

Chapter 5 Challenges to and restoration of congress system

Q 1. Which of these statements about the 1967 elections is/are correct?

1. Congress won the Lok Sabha elections but lost the Assembly elections in many states.
2. Congress lost both Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.
3. Congress lost majority in the Lok Sabha but formed a coalition government with the support of some other parties.
4. Congress retained power at the Centre with an increased majority.

Ans.

1. Congress won the Lok Sabha elections but lost the Assembly elections in many states.
 2. Congress lost majority in the Lok Sabha but formed a coalition government with the support of some other parties.
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Q 2. Match the following:

(a) Syndicate	(i) An elected representative leaving the party on whose ticket she/he has been elected
(b) Defection	(ii) A Catchy phrase that attracts public attention.
(c) Slogan	(iii) Parties with different ideological position coming together to oppose Congress and its policies.
(d) Anti-Congressism	(iv) A group of powerful and influential leaders within the Congress

Ans.

1. Syndicate – (iv) A group of powerful and influential leaders within the Congress.
 2. Defection – (i) An elected representative leaving the party on whose ticket she/ he has been elected.
 3. Slogan – (ii) A Catchy phrase that attracts public attention.
 4. Anti Congress – (iii) Parties with different ideological position coming together to oppose Congress and its policies.
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Q 3. Whom would you identify with the following slogans/phrases?

1. Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan

2. Indira Hatao!
3. Garibi Hatao!

Ans.

1. Lal Bahadur Shastri: Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan
 2. Syndicate: Indira Hatao!
 3. Indira Gandhi: Garibi Hatao!
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Q 4. Which of the following statement about the Grand Alliance of 1971 is correct?

The Grand Alliance ...

1. as formed by non-Communist, non-Congress parties.
2. had a clear political and ideological programme.
3. was formed by all non-Congress parties.

Ans. a. was formed by non-Communist, non-Congress parties.

Q 5. How should a political party resolve its internal differences? Here are some suggestions. Think of each and list out their advantages and shortcomings?

1. Follow the footsteps of the party president
2. Listen to the majority group
3. Secret ballot voting on every issue
4. Consult the senior and experienced leaders of the party

Ans.

1. **Advantage:** If the party follows the footsteps of the party president, there will be discipline and unity within the party.
Shortcoming: The party president can take its decision without taking into consideration the views of its party members. So, the inner democracy may get weakened.
 2. **Advantage:** If the party listens to the majority group, there will be more confidence among the party members and inner democracy will be strengthened.
Shortcoming: If the party listens to the majority group, factionalism may increase in the party. One faction may try to back another faction to gather support.
 3. **Advantage:** Secret ballot voting is an appropriate system. It is more democratic. Through it, any member can express his views.
Shortcoming: Sometimes, the party members may vote through secret ballot by ignoring the whip of the party issued by the party president. It may prove fatal to the party.
 4. **Advantage:** The novice and less experienced candidates will be benefited if they consult the senior and experienced leaders of the party and also follow their guidelines.
Shortcoming: If the party members only consult the senior and experienced leaders and follow their guidelines, their hold will get strengthened in the party.
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Q 6. State which of these were reasons for the defeat of the Congress in 1967. Give reasons for your answer?

1. The absence of a charismatic leader in the Congress party.
2. Split within the Congress party.

3. Increased mobilisation of regional, ethnic and communal groups.
4. Increasing unity among non-Congress parties.
5. Internal differences within the Congress party.

Ans. The reasons for the defeat of Congress in 1967 were:

1. It was one of the main reasons for the defeat of the Congress party. Now the party was split into two groups. Syndicate, a group of powerful and influential leaders having a strong hold over the Congress party. On the other hand, Indira supporters who were more inclined towards their leader. One group was in support of capitalism and liberalisation while others opposed it.
 2. The absence of a charismatic leader in the Congress party wasn't a reason for the defeat as there were many experienced and charismatic leaders in the Congress party.
 3. Due to the emergence of the Akali Dal in Punjab, D.M.K. in Tamil Nadu and other regional parties. The party could not get a majority at the centre and had to be deprived of power in various states.
 4. There was no unity among non-Congress parties. Various non-congress parties came together to form joint legislative parties (called Samyukt Vidhayak Dal in Hindi) that supported non-congress governments. So the non-Congress parties got benefit in other provinces.
 5. Internal differences within the party were one of the major causes of its defeat.
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Q 7. What were the factors which led to the popularity of Indira Gandhi's Government in the early 1970s?

Ans. The factors which led to the popularity of Indira Gandhi's Government in the early 1970s were the following:

1. Socialist credentials became the main projects during this period.
 2. Indira Gandhi campaigned to implement land reform laws and land ceiling legislation.
 3. She ended her dependence on other political parties by strengthening her party's position and recommended the dissolution of Lok Sabha in December 1970.
 4. The crisis in East Pakistan and Indo-Pak war to establish Bangladesh as an independent one, also enhanced the popularity of Indira Gandhi.
 5. Indira Gandhi's government was not accepted only as a protector of the poor and underprivileged but as a strong government also.
 6. Congress became popular among different social sections and restored dominance again.
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Q 8. What does the term 'syndicate' mean in the context of the Congress party of the sixties? What role did the Syndicate play in the Congress party?

Ans. Syndicate was a group of powerful and influential leaders from within Congress. The syndicate played a powerful role during the sixties in the Congress party:

1. Syndicate was led by K. Kamraj, former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and then the president of the Congress party. It also includes some powerful leaders like S.K Patil, S. Nijalingappa, N. Sanjeeva Reddy and Atulya Ghosh.
2. In the sixties, Syndicate played a decisive role by installing both Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi as a Prime Minister.
3. Syndicate played a decisive say in Indira Gandhi's first council of Ministers and formulation and implementation of policies.
4. After the Congress split, the leaders of the syndicate and those owing allegiance to them stayed with the Congress (O), led by Syndicate and Congress (R), led by Indira Gandhi.
5. Congress (R), won popularity after 1971 and Syndicate lost power and prestige.

Q 9. Discuss the major issue which led to the formal split of the Congress Party in 1969.

Ans. The formal split of the Congress took place in 1969 on the issue of nomination of the candidate during presidential elections:

1. Despite Mrs Gandhi's reservations, the 'syndicate' managed to nominate her long-time opponent and then speaker of the Lok Sabha, N. Sanjeeva Reddy, as the official Congress candidate for the ensuing Presidential elections.
 2. Indira Gandhi retaliated by encouraging the then Vice-President, V.V. Giri, to file his nomination as an independent candidate.
 3. During election, the then Congress President S. Nijalingappa issued a 'whip' asking all the Congress MPs and MLAs to vote in favour of Sanjeeva Reddy, the official candidate of the party. Supporters of Indira Gandhi requisitioned a special meeting of the AICC (that is why this faction came to be known as 'requisitionists') but this was refused.
 4. On the other hand, after silently supporting V.V. Giri, the Prime Minister openly called for a 'conscience vote' which meant that the MPs and MLAs from the Congress should be free to vote the way they want.
 5. Election went in favour of V.V. Giri, the independent candidate, and the defeat of Sanjeeva Reddy, the official Congress candidate.
 6. The defeat of the official Congress candidate formalised the split in the party into two:
 - Congress (O), i.e. organisation led by Syndicate, known as Old Congress.
 - Congress (R), i.e. requisitionists led by Indira Gandhi, known as New Congress.
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Q 10. Read the passage and answer the questions below:

"... Indira Gandhi changed the Congress into highly centralised and undemocratic party organisation, from the earlier federal, democratic and ideological formation that Nehru had led.... But this ... could not have happened had not Indira Gandhi changed the entire nature of politics. This new, populist politics turned political ideology ... into a mere electoral discourse, use of various slogans not meant to be translated into government policies.... During its great electoral victories in the early 1970s, amidst the celebration, the Congress party as a political organisation died —Sudipta Kaviraj

1. What according to the author is the difference between the strategies of Nehru and Indira Gandhi?
2. Why does the author say that the Congress party 'died' in the seventies?
3. In what way, did the change in the Congress party affect other political parties also?

Ans.

1. According to the author, the main difference between the strategies of Nehru and Indira Gandhi is that Jawahar Lal Nehru led the Congress into federal, democratic and ideological nature whereas Indira Gandhi converted it into a highly centralised and undemocratic party.
2. Congress party died in the seventies due to changing nature of Congress, the new populist politics turned political ideology into a mere electoral discouragement and the use of various slogans never meant to be translated into government policies i.e. electoral victories of 1970s.
3. The change in the Congress party affected other political parties also as they formed SVD (Samyukt Vidhayak Dal) in the form of coalitions and grand alliance.