
Lesson at a Glance

- **Partition** created a number of problems for independent India.
- First and foremost task was to **rehabilitate** the refugees who had come into the country from the newly born Pakistan.
- Then there was the problem of the **princely states**.
- These two problems needed immediate solution. Afterwards the new nation had to adopt a **political system** that would best serve the hopes and aspirations of its people.
- The population of India in 1947 was about 345 million. One could observe a lot of diversities in the country regarding languages, foods, dresses, professions etc. There was wide gap between **high castes** and **low castes**. In spite of all these diversities, people had to live together in one nation-state. This created the problem of unity.
- The problem of **development** was another major point. Indian **economy** was very weak at the time the country got freedom. Farmers and peasants depended on the monsoon for their survival.
- In the cities, factory workers lived in crowded slums with little access to **education** or health care.
- The new nation had to do a lot of work in order to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, etc. It had to increase productivity of agriculture and promote new, job-creating industries.
- A written **constitution** was essential for the country. For this a series of meetings on the country's political future was held. As a result the Indian Constitution came into being on 26 January 1950.
- The constitution adopted **Universal Adult Franchise**. All Indians above the age of 21 would be allowed to vote in state and national elections. (Later it was reduced to 18 years.)
- Our constitution guaranteed **equality before the law** to all citizens, regardless of their caste or religious affiliation.
- A third feature of the constitution was that it offered **special privileges** for the poorest and most disadvantaged Indians. The practice of untouchability was abolished. A certain percentage of seats in legislatures as well as jobs in government was reserved for members of the lowest castes.

- Along with the former untouchables, the **advasis** or **Scheduled Tribes** were also granted reservation in seats and jobs. Like the **Scheduled Castes**, these Indians too had been deprived and discriminated against.
- In order to maintain balance between the central government and that of the state governments, the constitution provided three lists of subjects—a **Union List**, with subjects such as taxes, defence and foreign affairs, which would be sole responsibility of the Centre, a **State List** with subjects such as education and health, which would be taken care of mainly by the states, a **Concurrent List** under which would come subjects such as forests and agriculture, in which both the centre and states would have joint responsibility.
- Language was also an important point. Several members of the **Constituent Assembly** wanted to replace English language with Hindi. But non-Hindi speakers had different opinion. They wanted English language to be continued. Therefore, a compromise was finally arrived at. It was resolved that while Hindi would be the 'official language' of India, English would be used in the courts, the services and communication between one state and another.
- Another major problem was that of the **formation of state**. Both Prime Minister Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel were against the creation of **linguistic states**. Nehru clearly said that he had to check disruptionist tendencies caused due to partition and make the nation strong and united.
- This caused great disappointment among the Kannada speakers, Malayalam speakers, the Marathi speakers and the Telugu speakers. They began to protest. The strongest protest came from the Telugu-speaking districts of the Madras Presidency.
- In October 1952 a veteran Gandhian named Potti Sriramula went on a hunger fast demanding the formation of Andhra state to protect the interests of Telugu speakers. As the fast went on, it attracted much support. *Hartals* and *bandhs* were observed in many towns.
- Finally the new state of Andhra Pradesh came into being on 1 October, 1953.
- Now other **linguistic communities** also began to demand their own separate states. A **States Reorganisation Commission** was set up which submitted its report in 1956, recommending the redrawing of district and provincial boundaries to form compact provinces of Assamese, Bengali, Oriya, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Telugu speakers respectively.

- The large Hindi-speaking region of north India was broken up into several states.
- In 1960, the bilingual state of Bombay was divided into separate states for Marathi and Gujarati speakers.
- In 1966, the state of Punjab was also divided into Punjab and Haryana.
- Now, planning for development began to be made. Lifting India out of poverty and building a modern technical and industrial base were among the major objectives of the new nation.
- In 1950, the government set up a **Planning Commission** to help design and execute suitable policies for economic development.
- In 1956, the **Second Five Year Plan** was formulated which focused strongly on the development of heavy industries.
- Sixty-two years of independence have passed. This is not a short duration. A lot have been achieved in this time but at the same time there have been a number of failures.
- **Successes.** India is still united and it is still democratic.
 - There is a free press.
 - There is an independent judiciary.
 - Unity in diversity.
- **Failures**
 - Deep divisions persist.
 - Despite constitutional guarantee, the Untouchables or the Dalits face violence and discrimination.
 - The gulf between the rich and the poor has grown over years.

■ TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED ■

Let's Recall

Q. 1. Name three problems that the newly independent nation of India faced.

Ans. The three problems that the newly independent nation of India faced are given below:

(i) The problem of the rehabilitation of 8 million refugees who had come into the country from newly born Pakistan.

(ii) The problem of the princely states. There were almost 500 princely states, each ruled by a Maharaja or a Nawab, and each of them had to be persuaded to join the new nation.

(iii) The new nation had to adopt a political system that would best serve the hopes and aspirations of the people.

Q. 2. *What was the role of the Planning Commission?*

Ans. The Planning Commission helped design and execute suitable policies for economic development.

Q. 3. *Fill in the blanks.*

(a) Subjects that were placed on the Union List were and

(b) Subjects on the Concurrent List were and

(c) Economic planning by which both the state and the private sector played a role in development was called a model.

(d) The death of sparked off such violent protests that the government was forced to give into the demand for linguistic state of Andhra.

Ans. (a) Taxes, defence, foreign affairs

(b) Forests, agriculture

(c) 'mixed economy'

(d) Potti Sriramulu

Q. 4. *State whether true or false:*

(a) At independence, the majority of Indians lived in villages.

(b) The Constituent Assembly was made up of members of the Congress Party.

(c) In the first national election, only men were allowed to vote.

(d) The Second Five Year Plan focused on the development of heavy industry.

Ans. (a) True (b) False

(c) False (d) True

Let's Discuss

Q. 5. *What did Dr. Ambedkar mean when he said that "In politics we will have equality, and in social and economic life we will have inequality"?*

Ans. What Ambedkar wanted to say was that providing voting right to the lower caste people would not remove other inequalities such as between rich and poor, or between

upper castes and lower castes. These classes of people could be labelled equal only politically but in reality it could not be possible due to our social and economic structure.

Q. 6. *After Independence, why was there a reluctance to divide the country on linguistic lines?*

Ans. India got independence at the cost of its division. This division had been done on the basis of religion. As a result of this division more than a million people had been killed in riots between Hindus and Muslims. In such circumstances, it was not wise to further divide the country on the basis of language. Therefore, both Prime Minister Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Patel were against the creation of linguistic states.

Q. 7. *Give one reason why English continued to be used in India after Independence.*

Ans. English continued to be used in India after Independence because south Indian states expressed strong opposition to Hindi.

Q. 8. *How was the economic development of India visualised in the early decades after Independence?*

Ans. In 1950, the government set up a Planning Commission to help design and execute suitable policies for economic development. There was a broad agreement on 'mixed economy' model. Here, both the state and the private sector would play important and complementary roles in increasing production and generating jobs. Now, it was on the Planning Commission to define which industries should be initiated by the state and which by the market and how to achieve a balance between the different regions and states.

In 1956, the Second Five Year Plan was formulated which focused on the development of heavy industries such as steel, and on the building of large dams. These sectors would be under the control of the state. This focus on heavy industry, and the effort at state regulation of the economy was to guide economic policy for the next few decades.

Let's Do

Q. 9. *Who was Mira Behn? Find out more about her life and her ideas.*

Ans. Mira Behn (1892–1982) was the daughter of a British Admiral. Her real name was Madeline Shade. She left England to live and work with Mahatma Gandhi. She devoted her life to human development, the advancement of Gandhiji's principles and to the freedom struggle. She was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 1982.

Q. 10. *Find out more about the language divisions in Pakistan that led to the creation of the new nation of Bangladesh. How did Bangladesh achieve independence from Pakistan?*

Ans. Pakistan was divided into two regions—East Pakistan and West Pakistan. This division was done on the basis of linguistic majority. The East Pakistan was dominated by Bengala-speaking Muslims while the West Pakistan was dominated by Urdu-speaking Muslims. The people of the West Pakistan always considered the Bengali Muslims living in the East Pakistan inferior to them. So, the Muslims living in East Pakistan were devoid of all facilities and fundamental rights. It caused great dissatisfaction among them. They began migrating to India. Their number grew so large that India was compelled to intervene the situation. It supported the cause of the East Pakistan which resulted in a war between India and Pakistan. Finally India won the war in favour of the East Pakistan and declared it as a new country named Bangladesh on 16th December 1971. Bangladesh was now recognised as a sovereign nation and Muziburr Rehman was its first President.

