

# Insights IAS GS Analytica

## SAMPLE ANSWERS/SYNOPSIS

**Question: UPSC CSE 2021 – GS1**

**Q13.” There arose a serious challenge to the Democratic State System between the two World Wars.” Evaluate the statement. (Answer in 250 words)**

### **Introduction 1 (General)**

The **Period between two world wars** saw continuous **turmoil** and the rise of **authoritarian regimes** in different parts of the world e.g., Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy, that challenged the established democratic system based on values of **liberty, fraternity and equality**.

### **Introduction 2 (with knowledge)**

The **Inter-war period (1918 to 1939)** faced a series of economic, social and political crises, which resulted in the spread of **ultranationalist** and **totalitarian** regimes in different parts of the world in different forms. This presented a serious challenge to the **established western democratic order**.

### **Body:**

#### **Background:**

The democratic state based on the values propagated by the American and French Revolution (e.g., **‘Men are born free and equal’**) was established in many parts of the world by 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century e.g., Germany, New Zealand (it became **1<sup>st</sup> nation to grant the right to vote for women** in 1894), etc. Even during the initial years after World War 1, democracies saw an upsurge in Europe e.g., Hungary, Czechoslovakia etc. But this process was interrupted by the two world wars.

#### **Factors that led to the rise of authoritarian regimes:**

- **Failure of Treaty of Versailles:** Rather than creating a secure, **rule-based world order**, it put the entire **blame of war and reparation amount** on defeated power, especially Germany.
  - This became the cause of **economic and political tension and of national humiliation**, which swung the opinion of people in favour of nationalist authoritarian leaders such as Hitler in Germany.
- **Fear of Communism:** Communism was spreading fast after the **Russian Revolution of 1917** and as communism is against any **private property**, it created tension among capitalist nations.
  - E.g., **Hitler's Nazi party** was offered to join the coalition government in 1933 as conservatives considered the 'communist party' a greater threat.
- **Failure of democratic system:** Democracy in itself is not a perfect system and in many states, democratic system created political instability
  - E.g., the 1919 system of **proportional representation in Italy** led to a fractured mandate and people preferred a stable government and decisive leader such as **Mussolini**.
- **Economic Depression of 1929:** The misery caused by the depression provided the spark to convert democratic regimes into authoritarian. The **1930s** became a **decade of dictators** in Europe and Latin America.
  - E.g., In **Germany**, by **1930 unemployment** skyrocketed to **22%**.
- **Policy of Appeasement:** Appeasement was the foreign policy of **pacifying an aggrieved country through negotiation** in order to prevent war. Appeasement by Allied powers such as Britain encouraged Hitler to be more aggressive, and contributed to rise in authoritarian power.
- **Failure of League of Nations:** It was formed in 1920 to maintain world peace. However, for any decision, it required **unanimity** of its members. This made it hard for the league to work.
  - Also, many of its members such as Britain and France ignored League in order to appease Hitler.

**These factors led to the rise of:**

- **Nazism in Germany:** Germany plagued by **joblessness**, embittered by the **loss of territory**, and demoralized by the **ineffective government**; people favoured strong leaders like Hitler, who quickly converted democracy into dictatorship.
- **Fascism in Italy and Spain:** Mussolini's Fasci party used **violence and intimidation** to come to power in 1922. Similarly Fascist leader **General Franco** defeated the democratic government in the Spanish Civil War
- **Militarism in Japan:** Military generals in Japan subdued civilian democratic government to come to power under General Tojo.
- **Dictatorship in USSR:** One party communist state under Lenin and later under Stalin purged any opposition fearing fascist rise.

- **Fascism in democratic country:** Even in democratic country like Britain and France, there was presence of fascist parties, although they didn't gain much significance.

### Impact of the authoritarian regime on the democratic system

- **Discredited democracy by the establishment of the one-party system:** State became all-powerful and voices of people were ignored.
  - **In Russia:** After the Russian Civil War- Lenin had established a **one-party communist state** by banning all the opposition political party
- **Blocked freedom of speech:** They controlled the media (to glorify the present regime) and education (to brainwash the people about the propaganda)
- **Use of secret police:** e.g., Gestapo by Hitler caused political and human rights repression
- **Weakening of Parliament** e.g., in Italy **Mussolini** declared all political parties illegal except for his own **Fascist Party**
- **Glorification of personality** e.g., General Franco in Spain, Stalin in the USSR or Hitler in Germany
- **Persecution of Minorities:** e.g., Jews in Germany

### Alternative View:

However, Challenges to Democratic State System was **not just limited to the period between two world wars**. **Colonialism and Imperialism** in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> were fundamentally against democratic ideals. After the Unification of Germany, **Bismarck** ruled with an Iron grip and therefore was sometimes called **Iron Chancellor**. Similarly, decades after the end of world wars, military dictators again rose to power in many of the African and South American Countries.

### Conclusion 1 (Consequence)

Thus, the rise of authoritarian regimes during the inter-war period ultimately led to the **second world war**, which shocked the world in terms of loss of lives and property. Learning from the experience, the democratic system was established and decolonization started in colonies in the years following the world wars.

### Conclusion 2 (Present Relevance)

Even decades after the end of world wars, we still witness the rise of **dictatorial leadership** (e.g., in Turkey), glorification of a leader, one-party rule (e.g., in China and Russia), military rule (e.g., in Myanmar). We must guard the democratic system against these tendencies.