

Elections of 1937 and the Role of Congress Ministry

Course Instructor: Habib Ali

Introduction

In 1937, Indian provincial elections were held under the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935.

The elections were a watershed moment in Indian history, as they marked the first time that Indians had the right to vote for their own representatives.

The elections were contested by a number of political parties, including the Indian National Congress (INC), the Muslim League, and the Hindu Mahasabha (Vinayak Damodar Savarkar)

Elections of 1937

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The elections were a watershed moment in Indian history, as they marked the first time that **Indians had the right to vote for their own representatives.**

The Indian National Congress (INC) won a landslide victory in the elections, **winning 711 out of 1,585 seats.**

The INC formed ministries in **(08) provinces**, including the **United Provinces, Bihar, the Central Provinces, Bombay, Madras, the North-West Frontier Province, and Assam.**

Formed coalition Govt in **03 Provinces**

Election Manifesto

Increased self-government for India.

Fundamental rights for all Indians.

Social and economic reforms.

Hindu-Muslim unity.

Role of Congress Ministries

- The Congress ministries took office in 1937 and implemented a number of reforms, including:
 - Abolishing untouchability
 - Introducing free and compulsory education
 - Expanding healthcare facilities
 - Promoting rural development

Congress Anti-Muslim Drive

Joint Electoral Vs. Separate Electoral

Separate electorates were reserved for specific religious or social groups, such as Muslims, Sikhs, and Scheduled Castes to ensure that these groups had a fair representation in the legislature

Joint electorates were open to all voters, regardless of their religion or social group.

This system was seen as more democratic, but majority could dominate the minority communities.

Hindi vs Urdu

INC was influenced by Hindu nationalist movement: Hindi as the language of Hindu culture & identity.

INC's decision to promote Hindi over Urdu was a Hinduizing attempt.

Wardha Educational Scheme

A set of educational guidelines developed by INC in 1937 based on the principles of Gandhian education (vocational training, and character building).

The scheme was based on the Hinduization of education in India because it emphasized the study of Hindi language

The scheme did not adequately address the needs of Muslim students, such as the need for religious instruction.

The scheme framed to promote Hindu values and interests.

Hoisting Tiranga (Flag)

Three colored flag: Green (Representing Muslims) Saffron (Hindus) White (Neutral for Peace & Harmony).

No sign of Red Crescent associated with Islam.

Vande Mataram

It was adopted as a National Song & Anthem of India.

It is written in Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in Anandamath (1882)

INC was trying to impose a Hindu agenda on India.

The song refers to India as "mother", which is a term that is used for the goddess Durga in Hinduism.

The song mentions the Ganges River, which is sacred to Hindus.

The song calls on Indians to "arise" and "shake off the dust", which was seen as a call to violence against Muslims.

Conclusion

The 1937 elections were a major turning point in Indian history.

They demonstrated the growing popularity of the INC and its commitment to self-government for India.

The elections also led to the hardening of communal positions, as the Muslim League became increasingly vocal in its demand for a separate Muslim state.