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Q12

Trace India's consolidation process during early phase of independence in terms of polity, economy, education and international relations.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · 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

- **Trace 1947-early 1950s consolidation under four heads:** polity, economy, education, international relations
- Use integration of states, Constitution, planning, IIT/university, NAM beginnings
- Keep it a process, not a victory speech

Revision summary

Princely integration and the 1950 Constitution, with the first general election, built the political union.

The **Planning Commission** and the First Plan set a mixed, public-investment economy after Partition's economic cut.

Radhakrishnan and Mudaliar commissions and IIT Kharagpur began a national education architecture.

Non-alignment, Panchsheel and Bandung defined an independent foreign policy while Kashmir stayed live.

Consolidation was simultaneous on all four fronts, and incomplete on land, food and literacy.

Introduction

- **Independence in August 1947 was a beginning under fire:** Partition, refugee columns, and more than five hundred princely states. Consolidation means turning that wreckage into **one constitutional state**, one economic direction, a school system that could outlast the Raj's clerks, and a foreign policy that was not a Dominion echo. The early phase is roughly **1947 to the mid-1950s**, when the first Plan and Bandung made the new map visible.

Body

Polity

Sardar Patel and **V.P. Menon** integrated most princely states by instrument of accession, money and, at **Hyderabad, Junagadh and later Kashmir**, force or special politics. The **Constitution** (26 January 1950) made a democratic republic with adult franchise, a strong Centre, and fundamental rights. **Linguistic states** began with Andhra in 1953 and the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956**, which calmed a different kind of breakup. The **Election Commission** ran the first general election in 1951-52. Consolidation here is **legal unity plus**

a vote.

Economy

Partition had cut jute and wheat belts. The **Planning Commission** (1950) and the **First Five-Year Plan** (1951) put public investment on irrigation, transport and agriculture. **Mixed economy** and the later **Industrial Policy** of 1956 (just on the edge of this phase) set the licence-permit frame. Land reform was promised more than completed. Food was still a political emergency. Consolidation meant **one currency, one rail, a plan**, not instant plenty.

Education

The **University Education Commission** (Radhakrishnan, 1948) and the **Secondary Education Commission** (Mudaliar, 1952) tried to turn an elite colonial college system toward a national one. **IIT Kharagpur** (1951) began the technical institutes. **Uttar Pradesh and other Hindi** debates showed that the school is also a language conflict. Literacy remained low; the consolidation was of **institutions**, not of universal enrolment.

International relations

India stayed in the **Commonwealth**, recognised China, and fought for a **ceasefire in Korea** as a non-permanent Security Council voice. **Panchsheel** (1954) with China, and **Bandung** (1955), announced **non-alignment**: no military camp of the Cold War, a voice for decolonisation. Kashmir at the UN and the **Indus** waters problem with Pakistan showed that Partition had not ended foreign policy.

The four heads moved together. A constitution without food riots contained, or a plan without diplomatic space, would have been a half state.

Flow diagram

Polity: accession Constitution 1952 vote -> Union

Economy: Planning Commission First Plan

Education: Radhakrishnan IIT Kharagpur

IR: Commonwealth Panchsheel Bandung: Commonwealth Panchsheel Bandung

Economy: Planning Commission First Plan -> Union

Education: Radhakrishnan IIT Kharagpur -> Union

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Conclusion

Early independent India consolidated by integrating states, writing a constitution and holding a general election; by planning a mixed economy; by founding national universities and IITs; and by non-alignment. It was a process under Partition's shadow, not a finished nation-day.

Facts & figures

26 January 1950

The Constitution came into force and India became a republic.

First Five-Year Plan, 1951

The first national plan, weighted toward agriculture, irrigation and transport.

Bandung, 1955

The Afro-Asian conference that made non-alignment a visible diplomatic family.

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