

CHALLENGES TO AND RESTORATION
OF CONGRESS SYSTEM

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1960's AS "DANGEROUS DECADE"

- 1960's were labeled as the dangerous decade because some unresolved problems like poverty, inequality, communal and regional divisions etc. could lead to a failure of the democratic project or even the disintegration of the country.
- Death of Nehru.

LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI

- During Shastri's brief Prime Ministership, the country faced two major challenges.
 1. While India was still recovering from the economic implications of the war with China, failed monsoons, drought and serious food crisis presented a grave challenge.
 2. The country also faced a war with Pakistan in 1965.
- Shastri's famous slogan '**Jai Jawan Jai Kisan**', symbolised the country's resolve to face both these challenges.
- He suddenly expired in Tashkent, then in USSR and currently the capital of Uzbekistan. He was there to discuss and sign an agreement with Muhammad Ayub Khan, the then President of Pakistan, to end the war.

INDIRA GANDHI

- After the death of Shastri, the senior Congress leaders supported Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister, because they believe that her administrative and political inexperience would compel her to be dependent on them for support and guidance.
- But, she set out to gain control over the party and to demonstrate her leadership skills.

FORTH GENERAL ELECTION, 1967

- During the Prime Ministership of Indira Gandhi, the economic situation triggered off price rise. People started protesting against the increase in prices of essential commodities, food scarcity, growing unemployment and the overall economic condition in the country. Bandhs and hartals were called frequently across the country. The government saw the protests as a law and order problem and not as expressions of people's problems.
- The communist and socialist parties launched struggles for greater equality

NON-CONGRESSISM

- Opposition parties were in the forefront of organising public protests and pressurising the government.
- In 1967 election, parties opposed to the Congress realised that the division of their votes kept the Congress in power. Thus parties that were entirely different and disparate in their programmes and ideology got together to form anti-Congress fronts in some states and entered into electoral adjustments of sharing seats in others.
- The socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia gave this strategy the name of '*non-Congressism*'.

OUTCOME OF THIS ELECTION

- The results jolted the Congress at both the national and state levels.
- The election results is a '*political earthquake*', because the Congress did manage to get a majority in the Lok Sabha, but with its lowest tally of seats and share of votes since 1952.
- The Congress Party got only 283 seats out of 516 seats.
- The Congress party lost majority in nine states – Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- In Tamil Nadu DMK formed the government. This was the first time any non-Congress party had secured a majority of its own in any State.
- *Coalition* formed in other states.

COALITION

- The elections of 1967 brought into picture the phenomenon of coalitions.
- When no party gets absolute majority in assembly than several parties come and together formed government.

DEFECTION

- Another important feature of the politics after the 1967 election was the role played by defections in the making and unmaking of governments in the States.
- Defection means an elected representative leaves the party on whose symbol he/she was elected and joins another party.
- 'Aya Ram, Gaya Ram
- In 1985, during the Prime Ministership of Rajiv Gandhi "Anti Defection Law" was passed to control defection.

SPLIT IN CONGRESS

- Indira vs. the 'Syndicate' conflict on the issue of **1967 elections**, Indira's **ten point programme** and **1969 Presidential election**.
- Ten point programme included social control of banks, nationalisation of General Insurance, ceiling on urban property and income, public distribution of food grains, land reforms and provision of house sites to the rural poor.
- N Sanjeeva Reddy was the official Congress candidate. But Indira Gandhi encouraged V V Giri to file his nomination as an independent candidate and V V Giri won in this election.
- Finally Congress split into the Congress (Organisation) and the group led by Indira Gandhi came to be called the Congress (Requisitionists).

THE 1971 GENERAL ELECTION AND RESTORATION OF CONGRESS

REASON FOR RESTORATION OF CONGRESS IN 1971

1. *Charismatic personality* of Indira Gandhi.
 2. *Socialist policies* adopted by Indira Gandhi's government.
 3. *Garibi Hatao* policy/slogan. On the other hand opposition parties called for *Indira Hatao*.
- The Congress(R)-CPI alliance won more seats and votes than the Congress had ever won in the first four general elections. The combine won 375 seats in Lok Sabha and secured 48.4 per cent votes. Indira Gandhi's Congress(R) won 352 seats with about 44 per cent of the popular votes on its own.