

800 years, during which the invading Turks established a Muslim empire in the eleventh century. They were replaced by the Moghuls at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The most famous Moghul ruler was Akbar (1560-1605) whose grandson, Shah Jahan, built the Taj Mahal. Moghul rule lasted 300 years (1470-1770) but did not extend over the whole of India, especially over the extreme south.

There was a return to fragmentation between the decline of the Moghuls and the rise of European interests. The British entered the struggle for a commercial foothold in India through the British East India Company, founded in 1600. By 1833, Britain had established its legislative authority over India and by the middle of the nineteenth century, Britain assumed direct control over three-fifths of India. The remaining areas were held by more than 500 princely states subject to British control and intervention.

The Sepoy Mutiny, generally considered India's first struggle for independence, took place in 1857. It was followed by an awakening of Indian nationalism and the creation of the Indian National Congress. Between the First and Second World Wars there were nationwide movements of resistance to British rule, led by Mahatma Gandhi. On August 15, 1947, British rule ended and British India was divided into India and Pakistan.

The Congress party has dominated Indian politics since Independence. It has ruled continuously since 1947, except for a three-year period beginning in 1977, when a loose opposition coalition took over after a state of emergency invoked by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru (India's first Prime Minister). Mrs. Gandhi, who recaptured power in 1980, was assassinated in 1984 and her son, Rajiv Gandhi, succeeded her as Prime Minister.

India is a democratic republic with a parliamentary system of government. The country is organized into 22 states and 9 centrally administered territories. The central legislature or Parliament consists of the President and two houses known as the *Rajya Sabha* (Council of States) and the *Lok Sabha* (House of People). The *Lok Sabha* consists of members elected directly on the basis of adult suffrage; its duration may extend to five years. Elections in the *Rajya Sabha* are indirect. All legislation requires the consent of both houses of Parliament.

The central executive consists of the President, Vice-President, and Council of Ministers. The President appoints the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the majority party