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Q3

Assess the main administrative issues and socio-cultural problems in the integration process of Indian Princely States.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · GS I · 10 marks · Post-independence Consolidation

Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country.

Core demand of the question

- Assess the main administrative issues and socio-cultural problems in the integration process of Indian Princely States
- Keep the assessment within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Lapse of paramountcy created a sovereignty vacuum that Patel and Menon filled by accession.

Tiny states had to be merged into viable unions before 1956 reorganisation.

Privy purses and court services delayed a uniform administration.

Hyderabad, Junagadh, and Kashmir mixed communal demography with force and diplomacy.

Praja mandals wanted democracy, not only a change of suzerain.

Introduction

Between 1947 and 1950 hundreds of princely states had to become districts and people of the Union. The administrative issue was sovereignty and services. The socio-cultural issue was dynasty, communal fear, and local identity.

Body

Administrative issues

- **Lapse of paramountcy left a legal vacuum: states could theoretically stay out.** **Sardar Patel, V. P. Menon**, and the States Ministry used the **Instrument of Accession** for defence, external affairs, and communications first.
- **Patchwork size:** Hyderabad, Kashmir, and Mysore were countries; dozens of Kathiawar units were villages with a gun. Mergers, unions such as **PEPSU** and **Saurashtra**, and later the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956**, had to invent viable units.
- Civil lists, **privy purses**, and the Indian Administrative Service replacing court officers created a dual loyalty problem until the 26th Amendment ended purses in 1971.
- Junagadh's accession politics, Hyderabad's **Operation Polo**, and Kashmir's conditional accession showed that some integrations were military and diplomatic, not only paperwork.

Socio-cultural problems

- Muslim-ruled Hyderabad over a Hindu majority, and Hindu-ruled Kashmir with a Muslim majority, made communal rumour a tool of delay.

- Rajput, Nizam, and Sikh princely cultures feared loss of ritual rank; **praja mandals** wanted responsible government, not only a new flag.
- Language and tenancy differed inside one state; Telangana in Hyderabad and the Punjabi-speaking hill states show that accession did not settle culture.
- Goa and Pondicherry were colonial leftovers, a reminder that 'princely' integration was only one map problem.

Assessment

- The Union succeeded in avoiding a Balkan legal map. It paid with delayed democracy in some unions, military action in Hyderabad, and an unfinished Kashmir file.

Flow diagram

Paramountcy lapses -> Accession merger
Accession merger -> Viable provinces IAS
Accession merger -> Communal dynasty identity
Communal dynasty identity -> Unfinished maps

Conclusion

Integration was an administrative feat of accession, merger, and new all-India services. Its socio-cultural costs were communal fear, dynastic privilege, and identities that 1956 and later still had to redraw.

Facts & figures

Instrument of Accession

Legal device by which a ruler joined the Dominion for three subjects first.

Operation Polo 1948

Indian action that ended the Nizam's hold and the Razakar terror in Hyderabad.

Privy purses

Constitutional payments to former rulers, abolished by the 26th Amendment, 1971.

V. P. Menon

Civil servant who negotiated mergers and wrote the administrative history of integration.

PEPSU

Patiala and East Punjab States Union, an example of stitching small Sikh-hill states into one unit.