

Emerging Political Trends 1977 to 2000

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Q. 1. Match the following:

- i. Economic liberalization a) restriction in foreign import tax
- ii. Arbitrary dismissal b) of state governments by central government
- iii. Ethnic cleansing c) towards people who are different from themselves
- iv) Federal principle d) greater autonomy for state governments

Answer : 1. Economic liberalization: restriction on foreign import taxes

EXPLANATION: Economies were liberalized by making the imports more freer to move inside India. It was thus done by restricting the tax on imports of foreign goods and services. This was a part of simplification and liberalization of the trade policy of India under the economic liberalization policy in the 1990s.

2. Arbitrary dismissal: of state governments by the national governments.

EXPLANATION: the state governments were dismissed by the central governments as in the case of Janta Party and Congress. When Janta party came into power at the Centre, it dismissed the Congress in the nine states where it won elections. The same was done by the Congress to Janta party after it came to power. This type of practice weakened the federal system as it involved the arbitrary use of power by the central government.

3. Ethnic cleansing: people who are different from themselves

EXPLANATION: Ethnic cleansing means forceful removal of an ethnic group or minority tribe from a particular territory of a more powerful ethnic group. The types of forces used may be are genocide, rapes, forced migration, intimidation. The objective is to make the territory free of people belonging to a different ethnic group and making it a homogeneous place.

4. Federal principle: greater autonomy for state governments

EXPLANATION: India is a federal country. Being a federal country means decentralization of power by providing more powers to the state governments. There is sharing of powers between the Centre and the state. There is no central authority which

holds complete power therefore lesser chances of suppression of the state governments.

Q. 2. Identify the major changes in the party system during the second phase of independence?

Answer : Since independence, there was a single party rule in India. The Congress won the first three general elections until the period ending in 1997. But after the period following the emergency, the following major changes took place in the party system:

1. The single-party rule came to an end, and the multi-party system emerged.
2. Several regional parties came to the forefront with increased awareness and full of competitive spirit. Thus national parties could not come to power without their support.
3. India witnessed the era of coalition party system from 1977 onwards.

Hence the single-party rule came to an end, and the other parties began to assert their importance in the formation of the government.

Q. 3. What are the major economic policies of various governments at the Centre and the state discussed in this and the previous chapters? How are they similar or different?

Answer : The major economic policies of various governments were different to a great extent. Since independence, our country is working towards growth and development of each section of the society.

- Immediately after independence, India adopted Five Year Plan in 1950. The plan was focused more on the agriculture sector and development of dams and irrigation.
- It stressed the need for increasing food production, development of transport and communications and the provision of social services.
- It also emphasized the need for India to be industrialised as soon as possible.
- The strategy favored by Nehru and finally adopted included three components: land reforms, agricultural cooperatives, and local self-government.
- The Foreign policy of India was neutral. India was a country which supported the Non-Aligned Movement and did not join any of the two blocks after being independent. Thus it maintained peaceful relations with both the superpowers.

But after the end of the first phase, its foreign policies got deviated from the issues of agriculture and industrial development. India focused more on economic liberalization. It included:

- Stress on a more free movement of exports and imports.
- The liberalized trade through the abolition of the licensing system
- Allowance to more and more foreign direct investments.
- Special Economic Zones were also set up to attract foreign countries into Indian territory.
- Making the economy more market and service oriented and expanding the role of private and foreign investments.

Some of the issues were the same as in the first phase, but the focus was more on the economic sector of the country rather than the agricultural one in the second phase. These were the similarities and differences in the economic policies of the two phases.

**Q. 4. How did regional aspirations lead to the formation of regional parties?
Compare the differences and similarities between the two different phases.**

Answer : The regional parties are the result of the regional aspirations and uprisings in the region. The leaders of the regional uprisings form their own party to represent their group and try to gain the power to come to power. The following are few examples of the regional movements that lead to the formation of regional parties in India:

1. PUNJAB: The Sikh minority in Punjab wanted to establish a separate state for them named “Khalistan” to serve as the homeland for Sikhs. The Shiromani Akali Dal urged upon the Janta government to take cognizance of the demands of the linguistic and cultural minority. The violent protests of the group led to the killing of various non-Sikh people.

2. ASSAM: The movement to remove the non-Assamese from the state led to the formation of “AASU” (ALL ASSAM STUDENTS’ UNION) in the 1970s. The movement demanded that all non-Assamese speaking people should be migrated from Assam. It led to a number of strikes, agitation, and marches directed against the central government to make its clear demand to remove all the outsiders.

3. ANDHRA PRADESH: The frequent change of Chief Ministers and imposition of leaders from New Delhi created a feeling of disrespect in people. This was seen as an insult to the pride of Telugu people. This led to the formation of Telugu Desam Party in 1982 by N.T. Rama Rao with the objective of bringing respect and stability in Andhra Pradesh.

Hence during both the phases, there were different sects of people demanding their own separate states and wanting greater autonomy from the Centre. Some of them even wanted to go out of India itself. Although the State Reorganization Commission

was set up in 1956, peaceful initiatives were begun by the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1990s for Mizoram, Assam, and Punjab.

Q. 5. In order to form governments, it becomes necessary for political parties to attract people from different sections of society. How did different political parties realize these objectives in the second phase after independence?

Answer : In order to form a government it became necessary for the political parties to look into the needs and demands of the different sections of the society. **This was because of the following reasons:**

1. The politicians wanted to make their party more representative and inclusive rather than be seen as representing a single community.
2. The parties wanted to expand their roots to the ground level. Hence, the parties attracted candidates from each and every section.
3. In order to gain power both at the state and the Centre, the political parties attracted people to their party and form the government.

The parties came to realize this after the second phase of the independence when the trend of single-party rule came to a downfall and parties emerged from different regions. They realized the need for being inclusive and representative to form a majority government. All the sects in Indian society had different problems to be dealt with. Therefore, they were looking for that party which would take their demand to the forefront and take decisions in their favor.

Q. 6. What were the developments that weakened the inclusive nature of the Indian polity? How is the ability to accommodate different communities and regional aspirations changing?

Answer : The Congress party which came to power after the first general elections comprised of educated, rich elites and businessmen. It did not represent each and every section of the society thus neglecting them. This exclusive nature of the Congress party created a feeling of hatred among people of other.

After independence, there was a huge population under poverty and illiteracy prevailed among the masses. People were ignorant. They lacked their basic rights. There was huge corruption, regionalism, communalism, population explosion, violence, Naxalism, terrorism, and fights with the neighboring countries over migration and border issues. Social and economic inequalities were prevalent.

Hence there was an urgent need to reform democracy and implement strict measures. All these were obstacles in the path of India to become a successful democratic country. Democracy was to be practiced under stringent reforms.

In the Indian scenario, there has been a noticeable change in accommodating regional aspirations and different communities. The political parties have become more inclusive as they were earlier. Now, these parties are eager to represent the views of every section of the society in order to expand their rule and gain support throughout the country. To come to power and remain there, it has become important for the parties to accommodate the demands of different regions.

Q. 7. How do different types of regional aspirations draw from cultural and economic dimensions?

Answer : A region is organized with the collaboration of culture, economy, traditions, politics, language and much more. It is identified with those particular attributes. When that region feels alienated from others and neglected, it demands greater autonomy for itself in the form of status, recognition, and power.

From the cultural point of view, the regional aspirations include the recognition of the religion and culture at the central level. They want their culture and traditions to be recognized as distinct and significant. If they face dominance of any other culture over theirs, they are sure to strike back against the ruling government.

From the economic point of view, if the region is facing the economic crisis, economic inequality or lacking in terms of economic development, it creates a sense of insecurity and hatred. The people want maximum economic development; be it in employment, infrastructure, health, etc. The aspirations highlighting the development of the economy of the region can prove dangerous for the government if not dealt with in a proper manner.

Hence different types of regional aspirations draw from culture and economic dimensions.

Q. 8. In the first half of the period after independence, there was a lot of importance given to planned development. In the later part, the emphasis was given to liberalization. Discuss and find out how does it reflects political ideals?

Answer : Soon after India became independent, the elected government paid attention to the development of different areas which were underdeveloped and lacked basic infrastructure. The Planning Commission was set up in March 1950 to look after the areas of development. The followings are the points explaining the issues which were given importance:

1. Poverty, underemployment, unemployment, low per capita income were given importance in the planning. They were recognized as social evils and as destructors of human resource.
2. The aim to reduce illiteracy among the masses and to increase awareness about education.

3. To improve health conditions, development of hospitals, access to medicines in remote areas, sanitation.

4. Setting up of a State Reorganization Commission to look into the matters of demand relating to the creation of new states, etc.

But after the first phase of independence, in the 1980s, the emphasis was laid on the liberalisation of the economy by the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

- His governments' first budget in 1985 moved towards a more liberalized system by removing some of the checks and controls that were in place.
- He viewed economic growth as a principal instrument of ensuring a dignified place for India as a global power.
- Freer imports and exports were promoted. The licensing of the industries was neglected.
- Foreign direct investments were approved in many areas. There was a reduction in tariffs.
- Many public policies were ended.
- The economy was made more market and service oriented by allowing and increasing private and foreign investments.

Still, there are debates going on if the policy of liberalization has done harms and to which extent and whether they are sustainable and relevant in today's context.

Q. 9. Study the newspapers and magazines to identify at least one example each of moderation in policies due to the coalition and how do different political parties in coalition emphasize their regional demands?

Answer : Coalition government is formed when there is no absolute majority of any single party in the parliament. There is cooperation of different political parties which come forward to form the government. Therefore all the parties have equal power and equal say in the policies of the government. In this way, they put forward their regional demands representing the demands of their own people and want the decisions to be taken in their favor only.

Hence in order to reach a certain agreement, the demands of all parties under coalition have to be taken care of. All their suggestions are considered before reaching the final decision. The central government becomes more sensible to the demands put forward which many times led to "policy paralysis" as the coalition cannot implement the agendas of the single party in the coalition as other parties threaten to withdraw its support from the government leading to instability.

One such example of regional parties emphasizing their demand in the era of coalition government is in the time of UPA government when national interest was kept aside for accomplishing the regional demands. When UPA government was at the Centre, it didn't reach an agreement with Bangladesh because West Bengal regional party believe that it would hamper the development of their state.

One example of policy moderation due to coalition government is that of the reservation bill. During the rule of Janta government, the report of Mandal commission recommended the reservation for OBC in educational and employment field. Most of the political parties were not in favor of the bill but accepted it because they did not want to become unpopular among the masses and had accepted the assertion of the OBCs in politics.