

Chapter 6 The Crisis of Democratic order

Q 1. State whether the following statements regarding the Emergency are correct or incorrect.

1. It was declared in 1975 by Indira Gandhi.
2. It led to the suspension of all fundamental rights.
3. It was proclaimed due to the deteriorating economic conditions.
4. Many Opposition leaders were arrested during the emergency.
5. CPI supported the proclamation of the Emergency.

Ans. a. Correct, b. Correct, c. Wrong, d. Correct, e. Correct.

Q 2. Find the odd one out in the context of proclamation of Emergency.

1. The call for 'Total Revolution'.
2. The Railway Strike of 1974
3. The Naxalite Movement
4. The Allahabad High Court verdict
5. The findings of the Shah Commission Report

Ans. c. The Naxalite Movement

Q 3. Match the following:

(a) Total Revolution	(i) Indira Gandhi
(b) Garibi Hatao	(ii) Jayaprakash Narayan
(c) Students' Protest	(iii) Bihar Movement
(d) Railway Strike	(iv) George Fernandes

Ans.

1. Total Revolution -(iii) Bihar Movement.
 2. Garibi Hatao -(i) Indira Gandhi.
 3. students' Protest -(ii) Jayaprakash Narayan.
 4. Railway Strike -(iv) George Fernandes.
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Q 4. What were the reasons which led to the mid-term elections in 1980?

Ans. The reasons that led to the mid-term elections in 1980 were as follows:

1. Janata Party lacked direction, leadership, and a common programme.
2. Janata Party government could not bring about a fundamental change in policies from those pursued by Congress.
3. There was a split in Janata Party and the government led by Morarji Desai which lost its majority in less than 18 months.
4. Charan Singh government was formed due to support of Congress party which later decided to withdraw its support resulting resignation of Charan Singh government within four months.

All the above mentioned reasons led midterm elections of 1980, which defeated Janata Party and again Congress-led by Indira Gandhi came back to power by winning 353 seats.

Q 5. The Shah Commission was appointed in 1977 by the Janata Party Government. Why was it appointed and what were its findings?

Ans. The following were the reasons for the appointment of the Shah Commission:

1. The Shah Commission was appointed in May 1977 by the Janata Party government which was headed by Justice J.C. Shah, retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India.
2. To inquire “into several aspects of allegations of abuse of authority, excesses and malpractices committed and action taken in the wake of the Emergency proclaimed on the 25th June 1975”.
3. The Commission performed to examine various kinds of evidence to give testimonies even including Indira Gandhi to appear before the Commission but she refused to answer any questions.

The following were the findings of the Shah Commission:

1. It found many ‘excesses’ committed during Emergency.
 2. Under preventive detention laws, nearly one lakh eleven thousand people were arrested.
 3. Press censorship took place without any proper legal sanctions.
 4. The Shah Commission report mentions that the General Manager of the Delhi Power Supply Corporation received verbal orders from the office of the Lt. Governor of Delhi to cut electricity to all newspaper presses at 2.00 a.m. on 26 June 1975. Electricity was restored two to three days later after the censorship apparatus had been set up.
 5. There were other and more serious allegations regarding the exercise of governmental power by people who held no official position.
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Q 6. What reasons did the Government give for declaring a National Emergency in 1975?

Ans. Emergency was proclaimed in response to a petition filed by Raj Narain, a socialist leader and a candidate who had contested against Indira Gandhi in 1971. The following were the reasons given by the Government for declaring a National Emergency in 1975:

1. On June 25, 1975, the government declared that there was a threat of internal disturbances and therefore, it invoked Article 352 of the Constitution.
2. Article 352 can declare emergency on ground of either internal or external disturbances.
3. The government decided that a grave crisis had arisen which made the proclamation of a state of emergency necessary.
4. Technically speaking this was within the powers of the government, for our Constitution provides for some special powers to the government once an emergency is declared.

5. President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad thus proclaimed emergency which became the most controversial episode in Indian Politics.
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Q 7. The 1977 elections for the first time saw the Opposition coming into power at the Centre. What would you consider as the reasons for this development?

Ans. The 1977 elections were evolved as a shock to everyone as Congress party was defeated for the very first time and opposition party came into power.

The following were the reasons for this development:

1. The opposition adopted the slogan 'Save democracy' against the imposition of emergency earlier.
 2. The opposition campaigned non-democratic character of the rule which provided various excesses.
 3. The opposition party highlighted the preventive and press censorship to favour public opinion.
 4. Janata Party also ensured not to divide non-Congress votes.
 5. Middle section of north India was moving away from Congress for whom Janata Party became a platform.
 6. Hence, elections of 1977 emerged many other factors instead of emergency only.
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Q 8. Discuss the effects of Emergency on the following aspects of our polity.

1. Effects on civil liberties for citizens.
2. Impact on the relationship between the Executive and Judiciary.
3. Functioning of Mass Media.
4. Working of Police and Bureaucracy.

Ans.

a. Effects on Civil Liberties for Citizens:

1. The government made large scale arrests under preventive detention.
2. Arrested political persons could not challenge arrest even Habeas corpus petitions.
3. Despite filing many petitions government claimed it not to be informed on grounds to arrested persons.
4. In April 1976, finally, it was proved that government could take away citizen's right to life and liberty by overruling of high courts under the Supreme Court and accept the government's plea.

b. Impact on Relationship between the Executive and Judiciary;

1. The Parliament brought in many new changes to the Constitution which made an amendment declaring that elections of Prime Minister, President and Vice-President could not be challenged in the Court.
2. The forty-second amendment was also passed during the Emergency. Among the various changes made by this amendment, one was that the duration of the legislatures in the country was extended from five to six years.
3. This change was not only for the Emergency period but was intended to be of a permanent nature.

Besides this, during an Emergency, elections can be postponed by one year. Thus, effectively, after 1971, elections needed to be held only in 1978; instead of 1976.

c. Functioning of Mass Media:

1. Press censorship took place which banned freedom of the press and newspapers were supposed to have prior approval before they publish any material i.e. RSS and Janata Islami were banned.
2. Protests, strikes and public agitations were also banned.

3. Various fundamental rights were also suspended including “Right to move to court” for the restoration of Fundamental Rights.
4. Kannada writer Shivarama Karanth awarded with Padma Bhushan and Hindi writer Fanishwarnath Renu with Padmashri returned their awards in protest against suspension of democracy.
5. Newspapers mainly Indian Express and the statesman protested against censorship by leaving blank spaces where news items were censored.

d. Working of Police and Bureaucracy:

1. The actual implementation of the Emergency rule took place through the police and the administration.
 2. These institutions could not function independently.
 3. They were turned into political instruments of the ruling party.
 4. According to the Shah Commission Report, the administration and the police became vulnerable to political pressures.
 5. This problem did not vanish even after the Emergency.
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Q 9. In what way did the imposition of Emergency affect the party system in India? Elaborate your answer with examples.

Ans. The elections after the Emergency set off the process of change in the party system:

1. Due to the absolute majority to party in power, leadership even dared to suspend the democratic process.
 2. The makers of India’s Constitution trusted that all political parties would basically abide by the democratic norm.
 3. Even during the Emergency, when the government would use extraordinary powers, its use would be within the norms of the rule of law.
 4. This expectation led to the wide and open-ended powers given to the government in times of Emergency.
 5. These were abused during the Emergency.
 6. This political crisis was more serious than the constitutional crisis.
 7. Tension and differences arose between institution based democracy and democracy based on spontaneous popular participation.
 8. It was attributed to the incapability of the party system to incorporate the aspirations of the people.
 9. For the first time, opposition parties came together to form a new party ‘Janata Party’ not to divide the non-Congress votes.
 10. 1977 elections brought an end to one-party dominance and created a coalition government.
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Q 10. Read the passage and answer the questions below:

“Indian democracy was never so close to a two-party system as it was during the 1977 elections. However, the next few years saw a complete change. Soon after its defeat, the Indian National Congress split into two groupsThe Janata Party also went through major convulsions.....David Butler, Ashok Lahiri and Prannoy Roy.—Partha Chatterjee

1. (a) What made the party system in India look like a two-party system in 1977?
2. (b) Many more than two parties existed in 1977. Why then are the authors describing this period as close to a two-party system?
4. (c) What caused splits in Congress and the Janata Party?

Ans.

1. The imposition of emergency in 1975 and political crisis made the party system in India look like a two-party system.
2. Two parties existed in 1977 were Congress and non-Congress parties to be described as close to the two-party system because it ended the one-party dominance and emerged Janata Party, an umbrella of non- Congress parties.
3. Split in Congress: Congress split on the issues of presidential elections in 1969. Split in Janata Party: Due to rising tensions among three leaders Moraiji Desai, Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram for leadership in 1979.