

Short Answer Questions

Q.1. Describe any four challenges faced by Election Commission of India before first General Elections.

[CBSE Delhi 2013]

Ans. The four challenges faced by Election Commission of India before first General Elections are as follows:

(a) Delimitation of Electoral Constituencies: To hold a free and fair election in a diverse country of India's size required drawing the boundaries of the electoral constituencies.

(b) Absence of electoral rolls: It was important to prepare list of voters to hold free and fair election.

(c) Illiteracy: There were only 15% voters literate out of 17 crore eligible voters because of which special method of voting was required.

(d) Mistakes in electoral rolls: 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.

Q.2. Describe the success achieved by Congress party in the first general elections.

Ans. In the first general elections, Congress party had a huge victory. It won 364 seats out of 489 seats. In this election era, Congress party left its opponents far behind. The Communist Party of India could win only 16 seats and stood second. Assembly elections were also conducted along with Lok Sabha elections. These elections were also swept away by the Congress Party. Apart from Kerala, Madras and Orissa, Congress emerged victorious in rest of the States. But later in even these three States congress managed to form Government. This way Congress became the dominant party at both the national as well as the provincial level and Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister of India.

Q.3. Explain any four reasons for the dominance of the Congress Party in the first three General Elections.

[CBSE Delhi 2013, (AI) 2014, (AI) 2016, CBSE Sample Paper 2015]

Ans. 1. Legacy of national movement: The Congress party had received a very big and rich heritage from national movement. The legacy was provided such a direction by

the party, so that it can progress politically. Party leaders like Nehru and Shastri spent years in jail and suffered torture which made them popular.

2. Grassroot organization: Congress was a grassroot organization' present during the independence. Its organizational structure was based on internal democracy. This democracy helped the party in resolving its internal conflicts and reinforced uniformity.

3. Adjustments according to local conditions: Congress party became influential because it was able to make adjustment according to local conditions. Former Zamindari aristocratism contested for power in congress. Party's internal democratic set up and advantages of election helped Congress to make necessary adjustments in line with changes in local power balance.

4. Increase in the supporters: With the increase in the developmental role of the State, the resources distributed to the party members also started to grow. The increase in the number of resources and opportunities also led to increase in the capability of Congress to make among its members administrative adjustment of the entire country. The party grew above the gifts of hierarchical order which gave it political and economic resources to choose new supporters for electoral benefit.

5. 'The first-past-the post' method also played a vital role in the Congress' dominance. In this method, 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.

Q.4. In what sense was the Congress an ideological coalition? Mention the various ideological currents present within the Congress.

[NCERT]

OR

Explain the functioning of the Congress Party as an ideological and social coalition.

[NCERT, CBSE (AI) 2014, 2016]

Ans. Congress as an ideological coalition: Congress was a centrist party that could accommodate views of near-Right and near-Left members. Congress was built on the principles of secularism and equality and had members without any exclusionary tactics. The Congress represented views of the capitalists and peasants in the forms of industrialists and peasants respectively.

Congress as a social coalition: Congress had representation from industrialists, farmers and of workers and tried to accommodate views of each social class. Similarly,

Congress did not discriminate on the basis of caste, religion, gender or ethnicity and showed unity in diversity.

Q.5. What distinguished the dominance of the Congress Party in India from other examples of one party dominance in other countries? Explain.

[CBSE Delhi 2016]

Ans. It is different because of the following reasons –

- In India, multiparty system prevailed where as in other countries like China and Russia dominance of one party was due to one party system.
- In India, dominance of the party (Congress) was due to its own popularity.
- There was no military interference in India like in Myanmar and Egypt.
- Democracy was not compromised by dominance of one party.