



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the system of Apartheid in South Africa which came to an end in 1994. Mention the role played by India in bringing apartheid to an end in South Africa. (250 words)

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Approach

- Describe Apartheid system briefly.
- Explain Apartheid policies.
- Give details of India's effort against Apartheid system.

Introduction

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the trading companies from Europe occupied colonized South Africa. Apartheid was the name of system of racial discrimination unique to South Africa imposed by white Europeans colonizers.

Body

Policies under apartheid system

- **No voting rights for non-whites:** The system of apartheid divided the people and labelled them on the basis of their skin colour. The white rulers treated all nonwhites as inferiors. The non-whites did not have voting rights.
- **Strict Segregation:** The apartheid system was particularly oppressive for the blacks. They were forbidden from living in white areas. They could work in white areas only if they had a permit. Trains, buses, taxis, hotels, hospitals, schools and colleges, libraries, cinema halls, theatres, beaches, swimming pools, public toilets, were all separate for the whites and blacks. They could not visit the churches where the whites worshipped.
- **Ban on formation of association and protests:** Blacks could not form associations or protest against the extreme discriminatory treatment. This hindered their capacity to fight against apartheid peacefully.

Role played by India

Soon after assuming office Nehru declared that India's policy is the ending of colonialism all over Asia, Africa and elsewhere and racial equality, and the end of domination or exploitation of one nation by another.

- **Gandhi's Impact:** Despite his great respect and sympathy for the Africans, Gandhi's political activities were confined essentially to the Indian community. His influence on the freedom movement in South Africa country was, therefore, by example. However even if indirect his imprint on the course of the South African struggle was indelible as recognized by great leaders like Mandela.
- **Indian diaspora role:** The bond between the national movements of India and South Africa became stronger during the Second World War. With the encouragement of the Indian national

movement, they recognized that their destiny was linked to that of the African majority and increasingly participated in joint struggles against racist measures.

- India's complaint to the United Nations in 1946 on racial discrimination South Africa was made even before the establishment of a national Government, because of strong public sentiment in the country.
- **India against apartheid in major International Organizations:** India co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution of 1962 urging all States to impose sanctions against South Africa and establishing the Special Committee against Apartheid. In the specialized agencies of the United Nations, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Commonwealth, as well as in numerous other organizations and forums, India was active in calling for the isolation of the apartheid regime and support for the liberation struggle.

Conclusion

Apartheid system symbolized extremes of colonialism and racism. In 1994 after long struggle against apartheid, South Africa finally attained freedom and new constitution banned apartheid and granted equal rights to all irrespective of their race.

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