

The process of decolonization: An Indian Experience

I will make a presentation on “The process of decolonization”: An Indian Experience. The presentation details India's comprehensive decolonization efforts across legal, economic, and cultural spheres, as well as ongoing initiatives.

The legal and constitutional decolonization began with the drafting of the Constitution by Indian representatives, replacing the colonial Government of India Act of 1935. This established constitutional supremacy, fundamental rights, and equality before the law, while abolishing discriminatory colonial laws and practices like communal electorates and untouchability. The lapse of British Paramountcy on August 15, 1947, led to the integration of over 560 princely states into the Indian Union.

Economically, India moved away from the British "Sterling Area" and negotiated independent trade agreements to reduce its dependency. Key sectors such as the Reserve Bank of India and major commercial banks were nationalized, giving the state control over monetary policy and credit allocation. The colonial-era Zamindari system was abolished through state-level acts and constitutional amendments, which led to land redistribution and tenancy reforms.

Culturally, decolonization focused on reviving indigenous arts, languages, and knowledge systems. Institutions like the Sahitya Akademi were established to support Indian traditions, and the education system was reformed to integrate Indian history and culture into textbooks, countering colonial narratives.

The presentation concludes that decolonization is an ongoing process, with recent efforts including the replacement of colonial-era penal codes, the overhaul of the education system through the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and initiatives promoting self-reliance and indigenous languages.