

Term-End Examination December, 2024

BPSE-143: STATE POLITICS IN INDIA

MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS (ENGLISH)

MUST WATCH TO SCORE GOOD MARKS

PART-1

Analyse the decline of the "Congress System"

The "Congress System" refers to the period of Indian politics after independence, where the Indian National Congress (INC) was the dominant political party. This system began to decline in the 1960s and 1970s.

1. **Internal Disputes:** The Congress party faced internal conflicts, especially after Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964. There was a leadership struggle within the party, with different leaders wanting control. The lack of strong leadership after Nehru created confusion and division.
2. **Rise of Regional Parties:** Over time, regional parties in various states gained more support. These parties started to challenge the Congress, focusing on local issues that the Congress was not addressing well. This weakened the Congress's hold over the entire country.
3. **Failure to Address Economic Problems:** By the 1960s, India was facing serious economic issues, including food shortages, inflation, and poverty. The Congress party, which had promised progress and prosperity, struggled to find solutions, leading to a loss of public support.
4. **Emergence of New Leaders:** Indira Gandhi, who became the Prime Minister in 1966, introduced a series of bold policies, but her style of leadership started to alienate many people. Her decision to impose a state of emergency in 1975 (which suspended civil liberties and elections) led to widespread opposition.
5. **Corruption and Mismanagement:** Allegations of corruption and mismanagement within the Congress, especially during Indira Gandhi's leadership, led to the public losing faith in the party. This was one of the key factors that led to the decline of the Congress System.
6. **Political Opposition:** New opposition parties and movements, such as the Janata Party, emerged and gained popularity, especially after the 1977 emergency. These opposition forces gradually chipped away at Congress's influence.

In conclusion, the Congress System declined because of leadership struggles, economic challenges, rising regional parties, internal corruption, and the emergence of strong political

opposition. By the 1980s, the Congress was no longer as dominant as it had been in the early years after independence.

Explain the characteristics of ethnic politics in North-east India.

Ethnic politics in North-East India refers to the way political movements and parties are shaped by the ethnic identities, cultures, and languages of the people in this region. North-East India is made up of various communities with distinct traditions and backgrounds, and their politics is strongly influenced by these differences.

Here are the key characteristics:

1. **Diverse Ethnic Groups:** North-East India is home to many different ethnic groups, such as Assamese, Nagas, Mizos, Manipuris, and several indigenous tribal communities. Each group has its own language, culture, and way of life, which plays a big role in politics.
2. **Demand for Autonomy:** Many ethnic communities in North-East India have demanded more autonomy or separate states to protect their identity, culture, and resources. These demands often come from a feeling of being neglected or oppressed by the central government.
3. **Regional Political Parties:** In North-East India, there are many regional political parties that focus on the interests of specific ethnic or community groups. These parties often fight for the rights and welfare of their own people, such as the Assam Gana Parishad in Assam or the Mizo National Front in Mizoram.
4. **Ethnic Conflicts:** Due to the diversity of communities, there have been several conflicts in the region, especially over issues of land, resources, and political power. Some ethnic groups have used violence or protests to demand their rights or resist what they see as domination by other groups.
5. **Insurgency Movements:** Some ethnic groups, particularly in states like Nagaland, Manipur, and Assam, have had armed movements demanding independence or greater autonomy from the Indian government. These movements often arise from a sense of historical injustice or marginalization.
6. **Cultural Identity and Preservation:** A major part of ethnic politics in the region is the desire to preserve and promote the unique cultural identity of each community. Language, traditions, and cultural practices are central to political movements, as people want to ensure their heritage is protected in the face of modern changes.
7. **Role of the Central Government:** The Indian government has often responded to the demands of North-East communities with a mix of military action, peace agreements, and granting special status to certain states (like Article 371A for Nagaland). However, these measures have not always fully resolved the issues, leading to continuing tensions.

In summary, ethnic politics in North-East India is shaped by the region's diversity, with communities seeking more autonomy, the protection of their identity, and political representation. This has led to both peaceful and violent movements, and the central government has often been involved in trying to address these concerns.

Discuss the evolution of local self-government.

The evolution of local self-government refers to the development of systems that allow local communities to govern themselves, make decisions, and manage local affairs.

In India, local self-government has evolved over time, from ancient times to the present day.

1. Ancient and Medieval Periods:

- **Ancient India:** In ancient India, local governance was an important part of society. Villages were often governed by Panchayats, which were councils of respected elders. These bodies would solve disputes, manage resources, and ensure the well-being of the community.
- **Medieval Period:** During the medieval period, local self-governance was influenced by the rulers of different kingdoms. While the kings and their representatives controlled the larger regions, local villages and towns often had their own administrative systems. However, these were not as organized or formalized as modern systems.

2. British Colonial Period:

- **Early British Influence:** The British colonial administration in India introduced a more centralized system of governance. Local self-governance was largely ignored, and decisions were made from the top down by British officials.
- **Regulation of Local Bodies:** In the 19th century, the British began to introduce some local bodies, mainly for urban areas like municipalities in towns and cities. The goal was to improve administration and manage public health, sanitation, and other services.
- **Indian Councils Act of 1861:** This act allowed for some local councils to be formed, though their powers were limited, and they had little control over major decisions.
- **Minto-Morley Reforms (1909):** These reforms allowed for more Indian participation in local governance, though power remained in British hands.
- **Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919):** The Government of India Act of 1919 allowed for more autonomy in local governance, particularly in urban areas, but the control remained largely with the British authorities.

3. Post-Independence Period:

- **Constitution of India (1950):** After India gained independence in 1947, the Constitution of India laid the foundation for local self-government. However, local governance was not strongly emphasized at the national level.
- **Panchayati Raj System (1950s):** In the 1950s, India introduced the **Panchayati Raj System** to decentralize governance. The idea was to empower rural local bodies like village panchayats to take decisions on local issues. This system was seen as a way to promote democracy at the grassroots level.
- **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992):** These amendments were crucial in strengthening local self-government in India.

- The **73rd Amendment** provided a constitutional basis for Panchayats in rural areas. It mandated regular elections to Panchayats, ensuring local people could elect their representatives.
- The **74th Amendment** focused on urban local bodies, like municipalities, making them more accountable and ensuring regular elections for urban governance.

4. Present Day (Modern Era):

- Today, local self-government in India includes rural and urban local bodies, which are organized into:
 - **Panchayats (for rural areas):** These are organized at three levels—village, intermediate, and district levels.
 - **Municipalities (for urban areas):** These govern towns and cities, and the focus is on urban planning, infrastructure, and services.
- Local self-government bodies have significant powers in areas like education, health, local infrastructure, and welfare programs. They are responsible for the implementation of various government schemes and development projects.

Challenges and Reforms:

- Despite the growth of local self-government, there are challenges like lack of sufficient financial resources, political interference, and poor implementation of programs.
- There have been calls for further reforms to strengthen local governance, ensuring greater devolution of powers to local bodies and making them more accountable.

Conclusion:

The evolution of local self-government in India has been a journey from informal systems in ancient times to the formal structures we see today. Over time, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of empowering local communities to govern themselves, particularly through the Panchayati Raj system and municipal governance. These developments have helped bring democracy closer to the people, ensuring better participation and decision-making at the grassroots level.