

**1. There has always been a debate whether freedom was seized by the Indians or power was transferred voluntarily by the British as an act of positive statesmanship. What are your views on this debate? Substantiate.**

### **Approach**

Candidates expected here to argue on both side of the debate with substantive views on issues and events in freedom struggle then in conclusion candidates can write how to save international image and under global pressure transferred power which was a right of Indians.

### **Introduction**

British decision to quit was partly based on the non - governability of India in the 1940s is beyond doubt. It is difficult to argue that there was consistent policy of devolution of power, which came to its logical culmination in August 1947 through the granting of independence to India.

### **Body**

- Colonial historiography always believed that Britain will devolve power to Indian subjects but Indians are not politically mature enough for self-government until 1947.
- To substantiate their view, they give evidence of 1917 Montague declaration that gradual development of self-governing Institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible governments in India remained objective of British rule in India.
- Constitutional reforms after certain interval of time were again part of ultimate aim of self-government to India.
- However, it is unlikely that British left India voluntarily in 1947 in pursuance of well-designed policy of decolonisation or that freedom was gift to the Indians.
- Constitutional arrangements of 1919 and 1935 were meant to secure British hegemony over the Indian empire through consolidation of control over the central government rather than to make Indians masters of their own affairs.
- Even in 1950s British foreign office and colonial office were contemplating ways and means of protecting economic and strategic interests in Asia and Africa against the recent upsurge of nationalism. They even acknowledged that it is impossible to reverse the constitutional advancement in view of the rising tide of the political resistance.
- During World War two, India was considered as most strategic point for defence of empire and to use Indian resources, strong grip over India was necessary. PM Churchill was against the grant of self-government to India. He even went out to say that he did not become his Majesty's Chief Minister to preside over liquidation of British Empire.
- Signing of Atlantic charter was symbolic under the pressure of American population which acknowledged the right to self-determination for all people

of the world. Churchill never wanted Cripps mission to succeed as he resorted to narrow interpretation.

- Pattern of post-war decolonization was profoundly influenced by the course and impact of the war. Quit India movement and its brutal repression ruptured the relationship between the Raj and the Congress and destroyed whatever goodwill the former might have had among the majority of Indian population.

Indians seized the power with various constant movements under Gandhian leadership with taking nationalism to masses:

- The most important effect of the Quit India Movement was that it made the British realise that in the context of the crippling effects of the Second World War on Britain's resources and the bitter opposition to its rule India, it would be very difficult to continue ruling the Indians.
- The radicals and leftists wanted to launch a mass Civil Disobedience Movement, but here Gandhi insisted on Individual Satyagraha. The Individual Satyagraha was not to seek independence but to affirm the right of speech. This gave leaders to talk against Britishers policies and wrongdoings. The Bengal famine and the wartime food scarcity in other regions further damaged the moral foundations of the Raj.
- The RIN strike came at a time when the Indian nationalist sentiment had reached fever pitch across the country. This revolt was different from the other revolts in the sense that, after 1857 it was the first time that the British realized that the Royal Indian forces were no more obedient to the British commands and were in concurrence with the overall defiant nationalist sentiments prevailing in the entire country.
- Open trials of INA prisoner led to politically united march against the British rule. Royal Indian navy mutiny raised the threat of imperial defense. Britain realized widespread mutiny in armed forces could lead to anarchy in India.
- After the war, Britain's debt to India started piling up, so that by 1946 Britain owed India more than £ 1,300 million, almost one-fifth of Britain's GNP. India had now certainly become less manageable as a colony henceforth it could only be kept under control at a heavy cost, both financial and military. Financial situation arose because of the increasing nationalist pressure for more resources and budgetary allocation for the development of India.
- Anti-imperialist sentiments, generated by the very struggle against Nazi Germany and enshrined in the United Nations Charter and its strict trusteeship rules, made empire morally indefensible.
- Increased communal violence after 1946 speed up the process of transfer of power as Britain wanted to maintain its diplomatic prestige with peaceful transfer of power.

### **Conclusion**

Britain's interest in India could now best be safeguarded by treating it as an independent nation, through informal rather than formal control. Britain realized that continuation of power is not possible without repression and which is against the

British public opinion. To save political power in home and to save face in International platform by compulsion Britain grant freedom to India.



**2. What rural India really needed post-independence was land reform. Do you agree? Substantiate. What measures were taken by the government on this front? Were they successful? Critically examine.**

### **Approach**

This question has many demands therefore the candidate needs to address each demand briefly and then transit to next one. The introduction can be based of what are land reforms and what was the need of these reforms at time of independence. Next write what were the measures taken by government and analyse their success and failures.

### **Introduction**

Land reforms were necessary to ensure that the fruits of independence could reach the common section of population, as land was basic mean for livelihood then. Political independence was meaningless in the absence of socio-economic independence. Further the need for land reform has been a vocal demand of the nationalist movement and a consensus was seen with the Indian national congress on the eve of independence.

### **Body**

Need of Land reform:

- They were counter measure against the colonial legacy by which millions of Indian peasants were impoverished resulted into concentration of land in few hands. For equitable distribution of land, reforms were necessary.
- Level of industrialization was quite low, Agriculture was the main stake of Indian economy and to make agricultural activity profitable, changes were required in the agricultural system of India.
- Socialist ideology of independent leaders favoured equitable distribution of means of production. Empowerment of peasantry was the important slogan of national movement; to fulfill the promise made to peasantry land reforms were crucial.
- More than 85% population used to live in rural India in 1950s and agriculture was the centre for direct and indirect economic activity hence for rural development land reforms became necessary.

The process of land reform after independence basically occurred in two broad phases.

The first phase started soon after independence and arguably continued till the early 1960s. This phase has also been called the phase of institutional reforms. It focused on the following features:

- Abolition of intermediaries—zamindars, jagirdars, etc.
- Tenancy reforms involving providing security of tenure to the tenants, decrease in rents and conferment of ownership rights to tenants.

- Ceilings on size of landholdings.
- Consolidation of land.
- Cooperativization and community development programmes.

The second phase beginning around the mid or late 1960s saw the gradual ushering in of the so-called Green Revolution and has been seen as the phase of technological reforms.

Success of Land reforms:

- As result of the abolition of intermediaries, about 2 crore tenants are estimated to have come into direct contact with the State making them owners of land. More lands have been brought to government possession for distribution to landless farmers.
- As per tenancy reforms, tenants cannot be evicted without any reason. They can be evicted only in accordance with the laws. Land can be resumed by the landlord only on the ground of personal cultivation. But the land-lord can resume the land only up to a maximum limit. The landlord should leave some area to the tenant for his own cultivation. The tenant in no case should be made landless.
- About 40 lakh tenants have already acquired ownership rights over 37 lakh hectares of land. They have become better-off economically and socially.

However, the success of land reform measures taken by the government at various levels was quite skewed.

- Large holders, articulate and capable, organized pressure in defense of their interests and the small cultivators and the landless were not only unorganized but in most cases, ignorant of legal and constitutional process; the former were very often successful in getting the land reforms modified or even nullified both at the stage of legislation as well as implementation
- The Land reform laws enacted by various state governments differed quite significantly. In states of Andhra Pradesh, limit of Land ceiling was so high that most of the land owners remained unaffected. The concept of land ceiling was applied to only land under cultivation. The land under the trees was not taken into consideration.
- The big peasants resorted to benami transactions; the land was transferred into the names of various family members, relatives or even servants to escape the imposition of land ceiling.
- Land being the state subject tied the hands of the central government and state government could not show the necessary political commitment to implement land reform initiatives in letter and spirit.

### **Conclusion**

India witnessed the unique phenomenon of wide-ranging land reforms being implemented within a modern democratic structure without any violence or use of authoritarian force. But the lack of thorough implementation became reason behind social crisis even today in which result in marginalisation of farmers and landless communities. Therefore a new approach and vigour is needed for land reform for the

21<sup>st</sup> century to tackle agrarian distress as well as to march towards industrial growth to achieve equitable and sustainable growth.



**3. The excessive centralisation of power by Indira Gandhi was responsible for the rise of the regional political parties between 1977 and 1984. Do you agree? Critically analyse.**

**Approach**

Candidates should try to define regional political parties in India. As question demands to critically analyse, candidates need to highlight how excessive centralisation led to rise or new local political parties and then give alternative view by analysing different factors for rise of parties.

**Introduction**

Regional parties are those which generally and exclusively operate within a limited geographical area or which represent the interests of particular linguistic, religious, ethnic or cultural groups whose population may be concentrated in an area as small as a single assembly constituency or as large as an entire state or a region.

**Body**

The phenomenon of regional political parties was not new to India before 1977, but the authoritarian policies of Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister and within Congress party as leader fuelled growth. There is large number of reasons behind rise of regional political parties in country like India where huge diversity prevails.

In a democracy, political parties provide an agency to the society to gather different views on various issues, with excessive centralisation regional local parties emerged to fulfill regional aspirations in various ways:

- Removal of state governments of opposition parties, abuse of president's rule, central agencies and the excesses of emergency period, constitutional amendments to increase the power of parliament are some of the policies with tilt of centralization.
- Indian political system has a federal structure with a unitary spirit. The Union enjoys a predominant role in the Indian federalism. As a reaction against the spirit of centralism or Unitarianism evident in the policies of Indira Gandhi several regional parties have come into existence in India. Eg. Telugu Desam, AIADMK, Asom Gana Parishad and some others.
- In 1977, the Akali Dal and DMK were partners in the Janata government. This was the first time that regional parties shared power at the national level.
- Former PM Indira Gandhi was also said to have unable to keep contact with an organization which gradually decayed, especially at the local and state levels became reason for formation of regional political parties. Eg. Congress for Democracy, INC(Ur), INC(socialist).

However, Policies of Indira Gandhi were not the only reason behind emergence of regional political parties. Some other factors were:

- Parties as pressure groups: Congress evolved as the party that was like a big umbrella under which all communities and interests and ideologies sought and got a place. Since independence there were many small parties competing with the Congress but they acted mainly as a kind of pressure groups.
- New parties in state government: With the death of Jawahar Lal Nehru, and 1967 elections posed challenge to dominance of the congress system. The Congress failed to secure majorities in eight states and its majority in the Lok Sabha was reduced to very narrow 54% of the seats. Regional parties started growing all over the country.
- Cultural Pluralism: Emergence of several regional political parties in India has been a natural development because of the presence of socio-economic, religious and cultural pluralism.
- Religious factors: The existence of several religions within India has helped the emergence of several regional parties like the Akali Dal of Punjab is mainly a religious party which stands for the preservation and promotion of Sikh religion and Punjab language.
- Economic factors: The emergence of regional economic imbalances in India has also been a factor in the emergence of regional parties. Several regions of the country have registered a relatively high level of economic development while many others continue to lag behind.
- Caste and Region: Caste system and religion in Indian society play only a marginal roll in causing regionalism. Only when caste is combined with linguistic preponderance or religion it may cause regional feeling. In the like manner religion is not so significant except when it is combined with linguistic homogeneity or based on dogmatism and orthodoxy or linked with economic deprivation. However, regionalism is usually a secular phenomenon in a relative sense and it can cross-cut the caste affiliation or religious loyalties.
- Split in major parties: Splits resulting from the emergence of sizeable dissident local groups in several national political parties have also been responsible for the emergence of some regional political parties. Eg. Janata Dal, Janata Dal Secular, Janata Dal (United), AIADMK etc. as regional parties in the Indian Political System can be explained in terms of this factor.
- Charisma based: There were regional parties which have been formed by individual leaders on the basis of their charismatic personalities. These were called as personalised parties and they are short-lived. The examples are Lok Janshakti Party, Haryana Vikas Party, Himachal Vikas Congress and so on.

### **Conclusion**

Personality cult politics, caste factors, developing nature of Indian political party system are some of the reasons behind rise of regional parties in India. Anti-Centralism is getting replaced by Centre-State cooperative-bargaining federation. It appears to be a healthy development in Indian politics.