

Congress System in Indian party system to multi party coalition:

(Some important questions with answers)

Q. 1. What were the reasons behind the economic crisis faced by India during 1960s?

Ans: The grave economic crisis resulted from successive failure of monsoons, widespread drought, and decline in agricultural production, serious food shortage, depletion of foreign exchange reserves, drop in industrial production and exports, combined with a sharp rise in military expenditure and diversion of resources from planning and economic development.

Q. 2. Mention the features of Ten Point Programme.

Ans: The Ten point programme included social control of banks, nationalisation of general insurance, and ceiling on urban property and income, public distribution of foodgrains, land reforms and provision of house sites to the rural poor.

Q. 3. What was 'Kamaraj plan'?

Ans: In 1963 Kamaraj proposed that all senior Congressmen should resign from the office to make way for younger party workers. This proposal is famous as Kamaraj plan.

Q. 4. Which two parties came out after the split in the congress?

Ans: The congress party split after the presidential elections in 1969. Indira Gandhi was expelled from the party. The Congress group led by the 'syndicate' came to be referred to as the Congress (Organisation) and the group led by Indira Gandhi came to be called the Congress (Requisition). These two parties were also described as Old Congress and New Congress. Indira Gandhi projected the split as an ideological divide between socialists and conservatives, between the pro-poor and the pro-rich.

Q. 5. Narrate the challenges before Indira Gandhi in 1970s.

Ans: There were two major challenges before Indira Gandhi;

(a) Internal Challenges:

- Internal Challenges refers to the members within the congress (Syndicates), who were opposing Indira Gandhi's assertiveness.

(b) External Challenges:

- External Challenges were from the opposition political parties. Since the congress position was greatly affected after the 1967 Elections. So it was important for the congress to built up a strong base.

Q. 6. Write a short note on the brief Prime Ministership of Lal Bhadur Shastri?

Ans: K. Kamaraj, the president of the Congress party consulted party leaders and Congress members of Parliament and found that there was a consensus in favour of Lal Bahadur Shastri. He was unanimously chosen as the leader of the Congress parliamentary party and thus became the Prime Minister. Shastri was a non-controversial leader from Uttar Pradesh who had been a Minister in Nehru's cabinet for many years. Nehru had come to depend a lot on him in his last years. He was known for his simplicity and his commitment to principles. Earlier he had resigned from the position of Railway Minister accepting moral responsibility for a major railway accident. Shastri was the country's Prime Minister from 1964 to 1966. During Shastri's brief Prime Ministership, the country faced two major challenges. While India was still recovering from the economic implications of the war with China, failed monsoons, drought and serious food crisis presented a grave challenge. As discussed in the previous chapter, the country also faced a war with Pakistan in 1965. Shastri's famous slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' symbolised the country's resolve to face both these challenges. Shastri's Prime Ministership came to an abrupt end on 10 January 1966, when he suddenly expired in Tashkent, then in USSR and currently the capital of Uzbekistan. He was there to discuss and sign an agreement with Muhammad Ayub Khan, the then President of Pakistan, to end the war.

Q. 7. Why 1960s were labelled as the dangerous decade?

Ans: The 1960s was labelled as the dangerous decade because unresolved problems like inequality, communal and regional division etc led to a failure of the democratic project and the disintegration of the country during this period.

Why did Indira Gandhi's government recommend the dissolution of Lok Sabha in December 1970?

Indira Gandhi's government recommended the dissolution of Lok Sabha in December 1970 in order to end government's dependency on other political parties, to strengthen party's position in the parliament and seek a popular mandate for governments programmes.

Q. 8. What do you mean by 'Privy Purse'?

Ans: After Independence several princely states were integrated into Indian Union. This integration was preceded by an assurance that after the dissolution of princely rule, the then ruler families would be allowed to retain certain private property, and given a grant in hereby or government allowance, measured on the basis of the extent of revenue and potential of the merging state. This grant was called the privy purse.

Q. 9. What do you understand by the expression "Aya Ram, Gaya Ram"? How did it rise in the politics after the 1967 election? State one example.

Ans: After 1967 election, defection played an important role in making and unmaking of governments in the state. Defection means an elected representative leaves the party on whose symbol he/she was elected and joins another party. After the 1967 general election, the breakaway Congress legislators played an important role in installing non-Congress governments in three states - Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The constant realignments and shifting political loyalties in this period gave rise to the expression 'Aya Ram, Gaya Ram'.

The story of 'Aya Ram, Gaya Ram':

The expression 'aya ram, gaya ram' became popular in the political vocabulary in India to describe the practice of frequent floor-crossing by legislators. The expression originated in an amazing feat of floor crossing achieved by Gaya Lal, an MLA in Haryana, in 1967. He changed his party thrice in a fortnight, from Congress to United Front, back to Congress and then within nine hours to United Front again! It is said that when Gaya Lal declared his intention to quit the United Front and join the Congress, the Congress leader, Rao Birendra Singh brought him to C Chandigarh press and declared "Gaya Ram is now Aya Ram".

Q. 10. How the Congress faced the challenge of political succession for the second time after the death of Nehru? Explain.

Ans: After the death of Nehru, there was a question of political succession before congress. Shastri took the charge after Nehru, but his sudden death again raised the same question before the congress. This time there was an intense competition between Morarji Desai and Indira Gandhi. Morarji Desai had earlier served as Chief Minister of Bombay state (today's Maharashtra and Gujarat) and also as a Minister at the centre. Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, had been Congress President in the past and had also been Union Minister for Information in the Shastri cabinet. This time the senior leaders in the party decided to back Indira Gandhi, but the decision was not unanimous. The contest was resolved through a secret ballot among Congress MPs. Indira Gandhi defeated Morarji Desai by securing the support of more than two-thirds of the party's MPs. A peaceful transition of power, despite intense competition for leadership, was seen as a sign of maturity of India's democracy.

Q. 11. What do you understand by 'Non-congress'?

Ans: Non congress is the name given by Ram Manohar Lohia to the strategy named against the then Indira Gandhi government. Opposition parties were in the forefront of organising public protests and pressurising the government. Parties opposed to the Congress realised that the division of their votes kept the Congress in power. Thus parties that were entirely different and disparate in their programmes and ideology got together to form anti-Congress fronts in some states and entered into electoral adjustments of sharing seats in others. They felt that the inexperience of Indira Gandhi and the internal factionalism within the Congress provided them an opportunity to topple the Congress.

Q. 12. Discuss the situation faced by the Indira Gandhi government before the fourth general elections?

Ans: Before the fourth general elections, the country undressed major challenges. Nehru and Shastri had died in quick succession and Indira Gandhi becomes the new prime minister. The first decision taken by the Indira government was to devalue the Indian rupee. The economic situation triggered off price rise. People started protesting against the increase in prices of essential commodities, food scarcity, growing unemployment and the overall economic condition in the country. Bandhs and hartals were called frequently across the country. The government saw the protests as a law and order problem and lot as expression of people's problems. This

further increased public bitterness and reinforced popular unrest. The communist and socialist parties launched struggles for greater equality. The CPI (Marxist-Leninist) led armed agrarian struggles and organised peasant agitations. This period also faced some Hindu- Muslims riots.

Q. 13. What do you understand by the Congress syndicate?

Ans: Syndicate was the informal name given to a group of Congress leaders who were in control of the party's organisation. K. Kamraj who was the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and the then president of the Congress party led the group. It included powerful state leaders like S. K. Patil of Bombay city (later named as Mumbai), S. Nijalingappa of Mysore (later Karnataka), N. Sanjeeva Reddy of Andhra Pradesh and Atulya Ghosh of West Bengal. Both Lal Bahadur Shastri and later Indira Gandhi owed their position to the support received from the Syndicate. This group had a decisive say in Indira Gandhi's first Council of Ministers and also in policy formulation and implementation. After the split in congress the leaders of the syndicate and those owing allegiance to them stayed with the Congress (O). Since it was Indira Gandhi's Congress (R) that won the test of popularity, all these big and powerful men of Indian politics lost their power and prestige after 1971.

Q. 14. What was the significance of 1971 elections?

Ans:

- (a) The 1971 general elections are being considered as landmark in the history of Indian politics.
- (b) Congress was back in power.
- (c) Indira Gandhi emerged as charismatic leader.
- (d) Garibi Hatao Programme was the turning point of the elections.
- (e) Restoration of new congress which was different than the old congress.
- (f) Focus was shifted to the rural sections.

Q. 15. Write a note on the nature of party system in India till 1977

Ans: The First Three General Elections (1952- 1967) in India witnessed Congress domination with the result One Party Dominant system prevailed. The Fourth General Election (1967-1971) was being referred as political earthquake in Indian Politics. Inability of the congress to get majority led to the emergence of Coalition Government. In the Fifth General Elections (1971-

1977) Congress managed to come back in power under the leadership of Indira Gandhi. With the result second one party model was established.

Q. 16. Describe the factors, which led to the popularity of Indira Gandhi in the 1971.

Ans: Certain important factors led to the popularity of Indira Gandhi were:

- a. To begin with, she inherited a rich political legacy and got ample opportunities to interact with the popular freedom fighter and thereby obtain the knowledge of the political life of India.
- b. She became the leader of the congress party
- c. An absence of genuine and powerful leader with a mass appeal
- d. An absence of a well organized political party with a mass base to counter her, gave her a tremendous psychological boost.

Q. 17. Why 1960s in the political scenario were labelled as 'Dangerous Decade'?

Ans: In 1960s there were many problems prevailing in India. These were:

- a. Economic Crisis
 - b. Successive failure of monsoon
 - c. Drought
 - d. Decline in agricultural production
 - e. Serious food shortage
 - f. Depletion of foreign exchange reserves
 - g. Drop in industrial production and exports
 - h. Sharp rise in military expenditure
 - i. Discontentment among masses
- Because of all these factors 1960s were being referred as Dangerous Decade.

Q. 18. Write a note on the 'Restoration of the Congress'?

Ans: A major political and military crisis broke out in East Pakistan after the 1971 Lok Sabha election in India. The crisis in East Pakistan and the Indo- Pak war led to the establishment of Bangladesh. These events added to the popularity of Indira Gandhi. Even the opposition leaders admired her statesmanship. Her party swept through all the State Assembly elections held in

1972. Indira was seen as the protector of the poor and the underprivileged and also a strong nationalist leader. With two successive election victories, one at the centre and other at the state level, the dominance of the Congress was restored. The Congress was now in power in almost all the states. Indira Gandhi did not restore congress instead she re-invented the party. The party occupied a similar position in terms of its popularity as in the past. But it was a different kind of party. It relied entirely on the popularity of the supreme leader. It had a somewhat weak organisational structure. This Congress party now did not have many factions, thus it could not accommodate all kinds of opinions and interests. While it won elections, it depended more on some social groups: the poor, the women, Dalits, Adivasis and the minorities. This was a new Congress that had emerged. Thus Indira Gandhi restored the Congress system by changing the nature of the Congress system itself. Despite being more popular, the new Congress did not have the kind of capacity to absorb all tensions and conflicts that the Congress system was known for. Write a short note on the results of the fourth general elections?

The fourth general elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies were held in February 1967. The results jolted the Congress at both the national and state levels. These election results were declared as a 'political earthquake'. Though Congress did manage to get a majority in the Lok Sabha but half the ministers in Indira Gandhi's cabinet were defeated. The political stalwarts who lost in their constituencies included Kamaraj in Tamil Nadu, S.K. Patil in Maharashtra, Atulya Ghosh in West Bengal and K. B. Sahay in Bihar. At the state level political change was more shocking for the party. The Congress lost majority in as many as seven states. In two other states defections prevented it from forming a government. In Madras state (now called Tamil Nadu), a regional party DMK got a clear majority. This was the first time any non-Congress party had secured a majority of its own in any state. In the other eight states, coalition governments consisting of different non-Congress parties were formed. The elections of 1967 brought into picture the phenomenon of coalitions. Since no single party had got majority, various non-Congress parties came together to form joint legislative parties (called Samyukt Vidhayak Dal in Hindi) that supported non-Congress governments. That is why these governments came to be described as SVD governments. In most of these cases the coalition partners were ideologically incongruent. The SVD government in Bihar had CPI on the left and Jana Sangh on the right. In Punjab it was called the 'Popular United Front' and comprised the two rival Republican Party and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

Q. 19. Write an essay on Indira Gandhi versus the syndicate.

Ans: After the 1967 election, the congress retained power at the centre but with a reduced majority and lost power in many state. The real challenge to Indira Gandhi came not from the opposition but from within her own party. She had to deal with the 'syndicate', a group of powerful and influential leaders from within the Congress. The Syndicate had played a role in the installation of Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister by ensuring her election as the leader of the parliamentary party. These leaders expected Indira Gandhi to follow their advice. Gradually, however, Indira Gandhi attempted to assert her position within the government and the party. She chose her trusted group of advisers from outside the party. Slowly and carefully, she sidelined the Syndicate. Indira Gandhi thus faced two challenges. She needed to build her independence from the Syndicate. She also needed to work towards regaining the ground that the Congress had lost in the 1967 elections. Indira Gandhi adopted a very bold strategy. She converted a simple power struggle into an ideological struggle. She launched a series of initiatives to give the government policy a Left orientation. She got the Congress Working Committee to adopt a Ten Point Programme in May 1967. This programme included social control of banks, nationalisation of General Insurance, and ceiling on urban property and income, public distribution of foodgrains, land reforms and provision of house sites to the rural poor. While the 'syndicate' leaders formally approved this Left-wing programme, they had serious reservations about the same.

Q. 20. Describe the presidential election of 1969?

Ans: After the death of President Zakir Hussain, the post of the President of India fell vacant. Despite Mrs. Gandhi's reservations the 'syndicate' managed to nominate her long time opponent and then speaker of the Lok Sabha, N. Sanjeeva Reddy, as the official Congress candidate for the Presidential elections. Indira Gandhi retaliated by encouraging the then Vice-President, V.V. Giri, to file his nomination as an independent candidate. She also announced several big and popular policy measures like the nationalisation of fourteen leading private banks and the abolition of the 'privy purse' or the special privileges given to former princes. Morarji Desai was the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister. On both the above issues, serious differences emerged between him and the Prime Minister resulting in Desai's leaving the government. Congress had seen differences of this kind in the past also. But this time both the parties wanted

a showdown which took place during the Presidential elections. The then Congress President S. Nijalingappa issued a 'whip' asking all the Congress MPs and MLAs to vote in favour of Sanjeeva Reddy, the official candidate of the party. Supporters of Indira Gandhi requisitioned a special meeting of the AICC (that is why this faction came to be known as (requisitionists) but this was refused. After silently supporting V.V. Giri, the Prime Minister openly called for a 'conscience vote', which meant that the MPs and MLAs from the Congress should be free to vote the way they want. The election ultimately resulted in the victory of V.V. Giri, the Independent candidate, and the defeat of Sanjeeva Reddy, the official Congress candidate.

Q. 21. Describe the situation before the election of 1971. What were the outcomes?

Ans: After the split in Congress, Indira Gandhi came in minority yet her government continued in power with the support of the DMK party. In December 1970, Indira Gandhi made a surprising and bold move. Her government recommended the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. The electoral contest appeared to be loaded against Congress (R). After all, the new Congress was just one faction of an already weak party. Everyone believed that the real organisational strength of the Congress party was under the command of Congress (O). To make matters worse for Indira Gandhi, all the major non communist, non- Congress opposition parties formed an electoral alliance known as the Grand Alliance. The SSP, PSP, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Swatantra Party and the Bharatiya Kranti Dal came together under this umbrella. The ruling party had an alliance with the CPI. Yet the new Congress had something that its big opponents Alliance did not have a coherent political programme. Indira Gandhi said that the opposition alliance had only one common programme: Indira Hatao (Remove Indira). In contrast to this, she put forward a positive programme captured in the famous slogan: Garibi Hatao (Remove Poverty). She focused on the growth of the public sector, imposition of ceiling on rural land holdings and urban property, removal of disparities in income and opportunity, and abolition of princely privileges. Through garibi hatao Indira Gandhi tried to generate a support base among the disadvantaged, especially among the landless labourers, Dalits and Adivasis, minorities, women and the unemployed youth. The slogan of garibi hatao and the programmes that followed it were part of Indira Gandhi's political strategy of building an independent nationwide political support base. The results of the Lok Sabha elections of 1971 were as dramatic as was the decision to hold these elections. The Congress(R)-CPI alliance won more seats and votes than the Congress had

ever won in the first four general elections. The combined won 375 seats in Lok Sabha and secured 48.4 per cent votes. Indira Gandhi's Congress (R) won 352 seats with about 44 per cent of the popular votes on its own. Contrast to this with the performance of the Congress (O): the party with so many stalwarts could get less than one-fourth of the votes secured by Indira Gandhi's party and won merely 16 seats. With this the Congress party led by Indira Gandhi established its claim to being the 'real' Congress and restored to it the dominant position in Indian politics. The Grand Alliance of the opposition proved a grand failure. Their combined tally of seats was less than 40.

Q. 22. Write any three causes, which led to the defeat of congress in 1967 General Elections.

Ans: Causes, which led to the defeat of the congress in 1967, are:

- a. Absence of charismatic leadership in congress
- b. Split within the congress
- c. Increasing unity among the non-congress parties

Q. 23. Mention the challenges faced by India during the Prime Ministership of Lal Bahadur Shastri?

Ans: Failed monsoons, drought and serious food crisis presented a grave challenge during the Prime Ministership of Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Q. 24. Which year is considered a landmark year in India's political and electoral history?

Ans: The year 1967's is considered a landmark year in India's political and electoral history.

Q. 25. What do you mean by "defection"?

Ans: Defection means an elected representative leaves the party on whose symbol he/she was elected and joins another party.

Q. 26. When were the fourth general elections held?

The fourth general elections to the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies were held in February 1967.

Q. 27. Which scheme was introduced by K. Kamaraj?

Ans: K. Kamaraj introduced mid – day meal scheme for school children in Tamil Nadu in 1960s.

Q. 28. Which Slogan was given by Indira Gandhi?

Ans: Indira Gandhi's government gave the slogan "Garibi Hatao".

Q. 29. Which election results were described as a "political earthquake"?

The fourth general election results were described as a political earthquake.

Q. 30. Who were 'Syndicate'?

Ans: Syndicate was a group of powerful and influential leaders within the Congress.

Q. 31. Which decade was labelled as the dangerous decade?

Ans: The 1960s were labelled as the dangerous decade.

Q. 32. Which famous slogan was given by Lal Bahadur Shastri?

Ans: Lal Bahadur Shastri coined the famous slogan "Jai Jawan- Jai Kisan".

Q. 33. Name the parties who were in the Grand Alliance?

Ans: The SSP, PSP, Bhartiya Jan Sangh, Swatantra Party and the Bhartiya Kranti Dal were under grand alliance.