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Q13

Highlight the importance of the new objectives that got added to the vision of Indian Independence since the twenties of the last century. (250 words).

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · GS I · 15 marks · The Freedom Struggle

The Freedom Struggle - its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country.

Core demand of the question

- Highlight the new objectives added to the vision of Indian Independence from the 1920s onward
- **Show why those aims mattered:** freedom as social and economic transformation, not only a transfer of the Viceroy's chair

Revision summary

The 1920s mass movements and 1929 poorna swaraj made complete independence the political goal.

Karachi 1931 and later planning added rights, wages, and a state economic role.

Gandhi's constructive work and anti-untouchability campaigns socialised swaraj.

Peasant, labour, and women's politics entered the national list.

Independence was thereby recast as social transformation, later written into the Constitution.

Introduction

Until the First World War, much moderate politics asked for constitutional crumbs inside the Empire. From the 1920s the national movement added mass satyagraha, poorna swaraj, social equality, and a planned economic life for peasants and workers. Those new objectives made Independence a programme for the whole people.

Body**Political objectives that widened after 1920**

- Non-cooperation and Khilafat (1920-22) brought towns, students, and many Muslims into a mass fight, so Independence was no longer a lawyers' petition.
- The Lahore Congress (1929) and the 26 January 1930 pledge named poorna swaraj-complete independence-as the goal, replacing dominion-status caution.
- Civil Disobedience, the salt satyagraha, and later **Quit India (1942)** made the state itself the target, while the INA trials widened the idea of a national army.

Social and economic objectives

- **Gandhi's** constructive programme-khadi, village sanitation, Hindu-Muslim unity, and an attack on untouchability-made swaraj a social discipline, not only a flag.

- The Karachi Resolution (1931) promised fundamental rights, a living wage, and state regulation of key industry, which tied freedom to a social-economic charter.
- The Congress Socialist Party (1934), **Nehru's** planning talk, and the **National Planning Committee (1938)** added a vision of ending colonial drain through industry and agrarian reform.
- Peasant satyagrahas such as **Bardoli (1928)** and kisan sabhas put rent, revenue, and debt on the national list. Labour strikes did the same for mill hours and unions.
- Temple entry, the **Poona Pact (1932)** after the Communal Award, and **Ambedkar's** claim for depressed classes forced caste justice into the meaning of freedom, even when Congress and **Ambedkar** disagreed on method.
- Women's participation in salt marches and later in legislatures, and debates on child marriage and education, added gender to the public agenda of swaraj.

Why these additions mattered

- Transfer of power without land reform, labour rights, and caste dignity would have left the colonial social order intact under Indian ministers.
- The 1930s-40s programme fed the Constitution's rights, Directive Principles, planning, and adult franchise, so the republic was imagined before 1947.
- Linguistic and regional claims, and the peasant-worker question, also warned that Independence had to be federal and social, or it would split.

Limits

- Communal settlement failed, and Partition showed that the widened vision did not carry every community with it.
- Many peasant and caste promises remained incomplete after 1947, which is why the 1920s turn still measures the republic.

Way forward for the answer

- List poorna swaraj, Karachi rights, constructive programme, planning, kisan-labour, and caste-gender, then say these made Independence a social revolution in intent.

Flow diagram

Mass satyagraha 1920s -> Poorna swaraj 1929
Poorna swaraj 1929 -> Karachi rights 1931
Karachi rights 1931 -> Planning kisan labour
Mass satyagraha 1920s -> Untouchability women unity
Planning kisan labour -> Republic rights DPSP
Untouchability women unity -> Republic rights DPSP

Conclusion

From the 1920s the vision of Independence grew from elite reform to complete swaraj plus rights, village uplift, planning, peasant and labour justice, and a fight on untouchability. Those new objectives mattered because they defined freedom as a new social order. The Constitution is their unfinished legal form.

Facts & figures

Lahore Congress, 1929

Session that adopted complete independence; 26 January 1930 was observed as Independence Day.

Karachi Resolution, 1931

Congress charter of fundamental rights and socio-economic promises after the Gandhi-Irwin context.

Poona Pact, 1932

Agreement between Gandhi and Ambedkar on reserved seats for depressed classes after the Communal Award.

National Planning Committee, 1938

Congress-linked body, with Nehru, that treated planned industry and resources as part of freedom.

Quit India, 1942

Mass demand to end British rule, showing that the 1920s turn had become an all-out political objective.

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