

1. Illustrate the scenarios that forced Congress to accept the partition of the country. In your opinion, could it have been avoided? Comment.

Approach

The candidate needs to define first what is meant by partition in Indian context. Further write what forced congress to accept partition and balance it out by writing points to support how it could have been avoided. In conclusion try to contextualise to present scenario after partition.

Introduction

The Partition of India in 1947 was the division of British India into two independent dominion states, the Union of India and the Dominion of Pakistan. Today the Dominion of India is the Republic of India, while the Dominion of Pakistan is today the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Partition was one of the most disastrous event of 20th century which led to death of millions of people on both the sides of border.

Body

Events that forced Congress to accept partition

- The seeds of partition were sown long ago by the divide and rule policy of Britishers starting from the formation of muslim league then giving of separate electorates and continuing this until the Shimla conference where Jinnah was given virtual veto in talks.
- Rajaji's formula, which was proposed by C Rajagopalachari and also the Desai-Liaquat in March 1944 which were rejected by the majority within the congress and also there was a forceful opposition from the Hindu Mahasabha.
- The communal riots which were a constant phenomenon in 1940s reached a unmanageable stage after the announcement of direct action day announced by the muslim league on 16 August 1946.
- Partition could control riots: The British government was not doing anything to check communalism. INC leaders felt that accepting Dominion status would at least give them some power to check further riots.
- Recalcitrant and adamant behaviour of Muslim league and Jinnah led to Failure of Cripps Mission, Shimla Conference, Cabinet Mission and the Interim government which convinced INC that Muslim League will not reconcile for one nation.
- Direct action day: It was observed by Muslim league and the following incidents of Hindu-Muslim riot made Congress believe that partition was the only option if otherwise there could be lasting peace even if British leave India.
- Mountbatten Plan (1947): it provided a way whereby the Congress need not any longer to construct ways for cooperating with the Muslim League.
- There was a constant pressure not only from the Muslim league but also the right wing within India and congress to have separate nation and this forced Congress hands further in the negotiations.

- The elections results of 1946 showed how India was divided between Hindu and muslim as the Muslim league which had not previously got good support among muslims won in majority of the seats and same was true for Congress in general category seats

Therefore the overall circumstances made partition rather an inevitable scenario for the congress. But historians has over the years made some strong arguments of how the partition was avoidable such as :

- Congress was not able to imbibe nationalism across the communities. After the initial failure of khilafat movement of 1920s congress didn't take enough efforts to reconcile with Muslim league and also to bring muslim population in mainstream nationalism.
- The Lahore pact of 1916 by congress was a tacit acceptance of the existence of Two nations by accepting the demand for separate electorates. This was avoidable which further gave legitimacy to muslim league.
- Congress was over the years unable to reign in the conservative and communal elements within the congress. This went on exacerbating the situation as seen at the 1928 all party conference events.

Conclusion

Therefore it can be concluded that there were both possibilities alive in the 1940s. While Congress was focused on achieving Independence for whole India the two parties that are Muslim league and British were both in connivance to thwart such plans by Congress. This eventually resulted into partition of India which was the price India payed for its independence which was achieved on 15 August ,1947. The scars of this partition still haunts India in persistent problems of communalism, militancy, terrorism and illegal migration across borders of Bangladesh and Pakistan.

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

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



3. Critical assess the performance of India's states towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).**Approach**

The candidate needs to first define what are sustainable development goals. In the next part mention the recent performances by different states. In next part add criticism on the current state of progress and suggest some reforms to overcome this situation.

Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. India played a prominent role in the formulation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and much of the country's National Development Agenda is mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The progress of the world to meet the SDGs largely depends on India's progress and India's progress depends upon the performances of individual states.

Body

Sustainable development goals index as baseline :

- While countries around the world were considering how to implement and measure success against the Goals, NITI Aayog took the lead by bringing out the SDG India Index Baseline Report 2018, and showing how SDGs will be measured in India. The NITI Aayog released the Baseline Report of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index, which comprehensively documents the progress made by India's States and Union Territories towards implementing the 2030 SDG targets.
- NITI Aayog has constructed the SDG India Index spanning across 13 out of 17 SDGs (leaving out Goals 12, 13, 14 and 17). The Index tracks the progress of all the States and Union Territories (UTs) on a set of 62 National Indicators, measuring their progress on the outcomes of the interventions and schemes of the Government of India. The SDG India Index is intended to provide a holistic view on the social, economic and environmental status of the country and its States and UTs.

Performance of Indian states :

- According to NITI Aayog's SDG Index 2020-21., India has made progress on fronts like clean energy, urban development and health which has improved its overall Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) score from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2021,
- SDGs on eradication of poverty and hunger; affordable and clean energy have showed improvement in several states and Union Territories (UTs).

- Kerala with a score of 75 has topped the third edition of NITI Aayog's SDG index while Bihar with a score of 52 continues to remain at the bottom of the list. The second spot was shared by two states Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh with 74 points each.
- Bihar with 52 points, Jharkhand 56 points and Assam with 57 occupied the bottom berths on the index, according to the NITI Aayog report.
- Among Union Territories, Chandigarh, Delhi and Lakshadweep scored 79, 68 and 68 points respectively. Mizoram gained 12 points as compared to 2019-20, Haryana 10 points and Uttarakhand 8 points emerging as top gainers.
- Among new front runners, were Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Punjab, Haryana, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.
- According to the report, Tamil Nadu and Delhi improved per capita income of citizens while Gujarat and Delhi topped the health sector while Kerala and Chandigarh did well on education.

Critical analysis of the SDG index 2020-21:

- While this is cause for cheer, the Index reveals that there has been a major decline in the areas of industry, innovation and infrastructure besides decent work and economic growth, again made worse by the lockdowns imposed by the governments seeking to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.
- But the stark differences between the southern and western States on the one hand and the north-central and eastern States on the other in their performance on the SDGs, point to persisting socio-economic and governance disparities.
- These, if left unaddressed, will exacerbate federal challenges and outcomes, as seen in the public health challenges during the second wave across some of the worse-off States.

Solutions to tackle the uneven progress of different states :

- The majority of the goals of SDG 2030 are in the domain of state governments therefore it becomes imperative to devolve more funds to state's government. The current devolution scheme envisages 42 percent which can be increased further.
- The SDG index released by Niti aayog can be made an important parameter to devolve funds to the state governments especially the schemes which target SDG goals.
- Municipal corporation's should be allowed to gather funds from green bonds to support its efforts to support targets in view of resource crunch.
- In light of COVID-19 pandemic the states should be allowed a greater fiscal room in deficit targets to spend more on welfare measures.
- A good practices repository of different states and practices around the world should be formulated and shared with states to enable them have more diverse options.
- The school curriculum needs to be focused towards bringing a behavioural change to create a next generation bureaucracy and workforce who imbibe the motives of SDG for better future.

Conclusion

Therefore India has made commendable efforts towards achieving the targets of SDG 2030. This can be seen by improvement of overall score of India from 60 to 66 in SDG Index India 2020-21. But the current pandemic and the regional disparities between states in achieving the SDG can hinder future progress. Therefore there is need to make rigorous efforts to incentivise lagging states and help India achieve these targets for a sustainable and prosperous future of India and world.

