



Hindus and Muslims in Kolkata in 1947 marked the end of communal violence by jointly flying the flags of India and Pakistan from trucks patrolling the city. This rare photograph captured the joy of freedom and the tragedy of partition in India and in Pakistan.

### *In this chapter...*

The first few years in the life of independent India were full of challenges. Some of the most pressing ones concerned national unity and territorial integrity of India. We begin the story of politics in India since Independence by looking at how three of these challenges of nation-building were successfully negotiated in the first decade after 1947.

- Freedom came with Partition, which resulted in large scale violence and displacement and challenged the very idea of a secular India.
- The integration of the princely states into the Indian union needed urgent resolution.
- The internal boundaries of the country needed to be drawn afresh to meet the aspirations of the people who spoke different languages.

In the next two chapters we shall turn to other kinds of challenges faced by the country in this early phase.

# CHALLENGES OF NATION BUILDING

CHAPTER

1

## *Challenges for the new nation*

At the hour of midnight on 14-15 August 1947, India attained independence. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of free India, addressed a special session of the Constituent Assembly that night. This was the famous 'tryst with destiny' speech that you are familiar with.

This was the moment Indians had been waiting for. You have read in your history textbooks that there were many voices in our national movement. But there were two goals almost everyone agreed upon: one, that after Independence, we shall run our country through democratic government; and two, that the government will be run for the good of all, particularly the poor and the socially disadvantaged groups. Now that the country was independent, the time had come to realise the promise of freedom.

This was not going to be easy. India was born in very difficult circumstances. Perhaps no other country by then was born in a situation more difficult than that of India in 1947. Freedom came with the partition of the country. The year 1947 was a year of unprecedented violence and trauma of displacement. It was in this situation that independent India started on its journey to achieve several objectives. Yet the turmoil that accompanied independence did not make our leaders lose sight of the multiple challenges that faced the new nation.



Credit: PIB

Prime Minister Jawahar  
Lal Nehru speaking from  
the Red Fort,  
15 August 1947

...SING ALWAYS  
...YOUR INTEREST  
...ILLUSTRATED BY  
**KAY**  
...THE NEWSPAPER  
...LAKHNAO DELHI CALCUTTA BOMBAY  
...SHEKHAR GOEL

Regd. No. L 1732.

**The Hindustan Times**

LARGEST CIRCULATION IN NORTHERN, NORTH-WESTERN AND CENTRAL INDIA

VOL. XXIV, NO. 138 NEW DELHI, SATURDAY, JULY 19, 1947. PRICE TWO ANNAS.

**END OF 200-YEAR-OLD BRITISH RULE IN INDIA**

**ROYAL ASSENT TO INDEPENDENCE BILL**

**BRIEF BUT COLOURFUL CEREMONY IN LORDS**

**Two Dominions Created**

**PROVISIONAL GOVT. FOR BURMA**

**ANNOUNCEMENT LIKELY NEXT WEEK**

**FREE INDIA FLAG**

**MESSAGE FROM PREMIER**

**UNION'S RELATIONSHIP WITH RULERS**

**PROVISION FOR PROVINCES' JURISDICTION IN STATES**

**Return Of Bholuuri To Viet-Nam Welcomed**

**Sir Shafiq Ahmad Khan Dead**




“ Tomorrow we shall be free from the slavery of the British domination. But at midnight India will be partitioned. Tomorrow will thus be a day of rejoicing as well as of mourning. ”

**Mahatma Gandhi**  
14 August 1947,  
Kolkata.

**Three Challenges**

Broadly, independent India faced three kinds of challenges. The first and the immediate challenge was to shape a nation that was united, yet accommodative of the diversity in our society. India was a land of continental size and diversity. Its people spoke different languages and followed different cultures and religions. At that time it was widely believed that a country full of such kinds of diversity could not remain together for long. The partition of the country appeared to prove everyone's worst fears. There were serious questions about the future of India: Would India survive as a unified country? Would it do so by emphasising national unity at the cost of every other objective? Would it mean rejecting all regional and sub-national identities? And there was an urgent question: How was integration of the territory of India to be achieved?

The second challenge was to establish democracy. You have already studied the Indian Constitution. You know that the Constitution granted fundamental rights and extended the right to vote to every citizen. India adopted representative democracy based on the parliamentary form of government. These features ensure that the political competition would take place in a democratic framework.

A democratic constitution is necessary but not sufficient for establishing a democracy. The challenge was to develop democratic practices in accordance with the Constitution.

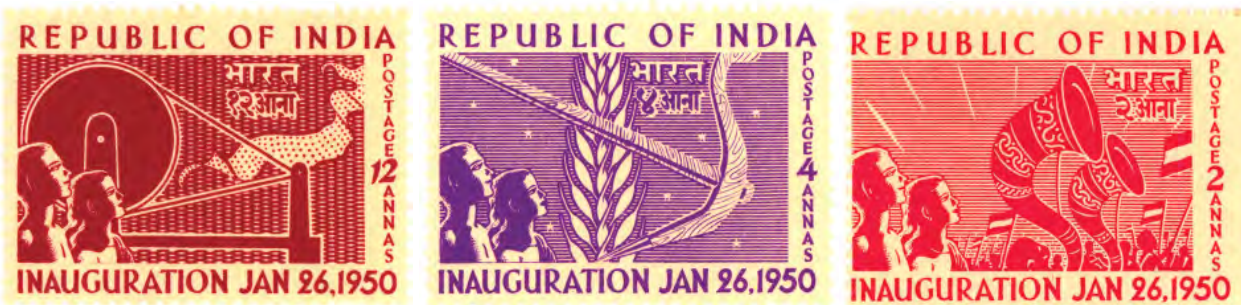
The third challenge was to ensure the development and well-being of the entire society and not only of some sections. Here again the Constitution clearly laid down the principle of equality and special protection to socially disadvantaged groups and religious and cultural communities. The Constitution also set out in the Directive Principles of State Policy the welfare goals that democratic politics must achieve. The real challenge now was to evolve effective policies for economic development and eradication of poverty.

How did independent India respond to these challenges? To what extent did India succeed in achieving the various objectives set out by the Constitution? This entire book is an attempt to respond to these questions. The book tells the story of politics in India since Independence so as to equip you to develop your own answers to big questions like these. In the first three chapters we look at how the three challenges mentioned above were faced in the early years after Independence.

In this chapter, we focus on the first challenge of nation-building that occupied centre-stage in the years immediately after Independence. We begin by looking at the events that formed the context of Independence. This can help us understand why the issue of national unity and security became a primary challenge at the time of Independence. We shall then see how India chose to shape itself into a nation, united by a shared history and common destiny. This unity had to reflect the aspirations of people across the different regions and deal with the disparities that existed among regions and different sections of people. In the next two chapters we shall turn to the challenge of establishing a democracy and achieving economic development with equality and justice.



I always wanted a time machine, so that I can go back and participate in the celebrations of 15 August 1947. But this looks different from what I thought.



These three stamps were issued in 1950 to mark the first Republic Day on 26 January 1950. What do the images on these stamps tell you about the challenges to the new republic? If you were asked to design these stamps in 1950, which images would you have chosen?

6

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DELHI: THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 1947

**MAAD ALI JINNAH**  
**MAAZAN-UL-MURABAKI**

**MAAD ALI JINNAH'S TRIBUTE TO BRITISH PEOPLE**

**Absolute Transfer Of Power  
 Unknown In World History**

**PAKISTAN TO MAINTAIN FRIENDSHIP  
 WITH BRITAIN AND HINDUSTAN**

**JINNAH'S SPEECH AT STATE DINNER  
 TO LORD & LADY MOUNTBATTEN**

KARACHI, Wednesday.  
 WILL BE OUR ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN GOODWILL AND FRIENDSHIP WITH  
 MAIN AND OUR NEIGHBOURING DOMINION—HINDUSTAN—ALONG WITH OTHER STATES  
 SO THAT WE ALL TOGETHER MAY MAKE OUR GREATEST CONTRIBUTION FOR THE  
 IN PROSPERITY OF THE WORLD". SAID MAAD-E-AZAM JINNAH IN PREPARING A TOAST  
 DURING AT THE STATE DINNER GIVEN IN HONOUR OF THE VISIT OF  
 LORD & LADY MOUNTBATTEN AT THE STATE DINNER GIVEN IN HONOUR OF THE VISIT OF  
 LORD & LADY MOUNTBATTEN AT THE STATE DINNER GIVEN IN HONOUR OF THE VISIT OF




Dawn, Karachi, 14 August 1947

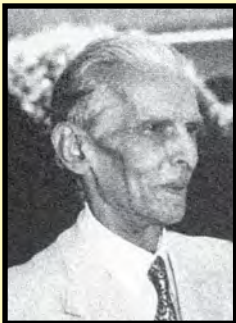
## The Dawn of Freedom

Faiz Ahmed Faiz

This scarred, marred brightness,  
 this bitten-by-night dawn -  
 The one that was awaited, surely, this is not that dawn.  
 This is not the dawn yearning for which  
 Had we set out, friends, hoping to find  
 sometime, somewhere  
 The final destination of stars in the wilderness of the sky.  
 Somewhere, at least, must be a shore for the languid  
 waves of the night,  
 Somewhere at least must anchor the sad  
 boat of the heart ...

*Translation of an extract from Urdu poem Subh-e-azadi*

Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984) Born in Sialkot; stayed in Pakistan after Partition. A leftist in his political leanings, he opposed the Pakistani regime and was imprisoned. Collections of his poetry include *Naksh-e-Fariyadi*, *Dast-e-Saba* and *Zindan-Nama*. Regarded as one of the greatest poets of South Asia in the twentieth century.



We should begin to work in that spirit and in course of time all these angularities of the majority and minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community – because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis and so on and among the Hindus you have Brahmins, Vaishnavas, Khattris, also Bengalees, Madrasis, and so on – will vanish. ... You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State.

*Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan at Karachi, 11 August 1947.*



**Today I call Waris Shah**

*Amrita Pritam*

Today, I call Waris Shah, "Speak from your grave"  
 And turn, today, the book of love's next affectionate page  
 Once, a daughter of Punjab cried and you wrote a wailing saga  
 Today, a million daughters, cry to you, Waris Shah  
 Rise! O' narrator of the grieving; rise! look at your Punjab  
 Today, fields are lined with corpses, and blood fills the Chenab  
 Someone has mixed poison in the five rivers' flow  
 Their deadly water is, now, irrigating our lands galore  
 This fertile land is sprouting, venom from every pore  
 The sky is turning red from endless cries of gore  
 The toxic forest wind, screams from inside its wake  
 Turning each flute's bamboo-shoot, into a deadly snake ...

*Translation of an extract from a Punjabi poem "Aaj Akhan Waris Shah Nun"*



*Amrita Pritam (1919–2005): A prominent Punjabi poet and fiction writer. Recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award, Padma Shree and Jnanapeeth Award. After Partition she made Delhi her second home. She was active in writing and editing 'Nagmani' a Punjabi monthly magazine till her last.*



We have a Muslim minority who are so large in numbers that they cannot, even if they want, go anywhere else. That is a basic fact about which there can be no argument. Whatever the provocation from Pakistan and whatever the indignities and horrors inflicted on non-Muslims there, we have got to deal with this minority in a civilised manner. We must give them security and the rights of citizens in a democratic State. If we fail to do so, we shall have a festering sore which will eventually poison the whole body politic and probably destroy it.

*Jawaharlal Nehru, Letter to Chief Ministers, 15 October 1947.*

### *Partition: displacement and rehabilitation*

On 14-15 August 1947, not one but two nation-states came into existence – India and Pakistan. This was a result of ‘partition’, the division of British India into India and Pakistan. The drawing of the border demarcating the territory of each country marked the culmination of political developments that you have read about in the history textbooks. According to the ‘two-nation theory’ advanced by the Muslim League, India consisted of not one but two ‘people’, Hindus and Muslims. That is why it demanded Pakistan, a separate country for the Muslims. The Congress opposed this theory and the demand for Pakistan. But several political developments in 1940s, the political competition between the Congress and the Muslim League and the British role led to the decision for the creation of Pakistan.

#### **Process of Partition**

Thus it was decided that what was till then known as ‘India’ would be divided into two countries, ‘India’ and ‘Pakistan’. Such a division was not only very painful, but also very difficult to decide and to implement. It was decided to follow the principle of religious majorities. This basically means that areas where the Muslims were in majority would make up the territory of Pakistan. The rest was to stay with India.

The idea might appear simple, but it presented all kinds of difficulties. First of all, there was no single belt of Muslim majority areas in British India. There were two areas of concentration, one in the west and one in the east. There was no way these two parts could be joined. So it was decided that the new country, Pakistan, will comprise two territories, West and East Pakistan separated by a long expanse of Indian territory. Secondly, not all Muslim majority areas wanted to be in Pakistan. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, the undisputed leader of the North Western Frontier Province and known as ‘Frontier Gandhi’, was staunchly opposed to the two-nation theory. Eventually, his voice was simply ignored and the NWFP was made to merge with Pakistan.

The third problem was that two of the Muslim majority provinces of British India, Punjab and Bengal, had very large areas where the non-Muslims were in majority. Eventually it was decided that these two provinces would be bifurcated according to the religious majority at the district or even lower level. This decision could not be made by the midnight of 14-15 August. It meant that a large number of people did not know on the day of Independence whether they were in India or in Pakistan. The Partition of these two provinces caused the deepest trauma of Partition.

This was related to the fourth and the most intractable of all the problems of partition. This was the problem of ‘minorities’ on both



Oh, now I understand! What was ‘East’ Bengal has now become Bangladesh. That is why our Bengal is called ‘West’ Bengal!

sides of the border. Lakhs of Hindus and Sikhs in the areas that were now in Pakistan and an equally large number of Muslims on the Indian side of Punjab and Bengal (and to some extent Delhi and surrounding areas) found themselves trapped. They were to discover that they were undesirable aliens in their own home, in the land where they and their ancestors had lived for centuries. As soon as it became clear that the country was going to be partitioned, the minorities on both sides became easy targets of attack. No one had quite anticipated the scale of this problem. No one had any plans for handling this. Initially, the people and political leaders kept hoping that this violence was temporary and would be controlled soon. But very soon the violence went out of control. The minorities on both sides of the border were left with no option except to leave their homes, often at a few hours' notice.

### ***Consequences of Partition***

The year 1947 was the year of one of the largest, most abrupt, unplanned and tragic transfer of population that human history has known. There were killings and atrocities on both sides of the border. In the name of religion people of one community ruthlessly killed and maimed people of the other community. Cities like Lahore,



Credit: DPA.

A train full of 'refugees' in 1947.



*Hospitality Delayed*

Saadat Hasan Manto

Rioters brought the running train to a halt. People belonging to the other community were pulled out and slaughtered with swords and bullets.

The remaining passengers were treated to halwa, fruits and milk.

The chief organiser said, 'Brothers and sisters, news of this train's arrival was delayed. That is why we have not been able to entertain you lavishly – the way we wanted to.'

Source: English translation of Urdu short story Kasre-Nafsi

Amritsar and Kolkata became divided into 'communal zones'. Muslims would avoid going into an area where mainly Hindus or Sikhs lived; similarly the Hindus and Sikhs stayed away from areas of Muslim predominance.

Forced to abandon their homes and move across borders, people went through immense sufferings. Minorities on both sides of the border fled their home and often secured temporary shelter in 'refugee camps'. They often found unhelpful local administration and police in what was till recently their own country. They travelled to the other side of the new border by all sorts of means, often by foot. Even during this journey they were often attacked, killed or raped. Thousands of women were abducted on both sides of the border. They were made to convert to the religion of the

abductor and were forced into marriage. In many cases women were killed by their own family members to preserve the 'family honour'. Many children were separated from their parents. Those who did manage to cross the border found that they had no home. For lakhs

of these 'refugees' the country's freedom meant life in 'refugee camps', for months and sometimes for years.

Writers, poets and film-makers in India and Pakistan have expressed the ruthlessness of the killings and the suffering of displacement and violence in their novels, short-stories, poems and films. While recounting the trauma of Partition, they have often used the phrase that the survivors themselves used to describe Partition — as a 'division of hearts'.

The Partition was not merely a division of properties, liabilities

Credit: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library



Gandhi in Noakhali (now in Bangladesh) in 1947.

and assets, or a political division of the country and the administrative apparatus. What also got divided were the financial assets, and things like tables, chairs, typewriters, paper-clips, books and also musical instruments of the police band! The employees of the government and the railways were also 'divided'. Above all, it was a violent separation of communities who had hitherto lived together as neighbours. It is estimated that the Partition forced about 80 lakh people to migrate across the new border. Between five to ten lakh people were killed in Partition related violence.

Beyond the administrative concerns and financial strains, however, the Partition posed another deeper issue. The leaders of the Indian national struggle did not believe in the two-nation theory. And yet, partition on religious basis had taken place. Did that make India a Hindu nation automatically? Even after large scale migration of Muslims to the newly created Pakistan, the Muslim population in India accounted for 12 per cent of the total population in 1951. So, how would the government of India treat its Muslim citizens and other religious minorities (Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Jews)? The Partition had already created severe conflict between the two communities.

There were competing political interests behind these conflicts. The Muslim League was formed to protect the interests of the Muslims in colonial India. It was in the forefront of the demand for a separate Muslim nation. Similarly, there were organisations, which were trying to organise the Hindus in order to turn India into a Hindu nation. But most leaders of the national movement believed that India must treat persons of all religions

Let's watch a Film

**GARAM HAWA**



Salim Mirza, a shoe manufacturer in Agra, increasingly finds himself a stranger amid the people he has lived with all his life. He feels lost in the emerging reality after Partition. His business suffers and a refugee from the other side of partitioned India occupies his ancestral dwelling. His daughter too has a tragic end. He believes that things would soon be normal again.

But many of his family members decide to move to Pakistan. Salim is torn between an impulse to move out to Pakistan and an urge to stay back. A decisive moment comes when Salim witnesses a students' procession demanding fair treatment from the government. His son Sikandar has joined the procession. Can you imagine what Mirza Salim finally did? What do you think you would have done in these circumstances?

Year: 1973  
Director: M.S. Sathyu  
Screenplay: Kaifi Azmi  
Actors: Balraj Sahani, Jalal Aga, Farouque Sheikh, Gita Siddharth

## *Mahatma Gandhi's sacrifice*

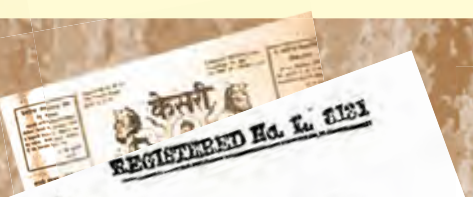
On the 15th August 1947 Mahatma Gandhi did not participate in any of the Independence Day celebrations. He was in Kolkata in the areas which were torn by gruesome riots between Hindus and Muslims. He was saddened by the communal violence and disheartened that the principles of ahimsa (non-violence) and satyagraha (active but non-violent resistance) that he had lived and worked for, had failed to bind the people in troubled times. Gandhiji went on to persuade the Hindus and Muslims to give up violence. His presence in Kolkata greatly improved the situation, and the coming of independence was celebrated in a spirit of communal harmony, with joyous dancing in the streets. Gandhiji's prayer meetings attracted large crowds. But this was short lived as riots between Hindus and Muslims erupted once again and Gandhiji had to resort to a fast to bring peace.

Next month Gandhiji moved to Delhi where large scale violence had erupted. He was deeply concerned about ensuring that Muslims should be allowed to stay in India with dignity, as equal citizens. He was also concerned about the relations between India and Pakistan. He was unhappy with what he saw as the Indian government's decision not to honour its financial commitments to Pakistan. With all this in mind he undertook what turned out to be his last fast in January 1948. As in Kolkata, his fast had a dramatic effect in Delhi. Communal tension and violence reduced. Muslims of Delhi and surrounding areas could safely return to their homes. The Government of India agreed to give Pakistan its dues.

Gandhiji's actions were however not liked by all. Extremists in both the communities blamed him for their conditions. He was particularly disliked by those who wanted Hindus to take revenge or who wanted India to become a country for the Hindus, just as Pakistan was for Muslims. They accused Gandhiji of acting in the interests of the Muslims and Pakistan. Gandhiji thought that these people were misguided. He was convinced that any attempt to make India into a country only for the Hindus would destroy India. His steadfast pursuit of Hindu-Muslim unity provoked Hindu extremists so much that they made several attempts to assassinate Gandhiji. Despite this he refused to accept armed protection and continued to meet everyone during his prayer meetings. Finally, on 30 January 1948, one such extremist, Nathuram Vinayak Godse, walked up to Gandhiji during his evening prayer in Delhi and fired three bullets at him, killing him instantly. Thus ended a life long struggle for truth, non-violence, justice and tolerance.

Gandhiji's death had an almost magical effect on the communal situation in the country. Partition-related anger and violence suddenly subsided. The Government of India cracked down on organisations that were spreading communal hatred. Organisations like the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh were banned for some time. Communal politics began to lose its appeal.





# The Gazette of India

EXTRAORDINARY  
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY  
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1948

CHIEF COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE, DELHI  
NOTIFICATION.

Delhi, the 4th February, 1948  
No. F.2(17)/48-R&J.—Whereas the Provincial Government is of the opinion that every association in the Province known as Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh constitutes a danger to the public peace. Now therefore in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 16 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1908 (XIV of 1908) the Provincial Government is pleased to declare every such association to be unlawful.

J. P. RAY, Home Secy.



Credit: Sumi Jaman

The news of Gandhi Ji's assassination drew a crowd in Kolkata.



equally and that India should not be a country that gave superior status to adherents of one faith and inferior to those who practiced another religion. All citizens would be equal irrespective of their religious affiliation. Being religious or a believer would not be a test of citizenship. They cherished therefore the ideal of a secular nation. This ideal was enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

Shweta noticed that her Nana (maternal grandfather) would get very quiet whenever anyone mentioned Pakistan. One day she decided to ask him about it. Her Nana told her about how he moved from Lahore to Ludhiana during Partition. Both his parents were killed. Even he would not have survived, but a neighbouring Muslim family gave him shelter and kept him in hiding for several days. They helped him find some relatives and that is how he managed to cross the border and start a new life.

Have you heard a similar story? Ask your grandparents or anyone of that generation about their memories of Independence Day, about the celebration, about the trauma of Partition, about the expectations they had from independence.

Write down at least two of these stories.

**Let's re-search**

### *Integration of Princely States*

British India was divided into what were called the British Indian Provinces and the Princely States. The British Indian Provinces were directly under the control of the British government. On the other hand, several large and small states ruled by princes, called the Princely States, enjoyed some form of control over their internal affairs as long as they accepted British supremacy. This was called paramountcy or suzerainty of the British crown. Princely States covered one-third of the land area of the British Indian Empire and one out of four Indians lived under princely rule.

#### ***The problem***

Just before Independence it was announced by the British that with the end of their rule over India, paramountcy of the British crown over Princely States would also lapse. This meant that all these states, as many as 565 in all, would become legally independent. The British government took the view that all these states were free to join either India or Pakistan or remain independent if they so wished. This decision was left not to the people but to the princely rulers of these states. This was a very serious problem and could threaten the very existence of a united India.

The problems started very soon. First of all, the ruler of Travancore announced that the state had decided on Independence. The Nizam of



**Note:** This illustration is not a map drawn to scale and should not be taken to be an authentic depiction of India's external boundaries.



Can't we end the Partition of India and Pakistan the way they did in Germany? I want to have breakfast in Amritsar and lunch in Lahore!

Isn't it better that we now learn to live and respect each other as independent nations?



Hyderabad made a similar announcement the next day. Rulers like the Nawab of Bhopal were averse to joining the Constituent Assembly. This response of the rulers of the Princely States meant that after Independence there was a very real possibility that India would get further divided into a number of small countries. The prospects of democracy for the people in these states also looked bleak. This was a strange situation, since the Indian Independence was aimed at unity, self-determination as well as democracy. In most of these princely states, governments were run in a non-democratic manner and the rulers were unwilling to give democratic rights to their populations.

### Government's approach

The interim government took a firm stance against the possible division of India into small principalities of different sizes. The Muslim League opposed the Indian National Congress and took the view that the States should be free to adopt any course they liked. Sardar Patel was India's Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Minister during the crucial period immediately following Independence. He played a historic role in negotiating with the rulers of princely states firmly but diplomatically and bringing most of them into the Indian Union. It may look easy now. But it was a very complicated task which required skilful persuasion. For instance, there were 26 small states in today's Orissa. Saurashtra region of Gujarat had 14 big states, 119 small states and numerous other different administrations.

The government's approach was guided by three considerations. Firstly, the people of most of the princely states clearly wanted to become part of the Indian union. Secondly, the government was prepared to be flexible in giving autonomy to some regions. The idea was to accommodate plurality and adopt a flexible approach in dealing with the demands of the regions. Thirdly, in the backdrop of Partition which brought into focus the contest over demarcation of territory, the integration and consolidation of the territorial boundaries of the nation had assumed supreme importance.

Before 15 August 1947, peaceful negotiations had brought almost all states whose territories were contiguous to the new boundaries of India, into the Indian Union. The rulers of most of the states signed a document called the 'Instrument of Accession' which meant that their state agreed to become a part of the Union of India. Accession of the Princely States of Junagadh, Hyderabad, Kashmir and Manipur proved more difficult than the rest. The issue of Junagarh was resolved after a plebiscite confirmed people's desire to join India. You will read about Kashmir in Chapter Eight. Here, let us look at the cases of Hyderabad and Manipur.

“We are at a momentous stage in the history of India. By common endeavour, we can raise the country to new greatness, while lack of unity will expose us to unexpected calamities. I hope the Indian States will realise fully that if we do not cooperate and work together in the general interest, anarchy and chaos will overwhelm us all, great and small, and lead us to total ruin...”

**Sardar Patel**

Letter to Princely rulers, 1947.



Credit: PIB

Sardar Patel with the Nizam of Hyderabad

### Hyderabad

Hyderabad, the largest of the Princely States was surrounded entirely by Indian territory. Some parts of the old Hyderabad state are today parts of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Its ruler carried the title, 'Nizam', and he was one of the world's richest men. The Nizam wanted an independent status for Hyderabad. He entered into what was called the Standstill Agreement with India in November 1947 for a year while negotiations with the Indian government were going on.

In the meantime, a movement of the people of Hyderabad State against the Nizam's rule gathered force. The peasantry in the Telangana region in particular, was the victim of Nizam's oppressive rule and rose against him. Women who had seen the worst of this oppression joined the movement in large numbers. Hyderabad town was the nerve centre of this movement. The Communists and the Hyderabad Congress were in the forefront of the movement. The Nizam responded by unleashing a para-military force known as the Razakars on the people. The atrocities and communal nature of the Razakars knew no bounds. They



**Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950):** Leader of the freedom movement; Congress leader; follower of Mahatma Gandhi; Deputy Prime Minister and first Home Minister of independent India; played an important role in the integration of Princely States with India; member of important committees of the Constituent Assembly on Fundamental Rights, Minorities, Provincial Constitution, etc.





I wonder what happened to all those hundreds of kings, queens, princes and princesses. How did they live their lives after becoming just ordinary citizens?

murdered, maimed, raped and looted, targeting particularly the non-Muslims. The central government had to order the army to tackle the situation. In September 1948, Indian army moved in to control the Nizam's forces. After a few days of intermittent fighting, the Nizam surrendered. This led to Hyderabad's accession to India.

### Manipur

A few days before Independence, the Maharaja of Manipur, Bodhachandra Singh, signed the Instrument of Accession with the Indian government on the assurance that the internal autonomy of Manipur would be maintained. Under the pressure of public opinion, the Maharaja held elections in Manipur in June 1948 and the state became a constitutional monarchy. Thus Manipur was the first part of India to hold an election based on universal adult franchise.

In the Legislative Assembly of Manipur there were sharp differences over the question of merger of Manipur with India. While the state Congress wanted the merger, other political parties were opposed to this. The Government of India succeeded in pressurising the Maharaja into signing a Merger Agreement in September 1949, without consulting the popularly elected Legislative Assembly of Manipur. This caused a lot of anger and resentment in Manipur, the repercussions of which are still being felt.



This cartoon comments on the relation between the people and the rulers in the Princely States, and also on Patel's approach to resolving this issue.

Credit: R. K. Laxman in the Times of India

## Reorganisation of States

The process of nation-building did not come to an end with Partition and integration of Princely States. Now the challenge was to draw the internal boundaries of the Indian states. This was not just a matter of administrative divisions. The boundaries had to be drawn in a way so that the linguistic and cultural plurality of the country could be reflected without affecting the unity of the nation.

During colonial rule, the state boundaries were drawn either on administrative convenience or simply coincided with the territories annexed by the British government or the territories ruled by the princely powers.

Our national movement had rejected these divisions as artificial and had promised the linguistic principle as the basis of formation of states. In fact after the Nagpur session of Congress in 1920 the principle was recognised as the basis of the reorganisation of the Indian National Congress party itself. Many Provincial Congress Committees were created by linguistic zones, which did not follow the administrative divisions of British India.

Things changed after Independence and Partition. Our leaders felt that carving out states on the basis of language might lead to disruption and disintegration. It was also felt that this would draw attention away from other social and economic challenges that the country faced. The central leadership decided to postpone matters. The need for postponement was also felt because the fate of the Princely States had not been decided. Also, the memory of Partition was still fresh.

This decision of the national leadership was challenged by the local leaders and the people. Protests began in the Telugu speaking areas of the old Madras province, which included present day Tamil Nadu, parts of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka. The Vishalandhra movement (as the movement for a separate Andhra was called) demanded that the Telugu speaking areas should be separated from the Madras province of which they were a part and be made into a separate Andhra province. Nearly all the political forces in the Andhra region were in favour of linguistic reorganisation of the then Madras province.

The movement gathered momentum as a result of the Central government's vacillation. Potti Sriramulu, a Congress leader and a veteran Gandhian, went on an indefinite fast that led to his death after 56 days. This caused great unrest and resulted in violent outbursts in Andhra region. People in large numbers took to the streets. Many were injured or lost their lives in police firing. In Madras, several legislators resigned their seats in protest. Finally, the Prime Minister announced the formation of a separate Andhra state in December 1952.

“..if linguistic provinces are formed, it will also give a fillip to the regional languages. It would be absurd to make Hindustani the medium of instruction in all the regions and it is still more absurd to use English for this purpose.”

**Mahatma Gandhi**  
January 1948

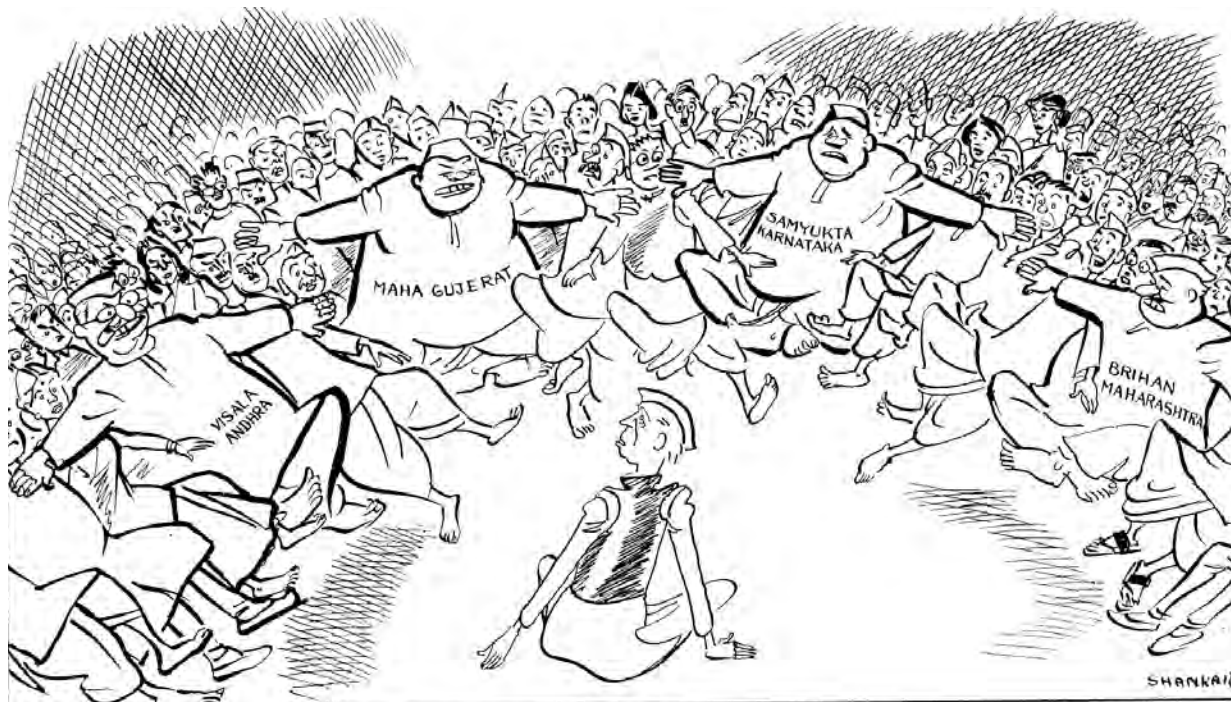


**Note:** This illustration is not a map drawn to scale and should not be taken to be an authentic depiction of India's external boundaries.

Read the map and answer the following questions:

1. Name the original state from which the following states were carved out:  

Gujarat	Haryana
Meghalaya	Chhattisgarh
2. Name two states that were affected by the Partition of the country.
3. Name two states today that were once a Union Territory.



Credit: Shankar

“Struggle for Survival” (26 July 1953) captures contemporary impression of the demand for linguistic states

The formation of Andhra spurred the struggle for making of other states on linguistic lines in other parts of the country. These struggles forced the Central Government into appointing a States Reorganisation Commission in 1953 to look into the question of redrawing of the boundaries of states. The Commission in its report accepted that the boundaries of the state should reflect the boundaries of different languages. On the basis of its report the States Reorganisation Act was passed in 1956. This led to the creation of 14 states and six union territories.



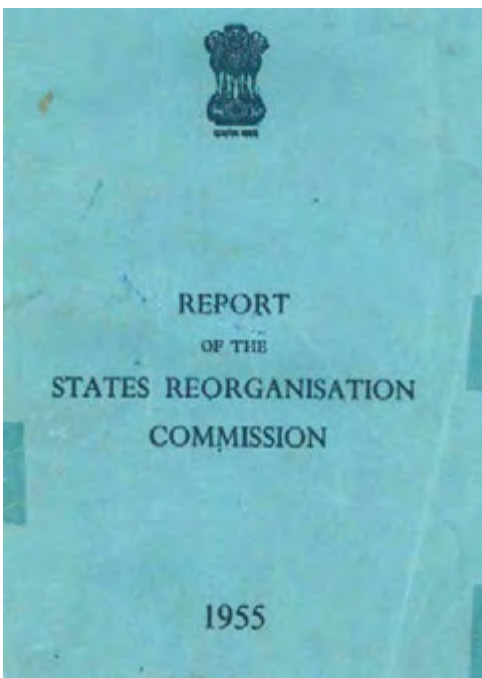
Now, isn't this very interesting? Nehru and other leaders were very popular, and yet the people did not hesitate to agitate for linguistic states against the wishes of the leaders!

**Potti Sriramulu (1901-1952):** Gandhian worker; left government job to participate in Salt Satyagraha; also participated in individual Satyagraha; went on a fast in 1946 demanding that temples in Madras province be opened to dalits; undertook a fast unto death from 19 October 1952 demanding separate state of Andhra; died during the fast on 15 December 1952.



Credit: Shankar

"Coaxing the Genie back" (5 February 1956) asked if the State Reorganisation Commission could contain the genie of linguism.



One of the most important concerns in the early years was that demands for separate states would endanger the unity of the country. It was felt that linguistic states may foster separatism and create pressures on the newly founded nation. But the leadership, under popular pressure, finally made a choice in favour of linguistic states. It was hoped that if we accept the regional and linguistic claims of all regions, the threat of division and separatism would be reduced. Besides, the accommodation of regional demands and the formation of linguistic states were also seen as more democratic.

Now it is more than fifty years since the formation of linguistic states. We can say that linguistic states and the movements for the formation of these states changed the nature of democratic politics and leadership in some basic ways. The path to politics and power was now open to people other than the small English speaking elite. Linguistic reorganisation also gave some uniform basis to the drawing of state boundaries. It did not lead

to disintegration of the country as many had feared earlier. On the contrary it strengthened national unity.

Above all, the linguistic states underlined the acceptance of the principle of diversity. When we say that India adopted democracy, it does not simply mean that India embraced a democratic constitution, nor does it merely mean that India adopted the format of elections. The choice was larger than that. It was a choice in favour of recognising and accepting the existence of differences which could at times be oppositional. Democracy, in other words, was associated with plurality of ideas and ways of life. Much of the politics in the later period was to take place within this framework.

### Fast Forward Creation of new states



The acceptance of the principle of linguistic states did not mean, however, that all states immediately became linguistic states. There was an experiment of 'bilingual' Bombay state, consisting of Gujarati- and Marathi-speaking people. After a popular agitation, the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat were created in 1960.

In Punjab also, there were two linguistic groups: Hindi-speaking and Punjabi-speaking. The Punjabi-speaking people demanded a separate state. But it was not granted with other states in 1956. Statehood for Punjab came ten years later, in 1966, when the territories of today's Haryana and Himachal Pradesh were separated from the larger Punjab state.

Another major reorganisation of states took place in the north-east in 1972. Meghalaya was carved out of Assam in 1972. Manipur and Tripura too emerged as separate states in the same year. The states of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh came into being in 1987. Nagaland had become a state much earlier in 1963.

Language did not, however, remain the sole basis of organisation of states. In later years sub-regions raised demands for separate states on the basis of a separate regional culture or complaints of regional imbalance in development. Three such states, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand, were created in 2000. The story of reorganisation has not come to an end. There are many regions in the country where there are movements demanding separate and smaller states. These include Vidarbha in Maharashtra, Harit Pradesh in the western region of Uttar Pradesh and the northern region of West Bengal.



The US has one-fourth of our population but 50 states. Why can't India have more than 100 states?

## EXERCISES

- Which among the following statements about the Partition is incorrect?
 

(a) Partition of India was the outcome of the “two-nation theory.”
(b) Punjab and Bengal were the two provinces divided on the basis of religion.
(c) East Pakistan and West Pakistan were not contiguous.
(d) The scheme of Partition included a plan for transfer of population across the border.
- Match the principles with the instances:
 

(a) Mapping of boundaries on religious grounds	i. Pakistan and Bangladesh
(b) Mapping of boundaries on grounds of different languages	ii. India and Pakistan
(c) Demarcating boundaries within a country by geographical zones	iii. Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh
(d) Demarcating boundaries within a country on administrative and political grounds	iv. Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand
- Take a current political map of India (showing outlines of states) and mark the location of the following Princely States.
 

(a) Junagadh	(b) Manipur
(c) Mysore	(d) Gwalior
- Here are two opinions –
 

*Bismay: “The merger with the Indian State was an extension of democracy to the people of the Princely States.”*

*Inderpreet: “I am not so sure, there was force being used. Democracy comes by creating consensus.”*

What is your own opinion in the light of accession of Princely States and the responses of the people in these parts?
- Read the following very different statements made in August 1947 –
 

*“Today you have worn on your heads a crown of thorns. The seat of power is a nasty thing. You have to remain ever wakeful on that seat.... you have to be more humble and forbearing...now there will be no end to your being tested.”* — M.K GANDHI

*“...India will awake to a life of freedom....we step out from the old to the new...we end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity...”* — JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Spell out the agenda of nation building that flows from these two statements. Which one appeals more to you and why?

6. What are the reasons being used by Nehru for keeping India secular? Do you think these reasons were only ethical and sentimental? Or were there some prudential reasons as well?
7. Bring out two major differences between the challenge of nation building for eastern and western regions of the country at the time of Independence.
8. What was the task of the States Reorganisation Commission? What was its most salient recommendation?
9. It is said that the nation is to a large extent an “imagined community” held together by common beliefs, history, political aspirations and imaginations. Identify the features that make India a nation.
10. Read the following passage and answer the questions below:  
*“In the history of nation-building only the Soviet experiment bears comparison with the Indian. There too, a sense of unity had to be forged between many diverse ethnic groups, religious, linguistic communities and social classes. The scale – geographic as well as demographic – was comparably massive. The raw material the state had to work with was equally unpropitious: a people divided by faith and driven by debt and disease.”* — RAMACHANDRA GUHA
  - (a) List the commonalities that the author mentions between India and Soviet Union and give one example for each of these from India.
  - (b) The author does not talk about dissimilarities between the two experiments. Can you mention two dissimilarities?
  - (c) In retrospect which of these two experiments worked better and why?

#### LET US DO IT TOGETHER

- Read a novel/ story on Partition by an Indian and a Pakistani/ Bangladeshi writer. What are the commonalities of the experience across the border?
- Collect all the stories from the ‘Let’s Research’ suggestion in this chapter. Prepare a wallpaper that highlights the common experiences and has stories on the unique experiences.





Credit: Shankar

This famous sketch by Shankar appeared on the cover of his collection – *Don't Spare Me, Shankar*. The original sketch was drawn in the context of India's China policy. But this cartoon captures the dual role of the Congress during the era of one-party dominance.

### *In this chapter...*

The challenge of nation-building, covered in the last chapter, was accompanied by the challenge of instituting democratic politics. Thus, electoral competition among political parties began immediately after Independence. In this chapter, we look at the first decade of electoral politics in order to understand

- the establishment of a system of free and fair elections;
- the domination of the Congress party in the years immediately after Independence; and
- the emergence of opposition parties and their policies.

# ERA OF ONE-PARTY DOMINANCE

## *Challenge of building democracy*

You now have an idea of the difficult circumstances in which independent India was born. You have read about the serious challenge of nation-building that confronted the country right in the beginning. Faced with such serious challenges, leaders in many other countries of the world decided that their country could not afford to have democracy. They said that national unity was their first priority and that democracy will introduce differences and conflicts. Therefore many of the countries that gained freedom from colonialism experienced non-democratic rule. It took various forms: nominal democracy but effective control by one leader, one party rule or direct army rule. Non-democratic regimes always started with a promise of restoring democracy very soon. But once they established themselves, it was very difficult to dislodge them.

The conditions in India were not very different. But the leaders of the newly independent India decided to take the more difficult path. Any other path would have been surprising, for our freedom struggle was deeply committed to the idea of democracy. Our leaders were conscious of the critical role of politics in any democracy. They did not see politics as a problem; they saw it as a way of solving the problems. Every society needs to decide how it will govern and regulate itself. There are always different policy alternatives to choose from. There are different groups with different and conflicting aspirations. How do we resolve these differences? Democratic politics is an answer to this question. While competition and power are the two most visible things about politics, the purpose of political activity is and should be deciding and pursuing public interest. This is the route our leaders decided to take.

Last year you studied how our Constitution was drafted. You would remember that the Constitution was adopted on 26 November 1949 and signed on 24 January 1950 and it came into effect on 26 January 1950. At that time the country was being ruled by an interim government. It was now necessary to install the first democratically elected government of the country. The Constitution had laid down the rules, now the machine had to be put in place. Initially it was thought that this was only a matter of a few months. The Election Commission of India was set up in January 1950. Sukumar Sen became the first Chief Election Commissioner. The country's first general elections were expected sometime in 1950 itself.

*“In India,....  
...hero-worship, plays a part  
in its politics unequalled  
in magnitude by the part  
it plays in the politics of  
any other country....But in  
politics, ...hero-worship is a  
sure road to degradation and  
eventual dictatorship.”*

**Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**

Speech in Constituent Assembly  
25 November 1949



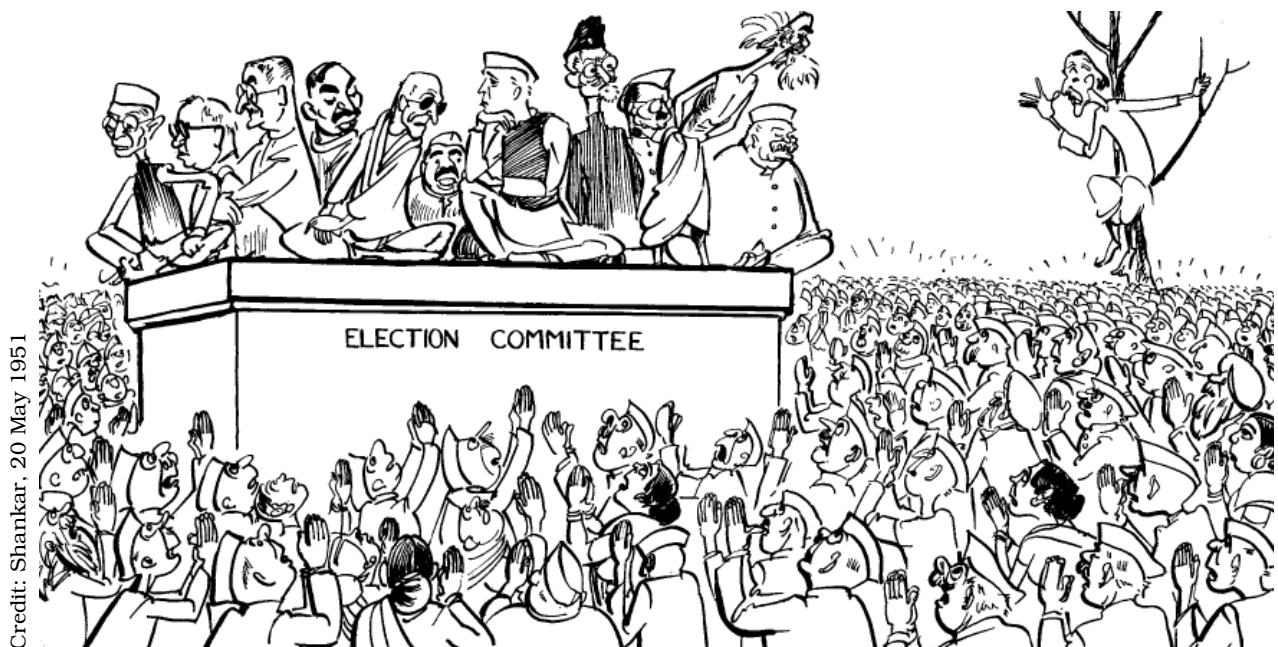
What's so special about our being a democracy? Sooner or later every country has become a democracy, isn't it?



That was a good decision. But what about men who still refer to a woman as Mrs. Somebody, as if she does not have a name of her own?

But the Election Commission discovered that it was not going to be easy to hold a free and fair election in a country of India's size. Holding an election required delimitation or drawing the boundaries of the electoral constituencies. It also required preparing the electoral rolls, or the list of all the citizens eligible to vote. Both these tasks took a lot of time. When the first draft of the rolls was published, it was discovered that the names of nearly 40 lakh women were not recorded in the list. They were simply listed as "wife of ..." or "daughter of ...". The Election Commission refused to accept these entries and ordered a revision if possible and deletion if necessary. Preparing for the first general election was a mammoth exercise. No election on this scale had ever been conducted in the world before. At that time there were 17 crore eligible voters, who had to elect about 3,200 MLAs and 489 Members of Lok Sabha. Only 15 per cent of these eligible voters were literate. Therefore the Election Commission had to think of some special method of voting. The Election Commission trained over 3 lakh officers and polling staff to conduct the elections.

It was not just the size of the country and the electorate that made this election unusual. The first general election was also the first big test of democracy in a poor and illiterate country. Till then democracy had existed only in the prosperous countries, mainly in Europe and North America, where nearly everyone was literate. By that time many countries in Europe had not given voting rights to all women. In this context India's experiment with universal adult franchise



Credit: Shankar, 20 May 1951

A cartoonist's impression of the election committee formed by the Congress to choose party candidates in 1951. On the committee, besides Nehru: Morarji Desai, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Dr B.C. Roy, Kamaraj Nadar, Rajagopalachari, Jagjivan Ram, Maulana Azad, D.P. Mishra, P.D. Tandon and Govind Ballabh Pant.

## Changing methods of voting



A sample of the ballot paper used from the third to the thirteenth general elections to Lok Sabha

These days we use an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) to record voters' preferences. But that is not how we started. In the first general election, it was decided to place inside each polling booth a box for each candidate with the election symbol of that candidate. Each voter was given a blank ballot paper which they had to drop into the box of the candidate they wanted to vote for. About 20 lakh steel boxes were used for this purpose.

A presiding officer from Punjab described how he prepared the ballot boxes—"Each box had to have its candidate's symbol, both inside and outside it, and outside on either side, had to be displayed the name of the candidate in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi along with the number of the constituency, the polling station and the polling booth. The paper seal with the numerical description of the candidate, signed by the presiding officer, had to be inserted in the token frame and its

window closed by its door which had to be fixed in its place at the other end by means of a wire. All this had to be done on the day previous to the one fixed for polling. To fix symbols and labels the boxes had first to be rubbed with sandpaper or a piece of brick. I found that it took about five hours for six persons, including my two daughters, to complete this work. All this was done at my house."



Electronic Voting Machine

After the first two elections this method was changed. Now the ballot paper carried the names and symbols of all the candidates and the voter was required to put a stamp on the name of the candidate they wanted to vote for. This method worked for nearly forty years. Towards the end of 1990s the Election Commission started using the EVM. By 2004 the entire country had shifted to the EVM.

Ask the elders in your family and neighbourhood about their experience of participating in elections.

- Did anyone vote in the first or second general election? Who did they vote for and why?
- Is there someone who has used all the three methods of voting? Which one did they prefer?
- In which ways do they find the elections of those days different from the present ones?

**Let's re-search**



**Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958):**

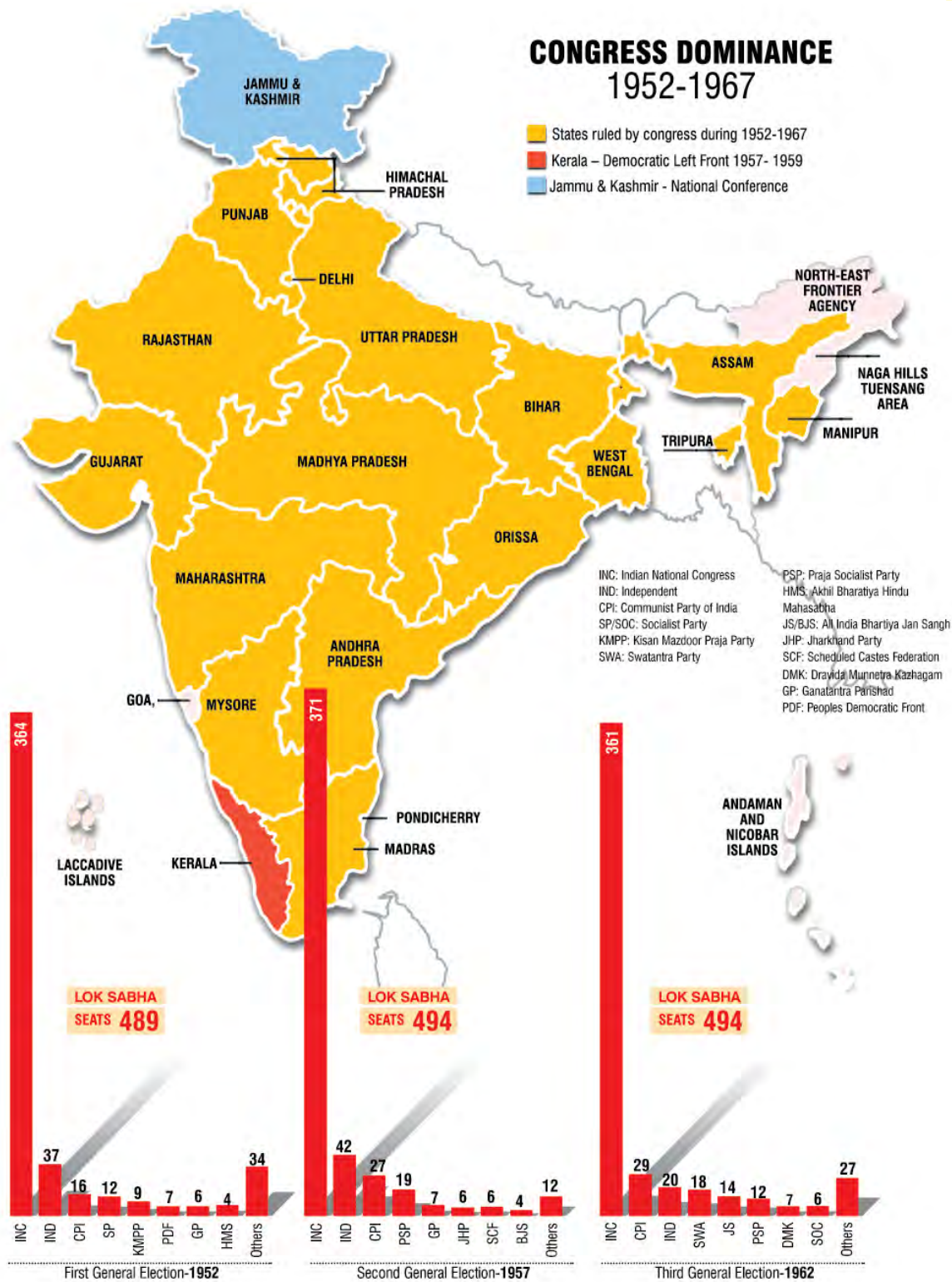
original name — Abul Kalam Mohiyuddin Ahmed; scholar of Islam; freedom fighter and Congress leader; proponent of Hindu-Muslim unity; opposed to Partition; member of Constituent Assembly; Education Minister in the first cabinet of free India.

appeared very bold and risky. An Indian editor called it “the biggest gamble in history”. Organiser, a magazine, wrote that Jawaharlal Nehru “would live to confess the failure of universal adult franchise in India”. A British member of the Indian Civil Service claimed that “a future and more enlightened age will view with astonishment the absurd farce of recording the votes of millions of illiterate people”.

The elections had to be postponed twice and finally held from October 1951 to February 1952. But this election is referred to as the 1952 election since most parts of the country voted in January 1952. It took six months for the campaigning, polling and counting to be completed. Elections were competitive – there were on an average more than four candidates for each seat. The level of participation was encouraging — more than half the eligible voters turned out to vote on the day of elections. When the results were declared these were accepted as fair even by the losers. The Indian experiment had proved the critics wrong. The Times of India held that the polls have “confounded all those sceptics who thought the introduction of adult franchise too risky an experiment in this country”. The Hindustan Times claimed that “there is universal agreement that the Indian people have conducted themselves admirably in the largest experiment in democratic elections in the history of the world”. Observers outside India were equally impressed. India’s general election of 1952 became a landmark in the history of democracy all over the world. It was no longer possible to argue that democratic elections could not be held in conditions of poverty or lack of education. It proved that democracy could be practiced anywhere in the world.

### *Congress dominance in the first three general elections*

The results of the first general election did not surprise anyone. The Indian National Congress was expected to win this election. The Congress party, as it was popularly known, had inherited the legacy of the national movement. It was the only party then to have an organisation spread all over the country. And finally, in Jawaharlal Nehru, the party had the most popular and charismatic leader in Indian politics. He led the Congress campaign and toured through the country. When the final results were declared, the extent of the victory of the Congress did surprise many. The party won 364 of the 489 seats in the first Lok Sabha and finished way ahead of any other challenger. The Communist Party of India that came next in terms of seats won only 16 seats. The state elections were held with the Lok



**Note:** This illustration is not a map drawn to scale and should not be taken to be an authentic depiction of India's external boundaries.

Can you identify the places where the Congress had a strong presence?  
 In which States, did the other parties perform reasonably well?



Sabha elections. The Congress scored big victory in those elections as well. It won a majority of seats in all the states except Travancore-Cochin (part of today's Kerala), Madras and Orissa. Finally even in these states the Congress formed the government. So the party ruled all over the country at the national and the state level. As expected, Jawaharlal Nehru became the Prime Minister after the first general election.

A look at the electoral map on the previous page would give you a sense of the dominance of the Congress during the period 1952-1962. In the second and the third general elections, held in 1957 and 1962 respectively, the Congress maintained the same position in the Lok Sabha by winning three-fourth of the seats. None of the opposition parties could win even one-tenth of the number of seats won by the Congress. In the state assembly elections, the Congress did not get majority in a few cases. The most significant of these cases was in Kerala in 1957

when a coalition led by the CPI formed the government. Apart from exceptions like this, the Congress controlled the national and all the state governments.

The extent of the victory of the Congress was artificially boosted by our electoral system. The Congress won three out of every four seats but it did not get even half of the votes. In 1952, for example, the Congress obtained 45 per cent of the total votes. But it managed to win 74 per cent of the seats. The Socialist Party, the second largest party in terms of votes, secured more than 10 per cent of the votes all over the country. But it could not even win three per cent of the seats. How did this happen? For this, you need to recall the discussion about the first-past-the-post method in your textbook, *Indian Constitution at Work* last year.

In this system of election, that has been adopted in our country, the party that gets more votes than others tends to get much more than its proportional share. That is exactly what worked in favour of the Congress. If we add up the votes of all the non-Congress candidates it was more than the votes of the Congress. But the non-Congress votes were divided between different rival parties and candidates. So the Congress was still way ahead of the opposition and managed to win.



**Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (1889-1964):** A Gandhian and Freedom fighter; belonged to the royal family of Kapurthala; inherited Christian religion from her mother; member of Constituent Assembly; Minister for Health in independent India's first ministry; continued as Health Minister till 1957.

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**Kovari's**  
 1940  
 TAMIL NOTES  
 THE PEE UNIVERSITY CHARGE  
 S. S. Srinivasan  
 KARTHIKIAN & CO.,  
 Madras-2.

## PRESIDENT'S RULE IN KERALA

CABINET ADVISES ACTION UNDER ARTICLE 356

## PROCLAMATION MAY BE ISSUED TO-DAY

(From Our Correspondent)  
 NEW DELHI, July 30. The Central Cabinet to-day advised the President of India, it is learnt, to take over the administration of Kerala State under powers vested in him by Article 356 of the Constitution to end the impasse there.

## INTERVENTION BY CENTRE

KERALA MINISTER'S REACTION

## "TRAGIC DRAMA" NEARING END

MADURAI, July 30. Mr. V. R. Krishna Aiyar, Kerala Law Minister, told PTI at the Madurai airport to-day that he did not expect that there would be any counter-demonstration or such reaction in Kerala if any Central intervention came.

Mr. Krishna Aiyar, who was on his way to Trivandrum, said he had been in touch with Trivandrum yesterday and he felt that the Central intervention would come in a day or two. "Only the form of intervention—whether to allow the Ministry to continue as a caretaker Government—seems to be yet under consideration," he said.

Asked about the impact of the possible intervention, the Law Minister said, "Of course, no decision has been taken about all this. But the pro-Government section of the people of Kerala are desirous of a 'tragic drama'—consequently it was stated that there would be no counter-demonstration."

Mr. Krishna Aiyar said he did not expect that there would be any counter-demonstration. He did not want to state any such opinion. He would rather like to see the Government return to power through the normal process of election.



## ANOTHER MAJOR WAR UNLIKELY

KHRUSHCHEV'S VIEW: "FOREIGNERS ARE GRANDED"

**मुडीज चाय**  
 सुवीज हस्त  
 जपन्तीचात एष्यड मन्स

**दुनिया**  
 पूर्वी पाकिस्तान के स्वशासन की मांग सिर्फ 'स्टण्ट' पारू मेताओं को पू. बंगाल के झलंग दोकर भारत में मिलने बां खतरा

**केरल शासन द्वारा शीघ्र भूमि सुधार का बचन नम्बुद्रीपाद मंत्रि-मण्डल ने शपथ ग्रहण की**  
 मयम सागवारी मुख्य मन्त्री की व्यापक नीति घोषित

## Communist victory in Kerala

As early as in 1957, the Congress party had the bitter taste of defeat in Kerala. In the assembly elections held in March 1957, the Communist Party won the largest number of seats in the Kerala legislature. The party won 60 of the 126 seats and had the support of five independents. The governor invited E. M. S. Namboodiripad, the leader of the Communist legislature party, to form the ministry. For the first time in the world, a Communist party government had come to power through democratic elections.

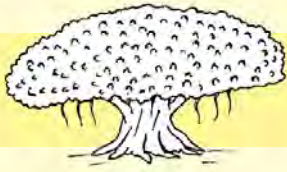
On losing power in the State, the Congress party began a 'liberation struggle' against the elected government. The CPI had come to power on the promise of carrying out radical and progressive policy measures. The Communists claimed that the agitation was led by vested interests and religious organisations. In 1959 the Congress government at the Centre dismissed the Communist government in Kerala under Article 356 of the Constitution. This decision proved very controversial and was widely cited as the first instance of the misuse of constitutional emergency powers.

E.M.S. Namboodiripad, leading a procession of Communist Party workers, after his ministry was dismissed from office in Trivandrum in August 1959.



Credit: Hindu





## Socialist Party

The origins of the Socialist Party can be traced back to the mass movement stage of the Indian National Congress in the pre-independence era. The Congress Socialist Party (CSP) was formed within the Congress in 1934 by a group of young leaders who wanted a more radical and egalitarian Congress. In 1948, the Congress amended its constitution to prevent its members from having a dual party membership. This forced the Socialists to form a separate Socialist Party in 1948. The Party's electoral performance caused much disappointment to its supporters. Although the Party had presence in most of the states of India, it could achieve electoral success only in a few pockets.



### **Acharya Narendra Dev (1889-1956):**

Freedom fighter and founding President of the Congress Socialist Party; jailed several times during the freedom movement; active in peasants' movement; a scholar of Buddhism; after independence led the Socialist Party and later the Praja Socialist Party.

The socialists believed in the ideology of democratic socialism which distinguished them both from the Congress as well as from the Communists. They criticised the Congress for favouring capitalists and landlords and for ignoring the workers and the peasants.

But the socialists faced a dilemma when in 1955 the Congress declared its goal to be the socialist pattern of society. Thus it became difficult for the socialists to present themselves as an effective alternative to the Congress. Some of them, led by Rammanohar Lohia, increased their distance from and criticism of the Congress party. Some others like Asoka Mehta advocated a limited cooperation with the Congress.

The Socialist Party went through many splits and reunions leading to the formation of many socialist parties. These included the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, the Praja Socialist Party and Samyukta Socialist Party. Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan, Asoka Mehta, Acharya Narendra Dev, Rammanohar Lohia and S.M. Joshi were among the leaders of the socialist parties. Many parties in contemporary India, like the Samajwadi Party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, Janata Dal (United) and the Janata Dal (Secular) trace their origins to the Socialist Party.



## Nature of Congress dominance

India is not the only country to have experienced the dominance of one party. If we look around the world, we find many other examples of one-party dominance. But there is a crucial difference between these and the Indian experience. In the rest of the cases the dominance of one party was ensured by compromising democracy. In some countries like China, Cuba and Syria the constitution permits only a single party to rule the country. Some others like Myanmar, Belarus, Egypt, and Eritrea are effectively one-party states due to legal and military measures. Until a few years ago, Mexico, South Korea and Taiwan were also effectively one-party dominant states. What distinguished the dominance of the Congress party in India from all these cases was it happened under democratic conditions. Many parties contested elections in conditions of free and fair elections and yet the Congress managed to win election after election. This was similar to the dominance the African National Congress has enjoyed in South Africa after the end of apartheid.



Founded in 1929, as National Revolutionary Party and later renamed as the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the PRI (in Spanish), exercised power in Mexico for almost six decades. It represented the legacy of the Mexican revolution. Originally PRI was a mixture of various interests

including political and military leaders, labour and peasant organisations and numerous political parties. Over a period of time, Plutarco Elías Calles, the founder of PRI, was able to capture the organisation and thereby the government. Elections were held at regular intervals and it was the PRI which won every time. Other parties existed in name only so as to give the ruling party greater legitimacy. The electoral laws were operated in a manner so as to ensure that the PRI always won. Elections were often rigged and manipulated by the ruling party. Its rule was described as 'the perfect dictatorship'. Finally the party lost in the Presidential elections held in 2000. Mexico is no longer a one-party dominated country. But the tactics adopted by the PRI during the period of its dominance had a long-term effect on the health of democracy. The citizens have yet to develop full confidence in the free and fair nature of elections.



**Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956):** Leader of the anti-caste movement and the struggle for justice to the Dalits; scholar and intellectual; founder of Independent Labour Party; later founded the Scheduled Castes Federation; planned the formation of the Republican Party of India; Member of Viceroy's Executive Council during the Second World War; Chairman, Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly; Minister in Nehru's first cabinet after Independence; resigned in 1951 due to differences over the Hindu Code Bill; adopted Buddhism in 1956, with thousands of followers.



**Rafi Ahmed Kidwai  
(1894-1954):**

Congress leader from U.P.; Minister in U.P. in 1937 and again in 1946; Minister for Communications in the first ministry of free India; Food and Agriculture Minister, 1952-54.

Earlier we had coalition in a party, now we have coalition of parties. Does it mean that we have had a coalition government since 1952?



The roots of this extraordinary success of the Congress party go back to the legacy of the freedom struggle. Congress was seen as inheritor of the national movement. Many leaders who were in the forefront of that struggle were now contesting elections as Congress candidates. The Congress was already a very well-organised party and by the time the other parties could even think of a strategy, the Congress had already started its campaign. In fact, many parties were formed only around Independence or after that. Thus, the Congress had the 'first off the blocks' advantage. By the time of Independence the party had not only spread across the length and breadth of the country as we had seen in the maps but also had an organisational network down to the local level. Most importantly, as the Congress was till recently a national movement, its nature was all-inclusive. All these factors contributed to the dominance of the Congress party.

***Congress as social and ideological coalition***

You have already studied the history of how Congress evolved from its origins in 1885 as a pressure group for the newly educated, professional and commercial classes to a mass movement in the twentieth century. This laid the basis for its eventual transformation into a mass political party and its subsequent domination of the political system. Thus the Congress began as a party dominated by the English speaking, upper caste, upper middle-class and urban elite. But with every civil disobedience movement it launched, its social base widened. It brought together diverse groups, whose interests were often contradictory. Peasants and industrialists, urban dwellers and villagers, workers and owners, middle, lower and upper classes and castes, all found space in the Congress. Gradually, its leadership also expanded beyond the upper caste and upper class professionals to agriculture based leaders with a rural orientation. By the time of Independence, the Congress was transformed into a rainbow-like social coalition broadly representing India's diversity in terms of classes and castes, religions and languages and various interests.

Many of these groups merged their identity within the Congress. Very often they did not and continued to exist within the Congress as groups and individuals holding different beliefs. In this sense the Congress was an ideological coalition as well. It accommodated the revolutionary and pacifist, conservative and radical, extremist and moderate and the right, left and all shades of the centre. The Congress was a 'platform' for numerous groups, interests and even political parties to take part in the national movement. In pre-Independence days, many organisations and parties with their own constitution and organisational structure were allowed to exist within the Congress.



# The Communist Party of India



In the early 1920s communist groups emerged in different parts of India taking inspiration from the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and advocating socialism as the solution to problems affecting the country. From 1935, the Communists worked mainly from within the fold of the Indian National Congress. A parting of ways took place in December 1941, when the Communists decided to support the British in their war against Nazi Germany. Unlike other non-Congress parties the CPI had a well-oiled party machinery and dedicated cadre at the time of Independence. However, Independence raised different voices in the party. The basic question that troubled the party was the nature of Indian independence. Was India really free or was freedom a sham?

Soon after Independence, the party thought that the transfer of power in 1947 was not true independence and encouraged violent uprisings in Telangana. The Communists failed to generate popular support for their position and were crushed by the armed forces. This forced them to rethink their position. In 1951 the Communist Party abandoned the path of violent revolution and decided to participate in the approaching general elections. In the first general election, CPI won 16 seats and emerged as the largest opposition party. The party's support was more concentrated in Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar and Kerala.

A. K. Gopalan, S.A. Dange, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, P.C. Joshi, Ajay Ghosh and P. Sundaraya were among the notable leaders of the CPI. The Party went through a major split in 1964 following the ideological rift between Soviet Union and China. The pro-Soviet faction remained as the CPI, while the opponents formed the CPI(M). Both these parties continue to exist to this day.



**A.K. Gopalan (1904-1977):** Communist leader from Kerala, worked as a Congress worker initially; joined the Communist Party in 1939; after the split in the Communist Party in 1964, joined the CPI (M) and worked for strengthening the party; respected as a parliamentarian; Member of Parliament from 1952.

**SIMHASAN**

This Marathi film, based on Arun Sadhu's two novels 'Simhasan' and 'Mumbai Dinank', depicts the tussle for the post of Chief Minister in Maharashtra. The story is told through journalist Digu Tipnis as the silent 'Sutradhar'. It tries to capture the intense power struggle within the ruling party and the secondary role of the Opposition.

Finance Minister, Vishwasrao Dabhade is making all-out efforts to unseat the incumbent Chief Minister. Both contenders are trying to woo trade union leader D'Casta to obtain his support. In this factional fight, other politicians too seek to obtain maximum advantage while bargaining with both sides. Smuggling in Mumbai and the grim social reality in rural Maharashtra form the sub-plots in this film.

Year: 1981  
 Director: Jabbar Patel  
 Screenplay: Vijay Tendulkar  
 Cast: Nilu Phule, Arun Sarnaik, Dr. Shreeram Lagoo, Satish Dubashi, Datta Bhat, Madhukar Toradmal, Madhav Watve, Mohan Agashe

Some of these, like the Congress Socialist Party, later separated from the Congress and became opposition parties. Despite differences regarding the methods, specific programmes and policies the party managed to contain if not resolve differences and build a consensus.

### ***Tolerance and management of factions***

This coalition-like character of the Congress gave it an unusual strength. Firstly, a coalition accommodates all those who join it. Therefore, it has to avoid any extreme position and strike a balance on almost all issues. Compromise and inclusiveness are the hallmarks of a coalition. This strategy put the opposition in a difficulty. Anything that the opposition wanted to say, would also find a place in the programme and ideology of the Congress. Secondly, in a party that has the nature of a coalition, there is a greater tolerance of internal differences and ambitions of various groups and leaders are accommodated. The Congress did both these things during the freedom struggle and continued doing this even after Independence. That is why, even if a group was not happy with the position of the party or with its share of power, it would remain inside the party and fight the other groups rather than leaving the party and becoming an 'opposition'.

These groups inside the party are called factions. The coalitional nature of the Congress party tolerated and in fact encouraged various factions. Some of these factions were based on ideological considerations but very often these factions were rooted in personal ambitions and rivalries. Instead of being a weakness, internal factionalism became a strength of



## Bharatiya Jana Sangh



The Bharatiya Jana Sangh was formed in 1951 with Shyama Prasad Mukherjee as its founder-President. Its lineage however can be traced back to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Hindu Mahasabha before Independence.

The Jana Sangh was different from other parties in terms of ideology and programmes. It emphasised the idea of one country, one culture and one nation and believed that the country could become modern, progressive and strong on the basis of Indian culture and traditions. The party called for a reunion of India and Pakistan in Akhand Bharat. The party was in forefront of the agitation to replace English with Hindi as the official language of India and was also opposed to the granting of concessions to religious and cultural minorities. The party was

a consistent advocate of India developing nuclear weapons especially after China carried out its atomic tests in 1964.

In the 1950s Jana Sangh remained on the margins of the electoral politics and was able to secure only 3 Lok Sabha seats in 1952 elections and 4 seats in 1957 general elections to Lok Sabha. In the early years its support came mainly from the urban areas in the Hindi speaking states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. The party's leaders included Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya and Balraj Madhok. The Bharatiya Janata Party traces its roots to the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.



**Deen Dayal Upadhyaya (1916-1968):** Full-time RSS worker since 1942; founder member of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh; General Secretary and later President of Bharatiya Jana Sangh; initiated the concept of integral humanism.



I thought factions were a disease that needed to be cured. You make it sound as if factions are normal and good.

the Congress. Since there was room within the party for various factions to fight with each other, it meant that leaders representing different interests and ideologies remained within the Congress rather than go out and form a new party.

Most of the state units of the Congress were made up of numerous factions. The factions took different ideological positions making the Congress appear as a grand centrist party. The other parties primarily attempted to influence these factions and thereby indirectly influenced policy and decision making from the “margins”. They were far removed from the actual exercise of authority. They were not alternatives to the ruling party; instead they constantly pressurised and criticised, censured and influenced the Congress. The system of factions functioned as balancing mechanism within the ruling party. Political competition therefore took place within the Congress. In that sense, in the first decade of electoral competition the Congress acted both as the ruling party as well as the opposition. That is why this period of Indian politics has been described as the ‘Congress system’.

### *Emergence of opposition parties*

Credit: Shankar



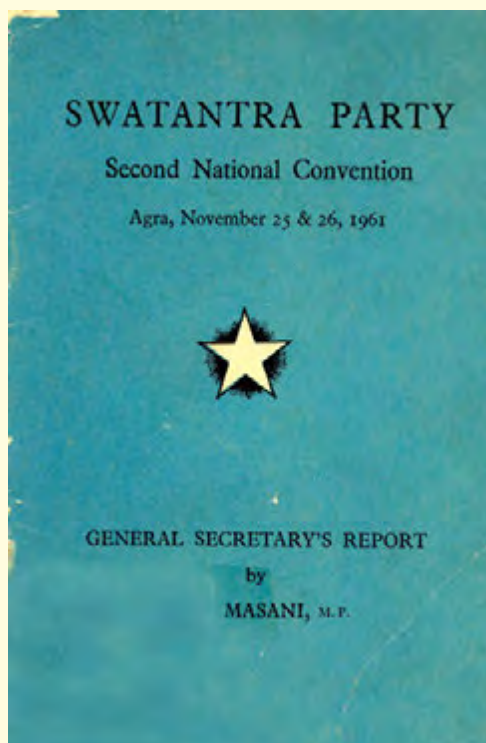
“Tug of War” (29 August 1954) is a cartoonist’s impression of the relative strength of the opposition and the government. Sitting on the tree are Nehru and his cabinet colleagues. Trying to topple the tree are opposition leaders A. K. Gopalan, Acharya Kripalani, N.C. Chatterjee, Srikantan Nair and Sardar Hukum Singh.

As we have noted above, it is not that India did not have opposition parties during this period. While discussing the results of the elections, we have already come across the names of many parties other than the Congress. Even then India had a larger number of diverse and vibrant opposition parties than many other multi-party democracies. Some of these had come into being even before the first general election of 1952. Some of these parties played an important part in the politics of the country in the ‘sixties and ‘seventies. The roots of almost all the non-Congress parties of today can be traced to one or the other of the opposition parties of the 1950s.

All these opposition parties succeeded in gaining only a token representation in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies during this period. Yet their presence played a crucial role in maintaining the democratic character of the system. These parties offered a sustained and often principled criticism of the policies and practices of the Congress party. This kept the ruling party under check and often changed the balance of power within the Congress. By keeping democratic political alternative alive,



## Swatantra Party



Swatantra Party was formed in August 1959 after the Nagpur resolution of the Congress which called for land ceilings, take-over of food grain trade by the state and adoption of cooperative farming. The party was led by old Congressmen like C. Rajagopalachari, K.M.Munshi, N.G.Ranga and Minoo Masani. The party stood out from the others in terms of its position on economic issues.

The Swatantra Party wanted the government to be less and less involved in controlling the economy. It believed that prosperity could come only through individual freedom.

It was critical of the development strategy of state intervention in the economy, centralised planning, nationalisation and the public sector. It instead favoured expansion of a

free private sector. The Swatantra Party was against land ceilings in agriculture, and opposed cooperative farming and state trading. It was also opposed to the progressive tax regime and demanded dismantling of the licensing regime. It was critical of the policy of non-alignment and maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union and advocated closer ties with the United States. The Swatantra Party gained strength in different parts of the Country by way of merger with numerous regional parties and interests. It attracted the landlords and princes who wanted to protect their land and status that was being threatened by the land reforms legislation. The industrialists and business class who were against nationalisation and the licensing policies also supported the party. Its narrow social base and the lack of a dedicated cadre of party members did not allow it to build a strong organisational network.



**C. Rajagopalachari (1878-1972):** A senior leader of Congress and literary writer; close associate of Mahatma Gandhi; member of Constituent Assembly; first Indian to be the Governor General of India (1948-1950); minister in Union Cabinet; later became Chief Minister of Madras state; first recipient of the Bharat Ratna Award; founder of the Swatantra Party (1959).



“..... Tandon's election is considered (by Congress members) more important than my presence in the Govt or the Congress..... ..I have completely exhausted my utility both in the Congress and Govt.

**Jawaharlal Nehru**

in a letter to Rajaji, after the election of Tandon as Congress president against his wishes.

these parties prevented the resentment with the system from turning anti-democratic. These parties also groomed the leaders who were to play a crucial role in the shaping of our country.

In the early years there was a lot of mutual respect between the leaders of the Congress and those of the opposition. The interim government that ruled the country after the declaration of Independence and the first general election included opposition leaders like Dr. Ambedkar and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in the cabinet. Jawaharlal Nehru often referred to his fondness for the Socialist Party and invited socialist leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan to join his government. This kind of personal relationship with and respect for political adversaries declined after the party competition grew more intense.

Thus this first phase of democratic politics in our country was quite unique. The inclusive character of the national movement led by the Congress enabled it to attract different sections, groups and interests making it a broad based social and ideological coalition. The



Nehru's Cabinet after the swearing-in of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari as Governor-General in 1948. Sitting from left to right: Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Baldev Singh, Maulana Azad, Prime Minister Nehru, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Mr. John Matthai and Jagjivan Ram. Standing from left to right: Mr. Gadgil, Mr. Neogi, Dr. Ambedkar, Shyama Prasad Mukherji, Mr. Gopaldaswamy Iyengar and Mr. Jayramdas Daulatram.

### *Party competition in a Bihar village*

When two buffalos fight, the grass beneath them gets crushed. The Congress and Socialist parties are fighting with each other. Both of them are seeking new members. The poor people will be ground between the two grindstones!

“No, the poor people won’t be crushed. In fact, they’ll benefit”, was someone’s reply. “Things aren’t accomplished by one party alone. It is the competition and rivalry between two groups that benefits the public...”

The news of Socialist Party meeting had agitated the Santhals. The news of the opening of the hospital hadn’t made much impression on them – nor did they ever bother much about the fights and quarrels, or the friendly gatherings of the villagers. But this meeting was for the tillers of the soil. .... “To whom does the land belong? To the tiller! He who tills will sow! He who sows will harvest! He who works will eat, come what may!” Kalicharan lectured....

There was turmoil in the District Office of the Congress Party too. They were about to elect a Party Chairman. There were four candidates — two real contenders and two dummy candidates. It was a contest between Rajputs and Bhumihars. The wealthy businessmen and zamindars from both the castes were cruising all over the district in their motorcars, campaigning. All kinds of mudslinging was going on between them. The Seth who owned the Katihar cotton mill was representing the Bhumihar party, and the owner of Farbigang jute mill was representing the Rajputs .... You should see the money they’re flashing around.

*Translated extracts from Fanishwarnath Renu’s novel “Maila Anchal”. The novel is set in Purnia district in North East Bihar in the early years after Independence.*



Fanishwarnath Renu

key role of the Congress in the freedom struggle thus gave it a head start over others. As the ability of the Congress to accommodate all interests and all aspirants for political power steadily declined, other political parties started gaining greater significance. Thus, Congress dominance constitutes only one phase in the politics of the country. We shall come to the other phases in later parts of this textbook.

#### **Shyama Prasad Mukherjee**

**(1901-1953):** Leader of Hindu Mahasabha; founder of Bharatiya Jana Sangh; Minister in Nehru’s first cabinet after Independence; resigned in 1950 due to differences over relations with Pakistan; Member of Constituent Assembly and later, the first Lok Sabha; was opposed to India’s policy of autonomy to Jammu & Kashmir; arrested during Jana Sangh’s agitation against Kashmir policy; died during detention.



## EXERCISES

1. Choose the correct option to fill in the blanks.
  - (a) The First General Elections in 1952 involved simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and .....(*The President of India/ State Assemblies/ Rajya Sabha/ The Prime Minister*)
  - (b) The party that won the second largest number of Lok Sabha seats in the first elections was the.....(*Praja Socialist Party/ Bharatiya Jana Sangh/ Communist Party of India/Bharatiya Janata Party*)
  - (c) One of the guiding principles of the ideology of the Swatantra Party was.....(*Working class interests/ protection of Princely States / economy free from State control / Autonomy of States within the Union*)
  
2. Match the following leaders listed in List A with the parties in List B.
 

List A	List B
(a) S. A. Dange	i. Bharatiya Jana Sangh
(b) Shyama Prasad Mukherjee	ii. Swatantra Party
(c) Minoo Masani	iii. Praja Socialist Party
(d) Asoka Mehta	iv. Communist Party of India
  
3. Four statements regarding one- party dominance are given below. Mark each of them as true or false.
  - (a) One-party dominance is rooted in the absence of strong alternative political parties.
  - (b) One-party dominance occurs because of weak public opinion.
  - (c) One-party dominance is linked to the nation's colonial past.
  - (d) One-party dominance reflects the absence of democratic ideals in a country.
  
4. If Bharatiya Jana Sangh or the Communist Party of India had formed the government after the first election, in which respects would the policies of the government have been different? Specify three differences each for both the parties.
  
5. In what sense was the Congress an ideological coalition? Mention the various ideological currents present within the Congress.
  
6. Did the prevalence of a 'one party dominant system' affect adversely the democratic nature of Indian politics?
  
7. Bring out three differences each between Socialist parties and the Communist party and between Bharatiya Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party.
  
8. What would you consider as the main differences between Mexico and India under one party domination?

9. Take a political map of India (with State outlines) and mark:
- (a) two states where Congress was not in power at some point during 1952-67.
  - (b) two states where the Congress remained in power through this period.

10. Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

*“Patel, the organisational man of the Congress, wanted to purge the Congress of other political groups and sought to make of it a cohesive and disciplined political party. He .... sought to take the Congress away from its all-embracing character and turn it into a close-knit party of disciplined cadres. Being a ‘realist’ he looked more for discipline than for comprehension. While Gandhi took too romantic a view of “carrying on the movement,” Patel’s idea of transforming the Congress into strictly political party with a single ideology and tight discipline showed an equal lack of understanding of the eclectic role that the Congress, as a government, was to be called upon to perform in the decades to follow.” — RAJNI KOTHARI*

- (a) Why does the author think that Congress should not have been a cohesive and disciplined party?
- (b) Give some examples of the eclectic role of the Congress party in the early years.
- (c) Why does the author say that Gandhi’s view about Congress’ future was romantic?

### LET US DO IT TOGETHER

Make a chart of elections and governments in your State since 1952. The chart could have the following columns: year of election, name of the winning party, name of ruling party or parties, name of the Chief Minister(s).



Stamps like these, issued mostly between 1955 and 1968, depicted a vision of planned development. Left to right, top to bottom: Damodar Valley, Bhakra Dam, Chittaranjan Locomotives, Gauhati Refinery, Tractor, Sindri Fertilisers, Bhakra Dam, Electric Train, Wheat Revolution, Hirakud Dam, Hindustan Aircraft Factory

### *In this chapter...*

In the last two chapters we have studied how the leaders of independent India responded to the challenges of nation-building and establishing democracy. Let us now turn to the third challenge, that of economic development to ensure well-being of all. As in the case of the first two challenges, our leaders chose a path that was different and difficult. In this case their success was much more limited, for this challenge was tougher and more enduring.

In this chapter, we study the story of political choices involved in some of the key questions of economic development.

- What were the key choices and debates about development?
- Which strategy was adopted by our leaders in the first two decades? And why?
- What were the main achievements and limitations of this strategy?
- Why was this development strategy abandoned in later years?

# POLITICS OF PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

As the global demand for steel increases, Orissa, which has one of the largest reserves of untapped iron ore in the country, is being seen as an important investment destination. The State government hopes to cash in on this unprecedented demand for iron ore and has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with both international and domestic steel makers. The government believes that this would bring in necessary capital investment and provide a lot of employment opportunities. The iron ore resources lie in some of the most underdeveloped and predominantly tribal districts of the state. The tribal population fears that the setting up of industries would mean displacement from their home and livelihood. The environmentalists fear that mining and industry would pollute the environment. The central government feels that if the industry is not allowed it would set a bad example and discourage investments in the country.

Can you identify the various interests involved in this case? What are their key points of conflict? Do you think there are any common points on which everyone can agree? Can this issue be resolved in a way which satisfies all the various interests? As you ask these questions, you would find yourself facing yet bigger questions. What kind of development does Orissa need? Indeed, whose need can be called Orissa's need?

## ***Political contestation***

These questions cannot be answered by an expert. Decisions of this kind involve weighing the interests of one social group against another, present generation against future generations. In a democracy such major decisions should be taken or at least approved by the people themselves. It is important to take advice from experts on mining, from environmentalists and from economists. Yet the final decision must be a political decision, taken by people's representatives who are in touch with the feelings of the people.

After Independence our country had to make a series of major decisions like this. Each of these decisions could not be made independent of other such decisions. All these decisions were bound together by a shared vision or model of economic development. Almost

## **Orissa villagers protest against POSCO plant**

Staff Reporter

BHUBANESWAR: People facing displacement by the proposed POSCO-India steel plant in Jagatsinghpur district staged a demonstration outside the Korean company's office here on Thursday. They were demanding cancellation of the memorandum of understanding signed between the company and the Orissa government one year ago.

More than 100 men and women from the gram panchayats of Dhinkia, Nuagaon and Gadakujanga tried to enter the office premises but the police prevented them. Raising slogans, the protesters said the company should not be allowed to set up its plant at the cost of their lives and livelihood. The demonstration was organised by the Rashtriya Yuva Sangathan and the Nabanirman Samiti.

*The Hindu, 23 June 2006*

**What is Left and what is Right?**

In the politics of most countries, you will always come across references to parties and groups with a Left or Right ideology or leaning. These terms characterise the position of the concerned groups or parties regarding social change and role of the state in effecting economic redistribution. Left often refers to those who are in favour of the poor, downtrodden sections and support government policies for the benefit of these sections. The Right refers to those who believe that free competition and market economy alone ensure progress and that the government should not unnecessarily intervene in the economy.

Can you tell which of the parties in the 1960s were Rightist and which were the Left parties? Where would you place the Congress party of that time?

everyone agreed that the development of India should mean both economic growth and social and economic justice. It was also agreed that this matter cannot be left to businessmen, industrialists and farmers themselves, that the government should play a key role in this. There was disagreement, however, on the kind of role that the government must play in ensuring growth with justice. Was it necessary to have a centralised institution to plan for the entire country? Should the government itself run some key industries and business? How much importance was to be attached to the needs of justice if it differed from the requirements of economic growth?

Each of these questions involved contestation which has continued ever since. Each of the decision had political

consequence. Most of these issues involved political judgement and required consultations among political parties and approval of the public. That is why we need to study the process of development as a part of the history of politics in India.

***Ideas of development***

Very often this contestation involves the very idea of development. The example of Orissa shows us that it is not enough to say that everyone wants development. For 'development' has different meanings for different sections of the people. Development would mean different things for example, to an industrialist who is planning to set up a steel plant, to an urban consumer of steel and to the Adivasi who lives in that region. Thus any discussion on development is bound to generate contradictions, conflicts and debates.

The first decade after Independence witnessed a lot of debate around this question. It was common then, as it is even now, for people to refer to the 'West' as the standard for measuring development. 'Development' was about becoming more 'modern' and modern was about becoming more like the industrialised countries of the West. This is how common people as well as the experts thought. It was believed that every country would go through the process of modernisation as in the West, which involved the breakdown of traditional social structures and the rise of capitalism and liberalism. Modernisation was also associated with the ideas of growth, material progress and scientific rationality. This kind of idea of development allowed everyone to talk about different countries as developed, developing or underdeveloped.

On the eve of Independence, India had before it, two models of modern development: the liberal-capitalist model as in much of Europe and the US and the socialist model as in the USSR. You have already studied these two ideologies and read about the 'cold war' between the two super powers. There were many in India then who were deeply impressed by the Soviet model of development. These included not just the leaders of the Communist Party of India, but also those of the Socialist Party and leaders like Nehru within the Congress. There were very few supporters of the American style capitalist development.

This reflected a broad consensus that had developed during the national movement. The nationalist leaders were clear that the economic concerns of the government of free India would have to be different from the narrowly defined commercial functions of the colonial government. It was clear, moreover, that the task of poverty alleviation and social and economic redistribution was being seen primarily as the responsibility of the government. There were debates among them. For some, industrialisation seemed to be the preferred path. For others, the development of agriculture and in particular alleviation of rural poverty was the priority.

### **Planning**

Despite the various differences, there was a consensus on one point: that development could not be left to private actors, that there was the need for the government to develop a design or plan for development. In fact the idea of planning as a process of rebuilding economy earned a good deal of public support in the 1940s and 1950s all over the world. The experience of Great Depression in Europe, the inter-war

Are you saying we don't have to be western in order to be modern? Is that possible?



Credit: Hindustan Times

Nehru addressing the staff of the Planning Commission



Credit: Niman



I wonder if the Planning Commission has actually followed these objectives in practice.

## Fast Forward ▶▶ Niti Aayog

The Government of India replaced the Planning Commission with a new institution named NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India). This came into existence on 1 January 2015. Find out about its objectives and composition from the website, <http://niti.gov.in>

### Planning Commission

Do you recall any reference to the Planning Commission in your book *Constitution at Work* last year? Actually there was none, for the Planning Commission is not one of the many commissions and other bodies set up by the Constitution. The Planning Commission was set up in March, 1950 by a simple resolution of the Government of India. It has an advisory role and its recommendations become effective only when the Union Cabinet approved these. The resolution which set up the Commission defined the scope of its work in the following terms :

“The Constitution of India has guaranteed certain Fundamental Rights to the citizens of India and enunciated certain Directive Principles of State Policy, in particular, that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting....a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall ..... direct its policy towards securing, among other things,

- that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood ;
- that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good; and
- that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment.

reconstruction of Japan and Germany, and most of all the spectacular economic growth against heavy odds in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s contributed to this consensus.

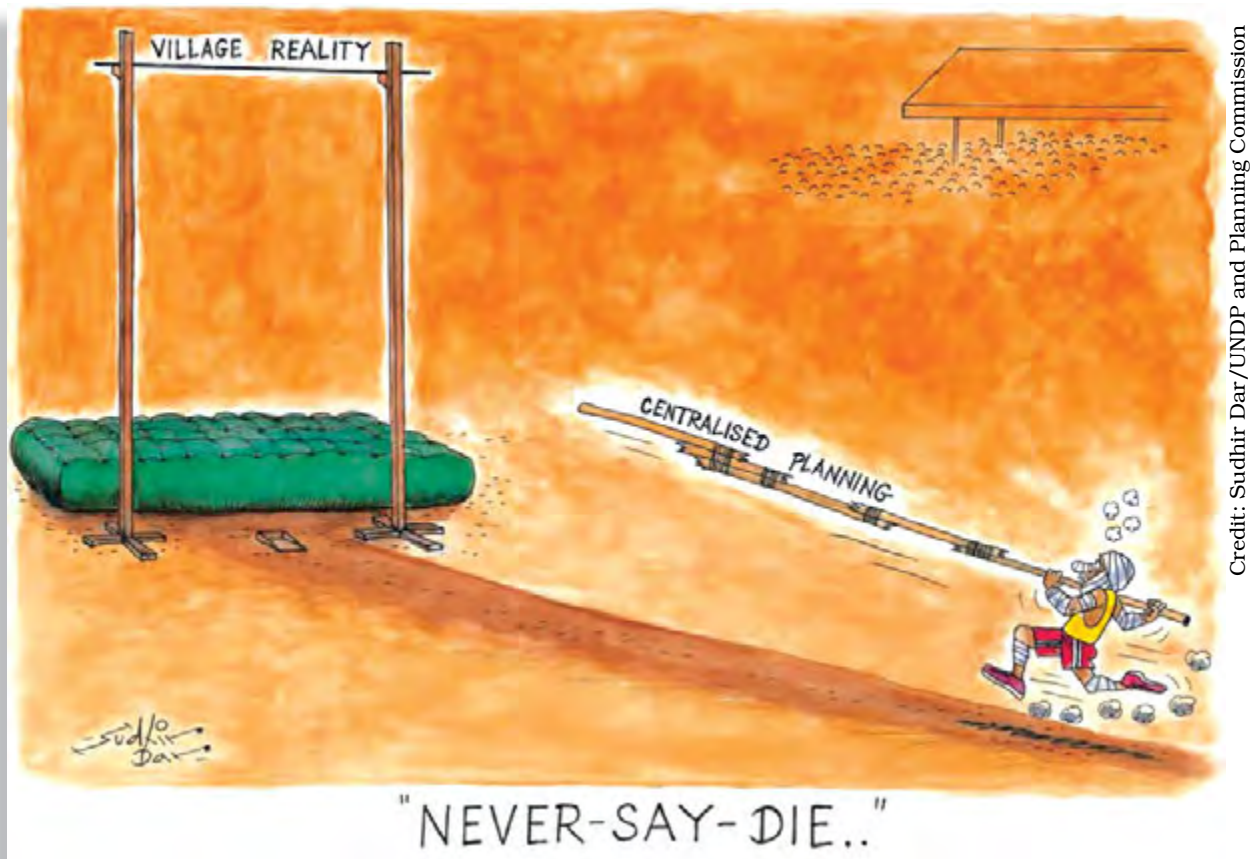
Thus the Planning Commission was not a sudden invention. In fact, it has a very interesting history. We commonly assume that private investors, such as industrialists and big business entrepreneurs, are averse to ideas of planning: they seek an open economy without any state control in the flow of capital. That was not what happened here. Rather, a section of the big industrialists got together in 1944 and drafted a joint proposal for setting up a planned economy in the country. It was called the Bombay Plan. The Bombay Plan wanted the state to take major initiatives in industrial and other economic investments. Thus, from left to right, planning for development was the most obvious choice for the country after Independence. Soon after India became independent, the Planning Commission came into being. The Prime Minister was its Chairperson. It became the most influential and central machinery for deciding what path and strategy India would adopt for its development.

### *The Early Initiatives*

As in the USSR, the Planning Commission of India opted for five year plans (FYP). The idea is very simple: the Government of India prepares a document that has a plan for all its income and expenditure for the next five years. Accordingly the budget of the central and all the State governments is divided into two parts: 'non-plan' budget that is spent



on routine items on a yearly basis and 'plan' budget that is spent on a five year basis as per the priorities fixed by the plan. A five year plan has the advantage of permitting the government to focus on the larger picture and make long-term intervention in the economy.



Credit: Sudhir Dar/UNDP and Planning Commission

The draft of the First Five Year Plan and then the actual Plan Document, released in December 1951, generated a lot of excitement in the country. People from all walks of life – academics, journalists, government and private sector employees, industrialists, farmers, politicians etc. – discussed and debated the documents extensively. The excitement with planning reached its peak with the launching of the Second Five Year Plan in 1956 and continued somewhat till the Third Five Year Plan in 1961. The Fourth Plan was due to start in 1966. By this time, the novelty of planning had declined considerably, and moreover, India was facing acute economic crisis. The government decided to take a ‘plan holiday’. Though many criticisms emerged both about the process and the priorities of these plans, the foundation of India’s economic development was firmly in place by then.

### ***The First Five Year Plan***

The First Five Year Plan (1951–1956) sought to get the country’s economy out of the cycle of poverty. K.N. Raj, a young economist involved in drafting the plan, argued that India should ‘hasten slowly’ for the first two decades as a fast rate of development might endanger democracy. The First Five Year Plan addressed, mainly, the agrarian sector including investment in dams and irrigation.



First Five Year Plan document

Agricultural sector was hit hardest by Partition and needed urgent attention. Huge allocations were made for large-scale projects like the Bhakhra Nangal Dam. The Plan identified the pattern of land distribution in the country as the principal obstacle in the way of agricultural growth. It focused on land reforms as the key to the country's development.

One of the basic aims of the planners was to raise the level of national income, which could be possible only if the people saved more money than they spent. As the basic level of spending was very low in the 1950s, it could not be reduced any more. So the planners sought to push savings up. That too was difficult as the total capital stock in the country was rather low compared to the total number of employable people. Nevertheless, people's savings did rise in the first phase of the planned process until the end of the Third Five Year Plan. But, the rise was not as spectacular as was expected at the beginning of the First Plan. Later, from the early 1960s till the early 1970s, the proportion of savings in the country actually dropped consistently.

### **Rapid Industrialisation**

The Second FYP stressed on heavy industries. It was drafted by a team of economists and planners under the leadership of P. C. Mahalanobis. If the first plan had preached patience, the second wanted to bring about quick structural transformation by making changes simultaneously in all possible directions. Before this plan was finalised, the Congress party at its session held at Avadi near the then Madras city, passed an important resolution. It declared that 'socialist pattern of society' was its goal. This was reflected in the Second Plan. The government imposed substantial tariffs on imports in order to protect domestic industries. Such protected environment helped both public and private sector industries to grow. As savings and investment were growing in this period, a bulk of these industries like electricity, railways, steel, machineries and communication could be developed in the public sector. Indeed, such a push for industrialisation marked a turning point in India's development.

It, however, had its problems as well. India was technologically backward, so it had to spend precious foreign exchange to buy technology from the global market. That apart, as industry attracted more investment than agriculture, the possibility of food shortage loomed large. The Indian planners found balancing industry and agriculture really difficult. The Third Plan was not significantly different from the Second. Critics pointed out that the plan strategies from this time around displayed an unmistakable "urban bias". Others thought that industry was wrongly given priority over agriculture. There were also those who wanted focus on agriculture-related industries rather than heavy ones.

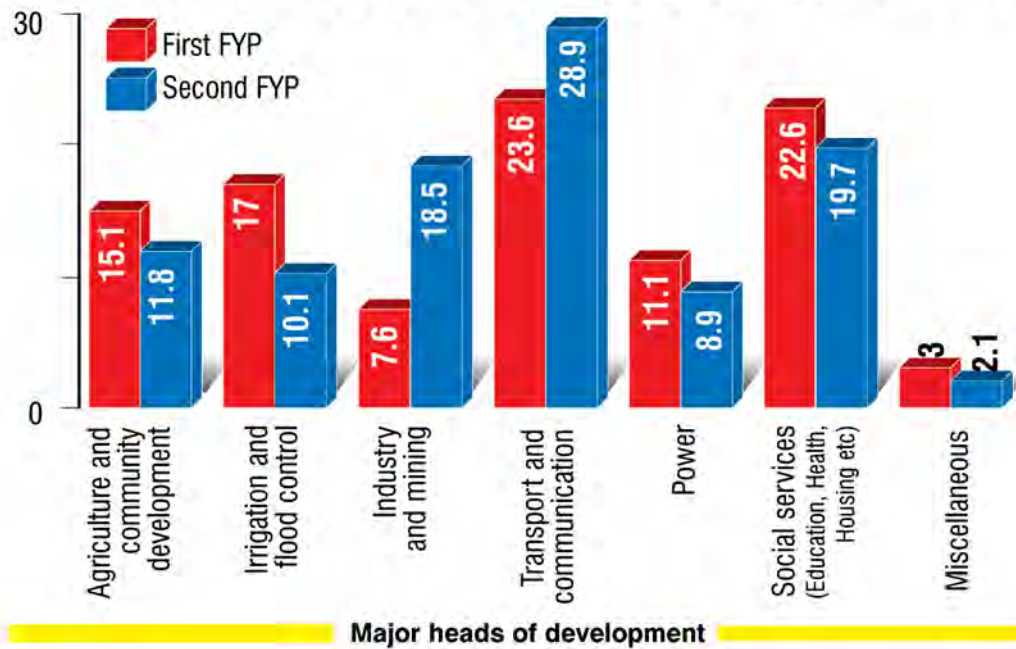


Tenth Five Year Plan document



**P.C. Mahalanobis (1893-1972):** Scientist and statistician of international repute; founder of Indian Statistical Institute (1931); architect of the Second Plan; supporter of rapid industrialisation and active role of the public sector.

### Allocations in the First and Second Five Year Plans (In %)



#### Decentralised planning

It is not necessary that all planning always has to be centralised; nor is it that planning is only about big industries and large projects. The 'Kerala model' is the name given to the path of planning and development charted by the State of Kerala. There has been a focus in this model on education, health, land reform, effective food distribution, and poverty alleviation. Despite low per capita incomes, and a relatively weak industrial base, Kerala achieved nearly total literacy, long life expectancy, low infant and female mortality, low birth rates and high access to medical care. Between 1987 and 1991, the government launched the New Democratic Initiative which involved campaigns for development (including total literacy especially in science and environment) designed to involve people directly in development activities through voluntary citizens' organisations. The State has also taken initiative to involve people in making plans at the Panchayat, block and district level.

#### Key Controversies

The strategy of development followed in the early years raised several important questions. Let us examine two of these disputes that continue to be relevant.

#### Agriculture versus industry

We have already touched upon a big question: between agriculture and industry, which one should attract more public resources in a backward economy like that of India? Many thought that the Second Plan lacked an agrarian strategy for development, and the emphasis on industry caused agriculture and rural India to suffer. Gandhian economists like J. C. Kumarappa proposed an alternative blueprint that put greater emphasis on rural industrialisation. Chaudhary Charan Singh, a Congress leader who later broke from the party to form Bharatiya Lok Dal,



**J.C. Kumarappa**

**(1892-1960):** Original name J.C. Cornelius; economist and chartered accountant; studied in England and USA; follower of Mahatma Gandhi; tried to apply Gandhian principles to economic policies; author of 'Economy of Permanence'; participated in planning process as member of the Planning Commission

forcefully articulated the case for keeping agriculture at the centre of planning for India. He said that the planning was leading to creation of prosperity in urban and industrial section at the expense of the farmers and rural population.

Others thought that without a drastic increase in industrial production, there could be no escape from the cycle of poverty. They argued that Indian planning did have an agrarian strategy to boost the production of food-grains. The state made laws for land reforms and distribution of resources among the poor in the villages. It also proposed programmes of community development and spent large sums on irrigation projects. The failure was not that of policy but its non-implementation, because the landowning classes

**Let's watch a Film**

**PATHER PANCHALI**



This film tells the story of a poor family in a Bengal village and its struggle to survive. Durga, the daughter of Harihar and Sarbajaya, with her younger brother, Apu, goes on enjoying life oblivious of the struggles and the poverty. The film revolves around the simple life and the efforts of the mother of Durga and Apu to maintain the family.

Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road) narrates the desires and disappointments of the poor family through the tale of the youngsters. Finally, during monsoon, Durga falls ill and dies while her father is away. Harihar returns with gifts, including a sari for Durga.....

The film won numerous awards nationally and internationally, including the President's Gold and Silver medals for the year 1955.

Year: 1955  
 Director: Satyajit Ray  
 Story: Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay  
 Screenplay: Satyajit Ray  
 Actors: Kanu Bannerjee, Karuna Bannerjee, Subir Bannerjee, Uma Das Gupta Durga, Chunibala Devi

had lot of social and political power. Besides, they also argue that even if the government had spent more money on agriculture it would not have solved the massive problem of rural poverty.

### **Public versus private sector**

India did not follow any of the two known paths to development – it did not accept the capitalist model of development in which development was left entirely to the private sector, nor did it follow the socialist model in which private property was abolished and all the production was controlled by the state. Elements from both these models were taken and mixed together in India. That is why it was described as 'mixed economy'. Much of the agriculture, trade and industry were left in private hands. The state controlled key heavy industries, provided industrial infrastructure, regulated trade and made some crucial interventions in agriculture.

A mixed model like this was open to criticism from both the left and the right. Critics argued that the planners refused to provide the private sector with enough space and the stimulus to grow. The enlarged public sector produced powerful vested interests that

Credit: Shankar, 6 May 1956

Astride the Public Sector are Central Ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri, Ajit Prasad Jain, Kailash Nath Katju, Jagjivan Ram, T. T. Krishnamachari, Swaran Singh, Gulzari Lal Nanda and B. V. Keskar



created enough hurdles for private capital, especially by way of installing systems of licenses and permits for investment. Moreover, the state's policy to restrict import of goods that could be produced in the domestic market with little or no competition left the private sector with no incentive to improve their products and make them cheaper. The state controlled more things than were necessary and this led to inefficiency and corruption.

Then there were critics who thought that the state did not do enough. They pointed out that the state did not spend any significant amount for public education and healthcare. The state intervened only in those areas where the private sector was not prepared to go. Thus the state helped the private sector to make profit. Also, instead of helping the poor, the state intervention ended up creating a new 'middle class' that enjoyed the privileges of high salaries without much accountability. Poverty did not decline substantially during this period; even when the proportion of the poor reduced, their numbers kept going up.

### *Major Outcomes*

Of the three objectives that were identified in independent India, discussed in the first three chapters here, the third objective proved most difficult to realise. Land reforms did not take place effectively in most parts of the country; political power remained in the hands of the landowning classes; and big industrialists continued to benefit and thrive while poverty did not reduce much. The early initiatives for planned development were at best realising the goals of economic development of the country and well-being of all its citizens. The inability to take significant steps in this direction in the very first stage was to become a political problem. Those who benefited from unequal development soon became politically powerful and made it even more difficult to move in the desired direction.

### **Foundations**

An assessment of the outcomes of this early phase of planned development must begin by acknowledging the fact that in this period the foundations of India's future economic growth were laid. Some of the largest developmental projects in India's history were undertaken during this period. These included mega-dams like Bhakhra-Nangal and Hirakud for irrigation and power generation. Some of the heavy industries in the public sector – steel plants, oil refineries, manufacturing units, defense production etc. – were started during this period. Infrastructure for transport and communication was improved substantially. Of late, some of these mega projects have come in for a lot of criticism. Yet much of the later economic growth, including that by the private sector, may not have been possible in the absence of these foundations.



### *Government Campaign reaches the village*

"In a way the advertisement stuck or written on walls gave an accurate introduction to the villager's problems and how to solve them. For example, the problem was that India was a farming nation, but farmers refused to produce more grain out of sheer perversity. The solution was to give speeches to farmers and show them all sorts of attractive pictures. These advised them that if they didn't want to grow more grain for themselves then they should do so for the nation. As a result the posters were stuck in various places to induce farmers to grow grain for the nation. The farmers were greatly influenced by the combined effect of the speeches and posters, and even most simple-minded cultivator began to feel the likelihood of there was some ulterior motive behind the whole campaign.

One advertisement had become especially well known in Shivpalganj. It showed a healthy farmer with turban wrapped around his head, earrings and a quilted jacket, cutting a tall crop of wheat with a sickle. A woman was standing behind him, very pleased with herself; she was laughing like an official from the Department of Agriculture.

Below and above the picture was written in Hindi and English – 'Grow More Grain'. Farmers with earrings and a quilted jacket who were also scholars of English were expected to be won over by the English slogans, and those who were scholars of Hindi, by the Hindi version. And those who didn't know how to read either language could at least recognise the figures of the man and the laughing woman. The government hoped that as soon as they saw the man and the laughing woman, farmer would turn away from the poster and start growing more grain like men possessed".

*Extracts of translation from 'Raag Darbari' by Shrilal Shukla. The satire is set in a village Shivpalganj in Uttar Pradesh in the 1960s.*

### **Land reforms**

In the agrarian sector, this period witnessed a serious attempt at land reforms. Perhaps the most significant and successful of these was the abolition of the colonial system of zamindari. This bold act not only released land from the clutches of a class that had little interest in agriculture, it also reduced the capacity of the landlords to dominate politics. Attempts at consolidation of land – bringing small pieces of land together in one place so that the farm size could become viable for agriculture – were also fairly successful. But the other two components of land reforms were much less successful. Though the laws were made to put an upper limit or 'ceiling' to how much agricultural land one person could own, people with excess land managed to evade the law. Similarly, the tenants who worked on someone else's land were given greater legal security against eviction, but this provision was rarely implemented.

Oh! I thought land reforms were about improving the quality of soil!



It was not easy to turn these well-meaning policies on agriculture into genuine and effective action. This could happen only if the rural, landless poor were mobilised. But the landowners were very powerful and wielded considerable political influence. Therefore, many proposals for land reforms were either not translated into laws, or, when made into

DIRY CLEANERS & DYERS  
PAULSONS

# The Hindustan Times

Largest Circulation in Northern and Central India  
New Delhi, Tuesday, November 22, 1966

## Trying months ahead despite rain: Minister Next crop may be normal Opposition warned not to exploit situation

New Delhi, Nov. 21.—Food Minister Subramanian today gave the Kavya Sabha the reassuring news of adequate rain in the drought affected States of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar P., and Bihar.

## Johnson 'ordered' freeze

New York, Nov. 21.—President Johnson today ordered a freeze on the pay of all Federal Government employees.

## Australia sounded on wheat

Mr. Subramanian said that the Government would like to purchase wheat from Australia.

## Industries given new concessions

The Government has announced new concessions for industries.



## Thirteen die of hunger in Bihar Tribal areas worst hit: adivasis live on roots

Patna, Nov. 1.—At least 13 starvation deaths have been reported to date from different scarcity-hit areas of Bihar. Of these, seven cases have been reported from Buxar district and six from Muzaffarpur.

## JP call for relief workers, food

New Delhi, Nov. 21.—Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, Congress leader, today presented a grim picture of the drought affected areas of north Bihar and said a famine situation was developing there rapidly.

### Food Crisis

The agricultural situation went from bad to worse in the 1960s. Already, the rate of growth of food grain production in the 1940s and 1950s was barely staying above rate of population growth. Between 1965 and 1967, severe droughts occurred in many parts of the country. As we shall study in the next chapter, this was also the period when the country faced two wars and foreign exchange crisis. All this resulted in a severe food shortage and famine – like conditions in many parts of the country.

It was in Bihar that the food-crisis was most acutely felt as the state faced a near-famine situation. The food shortage was significant in all districts of Bihar, with 9 districts producing less than half of their normal output. Five of these districts, in fact, produced less than one-third of what they produced normally. Food deprivation subsequently led to acute and widespread malnutrition. It was estimated that the calorie intake dropped from 2200 per capita per day to as low as 1200 in many regions of the state (as against the requirement of 2450 per day for the average person). Death rate in Bihar in 1967 was 34% higher than the number of deaths that occurred in the following year. Food prices also hit a high in Bihar during the year, even when compared with other north Indian states. For wheat and rice the prices in the state were twice or more than their prices in more prosperous Punjab. The government had “zoning” policies that prohibited trade of food across states; this reduced the availability of food in Bihar dramatically. In situations such as this, the poorest sections of the society suffered the most.

The food crisis had many consequences. The government had to import wheat and had to accept foreign aid, mainly from the US. Now the first priority of the planners was to somehow attain self-sufficiency in food. The entire planning process and sense of optimism and pride associated with it suffered a setback.

laws, they remained only on paper. This shows that economic policy is part of the actual political situation in the society. It also shows that in spite of good wishes of some top leaders, the dominant social groups would always effectively control policy making and implementation.

### **The Green Revolution**

In the face of the prevailing food-crisis, the country was clearly vulnerable to external pressures and dependent on food aid, mainly from the United States. The United States, in turn, pushed India to change its economic policies. The government adopted a new strategy for agriculture in order to ensure food sufficiency. Instead of the earlier policy of giving more support to the areas and farmers that were lagging behind, now it was decided to put more resources into those areas which already had irrigation and those farmers who were already well-off. The argument was that those who already had the capacity could help increase production rapidly in the short run. Thus the government offered high-yielding variety seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and better irrigation at highly subsidised prices. The government also gave a guarantee to buy the produce of the farmers at a given price. This was the beginning of what was called the 'green revolution'.

Why don't we call it wheat revolution? And why does everything have to be 'revolution'?



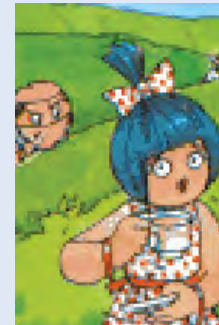
The rich peasants and the large landholders were the major beneficiaries of the process. The green revolution delivered only a moderate agricultural growth (mainly a rise in wheat production) and raised the availability of food in the country, but increased polarisation between classes and regions. Some regions like Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh became agriculturally prosperous, while others remained backward. The green revolution had two other effects: one was that in many parts, the stark contrast between the poor peasantry and the landlords produced conditions favourable for

Srikanth still remembers the struggle his elder brother had to undergo in order to get the monthly supply of ration for the ration shop. Their family was totally dependent on the supplies from the ration shop for rice, oil and kerosene. Many times, his brother would stand in the queue for an hour or so only to find out that the supply had ended and he would have to come later when fresh supply arrives. Find out from talking to elders in your family what is a ration card and ask your elders what, if any, items they buy from the ration shop. Visit a ration shop in the vicinity of your school or home and find out what is the difference in the prices of at least three commodities—wheat/rice, cooking oil, sugar—between the ration shop and the open market.

**Let's re-search**

## Fast Forward The White Revolution

You must be familiar with the jingle 'utterly butterly delicious' and the endearing figure of the little girl holding a buttered toast. Yes, the Amul advertisements! Did you know that behind Amul products lies a successful history of cooperative dairy farming in India. Verghese Kurien, nicknamed the 'Milkman of India', played a crucial role in the story of Gujarat Cooperative Milk and Marketing Federation Ltd that launched Amul.



Based in Anand, a town in Gujarat, Amul is a dairy cooperative movement joined by about 2 and half million milk producers in Gujarat. The Amul pattern became a uniquely appropriate model for rural development and poverty alleviation, spurring what has come to be known as the White Revolution. In 1970 the rural development programme called Operation Flood was started. Operation Flood organised cooperatives of milk producers into a nationwide milk grid, with the purpose of increasing milk production, bringing the producer and consumer closer by eliminating middlemen, and assuring the producers a regular income throughout the year. Operation Flood was, however, not just a dairy programme. It saw dairying as a path to development, for generating employment and income for rural households and alleviating poverty. The number of members of the cooperative has continued to increase with the numbers of women members and Women's Dairy Cooperative Societies also increasing significantly.

leftwing organisations to organise the poor peasants. Secondly, the green revolution also resulted in the rise of what is called the middle peasant sections. These were farmers with medium size holdings, who benefited from the changes and soon emerged politically influential in many parts of the country.

### Later developments

The story of development in India took a significant turn from the end of 1960s. You will see in Chapter Five how after Nehru's death the Congress system encountered difficulties. Indira Gandhi emerged as a popular leader. She decided to further strengthen the role of the state in controlling and directing the economy. The period from 1967 onwards witnessed many new restrictions on private industry. Fourteen private banks were nationalised. The government announced many pro-poor programmes. These changes were accompanied by an ideological tilt towards socialist policies. This emphasis generated heated debates within the country among political parties and also among experts.

However, the consensus for a state-led economic development did not last forever. Planning did continue, but its salience was significantly reduced. Between 1950 and 1980 the Indian economy grew at a sluggish per annum rate of 3 to 3.5%. In view of the prevailing

inefficiency and corruption in some public sector enterprises and the not-so-positive role of the bureaucracy in economic development, the public opinion in the country lost the faith it initially placed in many of these institutions. Such lack of public faith led the policy makers to reduce the importance of the state in India's economy from the 1980s onwards. We shall look at that part of the story towards the end of this book.



## EXERCISES

- Which of these statements about the Bombay Plan is incorrect?
  - It was a blueprint for India's economic future.
  - It supported state-ownership of industry.
  - It was made by some leading industrialists.
  - It supported strongly the idea of planning.
- Which of the following ideas did not form part of the early phase of India's development policy?
 

(a) Planning	(c) Cooperative Farming
(b) Liberalisation	(d) Self sufficiency
- The idea of planning in India was drawn from
 

(a) the Bombay plan	(c) Gandhian vision of society
(b) experiences of the Soviet bloc countries	(d) Demand by peasant organisations

i. b and d only	iii. a and b only
ii. d and c only	iv. all the above

4. Match the following.
 

(a) Charan Singh (b) P C Mahalanobis (c) Bihar Famine (d) Verghese Kurien	i. Industrialisation ii. Zoning iii. Farmers iv. Milk Cooperatives
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5. What were the major differences in the approach towards development at the time of Independence? Has the debate been resolved?
  
6. What was the major thrust of the First Five Year Plan? In which ways did the Second Plan differ from the first one?
  
7. What was the Green Revolution? Mention two positive and two negative consequences of the Green Revolution.
  
8. State the main arguments in the debate that ensued between industrialisation and agricultural development at the time of the Second Five Year Plan.
  
9. "Indian policy makers made a mistake by emphasising the role of state in the economy. India could have developed much better if private sector was allowed a free play right from the beginning". Give arguments for or against this proposition.
  
10. Read the following passage and answer the questions below:  
*"In the early years of Independence, two contradictory tendencies were already well advanced inside the Congress party. On the one hand, the national party executive endorsed socialist principles of state ownership, regulation and control over key sectors of the economy in order to improve productivity and at the same time curb economic concentration. On the other hand, the national Congress government pursued liberal economic policies and incentives to private investment that was justified in terms of the sole criterion of achieving maximum increase in production."* — FRANCINE FRANKEL
  - (a) What is the contradiction that the author is talking about? What would be the political implications of a contradiction like this?
  - (b) If the author is correct, why is it that the Congress was pursuing this policy? Was it related to the nature of the opposition parties?
  - (c) Was there also a contradiction between the central leadership of the Congress party and its State level leaders?

# EXERCISES