

**Mass Phase of the Indian
National Movement (Continued)**

10

**The Last Phase – Independence and
Partition of India (1942–47)**

Exercises

Multiple Choice Questions

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|--------|--------|--------|--|----------------------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (d) | 3. (a) | 4. (c) | 5. (c) |
| 6. (a) | 7. (d) | 8. (a) | 9. (i) (b), (ii) (d),
(iii) (a) (iv) (b), (v) (a) | 10. (d) 11. (a) |

Short-Answer Questions

1. Why was the Cabinet Mission sent to India?

Ans. The Cabinet Mission was sent to India to consult the Indian leaders on the question of the transfer of power.

2. Give two reasons for change in the British attitude after 1942.

Ans. (i) The Second World War shattered the British power, the USA and the Soviet Union became world powers. Both these countries supported India's demand for independence.

(ii) The British hold on armed forces was slipping and they had to change their attitude towards India.

3. Give the names of the three members of the Cabinet Mission.

Ans. Lord Patrick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and AV Alexander.

4. State any two provisions of the Cabinet Mission Plan.

Ans. (i) There was to be a federation of all the provinces and states of India.

(ii) The Federal Centre would control only defence, foreign affairs and communication. The province would look after other subjects and also control residuary powers.

5. How was the federation to be formed at the Centre under the Cabinet Mission Plan?

Ans. There was to be a federation of all the provinces and states of India.

6. How was the Constituent Assembly constituted under the Cabinet Mission Plan?

Ans. Under the Cabinet Mission Plan, a Constituent Assembly would be elected to draw up the future Constitution of India. It would consist of 389 members – 292 from the Provinces, 4 from Chief Commissioner's Provinces and 93 from the Indian States.

7. Why did the Muslim League first accept and then reject the Cabinet Mission proposals?

Ans. Initially, Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Mission proposals since it felt that the grouping of Muslim-majority Provinces in a way meant the formation of Pakistan. Muslim League demanded the establishment of two different Constituent Assemblies. Jinnah offered to form the Interim Government without the help of the Congress. Viceroy Lord Wavell did not agree to this proposal. As a result the Muslim League passed a resolution of July 29, 1946 and rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan.

8. What was the reaction of the Congress to the Cabinet Mission proposal?

Ans. In the beginning the Congress criticised the Cabinet Mission proposals and hesitated to accept it, later the Congress accepted it with some reservations.

9. How did the Sikhs react to the Cabinet Mission proposals?

Ans. The Sikhs were against the division of India. They rejected the plan completely because it did not safeguard their interests. Particularly, they felt that their interests would not be safe in the Muslim dominated province where they would be at the mercy of the Muslim League.

10. What were the views of the Scheduled Castes regarding the proposals of the Cabinet Mission Plan?

Ans. The Scheduled Castes felt the proposals as unacceptable because no seats were reserved for them in the Legislatures

and only one seat was offered to them in the Interim Government.

11. When did the Muslim League observe the 'Direct Action Day'?

Ans. August 16, 1946.

12. Who headed the Interim Government in 1946?

Ans. Jawaharlal Nehru.

13. With what aim did the Muslim League join the Interim Government?

Ans. The Congress formed the Interim Government on 14 August 1946 under the leadership of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Initially, the Muslim League had refused to join the Interim Government, but later on the Muslim League joined the Interim Government as it did not want the entire administration in the hands of the Congress. It joined Interim government with five members.

14. Give any two provisions of the Mountbatten Plan.

Ans. (i) The country would be divided into two Dominions of India and Pakistan.

(ii) The states would have the option to join either of the two Dominions of India or Pakistan.

15. State any two reasons to justify why the Congress accepted the Mountbatten Plan.

Ans. (i) Under the Mountbatten Plan freedom was at the door step.

(ii) Under the Mountbatten Plan the country would be divided into two Dominions of India and Pakistan. The Congress leaders accepted the partition since they were of the view that a small but strong India was better than a large but weak one.

16. Why was the Mountbatten Plan accepted by the Muslim League?

Ans. The Muslim League was in favour of the creation of separate nation for Muslims and her wish was going to be fulfilled through Mountbatten Plan.

17. Why did the Congress become ready for the partition of the country?

Ans. Keeping in view the large-scale bloodshed, chaos and anarchy the Congress accepted the partition but in bitterness and with a heavy heart.

18. State two reasons why India was partitioned in 1947.

Ans. (i) The Muslim League was rigid in its demand to form a separate nation for the Muslims.
(ii) Frequent riots took place between the Hindus and the Muslims.

19. Mention one important result of the Indian Independence Act of 1947.

Ans. The Indian Independence Act of 1947 marked the end of British rule in India.

Structured Essay-Type Questions

1. To settle the political tangle in India, the Cabinet Mission was sent to India in 1946. In this context, answer the following :

- (a) Reasons for sending the Cabinet Mission to India.
- (b) Main provisions of the Cabinet Mission Plan.
- (c) Reaction of the Congress and Muslim League.

Ans. (a) **Causes of Sending the Cabinet Mission**

- (i) The Labour Party came to power in England in 1945. It was sympathetic to granting self-government to the Indian people.
- (ii) It sent the Cabinet Mission to consult the Indian leaders on the question of the transfer of power.
- (iii) The Second World War shattered the British power; the USA and the Soviet Union became world powers.
- (iv) Both these countries supported India's demand for independence.
- (v) The British hold on armed forces was slipping and they had to change their attitude towards India.
- (vi) The Indian workers organised themselves and stood together to fight for their rights.

- (vii) Similarly, the peasants started agitations to oppose their exploitation, forced labour, high rents etc.
- (viii) The British realised that their days were numbered in India and so they changed their attitude towards the Indians.

(b) Main Provisions and clauses of the Cabinet Mission

Plan : Following were the main provisions of the Plan :

- (i) There was to be a federation of all the provinces and states of India.
- (ii) The Federal Centre would control only defence, foreign affairs and communication. The provinces would look after other subjects and also control residuary powers.
- (iii) The Union would have a Legislature and its own Executive. The Legislature would pass laws on subjects contained in the Union List. These laws would be enforced by the Union Executive.
- (iv) The provinces would be free to form regional unions to which they would surrender some powers by mutual consent. There were to be three groups of provinces: Group A — UP, MP, Madras, Bombay, Orissa and Bihar; Group B — Punjab, NWFP and Sind; Group C — Bengal and Assam.
- (v) Each Group would have a separate Constitution and if a Province opted to walk out of the Group after the first general elections, it would have the option to do so.
- (vi) The states would not be under the direct control of the Union and they would themselves decide as to what powers they were to surrender.
- (vii) A Constituent Assembly would be elected to draw up the future Constitution of India. It would consist of 389 members — 292 from the Provinces, 4 from Chief Commissioner's Provinces and 93 from the Indian states.

(c) In the beginning both the Congress and the League criticised the plan and hesitated to accept it. But the Mission removed their doubts.

(i) As a result the League accepted it in its entirety on June 6, 1946 because it felt that the grouping of Muslim-majority Provinces in a way meant the formation of Pakistan. But the Congress accepted it with some reservations. Later on, on July 29, 1946 the Muslim League rejected the Cabinet Mission plan

(ii) It accepted only that part of the scheme which dealt with the Constitution-making.

(iii) It considered the Constituent Assembly as a sovereign body for drafting the Constitution. It regarded the grouping of the Provinces as optional and not compulsory.

(iv) The Congress rejected the scheme of Interim Government because of its limited status and power and also because the Congress was given parity with the Muslim League in the formation of the Provisional Government.

2. The Muslim League decided to observe the Direct Action Day on August 16, 1946. In this context, answer the following :

(a) Why did the Muslim League observe the Direct Action Day?

(b) What were its results?

Ans. (a) Muslim League demanded the establishment of two different Constituent Assemblies. As the Congress was not ready to form the Interim Government, Jinnah offered to form the Interim Government without the help of the Congress. Viceroy Lord Wavell did not agree to this proposal. Jinnah felt angry and he attacked both the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy and blamed that they were playing in the hands of the Congress. He affirmed that the Muslims could no longer depend on the British rulers and were not

prepared to remain under the slavery of the Congress Government. The Muslim League under his leadership passed a resolution on July 29, 1946 and rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan. The League fixed August 16, 1946 as the day for observing the Direct Action Day throughout India.

- (b) There were clashes and rioting in Calcutta on August 16. Stabbing, killing, arson, looting, criminal assaults on women became the order of the day. Nearly 5,000 lives were lost, over 15,000 persons were injured and about 1,00,000 were rendered homeless. Property worth crores of rupees was destroyed. The Muslim League Ministry in Bengal failed to control the situation and to restore law and order. The mad fury continued for four days. Soon bloody riots started in Noakhali (East Bengal). Peace was restored there after the efforts of Gandhiji.

3. Using the following points, briefly describe the Mountbatten Plan of June, 1947 :

- (a) Main clauses of the Mountbatten Plan.
- (b) Why was he convinced that partition was the only solution to solve the political tangle?
- (c) Why did the Congress and the Muslim League accept this plan?

Ans. (a) (i) The country would be divided into two Dominions of India and Pakistan.

(ii) Referendum was to be held in the province of NWFP so as to ascertain whether the people there wished to stay with the Union of India or Pakistan.

(iii) The provinces of Assam, Bengal and Punjab were also to be divided.

(iv) The states would have the option to join either of the two Dominions of India or Pakistan.

(v) The transfer of power was to be formalised on August 15, 1947.

- (b) In March, 1947 Lord Mountbatten became Viceroy of India in place of Lord Wavell. He was a practical

man with a realistic approach. He was swift in taking decisions, but was not obstinate. When he came to India the hostility between the two communities had reached its peak. In the Western Provinces flames of disturbances and disorder were leaping skywards. In Bengal the situation was very explosive. He was so deeply upset by the rapid deterioration in communal relations and disturbances that he was eager to transfer power without any delay. He had long discussions with the leaders of the Congress and the League. He found that it was difficult to solve the deadlock between the two parties. He came to the conclusion that the partition alone could solve the Indian problem.

- (c) The plan was accepted both by the Congress and the League. Freedom was at the doorstep but the long cherished dream of Indian unity lay shattered. Keeping in view the large-scale bloodshed, chaos and anarchy, the Congress leaders, including even Gandhiji, accepted the partition but in bitterness and with a heavy heart. They were of the view that a small but strong India is better than a large but weak one.

4. India was partitioned in August, 1947. In this context, discuss the following causes of the partition :

- (a) Two-Nation Theory put forward by Mr. Jinnah.
- (b) Failure of the Interim Government.
- (c) The communal riots.

Ans. (a) The Two-Nation Theory was a founding principle of the Muslim League that led to the partition of India in 1947. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the political proponent of this Two-Nation Theory. He stated that Hindus and Muslims belonged to two different religious philosophies, with different social customs and literature, with no intermarriage and based on conflicting ideas and concepts. Their outlook on life and of life was different and despite 1000 years of history, the relations between the Hindus and Muslims could not attain the level of cordiality. He put forward

the ideology that religion is the determining factor in defining the nationality of Indian Muslims.

- (b) Both Congress and Muslim League accepted the Interim Government set up in 1946. The Congress was given 6 ministerial berths and the League was given 5, other organizations were given 3 berths. The Muslim League, however initially refused to join the Interim Government. Viceroy Wavell tried his utmost to convince League leadership to join the cabinet. Finally, on October 26, five Muslim League nominees joined the Interim Government. The Muslim League joined the Interim Government, as it did not want the entire administration in the hands of the Congress. However, there was constant bickering among the Congress and the Muslim League, so it was difficult to run the government. Finally, it proved to be a failure.
 - (c) The Muslim League under the leadership of Jinnah passed a resolution on 29 July 1956 and rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan. Pt. Nehru was invited to form the Interim Government to which the Congress authorized Nehru to accept it. The Muslim League decided not to join it and instead announced 'Direct Action' to achieve Pakistan. The League fixed 16 August 1946 as the day for observing the Direct Action Day throughout India. There were communal riots in Calcutta. Nearly 5,000 lives were lost and over 15,000 thousand persons were injured and about 1,00,000 were rendered homeless. Property worth crores of rupees was destroyed. The riot continued for four days and it spread to Noakhali and other places.
5. British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act on July 16, 1947. In this context, explain the following points :
- (a) Clauses concerning the partition of the country.
 - (b) Clauses affecting the position of the British king and the Viceroy.
 - (c) The choice given to the states.
 - (d) Importance of the act.

Ans. (a) Two independent dominions, namely India and Pakistan, shall be set up on August 15, 1947. Pakistan was to comprise Sindh, Baluchistan, NWFP, the West Punjab and East Bengal. Rest of the territories were to be included in India.

(b) (i) The office of the Viceroy was to end forthwith and replaced by a separate Governor-General for each Dominion.

(ii) The right of the King to veto laws was given up. This right was given to the Governor-General.

(iii) The Governor-General was given the powers to modify or adopt the Government of India Act, 1935 by 31 March 1948.

(iv) The titles of 'Emperor of India' and 'King of England' were dropped from the royal style.

(c) The states would have the choice to join with either of the dominions or to retain their independence.

(d) This Act has its own importance. It has been rightly said that the Indian Independence Act of 1947 was a great landmark in the Anglo-Indian relations. It was the noblest and the greatest law ever enacted by the British Parliament. About the significance of this Act, the then Secretary of State for India remarked. *"The Bill is unique in the history of legislation of this country. Never before has such a large portion of the world population achieved complete independence through legislation."* It marked the end of the British Rule in India. India became free on August 15, 1947. But unfortunately it was divided into two parts, India and Pakistan.

6. Describe the contribution of Jawaharlal Nehru to India's freedom struggle.

Ans. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) was the most prominent and outstanding hero of the National Movement. He was born at Allahabad on November 14, 1889. His father, Pt Motilal Nehru, was also a great political leader.

After his early education in India, he went to England for higher education at the age of fifteen. He qualified as a barrister and returned to India in 1912. He started his practice at Allahabad.

Soon he began to take an active part in the politics of his country and threw himself into the service of his motherland. He was elected President of the Congress in 1929. The annual session of the Congress was held at Lahore in 1929. Under his Presidentship a resolution was passed in this Session which declared complete independence as the goal of the Congress. He was elected Congress President in the years 1936 and 1937 also. He took an active part in the elections held in 1937. It was due to his efforts that the Congress was able to form Ministries in seven out of the eleven provinces of the British India. For about thirty years (1917-47), Pandit Nehru fought for the liberty of his people and sacrificed his wealth and energy for the freedom of his motherland. He went to jail many a time. He became the Vice-President of the Viceroy's Executive when the Interim Government was set up in 1946.

India won freedom in 1947 and Pandit Nehru became the first Prime Minister of India. He acted as the Prime Minister till his death on May 27, 1964. India made all-round progress under his able leadership and guidance.

Pandit Nehru possessed the qualities of head and heart. He was a true patriot, a great politician, an able statesman, a true democrat, a forceful orator and a famous author. He was a man of international fame. Some of his works, like *An Autobiography*, *Discovery of India*, and *Glimpses of World History*, are masterpieces of English literature which made him famous in the world. He loved the children very much and they called him *Chacha Nehru*.

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