

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. India's freedom struggle had participation from people of all walks of life irrespective of caste, creed, sex, and religion, and was not exclusively controlled by any particular group. Do you agree? Critically comment.

Approach

Candidates are expected to write about how Indian freedom struggle was initially confined to few politically active group and then with increasing the mass nationalism how it transitioned into number of movements and was not exclusively belonged to particular group.

Introduction

The Indian National Movement was an organised mass movement concerned with the interests of the people of India and affected by both internal and external factors. It was a result of series of Political, Socio-cultural and Economic factors that led to the rise of nationalism. Though it seems at the beginning, the movement was confined to bourgeoisie it was more a popular movement which saw the participation from various classes.

Body

Initial movement controlled by bourgeoisie:

- The early political associations like Bangabasha prakashika sabha, Zamindari association, East India association, India league etc. were formed by upper classes or zamindars with limited voice of masses.
- Moderate phase had narrow social base and masses played limited role.
- The formation of congress itself involved rich and educated Indians as well as English leaders like AO Hume.
- Even the congress gave less emphasis on issues related to religion and traditions which undermined the class of Dalits, women etc. who played little role in early phases of national movement.
- The leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozshah Mehta, Bipin Chandra pal etc. were from Rich class who were a part of struggle apart from the regular life of bourgeoisie.
- Most of the issues that were taken up especially in the early phases helped mostly the educated and middle-class Indians. e.g. the protest against lowering the age for ICS examination, education policies etc.,
- However, it would be wrong to say Indian national movement was exclusively controlled by the bourgeoisie.

Popular movement of various classes:

- Inclusion of Rural masses: especially after the entry of Gandhiji - were instrumental in various struggles like Kheda satyagraha, salt satyagraha and so on.

- Youth: They boycotted schools and colleges. Their participation increased during the extremist phase and reached its peak during the quit India movement.
- Educated Working class: The lawyers, teachers, government clerks and so on quit their jobs in support of Indian national struggle.
- Capitalist class: The capitalist class emerged in the end of 19th century and played some roles in freedom movement in one way or other. There were certain capitalists who joined Congress, went to jails and suffered hardships, for example JL Bajaj V O Chidambaram Pillai, JRD Tata etc. helped in Swadeshi movement and Indian industrial development.
- Muslims: The leaders of the Khilafat agitation, Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, now wished to initiate a full-fledged Non-Cooperation Movement. Gandhiji supported their call and urged the Congress to campaign against “Punjab wrongs” Jallianwala massacre, the Khilafat wrong and demand swaraj.
- Women’s participation was seen in late extremist phase and they were instrumental in successes of Civil disobedience movement. This includes Gandhian protesters like Sarojini Naidu as well as revolutionaries like Bina Das, Pritilata Waddadar and others.
- Revolutionary class: Individuals like Chandrashekhar Azad, Sachin Sanyal as well as revolutionary groups like Anushilan samiti, Anubhav Bharat used the route of violence to instill fear amongst British officials and tried to overthrow the regime by force.
- Lower classes struggled for equal socio: Political status e.g. Vaikom satyagraha, avarippuram movement etc. Congress did not have social reforms in its agenda in the beginning. However, when in 1918 the first Depressed Classes Conference was organized in Bombay, and the Dalits and non-Brahmins made proposals for separate electorates, the Congress reversed its policy.
- Struggles Among Peasants: In various parts of British India, the pattern of landownership was largely unfavourable to the cultivating population. The labourers suffered from various kinds of unfreedom, with a significant part of the agricultural population being tied in semi-serfdom they also revolted and took part in struggle.
- Tribals: As the freedom movement widened, it drew Advisees into all aspects of the struggle. Many landless and deeply oppressed Advisees joined in with upper-caste freedom fighters expecting that the defect of the British would usher in a new democratic era. For example Rampa rebellion, Heraka movement etc.
- Socialist class: Many of the key actors in India’s freedom struggle too were influenced by Marxism to varying extents, from the early revolutionaries of Bhagat Singh’s HSRA and the Communist Party to leftwing Congress leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose and others.
- It can be concluded that even though the nationalist movement was started by the established bourgeoisie class, it became successful when it became more inclusive and a pan India movement.

Conclusion

The Indian national movement acted as a vehicle of social change by redistributing social and economic power within the society with participation of different groups. It played a liberating role not only against the British government but also integrating different communities against the traditional social structure and provided a feeling of recognition and human dignity among the lowest sections of society.



3. How has the India-Russia relationship unfolded during this Pandemic? Critically Analyse.

Approach

Candidates are expected to critically analyse the India Russia relationships how it has unfolded during pandemic. Candidates need to write how India and Russia engaged with each other and then what are the difficulties and challenges around it.

Introduction

The year 2020 saw several geopolitical events that impacted both India and Russia. As Russia and India both desire a multi-polar world, they are equally important for each other in fulfilling each other's national interests. However, due to the changing geopolitical scenario, the relationship between both countries is not as good as it used to be in the cold war era.

Body

Let us analyse the relevance of Indo-Russian ties in a world of changing geopolitical equations in this pandemic times:

- The Chinese aggression in the border areas of eastern Ladakh, brought India-China relations to an inflection point, but also demonstrated that Russia is capable of contributing to defusing tensions with China.
- Russia organized a trilateral meeting among the foreign ministers of Russia, India, and China following deadly clashes in the Galwan Valley in the disputed territory of Ladakh.
- Russia currently seeks to leverage India's soft power to gain legitimacy in the success of the Eurasian Economic Union, and re-establishing its hegemony, as it existed during the cold war era.
- Till now, its development has primarily revolved around Chinese dominance and so Russia wants to diversify with the help of India to lessen Russia's growing dependence on China in post pandemic era.
- Recently India approved Russian Vaccine Sputnik V under emergency use authorisation. Both sides have also helped each other deal with the effects of the pandemic. Russia expressed its gratitude for India's decision to supply key drugs to fight the pandemic, HCQ and paracetamol.
- Apart from traditional areas of cooperation such as weapons, hydrocarbons, nuclear energy, and diamonds, new sectors of economic engagement are likely to emerge mining, agro-industrial, and high technology, including robotics, nanotech, and biotech.

Challenges in India Russia Relationships:

- The relationship was showing signs of strain even before to the pandemic, mainly because both countries are drifting toward different sides in the emerging competition between the United States and China.

- China-Russian ties are growing due to their shared interest in opposing the US. The intense geostrategic rivalry between China and the US in the region. Russia which opposes the US joined hands with China.
- For India, a Russia-China alliance would bring about the dreaded prospect of an Asia dominated by China. In this scenario, India would feel compelled to contemplate a similar relationship with the West this can affect Indo Russia ties.
- Both India and Russia have a difference of opinion in understanding the concept of the Indo-Pacific. This will increase the US presence in the region, Further, it will reduce Russia's involvement as Russia maintained a cordial relationship with Asian countries in the region.
- For this reason, Russia does not accept the concept of QUAD. This can be reflected in a determined restart of the Quad process after pandemic and a clearer enunciation of a free and inclusive Indo-Pacific.
- Russia responded by revving up its own "Pivot to the East". The most distinct results of which are markedly improved relations with China, and better ties with Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. Russia's Pivot to the East policy is not in synergy with that of the US and subsequently, the relationship between India and Russia suffers.
- But despite the emergency cooperation, and the defense relationship, there are longer term difficulties in the India-Russia relationship that are unlikely to be easy to resolve. The pandemic has accelerated the competition between China and the region and that is likely to eventually add stress to the India-Russia relationship.

Way forward:

- Apart from bilateral synergies, the two are members of various multilateral organizations including BRICS, RIC, G20, East Asia Summit, and SCO where avenues for cooperation on issues of mutual importance exist.
- India should pursue and facilitate Russia's engagement in the Indo-Pacific. However, Russia's role in the Indo-Pacific will depend on how successful it is in dealing with the fundamental problems hindering its economic development.

Conclusion

It is clear that India & Russia still regard each other as valued partners with a friendship built on deep mutual trust, their foreign policy goals are taking them in different directions. However neither India nor Russia wants to be a junior partner to China or the United States. Thus, both countries can turn back to and bolster ties as existed in the cold war era.