

Chapter – 12 History

India After Independence

After so many years of struggle and hardship, India finally attained freedom from the British Raj on 15th August 1947.

A New and Divided Nation:

After Independence, India faced a series of enormous challenges. Like-

- i. The problems of refugees and of the princely states had to be addressed immediately.
- ii. The new nation had to adopt a political system that would best serve the hopes and expectations of its population.
- iii. India's population in 1947 was large and was divided. Division between high castes and low castes, between majority Hindu community and Indians who practiced other faiths could be seen.
- iv. Farmers and peasants were dependent on the monsoon for their survival.
- v. The new nation had to lift its masses out of poverty by increasing the productivity of agriculture & by promoting new job creating industries.
- vi. Unity & development goes hand in hand. If the divisions between sections of India were not healed, they could result in violent conflicts. Examples-
 - Hindus Vs Muslims
 - High castes fighting with the low castes

· A Constitution is Written:.

The Constitution of India is a document that establishes the political values, the powers of government and the rights of the citizens of the country.

It is the supreme law of India.

(i) The meetings of '**Constituent Assembly**' were held in New Delhi and representatives from all parts of India attended the meeting. These discussions resulted in the framing of the Indian Constitution, which came into effect on **26 January 1950**.

(ii) One feature of the constitution was its adoption of **Universal Adult Franchise**; All Indians above the age of 21 would be allowed to vote in the state and national elections. This was the revolutionary step as Indians never had been allowed to choose their own leaders.

(iii) It guaranteed equality before the law to all citizens, regardless of their caste or religious affiliation. This was Constitution's second feature.

(iv) The third feature of the Constitution was that it offered special privileges for the poorest and the most disadvantaged group of Indians.

(v) The practice of untouchability was abolished. .

(vi) Temples which were once opened for only higher castes, were now open to all including the untouchables or ***Harijans***.

(vii) Along with the former Untouchables, the adivasis or Scheduled Tribes were also granted reservation in seats and jobs.

(viii) The Constituent Assembly spent many days in discussing the powers of the Central government and of the State government. It was decided that Centre's interest should be foremost as they will be in position to think & plan for the well-being of the country as a whole.

(ix) The Constitution sought to strike a balance of power, between the centre and the states by providing three lists of subjects which are Union list, the State list and the Concurrent list.

- **The Union list** has subjects like taxes, defence and foreign affairs which are the responsibility of the Centre.
- **The State list** has subjects like education and health, which would be taken care of principally by the state.
- **The Concurrent list** comprises of forests, agriculture, etc. in which the centre and the states would have joint responsibility.

(x) **Hindi was designated as the 'Official language' of India** and English would be used in

the courts, the services and communications between one state and another.

(xi) **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**, who was the Chairman of the drafting committee and under whose supervision the document was finalized played an important role in framing the Indian Constitution and referred to as "**The father of Indian Constitution**".

· **How Were States to be Formed:**

(i) In 1920s, the Indian National Congress amended its constitution and reorganized its regional branches on the basis of linguistic (language) groups.

(ii) Prime Minister Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel were against the creation of linguistic states.

(iii) In October 1952, a veteran Gandhian named Potti Sriramulu went on a hunger strike demanding the formation of Andhra Pradesh to protect the interests of Telegu speaking people.

(iv) On 15 December 1952, fifty eight days into his fast, Potti Sriramulu died. His death led to violence all over the state and central government was forced to give in to the demand.

(v) On 1 October 1953, the new state of Andhra Pradesh was created.

(vi) After creation of Andhra Pradesh, other linguistic communities also demanded separate states. Therefore, a State Reorganisation Commission was set up.

(vii) Following recommendations were done:

- The large Hindi-speaking region of north India was also to be broken up into several states.
- The bilingual state of Bombay was divided into separate states for Marathi & Gujarati speakers.
- The state of Punjab was also divided into Punjab & Haryana.

· **Planning for Development:**

(i) Among the major objectives of the new nation, lifting India and Indians out of poverty and building a modern technical and industrial base were very strong.

(ii) In 1950, the government set up a Planning Commission to help design and execute suitable policies for economic development. It was agreed that India would follow '**Mixed Economy**' model where both public and private sectors would co-exist for the economic development of the nation.

(iii) In 1956, the second five year plan was formulated which focused mainly on the development of heavy industries in India such as steel, and on the building of large dams. These sectors were directly under the control of the state.

(iv) The Bhilai steel plant of Chhattisgarh came to be seen as an important sign of development of modern India after Independence.

· **The Nation, Sixty Years On:**

(i) On 15 August 2007, India celebrated sixty years of its existence as a free nation.

(ii) In these sixty years, India has seen many achievements as well as failures.

(iii) Success during 60 years of India were-

- Still a united and a democratic country
- There is unity in diversity
- There is a free press and an independent judiciary

(iv) Failures during 60 years of India-

- Deep divisions persist
- Despite constitutional guarantees
- the untouchables or the Dalits face violence and discrimination
- there are Clashes between different religious groups in many states
- The gulf between the rich and poor has widened over these years.