



Mains Practice Question

Q. “Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s founding statesman, was a great figure whose legacy transcended national boundaries”. Comment. (250 words)

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Reference: [Legacy of Jawahar Lal Nehru](#)

Approach

- Start your answer by mentioning some of the important contributions of Jawaharlal Nehru in Post-independent India.
- Discuss in detail how these contributions define many of the essential characteristics of the Indian state, its institutions and foreign policy.
- You may conclude the answer by writing the relevance of Nehruvian policies in present times.

Introduction

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India, has in many ways contributed in laying the foundation of post-independent India. This can be reflected through policies of democratic socialism, non-alignment, secularism and institutionalisation of democracy etc.

Body

Institutionalisation of Democracy

- Nehruvian ideals envisioned in ‘Objective Resolution’, steered the Constituent Assembly to draw up the philosophy of Indian constitution i.e. Preamble.
- The nature of the Nehruvian way of politics (debate and deliberation) led to development of respect for parliamentary procedures, abiding faith in the constitutional system.
- Nehru also believed in democracy at grassroots level in India (panchayati raj institutions).

Ideal of Secularism

- Nehru believed that India belonged to all who had contributed to its history and civilisation, and that the majority community had a special obligation to protect the rights, and promote the well-being, of the minorities.
- This helped in building the narrative of ‘Unity in Diversity’.

Democratic Socialism

- Through the planned economy approach, Nehru envisaged that in a land of extreme poverty and inequality, the objective of government policy must be the welfare of the poorest, most deprived and most marginalised of the people.

Non-Alignment Policy

- For Nehru, Non-alignment (NAM) was the response to the bipolar divisions of the Cold War era.
- After two centuries of British rule, Nehru was determined to protect the country's strategic autonomy without compromising independence by aligning itself to either superpower in the Cold War.
- This policy of NAM, made India one of the most distinguished leaders of Third World solidarity, reached out to the rest of the colonised world, and forged a joint front against colonialism and a reinvented imperialism.

Conclusion

With these socio-economic-political contributions, Jawaharlal Nehru can be rightfully called the maker of modern India. Moreover, the recent developments such as emergence of a new era of the Cold War between the US and China, failure of neo-liberal economic policies-which can be reflected in rising inequalities, growing intolerance and disharmony within Indian society, need for development of scientific temperament, etc. marks the relevance of Nehruvian ideology in present times also.

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