific studies. Environmental literature offers valuable insights not only into various aspects of the environment but also into people's resistance and struggles. Large forest areas, home to rare animal species and many rivers supporting the livelihoods of numerous people, including Adivasis, face exploitation by vested state interests. These natural resources were often exploited without social concerns, leading to broader issues of development and displacement. As the environment became endangered, the dependent populations, especially marginalised groups such as the poor and Adivasis also faced increasing threats. Their inability to resist powerful interests accelerated environmental exploitation and degradation.

♦ *Environmental Degradation*

The environmental movements in India hold special significance in the history of new social movements. These movements can be classified as new social movements due to the following characteristics:

1. They addressed emerging issues like environmental degradation.

2. They were massive in scale, involving active participation from marginalised groups.

3. The demands of these movements were innovative, advocating for the right to livelihood and the rights of displaced people.

4. The movements adopted non-violent strategies.

5. They included previously unrepresented groups such as Adivasis, women and other marginalised communities.

6. Many of the new environmental movements compelled governments to adopt proactive policies through the introduction of new laws and provisions.

♦ *New social movements*

Ecological movements have emerged in response to threats to forests and agricultural lands caused by inundation, waterlogging and salinity resulting from the construction of large dams and major projects like the Tehri Dam, Koel-Karo, Sirsi and Inchampalli. In some cases, these movements are driven by the efforts of forest-dwelling communities to protect forests from destruction, as seen in the Chipko movement and similar movements in the Western Ghats, the Aravallis, the Vindhyas and tribal regions across India. As Vandana Shiva notes, ecological movements in India share certain commonalities, despite differences in their methods and protest agendas.

♦ *Ecological Movements*

2.3.4.1 The Bishnoi Movement

The Bishnoi Movement was deeply influenced by the teachings of Guru Jambheshwar, who founded the Bishnoi faith in 1485. The name "Bishnoi" comes from "Bish" (twenty) and "Noi" (nine), referring to the 29 principles set by Guru Jambhaji, six of which were dedicated to biodiversity preservation. Two key teachings of Bishnoism are Jeev Daya Palani (compassion for all living beings) and Runkh Lila Nahi Ghave (do not cut green trees). These principles promote harmony with nature and sustainable living, particularly suited to the rural livelihoods of the Bishnoi community. The Bishnoi Movement is considered the first organised effort for eco-conservation, wildlife protection and sustainable living.

♦ *Influence of Bishnoism*

Originating in the 1700s in the Thar Desert region of Western Rajasthan, the movement was led by Amrita Devi, who aimed to protect trees, particularly the Khejri trees, from being felled. This opposition to tree cutting was rooted in the Bishnoi faith, which emphasised the protection of both trees and animals, as well as the

community's reliance on forests for essential resources like fodder and fuelwood. Bishnois from eighty-four villages participated in the movement, using the act of hugging trees as a form of protest. In the 1730s, the ruler of Jodhpur, Abhay Singh, ordered the cutting of trees in Khejarli village to construct a palace. Amrita Devi, along with her three daughters, attempted to protect the trees by hugging them and their defiance inspired others from nearby villages to join the protest. This led to the sacrifice of over 300 Bishnois. In response to this mass sacrifice, Abhay Singh issued a decree banning tree cutting and hunting in Bishnoi villages.

The Bishnois are recognised as India's first environmentalists due to their strong commitment to conservation, which is deeply intertwined with their spiritual beliefs. Their emphasis on the protection of nature, particularly endangered species like the Black Buck and Chinkara and their rejection of rituals, idol worship and the caste system set them apart as a community devoted to peace, love and ecological balance. Their teachings and actions have made Bishnoism a significant model for modern environmental movements. The Bishnoi Movement can be seen as the first environmental movement in India, serving as a precedent for later movements like the Chipko Movement in the 20th century. It is also considered an early example of eco-feminism in India, as women played a central role in the protest. Even today, the Bishnois continue to stand against poaching, legal challenges and threats to the environment advocating for sustainable development in a world that often prioritises economic interests over ecological preservation.

2.3.4.2 The Chipko Movement

The renowned Chipko Movement, which began in 1971 in the hills of Uttarakhand, was inspired by the Bishnoi community's actions in Rajasthan nearly 265 years earlier. The term "Chipko" means "hug-the-tree" movement. The first action of the Chipko Movement took place in March 1974 in Reni village in the Garhwal Himalayas, when a group of women led by Gauri Devi, embraced trees to prevent hired sawyers from cutting them down for a sports goods company. The movement quickly spread throughout the valley. Women, who were most affected by the environmental degradation and the privatisation of basic resources, played a decisive role. When efforts were made to divert the men's attention, the women stepped in to protect their environment and livelihoods. This simple act evolved into an organised and peaceful movement under the leadership of Chandi Prasad Bhatt. The movement largely followed Gandhian principles of non-violence and *Satyagraha*. It was the first movement of its kind, not only in

post-independent India but globally and is considered one of the milestones in environmental activism.

As the movement gained momentum, the government finally relented and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a ban on tree logging in the 5,000-kilometer Trans-Himalayan region. A feature by the United Nations Environment Programme praised the efforts of the participants, noting: "The Chipko people are working for a socio-economic revolution by gaining control of their forest resources from a distant bureaucracy focused on exploiting the forests for urban-oriented products." The movement also helped raise awareness in civil society about the need to pressure the government to adopt an ecological policy promoting sustainable development.

♦ Environmental Victory

2.3.4.3 Anti- Tehri Dam Movement

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru once referred to dams as "the temples of modern India." After independence, the government approved several large-scale dam projects with the objectives of ensuring access to drinking water for all and achieving food self-sufficiency for India. India ranks among the top "big dam" countries, following China and the United States. While these large dam projects have contributed to food security in India, they have also been criticised for their significant social and environmental costs. The opposition to these projects stems from the government's failure to properly rehabilitate displaced communities and concerns about the long-term ecological sustainability of such initiatives.

♦ Dam Dilemma

In 1972, the Indian Planning Commission approved the Tehri Dam project, which would submerge the town of Tehri and two fertile, populated valleys. Protests against the project began and continued for over two decades. The People's Committee formed to oppose the dam managed to pressure the government into conducting several reviews of the project. In the mid-1980s, the plan was temporarily abandoned after a government-appointed committee recommended halting the project on environmental grounds. However, by 1992, construction was well underway and the opposition to the dam reached its peak. For a time, it seemed possible that the protestors might convince the government to stop the project once again. The movement gained momentum, with environmental activists, concerned citizens and residents from Tehri, neighbouring villages and the surrounding Uttarakhand region rallying against what they saw as a destructive, costly and unnecessary dam. Ultimately, the movement did not succeed and the authorities pressed on with the Tehri Dam, submerging most of Tehri and the proposed valleys in 2005.

♦ Tehri Struggle

2.3.4.4 The Silent Valley Movement

Another notable anti-dam movement opposed the Kerala government's proposal to construct a dam across the Kunthi River in the Silent Valley. The government argued that the dam was a viable alternative to more costly and polluting thermal power sources. However, environmental and citizen groups opposed the project, fearing it would disrupt the delicate ecological balance of the biodiversity reserve, home to rare species. International organisations such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) exerted pressure on the government, leading to the cancellation of the project in 1983 by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This movement was relatively successful and stands as one of the rare instances where the state yielded to public pressure and reversed its decision.

♦ *Silent Valley victory*

2.3.4.5 Narmada Bachao Andolan

The movement against the construction of huge dams in India, particularly the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), arose from the failure of planned economic development to address the displacement of large numbers of people. The NBA, an ongoing grassroots movement is primarily focused on opposing the Sardar Sarovar Dam, which is expected to displace 300,000 people, mostly peasants and tribal communities and submerge farmland and forest areas with rare species. The movement argues that the project's benefits are unlikely to materialise and are overshadowed by significant social and environmental costs.

♦ *Narmada Struggle*

The NBA has sparked widespread public debate on development and environmental issues, questioning the appropriateness of large-scale projects for India's future. It advocates sustainable development, protecting the rights of displaced communities, promoting traditional water harvesting and improving farming techniques. Medha Patkar, a key leader, criticises such huge projects as symbols of unsustainable development and calls for a redefinition of modernity to balance human and environmental needs. The NBA gained international attention, leading to the World Bank withdrawing its funding for the project. In 2000, the Indian Supreme Court ruled that the project could proceed if proper resettlement and rehabilitation of the displaced were ensured, though it did not fully address the environmental impacts or the human rights of the affected communities.

♦ *Development Debate*

Summarised Overview

Since independence in 1947, India has faced skepticism regarding its democracy, unity and development due to its vast diversity and economic disparities. Despite challenges, India's democracy has endured, aided by planned development, industrial policies and social reforms like reservations and land redistribution. However, caste-based politics and discrimination persist and tribal communities continue to face economic exploitation and displacement.

The Northeast witnessed tensions over integration, leading to new states like Nagaland and Mizoram, some through insurgencies. Dalit struggles focused on legal reforms and political empowerment, with figures like Ambedkar shaping policies. Women's rights evolved through legal reforms, activism and participation in various social movements, culminating in institutionalised gender advocacy by the 1980s.

Environmental movements, gaining momentum after the Stockholm Conference, addressed ecological degradation. Protests like the Bishnoi, Chipko and Narmada Bachao Andolan movements resisted deforestation and large dams, influencing policies on sustainable development.

Assignments

1. Discuss the major challenges faced by tribal communities in India.

2. Examine the significance of the Forest Rights Act (2006) in addressing tribal displacement. How effective has its implementation been?

3. Discuss the contributions of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to Dalit empowerment. How relevant are his ideas in contemporary India?

4. Compare and contrast the objectives and outcomes of the Chipko Movement and the Narmada Bachao Andolan.

5. Examine the socio-economic challenges faced by Dalits in post-independence India. How effective have government initiatives been in addressing these issues?

6. "Empowering women is crucial for sustainable development." Discuss this statement with examples from policies and movements in India.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Challenges From Within

UNIT 1

The Punjab and Assam Crisis

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

♦ identify the linguistic, economic and political factors that led to unrest in both regions
♦ examine the role of the Akali Dal, AISSF, ULFA and other organisations in shaping demands for autonomy
♦ assess the impact of military interventions, anti-Sikh riots, the Assam Accord and counterinsurgency measures
♦ explore the long-term effects on regional politics, ethnic relations and separatist ideologies in Punjab and Assam

Background

The British colonial administration employed divide and rule policies, fostering divisions along religious, caste, linguistic and ethnic lines to maintain control. They institutionalised communalism through measures like the Partition of Bengal (1905), separate electorates (1909) and the Government of India Act (1935), which deepened Hindu-Muslim divisions and eventually led to Partition in 1947. Caste-based distinctions were reinforced through censuses and the Poona Pact (1932), entrenching caste identities in politics. Linguistically, British policies heightened regional divisions, influencing post-independence state reorganisations and conflicts. Tribal communities were further isolated by laws like the Scheduled Districts Act (1874), contributing to their marginalisation. These policies had lasting consequences, including communal violence, caste-based political mobilisation, linguistic reorganisation movements and tribal alienation, shaping India's socio-political landscape long after independence.

Keywords

Punjabi Suba Movement, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, Operation Blue Star, Anandpur Sahib Resolution, Khalistan Movement, Anti-Sikh Riots, Assam Accord, Nellie Massacre, United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Discussion

3.1.1 The Punjab Conflict

Linguistic divisions and state reorganisation

The Punjab problem is a complex socio-political issue rooted in historical, linguistic and economic factors. The Hindi-Punjabi controversy, which emerged after independence, became a significant point of tension, with language tied to communal identities. During the 1951 and 1961 censuses, many Punjabi Hindus identified Hindi, not Punjabi, as their mother tongue, deepening linguistic and communal divides. This escalated into the Punjabi Suba movement, which demanded a Punjabi-speaking state. Although Punjab was reorganised in 1966, the division created new disputes, including the shared capital of Chandigarh and water-sharing conflicts with Haryana and Rajasthan.

3.1.1.1 Regional Tensions

Punjab's opposition to water allocation

Water disputes in Punjab became a critical issue following the partition of British India and the reorganisation of states. The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 allocated the eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—to India, necessitating new water-sharing agreements. Punjab, feeling marginalised, opposed the allocation of its water resources to non-riparian states and the construction of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal, which became a symbol of perceived injustice.

Economic disparity and environmental degradation

The Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s transformed Punjab into India's "breadbasket," boosting agricultural productivity. However, it also brought environmental and socio-economic challenges. Over-reliance on water-intensive crops led to groundwater depletion and soil degradation. While wealthier landowners benefitted, small and marginal farmers faced rising costs and declining returns, resulting in widespread indebtedness and socio-economic disparity. This growing sense of exclusion, combined with unresolved linguistic and water disputes, fostered disillusionment and shaped Punjab's socio-political landscape in subsequent decades.

Rise of Sikh political movements

The All-India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF), the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the concept of Sikh identity have played pivotal roles in shaping the socio-political landscape of Punjab, especially during the mid-20th century. This period, marked by the rise of caste divisions and growing extremism within the Sikh community, was central to the development of the political movements and struggles that would later define the demand for Khalistan and the subsequent insurgency in the state.

3.1.1.2 Political Struggle

The All-India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) was established in 1944 with the aim of promoting Sikh culture, identity and the welfare of Sikh youth. It sought to engage the younger generation of Sikhs in the political and social issues of the time. The AISSF was particularly concerned with protecting Sikh rights within a nation that was predominantly Hindu and had a complex relationship with its Muslim minority. Initially, the Federation focused on educational reform and addressing the specific needs of Sikh students. However, over time, it became more involved in the political struggles surrounding the future of Punjab.

The Shiromani Akali Dal, founded in 1920, was another central figure in Sikh politics. The Akali Dal had long been a political party that advocated the rights of Sikhs within the Indian state. It focused on protecting Sikh religious practices and seeking greater autonomy for Punjab. The party's origins lie in the struggle for Sikh religious freedom, particularly with regards to control over gurdwaras (Sikh temples). The Akali Dal played a major role in the Gurdwara Reform Movement of the 1920s, which sought to eliminate the influence of corrupt Mahants (priests) over Sikh shrines and ensure greater control by the Sikh community itself.

In the decades that followed, particularly in the 1950s to 1970s, the Akali Dal evolved into the primary political voice of the Sikh community in Punjab. However, during this period, the political landscape in Punjab became increasingly complex. The state's political leaders began to recognise the need to address the grievances of Sikhs, particularly in relation to their cultural identity and the economic challenges they faced.

The rise of caste distinctions within Sikh society, however, posed a challenge to the ideals of equality that Sikhism had espoused. Sikhism, founded in the 15th century by Guru Nanak, rejected the caste system and promoted the equality of all people, regardless of caste, creed or religion. However, despite the religious teachings of the Gurus, caste divisions persisted within the Sikh community, largely due to social and historical factors. By the 1970s, the Green Revolution, which led to significant agricultural development in Punjab, began to exacerbate these divisions.

This economic disparity between different caste groups led to growing tensions within the Sikh community. The Jats, who were largely rural landowners and farmers, became the dominant caste within the Sikh community. They were able to leverage the benefits of the Green Revolution, accumulating wealth and power in the process. At the same time, the non-Jat Sikhs, particularly

Side notes:
♦ *AISSF's role in Sikh politics*

♦ *Akali Dal's fight for Sikh autonomy*

♦ *Akali Dal's rise as Sikh voice*

♦ *Caste divisions within Sikhism*

♦ *Jat dominance and non-Jat alienation*

those from lower castes, found themselves excluded from the economic and social benefits that came with the agricultural boom. This disparity gave rise to a sense of resentment among the non-Jat Sikhs, who felt sidelined and alienated.

In this context, extremist ideologies began to take hold within some sections of the Sikh community. Leaders like Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who became a prominent figure in the late 1970s, capitalised on these frustrations. Bhindranwale's rise marked a turning point in Sikh politics, as he framed the issue of Sikh identity in terms of religious purity and the need for Sikh self-rule. Bhindranwale's brand of Sikh extremism was not solely based on religion but was also deeply tied to the socio-economic disparities that had taken root within the community. He portrayed the Jat Sikhs as the rightful protectors of Sikhism while criticising the caste-based divisions that existed among Sikhs.

♦ *Bhindranwale's rise and extremism*

3.1.1.3 The Rise of Extremism

The period from the 1970s to the early 1980s in Punjab was marked by a significant escalation of political tensions, social unrest and the rise of religious extremism. The All-India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF), originally a student body with a focus on educational issues, gradually became more radicalised during this time, shifting its priorities towards greater political autonomy for Sikhs and eventually, the demand for Khalistan, an independent Sikh state. This shift was influenced by a combination of religious, cultural and political factors, including a desire for protection against perceived Hindu dominance and a strong demand for the recognition of Sikh identity.

♦ *AISSF radicalisation and Khalistan demand*

The AISSF, under the leadership of prominent figures such as Gurcharan Singh Tohra, took a more active role in advocating for Sikh political and religious interests. The group's shift towards radicalism was symptomatic of the broader political trends in Punjab, where frustrations had been mounting for years. Economic disparities, political alienation and cultural tensions between Sikhs and the central government were all contributing factors. The AISSF's demands, initially focused on educational reforms and improving the welfare of Sikh students, increasingly became tied to the broader political struggles for Sikh rights, which ultimately gave rise to the demand for Khalistan.

♦ *AISSF's shift towards radicalism*

This period also saw the growing prominence of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who became a central figure in the Sikh separatist movement. Bhindranwale, a charismatic leader, was initially seen as a religious figure advocating a return to Sikh traditions and a stronger focus on Sikh identity. However, as tensions in Punjab

increased, Bhindranwale's message became increasingly political and he began calling for the creation of Khalistan, an independent Sikh state. Bhindranwale's popularity among the Sikh youth, particularly the rural population, was rooted in his appeal to their grievances about political marginalisation and economic inequality. His fiery speeches, which called for the defence of Sikhism against perceived Hindu encroachment, resonated deeply with those who felt that their religious and cultural identity was under threat in a predominantly Hindu India.

♦ *Bhindranwale's appeal and rhetoric*

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), which had long been a political representative of the Sikh community, played a crucial role in the demand for Khalistan. The Akali Dal's position on Punjab's autonomy was articulated in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, passed in 1973. The resolution called for greater autonomy for Punjab, the protection of Sikh religious practices and the establishment of a more equitable socio-economic system. It sought to address the political and economic grievances of the Sikh community by advocating more control over the state's resources, including land and water and greater representation in the Indian political system. However, the resolution also included provisions that were viewed by many as a challenge to the sovereignty of the Indian state. Its calls for autonomy were perceived by the central government as an attempt to undermine the unity of the country, leading to heightened tensions between the Akali Dal and the Indian government.

♦ *Akali Dal and Anandpur Sahib Resolution*

As the 1970s progressed, the political climate in Punjab became increasingly polarised. The Akali Dal's demand for greater autonomy, coupled with the growing influence of Bhindranwale and the AISSF, led to the rise of a more radical form of Sikh nationalism. This was not simply a struggle for political rights or economic justice but also a deepening of religious identity and cultural pride. For many Sikhs, the idea of Khalistan became a symbol of resistance against what they perceived as Hindu domination in Indian politics. The demand for Khalistan was framed not only as a political issue but as a religious and cultural imperative — a call for a Sikh homeland where their religious practices, traditions and way of life could be safeguarded from external influences.

♦ *Escalation of Sikh nationalism and conflict*

3.1.1.4 Operation Bluestar and the Insurgency

The rise of extremism in Punjab during this period culminated in the armed insurgency of the early 1980s. As Bhindranwale's influence grew, the demand for Khalistan became more violent. The militants, who had initially sought to raise awareness about the plight of Sikhs, resorted to armed struggle in pursuit of their goals. The situation in Punjab became increasingly volatile, with

♦ *Armed insurgency escalates in Punjab*

growing clashes between Sikh militants and Indian security forces. The central government, led by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, responded with increasing force, which only further entrenched the sense of alienation among many Sikhs.

In June 1984, the Indian government launched 'Operation Blue Star,' a military operation aimed at flushing out militants who had taken refuge inside the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, the holiest site in Sikhism. The operation commenced on 1 June 1984 with a cordon around the Golden Temple complex and escalated into a full-scale military assault on 5 June. The Indian Army, under the leadership of General K. Sundarji, faced fierce resistance from heavily armed militants. Tanks, artillery and infantry units were deployed, leading to significant damage to the Golden Temple and the destruction of the Akal Takht. By 7 June, the operation was declared successful, with Bhindranwale and other key militant leaders killed. However, the human cost was immense: official figures estimated over 500 deaths, though independent sources suggest the toll was much higher. Many of the casualties were innocent pilgrims caught in the crossfire.

An Assassination of Indira Gandhi and its Consequences

The assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 31st October 1984 by her Sikh bodyguards, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh, was a direct fallout of the anger and resentment that followed 'Operation Blue Star,' the controversial military action at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the holiest site for Sikhs. Following Indira Gandhi's death, an unprecedented wave of anti-Sikh violence engulfed the country, particularly in Delhi. Organised mobs, often armed with voter lists to identify Sikh households, targeted Sikh neighbourhoods. Men were dragged from their homes and brutally killed, often set alight after being doused in petrol. Women faced horrific sexual violence and children were not spared the brutality. Survivors recount the chaos and helplessness as homes and businesses were looted and burned, with entire families annihilated in some cases.

Eyewitnesses and survivors repeatedly pointed to the inaction and in some cases, complicity, of law enforcement. Police were accused of standing by as violence unfolded, failing to intervene or protect Sikh citizens. Reports later suggested that political leaders had instigated the mobs, with slogans and rhetoric encouraging violence against Sikhs. Relief for victims was slow to come and the absence of justice in the immediate aftermath only compounded the trauma. The riots devastated the Sikh community, leaving thousands displaced and fearful for their safety. Many families were forced to flee their homes and relocate to makeshift camps

or other cities. The psychological scars ran deep, with survivors grappling with the loss of loved ones and the destruction of their lives. Entire neighbourhoods were irrevocably changed as Sikh families abandoned areas they had lived in for generations.

♦ *Post-riot period*

In the years following the riots, the Sikh community struggled to rebuild their lives. The events of 1984 significantly strained Sikh-Hindu relations and left a lasting imprint on the collective consciousness of the Sikh diaspora. The riots, coupled with the unaddressed grievances of Operation Blue Star, intensified feelings of alienation and fuelled the demand for Khalistan among sections of the Sikh community, both within India and abroad.

The Rajiv-Longowal Accord

♦ *First attempt at peace*

The Rajiv-Longowal Accord, signed on 24th July 1985, was the first attempt to bring peace to Punjab during the height of the insurgency. It was a political agreement between then-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Shiromani Akali Dal President Harchand Singh Longowal to address the escalating violence and the grievances of the Sikh community. The accord aimed to provide a political framework to resolve the tensions that had arisen following Operation Blue Star, the subsequent anti-Sikh riots and the Khalistan insurgency.

♦ *Aimed to address grievances of the Sikh community*

The accord included several key provisions. It promised greater autonomy for Punjab by transferring control over certain central subjects, such as agriculture and water management, to the state. It also proposed the establishment of a tribunal to adjudicate disputes regarding the sharing of river water between Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. To address economic concerns, Chandigarh was to be transferred to Punjab and Haryana was to receive a new capital. Moreover, the accord called for compensation and rehabilitation for those affected by the violence, including the families of those killed in the anti-Sikh riots. Crucially, the agreement sought to address the grievances of the Sikh community. It proposed a review of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution and agreed to the creation of commissions to investigate police excesses and the human rights violations that had occurred during counterinsurgency operations.

♦ *Longowal Assassinated*

♦ *Accord fails to stem violence*

Despite its promise, the Rajiv-Longowal Accord faced significant resistance from multiple fronts. Radical Sikh factions rejected it as a betrayal of the Khalistan cause, while sections of the Indian political establishment saw it as a compromise on national unity. Longowal himself was assassinated by militants in August 1985, just a month after the accord. Ultimately, the accord's failure further entrenched the cycle of violence and mistrust in the state.

The Sikh diaspora played a prominent role in intensifying the Khalistan movement on the international stage during the 1980s. Countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States became significant hubs for pro-Khalistan advocacy, with expatriate Sikh communities actively supporting and funding the separatist cause. These efforts, often framed as a response to perceived oppression of Sikhs in India, further complicated the Indian government's attempts to manage the insurgency domestically.

Separatist Terrorism

The Air India Flight 182 bombing, also known as the Kanishka bombing, occurred on 23rd June 1985 and was one of the deadliest acts of aviation terrorism before 9 /11. The attack targeted a Boeing 747 *en route* from Montreal to Delhi via London, killing all 329 passengers, the majority of whom were Canadian citizens of Indian origin. The bombing was orchestrated by Sikh extremists based in Canada, specifically members of Babbar Khalsa, as retaliation for Operation Blue Star, the Indian military operation at the Golden Temple in 1984. A bomb hidden in a suitcase exploded mid-air over the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Ireland, causing the aircraft to disintegrate. On the same day, a second bomb, intended for Air India Flight 301, exploded at Tokyo's Narita Airport, killing two baggage handlers before it could be loaded onto the plane.

The attack was masterminded by Talwinder Singh Parmar, the leader of Babbar Khalsa, with Inderjit Singh Reyat constructing the bomb. Despite extensive investigations, Reyat was the only person convicted, pleading guilty to manslaughter in 2003. The bombing exposed serious lapses in Canadian security and intelligence, as warnings about potential attacks were overlooked. It remains the deadliest mass murder in Canadian history and led to significant changes in aviation security and counterterrorism policies in Canada. The tragedy also strained India-Canada relations.

The bombing was a dramatic escalation of the struggle for Khalistan and had far-reaching consequences for the Sikh diaspora. It led to a crackdown on Sikh militants worldwide and heightened tensions between the Indian government and the international Sikh community. The attack also brought international attention to the Sikh insurgency and the demand for Khalistan. The insurgency back in Punjab also saw the targeting of Hindus, who were perceived as enemies of the Khalistan cause. Sikh militants resorted to violence against Hindus, whom they considered complicit in the suppression of the Sikh struggle. The killings were indiscriminate, with militants attacking both Hindu civilians and political leaders, particularly those seen as pro-Indian or supportive of the status quo. Militant

groups such as the Babbar Khalsa, Khalistan Commando Force and Bhindranwale Tigers Force of Khalistan specifically targeted Hindu civilians, political leaders and government officials. These attacks were part of a strategy to create communal polarisation, disrupt social harmony and further the militants' demand for a homogenous Sikh ethnostate.

♦ *Violence against Hindus*

The violence against Hindus included bombings on trains and buses, mass killings and targeted assassinations. On 6 July 1987 militants stopped a bus near Lalru in Punjab, segregated the passengers based on their religion and executed 38 Hindu passengers. Similar mass killings were reported in other areas, including the killings of 24 Hindu bus passengers in Fatehabad in June 1987 and the attack on Hindus at a crowded market in Batala. These attacks aimed to instill fear among the Hindu population, forcing many families to flee Punjab to safer regions like Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. Terrorist attacks targeting Hindus during the Punjab insurgency not only shattered families and communities but also deepened the already fragile relationship between the Sikh and Hindu populations in the region. The killings created an atmosphere of fear and mistrust, leaving many Hindu families with no choice but to abandon their homes and livelihoods in Punjab.

♦ *Silencing moderate voices*

During this period, intellectuals and moderate voices within the Sikh community were also targeted by militants. Those who opposed the Khalistan movement, including writers, journalists and academics, were often branded as traitors or enemies of the Sikh cause. The Khalistan movement also targeted moderate Sikh leaders and intellectuals. Those who advocated reconciliation or rejected the demand for Khalistan were often labelled traitors. Prominent figures such as Professor V. N. Tiwari and Baldev Singh Mann were assassinated for their refusal to support militant demands. Journalists, singers, union leaders, writers and academics were also attacked, silencing moderate voices within the Sikh community.

3.1.1.5 The Decline of the Insurgency

♦ *Operation Black Thunder*

The Indian government responded by intensifying counterinsurgency operations, deploying large contingents of security forces and paramilitary troops across Punjab. In 1987, the government launched Operation Black Thunder, a follow-up to Operation Blue Star, which aimed to eliminate remaining militants from the Golden Temple complex and other Sikh shrines. However, the insurgency was far from over and the militants continued to carry out attacks across Punjab.

While these measures aimed to contain the militants, they often led to heavy-handed crackdowns that disproportionately affected ordinary civilians. Raids, mass arrests and allegations of extrajudicial killings became common, leaving many Punjabi families — both Sikh and Hindu — caught between militant violence and state repression. These operations, while attempting to restore order, inadvertently escalated resentment among the local population, particularly towards the state apparatus.

Reports of human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, custodial torture and indiscriminate shootings, further complicated the situation. For many in Punjab, the line between militant brutality and state violence became blurred, feeding a cycle of fear, distrust and retaliation. Villagers, already grieving the loss of loved ones in militant attacks, often found themselves targeted in police raids, intensifying their feelings of alienation and anger.

The state's counterinsurgency efforts were shaped by prominent figures like Julio Ribeiro, Mohammad Izhar Alam and K. P. S. Gill, whose roles remain both pivotal and controversial. Julio Ribeiro, serving as Punjab's Director General of Police (DGP) in the mid-1980s, advocated a "bullet for bullet" policy, which aimed to match militant violence with equally forceful state action. While this strategy was credited with weakening militant networks, it also led to widespread allegations of human rights abuses. Arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings and crackdowns on entire villages became common, leaving many civilians caught in the crossfire. Ribeiro's tenure highlighted the difficult balance between enforcing law and order and safeguarding civil liberties.

Mohammad Izhar Alam, a senior police officer during this period, became a particularly controversial figure due to the formation of the so-called "Fauj-e-Alam." This unofficial militia was composed of surrendered militants who worked alongside the police in counterinsurgency operations. While the paramilitary force was effective in eliminating key militant figures, it was also accused of operating outside the bounds of legality. Reports of targeted killings, extortion and other abuses by this group further eroded trust between the civilian population and the state apparatus.

Perhaps the most prominent figure in Punjab's counterinsurgency efforts was K. P. S. Gill, who took over as DGP in 1988. Gill earned the moniker "Supercop" for his aggressive tactics, which played a critical role in dismantling militant networks and restoring relative order to the state. Under his leadership, the Punjab Police conducted a series of highly coordinated operations that neutralised

top militant leaders. However, Gill's tenure was also marred by allegations of custodial torture, fake encounters and the targeting of families of militants. His hardline approach drew sharp criticism from human rights organisations, even as he was lauded by the central government for bringing the insurgency under control.

The assassination of Beant Singh, the Chief Minister of Punjab, in August 1995 marked the end of a significant chapter in the Punjab insurgency. Beant Singh had been a key figure in the government's efforts to combat Sikh militancy and his assassination by a Sikh militant group was a symbolic blow to the Indian state. His death was followed by a wave of retaliatory violence and further suppression of the Khalistan movement. Beant Singh's assassination, while a key moment in the insurgency, also marked the beginning of the decline of the militant movement.

The violence that unfolded during the Punjab insurgency left profound emotional scars, particularly for families who lost loved ones in both militant attacks and state operations. For these survivors, the painful memories of the 1980s and early 1990s never fully faded. For many Hindus who were forced to flee Punjab due to the escalating violence, the aftermath was equally challenging. They had to start anew in unfamiliar regions, dealing with the economic hardships of resettling and the emotional weight of having to leave their homes behind.

3.1.1.6 The Legacy

The Punjab insurgency remains one of the most complex and contentious periods in the history of modern India. It was primarily characterised by the demand for an independent Sikh state and was driven by a complex combination of socio-political, religious and economic factors. While the insurgency failed to achieve its goal, its aftermath continues to reverberate across the social and political landscape of Punjab and the Sikh community both in India and abroad. The insurgency's legacy is shaped by the contrasting narratives put forward by the Indian state and the militants, with each side constructing its own interpretation of events. The myth of Khalistan, as it emerged from these opposing viewpoints, further complicates the historical understanding of the insurgency and its lasting impact.

State-Sponsored Narrative

From the perspective of the Indian state, the insurgency was framed as an act of terrorism aimed at destabilising the nation. The demand for Khalistan was presented as an extremist movement driven by a few radical individuals, with Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale

emerging as the prominent face of the insurgency. Bhindranwale's rise among the Sikh community in Punjab was largely due to his vocal criticism of the Indian government, particularly on issues related to the protection of Sikh religious identity, the economic neglect of Punjab and the political marginalisation of Sikhs. However, the Indian government quickly labelled Bhindranwale and other militants as enemies of the state, framing them as terrorists who posed a serious threat to national integrity.

The government's response to the insurgency was justified as a necessary action to restore law and order. Operation Blue Star, a military operation carried out in 1984 to remove militants from the Golden Temple in Amritsar, was framed as a critical move to safeguard India's unity. However, the operation led to widespread violence and destruction, including significant damage to the sacred shrine, sparking anger and resentment among the Sikh community. Despite the backlash, the state continued to portray the insurgents as terrorists and downplayed the political, social and economic factors that contributed to the rise of the militancy. According to the Indian state's narrative, the demand for Khalistan was ultimately a myth, an unrealistic and unattainable goal, one that failed to garner significant support even within the Sikh community. The insurgency was merely the work of a small group of extremists and any sympathy for the Khalistan movement was viewed as a threat to India's territorial integrity.

The Militants' and Sikh Diaspora Narrative

In stark contrast, the narrative put forward by the militants and their supporters, particularly within the Sikh diaspora, viewed the insurgency as a legitimate struggle for justice and self-determination. From this perspective, the demand for Khalistan was seen not as an act of terrorism but as a response to the longstanding political and economic grievances of the Sikh community. Sikhs, especially in Punjab, felt increasingly alienated by the Indian state, which they believed had failed to address their concerns about economic underdevelopment, political exclusion and the erosion of their religious and cultural identity. For many, Khalistan was perceived as a means of securing political autonomy and protecting the distinctiveness of Sikh identity in the face of state oppression.

Bhindranwale, often depicted as a militant and terrorist by the Indian state, was seen by many Sikhs as a hero who had stood up for their rights and their religious identity. His call for Sikh autonomy and his opposition to the Indian government resonated with sections of the Sikh community, particularly those disillusioned by the failures of the state to address their concerns. The Sikh diaspora, especially in countries like Canada, the United Kingdom and the

United States, played a significant role in promoting the narrative of Khalistan. Through media outlets, political activism and public demonstrations, the diaspora helped to amplify the call for an independent Sikh state, framing it as part of a broader struggle for self-determination.

The Myth of Khalistan

Despite its passionate advocacy, the concept of Khalistan was ultimately an unattainable goal that lacked widespread support among the Sikh population. The demand for Khalistan, although it had some resonance with sections of the Sikh community, particularly the militants and their diaspora supporters, was never a universally accepted vision for the future of Punjab. While Sikhs formed a significant majority in Punjab, the region was home to a diverse population with differing views on the future of the state. Many Sikhs did not identify with the idea of Khalistan and preferred to remain within the Indian Union, seeking greater autonomy for Punjab rather than secession.

♦ Khalistan lacked widespread support

The internal divisions in the Sikh community regarding Khalistan were compounded by the violent tactics employed by the insurgents. The use of bombings, assassinations and attacks on civilians alienated many Sikhs, who were directly affected by the violence. The militants' violent actions led to significant social and economic disruption in Punjab, further eroding support for the movement. The counterinsurgency operations of the Indian government, while brutal in their own right, were also framed as efforts to suppress a terrorist movement, adding to the complexity of the situation. The brutality on both sides of the conflict, by the militants and by the Indian security forces, alienated a large portion of the Sikh population and prevented Khalistan from becoming a truly popular cause.

♦ Violence alienated Sikh population

Internationally, the demand for Khalistan failed to gain significant political or diplomatic support. While members of the Sikh diaspora were vocal in their advocacy of an independent Sikh state, the movement struggled to secure widespread recognition from major international powers or institutions. However, Pakistan and its intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), played a crucial role in supporting Khalistani militants. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the ISI provided financial aid, training and weapons to Sikh militant groups, particularly in Pakistan's border areas. This support was part of Pakistan's broader strategy to weaken India by fuelling separatist movements. Despite this backing, the movement failed to gain legitimacy on the global stage.

♦ Pakistan's ISI supported militants
♦ Lack of Global recognition

Lingering Legacy and Trauma

Despite the gradual waning of the insurgency after the mid-1990s, the traumatic events surrounding Operation Blue Star, the Kanishka bombing and the anti-Sikh riots continued to haunt the collective memory of the Sikh community. As the violence receded following the assassination of Beant Singh in 1995, Punjab entered a fragile peace, but the emotional and psychological scars of the insurgency remained. These traumatic events, along with the targeting of intellectuals and sustained violence against Hindus, left deep wounds that have not healed for many.

Families who lost loved ones, communities displaced by violence and those who witnessed the destruction of their homes and lives found little closure. The political divide between Sikhs and the Indian government remained, exacerbated by the perceived lack of justice for the atrocities committed during the insurgency. For the Sikh community, the quest for justice and reconciliation has largely remained unresolved. The emotional legacy of the violence has shaped the relationship between Sikhs and the Indian state, influencing political attitudes and the way the community relates to the nation. Even though the violent fervour of the Khalistan movement subsided by the mid-1990s, its emotional and political impact continued to shape the region's political landscape, contributing to an ongoing struggle for identity, justice and reconciliation.

3.1.2 The Conflict in Assam

The Assam problem is deeply rooted in the state's history, shaped by complex socio-political, ethnic and economic factors, with the issue of immigration playing a central role. The roots of the problem trace back to the colonial period when British policies sowed the seeds of ethnic tensions. During their rule, the British implemented land settlement policies that encouraged the migration of Bengali-speaking people, primarily Muslim peasants, to Assam. These immigrants were invited to cultivate land in the fertile Brahmaputra Valley, which was a sparsely populated region. This migration began to significantly alter the demographic composition of the region. As Bengali-speaking communities settled and thrived in the valley, Assamese-speaking people, who had historically been the dominant group, began to feel increasingly marginalised in terms of political power, economic opportunities and social status.

The process of demographic change continued after independence and it was during and after the Partition of India in 1947 that the issue of immigration took a sharper and more politically charged turn. Large numbers of refugees, both Muslim and Hindu, fleeing

from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), entered Assam, seeking shelter from the violence and turmoil that followed Partition. These refugees were often settled in rural areas, adding to the growing concerns about the shifting demographic balance in the state. The influx of refugees, especially from East Bengal, significantly altered the ethnic makeup of Assam, leading to tensions between the indigenous Assamese and the migrant communities.

♦ *Partition worsened demographic tensions*

Assam's ethnic composition is extraordinarily diverse. The state is home to a variety of indigenous groups, including the Assamese, Bodos, Tea Tribes and various indigenous tribal communities. The Assamese-speaking population, predominantly concentrated in the Brahmaputra Valley, forms the core of the state's cultural identity. However, the valley is also home to several other ethnic groups with distinct languages, customs and traditions, such as the Bodos in the western part of the state and numerous indigenous hill tribes like the Karbis, Dimasas and Kukis. This diversity, while a source of cultural richness, has also contributed to the challenges of defining a unified Assamese identity.

♦ *Ethnic diversity complicates identity*

The geographical challenges of Assam add to the complexity of the situation. The state is divided into two distinct regions: the Brahmaputra Valley and the hilly areas, including the Barak Valley and the hills of Karbi Anglong, North Cachar Hills and the Naga-inhabited regions. The Brahmaputra Valley is home to the majority of Assam's population and has traditionally been the political and economic heartland of the state. The hills, however, are home to numerous indigenous communities that have often felt excluded from the dominant Assamese narrative and politics, leading to demands for greater autonomy or even secession in some cases.

♦ *Geography influences political divisions*

The Assamese Identity

The question of what it means to be "Assamese" has been a key point of contention. For many in Assam, being Assamese is more than just speaking the language; it is tied to a shared cultural and historical heritage. However, as the demographic landscape changed with the influx of Bengali-speaking migrants, the definition of being Assamese began to evolve, leading to tensions. Many Assamese people see themselves as the rightful custodians of the land, with their language and culture as symbols of their identity. Conversely, migrants, particularly those from Bangladesh, see themselves as citizens entitled to equal rights and protections under the Indian Constitution. The idea of who belongs and who does not remain at the heart of the Assam problem.

♦ *Assamese identity remains contested*

The question of immigration and its impact on the state's politics has been further complicated by changes in political boundaries

over time. The partition of Assam in 1947, which resulted in the creation of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), led to the displacement of large numbers of people, some of whom moved to India, including Assam. The shifting boundaries and the establishment of the Indian state created political and economic dislocation, as well as a profound sense of insecurity among the indigenous Assamese population. The political boundaries were further altered after the creation of the state of Nagaland in 1963 and the subsequent demands for autonomy from various ethnic groups in Assam, including the Bodos and other indigenous communities. These boundary changes and demands for autonomy created a complex political environment, with various groups vying for power and representation.

3.1.2.1 The 1971 War

The war for Bangladesh's independence and the subsequent formation of the new nation triggered an immense wave of refugees fleeing violence and instability. Many of these refugees, both Hindus and Muslims, crossed over into India and Assam, being geographically close, became one of the primary destinations for those seeking shelter. The flow of refugees was not a new phenomenon; it had been happening since the partition in 1947. However, the events of 1971 escalated the situation to an unprecedented scale. Millions of people sought refuge in Assam, many of whom were believed to have entered the state illegally. This sudden surge in population put enormous pressure on Assam's already fragile infrastructure and resources. The state was ill-prepared to deal with such a large influx of people, many of whom settled in rural and remote areas, far from the resources of urban centers. The sheer number of new arrivals was overwhelming and locals, who were already struggling with the challenges of their own development, began to feel the strain.

But the issue was not just about numbers. The refugees were predominantly Bengali-speaking and their arrival brought about fresh anxieties for the indigenous Assamese population. For centuries, Assamese culture and language have been the defining elements of the region's identity. The increasing presence of Bengali-speaking people, who were seen as outsiders, began to chip away at the sense of ownership the Assamese had over their own land and heritage. There was a growing fear that their language, their traditions and their very way of life were being threatened by the wave of migrants from across the border.

This fear extended beyond cultural concerns and took on an economic dimension as well. Assam, like much of the northeast, was economically underdeveloped. Job opportunities, land and

basic services were already limited and with the arrival of new settlers, competition for these resources became even more intense. Many indigenous Assamese felt that they were being squeezed out of their own state, as the new comers settled in areas that were once their strongholds, putting additional strain on an already fragile economy.

Politically, the situation became increasingly tense. The arrival of these refugees triggered fears that the demographic changes would ultimately affect the political landscape of Assam. As the new arrivals were granted the right to vote, there was a growing concern that they might tip the political balance in favour of Bengali-speaking settlers, further marginalising the Indigenous Assamese. The indigenous population began to question whether they would retain political control in a state where they had once been the majority. This concern grew into a full-blown movement in the late 1970s, with groups like the All-Assam Students' Union (AASU) demanding action to identify and deport illegal immigrants. The Assam Movement (1979-1985) was born from this frustration, driven by the belief that unchecked migration would erode the rights of the Assamese people.

3.1.2.2 The Assam Movement

In response to these concerns, the All-Assam Students' Union (AASU) was formed in 1978, aiming to protect the rights and identity of the Assamese people. The AASU led a vigorous movement against illegal immigration, culminating in the Assam Movement (1979–1985). The movement sought to update the voters' list to exclude illegal immigrants and to implement stricter controls on immigration. It also demanded that those who had entered Assam after 1951, the year of the first census in independent India, be declared foreigners and removed from the electoral rolls.

The Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AGSP) emerged as a significant political force in Assam during the 1980s, particularly during the turbulent years of the Assam Movement, which sought to address the concerns of the indigenous Assamese population regarding illegal immigration. The AGSP was a coalition of the All-Assam Students' Union (AASU) and other regional groups, formed to push forward the demand for identifying and deporting illegal immigrants, particularly Bengali-speaking Muslims, whom they believed to be a threat to the Assamese identity, language and culture. The AGSP's leadership was largely drawn from the AASU, with key figures such as Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, Bhrigu Kumar Phukan and Golap Borbora playing instrumental roles. Mahanta, in particular, emerged as the most prominent leader during this

♦ *Economic strain fueled resentment*

♦ *Political concerns over voting rights*

♦ *Assam Movement opposed illegal immigration*

♦ *AGSP demanded migrant expulsions*

period, later becoming the Chief Minister of Assam. Alongside Mahanta, Prafulla Mahanta also played an important role in shaping the movement's strategies, galvanising the youth of Assam and ensuring the support of various regional political factions.

The central government, led by Indira Gandhi and later Rajiv Gandhi, had a challenging time navigating the political crisis in Assam. In response to the growing unrest, the government initially took a strong stance by deploying military forces to curb the rising violence and unrest, resulting in clashes between Assamese protesters and Indian security forces. The violent suppression of protests only worsened the alienation felt by the local population. By the early 1980s, Assam was already a deeply divided state. The issue of illegal immigration had become highly politicised and the belief that the state was being overwhelmed by outsiders had created an atmosphere of suspicion and resentment.

The Nellie Massacre

On February 18, 1983, an angry mob of Assamese villagers, convinced that the Bengali-speaking Muslims were illegal immigrants, attacked the village of Nellie. They killed around 2,000 people in an act of extreme violence. Men, women and children were slaughtered. The massacre was not an isolated incident, but rather the result of years of growing ethnic and cultural division in the state. Fearful that their culture and way of life were at risk, some felt justified in resorting to violence. The massacre, although horrific, was, in the minds of some, an expression of the deep-seated fear and frustration that had built up over years of tensions.

The scale of the violence and the sheer brutality of the act left a lasting mark on the people of the state. For the victims, it was an unimaginable loss and for the survivors, it was a traumatic event that would never be forgotten. Many of those killed were poor, vulnerable people who had lived in Assam for generations, yet they were seen as outsiders because of their language and religion. The massacre highlighted how deeply personal the issue of immigration had become and how the question of who belonged in Assam had reached a breaking point.

The massacre also exposed the deep divides within Assamese society. While some justified the violence as a necessary response to the threat posed by illegal immigration, others were horrified by the brutal killings. The event left a lasting scar, not only in the political and social fabric of Assam but also in the minds of the people. For many in the Bengali-speaking Muslim community, the massacre was a loss not just of life but of their dignity and place in the state. For the Assamese, it was a painful reminder of how

♦ *Government repression escalated tensions.*

♦ *Nellie Massacre exposed deep divisions*

♦ *Poor and vulnerable targeted*

♦ *Brutality shocked civil society*

fear and insecurity could lead to such violence. The violence at Nellie marked a defining moment in the state's history, one that still resonates with those who lived through it.

Assam Accord

Faced with the escalating crisis, the Indian government, under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, eventually moved towards a political solution. This culminated in the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985, which was intended to bring an end to the Assam Movement. The Accord promised to detect and expel illegal immigrants who had entered Assam after 1971 (the creation of Bangladesh) and included provisions to protect the rights of indigenous Assamese people. However, the implementation of the Accord was controversial and led to discontent among both the AGSP and sections of the Bengali-speaking population, particularly those who had settled in Assam long before 1971.

♦ Assam Accord aimed at resolution

While the Accord aimed to address the demands of the AGSP and the AASU, many felt that it fell short in effectively solving the immigration issue. The Assam Accord's provisions were not fully implemented and the question of who should be classified as a legitimate citizen of Assam remained unresolved. This dissatisfaction with the Accord contributed to the continued political unrest in the state, even after the AGSP's leaders joined the mainstream political system and formed the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), a regional political party that contested elections in Assam based on the promises of the Assam Accord.

♦ Implementation issues caused unrest

The central government's stance on immigration and Assam's demands continued to be a point of contention. Despite signing the Accord, the government's handling of the post-accord period, particularly regarding the identification of illegal immigrants, was met with criticism. Many Assamese leaders felt that the implementation was weak, with too many illegal migrants continuing to reside in the state and the issue remained politically sensitive throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Additionally, the Bengali-speaking Muslim community, which had been living in Assam for generations, also felt marginalised and alienated, with fears of being unjustly labelled as illegal immigrants, even though many of them were born and raised in the state.

♦ Immigration remained a controversy

The Assam Insurgency

The aftermath of the Assam Accord did not bring lasting peace. The issue of citizenship became central to the Assam insurgency. Many in Assam, especially among indigenous communities, felt that the state's political and cultural identity was being

compromised by the continuous influx of immigrants. This led to the formation of armed separatist groups like the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). The insurgency, which began in the early 1980s, intensified in the following years. The ULFA, which was formed in 1979, sought to achieve an independent Assam through violent means, using terrorism and guerrilla tactics to challenge the Indian state. The group's leaders claimed that the Assamese people had been denied their rightful autonomy and were being subjected to the dominance of outsiders.

The insurgency reached its peak in the 1980s and early 1990s, marked by bombings, kidnappings and violent clashes with Indian security forces. The violence resulted in the loss of thousands of lives, both civilian and military and caused widespread disruption to the state's economy and social fabric. The Indian government responded with heavy-handed tactics, including military operations and the imposition of curfews, but these measures often exacerbated the situation, further alienating the local population.

Despite the decline of the ULFA's influence in the 1990s, the insurgency continued to shape the state's political landscape for years to come. The ongoing sense of alienation, the unresolved issues surrounding immigration and the economic disparities between Assamese people and the migrants ensured that the demand for greater autonomy remained a central issue in Assam's politics. Although the insurgency has since lost much of its momentum, it has left a lasting legacy of distrust between the indigenous population and the Indian state and the questions surrounding immigration and identity continue to resonate deeply in Assam today.

3.1.2.3 The Question Of Citizenship

In the aftermath of the Assam insurgency, the issue of citizenship and immigration remained a contentious topic. The Assam Accord, while a step toward resolving the crisis, did not fully address the deep seated grievances of both indigenous Assamese people and immigrants. The continuing demands for a National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the challenge of defining who was a citizen and who was an immigrant remained unresolved, leading to further instability in the region.

In the years following the insurgency, the issue of immigration and the definition of citizenship remained at the heart of Assam's political discourse. The introduction of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam, aimed at identifying illegal immigrants, was seen as a step toward addressing the concerns that had driven the Assam movement. However, the implementation of the NRC has been fraught with controversy. The exclusion of millions of

people from the final NRC list, particularly Muslims, led to fears of statelessness and accusations of bias in the process. Many feared that the NRC, combined with the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019, which provides a path to citizenship for non-Muslim refugees from neighbouring countries, would disproportionately affect Muslims and further marginalise them. These developments have sparked widespread protests in Assam and across India, as they are seen as exacerbating existing ethnic tensions and threatening the delicate balance of Assam's multi-ethnic society.

♦ *NRC exclusions sparked controversy*

The CAA has particularly inflamed fears among indigenous Assamese communities, who worry that the Act will encourage further migration and dilute their political and cultural identity. For many Assamese, the promise of the Assam Accord — that illegal immigrants would not be allowed to settle in the state — was fundamental to their sense of security and identity. The CAA, which grants expedited citizenship to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian refugees, but excludes Muslims, has raised concerns that it will undermine the Accord and allow the influx of more non-Assamese populations into the state. This fear has been compounded by the perception that the Assamese language and culture will be further marginalised, with Assamese identity subsumed by a growing influx of non-Assamese people. In the present day, the NRC and the CAA have become central to the ongoing political discourse and the fear of marginalisation is still very much alive among both the indigenous Assamese people and immigrant communities.

♦ *CAA heightened Assamese fears*

Summarised Overview

The Punjab and Assam conflicts were shaped by linguistic, economic and political grievances. In Punjab, unresolved water-sharing issues, economic disparities and the rise of Sikh identity politics led to demands for greater autonomy. The Akali Dal and AISSF initially sought political reforms, but Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's radicalism transformed the movement into an armed insurgency. Operation Blue Star (1984), aimed at neutralising militants in the Golden Temple, intensified Sikh alienation. Indira Gandhi's assassination triggered anti-Sikh riots, further fueling separatist sentiments. The insurgency was eventually suppressed by counterinsurgency efforts, but the Khalistan movement found support among the Sikh diaspora.

In Assam, the conflict revolved around migration and identity. British-era land policies had encouraged Bengali migration, creating demographic tensions. The Assam Movement (1979–1985), led by AASU, demanded the expulsion of illegal immigrants, culminating in the Nellie massacre (1983) and the Assam Accord (1985). However, dissatisfaction

with the Accord led to the rise of ULFA, which pursued an armed insurgency for an independent Assam. The government responded with military operations, but the issue of illegal immigration remained unresolved. The introduction of the NRC and the CAA has reignited debates on citizenship and Assamese identity, keeping tensions alive.

Both conflicts highlight the challenges of ethnic identity, migration and regional autonomy in India. While militancy in Punjab declined by the mid-1990s, the legacy of the insurgency continues to influence Sikh politics and diaspora activism. In Assam, debates over citizenship persist, with the NRC and CAA fueling ongoing tension.

Assignments

1. Compare and contrast the Punjab and Assam conflicts in terms of their causes, key events and outcomes.

2. How did migration and identity shape the Assam conflict and what role did the Assam Accord play in addressing these issues?

3. Analyse the impact of Operation Blue Star and its aftermath on Sikh politics and the Khalistan movement.

4. Discuss the role of the NRC and CAA in contemporary Assam politics. How have these policies influenced the region's ethnic and political landscape?

5. Examine the significance of Rajiv-Longowal Accord.

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Suggested Reading

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Communalism and its Ideology

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ♦ analyse how British colonial policies, contributed to the rise of communal identities in India
- ♦ assess the contributions of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha in fostering communal tensions
- ♦ compare different scholarly interpretations on the causes and impact of communalism in India
- ♦ examine how communal identities continue to be used for political mobilisation

Background

The origin of communalism in India is a complex and multifaceted issue, shaped by historical, political, social and economic factors that span centuries. While communalism, as we understand it today, became pronounced in the 19th and 20th centuries, its roots can be traced back to the pre-colonial period, when religion played a central role in the social fabric of Indian society. However, it was during British colonial rule that communalism took on a more distinct and divisive character, laying the foundation for many of the conflicts that would follow in post-independence India.

India, before the arrival of the British, was a land of diverse religious and cultural communities. These communities — comprising Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others — lived in relatively harmonious coexistence, though tensions did exist, particularly between Hindus and Muslims. However, religion was not the sole basis of identity; caste, language, region and occupation were often more significant in determining social boundaries. The relationship between different communities, though complex, was not as overtly antagonistic as it would later become during British rule.

Discussion

3.2.1 Communalism and its Origins

♦ *British policies deepened religious divisions*

The British East India Company, which first established control over parts of India in the 17th century, laid the groundwork for communal tensions by using a policy of "divide and rule." The British administrators were keen on preserving their authority and often employed strategies that heightened divisions between various religious and social groups. They did this by creating separate administrative categories for different communities, fostering a sense of distinctness among them. The census, for example, categorised people not just by caste but also by religion, which inadvertently reinforced the idea of religious communities as separate and distinct entities.

♦ *Western education revived religious identities*

However, it was in the 19th century, with the rise of colonial modernity and the advent of Western education, that communalism began to take a more concrete shape. As the British promoted English education, a new class of Indian elites emerged. These elites were often educated in the Western tradition and they started to adopt a more rational, scientific view of the world. However, the elite's exposure to Western ideas also led to a certain introspection about India's own religious and cultural heritage. This resulted in a revival of religious identity, which, though initially meant to rejuvenate indigenous culture, also began to be used as a tool for asserting distinct group identities.

3.2.1.1 Religious Revivalism

♦ *Hindu-Muslim revivalism deepened divisions*

The British, for their part, encouraged these identity politics to maintain control over the vast and diverse subcontinent. The late 19th century saw the rise of Hindu and Muslim revivalist movements, such as the Arya Samaj and the Aligarh Movement. These movements sought to promote and protect their respective religious identities, sometimes at the expense of each other. While the Arya Samaj sought to reform Hinduism and reassert its ancient traditions, the Aligarh Movement, led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, aimed to modernise and improve the social standing of Muslims,

particularly by aligning with British interests. However, in doing so, both movements reinforced the sense of separate identities between Hindus and Muslims.

♦ *Congress struggled with religious divisions*

The formation of communal identities was further solidified in the early 20th century as political movements began to take shape. The Indian National Congress (INC), initially a secular organisation representing the interests of the Indian elite, became increasingly sensitive to religious divisions as it sought mass support. The INC, led by figures like Mahatma Gandhi, attempted to forge a broad-based national movement that would unite people across religious lines. However, in its effort to include diverse groups, the Congress ended up alienating both religious communities at various points, with both Hindus and Muslims feeling that their distinct interests were not adequately addressed.

♦ *Muslim League pushed for partition*

In this context, the Muslim League, founded in 1906, began to gain traction as it advocated the rights of Muslims in a predominantly Hindu- India. The League's political rhetoric evolved and by the 1940s, it had begun to demand a separate Muslim state, Pakistan, based on the argument that Muslims and Hindus had distinct nations, cultures and religions. The rise of the Muslim League, particularly under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, marked a turning point in India's political landscape, as it formalised the division of India along religious lines.

♦ *British policies reinforced communalism politically*

The seeds of communalism were sown during the colonial era, but they were fertilised by the political exigencies of the time. The British, although officially committed to a policy of non-interference in religious matters, actively used religion as a tool of governance. They recognised the political potential of religion in shaping identities and therefore encouraged communal politics. By granting religious communities separate electorates under the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, the British formalised the division between Hindus and Muslims in the political sphere. This was a significant step towards creating the conditions for communal politics, as it institutionalised the idea of religion as a key determinant of political identity. In the years leading up to independence, this growing sense of religious separation culminated in the Partition of India in 1947, which became one of the most tragic episodes in Indian history.

3.2.1.2 The Road to Partition

The complicity of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha in the violence that accompanied the partition of India in 1947 is one of the most contested and tragic aspects of Indian history. Both organisations, despite their differing ideological and political

outlooks, were instrumental in shaping the course of events that led to one of the bloodiest divisions of a country in modern history. Although they operated from different premises — religious nationalism for the League and Hindutva for the Mahasabha — their actions, rhetoric and political strategies contributed significantly to the climate of communal violence, hatred and division that marked the partition.

The Muslim League: A Role in Creating the Divide

Under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Muslim League emerged as the most vocal proponent of the partition of India and the establishment of Pakistan. Initially formed as a party seeking political representation and protection for Muslims in a united India, the League's demand for a separate state became the central political issue by the late 1930s. Jinnah's insistence on the "two-nation theory" posited that Hindus and Muslims were two distinct nations, culturally, religiously and politically incompatible in a single nation. This separatist ideology, though argued as necessary for Muslim security, had profound consequences on India's unity and contributed directly to the violence that would follow.

The League's demand for Pakistan was not merely a political negotiation for Muslim rights, as some might claim, but a deliberate effort to sever the unity of India. The rhetoric espoused by Jinnah and the League was divisive and often alarmist, playing on fears of Muslim victimhood in a Hindu-majority India. The political moves made by the League were not aimed at fostering mutual understanding or securing the future of Muslims in an independent India, but at creating a religiously homogeneous state. This divisive stance left little room for compromise or reconciliation between India's religious communities, sowing the seeds of violent confrontation.

The League's role in the violence after partition is both glaring and understated. Jinnah's insistence on Pakistan was pursued with such rigidity that it drowned out calls for unity and reconciliation. While he and other League leaders did not directly call for violence, the rhetoric of the League — the language of fear, separation and exclusion — fuelled a toxic environment that was ripe for violence. The League's leadership, especially Jinnah, failed to exercise restraint or caution as the violence escalated during partition. Its tacit acceptance of extreme nationalist views within its ranks left many of its members emboldened to partake in the violence. Moreover, the League's complicity in the violence became more evident as the partition unfolded. In areas like Punjab and Bengal, where religious communities lived in proximity, the League's

♦ *League and Mahasabha fuelled partition*

♦ *Muslim League demanded Pakistan, partition inevitable*

♦ *Jinnah's rhetoric fuelled religious tensions*

♦ *Partition violence escalated under League's stance*

fervent campaigning for partition exacerbated religious tensions, leading to massacres, forced migrations and the breakdown of law and order.

The Hindu Mahasabha: Fuelling Communalism and Exacerbating Tensions

In contrast to the Muslim League's separatism, the Hindu Mahasabha, led by figures like Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, promoted the idea of Hindutva, which sought to define India exclusively as a Hindu nation. The Mahasabha was unwaveringly opposed to the creation of Pakistan and supported the unity of India as a Hindu-majority state. While it did not formally advocate partition, its ideological stance was just as polarising. The Mahasabha's emphasis on Hindu nationalism painted Muslims as a threat to India's cultural and religious integrity, contributing significantly to the communal tensions of the period.

♦ *Mahasabha promoted exclusive nationalism*

The Mahasabha's rhetoric was divisive and exclusionary, portraying Muslims as foreign elements that did not belong in India. While the Mahasabha leaders did not explicitly call for violence, their ideology of Hindutva laid the ideological foundation for the later violence that erupted during partition. By framing Muslims as enemies of the Hindu nation, the Mahasabha fostered a sense of collective Hindu victimhood, which was manipulated by radical elements within the community to justify violence.

♦ *Hindutva ideology painted Muslims negatively*

The Mahasabha's role in partition violence is often overshadowed by the more direct actions of the Muslim League, but it was nonetheless significant. The Mahasabha's participation in the climate of hate and suspicion was critical in stoking the fires of communal violence. Its ideology provided the justification for those involved in violent reprisals against Muslims during the partition. Moreover, the Mahasabha's alignment with more radical right-wing groups such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its association with Nathuram Godse — who assassinated Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 — demonstrates the violent potential of the Mahasabha's Hindu nationalism.

♦ *Mahasabha justified violence*

♦ *Ties to RSS, Godse revealed extremism*

While the Mahasabha was not directly responsible for partitioning India, its ideology played a crucial role in exacerbating the religious divide. Its portrayal of Muslims as a hostile force in Indian society added fuel to the communal hatred that would erupt in the violence of partition. The Mahasabha's stance, which rejected any possibility of co-existence or compromise, directly contributed to the climate of fear and hostility that led to the massive violence and displacement that accompanied the division.

♦ *Rejected coexistence, deepened communal divide*

Complicity and Responsibility in Partition Violence

Both the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, despite their differing approaches, were complicit in the violence that accompanied partition. The League's aggressive pursuit of a separate Muslim state, founded on the premise of religious separateness, created an environment where communal violence could flourish. The Mahasabha, while less involved in the political machinations of partition, nevertheless provided the ideological ammunition for the forces of Hindu nationalism that participated in the violence.

In hindsight, both organisations played key roles in amplifying the divisions within Indian society. The League's insistence on Pakistan, its refusal to engage in meaningful dialogue for a united India and its failure to stem the tide of violence that accompanied partition, mark it as a principal architect of the bloodshed. The Mahasabha's rhetoric, while not directly leading to partition, was no less harmful in its contribution to the polarisation of Hindu and Muslim communities. Both organisations, through their respective ideologies and political actions, played a significant role in the horrific events of 1947. The legacy of their actions continues to haunt the subcontinent, as the scars of partition remain deep within the social and political fabric of India and Pakistan.

3.2.2 Dimensions and Views on Communalism

3.2.2.1 Bipan Chandra: The Role of Colonialism in the Rise of Communalism

Bipan Chandra, one of the most prominent historians of modern India, viewed communalism as a product of colonialism and the divisive policies of the British Empire. According to Chandra, colonial rule did not create communalism but aggravated and institutionalised it through policies that reinforced religious distinctions. British policies of "divide and rule," especially after the revolt of 1857, emphasised religious identities and differences, thereby cultivating a sense of separateness among India's diverse communities. Chandra pointed out that the British administration encouraged the development of separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims, which institutionalised religious distinctions within the political sphere.

Chandra also stressed the role of the British in fostering a communal mindset among the elites. As the colonial state co-opted the upper classes from various communities into its service, it simultaneously created a perception of "communal" interests. This process, according to Chandra, laid the foundation for the rise

♦ *Both groups fuelled communal violence*

♦ *League's separatism, Mahasabha's ideology clashed*

♦ *British rule institutionalised communal divisions*

♦ *Separate electorates deepened religious divides*

of communal politics, particularly after the 1880s, when the Indian National Congress began to demand political rights for Indians. The Muslim League, for instance, began to articulate its separate identity in response to what it perceived as the domination of Hindus in the political sphere, further entrenching communal divides.

3.2.2.2 Christopher Bayly: Communalism and the Politics of Identity

Elite co-optation fostered communal politics

Christopher Bayly, another prominent historian, offered a more nuanced perspective on communalism. Bayly argued that communal identities in colonial India were not purely a consequence of British policies but were shaped by a more complex interplay of local, social and economic factors. While recognising the role of colonialism in exacerbating divisions, Bayly emphasised that communal identities were fluid and constructed, evolving over time as a result of modernisation and the growing importance of print culture, education and the emergence of a colonial state.

Communalism shaped by local, economic factors

Bayly also critiqued the conventional understanding of communalism as a rigid, purely religious divide. He argued that communal identities were often shaped by more practical considerations, such as competition for economic resources and political power. In his view, communalism was not just an outgrowth of religious identity but was also deeply embedded in the class and economic struggles that arose with the expansion of colonial capitalism. Bayly's analysis highlights the role of economic factors in the construction of communal identities, particularly in the urban spaces of colonial India.

Print, education and capitalism influenced identity

3.2.2.3 Gyan Pandey: Communalism as a Cultural and Social Phenomenon

Gyan Pandey's work on communalism, particularly his study of the violence during the partition of India in 1947, focuses on the social and cultural aspects of communalism. Pandey sees communalism not just as a political ideology but as a deeply ingrained social and cultural force that finds expression in violence, rituals and everyday practices. His analysis of communal violence during partition emphasizes how religious identities became violently politicised, leading to mass displacement, killings and the formation of deep social and psychological divisions between communities.

Communalism embedded in cultural practices

Pandey challenges the view that communalism is a relatively modern or external phenomenon; instead he shows how religious identity has been reinterpreted and politicised through historical processes. His work focuses on how communal violence operates within social structures and cultural norms, often taking the form

Memory, rituals reinforced communal divisions

of collective memory and ritualised practices that mark the boundaries between communities. For Pandey, communalism is more than just a political strategy; it is embedded in the very fabric of social relationships and cultural practices.

3.2.2.4 Bernard S. Cohn: The Construction of Communalism through Colonial Knowledge

Bernard S. Cohn, a prominent anthropologist, approached the question of communalism through the lens of colonial knowledge and its role in shaping Indian society. Cohn argued that the British colonial state constructed communal identities through a process of classification, categorisation and control. The colonial state relied on a system of knowledge that sought to categorise and fix identities along rigid communal lines. This process of "othering" reinforced the distinctions between religious communities and created a framework for understanding and managing communal differences.

♦ *Colonial classification shaped communal identities*

Cohn's work highlighted how the British colonial state and its administrators not only treated communities as separate entities but also actively shaped and manipulated how these communities were perceived. Through surveys, census data and the creation of communal categories, the colonial state played a critical role in defining what it meant to be a Hindu or a Muslim in India. This official knowledge of communities, according to Cohn, had lasting effects on how communal identities were constructed and politicised in the post-colonial period.

♦ *Surveys, census reinforced religious distinctions*

3.2.2.5 Achin Vanaik: Communalism and the Politics of Identity in Post-Colonial India

Achin Vanaik's analysis of communalism is grounded in the post-colonial context and focuses on how communal identities continue to be mobilised for political gain in independent India. Vanaik argues that while communalism was initially a product of colonialism, it has been sustained and exacerbated in the post-colonial period through the political use of religious identities. He critiques both the Congress Party and the Hindu Right for their roles in fostering and manipulating communal identities for political purposes.

♦ *Congress and BJP exploited religious sentiments*

Vanaik's critique centres on how communalism has been institutionalised in Indian politics. He argues that both the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), while on opposite ends of the ideological spectrum, have often used communal appeals to consolidate their political bases. The Congress, particularly during the post-independence era, has been accused of accommodating

♦ *Hindutva central to BJP's existence*

Hindu religious sentiments to maintain political stability, while the BJP has openly embraced Hindutva as a central element of its political agenda. Vanaik's analysis highlights the enduring nature of communal politics and its role in shaping India's political landscape.

3.2.2.6 K.N. Panikkar: Nationalism, Communalism and the Question of Identity

K. N. Panikkar's work on nationalism and communalism examines the intersection of these two forces in colonial and post-colonial India. Panikkar argues that communalism emerged as a challenge to the inclusive idea of Indian nationalism promoted by leaders like Gandhi and Nehru. He stresses the role of communal politics in challenging the idea of a unified Indian nation-state, particularly as articulated by the Indian National Congress.

♦ *Communalism challenged inclusive nationalism*

Panikkar highlights the role of the Muslim League in shaping the discourse around Muslim identity and its demand for Pakistan. He also explores the role of the Hindu Mahasabha and other right-wing organisations in promoting a vision of India as a Hindu nation, thereby undermining the secular foundations of Indian nationalism. Panikkar's work provides an important critique of how both nationalism and communalism were shaped by competing visions of identity, culture and religion in India.

♦ *Nationalism shaped by competing identities*

Summarised Overview

Communalism in India is a socio-political issue whereby religious identities shape conflicts and political agendas. Its roots lie in colonial policies, particularly the British "divide and rule" strategy, which deepened Hindu-Muslim divisions. The introduction of separate electorates for Muslims in 1909 and the 1932 communal award reinforced religious political representation, fuelling discord. The partition of Bengal in 1905 further intensified communal tensions, which ultimately led to the partition of India in 1947, resulting in large-scale violence and displacement.

After independence, India adopted a secular constitution, but communalism remained a persistent challenge. To counter communalism, India needs strong secular policies, inclusive economic development and education promoting interfaith harmony. While pluralism remains a defining characteristic of Indian society, the challenge of communalism requires sustained efforts in governance, law enforcement and civil society engagement to uphold democratic values and religious coexistence.

Assignments

1. Discuss the historical roots of communalism in India and its link to colonial policies.
2. How did the partition of India shape the trajectory of communalism in post-independence India?
3. Examine the role of political parties in communal tensions in contemporary India.
4. What measures can be taken to mitigate communalism and promote interfaith harmony in India?

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Fissures on the Body Politic

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ♦ analyse the impact of communalism in post-independence India
- ♦ explain the rise of Hindutva and its influence on Indian politics
- ♦ evaluate the significance of the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy
- ♦ evaluate the socio-political impact of caste reservations on different communities
- ♦ assess the role of political parties in shaping identity politics

Background

After India gained independence in 1947, it faced significant internal challenges, one of the most profound being the rise of communalism. The partition of India, based on religious lines, created deep-seated divisions between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and other religious communities. The violence that accompanied the partition resulted in mass migration, atrocities and a lasting sense of distrust between communities. The newly independent nation, which aspired to secularism and unity, found itself grappling with the challenge of reconciling these communal divisions.

One of the earliest manifestations of communal tensions after 1947 was the widespread communal riots that erupted in various parts of the country. These riots were often triggered by religious provocations, disputes over religious practices or even political manipulation. Despite the Indian Constitution's commitment to secularism, these tensions revealed the fragility of communal harmony in a diverse country like India. The political leadership, particularly under Jawaharlal Nehru, aimed to build a secular state that embraced pluralism, but the reality was more complicated as regional, caste-based and religious identities often took precedence over national identity.

The internal challenges posed by communalism were further compounded by the political use of religious identities. Political parties and leaders occasionally relied

on communal rhetoric to mobilise support, resulting in the entrenchment of religious divisions in the political domain. The Congress Party, for instance, sought to maintain a delicate balance by appeasing both Hindu and Muslim sentiments, but in doing so, it inadvertently stoked the flames of religious polarisation. Moreover, the growth of religious fundamentalism among both Hindus and Muslims presented a direct challenge to India's secular fabric. Groups like the Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League, although diminished after partition, continued to exert influence in certain regions, advocating communal agendas that contradict the ideals of the Indian Constitution. These forces played a significant role in shaping the political discourse, contributing to the challenges of maintaining national unity.

Keywords

Communalism, Hindutva, Secularism, Babri Masjid, Shah Bano Case, BJP, Ram Janmabhoomi Movement, Mandal Commission, Sachar Committee Report, Caste Politics

Discussion

3.3.1 Rise of Identity Politics after Independence

♦ *Hindutva ideology grew post-1947 India*

The rise of Hindutva after 1947 is closely tied to the challenges India faced in reconciling its religious diversity with the vision of a secular and pluralistic nation. Hindutva or Hindu nationalism, was popularised by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in his 1923 pamphlet "Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?" Savarkar's ideology sought to define India as a Hindu nation, emphasising the cultural and religious unity of Hindus while excluding Muslims, Christians and other religious communities from the national identity. While this ideology had its roots in the pre-independence period, it found a more significant political outlet in post-1947 India, particularly with the emergence of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its affiliated organisations.

♦ *RSS gained influence, opposed Congress secularism*

The early years following independence saw the rise of the RSS as a prominent proponent of Hindutva. Although initially marginalised, the RSS gradually gained ground, especially after the 1960s. It positioned itself as a counterforce to the secular policies of the Congress Party, which it criticised for appeasing Muslims and diluting Hindu interests. The RSS and its affiliates, including the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal,

played a crucial role in promoting the idea of Hindu unity and the concept of India as a Hindu nation.

The shift towards Hindutva gained further momentum in the 1980s with the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which was originally an offshoot of the Janata Party but was deeply influenced by RSS ideology. Under the leadership of figures like L. K. Advani, the BJP used the political space created by religious and caste-based identity politics to promote Hindutva as a dominant force in Indian politics. The 1980s witnessed the beginning of the Mandir-Masjid issue, which centered around the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. The BJP, along with VHP and RSS, played a key role in mobilising mass support for the construction of a Ram Mandir at the site of the Babri Masjid, invoking religious sentiments to unite Hindus under the banner of Hindutva. This movement culminated in the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, which sparked widespread communal riots across India.

3.3.1.1 The Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid Controversy

The Ram Janmabhoomi - Babri Masjid dispute stands as one of the most significant and divisive issues in modern Indian history, epitomising the clash between religion, politics and identity. The controversy surrounding this site in Ayodhya has had lasting implications for the country's social fabric, affecting inter-community relations, national politics and India's secular identity.

The controversy dates back several centuries, with claims from sections of the Hindu community that the Babri Masjid, a mosque built in the 16th century by the Mughal emperor Babur, stood on the birthplace of Lord Ram, one of Hinduism's most revered deities. According to this narrative, the original Hindu temple at the site was destroyed by Babur's forces to erect the mosque. While these claims were not universally accepted, they became increasingly important for Hindu religious groups, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries.

During the colonial period, both Hindu and Muslim groups laid claim to the site, leading to sporadic tensions. However, it was in the 1980s that the issue gained significant political traction. Organisations like the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), alongside the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), began advocating the construction of a Ram temple at the site, portraying the Babri Masjid as a symbol of Muslim oppression and the marginalisation of Hinduism. Their argument was rooted in the belief that restoring the temple would not only restore a sacred Hindu site but would also correct an

◆ *BJP promoted Hindutva, led Babri Masjid dispute*

◆ *Babri Masjid dispute divided Indian society*

◆ *Origins of the Controversy*

◆ *Babri dispute politicised in 1980s, fueled tensions*

alleged historical wrong.

The Rise of Political Mobilisation

In the late 1980s, the movement gained substantial momentum under the leadership of BJP's L. K. Advani, who embarked on the infamous rath yatra in 1990. This "chariot procession," which travelled across India, sought to rally Hindus for the cause of the Ram temple. Advani's journey was not just a religious endeavour but a calculated political move to consolidate Hindu support and present the Ram Janmabhoomi issue as central to Hindu identity. The rath yatra was successful in mobilising masses and generating widespread attention to the cause, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, the state where Ayodhya is located.

The rise of the BJP coincided with the growing influence of Hindutva ideology, which sought to define India as a Hindu nation and sought to promote Hindu cultural and religious supremacy. In this context, the Babri Masjid dispute was framed not just as a religious issue, but as a matter of national identity. For the BJP and other Hindu nationalist organisations, constructing a Ram temple at the disputed site was seen as part of a broader project to reclaim Hindu pride.

While the movement gained significant traction among Hindu groups, it also sparked strong opposition, particularly from Muslim organisations and secular political forces. The Congress party, which had been the dominant force in Indian politics since independence, feared the potential divisiveness of the issue and attempted to keep the situation under control. However, the growing political power of the BJP and its allies in the Hindutva movement meant that the dispute was increasingly being shaped in terms of Hindu-Muslim conflict, with both communities becoming more entrenched in their positions.

Shah Bano and Communal Identity

In 1985, Shah Bano, a 62-year-old Muslim woman, sought maintenance from her husband under Section 125 of the Indian Code of Criminal Procedure after he divorced her through triple talaq. The Supreme Court ruled in her favour ordering her husband to provide a monthly alimony, citing constitutional principles of justice and equality. However, this decision sparked a nationwide debate, revealing the deep fault lines in Indian society.

For many, the verdict symbolised a progressive step towards gender justice, ensuring that Muslim women were not denied rights enshrined in Indian law. However, it also triggered a fierce backlash among segments of the Muslim clergy, who viewed the judgment

♦ *Advani's rath yatra mobilised Hindus politically*

♦ *BJP used Babri issue to assert Hindutva*

♦ *Babri issue deepened Hindu-Muslim divide in politics*

♦ *Shah Bano case triggered tensions*

as an encroachment on Islamic personal law. The government of Rajiv Gandhi, under pressure from conservative Muslim groups, overturned the verdict by passing the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act in 1986. This legislation limited a divorced Muslim woman's maintenance to the iddat period (approximately three months after divorce), placing the onus of support thereafter on her family or the Waqf Board.

- ♦ *Congress reversed progressive ruling*

The Shah Bano case polarised public opinion, fuelling communal tensions. On one side, proponents of secularism and women's rights decried the government's capitulation to conservative elements, arguing that it undermined the constitutional principle of equality before the law. On the other hand, the Muslim leadership framed the issue as one of religious autonomy, rallying their community to defend personal laws from perceived state interference.

- ♦ *BJP gained from appeasement claim*

The political handling of the Shah Bano case had wider implications. It emboldened Hindu nationalist forces, who capitalised on the perceived appeasement of Muslims to garner support among Hindus. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), in particular, leveraged this sentiment to bolster its narrative of "pseudo-secularism," accusing the Congress government of pandering to minority communities at the expense of national unity. This period witnessed a rise in communal violence, as tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities escalated. The Shah Bano controversy became a rallying point for both communities, deepening mistrust and sharpening divisions.

- ♦ *Communal tensions worsened post-case*

The Demolition of the Babri Masjid

In 1986, the unlocking of the Babri Masjid's gates by a local court, allowing Hindu worshippers access, proved a pivotal moment. It was widely perceived as an act of appeasement towards Hindu sentiments by the Congress government, led by Rajiv Gandhi, to counter the fallout from its perceived favouritism towards Muslims in the Shah Bano case. The BJP, under leaders like L. K. Advani, capitalised on the issue, framing it as a battle for cultural and historical justice. The party allied with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) to spearhead the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, galvanising Hindu sentiments on an unprecedented scale. Advani's Rath Yatra, a political pilgrimage aimed at mobilising support for a Ram temple at the disputed site, inflamed communal tensions across the country. The movement was marked by inflammatory rhetoric and polarising propaganda, creating a fertile ground for violence.

- ♦ *BJP intensified temple movement*

The late 1980s witnessed a series of communal riots as clashes

between Hindus and Muslims became more frequent and brutal. The political manipulation of religious identities deepened mistrust, particularly in urban centres like Meerut, Bhagalpur and Ahmedabad, where large-scale violence erupted. The BJP's narrative of Hindu victimhood resonated with a significant section of the electorate, enabling the party to make significant gains in the 1989 general elections. It increased its parliamentary presence from just two seats in 1984 to 85, emerging as a formidable political force.

The situation reached a dramatic and tragic climax on December 6, 1992, when a large crowd led by the VHP, BJP and RSS, descended on Ayodhya. Despite assurances from the government and the police to maintain order, the crowd turned violent, overwhelming the security forces and demolishing the Babri Masjid. The demolition, which was televised and broadcast across the country, sent shockwaves through India and triggered a series of violent communal riots in many parts of the country. These riots resulted in the deaths of thousands, predominantly Muslims and left many others wounded.

For many, the demolition was seen as a long-awaited victory, a symbolic restoration of Lord Ram's birthplace. But for Muslims, it was an act of violence and destruction, a violation of their religious rights and a blow to their sense of security in a nation that had always prided itself on its secularism. The aftermath was deeply polarising, with Hindus and Muslims becoming more divided and the country's secular image being severely challenged. The events of December 6, 1992, marked a watershed moment in Indian politics. The BJP, which had been a marginal player in national politics until then, quickly emerged as a major political force, capitalising on the success of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. The party's rise was marked by a strong emphasis on Hindu nationalism, which became central to its political agenda. In the subsequent elections, the BJP's success was in no small part due to its alignment with the Ram temple movement.

Legal and Political Consequences

The demolition also sparked a long-running legal battle over the ownership of the site. In the years following the event, criminal cases were filed against several BJP leaders and activists involved in the destruction of the Babri Masjid, including L. K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti. These cases have been mired in delays and political controversies, reflecting the sensitive and polarising nature of the issue. In 2019, after decades of legal wrangling, the Supreme Court of India delivered a landmark judgment, ruling that the land where the Babri Masjid once stood

should be handed over for the construction of a Ram temple. At the same time, the court ordered the allocation of an alternative plot of land in Ayodhya for the construction of a mosque. The verdict was hailed as a victory by Hindu nationalist groups and saw the formal beginning of the Ram temple's construction. However, it also triggered concern among many about the implications for India's secular constitution and the treatment of religious minorities.

♦ *Legal wrangling*

The ruling underscored the deep entanglement of religion and politics in India, with the Ram Janmabhoomi issue being at the heart of the country's national discourse for over three decades. While the temple construction may be seen as a resolution for many Hindus, for others, especially Muslims, the events surrounding the Babri Masjid and its demolition remain a painful reminder of the dangers of religious politicisation.

♦ *Reshaped Indian politics*

The Gujarat riots of 2002 and the Delhi riots of 2020 were two of the most violent episodes of communal conflict in modern India, embedded with the rise of Hindutva politics. The Gujarat riots erupted after the burning of the Sabarmati Express in Godhra, where 59 Hindu pilgrims returning from Ayodhya were killed. In response, widespread anti-Muslim violence broke out across the state, resulting in the deaths of over 1,000 people, mostly Muslims. Human rights organisations and media reports suggested that the violence was not spontaneous but systematically organised, with the alleged complicity of the state administration. The failure of law enforcement agencies to control the situation further fuelled the perception that the state government was either unwilling or actively encouraging the riots.

♦ *Gujarat riots*

The Delhi riots of 2020 unfolded in the backdrop of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests, which had triggered widespread opposition for allegedly discriminating against Muslims. The unrest began when BJP leader Kapil Mishra made an inflammatory speech, threatening forceful removal of anti-CAA protestors. Soon after, violence erupted in northeast Delhi, resulting in the deaths of over 50 people, mostly Muslims. Mobs vandalised and burned homes, mosques, and businesses, while police forces were accused of inaction, with reports of them either standing by or siding with the rioters. Unlike the Gujarat riots, which lasted for weeks, the Delhi violence was concentrated over a few days but was equally brutal in its intensity. The riots were widely seen as a consequence of the growing normalisation of Hindutva rhetoric, where Muslims were increasingly portrayed as outsiders in their own country. The unchecked spread of hate speech and the use of religious polarisation as a political tool played a significant role in escalating tensions.

♦ *Delhi riots fuelled by polarisation*

Both riots reflected the deep entrenchment of Hindutva politics in India's socio-political landscape. In Gujarat, the violence was a response to an incident that was immediately framed as a Muslim attack on Hindus, justifying mass retaliation. In Delhi, the violence was directed at protestors who opposed the government's policies, but it quickly turned into a broader attack on Muslim communities. The pattern of incitement, state inaction, and targeted attacks in both cases highlighted how religious identity had become a key factor in political mobilisation. The mainstreaming of Hindutva politics has contributed to an environment where communal violence is not just an unfortunate consequence but, in some cases, a political strategy.

The Gujarat riots played a crucial role in reshaping Indian electoral politics. Modi's response to the riots—refusing to apologise and instead focusing on Gujarat's development—won him the unwavering support of Hindu nationalist groups. The BJP, which had previously relied on temple politics and soft Hindutva, now had a leader who openly embodied hardline Hindu nationalist ideals. The 2014 and 2019 general elections saw a massive consolidation of Hindu votes, as Modi's image as a leader who could protect Hindu interests became a central electoral narrative. The Delhi riots, on the other hand, showed how communal tensions could be weaponised at critical political moments. Occurring just after the 2020 Delhi Assembly elections, the violence served to deepen the Hindu-Muslim divide, reinforcing the BJP's long-term goal of majoritarian consolidation.

The role of state institutions in both riots has also been a matter of concern. In Gujarat, reports suggested that the police were either ineffective or complicit in allowing rioters to operate with impunity. In Delhi, similar accusations were made, with videos showing police officers aiding mobs or assaulting injured Muslims. While some perpetrators of the Gujarat riots were convicted years later, many key accused, including politicians, walked free. In Delhi, accountability remains elusive, with several victims still seeking justice. The lack of decisive action against those responsible for inciting or perpetrating violence has contributed to a culture of impunity, where communal riots are seen as politically beneficial rather than criminal acts that need strict punishment.

Perhaps the most concerning consequence of these riots is the long-term social impact. In Gujarat, many riot-affected Muslims were forced into ghettoised settlements, unable to return to their original homes due to fear and social ostracisation. The state witnessed a significant decline in Hindu-Muslim interactions, with deepening segregation in schools, neighbourhoods, and businesses.

♦ *Hindutva politics normalises communal violence*

♦ *Communalism strengthens BJP's electoral gains*

♦ *State complicity weakens justice system*

♦ *Riots deepen communal divisions in India*

In Delhi, similar patterns emerged, with Muslims in riot-affected areas facing economic losses, displacement, and an enduring sense of insecurity. The growing acceptance of communal violence as a part of India's political landscape has normalised religious discrimination, making the idea of an inclusive and secular democracy increasingly fragile.

3.3.2 The Mandal Commission and the State of Casteism in India

3.3.2.1 Casteism in India Post-Independence

Caste has been a defining feature of Indian society for centuries, influencing social hierarchies, access to resources, and opportunities for advancement. Post-independence, the Indian state attempted to address caste-based discrimination through constitutional safeguards, affirmative action, and social policies. However, casteism has persisted in various forms, adapting to the changing political, economic, and social landscape. One of the most significant efforts to address historical injustices was the Mandal Commission, which recommended reservations for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in government jobs and educational institutions. While the Commission's findings and subsequent implementation sparked heated debates, they also reshaped Indian politics and caste dynamics.

Economic and Educational Disparities

Reservations have undoubtedly improved access to education and employment for marginalised groups, but deep inequalities persist. Many SCs, STs, and OBCs still face barriers in accessing quality education due to a lack of resources and historical disadvantages. The introduction of reservations in private educational institutions has helped to some extent, but representation in high-paying jobs and elite institutions remains limited.

The economic disparities between upper castes and lower castes continue to be stark. Land ownership patterns remain skewed in favour of upper-caste landlords, while Dalits and lower-caste groups continue to work as landless labourers in many parts of India. This economic inequality reinforces caste-based divisions.

Social Discrimination and Violence

While legal frameworks such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, have sought to curb caste-based violence, cases of caste-based discrimination, honour killings, and lynchings remain alarmingly high. Reports of

♦ Caste remains a major force despite constitutional measures

♦ Reservations helped, but barriers remain in education

♦ Land and wealth concentrated among upper castes

♦ Laws exist, but caste-based violence continues

Dalit children being denied entry to temples, Dalit grooms facing violence for riding horses, and caste-based massacres show that deeply entrenched social prejudices persist.

In urban areas, caste-based discrimination is more subtle but still pervasive. Housing discrimination, workplace biases, and lower wages for lower-caste workers are common. The rise of social media has both amplified caste-based hate speech and provided a platform for lower-caste communities to assert their rights.

♦ *Caste discrimination is both overt and subtle*

3.3.2.2 The Mandal Commission: A Historical Context

The Mandal Commission, officially known as the Second Backward Classes Commission, was established in 1979 under Prime Minister Morarji Desai. Chaired by B.P. Mandal, the commission aimed to identify socially and educationally backward classes and recommend measures for their upliftment. The commission submitted its report in 1980, outlining 11 social, economic, and educational indicators to identify OBCs. The commission's most significant recommendation was a 27% reservation for OBCs in central government jobs and educational institutions, in addition to the existing 22.5% reservation for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), bringing the total reservations to 49.5%.

♦ *Mandal Commission recommended 27% quota*

However, the Mandal Commission's findings were not acted upon until 1990, when Prime Minister V.P. Singh decided to implement its recommendations. This led to mass protests and self-immolations by upper-caste students who saw it as a threat to meritocracy. Despite these reactions, the decision marked a turning point in Indian politics, solidifying caste-based electoral mobilisation and giving OBCs a stronger political voice.

♦ *OBC reservations led to protests but transformed caste politics*

3.2.3.3 The Sachar Committee Report and the Status of Muslims

While the Mandal Commission focused on OBCs, the Sachar Committee, set up in 2005 under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, examined the socio-economic status of Muslims in India. The Sachar Report (2006) painted a bleak picture of Muslim backwardness, revealing that their conditions were often worse than those of SCs and STs in several indicators such as education, employment, and political representation.

♦ *Socio-economic status of Muslims*

Key Findings of the Sachar Committee

Low Literacy Rates

Education is often the key to upward mobility, yet for many

Muslims in India, access to quality education remains a significant challenge. The literacy rate among Muslims was just 59.1%, falling below the national average. This gap is even starker in higher education, where Muslim representation is disproportionately low. Many Muslim children, particularly in economically weaker families, are forced to drop out of school early due to financial constraints, lack of educational support systems, and discrimination. The absence of sufficient government-run schools in Muslim-dominated localities further exacerbates the issue, leaving generations trapped in a cycle of limited educational opportunities.

♦ *Education gap and early dropouts*

Economic Marginalisation

Muslims in India are overrepresented in the informal sector, working as street vendors, artisans, mechanics, tailors, and small-scale traders. These jobs often lack social security, fair wages, or financial stability. A stark indicator of economic exclusion is their low representation in government jobs—positions that offer stability and better pay. Despite being a significant portion of the population, Muslims remain severely underrepresented in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), and Indian Foreign Service (IFS), limiting their role in decision-making and governance. This economic marginalisation leaves many Muslim families struggling to break free from poverty.

♦ *Limited job security and exclusion*

Political Underrepresentation

Despite constituting nearly 14% of India's population, Muslim representation in legislatures and government bodies remains disproportionately low. The lack of political inclusion means that issues affecting the community, such as unemployment, housing, and education, often do not receive adequate attention in policymaking. Many Muslim-majority areas remain underdeveloped, lacking essential public services. The absence of strong political representation makes it difficult for the community to assert its rights, leading to further marginalisation.

♦ *Minimal role in governance*

Ghettoisation

Many Muslims in India live in urban slums and segregated neighbourhoods, often with poor access to basic amenities such as clean water, sanitation, healthcare, and schools. This process of ghettoisation is partly a result of discrimination in the housing market, where Muslims often find it difficult to rent or buy homes in mixed localities. As a result, entire communities become concentrated in specific areas, reinforcing social and economic disadvantages. These localities are frequently overlooked by civic authorities, leading to poor infrastructure, lack of development,

♦ *Social segregation and poor infrastructure*

and limited job opportunities.

Low Credit Access: Barriers to Economic Growth

♦ *Financial exclusion hinders business growth*

Access to financial resources is critical for entrepreneurship and economic growth, yet Muslim-owned businesses face significant difficulties in obtaining loans from banks and financial institutions. Studies have shown that Muslims are more likely to be denied credit, making it harder for them to start or expand businesses. The lack of financial inclusion limits wealth creation, leading to economic stagnation. Without access to capital, many Muslims are forced to rely on informal moneylenders, who charge high interest rates, trapping them in cycles of debt and poverty.

♦ *Affirmative action debated*

The report recommended affirmative action policies, better representation in government jobs, and targeted schemes to uplift the Muslim community. However, its implementation was slow, and political responses to the report were largely divided along ideological lines.

3.2.3.4 Political Implications of the Mandal Commission

Reshaping Electoral Politics: The Rise of OBC Parties

♦ *OBC parties challenged Congress rule*

The implementation of the Mandal Commission's recommendations in 1990 fundamentally altered India's political landscape. Before Mandal, the Congress party dominated Indian politics, maintaining a broad-based appeal that included upper castes, Dalits, and some OBCs. However, the reservation policy empowered OBCs, leading to the rise of caste-based political parties such as the Samajwadi Party (SP), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), and Janata Dal. These parties positioned themselves as champions of OBC interests, directly challenging Congress and reshaping electoral competition. As OBCs began to see their collective strength, they shifted political allegiances, weakening the Congress's once-dominant position. The emergence of OBC-centric parties meant that caste, rather than a broad-based nationalist ideology, became a decisive factor in elections, particularly in North India.

Caste-Based Mobilisation and Fragmentation of Votes

♦ *Caste-driven vote banks fragmented politics*

The Mandal Commission's implementation deepened caste consciousness in Indian politics, leading to a new era of vote-bank politics. Political parties increasingly campaigned along caste lines, appealing to specific communities for electoral gains. This shift resulted in the fragmentation of votes, as regional parties gained strength by mobilising OBCs, Dalits, and even upper-caste groups in opposition to reservations. The BJP capitalised on upper-

caste resentment, while Dalit-led parties like the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) further complicated caste-based electoral dynamics. This realignment reduced Congress's ability to consolidate a single dominant vote bank, forcing it to compete for fragmented caste groups. The rise of regional parties also meant coalition politics became more common, as no single party could secure a clear majority without alliances.

Long-Term Social and Political Consequences

♦ *Caste remains central in politics*

Beyond elections, the Mandal Commission deepened caste identities, reinforcing caste-based political activism. While OBCs gained greater political representation, the upper-caste backlash led to counter-movements, such as demands for economic-based reservations. This tension continues to shape Indian politics, with periodic protests against or in favour of reservations. Additionally, the political rise of OBCs created new power hierarchies, sometimes sidelining Dalits and other marginalised groups. Over time, caste-based political mobilisation evolved, with leaders focusing on development and governance rather than just caste identity. However, caste remains an inescapable factor in Indian politics, influencing party strategies, candidate selection, and policy-making. The Mandal moment ensured that no political party can ignore caste, making it a permanent electoral and policy concern.

Summarised Overview

After independence, Hindutva gained traction as the RSS, VHP, and BJP positioned themselves as an alternative to the Congress party, advocating Hindu nationalism. The Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi dispute escalated in the 1980s, with L. K. Advani's Rath Yatra rallying support for a Ram temple. The demolition of the mosque in 1992 led to widespread communal riots, intensifying Hindu-Muslim divisions. Meanwhile, the 1985 Shah Bano case, where the Supreme Court granted maintenance to a divorced Muslim woman, ignited controversy. Congress, accused of appeasing minorities by overturning the ruling, alienated Hindu voters, further strengthening the BJP.

At the same time, the implementation of the Mandal Commission's recommendations in 1990 reshaped Indian politics by bringing caste-based reservations to the forefront. The rise of OBC-led regional parties and the backlash from upper-caste groups added another layer to identity politics, deepening social and political polarisation. The BJP strategically used the Ram temple issue alongside opposition to caste-based quotas to consolidate its voter base, rising as a dominant political force. Legal battles ensued, and in 2019, the Supreme Court granted the disputed site for a Ram temple while allocating land for a mosque.

Assignments

1. Examine how political parties have influenced the rise of communalism in India.

2. Discuss the tension between communalism and secularism in post-independence India.

3. Analyse the role of media and social movements in shaping communal narratives.

4. Assess the impact of reservation policies on the upliftment of depressed classes.

5. Discuss the role of Dalit movements in shaping social and political change in India.

6. Analyse the challenges faced by depressed classes despite constitutional safeguards

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Liberalization and its Impact

BLOCK-04

Economy

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ♦ understand the key reforms introduced by the New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1991
- ♦ analyse the shift in the concept of planning in India with the establishment of NITI Aayog
- ♦ evaluate the impact of Demonetisation in India
- ♦ understand the impact of the Farm Laws and the subsequent protests by farmers

Background

In 1991, India embarked on a transformative journey of economic liberalisation, marked by the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP). The NEP aimed to restructure the economy by reducing state control, encouraging foreign investment and promoting growth of the private sector. This shift was necessitated by a balance of payments crisis, leading to India's first structural adjustments through measures such as trade liberalisation, deregulation and fiscal consolidation. Following this, the concept of planning in India saw a major transformation with the formation of NITI Aayog in 2015, replacing the Planning Commission. NITI Aayog was tasked with fostering cooperative federalism, focusing on sustainable and inclusive development while advocating the decentralisation of planning and policy formulation.

The unit also examines significant policy interventions such as Demonetisation in 2016, aimed at curbing black money, counterfeiting and promoting a cashless economy. However, the impact and effectiveness of this policy remain debated, especially with respect to the informal sector. The Farm Laws introduced in 2020, which aimed to modernise agricultural marketing and introduce greater freedom in trade, sparked widespread protests due to concerns over potential adverse impacts on farmers' incomes and market access.

Finally, the evolution of Labour Laws in India, especially following economic liberalisation, highlights the complex balance between labour rights and economic flexibility, with ongoing reforms seeking to simplify and modernize the legal framework.

Discussion

4.1.1 Structural Adjustments: Definition

♦ *Economic policies for growth and fiscal balance*

Structural adjustment refers to a series of economic policies implemented to stimulate economic growth and reduce fiscal imbalances in a country, often under the guidance of international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In the Indian context, structural adjustments gained prominence with the economic reforms of 1991, introduced to address a severe balance of payments crisis and pave the way for liberalisation, ptivatisation and globalisation.

♦ *India's 1980's economic crisis*

By the late 1980s, India faced a severe economic crisis marked by a high fiscal deficit, stagnating industrial output and dwindling foreign exchange reserves. This crisis was further exacerbated by external shocks such as the Gulf War (1990–1991), which caused a surge in oil prices and reduced remittances from Indian workers in the Middle East.

♦ *India's 1991 crisis led to IMF-backed reforms*

In 1991, India turned to the IMF and the World Bank for financial assistance. In return, the government had to adopt structural adjustment policies (SAPs) designed to stabilise the economy and promote structural changes.

4.1.1.1 Features of Structural Adjustments

Features of structural adjustments revolved around macroeconomic stabilisation, liberalisation, ptivatisation and globalisation.

♦ *Macroeconomic stabilisation through deficit cuts and rupee devaluation*

Macroeconomic Stabilisation: was central to the reform agenda and focused on reducing fiscal deficits, controlling inflation and stabilising external accounts. India achieved this by cutting government spending, particularly on subsidies in sectors like agriculture and energy, improving tax collection and devaluing the rupee. The devaluation, undertaken in 1991, made Indian exports more competitive while curbing non-essential imports. Monetary policies were tightened, with the Reserve Bank of India adopting measures to curb inflation and reduce deficit financing.

Liberalisation: sought to dismantle the restrictive economic controls that had characterised India's economy since independence. It involved the removal of industrial licensing requirements in most sectors, except for a few like defence and hazardous chemicals. Trade barriers were significantly reduced by lowering import tariffs and eliminating export subsidies, fostering a more open economy. The financial sector underwent significant changes, with private and foreign banks allowed to operate, while interest rates were deregulated to promote efficiency

Ptivatisation: was aimed at reducing the financial and managerial burden on the government by transferring ownership or management of public sector enterprises (PSEs) to private players. This was carried out through disinvestment, where the government diluted its stake in enterprises like Hindustan Zinc and Maruti Suzuki. Ptivatisation was also expected to inject efficiency, enhance productivity and attract investment into these sectors.

Globalisation: another cornerstone of SAPs, emphasized integrating the Indian economy with global markets. This involved relaxing restrictions on foreign direct investment (FDI), allowing foreign capital and technology into critical industries like telecommunications, information technology and infrastructure. Exchange rate reforms facilitated a transition to a market-determined system, ensuring greater flexibility in managing external trade and financial flows.

4.1.1.2 Impact of Structural Adjustments in India

The structural adjustment policies (SAPs) implemented in India in 1991 brought significant transformation to the economy, addressing a severe balance of payments crisis and transitioning the country towards a market-oriented economic framework. While the reforms succeeded in achieving many macroeconomic objectives, they also had profound social, economic and environmental consequences.

Positive Impacts

♦ The most notable achievement of structural adjustments was the acceleration of economic growth. After the reforms, India's GDP growth rate rose to an average of 6–7% annually in the 1990s and the early 2000s. Liberalisation opened up sectors like information technology and pharmaceuticals, which became critical engines of growth, contributing significantly to exports and job creation in urban areas.

♦ Foreign investment surged as India adopted investor-friendly policies, reducing regulatory hurdles and

offering incentives for foreign direct investment (FDI). Major multinational corporations entered sectors such as telecommunications, automotive manufacturing and consumer goods, enhancing technology transfer and global integration. The financial sector also experienced modernisation, with the deregulation of interest rates and the establishment of institutions like the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), promoting transparency and efficiency.

♦ *Accelerated GDP growth, Privatisation and Liberalisation*

- Trade reforms had a profound impact, shifting India's economic orientation toward export-led growth. The IT and services sector, in particular, flourished, helping India emerge as a global outsourcing hub. The relaxation of industrial licensing and the reduction of import tariffs allowed domestic industries to compete more effectively on a global scale.

- Ptivatisation of public sector enterprises improved efficiency in several cases, reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies and fostering a more competitive economic environment. Disinvestment in industries such as steel and telecommunications allowed for modernization and growth.

Negative Impacts: Social and Economic Challenges

- Despite these achievements, the structural adjustments also led to significant disparities. Economic liberalisation disproportionately benefited urban areas and industries with global competitiveness, leaving rural and agricultural sectors relatively underdeveloped. Rural distress became a pressing issue as reduced agricultural subsidies and minimal public investment exacerbated the vulnerabilities of small farmers. This distress was evident in the stagnation of agricultural growth and increasing indebtedness among farmers.

- The reforms also brought a phenomenon often described as "jobless growth." While economic growth surged, employment generation in the formal sector failed to keep pace. Automation and the focus on capital-intensive industries limited job opportunities, leaving a significant portion of the workforce in the informal sector, which lacked job security and social protection.

♦ *Rural distress, Jobless growth and income inequality*

- Income inequality widened, with the benefits of economic growth concentrated among the urban elite and those in high-growth industries like IT and finance. Marginalised groups, including women and socially

disadvantaged communities, often faced limited access to the opportunities created by liberalisation.

♦ Public spending on social sectors like health and education declined due to fiscal austerity measures. This reduced government expenditure left critical services underfunded, adversely affecting the most vulnerable sections of society. The decline in public healthcare and education quality further deepened existing inequalities.

4.1.2 New Economic Policy

♦ 1991 New Economic Policy shifted to market reforms

The New Economic Policy of July 1991 was a turning point in the Indian Economy. In place of the hitherto planned economy. India adopted market-oriented strategies to deal with massive economic problems. The New Economic Policy contains a) short-term fiscal corrections: massive external borrowing, devaluation of the Indian Rupee, cut in government expenditure and b) structural adjustments; deregulation, decontrol and privatisation of enterprises. The success of these measures would depend on important implicit assumptions and the trickle-down effects of various policies to deal with serious economic problems.

4.1.2.1 The Economic Crisis in 1991

♦ Economic mismanagement led to financial crisis

The origin of India's financial crisis can be traced to economic mismanagement in the 1980s, which led to rising budget deficits by 1990-91. The government borrowed extensively to cover deficits, increasing both domestic and international debt. The revenue deficit, which was minimal in 1980-81, surged to 3.51% of GDP in 1990-91. This was mainly due to growing expenditures on unproductive areas like interest payments and subsidies. The deficits fuelled inflation, with prices soaring, particularly in food items, harming the weaker sections of society. The balance of payments crisis in 1991 was exacerbated by rising external debt and declining aid, leading to high borrowing costs. By June 1991, India faced the threat of default, with foreign exchange reserves plummeting, prompting the government to pledge 46 tons of gold to secure loans.

4.1.2.2 New Economic Policy

Some of the above dangerous signals in the national economy prompted the Indian Finance Minister to acknowledge in his budget speech in July 1991 that his government "inherited an economy in deep crisis."

A. Stabilisation Policies

1. Fiscal Correction

An important element in the stabilisation efforts was to restore fiscal discipline. The government has set before itself the medium-term objective of reducing substantially the central government fiscal deficit to about 3 to 4 percent of GDP. The government expenditure is to be reduced through slashing subsidies on exports and fertilizer as well as the steps to be taken to keep non-plan expenditures: for example, defence expenditure, in check. The Central Government budget for 1992-93 has carried forward the fiscal adjustment program with the overall deficit to decline to 5 percent of the GDP. 10 Apart from a reduction in government expenditure, additional tax revenues will be raised through comprehensive tax reforms including simplification and rationalization of the tax structure and also widening its base.

2. Balance of Payments Financing

Expecting that the above measures of fiscal correction and structural reforms will bring about an improvement in the balance of payments in the medium term, some short-run steps were taken to finance the substantial balance of payments deficit facing the country. As already stated, the government sought support from international financial institutions, the IMF, the World Bank and bilateral donors. In July-September 1990, India withdrew the reserve tranche (RT) of the SDR 490 million. (Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) are an asset, though not money in the classic sense because they can't be used to buy things. The value of an SDR is based on a basket of the world's five leading currencies – the US dollar, euro, yuan, yen and the UK pound.)

In December 1990, the government applied for the first credit trance (FCT) of SDR 552 million and negotiated drawals under the contingency compensatory finance facility (CCFF) which totalled SDR 1.352 billion between January and September 1991. In addition, India had drawn a total of SDR 270 million under the upper credit tranche stand-by arrangement and a further SDR 461 million was to be disbursed in April 1992.

A Structural Adjustment Loan of $500 million was negotiated with the World Bank of which $300 million had been withdrawn. Additional short-term loans were to be attained from the Asian Development Bank and other bilateral donors. Further steps to supplement balance of payments financing: The floating of the India Development Bonds directed at Non-Resident Indians and the Immunity Scheme for funds held abroad, were taken. The India Development Bond mobilized 1.6 billion and the Immunity

Scheme $793 million by March 1992.

India continues to negotiate more funds from the World Bank, IMF and other international financial institutions. As of December 1992, India has received loans and credit of over $35 billion from the World Bank alone, making her one of the largest borrowers from the World Bank Group. The total outstanding external debt of India increased from $20 billion in 1980-81 to $71.5 billion in 1991-92: a massive 257 percent increase during a decade.

♦ *India became a major World Bank borrower*

For a lasting solution to the balance of payments problem steps would be planned for substantial improvements in the country's export performance. During the coming 4 to 8 years period, however, some adjustments are called for: (1) Reduction in domestic excess demand through anti-inflationary fiscal and monetary policies. Care will, however, be taken to ensure that any reduction in aggregate demand is brought about without hurting production and it is shared by different economic classes in the country. (2) Enhanced Competitiveness: through a change in the exchange rate of the rupee: 18 percent downward adjustment in the external value of the rupee in July 1991, phasing down of import restrictions and reduction in high-level protection.

♦ *Export boost, demand control, rupee devaluation planned*

Further reduction in the exchange rate of the rupee against the US Dollar was announced in December 1992. (3) Simplification of administrative procedures governing controls over imports and exports including custom procedures. Trade and customs classification of goods were harmonised in October 1991. Further steps were taken to simplify administrative procedures to make international trade as easy as domestic trade. (4) Increase technological and managerial capability for self-improvement to compete in the world market for India's agricultural and industrial products.

♦ *Rupee devaluation, trade simplification, global competitiveness*

3. Monetary Reforms

The long-term objective of the monetary policy would be to promote the operational efficiency of the financial system and develop the money market. Simultaneously, steps will be taken to support the cohesive package of measures of macroeconomic stabilisation and structural reforms initiated by the government as a part of the New Economic Policy. Credit Policy measures include the following: First, for import containment through non-discretionary measures, cash margins will be imposed and also cost of import finance will be increased through the imposition of a 25 percent interest rate surcharge.

♦ *Monetary policy for stabilisation*

Secondly, a tight money and credit regime will be adopted to contain the current account deficit on the balance of payments and

reduce the fiscal deficit. Thirdly, new monetary instruments: 364 days Treasury bills and 15-year and 10-year dated securities, all on an auction basis, have been introduced for reforming the financial sector and meeting the government's increasing financial needs from the government securities market. Further rationalisation of lending rates and substantial freedom given to banks to determine deposit maturities and deposit rates also constitute a part of the reform programme.

♦ Rupee devaluation, trade simplification, global competitiveness

B. Structural Adjustments

These policies include various measures aiming at structural reforms in trade, industrial and public sectors. The objective is to increase competitive strength in the industrial economy: evolve an industrial and trade policy framework to promote efficiency, reduce the bias in favour of excessive capital intensity and encourage an employment-oriented pattern of industrialisation.

♦ Structural reforms to boost industry and trade

1. Trade Policy Reforms

These reforms intend to create a necessary climate to stimulate exports and reduce the degree of regulations and licensing control on foreign trade. The exchange rate adjustment of 18 percent in the value of the rupee was made to provide stimulus to exports.

1) A large part of the administered licensing of imports was replaced by import entitlement linked to export earnings. These import entitlements renamed Exim scrips would be freely tradable and attract a premium in the market. Most exports can be traded at the rate of 30 percent of Exim scrips but in the case of some exports, the rate was higher.

2) The advanced Licensing system for export was simplified to improve exporters' access to imported inputs at duty-free rates.

3) Permission to import capital goods was given without clearance from the indigenous availability angle provided that this import was fully covered by foreign equity or was up to 25 percent of the value of plant and machinery, subject to a maximum of Rs.2 crore.

♦ Simplification of trade policy

4) Export and Trading Housing and Star Trading House were permitted on a larger range of imports. Fiftyone (51) percent foreign equity is also now allowed in the Trading House.

5) The scope of canalisation for both exports and imports was narrowed.

6) Actual user requirements for the import of capital goods, raw materials and components under OGL were removed; and

7) Established exporters are now permitted to maintain foreign currency accounts and to raise external credits to finance their trade transactions.

2. Industrial Policy Reforms

To consolidate the gains already achieved during the 1990s and to provide greater competitive stimulus to the domestic industry, a series of reforms was introduced in the Industrial Policy. The new industrial policy of 24 July 1991 sought substantially to deregulate industry to promote the growth of a more efficient and competitive industrial economy. Industrial policy reforms announced in July 1991 should be seen as being complementary to those undertaken in trade and fiscal policies and in the management of the exchange rate and the financial sector. The central elements of these reforms were as follows:

1. Industrial licensing was abolished for all products except in 18 industries where strategic environmental concerns are paramount or where industries produce goods with exceptionally high import contents. With this, 80 percent of the industry has been taken out of the licensing framework.

2. The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act was amended to eliminate the need for prior approval by large companies for capacity expansion or diversification. This will enable Indian firms to become large enough to compete effectively in global markets.

3. The requirement of a phased manufacturing programme was discontinued for all new projects.

4. Areas reserved for the public sector were narrowed down and greater participation by the private sector was permitted in core and basic industries. In place of the 17 areas earlier reserved for investment by the public sector, only 8 areas are now reserved. These eight areas are mainly those involving strategic and security concerns.

5. Government clearance for the location of projects was dispensed with except in the case of 23 cities with a population of more than one million.

6. Small scale enterprises were given the option to offer up to 44 percent of their shareholdings to large-scale and other industrial undertakings. This will provide them with greater access to capital and technology.

7. Loan agreements of the financial institutions with privately managed firms were earlier required to provide for the right of the financial institutions to convert the loans into equity. In August 1991, these institutions

were permitted not to insist on this provision in future loans unless they felt it necessary for commercial reasons. In December 1991, the institutions were permitted to delete the provision from past loans also subject to a revision of the interest rate where appropriate.

3. Inflow of Direct Foreign Investment

Along with a reform of industrial policies, steps were also taken to facilitate the inflow of direct foreign investment. These non-debt-creating inflows will reduce reliance on fixed interest debt and also bring in new technology, marketing expertise and modern managerial practices. The following measures were taken in this context:

i.   The limit of foreign equity holdings was raised from 40 to 51 percent in a wide range of priority industries. However, foreign exchange outflow on account of dividends on additional equity will be balanced by export earnings. Such foreign equity participation now has automatic approval and is cleared by the Reserve Bank of India.

♦ *Increased FDI inflow*

ii. The procedures for investment in non-priority industries have been streamlined. The Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) has been established to negotiate with large international firms and to expedite the clearances required. The FIPB also considers individual cases involving foreign equity participation over 51 percent.

iii. Technology imports for priority industries are automatically approved for royalty payments up to 5 percent of domestic sales and 8 percent of export sales or for lump sum payment of Rs.1 crore.

4. Public Sector Reforms

♦ *Public sector autonomy and partial disinvestment introduced*

To enable the public sector to work efficiently, the public sector units have been given greater autonomy in their operations. A system of full responsibility and complete accountability will be enforced on public sector management. In 1991 - 92, the Government undertook a limited disinvestment of a part of public sector equity to the public through public financial institutions and mutual funds in order to raise non-inflationary finance for development.

♦ *Disinvestment, accountability and PSU restructuring introduced*

The disinvestment will also bring in greater public accountability and help to create a new culture of operational efficiency in their work. Recognising that sickness is a serious problem in many public sector units, the government amended the Sick Industrial Companies Act to bring public sector undertakings also within its purview. This makes public sector units subject to the same

discipline as private sector units including reference to the BIFR for identification of a viable restructuring package or closure as the case may be.

After the announcement of the New Economic Policy in 1991, the Government of India submitted a memorandum in June 1992 supplementing and / or modifying the earlier announced conditions and policies outlined above. Based on this memorandum, the IMF agreed to release the bulk instalment of $2.2 billion into an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility by November 1992.

Some important provisions in the Memorandum are (i) The rate of growth of inflation has been set at 8 percent for 1992 - 93 against 6 percent targeted earlier. (ii) The government to refrain from imposing new restrictions on imports as well as on payments and transfers from the current international transactions during the program. (iii) The government will intensify the process of liberalisation during 1992 - 93 through (a) enhancing government tax revenues by broadening the base of indirect taxes and gradually moving towards a system of value-added taxation, (b) the disinvestment programme of the public sector will be extended in 1992 - 93 with several units going beyond 20 percent and up to 49 percent. The disinvestment policies include sale of shares to workers and new scrips offerings on the stock market.

On September 14, 1992, the Government of India announced permission to Foreign Institutional Investors (FII) such as pension funds and mutual funds to invest in all the securities traded on the primary and secondary markets, including the equity and securities / investments of companies listed on the Indian Stock Exchange. These would include shares, debentures, warrants and the schemes floated by domestic mutual funds. It is hoped that this rather important step would give a boost to the inflow of foreign capital and also mark a major step towards globalisation of the Indian Economy.

All the above elements in new economic policies are, in popular language, known as "liberalisation," "privatisation," "globalisation," "deregulation" and "decontrols." Adoption of such policies has become rather common in most economies in the East and West, developed and developing and in the market as well as in the erstwhile socialist economies. To some extent, the adoption of such policies is explained by the ineffectiveness of the control regimes: growing losses in the public sector, increasing intervention and participation by the government in national economies and slow progress to achieve economic goals.

♦ *The IMF approved $2.2 billion under the adjustment facility*

♦ *Inflation target, import liberalisation, expanded disinvestment*

♦ *FIIs allowed investing, boosting foreign capital inflow*

♦ *Liberalisation, ptivatisation and globalisation reshape economic policies*

4.1.3 NITI Aayog and Shift in the Concept of Planning

4.1.3.1 Relevance of Planning Commission

In the post-liberalisation period, the concept of planning itself has changed. India moved, at best, to an era of indicative planning. The blend of public and private investment has tilted in favour of the private sector. While planning of the type India had in the first five decades after Independence has no relevance; an organisation to look at the basic issues confronting the economy and preparing a broad framework on how long-term issues can be resolved, is still a necessity. While the state may play a diminishing role, it still plays a critical role in the economy. In the infrastructure sector, it still has a dominant role. If the centre and states agree on a broad framework through discussions, it would facilitate the adoption of better policies. Such an organisation will be something more than a think tank.

Through a broad range of discussions, it should prepare a roadmap that will be acceptable to both the centre and the states. Thus, the task of preparing a blueprint for the country over a certain period is essential and should continue to be performed. Also, there are issues that cut across ministries, such as energy, transport, water or environment. In terms of policy formulation, this commission can take a holistic view and offer advice.

As India moves ahead, there are critical problems facing the economy. Ensuring a faster rate of economic growth with equality is not an easy task. Environmental considerations have emerged as a serious concern. Therefore, an integrated look at the problems faced by the country is very much required. Thus, there is a need for an organisation to formulate ideas on how to shape the economy over a certain time frame. This task, the newly formed NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) is expected to do.

4.1.3.2 NITI Aayog: Role and Functions

The establishment of the NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) on 1st January 2015 marked a significant shift in India's planning paradigm. It replaced the Planning Commission, a central institution in India's economic planning since its inception in 1950. The abolition of the Planning Commission was driven by growing criticism regarding its centralisation, inefficiency and outdated methodology, which no longer aligned with the demands of a dynamic and liberalised economy.

The Planning Commission's approach was rooted in the Nehruvian vision of state-led development, heavily reliant on five-

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Marginal notes (left column):

♦ *Post-liberalisation planning shifts towards the private sector*

♦ *A strategic planning body is needed to coordinate long-term policies*

♦ *NITI Aayog aims to shape economic growth*

♦ *NITI Aayog replaced the outdated Planning Commission*

year plans to guide India's economic growth. While this strategy initially proved effective in building infrastructure and fostering industrial growth, it became increasingly rigid and detached from the realities of federal governance. The one-size-fits-all approach often ignored regional disparities and state-specific requirements, leading to inefficiencies and friction between the centre and states.

Recognising these shortcomings, the government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi dissolved the Planning Commission and established NITI Aayog. The new institution aimed to modernise planning by fostering cooperative federalism, encouraging innovation and aligning development strategies with global trends and local needs. PMO advised the NITI Aayog to prepare a fifteen year vision, seven year strategy and three year action agenda documents. Accordingly, the three year action agenda recommends policy changes and programmes for action during the years 2017-18 to 2019-20, the last three years of the Fourteenth Finance Commission.

The cabinet resolution lists 13 different tasks for NITI Aayog which may be grouped under four major heads, namely:

i. fostering cooperative federalism by providing structured support to states on a continuous basis;
ii. formulation of a strategic vision and long term policies and programme framework both for the macro economy and for different sectors;
iii. acting as a knowledge and innovation hub and providing research inputs by undertaking and accessing globally available research; and
iv. providing a platform for interdepartmental coordination.

4.1.3.3 Functions of NITI Aayog

♦ **Cooperative and Competitive Federalism**: Be the primary platform for operationalising Cooperative Federalism; enabling states to have active participation in the formulation of national policy, as well as achieving time bound implementation of quantitative and qualitative targets through the combined authority of the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers. This will be by means of systematic and structured interactions between the Union and State Governments, to better understand developmental issues, as well as forge a consensus on strategies and implementation mechanisms. The above would mark the replacement of the one-way flow of policy from centre-to-state, with a genuine and

continuing Centre-State partnership. This Cooperation would be further enhanced by the vibrancy of Competitive Federalism; with the Centre competing with the States and vice versa and the States competing with each other, in the joint pursuit of national development.

♦ **Shared National Agenda:** Evolve a shared vision of national development priorities and strategies, with the active involvement of States. This will provide the framework "national agenda" for the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers to implement.

♦ **State's Best Friend at the Centre**: Support States in addressing their own challenges, as well as building on strengths and comparative advantages. This will be through various means, such as coordinating with Ministries, championing their ideas at the centre, providing consultancy support and building capacity.

♦ **Decentralised Planning**: Restructure the planning process into a bottom-up model, empowering States and guiding them to further empower local governments; in developing mechanisms to formulate credible plans at the village level, which are progressively aggregated up the higher levels of government.

♦ **Vision & Scenario Planning:** Design medium and long-term strategic frameworks of the big picture vision of India's future - across schemes, sectors, regions and time; factoring in all possible alternative assumptions and counter factuals. These would be the drivers of the national reform agenda, especially focussed on identifying critical gaps and harnessing untapped potentialities. The same would need to be intrinsically dynamic with their progress and efficacy constantly monitored for necessary mid-course recalibration and the overall environment (domestic and global) continuously scanned for incorporating evolving trends and addressing emerging challenges. The above would mean a fundamental transition from merely planning for where the Nation's money goes, to planning where we want the Nation to go. Given its unique position as the aggregator and integrator of all developmental initiatives of the Government of India and States, the NITI Aayog would be ideally suited for the same.

♦ **Domain Strategies:** Build a repository of specialised domain expertise, both sectoral and cross-sectoral; to assist Ministries of the Central and State governments in their respective development planning as well as problem-solving needs. This will especially enable the

♦ *NITI Aayog fosters cooperative and competitive federalism*

imbibing the best practices of good governance, both national and international; especially regarding structural reforms.

♦ **Knowledge and Innovation hub**: Be an accumulator as well as disseminator of research and best practices on good governance, through a state-of-the-art Resource Centre which identifies, analyses, shares and facilitates replication of the same.

♦ **Harmonisation:** Facilitate harmonisation of actions across different layers of government, especially when involving cross-cutting and overlapping issues across multiple sectors; through communication, coordination, collaboration and convergence amongst all stakeholders. The emphasis will be on bringing all together on an integrated and holistic approach to development.

♦ **Conflict Resolution:** Provide a platform for mutual resolution of inter-sectoral, inter-departmental, inter-state and centre-state issues; facilitate consensus acceptable and beneficial to all, to bring about clarity and speed in execution.

♦ **Coordinating interface with the World**: Be the nodal point for strategically harnessing global expertise and resources coming in from across nations, multilateral institutions and other international organisations in India's developmental process.

♦ **Internal Consultancy**: Offer an internal consultancy function to central and state governments on policy and programme design; providing frameworks adhering to basic design principles such as decentralisation, flexibility and a focus on results. This would include specialised skills such as structuring and executing Public Private Partnerships.

♦ **Capacity building:** Enable capacity building and technology up-gradation across government, benchmarking with the latest global trends and providing managerial and technical know-how.

♦ **Monitoring and Evaluation**: Monitor the implementation of policies and programmes and evaluate their impact; through rigorous tracking of performance metrics and comprehensive program evaluations. This will not only help identify weaknesses and bottlenecks for necessary course correction but also enable data-driven policy-making; encouraging greater efficiency as well as effectiveness.

♦ *NITI Aayog plans India's long-term strategic vision*

4.1.4 Demonetisation

4.1.4.1 Definition of Demonetisation

Demonetisation is a monetary policy where a certain currency unit ceases to be used as a form of legal tender. Further, it is an act of stripping a currency unit of its status as legal tender. Governments make decisions to stop the circulation of some denominations or completely replace old currency for various reasons. During the demonetisation process demonetised currency is withdrawn from circulation, deposited in banks and replaced by currency that is in circulation or with new currency. Demonetisation is also referred to as the process of moving people from a cash-based transaction system to a cashless transaction system.

Nowadays governments and financial institutions discourage people from keeping hard cash as it helps in evading tax, reducing the deposit base of financial institutions and may increase public debt. In this regard, demonetisation has been defined as ending something that is no longer legal tender in a country or when a currency note of a particular denomination ceases to be legal tender. Generally, demonetisation is implemented for various reasons such as combating inflation, removing corruption and criminal activities (counterfeiting, tax evasion), discouraging a cash dependent economy, facilitating trade and controlling the circulation of black money and other unaccounted money. Demonetisation is a process with multi-dimensional impacts on all groups i.e., households, manufacturing, services *etc*. in the economy, covering both formal and informal sectors

4.1.4.2 Demonetisation in India

The formal announcement of demonetisation of high denomination notes of Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000 worth nearly 15.4 trillion, constituting about 87 percent of the currency in circulation, took place on November 8, 2016. The move aimed at curbing corruption, black money, eliminating counterfeit currency and terrorism funding. Alongside, the move aimed at the promotion of a cashless economy mainly through digitisation, converting the informal economy to a formal one, increasing the scope for financial inclusion, enhancement of financial savings, the larger scope for strengthening of treasury accounts of the Government, ultimately to be utilised for development finance *etc*.

India has tendered high denomination notes illegal and supplied fresh notes of Rs. 500 and introduced new currency notes of Rs. 2000. The biggest objective of demonetisation is linked to unearthing black money and corruption. As of now the journey of the government towards curbing black money and corruption

♦ *Demonetisation removes old currency from circulation*

♦ *Demonetisation curbs black money and promotes cashless economy*

♦ *India's 2016 demonetisation targeted black money and digitization*

such as the Income Declaration Scheme (IDS) in the Budget for 2016-17, the August 2016 amendment of the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act of 1988 and the reforms in indirect taxes in the form of GST are isolated measures, but collectively create the massive scope for addressing the two problems

The evaluation of demonetisation from the perspective of only the black money is partial as the move has multi-fold targets such as giving a boost to the tax base, financial inclusion, a cashless economy *etc*. In this regard, calling the demonetisation move a failure based on recovery of all stated amounts of high denomination notes needs to be understood with other targets.

The other likely benefits such as a rise in the number of taxpayers, tax collection amount, less cash economy, revival in investment under surplus liquidity, fulfilling the capital requirements of banks under Basel III and balance to bubbles in asset prices are equally important. After examining the statistics related to income, it was concluded that the number of persons filing income tax returns as well as income tax has increased substantially. Moreover, about 1.8 million bank accounts are under probe and the unusual cash deposits of Rs 1.6 - 1.7 lakh crores during the demonetisation period are under the lens of the Government.

The demonetisation move might have added an extra burden on RBI, but the cost of shortfall of capital in the Indian banking industry under the international accord of Basel III is of utmost importance, which can be managed through surplus balance with the central bank. Even the asset side of RBI has risen on the grounds of an increase in foreign investments and domestic investments by 2.70 percent and 7.45 percent, respectively. Here, the potential impact on investment revival in coming years through increased credit is yet to be confirmed. Also, the surmountable printed cash to GDP ratio has been a major challenge for the Indian economy to safeguard itself from asset bubbles. This would have been like what happened in the U. S. A. during 2004 - 2008 amid reckless lending.

Some academics have argued that demonetisation acted as a safeguard for the Indian economy against the excessive flow of cash into the economy which rendered the hike in asset prices well above the real behaviour. This side has been completely overlooked in the current debate about the effectiveness of the move. In this regard, the demonetisation is a move towards a cashless economy and mainly a push to digital transactions. Alongside, the rise in bank deposits is obvious. People's deposits in the banks went up from Rs 97 lakh crores to Rs 114.2 lakh crores.

♦ *Demonetisation aimed to tackle black money and corruption*

♦ *Demonetisation boosted tax base and financial inclusion*

♦ *Demonetisation impacted RBI but boosted investments and credit*

♦ *Demonetisation controlled excess cash flow and boosted deposits*

4.1.4.3 Advantages of Demonetisation

1. A major advantage is that demonetisation helped the government track black money. Large sums of black money were kept hidden by tax evaders. Demonetisation helped the government uncover huge amounts of unaccounted cash. According to estimates made by RBI, people have deposited more than 3 lakh crores rupees worth of black money in their bank accounts. This has helped the government in slowing down the plague of parallel economy.

2. A major reason behind demonetisation was that a big part of black money was being used for funding terrorism and gambling, in inflating the price of major asset classes like real estate, gold and other social evils. Demonetisation is acting as an effective countermeasure against such activities. Now all such activities will be reduced for some time and also it will take years for people to generate that amount of black money again; hence in a way it helps put an end to this circle of people doing illegal activities to earn black money and using that black money to do more illegal activities.

3. Another benefit is that due to people disclosing their income by depositing money in their bank accounts government gets a good amount of tax revenue which can be used by the government towards the betterment of society by providing good infrastructure, hospitals, educational institutions, roads and many facilities for the poor and needy sections of society

4.1.4.4 Disadvantages of Demonetisation

1. The biggest disadvantage of demonetisation has been the chaos and frenzy it created among common people initially. Everyone was rushing to get rid of demonetised notes while an inadequate supply of new notes affected the day-to-day budgets of citizens. Banks and ATMs witnessed long queues while small businesses suffered temporary financial losses. The situation was even worse in rural India where people struggled to exchange and withdraw cash due to the lack of enough banks and ATMs in their vicinity.

2. Another disadvantage is that the destruction of old currency units and printing of new currency units involve costs that have to be borne by the government and if the costs are higher than the benefits, there is no use of demonetisation.

♦ *Demonetisation exposed black money and curbed the parallel economy*

♦ *Demonetisation disrupted black money funding illegal activities*

♦ *Demonetisation increased tax revenue for public welfare*

♦ *Inadequate supply, high cost of printing and failure to curb black money*

3. Another problem is that this move was targeted towards black money but many people who had not kept cash as their black money and rotated or used that money in other asset classes like real estate, gold and so on were not affected by demonetisation

4.1.5 Farm Laws

In 2020, the Union Government promulgated three new farm bills; they were legislated into Acts by the Indian parliament in September of that year and then signed by the President of India. These three Acts are the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act 2020, the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services for Agriculture Act 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020.

They are considered to be the most prominent structural reforms in Indian agriculture in the last few decades. The broad objective of these Acts is to address the structural weaknesses inherent in the sale, marketing and stocking of agri-produce in the regulated / wholesale markets being governed under the aegis of the Agriculture Produce Committee Act (APMC) 1961 and the Essential Commodity Act 1955. Setting up privately owned markets parallel to the existing APMC markets and initiating contract farming and other provisions in the ordinances are expected to enhance competition, investment and innovation and provide farmers with a wider array of choices to enable them to realise better prices for their produce.

Since agriculture is a subject on the state list of the Constitution of India, the states are expected to amend the rules, procedures and codes of conduct for trade in consonance with the provisions laid down by the new national central laws. Their enactment, however, has provoked serious discussion, criticism and even protest to the extent that, in January 2021, the Supreme Court had to intervene and constitute a three-member committee. The Committee was assigned the task of looking into the implications of these laws for farmers' welfare, the agricultural economy and other crucial aspects. Meanwhile, the members of various farmers' unions, as well as many APMC market (mandi) traders continued to protest and demanded that these laws be revoked

4.1.5.1 Implication of New Farm Laws

Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Law 2020

This Law states that farmers are now free to sell all their products anywhere and to anyone beyond the physical premises of APMC

markets or other markets notified under the state APMC Laws, unlike earlier when they were required to sell these only in the designated 7,300 odd Mandis and to traders who were licensed to buy (the select) farm products there. Also, unlike earlier, the new law permits trading in an "outside-trade area" like farm gates, factory premises, warehouses, silos and cold storages within or outside the state. The Law further permits electronic trading of farmers' produce in specified trade areas, facilitating direct and online buying and selling of such produce through electronic devices and the Internet.

In short, the Law is expected to promote barrier-free, inter-state and intra-state trade of farmers' produce, reduce marketing / transportation costs, help farmers get the best-prevailing prices and provide a facilitative framework for electronic trading. It is believed that the Law will facilitate lucrative prices for farmers through competitive alternative trading channels for promoting barrier-free inter-state and intra-state trade of agricultural goods

Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Law and Farm Services Law, 2020

The Farmers Agreement Law creates a framework for contract-farming through an agreement between a farmer and a buyer, before the production or rearing of any farm produce (including livestock). Farmers could enter into agreements with any large buyers: food-processing companies, large retailers and exporters for the supply of farm produce at pre-agreed prices. In case of dispute, it provides for a three-level dispute settlement mechanism: The Conciliation Board, Sub-divisional Magistrate / Collector and the Appellate Authority.

Farming Agreement: The Law provides for drawing up a legal agreement between the farmer and the buyer before the production (or rearing) of any farm produce, containing clauses on the quality and quantity of sale, financial agreement and other clauses. The minimum period of an agreement will be one crop season or one production cycle of livestock. The maximum period is five years unless the production cycle of the crop is more than five years (as is the case of some fruit trees).

Pricing the farming produce: The sale price of farm produce is to be mentioned in the agreement. A guaranteed price for the product and a clear reference for any additional amount above the guaranteed price must be specified in the agreement. Further, the process of price determination must be transparent and mentioned in the agreement.

♦ *Farmers can sell produce freely beyond APMC markets*

♦ *Law aims to enable fair, barrier-free trade*

♦ *Law enables contract farming with dispute resolution*

♦ *Law sets contract terms for farm produce agreements*

Dispute Settlement: The agreement must provide for a conciliation process for the settlement of disputes. At first, all disputes must be referred to a Board for Resolution. If the dispute remains unresolved by the Board after 30 days, parties may approach the Sub-divisional Magistrate (SDM). Parties will also have a right to appeal to an Appellate Authority (presided by the Collector or Additional Collector), against the decisions of the SDM. Both, the Magistrate and Appellate Authority will be required to dispose of a dispute within 30 days from the receipt of the application. The Magistrate or the Appellate Authority may impose certain penalties on the party contravening the agreement. However, no action can be taken against the agricultural land of the farmer for recovery of any dues.

The Law puts forth a framework that would enable farmers to engage with agribusiness companies (including FDI companies), retailers and exporters for service and sale of the produce, while also giving the farmer access to modern technologies and crop varieties. Also, the Bill removes items such as cereals and pulses from the list of essential commodities, permitting contract trade in them as well. In principle, contract farming assures the farmers have a market at a predetermined price, relieving them of market or price uncertainties. This is somewhat like the AMUL model, though not quite the same, since the AMUL model bases itself on collectives of milk producers rather than individual farmers and the buyers too are cooperatives rather than corporate entities. In fact, these two differences make the law seemingly similar, but fundamentally different from AMUL.

The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Law, 2020

This Law is an extension of the Essential Commodities Law of 1955, which regulated how much produce could be stored and sold.

Regulation of food items in the new law: The Essential Commodities Law of 1955 empowered the Central Government to designate certain commodities (such as food items, fertilisers and petroleum products) as essential commodities, which it could regulate and prohibit their production, supply, distribution, trade and commerce. The New Law of 2020 has opened up the market with no restrictions under normal conditions. It pronounces that only under extraordinary conditions, would the central government regulate the supply of certain food items including cereals, pulses, potatoes, onions, edible oil seeds and oils. These extraordinary conditions include: war, famine, excessive price rise and natural calamity of a grave nature.

♦ *Law mandates dispute resolution through conciliation and appeals*

♦ *Law enables contract farming with market assurance*

♦ *New law limits food regulation to emergencies*

Stock limit: The earlier stipulation of stock limits is withdrawn. The new Law requires that the imposition of any stock limit on agricultural produce must be based on price rise. A stock limit may be imposed only if there is:

♦ 100 per cent increase in the retail price of horticultural produce and
♦ 50 per cent increase in the retail price of non-perishable agricultural food items.

The increase will be calculated over the price prevailing during the immediately preceding 12 months or the average retail price of the last five years, whichever is lower.

Taken together, the new marketing and pricing reforms promulgated are expected to loosen the rules around the sale, pricing and storage of farm produce; rules which partly helped usher in the green revolution, but have outlived their utility. The new laws permit farmers to sell their produce at the market price, directly to private players, be they agri-businesses, supermarket chains, online grocers or any other; outline rules for contract farming where farmers tailor their production to suit a specific buyer's demand and also allow private buyers to hoard essential commodities for future sales, which earlier only government-authorised agents could do. In short, the three laws aim to increase the number of buyers for farmers' produce by allowing them to trade freely without any license, stock limit or borders.

♦ New laws expand farmer market access and pricing freedom

4.1.5.2 Mass protests against the Laws

Mass protests against the reforms started at the end of November 2020, with the biggest protests centred on the capital New Delhi. Delhi is adjacent to the state of Haryana, whose farmer's organisations, along with those from the state of Punjab, have been among the most vocal in their criticism of the reforms. These are two of the major agricultural-producing states and are also said to be among the biggest beneficiaries of the current system of agricultural subsidies and price controls.

♦ Mass farmer protests erupted, led by Punjab and Haryana

Police from Haryana tried to prevent protestors from entering the city by erecting barriers at the border. Police were also reported to have used tear gas and water cannons on protestors trying to enter Delhi. On 27 November the police allowed protestors into the city escorting farmers to a protest site. However, this was only a temporary change of approach and by the beginning of December thousands of protestors remained massed on the outskirts of the capital, their entry blocked by the police. Early in December a nationwide strike was called in support of the farmers, leading to severe road and rail traffic disruptions.

♦ Police blocked farmers; protests led to nationwide strike

On 26 January 2021, during the annual parade celebrating India's Republic Day, some protesting farmers using tractors broke through police barricades to storm Delhi's Red Fort complex. Clashes broke out with police, leading to the death of one protestor and injury to more than 300 policemen. Leaders of the protests condemned the violence, blaming the chaos on "rogue elements" in an otherwise peaceful march.

♦ Republic Day protests turned violent; leaders condemned chaos

In mid-April, Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar requested protesting farmer union leaders to call off their demonstrations, to prevent a major outbreak of the disease at the three main protest sites near Delhi.

Protest leaders responded that they had followed guidelines and had no plans to abandon their protests. Rakesh Tikait, a prominent leader of one of the largest farmers' unions, said the protest leaders had drawn up plans to stay put "until at least November and December, or even beyond that if the government doesn't listen to us by then." Another prominent farmers' leader from Punjab, Ramandeep Singh Mann, accused the Government of hypocrisy, stating: "the ruling party marshalled large crowds at its political rallies during recent state assembly elections and it should practise what it preaches."

♦ Farmers refused to end protests, citing government hypocrisy

4.1.5.3 Government offers concessions

In early December 2020, the Government was reported to have offered several concessions to farmers. It offered to amend the laws in some areas, though said it would not scrap them as many farmers have demanded. It also said it assured that the MSP regime would continue, though it does not appear to offer to put this guarantee on a legal basis. Farmer unions rejected these concessions and it was reported that Opposition leaders including Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the Congress Party, had backed them in their demands to fully repeal the laws. Mr Gandhi reiterated opposition claims that there was no consultation with them on the Bills as they passed through Parliament. On 21 January the BBC reported that the Government offered to suspend the laws for 18 months. The Farmers' unions rejected this offer also saying they wanted the laws fully repealed.

♦ Government offered amendments; farmers demanded full repeal

4.1.5.4 Supreme Court suspends the laws

On 12 January 2021, India's Supreme Court ruled that the three Acts be suspended and that a four person committee be formed to look into farmers' grievances over the laws. The justices said they were "extremely disappointed" with how negotiations between the Government and activists had gone. The judges also expressed concern at the lack of consultation with farmers when passing the law.

♦ Supreme Court intervention

The Court ordered a committee of the following four individuals:

1. Shri Bhupinder Singh Mann, National President, Bhartiya Kisan Union and All India Kisan Coordination Committee (the Bhartiya Kisan Union is an organisation representing farmers);

2. Dr Parmod Kumar Joshi, Agricultural Economist, Director for South Asia, International Food Policy Research Institute;

3. Shri Ashok Gulati, Agricultural Economist and Former Chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices and

4. Shri Anil Ghanwat, President, ShetkariSanghatana .

The Committee submitted its findings to the Court at the end of March. The contents of the report were not made public; however, a covering document was said to have stated that the Committee had consulted with 85 farmer organisations. In February it was reported that the Committee had held discussions with the governments of 18 states including Punjab, Maharashtra, Kerala, Delhi, Karnataka and others.

4.1.5.5 Decision to repeal laws

On 22 July, hundreds of farmers began a sit-in at Jantar Mantar, a large Mughal era observatory near parliament in New Delhi, renewing a push for repeal. Police agreed to allow the demonstration when protestors assured them that they would not march on parliament. They were permitted to remain at the site until 9 August, but only on weekdays. On 5 August, MPs from several opposition parties joined the protestors at Jantar Mantar. On 5 September, the largest rally to date occurred in the state of Uttar Pradesh. More than 500,000 farmers attended the rally in the city of Muzaffarnagar, according to local police. Uttar Pradesh, a predominantly agricultural state, is also India's most populous, home to 240 million people. On 19 November 2021, Narendra Modi announced in a surprise nationally televised address that his government would repeal the farm laws. The PM said the laws were meant to strengthen the small farmers, "but despite several attempts to explain the benefits to the farmers, we have failed." He urged the farmers "to return to their homes, their farms and their families" and requested them "to start afresh."

Some agriculture experts said Modi's reversal was unfortunate because the reforms would have brought new technology and investment. "It's a blow to India's agriculture," said Sandip Das, a New Delhi-based researcher and agricultural policy analyst. "The

laws would have helped attract a lot of investment in agricultural and food processing - two sectors that need a lot of money for modernisation," he said.

4.1.6 Labour Laws

Labour laws in India have evolved through a complex historical trajectory, rooted in colonial rule and shaped by post-independence socio economic reforms. During the British colonial era, labour legislations such as the Factories Act of 1881 and the Mines Act of 1901 were introduced, primarily to safeguard British economic interests rather than the welfare of workers. These laws marked the beginning of formal labour regulations in India but were limited in scope and enforcement. After independence, India's Constitution laid the groundwork for labour welfare through provisions in the Directive Principles of State Policy, emphasising the right to work, humane conditions of work and protection against exploitation. Over the years, numerous labour laws — over 40 central and 100 state level statutes — were enacted to address issues such as wages, industrial disputes, social security and workplace safety.

4.1.6.1 New Labour Codes (2020)

The Second National Commission on Labour which had submitted its Report in June 2002 had recommended that the existing set of labour laws in India should be broadly grouped into four or five categories. More recently, the Global Commission on Future of Work, 2019 constituted by the International Labour Organisation as a part of its centenary, had expressed that there are strong and crucial links between trade, financial, economic and social policies and that the success of human centred growth and development agenda of the nation depend on these policy areas.

To match the emerging requirements of the world of work, make the existing structures of labour governance more worker and employer-friendly, put the economy on a high growth trajectory and ensure inclusive growth, the Ministry of Labour and Employment decided to simplify, rationalise and amalgamate the existing 29 labour laws into Four Codes: Wages, Industrial Relations; Social Security and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions. These Codes have been rolled out after sustained and wide ranging discussions and consultations with various social partners and the state governments. While the Code on Wages was passed by the Parliament in 2019, the other three Codes were passed in September 2020.

♦ *Experts saw repeal as a setback for agricultural modernization and investment*

♦ *Labour laws need restructuring for policy coherence*

♦ *India simplifies 29 labour laws into four codes*

4.1.6.2 Labour Code (Wage Code) 2019- Features

♦ After 73 years of independence, work is being done to provide wage security, social security and health security to 50 crore workers, covering organised and unorganised sectors.

♦ The guarantee of minimum wages is available to 50 crore workers of organised and unorganised sectors.

♦ Review of minimum wages every 5 years.

♦ Guarantee of timely payment of wages to all workers

♦ Equal remuneration to male and female workers.

♦ For the first time, around 40 crore workers of the unorganised sector in the country have got this right.

♦ To remove regional disparity in minimum wages the provision of floor wage has been introduced.

♦ The determination of minimum wages has been made easy. It will be based on criteria such as skill level and geographical area.

♦ From 28.08.2017 Payment of Wages Act has increased the wage ceiling from Rs. 18000 to Rs. 24000

4.1.6.3 Social Security Code, 2020- Features

♦ Through a small contribution, the benefit of free treatment is available under hospitals and dispensaries of ESIC.

♦ The doors of ESIC will now be opened for the workers of all sectors along with the workers of the unorganised sector.

♦ Expansion of ESIC hospitals, dispensaries and branches up to the district level. This facility is to be increased from 566 districts to all the 740 districts of the country.

♦ Even if a single worker is engaged in hasardous work, he would be given ESIC benefit.

♦ Opportunity to join ESIC for platform and gig workers engaged in new technology.

♦ Plantation workers to get the benefit of ESIC.

♦ Institutions working in hazardous areas to be compulsorily registered with ESIC.

Expansion of Social Security

♦ Benefit of pension scheme (EPFO) to all workers of organised, unorganised and self-employed sector.

♦ Creation of a social security fund for providing comprehensive social security to the unorganised sector.

♦ The requirement of minimum service has been removed for payment of gratuity in the case of fixed-term employees.

- Employees engaged on fixed terms to get the same social security benefits as permanent employees.
- Creating a national database of workers of the unorganised sector through registration on Portal.
- Employers employing more than 20 workers to mandatorily report vacancies online.
- A Universal Account Number (UAN) for ESIC, EPFO and Unorganised Sector workers.
- Aadhaar-based Universal Account Number (UAN) to ensure seamless portability.

4.1.6.4 OSH Code (Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code) 2020- Features

- Various provisions in the OSH Code will ease the lives of the Inter-State Migrant Workers.
- Anomalies of the Inter-State Migrant Workers Act of 1979 have been comprehensively addressed in the OSH Code. Earlier only workers appointed by a contractor were recognised as Inter-State Migrant Workers. However, under the new provisions of the Code, workers can be *Aatmanirbhar* as they can now register themselves as Inter-State Migrant Workers on the national portal. By this provision, the worker would get a legal identity which would enable them to get the benefits of all social security schemes.
- A provision has been made for employers to provide a travelling allowance annually to an Inter-State Migrant Worker for undertaking a to-and-fro journey to his native place.
- Providing appointment letters to the workers has been made mandatory.
- Mandatory, free annual health checkups of the workers to be provided by the employers.
- For a worker engaged in building and other construction work in one State and moving to another State, benefit from the building and other Construction Workers' Cess fund will be provided.
- Under the "One Nation – One Ration Card, an Inter-State Migrant Worker would get a ration facility in the State he is working in and the remaining members of his family would be able to avail the ration facility in the State where they reside.
- Mandatory helpline facility in every State for resolution of Inter-State Migrant Workers' grievances.
- National database to be created for the Interstate Migrant Workers.

- Instead of 240 days, now if a worker has worked 180 days, he shall be entitled for one day leave for every 20 days of work done.

Women Empowerment through the Labour Codes

- Right to women workers to work in all types of establishments.
- Women have been given the right to work at night with their consent and it has also been ensured that the employer would make adequate arrangements to provide safety and facilities to women workers at night
- The Maternity Benefit Act was amended in 2017 to increase the paid Maternity leave for women workers from 12 to 26 weeks and ensure mandatory crèche facilities in all establishments having 50 or more workers.

4.1.6.5 Industrial Relations (IR) Code, 2020

- In case of job loss, a worker will get benefits under the *Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna*.
- Under the *Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna*, a worker of the organised sector who loses his job gets financial aid from the Government. This is a type of unemployment allowance, the benefit of which is admissible to the workers covered under the ESI Scheme.
- At the time of retrenchment, a worker would be provided 15 days' wages for re-skilling. The wages would be credited directly into the bank account of the worker to enable him to learn new skills.
- Faster justice to the workers through the Tribunal.
- Workers disputes to be resolved within a year in the Tribunal.
- Industrial Tribunals have 2 members to facilitate faster disposal of cases.
- In industrial establishments, a Trade Union having 51 per cent votes shall be recognised as the sole negotiating union which can make agreements with employers.
- In industrial establishments in which no trade union gets 51 per cent votes, a negotiating council of trade unions shall be constituted for making agreements with employers.

Summarised Overview

This unit explores the transformative economic and policy reforms in India, particularly since the early 1990s. It starts with the New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced in 1991, which marked a pivotal shift towards market-oriented reforms, including trade liberalisation, ptivatisation and deregulation, aimed at overcoming a severe balance of payments crisis. These structural adjustments reshaped India's economic landscape, opening it to global markets and reducing state control. The unit also highlights the formation of NITI Aayog in 2015, which replaced the Planning Commission. NITI Aayog represents a significant change in the concept of planning, focusing on cooperative federalism, decentralized decision-making and sustainable, inclusive growth, marking a departure from the centralised planning model that characterized post-independence economic policies. Another key focus is the Demonetisation policy of 2016, aimed at curbing black money, counterfeit currency and promoting a digital economy. While the policy was touted as a step towards transparency, its impact, particularly on the informal sector, remains controversial.

The Farm Laws of 2020, introduced to modernize agricultural markets and provide farmers with more freedom in trade, triggered mass protests. Critics feared that the laws would erode farmers' incomes and empower large corporations, leading to widespread opposition and eventual repeal. Lastly, the unit delves into the evolution of Labour Laws in post-liberalisation India. Reforms in labour laws seek to strike a balance between labour rights and economic flexibility, aiming to create a more business-friendly environment while addressing concerns over workers' welfare and rights.

Assignments

1. Analyse the impact of the New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1991 on India's economic transformation.

2. Evaluate the role of NITI Aayog in reshaping the concept of planning in India post-2015.

3. Analyse the objectives, implementation challenges and outcomes of Demonetisation

4. Examine the provisions of the Farm Laws and the reasons behind the farmer protests. What do these policies reveal about the intersection of economic reforms and social resistance?

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Suggested Reading

1. Krishan Menon and Ranjana Subberwal, *Social Movements in Contemporary India*, Sage, 2019

2. Patel, Aakar, *Our Hindu Rashtra: What It Is. How We Got Here*, Westland, 2020.

3. Pulapre, Balakrishnan, *Economic Growth and Its Distribution in India*, Orient Blackswan, 2015

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Globalisation and Culture

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ♦ understand the process of cultural homogenisation and the global spread of dominant cultural trends.
- ♦ analyse the concept of "Globalisation" and its role in balancing global influences with local traditions.
- ♦ evaluate the impact of globalisation on the expansion of the middle class, mobility and consumerism
- ♦ examine the influence of globalisation on education, media, social media, family structures and cultural nationalism.

Background

Globalisation, as a multifaceted process, has significantly transformed cultural landscapes across the world, influencing both local and global dimensions of societies. In recent decades, the interaction between global markets, ideas, technologies and cultures has led to profound shifts in traditional cultural practices and the emergence of new forms of cultural expression. One of the prominent features of this transformation is the homogenisation of culture, where dominant global cultural trends, often driven by Western ideals, are spreading across diverse societies. However, this global flow of culture has also led to resistance movements, with various regions and communities asserting their local identities, promoting the preservation of indigenous traditions and customs. This phenomenon of cultural resistance is often reflected in cultural nationalism, where local or national cultures become the focal point for safeguarding heritage against foreign influences.

The concept of "Globalisation" exemplifies this dual process of global integration and local adaptation. Local communities increasingly integrated global ideas and products into their own practices while simultaneously maintaining unique cultural expressions. An example of this can be seen in how global businesses tailor their products to fit local tastes or how local traditions blend with modern global practices. Another significant aspect of Globalisation's impact is the expansion of the middle class, which has brought

about a rise in mobility and consumerism. Economic Globalisation has made previously inaccessible goods and services available to wider sections of society, reshaping lifestyles, consumption patterns and aspirations. In parallel, changes in education reflect the growing importance of globalised curricula and educational exchanges that influence how young people perceive the world and their cultural affiliations. Moreover, the rise of social media and digital platforms has drastically altered the ways people communicate, reinforcing the global spread of culture while also giving voice to local dialects and regional languages. These shifts, coupled with evolving patterns in family and marriage, reflect the ongoing tension between traditional values and the dynamic, ever-changing globalised environment. Cultural nationalism continues to grow as a response to these changes, offering a counterpoint to the pervasive forces of Globalisation.

Keywords

Globalisation, Homogenisation, McDonaldization, Coca-Colonization, Migration, Education, Meida, Glocalisation, Global mobility, Consumerism, Cultural nationalism

Discussion

4.2.1 Globalisation - Definitions

♦ *Globalisation's origins, evolution and varied definitions*

The term Globalisation comes from English, as the base of the word" "Globalisation" refers to the emergence of an international network, belonging to an economic and social system. One of the earliest uses of the term "Globalisation," as known, was in 1930 - in a publication titled "Towards New Education" - to designate an overview of the human experience in education. A near-term "giant corporation" was used in 1897 by Charles Russell Tazel to describe the big national trusts and other large enterprises of the time. From 1960 both terms began to be used interchangeably by economists and researchers in social sciences and were used until about mid-1980. Since the invention of the concept, globalisation has inspired numerous interpretations and definitions and has had a history going back in time to the great commercial and imperialist movements throughout Asia and the Indian Ocean since the fifteenth century. Vladislav Inosemtsev defines globalisation as one of the most popular social studies of today, but is, at the same time, an empty term. It was first mentioned in literature in the mid-1940s, but until the mid-1980s it was mentioned only occasionally.

After the Cold War, the term began to be used to describe the world becoming more interdependent in its economic and informational dimensions. Because of the complexity of the concept, research projects, articles and debates have remained mostly focussed on one aspect of Globalisation. Roland Robertson, a professor of sociology at the University of Aberdeen, was the first person who defined Globalisation as "the understanding of the world and the increased perception of the world as a whole." Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King, sociologists, define Globalisation as "all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society."

Globalisation can be linked to the local, national and regional. On the one hand, a connection is made between social and economic relationships and networks, organised on a local and / or national basis. On the other hand, it connects social and economic relationships and networks crystallised on a wider scale than the regional and global interactions. Globalisation can refer to those spatial - temporal processes of change, which constitute the fundamentals of the transformation of human concerns in an organisation, linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents. Without referring to the expansion in space of the connections, there can be no clear and coherent formulation of the term Globalisation. A satisfactory definition of Globalisation must address each of these items: extension, intensity, celerity and impact.

4.2.2 Homogenisation of Culture and Responses Against It

4.2.2.1 Introduction to Cultural Homogenisation

Cultural homogenisation refers to the process by which diverse cultures lose their distinctive traits, often assimilating into a dominant global culture. This phenomenon is a byproduct of Globalisation, driven by technological advancements, economic integration and transnational cultural exchanges. The terms McDonaldization and Coca-Colonization encapsulate the spread of Western — primarily American — cultural norms, values and consumer products to other parts of the world, often overshadowing indigenous and traditional practices.

4.2.2.2 McDonaldization and Coca-Colonization

George Ritzer's concept of *McDonaldization* highlights the application of principles of fast-food chains — efficiency, calculability, predictability and contro l —to various facets of

♦ *Globalisation links economies, societies and perceptions*

♦ *Globalisation connects local, national and global networks*

♦ *Cultural homogenisation erodes diversity through globalisation*

society. Beyond the food industry, this phenomenon symbolises the standardisation of cultural practices, lifestyle choices and social interactions. For instance, global urban spaces increasingly reflect a uniform aesthetic, characterised by similar shopping malls, fast-food outlets and entertainment venues.

Coca-Colonization extends this notion by signifying the cultural dominance exerted by global corporations, epitomised by Coca-Cola. This process reflects the pervasive influence of American consumer culture, with its ideals of materialism, individualism and convenience shaping tastes, aspirations and consumption patterns worldwide. The spread of Western media, fashion and language further contributes to this cultural convergence.

4.2.2.3 Impact of Globalisation on Traditional and Indigenous Cultures

Globalisation's impact on traditional and Indigenous cultures is multifaceted. On one hand, it facilitates exposure to diverse ideas, technologies and opportunities for economic growth. However, it also poses significant threats to cultural diversity, heritage and autonomy.

Traditional art forms, crafts and rituals often struggle to compete with mass-produced, globally marketed products. Indigenous languages face extinction as younger generations adopt dominant global languages like English. Local cuisines, clothing styles and festivals may be overshadowed or commercialised to appeal to global audiences, leading to a dilution of their original meanings and contexts.

Globalisation significantly influences traditional and Indigenous cultures, often leading to their marginalization or transformation. In India, the advent of global media, multinational corporations and international trade has brought profound changes to local cultural expressions. Traditional art forms like folk music, dance and crafts often face neglect as global entertainment platforms dominate popular culture.

Indigenous clothing styles, such as handloom sarees and traditional attire, are being replaced or adapted to meet global fashion trends. Additionally, indigenous knowledge systems, including Ayurveda and tribal healing practices, are commodified for global markets, often stripped of their cultural context. This results in both cultural erosion and a dilution of the authenticity of traditional practices. The loss of traditional agricultural practices due to the adoption of high-yield crop varieties, driven by Globalisation, also illustrates the cultural impact. Indigenous

festivals and rituals, deeply tied to these agricultural cycles, have either adapted to modern schedules or lost their prominence.

4.2.2.4 Responses Against Homogenisation

♦ *Revivalist Movements*

The rise of cultural revivalist movements in India showcases resistance to cultural homogenisation. Movements like Swadeshi, historically aimed at resisting colonial economic domination, have found contemporary relevance. Efforts to promote khadi, organic farming and the use of indigenous products signify an attempt to reconnect with traditional values. Organisations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) emphasise cultural pride and self-reliance, encouraging the rediscovery of ancient practices and lifestyles.

♦ *Local Resistance to Global Brands and Lifestyles*

Across India, local communities have resisted the overwhelming influence of global brands. Protests against the establishment of Walmart and other global retail giants highlight concerns over the displacement of small businesses. Similarly, campaigns such as "Boycott Chinese Products" showcase a collective assertion of economic nationalism against perceived cultural and economic threats.

♦ *Preservation of Traditional Languages and Customs*

Efforts to preserve traditional languages and customs are also evident in India. Language-based movements, such as those for Tamil and Kannada, focus on revitalising linguistic pride amidst the dominance of English. Organisations like the *Sahitya Academy* and other state initiatives promote the creation of literature in regional languages. Educational policies that emphasise the importance of vernacular languages aim to safeguard linguistic diversity. Furthermore, festivals such as Navroz, Pongal and Onam are being celebrated with renewed enthusiasm to reaffirm cultural identity. Community driven initiatives also work to document and preserve oral histories, tribal art forms and folk traditions, ensuring their survival in an increasingly homogenised world.

4.2.3 Localities and 'Glocalisation'

4.2.3.1 Understanding the Concept of Glocalisation

Glocalisation is a conceptual framework that describes the intersection of Globalisation and localisation. Coined from the Japanese term *dochakuka* (originally referring to the adaptation of agricultural techniques to local conditions), the term was popularised in sociology and business studies by Roland Robertson in the 1990s. It signifies the adaptation of global products, services, or cultural elements to fit local traditions, preferences and conditions. At its core, glocalisation emphasises a two-way interaction: while

Globalisation brings homogenising influences across the globe, localisation ensures that these influences are reinterpreted, modified, or integrated to resonate with local contexts. Unlike Globalisation, which is often criticised for promoting cultural imperialism and eroding indigenous traditions, glocalisation provides a more nuanced understanding of how global forces are assimilated and transformed by local environments.

For example, McDonald's — a quintessential symbol of Globalisation — has embraced glocalisation by tailoring its menu to suit local dietary habits. In India, where a significant portion of the population is vegetarian and beef is culturally sensitive, McDonald's offers vegetarian options such as the McAloo Tikki burger and avoids beef-based products entirely. This illustrates how global businesses achieve market penetration by respecting local norms.

4.2.3.2 Significance of Glocalisation

Glocalisation is not merely an economic or cultural phenomenon; it is a strategic adaptation that underscores the importance of context-specific solutions in a globalised world. In India, this is visible across industries, cultural practices and social norms. The significance of glocalisation can be summarised as follows:

1. **Economic Adaptation**: Glocalisation allows businesses to penetrate diverse markets by tailoring global products and services to local tastes and preferences. For example, multinational companies like McDonald's and Coca-Cola have localised their products to suit Indian consumers.

2. **Cultural Preservation and Evolution**: While Globalisation can lead to cultural homogenisation, glocalisation ensures that local traditions and practices are preserved and reinvented. This is especially crucial in India, where linguistic, culinary and artistic diversity is a defining characteristic.

3. **Social Integration**: Glocalisation facilitates the integration of global and local elements in a way that resonates with people's daily lives. It helps mitigate the alienation often associated with rapid Globalisation.

4. **Technological Synergy**: Technology has played a pivotal role in bridging global and local divides. Digital platforms enable the dissemination of local art, music and crafts to global audiences, fostering mutual enrichment.

♦ *Glocalisation adapts global influences to local contexts*

♦ *McDonald's adapts the menu to local cultural preferences*

♦ *Glocalisation emphasises context-specific solutions*

4.2.4 Expansion of the Middle Class

4.2.4.1 The Rise of the Global Middle Class due to Economic Liberalisation

Economic liberalisation, initiated in India in 1991, marked a watershed moment in the country's developmental trajectory. The deregulation of markets, reduction in trade barriers and an influx of foreign direct investment (FDI) created a conducive environment for rapid economic growth. This transformation had a profound impact on the Indian middle class, expanding its size and influence.

♦ *India's 1991 economic reforms spurred growth and FDI*

Before liberalisation, the Indian middle class was relatively small, shaped by colonial economic policies and post-independence socialist frameworks. Economic liberalisation brought a structural shift in the economy, particularly in urban areas, leading to the emergence of new employment opportunities in industries such as information technology, telecommunications and financial services. This resulted in an unprecedented rise in disposable incomes and improved living standards, which became hallmarks of the expanding middle class.

♦ *Liberalisation expanded India's middle class and opportunities*

As India became increasingly integrated into the global economy, middle-class aspirations aligned with global trends. Exposure to international cultures and lifestyles through media and technology further fuelled desires for upward mobility. Economic liberalisation facilitated access to global consumer goods and services, enabling the Indian middle class to embrace a cosmopolitan identity.

♦ *Global integration shaped India's aspirational middle class identity*

4.2.4.2 Changes in Consumption Patterns and Lifestyle Aspirations

The expanding middle class in India has significantly altered the country's consumption landscape. Increased purchasing power and exposure to global markets have transformed consumer behaviour, reflecting a shift from necessity-driven consumption to aspirational and discretionary spending.

1. **Consumerism and Brand Consciousness:** Middle-class households have become the primary drivers of India's consumer economy. The growing preference for branded goods, smartphones, vehicles and luxury items signifies a departure from traditional frugality. Financial institutions have played a crucial role in this transformation by offering easy access to credit, enabling the middle class to indulge in high-value purchases.

2. **Real Estate and Education:** Investments in housing

and education have emerged as priorities for middle class families. Urbanisation and the growth of tier-2 and tier-3 cities have fuelled demand for residential properties, often seen as a symbol of economic success. Similarly, education, particularly in professional fields, is perceived as a gateway to sustained upward mobility, resulting in high expenditure on private schooling and overseas education.

♦ *Tranformation towards consumerism*

3. **Digital Revolution and E-Commerce:** The advent of affordable internet and smartphones has accelerated the middle class's adoption of e-commerce platforms. Companies such as Flipkart, Amazon and Zomato have capitalised on this trend, offering convenience and a wide array of choices. Digital payments and fintech services have further facilitated seamless transactions, fostering a digitally empowered middle class consumer base.

4.2.4.3 The Role of Middle Class Values in Shaping Cultural Trends

The middle class plays a pivotal role in defining and disseminating cultural norms and values. In India, this has been a dynamic process influenced by both traditional ethos and modern aspirations.

1. **Balancing Tradition and Modernity:** While the middle class embraces modernity in terms of lifestyle and technology, it continues to value traditional practices, particularly in areas such as marriage, festivals and family structures. This duality is reflected in the co-existence of nuclear and joint families, as well as the adaptation of traditional customs to contemporary contexts.

♦ *Middle class shapes consumption*

2. **Cultural Consumption and Media Influence:** The middle class drives India's cultural economy through its consumption of films, television and digital content. Platforms such as Netflix, YouTube and Hotstar cater to this demographic by offering diverse narratives that resonate with urban and semi-urban audiences. Additionally, middle class preferences for fitness, wellness and international cuisines have given rise to new industries and cultural trends.

3. **Social Mobility and Meritocracy:** Middle class values emphasise education, hard work and meritocracy as pathways to social mobility. This has fostered a competitive culture, particularly in urban India, where

success is often equated with material and professional achievements.

4.2.4.4 Economic Disparities and Cultural Implications

The expansion of the middle class has brought to the fore significant economic and cultural disparities, posing challenges to social cohesion and equity.

1. **Rural-Urban Divide:** The benefits of middle class growth have been disproportionately concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural populations with limited access to similar opportunities. This has exacerbated inequalities in income, education and healthcare, creating a widening gap between urban and rural India.

2. **Cultural Homogenisation and Marginalisation:** The growing influence of middle-class culture has led to the marginalisation of diverse regional and indigenous identities. The homogenisation of lifestyles, particularly among urban youth, often undermines traditional practices and local languages.

3. **Aspirational Anxiety and Consumer Debt:** The middle class's quest for upward mobility has fostered a culture of aspirational anxiety, often resulting in financial overextension. The reliance on loans and credit cards to sustain lifestyles has led to rising levels of consumer debt, posing risks to economic stability.

4. **Political and Social Implications:** The middle class has become a significant political constituency, shaping electoral outcomes and public policies. However, its demands for economic reforms and urban development often overshadow the needs of marginalised communities, perpetuating systemic inequities.

4.2.5 Mobility and Consumerism

4.2.5.1 Mobility: Migration, Tourism and its Cultural Impact

1. Migration

Migration is a central aspect of global mobility, which can be categorised into voluntary and forced migration. Voluntary migration occurs when individuals or groups move to improve their economic prospects, pursue educational opportunities or join family members. Forced migration, on the other hand, is typically driven by conflict, persecution, natural disasters or political instability.

♦ Rural urban divide, marginalisation and overextension

♦ Migration is driven by both choice and necessity

India is a prime example of both types of migration. Indian migration patterns are deeply tied to historical, economic and political factors.

♦ *India's diaspora grew through colonial-era migration waves*

♦ **Historical Roots of Indian Migration**: India has a long history of migration, both as a source and a destination. The Indian diaspora has existed for centuries, with notable migration waves during the colonial period. The indentured labour system, which saw large numbers of Indians migrating to the Caribbean, Africa, Southeast Asia and Fiji in the 19th and early 20th centuries, is one such example. These waves laid the foundations for a global Indian presence.

♦ *Economic migration drives India's workforce to the Gulf and West*

♦ **Economic Migration**: Economic migration has been a defining characteristic of modern Indian migration patterns. Since the liberalisation of the Indian economy in the 1990s, migration for better job opportunities has surged. The Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar have attracted millions of Indian workers in construction, hospitality and domestic services. The appeal of higher wages and better living conditions, compared to India's rural and semi-urban areas, has contributed significantly to this flow. Simultaneously, skilled professionals, such as IT specialists, doctors and engineers, have found employment in Western countries. Silicon Valley in the United States, in particular, has become a hub for Indian tech professionals. The Indian American community, currently numbering over 4 million, is one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups in the U. S. The diaspora contributes significantly to both countries' economies and strengthens cultural exchange.

♦ *India is both a major source and destination for students*

♦ **Educational Migration**: Another prominent factor is the migration of students. India has emerged as one of the largest sources of international students, particularly in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. These students go abroad to seek quality education, better career prospects and life experiences. After completing their education, many opt to stay in these countries, further contributing to the diaspora and the global exchange of knowledge and innovation. At the same time, India also attracts international students, especially from neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Indian universities have become increasingly popular destinations for students seeking affordable and high-qual-

ity education in fields like engineering, medicine and business.

- ♦ **Internal Migration**: Migration within India is also significant. Rural-to-urban migration has been a major trend, as millions of people from the countryside move to cities in search of employment and a better standard of living. India's rapid urbanisation, particularly in cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru, has created a complex socio-economic environment. Cities have become melting pots of diverse cultures, where rural migrants bring their traditions, languages and customs. However, this internal migration has also led to the emergence of new challenges, including the overcrowding of urban spaces, the strain on infrastructure and the marginalisation of migrant workers in informal sectors. In some cases, cultural clashes have arisen between migrants and local populations, reflecting the complexities of cultural assimilation.

- ♦ **Refugees and Forced Migration**: Forced migration due to conflict and persecution has affected India as well. The country has been home to refugees from neighbouring countries like Tibet, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. Additionally, the recent influx of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar into India has highlighted the growing challenges of managing forced migration while balancing humanitarian concerns. Refugees often face significant challenges related to their status, access to basic services and social acceptance. The cultural impact of forced migration is multifaceted, as it involves the integration of displaced populations into existing societies, which may lead to cultural exchanges, but also tensions, particularly in terms of social integration and economic competition.

2. Tourism

Tourism is another important aspect of global mobility, playing a key role in the cultural and economic landscapes of many countries, including India. As one of the largest tourist destinations globally, India's tourism industry has both economic and cultural dimensions that need close examination.

1. **Inbound Tourism in India**: India attracts millions of international tourists annually, who come for its rich cultural heritage, historical landmarks, natural beauty and spiritual experiences. Iconic destinations such as the Taj Mahal, Jaipur's palaces and Kerala's backwaters continue to draw global visitors. For these tourists,

♦ Rural-to-urban migration creates socio-economic challenges

♦ Forced migration challenges integration and social acceptance

India represents a unique blend of ancient traditions and modern growth. Beyond traditional destinations, newer attractions like adventure tourism in the Himalayan region and ecotourism in places like Sikkim and Uttarakhand are gaining popularity. Religious tourism, especially related to Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism, also plays a major role in the tourism sector, with millions visiting temples and pilgrimage sites like Varanasi, Tirupati and Amritsar. The arrival of international tourists has led to significant economic benefits, including job creation in the hospitality, transport and retail sectors. Additionally, the tourism industry has led to an increased demand for locally produced goods such as handicrafts, textiles and traditional art forms. However, the growth of tourism has also brought challenges like the commercialisation of cultural heritage and the displacement of local communities from popular tourist spots.

2. **Outward Tourism: Changing Travel Habits**: Indian tourism has undergone a transformation, with Indians traveling abroad in large numbers. As the middle class has grown and disposable incomes have risen, international tourism has become more accessible. Popular destinations for Indian travellers include Dubai, Europe, the United States, Southeast Asia and Australia. This trend reflects growing global aspirations among young Indians, particularly in terms of shopping, education and leisure.

Cultural exchange, though often superficial, is a major component of outward tourism. As Indians travel and interact with different cultures, they are exposed to new ideas, lifestyles and technologies, which are then brought back to India. These interactions sometimes lead to the adoption of foreign practices and values, further contributing to the evolving cultural landscape. At the same time, outward tourism has impacted Indian culture. It has led to the rising popularity of global trends in fashion, food and lifestyle. The influx of global brands and cultural influences through tourism have contributed to a shift in values, particularly among younger generations who are more likely to embrace globalised identities and consumer cultures.

Cultural Impact of Global Mobility

The cultural impact of migration and tourism is profound, both within India and globally. As people move across borders, they bring with them their traditions, values, languages and practices, leading to a complex and often fluid exchange of cultures.

Margin notes:

♦ *India's tourism boosts the economy, faces challenges*

♦ *Rising middle class drives outbound tourism growth*

♦ *Outward tourism fosters cultural exchange and influences*

♦ *Migration and tourism foster cultural hybridisation*

♦ *Global mobility sparks concerns, but cultural adaptation thrives*

♦ *Migration and tourism challenge social integration, cultural preservation*

1. **Cultural Exchange and Hybridization**: Migration and tourism often lead to cultural hybridisation, where local customs are blended with foreign influences. In Indian cities, for instance, the introduction of Western-style fast food, fashion and entertainment has led to the creation of hybrid cultural identities. Bollywood, while firmly rooted in Indian tradition, now reflects global influences, incorporating Western music, dance styles and narrative techniques Similarly, in urban centres like Delhi and Mumbai, you can find an amalgamation of cuisines, languages and art forms, as diverse groups of people bring their unique cultural traits. Indian culture itself has evolved because of this constant interaction with global cultures.

2. **Cultural Homogenisation vs Preservation**: One of the concerns surrounding global mobility is cultural homogenisation. Critics argue that the spread of Western ideals, through migration and tourism, threatens the preservation of local cultures and identities. In India, the dominance of English, global media and the increasing popularity of Western style consumer goods and lifestyles have led some to fear that traditional Indian values and practices may be lost. However, there is also a counter-narrative, where local cultures adapt to global trends while retaining their distinctiveness. This dual process of Globalisation —where global influences are filtered through local contexts—has allowed Indian culture to not only survive but also thrive in the globalised world.

3. **Social Integration and Tensions**: Migration can also lead to challenges in social integration. In India, the arrival of migrants from different regions and countries can create both opportunities and tensions. While migrants contribute to the cultural fabric of Indian cities, they can also face discrimination, social exclusion and difficulty in integrating into the local community. Similarly, tourists may unintentionally contribute to the commercialisation and distortion of local culture, reducing it to a mere commodity for consumption. The changing dynamics of cultural exchange have led to increased debates around nationalism, identity and cultural preservation. As India continues to become a more globalised society, balancing these influences with the need to protect and celebrate its rich cultural heritage remains a significant challenge.

4.2.5.2 Consumerism as a Global Culture

Consumerism, defined as the preoccupation with and inclination toward material acquisition, has emerged as a dominant global phenomenon. In India, consumerism intertwines with the country's socio-economic transitions, driven by liberalisation, urbanisation and rising aspirations of a burgeoning middle class. After liberalisation in 1991, India opened its economy to foreign direct investment, paving the way for global brands to enter the market. Companies like Coca-Cola, McDonald's and Nike have since become household names. These brands represent more than mere products; they symbolise lifestyle aspirations and modernity. For instance, smartphones like Apple's iPhone are not just communication tools but status symbols in Indian society. The proliferation of global brands is evident in urban spaces, where malls and high streets host international luxury and fast-fashion retailers alongside domestic competitors.

This global brand culture has reshaped Indian consumption patterns. Traditional preferences for locally made goods have increasingly given way to global products perceived as superior in quality and prestige. However, this shift is not without contention. Local brands and traditional industries often face stiff competition, leading to a re-evaluation of their strategies to survive in the globalised marketplace.

4.2.5.3 Criticisms of Consumerism: Environmental Concerns

While consumerism fuels economic growth and enhances living standards, it also draws criticism for its environmental and ethical consequences. In India, the environmental costs of unchecked consumerism are striking. The demand for consumer goods drives resource extraction, leading to deforestation, water scarcity and loss of biodiversity. For instance, India's electronics market, one of the fastest-growing globally, generates vast amounts of e-waste annually, much of which is poorly managed, resulting in soil and water contamination. Similarly, the textile industry, fuelled by fast fashion, is a significant polluter, contributing to water pollution from dyeing processes and textile waste.

Consumerism also exacerbates carbon emissions. Rising ownership of private vehicles, a status symbol in India, contributes to urban air pollution, making cities like Delhi and Mumbai among the most polluted globally. Furthermore, the culture of disposability promoted by consumerism — where products are used briefly and discarded — clashes with India's traditional ethos of frugality and reuse. Efforts to address these concerns are

♦ Consumerism, driven by liberalisation, shapes India's aspirations

♦ Brand culture reshapes consumption patterns

♦ Consumerism boosts the economy but harms the environment

underway. Initiatives promoting sustainable consumption, such as eco-friendly products and zero-waste lifestyles, are gaining traction among urban, educated consumers. Government policies, like the ban on single use plastics and incentives for electric vehicles, aim to mitigate environmental damage. Grassroots movements, too, play a crucial role; organisations like the Barefoot College advocate for sustainable rural development, combining traditional knowledge with modern solutions.

♦ Consumerism raises emissions, but sustainability efforts grow

Critics of consumerism argue that its emphasis on material acquisition fosters inequality. In India, while the urban elite enjoy access to global brands and lifestyles, vast sections of the rural population struggle with basic needs. This disparity highlights the ethical dilemmas inherent in a consumerist society, where progress for some comes at the expense of others.

♦ Consumerism fosters inequality, benefiting the elite

4.2.6 Changes in the realm of education

4.2.6.1 Impact of Globalisation on Educational Curricula and Pedagogy

Globalisation has been one of the most dominant forces influencing educational systems world wide and India is no exception. With increased interconnectedness in the global economy, there has been a significant impact on educational curricula and pedagogical methods across the country. The global demand for skills that are aligned with modern technological advancements and economic requirements has compelled educational institutions to revise their curricula in order to keep pace with the changing times.

♦ Globalisation reshapes education to meet economic needs

One of the most profound changes brought about by Globalisation is the integration of interdisciplinary learning, where students are encouraged to view subjects from a cross-disciplinary perspective. Traditional Indian education systems, which were once heavily siloed and focussed on rote memorisation, are gradually shifting towards a more holistic approach that emphasises critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity and innovation. Subjects like environmental studies, business ethics, digital literacy and international relations have found their way into Indian educational frameworks, reflecting a broader, more globalised view of knowledge.

♦ Globalisation fosters interdisciplinary learning, enhances critical thinking

Additionally, the pressure to equip students with skills necessary for global employment has pushed Indian educational institutions to focus on practical and vocational training, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. This has been especially evident in the rise of skill-based courses and certifications in fields like IT, healthcare, management and engineering, which are tailored to meet the needs of global job markets. Pedagogically, Globalisation has prompted a shift towards

more student-centred learning methods. Traditional methods of instruction, where teachers were the primary source of knowledge, have given way to newer approaches such as collaborative learning, flipped classrooms and project-based learning. These pedagogical changes emphasise active student participation, where learners are encouraged to take ownership of their education and engage critically with the content.

Furthermore, the increased use of digital tools and multimedia in the classroom is another significant consequence of Globalisation. Virtual simulations, online resources and interactive content have become an integral part of the teaching process, offering students more dynamic and engaging ways to learn. This shift has also led to the development of blended learning models, combining face-to-face teaching with online components, allowing students to benefit from the best of both worlds.

4.2.6.2 The Rise of Online Learning and Its Cultural Implications

In recent years, the rise of online learning has been one of the most notable changes in the educational landscape, particularly in the Indian context. The rapid expansion of the internet, along with the increasing availability of smartphones and affordable data plans, has democratised access to education as never before. India, with its vast rural-urban divide and large student population, has greatly benefited from the growth of online learning platforms, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The cultural implications of this shift are manifold. On the one hand, online learning has provided opportunities for students from rural and remote areas to access quality education, breaking down geographical barriers. This is particularly important in a country like India, where access to educational resources has historically been limited by factors such as location, socio economic status and infrastructure. With online learning, students no longer need to travel long distances to attend classes or rely on limited local resources. This has empowered a significant portion of the population that was previously excluded from mainstream education.

Moreover, online learning has facilitated the rise of new pedagogical models, such as massive open online courses (MOOCs), which allow learners to access content from top universities and institutions around the world. These platforms have democratised education by offering high-quality content at little to no cost, which has had a profound impact on the way students in India perceive and engage with education. The availability of diverse courses, ranging from technical fields like computer science and

engineering to humanities and arts, has allowed students to explore a broader range of subjects that may not have been available in their local educational institutions.

However, the widespread adoption of online learning also raises concerns regarding cultural homogeneity. While online education provides access to a vast pool of knowledge, much of the content is still influenced by Western educational models, which may not always align with India's unique cultural, social and economic contexts. There is a growing need to adapt online learning platforms to cater to local needs, incorporating Indian languages, history, literature and social issues into the curriculum. This cultural tension between global content and local relevance is a critical challenge that Indian educational authorities and online learning platforms must address.

♦ *Online learning faces challenges of cultural relevance*

Furthermore, online learning has introduced a new form of social interaction, where students engage with their peers and instructors through digital means rather than face-to-face interaction. This has raised concerns about the development of social skills, emotional intelligence and a sense of community among students. Although online platforms offer discussion forums, group projects and virtual classrooms, these digital interactions cannot fully replicate the social experiences of traditional classroom settings, which are integral to personal growth and development.

♦ *Online learning challenges social skills, community development*

4.2.7 Media, social media and dialects

4.2.7.1 The Role of Global Media in Cultural Exchange

In today's interconnected world, global media serves as a powerful tool for cultural exchange. For India, global media has played a crucial role in shaping perceptions, promoting cultural diversity and influencing the ways in which Indian society views itself and others. The rapid expansion of global media in India, from television networks like BBC and CNN to the internet's proliferation, has exposed Indian audiences to a wide array of foreign cultures, ideas and lifestyles. The role of global media in cultural exchange is multifaceted. It allows the sharing of global news, trends and entertainment, thereby increasing the global visibility of Indian culture while simultaneously exposing Indians to international cultures. For instance, Hollywood movies and Western television series have created an appetite for foreign narratives, which have been localised in India through dubbed versions or remakes. In turn, Indian cinema, particularly Bollywood, has gained international recognition, symbolising India's soft power globally.

♦ *Global media fosters cultural exchange and visibility*

This cultural exchange is not one-sided. While global media facilitates the dissemination of foreign cultures into Indian society, it also serves as a platform for Indian culture to reach the world. Television networks such as Star India, Zee Entertainment and others have expanded internationally, bringing Indian dramas, music and reality shows to global audiences. Additionally, the popularity of Bollywood films has sparked a cultural dialogue that transcends borders, influencing global fashion, music and lifestyle choices.

However, the spread of global media is not without challenges. Critics argue that the dominance of Western media could lead to cultural homogenisation, threatening indigenous cultures and local traditions. The advent of satellite television and internet platforms in India has led to increased exposure to Western values, which sometimes clash with traditional Indian values. This results in debates over cultural preservation and the impact of global media on the younger generation, who are more susceptible to Western influences.

India's vast linguistic diversity adds another layer to this cultural exchange. While the English language has served as a global medium, India's regional languages and dialects play an important role in negotiating the intersection of global and local cultures. Global media, through its translation and dubbing practices, influences the way Indian dialects are perceived on the global stage. It also affects how people in different parts of India relate to each other, particularly when global media amplifies the divide between urban and rural populations.

4.2.7.2 The Intersection of Media, Social Media and Dialects in India

Dialects are not just a means of communication; they are a reflection of cultural identity and regional pride. India is home to over 1,600 languages, with hundreds of distinct dialects spoken across its vast expanse. These dialects are often tied to specific communities and regions, shaping how individuals relate to their cultural heritage and to each other. The rise of media and social media has created new opportunities for these dialects to find representation, but it has also raised important questions about linguistic preservation and cultural erosion.

Television, radio and cinema have long been avenues for the promotion of regional languages and dialects in India. However, the introduction of social media has provided a more dynamic space for dialects to flourish. Through user-generated content, local communities can now share stories, songs and narratives in

their dialects, which helps preserve linguistic diversity while also connecting with a broader audience. For example, regional language pages on Facebook and Instagram, as well as YouTube channels in various dialects, have created vibrant digital communities. At the same time, social media also exposes the tension between language dominance and dialect survival. The widespread use of English and Hindi on digital platforms, particularly among younger generations, threatens the sustainability of less commonly spoken dialects. For many young Indians, English is often seen as the language of success, education and Globalisation, leading to a gradual decline in the use of regional dialects. This shift is most pronounced in urban areas, where the influence of global media and social media is the strongest.

Moreover, the use of dialects in the digital space often faces a challenge in terms of standardisation. Many dialects lack the kind of formal recognition or written systems that major languages like Hindi or Tamil enjoy, making it difficult to create digital content that is accessible to a wider audience. Social media platforms and messaging apps are increasingly adopting regional language support, but the rich variety of dialects spoken in different parts of India poses challenges in terms of linguistic representation.

The study of media, social media and dialects in India provides valuable insights into how cultural, social and linguistic dynamics are evolving in an increasingly globalised world. Global media facilitates cultural exchange, bringing foreign ideas into Indian society while also allowing Indian culture to reach the world. Social media, in turn, serves as a dynamic space for local and global interactions, allowing people to communicate, organise and share content in ways that were previously unimaginable.

At the same time, the rise of media and social media poses challenges to linguistic diversity, as dialects struggle to find a place in the digital world dominated by major languages. Nevertheless, these platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for the preservation and promotion of regional dialects, making them an integral part of India's evolving cultural landscape. In exploring these issues, it is essential to consider the broader socio-political, economic and technological contexts that shape media and social media's influence on dialects in India. Only then can we fully understand the complex relationship between global media, social media and dialects in India's multifaceted society.

4.2.8 Trends in Family and Marriage

4.2.8.1 Changing Family Structures: Shift from Joint Families to Nuclear Families

Family structures in India have undergone significant changes, particularly with the movement from traditional joint families to nuclear families. This shift is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by several socio-economic, political and cultural factors. The joint family system, which has been a dominant feature of Indian society for centuries, typically involved multiple generations living under one roof. In such families, the authority usually resided with the eldest male member and the roles were distinctly divided based on age and gender. The joint family structure provided a sense of collective identity, where responsibility for economic and social welfare was shared.

However, in recent decades, there has been a noticeable shift towards nuclear families, especially in urban areas. This change can be attributed to a variety of reasons. One significant factor is the increased economic mobility that has led individuals, particularly the younger generation, to seek employment opportunities away from their hometowns. As a result, they often find it necessary to live independently, leading to the rise of nuclear families. Additionally, the economic liberalisation policies of the early 1990s played a crucial role in transforming the Indian economy, which led to a rise in the number of working professionals and the subsequent need for more individual autonomy. This change in economic status and aspirations has translated into a shift in family structures, where nuclear families are now more common.

Moreover, changing gender roles have also contributed to the decline of joint families. In traditional joint families, women were expected to take on domestic responsibilities, often in subordination to male authority. However, the increased participation of women in the workforce and their growing independence have led to a re-evaluation of family structures. The nuclear family, where both partners can share responsibilities equally, aligns with modern notions of gender equality and individual rights.

While the shift from joint to nuclear families can be seen as a result of modernisation, it is important to note that the nuclear family model has its own set of challenges. The lack of a support system within the household can be particularly stressful for working parents, who must balance their professional and personal lives without the assistance of extended family members. Additionally, the increasing atomisation of society has raised concerns about the erosion of communal and familial bonds that were previously

Margin notes:

♦ *Family structures in India shift from joint to nuclear*

♦ *Economic mobility drives shift to nuclear families*

♦ *Changing gender roles promote nuclear family structures*

♦ *Nuclear families face challenges in support and cohesion*

integral to social life in India.

Despite these challenges, nuclear families are increasingly viewed as an efficient way to manage modern life. However, the declining importance of the joint family system has also led to the questioning of the Indian cultural identity, which has historically valued familial bonds, respect for elders and collective living. As nuclear families become more prevalent, there is a growing debate about the long term effects on Indian society and the potential for social isolation and weakening of familial ties.

♦ Nuclear families raise concerns about cultural identity

4.2.8.2 Globalisation's Influence on Marriage

The influence of Globalisation on marriage in India is another critical area of study in this syllabus. In an era where global connectivity is increasing, marriages in India have increasingly become sites of cross-cultural exchange. The movement of people across borders, driven by educational, economic and professional opportunities, has led to a rise in cross-cultural marriages in India. These marriages are typically characterized by the union of individuals from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. While such marriages were once rare in Indian society, they have become more common in recent years due to the greater exposure to global ideas, lifestyles and people.

♦ Globalisation fosters rise in cross-cultural marriages

Cross-cultural marriages reflect the impact of Globalisation on social norms and values. Traditionally, Indian marriages were arranged by families and were based on cultural compatibility, caste, religion and social status. However, in the contemporary globalised world, individuals are increasingly choosing their own partners based on love, emotional compatibility and personal choice, which may transcend traditional social boundaries. This has led to a more inclusive approach to marriage, where people from different regions, languages and backgrounds are now able to marry one another.

♦ Globalisation shifts marriage norms towards inclusivity

The rise of cross-cultural marriages is also a direct consequence of the growing number of students and professionals who travel abroad for studies and work. Many young Indians who return to India after studying abroad bring with them not only new ideas but also potential partners from diverse cultural backgrounds. This trend is not limited to the youth; professionals working in multinational corporations or those involved in the global economy also often marry people from different countries. The impact of these cross-cultural marriages on Indian society has been significant, with greater acceptance of diversity and a blending of cultural traditions.

♦ Cross-cultural marriages reflect greater acceptance of diversity

However, these marriages can also present challenges, particularly regarding cultural integration and acceptance. Marrying someone from a different cultural background often leads to negotiation and adaptation, particularly when it comes to religious practices, family expectations and community norms. In some cases, such marriages face resistance from families or communities, as they may challenge traditional values regarding caste, religion and social hierarchy. Nonetheless, cross-cultural marriages are increasingly seen as a symbol of a more open and globalised society, where individual choice takes precedence over social convention.

♦ *Cross-cultural marriages face challenges in integration and acceptance*

Additionally, Globalisation has contributed to significant changes in the traditional marriage practices of India. Traditionally, marriage was considered a sacred institution, with elaborate rituals and customs that varied regionally. These practices were deeply embedded in social and religious traditions and weddings were seen as social events that reinforced community ties. However, with Globalisation, there has been a shift towards more individualised, less traditional forms of marriage. The growing influence of Western ideals, including the notion of personal choice in selecting a partner and the idea of marriage as an emotional bond, has led to changes in the way marriages are conceptualised and celebrated in India.

♦ *Globalisation transforms traditional marriage practices in India*

One of the most significant changes in marriage practices has been the growing trend of love marriages. While love marriages were once considered taboo in many parts of India, they have become increasingly common, particularly in urban areas. The rising number of young people seeking to marry for love, rather than following the traditional route of arranged marriages, is a direct result of the liberalising forces of Globalisation. The advent of technology has also played a crucial role in facilitating these changes. Online dating apps, social media and matrimonial websites have made it easier for individuals to connect with potential partners, often without the involvement of families or intermediaries.

♦ *Globalisation boosts love marriages and technology's role*

4.2.9 Growth of Cultural Nationalism

4.2.9.1 Defining Cultural Nationalism

Cultural nationalism refers to the assertion of a nation's cultural identity in opposition to foreign domination or cultural dilution. It is a response to the perceived threats posed by Globalisation and external influences that may undermine or overpower indigenous cultures. In the Indian context, this concept developed significantly

♦ *Cultural nationalism asserts identity amid globalisation pressures*

during the colonial period and later gained prominence during the post-independence era. It can be seen as a way to reconnect with traditional values, practices and customs while simultaneously navigating the pressures of a globalised world.

In India, cultural nationalism has often been defined by the need to preserve local identities and traditions in the face of Westernisation and foreign cultural influences. This struggle can be traced to the colonial era when British rule led to the widespread adoption of Western values and practices, often at the expense of Indian cultural expressions. The demand to preserve Indian culture became intertwined with the nationalist struggle for independence, leading to a cultural renaissance that sought to reaffirm India's distinctiveness in the world. However, the challenge has always been how to embrace modernity, technology and global interconnectedness without sacrificing the richness of local traditions and identities.

Features of Cultural Nationalism

1. **Revival of Traditional Culture:** A main feature of cultural nationalism is the revival and promotion of indigenous traditions, practices and languages. In the Indian context, this revival manifested in the 19th and 20th centuries through the efforts of various social reformers and intellectuals like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore. These leaders sought to reinterpret and reassert traditional Indian values in the face of colonial rule. The idea was not to revert to an idealised past, but to creatively engage with traditional culture to form a sense of national unity. This movement also led to a greater emphasis on classical art forms, music, literature and philosophy, which were seen as the foundation of Indian national identity.

2. **Rejection of Westernisation and Colonial Influence:** Cultural nationalism in India was deeply tied to the rejection of Western colonial values that had been imposed through British rule. This rejection was not merely of the political and economic systems but extended to cultural and educational systems. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi called for a return to indigenous ways of life, encouraging the use of khadi (hand-spun cloth) and promoting self-reliance, which became a symbol of resistance against British economic policies and the cultural influence of the West. This resistance helped form a cultural ethos rooted in local traditions

♦ *Cultural nationalism preserves local identities amid Western influences*

♦ *Revival of indigenous traditions for national unity*

♦ *Rejection of colonial values, embrace of self-reliance*

and self-determination.

3. **Promotion of National Unity:** Another defining feature of cultural nationalism is the use of cultural elements to foster national unity. Given India's vast diversity in terms of language, religion and customs, creating a cohesive national identity was a significant challenge. Cultural nationalism aimed to create a unifying narrative that transcended regional and religious differences. Symbols like the national flag, national anthem and iconic figures like Gandhi became central to this effort. In addition, efforts to promote a common national language, Hindi, played a significant role in unifying diverse linguistic groups within the country.

♦ *Cultural symbols and language unify diverse India*

4. **Cultural Pride and Self-Respect:** Cultural nationalism in India fostered a sense of cultural pride and self-respect, encouraging people to embrace their heritage. This was particularly important in the context of caste-based discrimination and the pervasive influence of colonial attitudes that had positioned Indian culture as inferior to Western norms. Figures like Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who emphasised the need for social reform alongside cultural revival, advocated the empowerment of marginalised communities through education and cultural self-assertion. The aim was to provide individuals and communities with the tools to reclaim their dignity and assert their identity in the face of centuries of social oppression.

♦ *Cultural pride and empowerment against oppression*

5. **Adaptation to Modernity and Globalisation:** While cultural nationalism was largely about reclaiming indigenous traditions, it also had to confront the realities of modernity and Globalisation. In the post-independence period, especially after liberalisation in the 1990s, the rapid Globalisation of culture, technology and economics began to influence Indian society. In this context, cultural nationalism adapted by selectively integrating global influences while maintaining local cultural elements. This process was particularly evident in the fields of cinema, music, fashion and literature, where global trends were absorbed and reinterpreted through the lens of Indian culture. Bollywood, for instance, became a cultural force that blended traditional Indian story telling with global cinematic techniques, creating a unique form of popular culture that resonated with both domestic and international audiences.

♦ *Cultural nationalism adapts to the influence of globalisation*

6. **Cultural Pluralism and Diversity:** Another aspect of cultural nationalism in India is its recognition and celebration of cultural pluralism. India is home to a multitude of ethnic, religious and linguistic communities, each with its distinct cultural practices. Cultural nationalism, while promoting a unified national identity, also acknowledges and celebrates this diversity. The idea was to promote a vision of nationalism that included, rather than excluded, various cultural identities. The constitution of India, for example, recognises multiple languages and religions, ensuring that no single cultural group dominates the national narrative. In the political sphere, cultural nationalism has sometimes been challenged by demands from various regional and ethnic groups for greater autonomy or recognition, but the overall framework has been one of inclusivity.

7. **Political Dimensions of Cultural Nationalism:** Cultural nationalism has had strong political overtones in India, particularly in the post-independence era. Political parties and movements have often invoked cultural nationalism to mobilise support. For example, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its ideological affiliate, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), have been prominent proponents of cultural nationalism, arguing that India's cultural identity is rooted in its Hindu heritage. This interpretation of cultural nationalism has been a point of contention, particularly in the context of India's secular constitution and its commitment to accommodating religious and cultural pluralism.

8. **Impact on National Identity:** Cultural nationalism has played a crucial role in shaping India's national identity. After independence, the concept of Indian nationalism was largely constructed through the fusion of multiple cultural strands — Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and others — into a collective vision. At the same time, cultural nationalism has also led to tensions, particularly in the context of inter-community relations. The emphasis on cultural purity or the idea of a singular national culture has sometimes led to conflicts, especially regarding the treatment of minorities or marginalised communities. The rise of identity politics in recent decades has complicated the picture, with some arguing that the concept of cultural nationalism in India risks undermining the pluralistic fabric of the nation.

9. **Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary India:** In the contemporary context, cultural nationalism continues to be a powerful force, especially in light of increasing Globalisation. The growth of the Indian diaspora, the rise of global media and the widespread use of social media platforms have created new spaces for the expression of cultural nationalism. On the one hand, these global networks provide opportunities for the promotion of Indian culture worldwide. On the other hand, they also present challenges in terms of how to balance traditional values with modern influences.

Summarised Overview

This unit explores the multifaceted relationship between globalisation and culture, highlighting both the homogenising effects of global influences and the resistance that arises from local cultural identities. As global interconnectedness increases, there is a noticeable spread of dominant cultural trends, particularly from Western societies, leading to the homogenisation of culture. However, in response to these external forces, various local and national communities assert their own cultural identities, often through cultural nationalism, to preserve their traditions and values. A key concept explored in this unit is "Glocalisation", which refers to the process by which global ideas and products are adapted to fit local contexts. This phenomenon allows cultures to blend, as local communities integrate global influences while retaining distinct regional characteristics. The unit also examines the significant role of the middle class in this cultural transformation, as economic changes driven by globalisation have facilitated greater mobility and consumerism, reshaping lifestyles and cultural practices.

The impact of globalisation is also evident in the realm of education, where global curricula and exchange programmes influence students' worldviews. Furthermore, media, especially social media, has become a critical tool in both spreading global culture and promoting local dialects and languages. The unit delves into how these changes extend to family structures and marriage patterns, as traditional norms are challenged by new global ideas. Finally, the unit addresses the growing prominence of cultural nationalism, where societies emphasise the importance of local culture in the face of global pressure. Through this exploration, the unit provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interplay between global and local cultural forces in today's world.

Assignments

1. Explain the concept of "Glocalisation" and provide examples of how global influences are adapted to local contexts.

2. Evaluate the role of social media in the dissemination of global culture and its impact on local dialects and regional languages. How does it contribute to changing family and marriage patterns?

3. Discuss the impact of globalisation on the expansion of the middle class, mobility and consumerism and examine their influence on cultural practices.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Changes in Domestic and Foreign Policy

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the political and legal implications of the abrogation of Article 370 on Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy and its integration with India
- evaluate the impact of the 6th Amendment of the Citizenship Act of 1955 on the socio-political landscape and the concept of secularism in India
- assess the transformative reforms introduced in the New Education Policy 2020 and their potential effects on India's educational system
- examine the major shifts in India's foreign policy since 1990, focusing on its evolving global strategy and international relations

Background

In August 2019, the Government of India revoked Article 370, which granted special autonomy to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This bold political move was aimed at integrating Jammu and Kashmir fully into the Indian Union, ending decades of special treatment and paving the way for greater development and security in the region. The abrogation triggered significant political debate and raised concerns about the region's stability, security and constitutional implications. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was passed in December 2019, amending the Citizenship Act of 1955. The law fast-tracked Indian citizenship for non-Muslim refugees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. While the proponents argued that it provided refuge to persecuted minorities, critics viewed it as discriminatory and unconstitutional, arguing that it violated the secular nature of the Indian state and posed a threat to the rights of Muslims.

The NEP 2020, which replaced the 1986 policy, brought transformative changes in India's education sector. It focused on holistic, flexible and multidisciplinary education, aiming to reduce the burden of rote learning and enhance critical thinking. Key reforms include the introduction of a 5+3+3+4 curriculum structure, a focus on vocational education and an emphasis on mother tongue-based learning. Since the early 1990s, India's foreign policy has undergone significant shifts, especially with the liberalisation of the economy. The country has increasingly embraced globalisation, strengthened strategic partnerships and sought to play a larger role in global governance. The focus has been

on improving ties with the United States, engaging more with regional powers like Japan and asserting its position in multilateral organisations like the United Nations and BRICS. Together, these changes in domestic and foreign policies represent a shift towards greater national integration, international influence and social reforms in India's quest for growth and stability in the 21st century.

Keywords

Article 370,Citizenship Amendment Act, Secular fabrics, New Education Policy 2020, ECCE, SARC, QUAD

Discussion

4.3.1 Abrogation of article 370

4.3.1.1 Historical context of Article 370

♦ *Maharaja Hari Singh's accession of Jammu and Kashmir*

Jammu and Kashmir was a princely state like other states but after the independence of India in 1947, Jammu and Kashmir state was attacked by forces of Pakistan. At that time Maharaja Hari Singh, who was a maharaja of this state to protect this state from the aggression of Pakistan, asked for help from the government of India. The government of India asked Maharaja Hari Singh to join the domain of India by signing an instrument of accession. Maharaja Hari Singh on 26th October 1947 signed the Instrument of Accession and agreed to join the domain of India.

♦ *Article 370 adopted*

This accession was accepted by the governor general of India Lord Mountbatten on 27th October 1947. But in 1949 when the Constitution of India was adopted, the future picture of the relationship of Jammu and Kashmir with India was not clear. So, to establish relations with Jammu and Kashmir Article 370 was inserted in the Constitution of India

♦ *Article 370 grants Jammu and Kashmir special status*

Article 370 present in part xxi of the Constitution of India gave special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmi,r because of which this state enjoys special privileges. This article was a temporary provision and gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir by stating that Jammu and Kashmir state will have its separate Constitution and the provisions of the Constitution of India will not apply here.

This article states that the legislature of India has control over only three subjects, namely external affairs, defence and communications. To draft Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, Jawaharlal Nehru appointed his loyal Cabinet Member N. Gopalaswami Aiyengar when B. R. Ambedkar declined to do so. Initially, Sheikh Abdullah was asked to join B. R. Ambedkar in creating Article 370, but he opposed it. In 1950, the Indian Constitution established Jammu and Kashmir with a unique status. The "Delhi Agreement " was struck by Jawaharlal Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah to enhance relations between the state and the union. Nehru assured Indian citizens that Article 370 would be removed after a limited period. Article framers did not indicate the period, but they used the term "temporary."

Clause (3) of this article also states that after a recommendation from the constituent assembly of this state Article 370 can be removed. Despite the application of Article 370, the rights of a permanent resident of Jammu and Kashmir were not made clear. Hence, on 14th May 1954, the president of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad passed a presidential order named Constitution Application to (Jammu and Kashmir) Order 1954 and included article 35A in it which defines the rights of permanent residents of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1957 the constituent assembly of Jammu and Kashmir was dissolved without removing Article 370. So, Article 370 was known to be the permanent provision of the Constitution. In August 2019 the President of India superseded the presidential order of 1954 and passed a presidential order of 2019 after the execution of this order, the Government of India introduced two resolutions in the upper house: one Jammu and Kashmir reorganisation bill and another a bill to remove Article 370 which was passed by a two-thirds majority in the upper house. By this Article 370 was removed from Indian Constitution.

4.3.1.2 Provisions under Article 370

1. According to Article 370, the states of Jammu and Kashmir have their separate Constitution drafted by its constituent assembly and this state is governed under this Constitution.

2. The power of parliament to make laws for the state of Jammu and Kashmir is limited to:

   ♦ Those matters which are in the union list and in the concurrent list which are in consultation with the government of the state and are declared by the president of India correspond to matters specified in the Instrument of Accession

   ♦ Such other matters in the state list as with the con-

currence of the state and as the president's order may specify.

- It has been held that the president has the power to vary, amend or modify a Constitutional provision in any way he deems necessary while applying it to the state. Article 370 empowers the president to modify a Constitutional provision not only when it is applied to that state for the first time, but he may subsequently also make amendments or modifications in such order as earlier issued.

Defining Article 35 A

1. It defines classes of people who are permanent residents of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, It confers on such permanent residents any special rights and privileges or imposes upon other persons any restrictions with respect to

   - Employment under the state government.
   - Acquisition of immovable property in the state.
   - Settled in the state or
   - The right to scholarship and such other forms of aid as the state government may provide.

Discriminatory nature of Article 35A

Article 35A of the Indian Constitution prohibits women who marry outside their caste, religion or State from owning or inheriting property, violating Article 14. The provision is also in violation of the J&K Constitution. According to Section 6 of the J&K Constitution, a citizen of India is considered a permanent resident of the state if they were a state subject of Class I or II on May 14, 1954, or had legally acquired immovable property in the state and resided there for at least 10 years before that date. The section also states that individuals who were class I or class II state subjects before May 14, 1954 and returned to the state under a resettlement permit or permanent return law will be granted permanent resident status.

♦ *Article 35A's property rights and constitutional conflict*

Further, in a case of the State of Jammu vs Kashmir Dr. Susheela Sawhney, the court ruled that discrimination based on gender violates the Constitutions of India and J&K and there was a reference to the Preamble of the Constitution of India, which guarantees equality of status and liberty. The court agreed that Section 10 of the J & K Constitution guarantees permanent residents all rights under the Indian Constitution, including Article 14. This implies that the state must uphold the fundamental rights of the Indian Constitution, including Article 14. But in the process of the interpretation of the definition of permanent resident, an

♦ *Gender-based discrimination in property rights and equality*

entire section of the society (the women) has become discriminated against and they are unable to claim or purchase property or even obtain scholarships and employment even though they are just as much of a permanent resident of the state as the men are.

4.3.1.3 Reasons for Abrogation of Article 370

1. Article 370 impeded the full integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian Union, resulting in a sense of secession and hindering its growth. Full integration was thought to facilitate enhanced access to resources, infrastructure and opportunities for the inhabitants of Jammu and Kashmir.

2. Pakistan utilised Article 370 to bolster terrorism and promote separatists in the region, compromising national security. The abrogation would enhance national security by granting the Indian government greater authority over the region and enabling stricter measures against terrorist operations.

3. Eliminating Discrimination - Article 370 exhibited discriminatory practices towards women, Dalits and other marginalised communities in Jammu and Kashmir. The abrogation would subject them to Indian laws and grant them equal rights and privileges.

4. Article 370 resulted in a dearth of transparency and accountability in the administration of Jammu and Kashmir. The abrogation would subject the state under the jurisdiction of the Central Vigilance Commission and the Right to Information Act, resulting in enhanced governance and accountability.

5. Economic Prosperity - Article 370 impeded economic progress in the region of Jammu and Kashmir. The abrogation would facilitate increased investment, tourism and job generation in the region.

4.3.1.4 Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill 2019

The Presidential Order to delete Article 370 prompted this statute. This bill created two Union Territories —Jammu - Kashmir and Ladakh. Insurgencies between Pakistan and India always target Jammu & Kashmir. This Act took effect on October 31, 2019. On August 5, 2019, Home Minister Amit Shah launched this Act. The measure was passed by majority vote in both houses of the Parliament. With the floor open, 125 Rajya Sabha members supported this measure when it was introduced. On August 9, 2019, India's president gave his renowned consensus to enact the bill.

♦ *Intergration of Jammu and Kashmir, national security,enhanced governance*

♦ *Article 370 repealed, Jammu & Kashmir reorganisation*

The measure, launched by presidential order, repealed Article 370 from the Indian Constitution. As Article 370 expired, the Union Government passed the Reorganisation Bill to redraw Jammu - Kashmir and Ladakh.

Features

This law establishes the legislative assembly for the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The people of Ladakh will be led only by the lieutenant governor since the region lacks a legislative assembly.

1. Jammu and Kashmir would be dissolved and Ladakh territory would be combined with Leh and Kargil.

2. No other states, districts or villages will be able to escape Jammu and Kashmir's influence.

3. The Act also determines how the Lok Sabha seats would be distributed, with five seats going to Jammu & Kashmir and one to Ladakh out of a total of six.

4. Following the procedures outlined in the Delimitation Act will govern the election.

5. The term of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly is five years.

6. Jammu and Kashmir will have the same legal standing as Puducherry under Article 239a.

7. Reservations will be made for SC / ST.

8. There will be no difference between the two the High Courts of the Union Territories.

4.3.1.5 Impact of the Abrogation of Article 370

♦ *Changes in Domicile Laws*

In April 2020, the Centre introduced the domicile clause for J&K, redefining residence and recruitment rules. This made any individual who has resided in J&K for 15 years or has studied for 7 years and appeared in class 10th /12th examination in J&K, eligible for a domicile certificate, replacing the previously issued Permanent Resident Certificates.

♦ *Changes in Land Laws*

The government amended 14 land laws in the former state of J&K, repealing 12 of them, including the Jammu and Kashmir Alienation of Land Act, 1938 and the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, 1950, which had protected land holdings for permanent residents, alienating the non-permanent residents.

♦ *Decline in Violence*

Since the abrogation of Article 370, there has been a significant decline in terror activities, local militancy recruitment and terrorist killings in J&K, with stone pelting, separatist strikes and violent

protests almost vanishing in the last five years.

J&K recorded its highest voter turnout in a 2024 Lok Sabha poll in 35 years, with the Kashmir Valley seeing a 30 point increase from 2019. The 2024 Parliamentary polls were the first major election in the Union Territory after the abrogation of Article 370 .

The region saw an unprecedented surge in tourism, attracting over 21.1 million visitors in 2023, boosting the local economy. There has been a tourism boom post COVID-19 and after the abrogation of Article 370, which is expected to increase further. Since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, J&K attracted Rs 5,656 crores in investments across various sectors. The New Central Sector Scheme for Industrial Development, launched in February 2021, spurred 310 investments in 2020-21, 175 in 2021-22 and 1,074 in 2022-23. Lt Governor reported Rs 66,000 crores in private investment proposals within two years.

The government has also invested heavily in infrastructure development in Jammu and Kashmir. This includes projects such as the construction of new roads, bridges, tunnels and power lines. These improvements have made it easier for people to travel and do business within the region.

4.3.2 6th Amendment of the Citizenship Act of 1955 (CAA 2019)

4.3.2.1 The Citizenship Act of 1955

The Citizenship Act of 1955 is a pivotal legislative framework in India that governs the acquisition, determination and termination of Indian citizenship. Enacted shortly after the adoption of the Indian Constitution, the Act translates constitutional provisions related to citizenship into actionable laws and procedures. The Act establishes five modes of acquiring Indian citizenship: by birth, descent, registration, naturalisation and incorporation of territory. A person born in India automatically becomes a citizen under the original provisions if born between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987. However, subsequent amendments introduced conditions for citizenship by birth, such as requiring at least one parent to be an Indian citizen for those born after July 1, 1987. Citizenship by descent is available for those born outside India if at least one parent was an Indian citizen at the time of their birth, though procedural formalities must be fulfilled.

The Act also provides for citizenship by registration, primarily targeting individuals of Indian origin residing outside India, spouses of Indian citizens and certain other categories. Naturalisation, on the other hand, is granted to individuals who meet specified residency

and eligibility criteria, reflecting India's openness to integrating foreign nationals under defined circumstances. Finally, citizenship by incorporation applies when new territories are integrated into India, as was the case with Sikkim in 1975.

Equally important is the Act's emphasis on the cessation of citizenship. Indian citizenship can be renounced voluntarily, terminated by the government for those acquiring foreign citizenship or revoked in cases of fraud, disloyalty or unlawful acts against the state. Over time, the Act has been amended to reflect changing social, political and demographic realities. Notable amendments include the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 1986, which introduced stricter conditions for citizenship by birth and the 2003 amendment, which mandated the establishment of a National Register of Citizens (NRC) and introduced the concept of "illegal migrants," who are barred from acquiring citizenship

The most contentious amendment, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019 (CAA), grants expedited citizenship to religious minorities — Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians — from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, provided they entered India before December 31, 2014. While the government justified the CAA as a measure to protect persecuted minorities, it sparked widespread protests over concerns of religious discrimination and its potential implications when coupled with the NRC. The Citizenship Act of 1955 thus remains a cornerstone of India's legal and administrative framework, balancing constitutional principles, demographic challenges and international obligations. It continues to be a dynamic area of law reflecting India's socio-political landscape.

4.3.2.2 6th Amendment of the Citizenship Act of 1955 (CAA 2019)

Just after midnight on December 10, 2019, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) passed in the Lok Sabha (the lower house of Indian parliament). Two days later, it cleared the Rajya Sabha (the upper house of Indian parliament) and after quickly receiving the assent of Indian President Ram Nath Kovind, became law. A campaign promise of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during both the 2014 and 2019 parliamentary elections, the CAA provides a fast track for non-Muslim immigrants from Muslim majority Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan to apply for and gain Indian citizenship.

The law essentially grants individuals of selected, non-Muslim communities in these countries refugee status within India and reserves the category of "illegal migrant" for Muslims

Margin notes

♦ *The Act outlines voluntary renouncement, termination and revocation of citizenship*

♦ *CAA sparks debate on religious discrimination*

♦ *CAA fast-tracks citizenship for non-Muslim immigrants*

alone. Opposition parties decried the bill for violating India's secular foundations and expressed worry that it would be used to disenfranchise India's sizable Muslim population. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who introduced the bill in parliament, argued that the CAA has nothing to do with India's own religious minorities and is aimed at protecting those who have suffered from religious persecution in neighbouring states. The CAA, however, does not require members of the listed non-Muslim religious groups to provide any proof of persecution, yet omits Muslim minority communities such as Shi'a and Ahmadi Muslims who have faced severe persecution in Afghanistan and Pakistan due to their faith. The law's passage sparked large-scale protests across the country that provoked a harsh and deadly crackdown by police forces. A wide variety of political parties, non-governmental organisations and religious groups also submitted petitions to the Supreme Court challenging the CAA's constitutionality, arguing that it, in particular, violates Section 14 (equality before the law) of the Indian Constitution.

♦ *CAA was criticised for discrimination, which sparked protests*

A number of chief ministers, including in Kerala, Punjab and West Bengal, announced that they would refuse to implement the law in their states with the Kerala government also challenging the law in the Supreme Court. Alongside the U. S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights, the U. S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom and the House Foreign Affairs Committee similarly expressed their concern about the law.

♦ *States oppose CAA, global concern grows*

4.3.2.3 Provisions of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act

The Citizenship Act of 1955 bars illegal migrants (defined as foreigners who entered India without valid travel documents or entered with a valid travel document but stayed beyond the permitted period) from obtaining Indian citizenship. Any Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian migrant from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, or Pakistan who arrived in India on or prior to December 31, 2014, will not be treated as an "illegal migrant" under the CAA, allowing them to apply for and gain Indian citizenship.

♦ *CAA exempts selected migrants from illegality*

- The CAA grants the aforementioned migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan immunity from any legal cases against them concerning their immigration status.
- For migrants belonging to the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, or Christian communities in Afghanistan,

Bangladesh and Pakistan, the CAA reduces their qualifying length of residency in India before being eligible for Indian citizenship from "not less than eleven years" to "not less than five years."

♦ The CAA contains a provision allowing the government to withdraw individuals' Overseas Citizens of India cards — an immigration status allowing foreigners of Indian origin to live and work in India without restrictions — if they violate any laws for major or minor offenses.

4.3.2.4 Allegations of Religious Discrimination

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019, an amendment to the Citizenship Act of 1955, has been a subject of intense debate and controversy, particularly concerning its alleged religious discrimination and its implications for the secular nature of India as enshrined in its Constitution. The CAA grants expedited citizenship to non-Muslim religious minorities — Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians — fleeing religious persecution from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, provided they arrived in India before December 31, 2014. Critics argue that this selective inclusion of religions excludes Muslims, thereby violating the principle of equality before the law guaranteed under Article 14 of the Indian Constitution.

The Act does not account for other persecuted groups such as Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan, Hazaras in Afghanistan or Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar. This exclusion has been perceived as discriminatory, raising concerns that the law uses religion as a criterion for citizenship, a departure from India's traditionally secular policies.

4.3.2.5 Concerns About the Secular Fabric of India

India's Constitution identifies the nation as a secular state, guaranteeing equality and non-discrimination on the grounds of religion. Critics contend that the CAA undermines this secular foundation by introducing a religious element into citizenship laws for the first time. This move is seen as inconsistent with India's history of accommodating refugees of diverse religious backgrounds without prejudice.

The coupling of the CAA with the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) exacerbates concerns. Critics fear that if the NRC is implemented nationwide, it could disproportionately affect Muslims, as those unable to prove their citizenship may face statelessness or detention. This fear is amplified by statements from

political leaders suggesting that the CAA would protect all non-Muslims excluded from the NRC, leaving Muslims vulnerable.

Protests against the CAA were widespread, involving diverse groups including students, civil society organisations and opposition political parties. Detractors viewed the Act as an attempt to redefine India's pluralistic identity in a manner that marginalises its Muslim population. International bodies and human rights organisations, such as the United Nations, also expressed concern, questioning the compatibility of the CAA with India's commitments under international human rights conventions.

Supporters of the CAA argue that it is a humanitarian measure aimed at addressing the plight of persecuted minorities in the region. They emphasise that the Act does not take away rights from Indian Muslims but instead provides a pathway to citizenship for specific groups facing persecution. The controversies surrounding the CAA centre on its perceived religious bias and its potential to erode India's secular character. While proponents hail it as a compassionate response to historical injustices, critics view it as a divisive policy that challenges the constitutional ethos of equality and secularism. This ongoing debate reflects deeper social and political tensions over identity, citizenship and the principles guiding the Indian state.

4.3.3 New Education Policy (NEP) 2020

4.3.3.1 Historical Evolution of Education Policies of India

After independence in 1947, the GOI faced many challenges like illiteracy. To solve the problem of illiteracy, the GOI floated and sponsored different types of programmes, policies and regulations. The first Education Minister of India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, envisaged a uniform education system through robust central government control over the education system and policies. The Union Government founded the University Education Commission (1948–1949), the Secondary Education Commission (1952–1953), the Kothari Commission (1964–1966) and the University Grants Commission (November 1956) to prepare the proposals to modernise the education systems of India. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, accepted the Science Policy Resolution to promote the education of sciences. The Nehru government has funded superior education institutions (for promoting engineering and science) such as the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). The Union Government formed the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 1961 as an autonomous body. The objective of this mechanism is to advise the government on the

formulation and implementation of policies related to education.

1. The First National Policy on Education, 1968

Based on the report and recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964–1966), then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's government declared the first NPE in 1968. The policy was considered with "radical reform" and recommended equal opportunities (for both rural and urban sectors) of education to achieve national integration and more excellent cultural and economic development. However, the decision to adopt Hindi as a national language proved controversial. The policy called for the use and learning of Hindi to promote a common language throughout India. This specific policy also encouraged the teaching of the ancient Sanskrit language, which was considered to be an integral part of India's culture and heritage. This policy was also aligned to promote physical education to promote sports and games culture. The NPE of 1968 called for expenditure on education to rise to 6% of the national income (Govt. of India, 1968).

♦ 1968 NPE aims for educational reform, faces controversy

2. Second National Policy on Education, 1986

In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister, launched a new National Policy for promoting education at all economic levels. The adopted policy is known for "Special Emphasis on the Elimination of Inequalities and to Eequalise the Educational Opportunity", irrespective of the cast (scheduled caste, scheduled tribes), gender (predominantly for females) and economic status. The policy called for the expansion of scholarships, subsidies, allowances, adult education and various other methods to promote social integration. This NPE is known for the "child-centred approach" especially for primary education and, thus, initiated a very popular educational reform "Operation Blackboard." The objective was to develop primary schools across the country. The policy extended the open and distance university system with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) founded in 1985 (IGNOU, 1985). This policy followed the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi to promote development (both economic and social) at the bottom level in rural India (Govt. of India, 1986).

♦ 1986 NPE focuses on equality and primary education

3. Revisions in Second National Policy on Education in 1992 and 2005

In 1992, the former Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao revised the NEP. This education policy is known for the adoption of the Common Entrance Examination (CEE). The former Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, introduced a revised "Common Minimum Program" policy. The Program of Action (PoA) 1992, under the NEP, 1986, planned a common entrance examination for

♦ 1992 NEP revises entrance exams for vocational training

all India-based vocational and technical training admissions.

4.3.3.2 Third National Policy on Education, 2020

In 2019, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) released a Draft on NEP, 2019, which was trailed by several ideas and consultations offered by the stakeholders and public. The Draft NEP discusses reducing curriculum content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking. The new educational policy designed by the government of India is a significant step in this direction. National Education Policy 2020 is the third major revamp of educational policy, formulated and published by the Ministry of Human Resource Development of India. Its focus is to transform the educational scenario by 2040.

Globalisation has brought new skills that have dominated the traditionally valued skills and knowledge has become less critical. This policy aims to revolutionise the Higher education system, making it more inclusive and relevant to the 21st century. The policy focuses on areas such as access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability in education. The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a landmark policy in the history of Indian education. It was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on July 29, 2020 and it replaces the previous National Policy on Education enacted in 1986.

The NEP aims to transform the Higher education system by focusing on access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability in education. The policy is designed to address the challenges facing the Higher education system, such as low learning outcomes, inadequate teacher training and limited access to quality education. The NEP proposes a comprehensive and holistic approach to education, emphasising the importance of critical thinking, creativity and problem solving skills. It also promotes multilingual education and the integration of technology in the classroom. The policy is intended to create a flexible and inclusive education system that accommodates the diverse needs of students and prepares them for the rapidly changing global economy. Overall, the NEP 2020 represents a significant step forward in the modernisation of the Higher education system and provides a roadmap for the future of education in India.

4.3.3.3 Highlights of New Education Policy 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is a comprehensive framework for the development of education in

Margin notes:

♦ *NEP 2020 aims to transform education*

♦ *Globalisation reshapes education through NEP 2020*

♦ *NEP 2020 transforms higher education system*

India. Here is a list of the key highlights and provisions of NEP 2020:

1. **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):** NEP 2020 emphasises the importance of early childhood education and aims to provide foundational education to children in the 3-6 age group through Anganwadis and pre-schools .

2. **School Education**: The policy aims to bring a multidisciplinary and holistic approach to school education, with a focus on critical thinking, experiential learning and reducing the emphasis on rote memorisation. It promotes the use of the mother tongue / local language as the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5.

3. **Curricular Reforms**: NEP 2020 proposes a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure, replacing the existing 10+2 system. The new structure includes 12 years of schooling divided into foundational (ages 3-8), preparatory (ages 8-11), middle (ages 11-14) and secondary (ages 14-18) stages. It also encourages a flexible curriculum with a wide range of subjects and promotes vocational education.

4. **Teacher Education**: The policy focuses on enhancing the quality of teachers by introducing a four-year integrated B. Ed. programme and a common National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) framework. It aims to provide continuous professional development opportunities for teachers throughout their careers.

5. **Higher Education**: NEP 2020 proposes several reforms in higher education, including the establishment of a single regulator, a multidisciplinary approach, flexibility in curriculum and increased use of technology. It aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education and promote research and innovation.

6. **Technology in Education**: The policy recognises the importance of technology in education and aims to integrate it effectively into teaching and learning processes. It promotes the use of online and digital resources, virtual labs and e-learning platforms to enhance access and quality of education.

7. **Gender Inclusion**: NEP 2020 emphasises the importance of gender inclusion and aims to provide equal opportunities for girls and transgender students. It en-

♦ *Reforms higher education, technology integration and holistic education*

courages the elimination of gender-based discrimination and the promotion of gender-sensitive education

8. **Assessment Reforms**: The policy advocates a shift from a summative assessment system to a more competency based and formative assessment approach. It aims to reduce the emphasis on board exams and promote holistic evaluation methods.

9. **Research and Development**: NEP 2020 emphasises the need for increased investment in research and development in the education sector. It promotes the establishment of research institutes, collaboration with international institutions and the creation of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to foster research and innovation.

10. **Financial Support**: The policy highlights the need for increased public investment in education and recommends the allocation of 6% of India's GDP to education. It also aims to enhance the availability of scholarships, loans and financial aid for students.

4.3.4 Indian Foreign Policy

4.3.4.1 Major Changes in Indian Foreign Policy Post-2000

♦ India's foreign policy evolves into global leadership

India's foreign policy after 2000 has undergone significant transformation, driven by its aspirations as an emerging global power and the challenges of a rapidly changing international order. The period has been characterised by a pragmatic approach to geopolitics, economic diplomacy and strategic security concerns, marking India's transition from a regional to a global player.

Rise of India as a Global Player

♦ India adapts foreign policy in changing world

The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia Ukraine war have had a structural change on the world order, where there is a shift of power from the Atlantic to the Pacific and India is navigating its way through the complexities of International Relations by balancing national interests and global responsibilities. There is a rise in India's geopolitical profile as it is playing a greater role in world affairs with active participation in international organisations such as UNSC, SCO, WTO, G 20 *etc*. The shift from an idealistic to more realistic foreign policy with a greater emphasis upon soft power, para diplomacy and using India's geopolitical positioning at the cross borders of Asia and the Middle East has played an important role in making India a crucial player in regional as well as global politics.

From the Bandung Conference to the G20 presidency of 2023, India has served as the voice of the Global South, thereby bringing the issues of the developing nations to the fore. India is upholding its strategic autonomy while playing a proactive role in finding solutions. As the G20 chair, India will play an important role in setting up a new agenda for the global public good. India's rise as a global power, growing and existing on the no-war principle is a first of its kind in human history. Along with the fulfilment of its role as the representative of the developing countries, India is also managing the issues on its maritime front. It is managing its increasing regional assertiveness in the South China Sea by partnering with QUAD and JAI and deepening its ties with Europe.

The Indian Ocean region is at the crossroads of global trade and has become the major international trade route, especially for transporting energy which has made India rethink its priorities in the region. Further, The Indian Ocean Rim Association strives to achieve sustainable use of resources which is backed by blue diplomacy to avail the perks of maritime development. India is dominating the Indian Ocean region by permanently deploying its warships and conducting naval exercises such as - The Malabar exercise with QUAD, the Varuna exercise 2021 with France and SITMEX 2020 with Thailand and Singapore. India's UNSC candidature was unanimously endorsed by 55 countries, including China and Pakistan. This shows the success of Indian diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region. It is needless to mention that India's G20 presidency stands as a testimony to India's rise as a superpower

The Indian Diaspora is seen as the carrier of soft power. An assertive and active Indian Diaspora is playing an important role in strengthening and improving ties with many countries. It promotes people-to-people contact and enhances India's soft power through the facilitation of cultural exchanges and collaborations, builds bridges of understanding between nations. Apart from the Indian diaspora, India's para-diplomacy can play a significant role in its rise as a global superpower. Para diplomacy points to a situation wherein a subnational entity like states, provinces or cities undertakes external relations with other nations. It helps in attracting foreign investment by promoting the unique strengths and resources of the states. For example, Gujarat attracted foreign investment during its "Vibrant Gujarat Summit" which helped to boost economic growth and create employment opportunities. It also facilitates international corporations in areas such as education, agriculture *etc*. and helps to address regional challenges of border security, terrorism, climate change *etc*.

Para diplomacy therefore provides a unique opportunity for India

♦ *India leads Global South with proactive diplomacy*

♦ *India strengthens dominance in Indian Ocean region*

♦ *Indian diaspora and para diplomacy boost global influence*

to leverage its unique strengths in its rise as a global superpower. India is treading on the right path as far as the diplomatic front is concerned. It is consciously working towards capitalising on its strengths and working on the opportunities offered by the external environment. India has been successful in addressing its diplomatic issues and has made persistent efforts to improve its relations with all the countries. Treading on the path of diplomatic success is therefore the right way forward towards guaranteeing India's rise as a global superpower.

4.3.4.2 Geopolitical Strategies: Balancing Ties Between the U. S., Russia and China

The U. S.-India Strategic Partnership

The post-Cold War era saw a significant warming of relations between India and the United States. Key milestones include the 2008 Civil Nuclear Agreement, which ended decades of nuclear isolation for India. The U. S.-India partnership expanded into defence cooperation, technology sharing and counter terrorism. More recently, the two nations have deepened their ties through agreements such as the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA).

Russia: A Time-Tested Partner

Despite India's growing proximity to the U. S., Russia remains a crucial ally. India relies on Russian military hardware, with deals such as the acquisition of the S-400 Triumf missile defence system highlighting the enduring defence relationship. Balancing this partnership amidst Western sanctions on Russia has been a diplomatic challenge, reflecting India's commitment to an independent foreign policy.

China: Cooperation and Conflict

India's relationship with China is marked by both economic engagement and strategic rivalry. While trade ties have grown significantly, territorial disputes, particularly the Doklam standoff (2017) and the Galwan Valley clashes (2020), have strained relations. India's participation in initiatives like the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) and its Indo-Pacific strategy reflects its efforts to counter China's growing influence in the region.

4.3.4.3 Recent Shifts - Post 2014

India has traditionally pursued a "non-aligned" foreign policy, but since Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014, the country has become more aggressive in international dealings, notably with Pakistan. Prior to his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

taking over the reins of the country following a stunning general election victory in 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had no prior expertise in foreign affairs. He was recognised as the Chief Minister of Gujarat, for his economic prowess, but as Prime Minister, he had to demonstrate his ability in international affairs as well. Modi has a difficult challenge in establishing his image after assuming office.

The religious riots in Gujarat in 2002, which killed over 2,000 people, many of them Muslims, had tarnished his reputation as the state's chief minister. Modi, a skilled politician, launched his diplomatic assault soon after his BJP won a majority in the 2014 legislative elections. He invited numerous regional figures to his inauguration, including Pakistan's former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and ex-Afghan President Hamid Karzai. According to experts, Modi sought to shed his reputation as Gujarat Chief Minister and promote himself as a statesman. Even before he became Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's government prioritised diplomacy as one of its main priorities. The government's diplomatic outreach has come a long way in the previous four years, from inviting SAARC leaders to his inauguration to conducting back-to-back informal encounters with the Chinese and Russian presidents. It has seen ups and downs in its connections with other nations and has had to adjust to the changes. The administration has made a determined effort to communicate with all 192 nations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy has been characterised by a concerted effort to enhance India's diplomatic ties with nations that had been overlooked for an extended period. In November 2014, PM Modi embarked on a historic visit to Fiji, becoming the first Indian head of government to do so in 33 years since Indira Gandhi's visit in 1981. During this visit, he participated in the 'Forum for India-Pacific Island Cooperation,' engaging with leaders from all 14 Pacific Island nations and earning the prestigious "The Companion of the Order of Fiji" in recognition of his global leadership. In March 2015, PM Modi undertook a groundbreaking visit to Seychelles, marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 33 years since Indira Gandhi. This visit was part of Modi's overarching "Indian Ocean outreach" programme. In 2016, Modi continued his efforts by visiting Mozambique, the first prime ministerial visit from India to the country since Indira Gandhi's visit in 1982.

In April 2018, PM Modi strengthened diplomatic ties with Sweden, marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 30 years. During this visit, he engaged in productive discussions with Swedish P. M. Stefan Lofven, interacted with business leaders and

met His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf. Further, in August 2015, P. M. Modi made history by becoming the first Indian Prime Minister in 34 years to visit the United Arab Emirates (UAE), emphasising a renewed focus on the Middle East. In 2015, he made a significant stopover in Ireland, marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in about 60 years since Jawaharlal Nehru's visit in 1956.

♦ *Enhances diplomatic ties with key nations*

Modi also made strides in Central Asia, being the second Indian P. M. to visit Turkmenistan in 2015 after P. V. Narasimha Rao, as part of his diplomatic engagements following the BRICS summit in Russia. The year 2018 witnessed P. M. Modi's historic visit to Jordan, making him the first Indian Prime Minister to visit the nation in 30 years. This visit included meetings with Prime Minister Hani Al-Mulki and King Abdullah II of Jordan, reinforcing India's commitment to fostering diplomatic relations across various regions (Jaiswal, 2023). Modi's strategic visits to these nations underscore his commitment to revitalising India's global diplomatic outreach and strengthening ties with countries that had not been prioritised in recent decades.

♦ *Strengthens India's ties with Central Asia and Jordan*

Challenges for Indian Foreign Policy – post-2014

1. India has become part of several new groups, but it has not kept the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) running smoothly. The last SAARC Summit occurred in 2014. Instead, organisations like BIMSTEC and BBIN have gained attention, but they do not cover the entire region. Additionally, India has almost stopped its involvement with over 120 nations in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), even though the Modi government has reached out to similar countries.

♦ *India shifts focus to BIMSTEC, BBIN over SAARC*

2. The government has shifted from being non-aligned to being multi-aligned, but it has not clearly stated its position in a world that is becoming more divided. Striking a balance between trying to please everyone and having a clear stance can be tricky. Moving from a realistic approach to realpolitik and transnationalism without a guiding principle may not be sustainable in the long run.

♦ *India navigates challenges in multi-aligned foreign policy*

3. China's challenge extends beyond bilateral issues and border tensions; it now involves India's neighbouring countries. With almost every neighbouring nation, except Bhutan, participating in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), there is a significant increase in Chinese investments and trade in the region. Bhutan, too, has engaged with Beijing in an unprecedented way for boundary settlement. The unresolved issues with China have led to roadblocks in achieving key government objectives, such as membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Despite Prime

♦ *China's influence challenges India's regional objectives*

Minister Modi's 18 one-on-one meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping, the India-China relationship has faced challenges, particularly in anticipating incidents like the Line of Actual Control (LAC) incursions.

4. Human Rights Concerns: The government's foreign policy has faced scrutiny for not consistently prioritising human rights concerns in its engagements. Instances such as the handling of the Rohingya crisis and certain domestic developments have led to questions about India's stance on human rights issues in its foreign policy.

5. Ignoring several countries which are important from an Indian Perspective: As India seeks to strengthen its global partnerships and leverage its strategic heft, it is crucial for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to undertake visits to key countries that are vital for India's interests across various domains. Nations like Norway, a major partner in the blue economy and Arctic affairs, South Korea, a technology powerhouse and crucial Indo-Pacific player, Chile, a gateway to Latin America, New Zealand, an influential voice in the South Pacific and Finland, a cooperative partner in areas like education and innovation, present immense opportunities for deepening engagement. High-level visits would allow Modi to have in-depth discussions on expanding cooperation in areas of mutual priority such as trade and investment, energy, climate change, technology transfers, defence and maritime security. Moreover, these nations could prove to be valuable partners in supporting India's ambitions in different multilateral forums. By taking the initiative to nurture these ties through summits and bilateral meetings, Modi can signal India's commitment to forging multi-dimensional global partnerships that cut across geographies in line with the nation's quest to play a more influential role on the world stage.

Summarised Overview

The unit "Changes in Domestic and Foreign Policy" explores significant shifts in India's political, legal and foreign policy landscape in recent years. It covers four key areas: the abrogation of Article 370, the 6th Amendment of the Citizenship Act of 1955, the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and major changes in India's foreign policy since 1990.

The abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 marked a historic shift by revoking the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir, aiming for greater integration and development. This decision was met with both support and opposition, raising complex questions about regional autonomy and security. The CAA, passed in 2019, amended the citizenship law

to provide expedited citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. While proponents argued it offered refuge to persecuted minorities, critics raised concerns about its discriminatory nature, especially regarding its exclusion of Muslim refugees.

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced transformative reforms aimed at revamping India's education system. The policy emphasizes a multidisciplinary approach, reducing rote learning, encouraging critical thinking and promoting vocational education. It also advocates for education in the mother tongue and aims to make education more accessible and inclusive. India's foreign policy has undergone significant changes since the early 1990s, marked by a shift towards globalisation and liberalisation. The country has strengthened strategic relationships, particularly with the United States and regional powers like Japan, while asserting itself more actively in international forums such as the United Nations and BRICS.

Assignments

1. Evaluate the significance of the 6th Amendment of the Citizenship Act of 1955 (CAA) in shaping India's secular framework.

2. Critically assess the key reforms introduced by the New Education Policy 2020. How do these changes address the challenges faced by the Indian education system and promote inclusive growth?

3. Analyse the major shifts in India's foreign policy since 1990. How have India's strategic relationships with the United States, neighbouring countries and multilateral organisations evolved in the post-liberalisation era?

Reference

1. Bhagwati, Jagdish N. *India's Foreign Policy: Coping with the Changing World*. Oxford UP, 2020.

2. Lamb, Alastair. *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy 1846-1990*. Roxford, 1991.

3. Sharma, Arvind N. National Education Policy 2020: Transforming Education in India. 1st ed. Publisher, 2020

Suggested Reading

1. Ahmad, Bashir. *Kashmir: Glimpses of History and the Story of Struggle*. J&K Cultural Academy, 1999.

2. Kaur, Amarjit. *The CAA-NRC Debate: A Constitutional Perspective*. 2020.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

MODEL QUESTION PAPER SETS

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FOURTH SEMESTER MA EXAMINATION
DISCIPLINE CORE COURSE - M21HS11DC: CONTEMPORARY INDIA
(CBCS - PG)

MODEL QUESTION PAPER- SET- A

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

SECTION A

Answer any ten questions in a word or sentence Each question carries one mark.

(10X1= 10 Marks)

1. Under which Article of the Indian Constitution was the Internal Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi on 26 June 1975?

2. What was the primary objective of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)?

3. Structural adjustment policies (SAPs) in India were introduced in response to which crisis?

4. Which sector in India particularly benefited from liberalization and contributed significantly to export growth?

5. Which states were at the forefront of the farmers' protests against the new farm laws?

6. According to the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Law, 2020, when can the government regulate the supply of food items?

7. What was the primary goal of the Assam Movement (1979-1985)?

8. When did the Muslim League observe "Direct Action Day"?

9. Which regions experienced severe communal violence during the Partition of India in 1947?

10. Who led the government of Bengal during the Noakhali riots?

11. Which state became one of the primary destinations for refugees during the 1971 Bangladesh war?

12. Which historic agreement promised the protection of Assamese identity by preventing the settlement of illegal immigrants?

13. According to Bipan Chandra, which British policy institutionalised religious distinctions?

14. Which anthropologist argued that the British colonial state constructed communal identities through classification and categorisation?

15. Which historian emphasised the role of print culture and education in shaping communal identities?

SECTION B

Answer any five questions in two or three sentences each. Each question carries two marks.

(5X2 =10 Marks)

16. The Bishnoi Movement

17. Swadeshi

18. Economic Liberalism

19. Operation Bluestar

20. The Nellie massacre

21. Adult suffrage

22. Fundamental Rights

23. Noakhali

24. Cultural homogenisation

25. Educational Migration

SECTION C

Answer any five questions in one paragraph. Each question carries four marks.

(5X4 = 20 Marks)

26. Discuss the concerns related to cultural homogenisation due to global mobility. How does the process of cultural adaptation help preserve local cultures in India?

27. Explain the features of structural adjustments.

28. Discuss the key features of the Social Security Code, 2020. How does it expand social security benefits to the unorganised sector and ensure comprehensive welfare?

29. Explain the demographic changes in Punjab caused by the Partition of India in 1947.

30. Discuss the impact of colonial rule and post-independence policies on tribal communities in India.

31. Examine the significance of Rajiv-Longowal Accord

32. How did the rise of religious extremism in Punjab lead to the demand for Khalistan?

33. Write Bipan Chandra's view on how colonial policies contributed to the rise of communalism in India.

SECTION D

Answer any three questions in two pages. Each question carries ten marks.

(3X10 =30 Marks)

34. What were the challenges India encountered in the rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees after the mass migrations of 1947?

35. Discuss the challenges faced by Jawaharlal Nehru and other Indian leaders in managing linguistic diversity immediately after independence.

36. Explain the major reforms of the New Education Policy 2020. How do these reforms tackle the challenges within the Indian education system and foster inclusive growth?

37. Evaluate the role of NITI Aayog in reshaping the concept of planning in India

38. Compare and contrast the Punjab and Assam conflicts in terms of their causes.

39. Evaluate the role of secularism in the Indian national movement.

FOURTH SEMESTER MA EXAMINATION
DISCIPLINE CORE COURSE - M21HS11DC: CONTEMPORARY INDIA
(CBCS - PG)

MODEL QUESTION PAPER- SET- B

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours   Max Marks: 70

SECTION A

Answer any ten questions in a word or sentence Each question carries one mark.

(10X1= 10 Marks)

1. Which constitutional provision was abrogated in 2019, leading to the removal of Jammu and Kashmir's special status?

2. Which region experienced the most intense demographic shifts during the Partition of India?

3. Which international event laid the foundation for studies on environmental conditions and inspired global environmental awareness?

4. Who was the leader of the Muslim League at the time of the 1946 Calcutta riots?

5. Which year did India undertake the devaluation of the rupee as part of its economic reforms?

6. What was one of the immediate causes of economic discontent that led to the declaration of the Internal Emergency in 1975?

7. What was the primary goal of India's 2016 demonetisation?

8. On which date did India's Supreme Court suspend the three farm laws?

9. According to the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956, which sector was supposed to dominate the economy in the long run?

10. What was Jawaharlal Nehru's approach towards tribal integration in post-independence India?

11. What was the primary aim of the 20-Point Programme introduced in 1975?

12. In which year the preference for 'sons of the soil' in employment and education intensified after which year?

13. Which slogan did Indira Gandhi use during her 1971 election campaign?

14. What was the major objective of the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002)?

15. Who was the President of FICCI in 1934 who advocated for comprehensive economic planning in India?

SECTION B

Answer any five questions in two or three sentences each. Each question carries two marks.

(5X2 =10 Marks)

16. Nationalisation of Banks

17. Demonetisation

18. GDP

19. AISSF

20. Green Revolution

21. Anti-liquor movement

22. Chipko Movement

23. States Reorganisation Commission

24. Samyukta Maharashtra movement

25. HYV seeds

SECTION C

Answer any five questions in one paragraph. Each question carries four marks.

(5X4 = 20 Marks)

26. In what ways did Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru attempt to counteract communal divisions during and after Partition?

27. Explain the role of Potti Sriramulu in the creation of Andhra Pradesh and its impact on India's linguistic reorganisation.

28. What were the main objectives of the Second Five-Year Plan, and how did it shape India's industrial growth?

29. Explain the reasons behind the nationalisation of banks in 1969 and its impact on financial inclusion in India.

30. How did the Indian government's counterinsurgency operations in Punjab impact civilians during the 1980s and early 1990s?

31. Explain the role of global media in facilitating cultural exchange in India. How does it impact both Indian and foreign cultures?

32. Explain the concepts of McDonaldization and Coca-Colonization in the context of cultural homogenization.

33. How did the British policy of "divide and rule" contribute to the rise of communalism in India?

SECTION D

Answer any three questions in two pages. Each question carries ten marks.

(3X10 =30 Marks)

34. Explain the concept of "Glocalization". How global influences are adapted to local contexts.

35. Analyse the impact of Operation Blue Star and its aftermath on Sikh politics and the Khalistan movement.

36. What were the challenges India encountered in the rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees after the mass migrations of 1947?

37. Discuss the challenges faced by Jawaharlal Nehru and other Indian leaders in managing linguistic diversity immediately after independence.

38. Explain the major reforms of the New Education Policy 2020. How do these reforms tackle the challenges within the Indian education system and foster inclusive growth?

39. How have India's strategic relationships with the United States, neighbouring countries, and multilateral organisations evolved in the post-liberalization era?

സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

വിദ്യയാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ഗ്രഹപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കൂരിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം
നീതിവൈജയന്തി പാറണം

ശാസ്ത്രവ്യാപ്തിയെന്നുമേകണം
ജാതിഭേദമാകെ മാറണം
ബോധരശ്മിയിൽ തിളങ്ങുവാൻ
ജ്ഞാനകേന്ദ്രമേ ജ്വലിക്കണേ

കുരീപ്പുഴ ശ്രീകുമാർ

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Contemporary India

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