

ERA OF ONE PARTY DOMINANCE

THE General Elections of 1952 in India were a landmark in the history of democracy all over the world

The reasons are

- (i) Big Test of Democracy :- The first general election was the first big test of democracy in a poor & illiterate country. Till then democracy had existed only in prosperous countries like in Europe and North America where every one was literate.
- (ii) India experimented with Universal Adult Franchise :- India experimented with Universal Adult Franchise which by that time had not been given in some European countries. It was restricted for women. This appeared as India's bold & risk step.
- (iii) Elections were competitive :- Not only this, the elections were competitive. There were on an average more than four candidates for every seat.
- (iv) Level of participation was encouraging and fair :-> Even the level of participation in elections was encouraging and more than half the eligible voters turned out to vote on the day of elections. And when results were declared, these were accepted as fair even by the losers.

CONGRESS DOMINANCE IN THE FIRST THREE GENERAL ELECTIONS

In the first three general elections in the Congress Party maintained its dominance. In the first election Indian National Congress was expected to win and when the final results were declared the extent of the victory of the Congress did surprise many. The party won 364 of the 489 seats in the first Lok Sabha and finished way ahead of any other challenger.

- (i) The Communist party of India that came next in terms of seats won only 16 seats.
- (ii) In the state elections also the Congress scored big victories. It won a majority of seats in all the states except Travancore Cochin (Cesta) Madras & Odisha.
- (iii) So the party ruled all over the country at the national and the state level and Jawaharlal Nehru became the Prime Minister.
- (iv) In the Second & third General Election held in 1957 & 1962 respectively the Congress Party maintained the same position in the Lok Sabha by winning three-fourth of seats.
- (v) None of the opposition parties could win even one tenth of the number of seats captured by the Congress.

Factors for Domination of Political Scene by the Congress: ->

- (i) Congress is the oldest party in India. It started in 1885 and was the major party that struggled to get India independence. It produced many great leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Rajaji, Vallabhbhai Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose. It provided strong leadership to the Indian masses.
- (ii) Congress sacrificed in all possible forms to achieve independence. One can rightly say that Congress wholeheartedly fought for India's Independence.
- (iii) Gandhi lived like an ordinary Indian & propagated ideologies of truth, non-violence, swaraj, trusteeship which the people of India thoroughly appreciated. He was the first man to launch a national movement as mass movement by bringing women, peasants & students to participate on a large scale.
- (iv) Indian masses were totally impressed by the role of Congress party & having faith in the Congress they voted for it more than five decades. The able leadership of Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi & Narshimha Rao led India on to the path of success even though some leaders fell victims to terrorism. (Indira Gandhi & Rajiv Gandhi)
- (v) The Congress after India's independence, not only tried to solve the problems but also faced the challenges before the nation, It is not

independence meant that we had achieved everything. There were many challenges such as poverty, unemployment, low production in agriculture, industry, problem of integration of states and very importantly the refugees. It was a tough time for Congress & it managed to overcome these problems slowly but steadily. (11)

(vi) There was no strong political party to replace the Congress and the policies of the Congress and our relations with the neighbours favoured Congress to become the dominant political party.

Functioning of the Communist Party of India from 1920 to 1950.

The Communist Party played a multi-dimensional role from 1920 to 1950

- (i) In the early 1920s 'Communist groups' emerged in different parts of India taking inspirations from the Bolshevik revolution.
- (ii) From 1935, the Communists worked mainly from within the fields of the Indian National Congress.
- (iii) The Communist Party had a well oiled Party machinery and dedicated Cadre at the time of independence.
- (iv) After independence the Communist Party played a negative role and encouraged violent uprisings in Telangana because the party thought that the transfer of power in 1947 was not true independence.
- (v) It failed to generate popular support. Hence in 1951, the Communist Party abandoned the path of violent revolution and decided to participate in the approaching general elections.

In the first election in 1952 the Communist Party won 16 seats and emerged as the largest opposition party.

Communist Party of India split in 1964 : → Charu Mazumdar was a Communist revolutionary and the leader of the Naxalbari uprising. He founded the CPI (Marxist-Leninist) in 1964 following an ideological rift between the Soviet Union and China.

The pro Soviet factors remained as the CPI, while the opponents formed the CPI (M) i.e. Marxist. Both these parties continue to exist to this day significantly in the states of Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh & Tamil Nadu.

- Main differences between Mexico & India under one party domination (12)
- (i) Mexico one party domination: → i.e. the domination of Institutional Revolutionary Party was based on the "Perfect dictatorship" whereas, in India the Congress Party's domination was based on "Popular Consensus".
  - (ii) In Mexico the elections were often rigged and manipulated by the ruling party i.e. PRI but in India Elections were based on competition among political parties.

Swatantra Party: →  
C. Rajagopalachari, a senior Congress leader, was the founder of the Swatantra Party. The Party was formed in August 1959. The Party believed that prosperity could come only through individual freedom. It was against land ceiling in agriculture and also opposed cooperative farming.

### Bharatiya Jani Sangh

The Bharatiya Jani Sangh was formed in 1951 with Shyama Prasad Mukherjee as its founder-president. Its lineage however can be traced back to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Hindu Mahasabha before independence.

The policies were based on

- (a) One Country, one culture and one nation replacing secular concept.
- (b) India would have reunited with Pakistan under the concept of Akhand Bharat.
- (c) No cultural and educational rights as the Bharatiya Jani Sangh opposed the granting of concessions to religious and cultural minorities.

- The Policies of Communist Party of India :->
- (i) For Communist Party the government policy directed towards the system of proportional representation.
  - (ii) Control on the electronic mass media by an autonomous body or corporation.
  - (iii) Government would follow the Communist ideology on broad policy matters.

### SOCIALIST PARTY :->

Acharya ~~Prabhu~~ Narendra Dev was founding President of the Congress Socialist Party. The Socialist believed in the ideology of democratic socialism which distinguished them both from the Congress as well as from the Communists. They criticised the Congress for favouring capitalists and landlords and for ignoring the workers & the peasants.

### Important Questions :->

1. Why did the Indian National Congress dominate the first three General Elections after independence?
2. In which state did the Indian National Congress faced defeat in March 1957 Assembly Elections?
3. Who was the founder of 'Swatantra Party'?
4. Who was Churn Mazumdar?
5. What is meant by opposition in a democratic system? Describe any two activities of the opposition during the first two Parliaments of 1952 & 1957.
6. On which two main ideas did Bhanu Prasad Jaisankar lay emphasis?
7. Why did the Communist Party of India split in 1964?  
8. Write the name of the second largest party in the Lok Sabha in the first three general elections.