

INDEPENDENT INDIA (THE FIRST 30 YEARS - 1947-77)

- India gained independence in 1947, beginning a new era of democracy and nation-building
 - Constitution of India (1950) sought to establish democracy, unify the nation, and bring social-economic changes
 - B.R. Ambedkar warned of contradictions between political equality and social-economic inequality
 - The early years after independence were defining for India's post-colonial development
 - Key challenges: maintaining unity, implementing social-economic transformation, and ensuring democracy
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FIRST GENERAL ELECTIONS

- India held its first general elections under the new Constitution in 1952
- India adopted Universal Adult Franchise immediately, unlike Western countries' gradual approach
- Election Commission developed innovative solutions like election symbols to help illiterate voters
- Separate voting booths were created for women in areas observing purdah
- Elections represented India's commitment to democracy after colonial rule

ONE-PARTY DOMINANCE

- Congress won the first three general elections (1952, 1957, 1962) with large majorities
- Jawaharlal Nehru became India's first Prime Minister and dominated early politics
- Congress consistently won over 70% of seats with about 45% of votes
- The "Congress System" featured internal groups that created diversity within the party
- This period helped nurture multi-party democracy despite Congress dominance

STATE REORGANIZATION

- Language-based reorganization of states became an early challenge for independent India
- Leaders initially hesitated fearing it might threaten national unity after Partition
- The Telugu speakers' movement led by Potti Sriramulu (who died after 58-day fast) was pivotal
- States Reorganisation Commission (1953) led to the States Reorganisation Act of 1956
- Act created 14 states and 6 union territories, helping consolidate rather than weaken India

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

- Planning Commission established to guide India's economic development
- First Five-Year Plan (1951-56) focused on agriculture, transport, and social services
- Land reforms aimed to give land to actual tillers but implemented half-heartedly
- Major dam projects were undertaken to improve irrigation and generate electricity
- From Second Five-Year Plan onwards, emphasis shifted to industrial development

FOREIGN POLICY AND LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

- Nehru established Non-Aligned Movement, avoiding both US and USSR blocs
- India faced wars with Pakistan (1948, 1965, 1971) and China (1962)
- After Nehru's death in 1964, Lal Bahadur Shastri became Prime Minister
- Shastri faced challenges including Anti-Hindi agitation and food shortages
- Following Shastri's death in 1966, Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister



ANTI-HINDI MOVEMENT AND REGIONAL POLITICS

- Official Languages Act (1963) triggered protests in southern states
- DMK led anti-Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu against perceived Hindi imposition
- Government made concessions including allowing states to use regional languages
- 1967 elections marked rise of regional parties and Congress's worst performance
- New governments reflected first "democratic upsurge" with intermediate castes gaining power

REGIONAL MOVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

- Period saw renewed regional movements across India (Telangana, Meghalaya, Punjab)
- Shiv Sena emerged in Maharashtra demanding "Bombay for Maharashtrians"
- Kashmir and Nagaland continued to face separatist movements
- Communal tensions and riots occurred in various parts of the country
- Jammu and Kashmir's unique accession circumstances led to special status (Article 370)

BANGLADESH WAR AND LEFT TURN

- East Pakistan crisis led to 1971 war and birth of Bangladesh with India's support
- Indira Gandhi called early elections in 1971 with "Garibi Hatao" (Remove Poverty) slogan
- Post-victory, Congress introduced radical policies: bank nationalization and abolishing princely pensions
- Supreme Court established "Basic Structure Doctrine" in 1973 to limit constitutional amendments
- Economic challenges (oil crisis, inflation, unemployment) led to growing public discontent

EMERGENCY AND ASSESSMENT

- Emergency imposed in 1975-77 following JP Movement and Indira Gandhi's election case
- Fundamental rights suspended, press censored, opposition leaders imprisoned
- 42nd Constitutional Amendment attempted to reduce judicial powers
- Despite Emergency setback, first 30 years established stable democracy and multi-party system
- Achievements: democratic institutions, civilian control of military, food self-sufficiency; Weaknesses: neglect of education and health