



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the role of Jawaharlal Nehru in post independence consolidation and nation building. (250 words)

03 Aug, 2020 GS Paper 1 History

Approach

- Start the answer by writing a few introductory lines about Jawahar Lal Nehru.
- Briefly explain the challenges faced by the newly independent India.
- Discuss Nehru's role in post independence consolidation and nation building with his visionary approach.
- Conclude by summarizing the immense contributions of Nehru in the making of Modern India.

Introduction

- Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India is widely acclaimed as one of the **architects of modern India**.
- His remarkable personality was an unusual combination of an **intellectual** and a practical political leader.
- The role that he played in the long struggle for national freedom, and later as one of the greatest political leaders of free India, has had a profound impact on the modern politics of the country.

Body

Challenges Faced by the Newly Independent India

- India was born in very difficult circumstances. Freedom came with partition of the country. The year 1947 was a year of unprecedented violence and trauma of displacement.
- It was in this situation that independent India started on its journey to achieve several objectives.
- Yet the turmoil that accompanied independence did not make our leaders lose sight of the multiple challenges that faced the new nation.
- Broadly, independent India faced the following challenges:
 - The first and the immediate challenge was to **shape a nation** that was **united** yet **accommodative of the diversity**.
 - India was a land of continental size and diversity. Its people spoke different languages and followed different cultures and religions.
 - At that time it was widely believed that a country full of such kinds of diversity could not remain together for long.
 - The partition of the country appeared to prove everyone's worst fears. Hence, consolidation of the country was one of the biggest challenges.
 - The second challenge was to **establish democracy**.
 - Everybody agreed on running the country through democratic government.
 - However, a democratic constitution is necessary but not sufficient for establishing

democracy. The challenge was to develop democratic practices in accordance with the constitution.

- The third challenge was to **ensure the development and well being of the entire society** and not only of some sections.
 - The constitution laid down the principle of equality and special protection to socially disadvantaged groups and religious and cultural communities.
 - But, the real challenge was to evolve effective policies for economic development and eradication of poverty.
- The fourth challenge was to have a **new foreign policy**.
 - India had just gained independence from Britishers. The leaders feared that joining any of the two blocs (USA and USSR) might be a risk to the country's autonomy and compromising independence.

Nehru's role in overcoming these challenges

- **Consolidation of the nation:** Nehru took a firm stance against the possible division of India into smaller principalities. He established the **State Reorganization Committee** to fulfil regional aspirations of the people which would lower the chances of them wanting to cede from the nation. This way he strengthened the unity.
- **Rehabilitation of refugees:** Refugees from Pakistan were given **shelter** and attempts were made to **reduce communalism**.
- **Secularism:** It was mainly due to Jawahar Lal Nehru's efforts that India emerged as a secular state in the mid-twentieth century. Much before independence, he played a heroic role in the development of a secular basis for Indian polity. This helped in building the narrative of '**Unity in Diversity**'.
- **Welfare state:** Nehru was a **practical idealist** and believed that socialism and democracy were not contradictory but complementary to each other. He wanted to build a welfare state for the **equitable distribution of wealth**.
- **Planning Commission:** Nehru, a pragmatic socialist understood the importance of the welfare state in a country which does not have sufficient infrastructure, established a planning commission for long term planning of social schemes.
- **Non-Alignment Policy (NAM):** Nehru, being the Foreign Minister, did not want to join either of the power blocs. Also he did not want India to remain aloof from world politics. Therefore, Nehru's visionary approach to establish NAM with other third world countries proved to be an **ideal foreign policy approach**.

Conclusion

Nehru's contribution to India can never be truly evaluated. Despite facing daunting tasks he was successful in maintaining and strengthening the nation. Carrying the traditions of the national movement, he nurtured the newly born nation, India.