

Indian Nationalism: Strategies & Perspectives

Nationalism is an abstract concept and a concrete reality. It is a positive consciousness of unity, homogeneity and national aspiration.

Nationalism emerged in India because of **colonial intervention** in Indian social, economic, political and religious affairs. Nationalism in India is intimately connected to the anti-colonial responses. People began discovering their unity in the process of their struggle with colonialism. The sense of being oppressed under colonialism provided a shared bond that tied many different groups together and forged the idea of nationalism.

Thus, the Nationalism in India in its modern form **emerged in 19th-century** British India both in emulation of and as a reaction against the consolidation of British rule and the spread of Western civilization. However there has been debate over Indian Nationalism.



VIEWS OF WESTERN SCHOLARS

- **Marxist Scholars like Benedict Anderson (book-“Imagined Communities”)** are of the view that Indian Nationalism emerged in India because of British rule. According to Anderson, Nationalism is not IMAGINARY and it is constructed through print media and railways etc. which has helped in its emergence.
- **Valentine Chirol** refuses the existence of Indian Nationalism. In his book **Indian Unrest**, he asserted that **India was a ‘mere geographical expression’**, and even this geography was forged by the British. Thus, for him, the term ‘India’ was no more than a **geographic creation by the British for administrative purposes rather than a nation.**
- **Another British scholar, Christopher Belle** has tried to find out the roots of Indian nationalism in ancient India. According to him, good government and patriotism always existed in ancient India.

VIEWS OF INDIAN SCHOLARS

- **Radhakumud Mukerji** argues about the existence of nationalism in ancient Indian society, particularly, in Hindu culture. Mukerji states that ancient Indian society had a systematic bureaucracy, rules and laws. Big empires were setup by the kings like Chandragupta Maurya, Asoka and Gupta Kings. Trade and commerce developed during these empires.
- **Har Bilas Sarda** declared that ‘the ancient Hindus were the greatest nation that has yet flourished on the earth’.
- **Lajpat Rai** asserted in his **Young India** that ‘fundamentally India has been a nation for the last 2,000 years.
- **K.P. Jaiswal, in his book “Hindu Polity”,** stated that India possessed everything which modern Britain could claim: big empires, enduring and successful republics, representative elective institutions, strong parliaments, a constitutional monarchy, and supremacy of Law above the executive authority.
- **Aurobindo Ghosh** was Cultural Nationalist who held that India was always a nation. His Theory of Nationalism believes that the Indian Nationalism didn’t emerge in a single day but it is the culmination of diverse factors ranging from political, economic, cultural and other diverse domains as listed below.

CAUSES OF RISE OF NATIONALISM

POLITICAL FACTORS

- **Formation of Indian National Congress** in 1885 gave a political platform to various leaders who contributed in Indian national movement and propagated the idea of India nationalism.
- **Political and Administrative unification of the Country**-Brought people, especially the leaders, from different regions together. This was important for the exchange of political ideas and for mobilization and organization of public opinion on political and economic issues.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

- **Understanding of contradictions in Indian and colonial** interests led to the people united against their exploitation and it was propagated through the **economic critique of British rule**.

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

- **It gave rise to middle class intelligentsia** which was an important factor which contributed in the emergence of nationalism in India.
- **The Charter Act of 1813** allowed Christian missionaries to come to India. And, in the same year, colonial government allocated one lakh rupees for the development of Education in India. English became the medium of education which helped Indians to go to various countries and understand their social conditions.

REACTIONARY POLICIES AND RACIAL ARROGANCE OF RULERS

- Racial myths of white superiority were sought to be perpetuated by the British through a deliberate policy of discrimination and segregation. Witnessing various reactionary policies, it became clear to the nationalists that justice and fair play could not be expected where interests of the European community were involved which led to the rise of Indian nationalism.

REDISCOVERY OF INDIA'S PAST

- **Historical researches** –which has been highlighted by the extremist like Tilak and also nationalist painting like Bengal school of Abanindranath Tagore.

IMPACT OF CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENTS WORLDWIDE

- Rise of a number of nations on the ruins of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in South America.
- **National liberation movements of Greece and** Italy in general and of Ireland in particular deeply influenced the nationalist ranks.

INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Indian Nationalist Movement was a grand and prolonged struggle launched against British imperialism. Nationalism was the main ideology and the instrument with whose help this struggle was launched. In the context of the Indian Nationalist Movement, Indian nationalism represented two major ideas: anti-imperialism and national unity. In other words, any person, movement, or organisation that practised and upheld these two ideas, could be considered a nationalist.

India's freedom struggle was a protracted battle. It included multiple strategies in multiple periods and also variety of actors. In this topic, we will be studying various phases and various actors of Indian freedom struggle from analytical perspective. Please remember that, in Political Science, we give more importance to analysis than historical facts.

PHASES OF INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

A) CONSTITUTIONALISM (MODERATE PHASE)

There are different types of political strategies adopted by the politicians or groups to achieve the political aim. Constitutionalism is a political strategy based on the philosophy of liberalism. Liberalism is based on the assumption that man is rational and hence political ends can be achieved by rational dialogue.

There is no need of the use of violence in achieving political aims. Constitutional methods can be called as institutional methods. States can provide different institutions like legislatures, local governments, for representation of people's demands, involvement of them in administration. Free and fair judicial system for redressal of grievances.

Constitutional methods in India: The idea of constitutionalism is itself an imported idea. Constitutionalism originated in Britain; it was introduced in India by the colonial masters. Britishers had introduced modern institutions like rule of law, modern judicial system, civil services and assemblies.

Britishers did not rule India only by the use of coercive methods. They tried to build hegemony by doing certain good actions for Indians. To **gain the legitimacy** of British rule, they incorporated Indians in assemblies as well as in civil services.

Early nationalists employed constitutional methods like bringing resolutions in the assembly, sending memorials, prayers, petitions, appeals to justice and protests. Thus, constitutional methods differ from direct actions like passive resistance, satyagraha, non-cooperation, dharana, hartal, boycott, civil disobedience, rebellions, mutiny, terrorism, criminal actions, aiding foreign invasions, subversion etc.

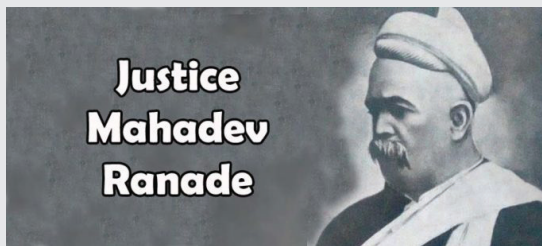
Why early nationalists adopted constitutional methods?

A. Ideological reasons –Most of them were educated in western education and impressed with values of liberalism. Early nationalist believed that British rule is blessing in disguise. They had great faith in British sense of justice. **M G Ranade thanked British for introducing rule of law**, expressed that British rule in India is a divine intervention to eradicate the evils of misrule of the past. **Surendra Nath Banerjee** appealed to the British to introduce the institutions which are truly British in character so that Indians can rejoice in permanent union with British. **Dadabhai Naoroji** held that British are justice loving people. Indians have to communicate their demand to the British in 'reasonable manner'. **Ranade** held that British rule is a source of inspiration, hope and confidence. He held that Indians are fortunate that they are ruled by the British.

B. Pragmatic reasons –According to **Gokhale**, constitutional methods were adopted according to the circumstances. Direct action required immense preparation and Indians were not ready for such action. According to **C. Y. Chintamani** before introducing direct actions, we have to address internal divisions and disunity.

Criticism of constitutional methods

- 1. Tilak** – 'Constitutional methods in front of alien bureaucracy is a political suicide'.
- 2. Aurobindo Ghosh** – Constitutional methods reflect 'intellectual bankruptcy of the leaders'. Aurobindo Ghosh believed that Indians will have to strike at the roots of colonialism. That is – boycotting the foreign goods and adopting Swadeshi.
- 3. Pandit Nehru** – Constitutional methods will not work because India does not have constitutional government.



Bipin Chandra quotes **M.G. Ranade**, who held that *"the memorials are not addressed to the British, they were addressed to Indians."*



Bipin Chandra also quotes Gokhale, in the words of **Gokhale** *'We are at such a stage that our achievements are bound to be less and our failures too frequent. We must content ourselves by serving our country by our failures. It is through these failures that the struggle will emerge.'*

4. Assessment by Bipin Chandra

- Direct action is possible only when masses are organized, unified and have common consciousness of the common end. The objective conditions of the colonial rule were bringing Indians together but the subjective consciousness of the common ends was missing.

- Moderates were 'leaders as well as learners.' There was no readymade critique of imperialism available for them to understand. (The first analysis of imperialism as colonialism came with the publication of **Lenin's book (IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM.)** At the same time, British did introduce some good practices. All the features of the evil empire were not on surface.
- Though moderates didn't carry mass struggle, but they carried struggle at 'ideological level.' They led the foundation of the most spectacular mass movement.

B) EXTREMIST PHASE

The second generation of the leaders represented by Lal Bal Pal (Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal) are called as extremists. They were dissatisfied with the achievements of early nationalists. The use of the term extremists and militants is relative. These leaders appear extremist in their demands and methods in comparison to earlier leaders which now appeared 'moderates'.

There is not much basic difference between the two in terms of goals. The goal of both remained Swaraj. With the exception of Aurobindo Ghosh, Swaraj even for all extremist leaders was 'dominion status' and self-rule.

The only difference was that they were getting impatient. Whatever reforms Britishers have introduced in the name of Indian Council Acts appeared too little and too late. It failed to meet the aspirations of extremist leaders. There was no effective representation of Indians in law making, Indians only got gradual rights to ask questions on budget and to bring resolutions.

The main difference was in the strategy. Extremists favoured direct actions like passive resistance, boycott, Swadeshi, national education, national courts etc. Tilak rejected the method of petition and asserted that Swaraj is the birthright of Indians. Tilak justified prajadroh i.e., the right of the people to resist the government which exploits.

Evaluation of extremists: Extremists phase was the next logical step. Swadeshi movement can be considered as successful movement led by INC. Extremists could preserve the credibility of INC and created the base for the launch of Gandhi's mass movement.

Extremists have given the stronger theory of nationalism based on cultural symbols. Unfortunately, it provided opportunity to the British to give communal colour to the movement, presenting INC as party of Hindus.

To defeat the nationalist consciousness which emerged because of Swadeshi, Britishers had introduced Morley-Minto reforms of 1909, gave separate electorate to Muslims. Thus led the statutory foundation of the two-nation theory.



Gopal Krishna Gokhale and rivalry with Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Gokhale became a member of the Indian National Congress in 1889, as a protégé of social reformer Mahadev Govind Ranade. Beside with other modern leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Dadabhai Naoroji, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai and Annie Besant, Gokhale fought for decades to obtain greater political representation and power in excess of public affairs for general Indians.

He was moderate in his views and attitudes, and sought to petition the British authorities by cultivating a procedure of dialogue and discussion which would yield greater British respect for Indian rights.

Gokhale's first major confrontation with Tilak centered approximately one of his pet projects, the Age of Consent Bill introduced by the British Imperial Government, in 1891-92. Gokhale and his fellow liberal reformers, wishing to purge what they saw as superstitions and abuses from their native Hinduism, wished by the Consent Bill to curb child marriage abuses.

However, the Bill was not extreme, only raising the age of consent from ten to twelve. Tilak took the issue with it; he did not substance per se to the thought of moving towards the elimination of child marriage, but rather to the thought of British interference with Hindu custom. For Tilak, such reform movements were not to be sought after under imperial rule when they would be enforced by the British, but rather after independence was achieved when Indians would enforce it on themselves. The bill though became law in the Bombay Presidency.

In 1905, Gokhale became president of the Indian National Congress. Gokhale used his now considerable power to undermine his longtime rival, Tilak, refusing to support Tilak as candidate for president of the Congress in 1906. By now, Congress was split: Gokhale and Tilak were the respective leaders of the moderates and the "extremists" in the Congress.

Tilak was an advocate of civil agitation and direct revolution to overthrow the British Empire, whereas Gokhale was a moderate reformist. As a result, the Congress Party split into two wings and was mainly robbed of its effectiveness for a decade. The two sides would later patch up in 1916 after Gokhale died.

C) STRATEGY OF MASS MOVEMENT (GANDHIAN PHASE)

Gandhi led one of the biggest mass movements in the world, successfully.

Mass movements can be categorized into two basic types.

1. **Uncontrolled mass movements** – French revolution was spontaneous, uncontrolled mass movement.
2. **Controlled mass movements** – Russian revolution, Chinese revolution, Gandhian movements are examples of planned, directed and controlled mass movements.

We can also categorize mass movements in terms of strategy into two basic types.

1. **Marxist – Leninist movement** – The characteristic is that they are sudden, comprehensive and aims to achieve the immediate overthrow of the system. (Overnight movements.)
2. **Gramscian and Gandhian movements** – Gramsci and Gandhi were contemporaries and show unique convergence in context of the strategy. They suggested two-stage revolution in case of 'opaque states', where it is difficult to understand the exploitative nature. Hence the movement has to be 'protracted movement' known as war of position before arriving at a point of direct action or war of manoeuvre/frontal attack.

According to Bipin Chandra, Gandhian mass movement was a long, protracted movement with its active and passive phases. Active phases included mass agitation; passive phases included constructive programs.

Bipin Chandra calls Gandhi's strategy as a strategy of S-T-S (Struggle-Truce-Struggle). Gandhian strategy was based on the understanding of mass psychology. Masses have limited capacity to participate in mass struggle for prolonged time. Besides being a psychologist, Gandhi was a master strategist. Gandhi knew when to start the movement and when to call off the movement.

Gandhi's approach was 'proactive' rather than reactive. Gandhian movements are proactive in the sense that Gandhi never left ball in the courts of enemy. He forced enemy to respond. It was always initiative of Gandhi. The time, place and issue were all choice of Gandhi. Gandhi was offensive rather than defensive.

NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT.

It was first truly Gandhian movement at pan India level. **Gandhi started the movement at that time because the** political environment was conducive to start the movement. People were looking for action in background of

1. Rowlatt Act and suppression of civil liberties.
2. Extreme pain because of Jallianwala Bagh tragedy.
3. Extreme disappointment and frustration because of the report of Hunter commission, and the massive support by British public for General Dyer.
4. Economic distress because of 1st WW.
5. Khilafat movement as an opportunity to bring Muslims together.

In Nagpur session of 1920, congress adopted the program of extra-constitutional mass struggle led by Gandhi. Here Gandhi proposed right to refuse cooperation with the ruler who misrules. **Gandhi promised that such method can deliver** Swaraj within a year.



Rowlatt Act

The Rowlatt Act was passed in March 1919 by the Central Legislative Council to control the militant nationalist struggles and curtailed the liberty of the people. The Bill provided for speedy trial of offences by a special court and had no appeal. The provincial government had powers to search a place and arrest a suspected person without warrant. These gave unbridled powers to the government to arrest and imprison suspects without trial for two years maximum. It caused a wave of anger in all sections spreading a country-wide agitation by Gandhiji and **marked the foundation of the Non-Cooperation Movement**. Gandhiji organised the Satyagraha on 14th February, 1919. On 8th April, 1919 Gandhiji was arrested.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

March and April 1919 witnessed a remarkable political awakening in India with demonstrations against unjust British Rule and Rowlatt Act. There were *hartals*, strikes, and demonstrations. The slogans of Hindu-Muslim unity filled the air. The entire country was electrified. The Indian people were no longer willing to submit to the degradation of foreign rule.

The Government was determined to suppress the mass agitation. It repeatedly lathi-charged and fired upon unarmed demonstrators at Bombay, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Delhi and other cities. Gandhiji gave a call for a mighty *hartal* on 6 April 1919.

The people responded with unprecedented enthusiasm. The Government decided to meet the popular protest with repression, particularly in the Punjab. At this time was perpetrated one of the worst political crimes in modern history. An unarmed but large crowd had gathered on 13 April 1919 at Amritsar (in the Punjab) in the Jallianwala Bagh, to protest against the arrest of their popular leaders, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlu and Dr. Satyapal. General Dyer, the military commander of Amritsar, decided to terrorise the people of Amritsar into complete submission.

Jallianwala Bagh was a large open space which was enclosed on three sides by buildings and had only one exit. He surrounded the Bagh (garden) with his army unit, closed the exit with his troops, and then ordered his men to shoot into the trapped crowd with rifles and machine-guns. Thousands were killed and wounded.

Strategy of non-cooperation

1. Surrender of titles and honours.
2. Boycott of government schools, colleges and foreign clothes.
3. No tax campaign in case provincial congress committee approves.
4. Opening of national schools, colleges, panchayat courts, promotion of Khadi, maintaining Hindu-Muslim unity, giving up untouchability.
5. Strict adherence to non-violence.
6. Congress to reach to Mohalla levels.

Congress described the movement as a peaceful, legitimate protest for attainment of Swaraj, by direct action rather than constitutional means. However, Gandhi called off the movement abruptly after Chauri Chaura incident in February 1922.

Reaction against Gandhi's decision: Gandhi came under harsh criticism not only by non-congress leaders but even from congressmen. Even Pandit Nehru questioned the rationale of calling off the movement. Major criticism came from communists. They believed that Gandhi was fearful of masses acquiring power.

Analysis by Bipin Chandra: The real reason was that Gandhi wanted 'graceful exit'. By this time masses were getting exhausted. There were violent incidents in some regions like Moplah revolt in Malabar. Moplah revolt would have taken communal colour. Gandhi realized that because of Chaurichaura incident, government will get excuse to use massive force. If government uses force, people will get scared and it will be difficult to rebuild the movement.

Assessment of Non-Cooperation movement: Movement was failure in terms of stated objectives and the promises made by Gandhi and Congress. However, movement was successful in the sense Gandhi got all that he wanted. Gandhi's wanted to test the capacity of masses for struggle. He wanted to establish Congress as the party of masses and not merely representing 'microscopic minority'. Gandhi wanted national movement to become mass movement. It means multi-class mass movement rather than just limited to the middle classes.

There were also some visible successes e.g.

- boycott of the visit of prince of Wales,
- boycott of foreign goods.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT [CDM] (1930-31)

It is a finest example of Gandhian strategy. Non-Cooperation can be considered as mild in comparison to Civil Disobedience, which was more provocative. Civil Disobedience was direct challenge to the authority whereas NCM was just targeting the economic base of colonialism. NCM was not cooperating with the state, but civil disobedience was 'willful disobedience' of the authority. It is like questioning the legitimacy of the state.

CDM was more offensive than NCM. Gandhi wanted Britishers to use force. It would have challenged the myth of 'benevolent despotism'. In case British state does not use force, it meant 'collapse of the state', if it uses force, it meant the collapse of its hegemony.

Since the strategy of CDM has put colonial state in dilemma, expressed by Viceroy as 'dammed if you do and dammed if you don't.' It took them time to decide the arrest of Gandhi. This permitted Gandhi to complete his march. Once Gandhi completed his march, similar marches were organized in other parts of the country. It became impossible for state not to arrest Gandhi.

Arrest of Gandhi led to more rigorous protests. Ultimately government had no option but to release Gandhi. This has shown the victory of Gandhi. CDM ended in Gandhi-Irwin pact 1931, where govt. had accepted almost all of the demands of Gandhi. It strengthened

- Credibility of Congress
- It has elevated Congress at a equal footing with govt.

CDM is also an example of Gandhi's proactive approach. Gandhi started the movement when he realized that the atmosphere is favourable. Atmosphere was surcharged with 'anti-British' feelings because of a) economic hardships because of economic depression & b) Simon commission and death of Lala Lajpat Rai.

Gandhi's 11-point demands

There were 11-point demands.

1. Abolition of salt tax.
2. Total prohibition on sale of liquor.
3. Reduction of land revenue by half.
4. Reduction of military expenditure by half.
5. Reduction in the salary of the higher officials.
6. Hike in the tariff of imported goods.
7. Release of political prisoners.
8. Abolition of CID.
9. License to use arms in self defence.
10. Rationalization of rupee pound-sterling ratio.
11. Coastal tariff regulation bill.

The uniqueness of CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

- CDM was more offensive than NCM.
- NCM was not cooperating with the state, but civil disobedience was 'wilful disobedience' of the authority. It is like questioning the legitimacy of the state.

The achievements of civil disobedience movement

- Marked a critically important stage in anti-imperialistic struggle.
- Marked the increased entry of women
- The movement dissipated into rural areas

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT/AUGUST REVOLUTION 1942

Known as most un-Gandhian, least controlled & most militant. Gandhi allowed the use of force for self-defense. Gandhi held that use of force is justified against the stronger and well-equipped aggressor. Gandhi called for 'Do or Die' but do not remain alive to see the country in the state of slavery.

Gandhi held that nations survive when people are ready to die for nation. He mentioned that any delay in freedom will be injurious and humiliating. He made it clear that he will not call off the movement. He permitted people to take the control of police stations if needed. He refused to condemn the violence by people, justified it in the light of bigger violence by the state.

Congress in its resolution mentioned

- Congress is not prescribing any restriction.
- Everyone is free to choose his methods.
- Don't bow heads and suffer stroke but pull the sticks and defend yourselves.

QIM is un-Gandhian in the sense that, up till now Gandhi was saying to hate the evil and not the evil doer. Now Gandhi made the objective to throw the Britishers out. QIM was the most **spontaneous**. Once top leadership was arrested, grassroot leadership emerged on its own. Common man became his own leader. This is what Gandhi wanted. QIM reflect 'class in itself' converting into 'class for itself'. It was Gandhi's 'war of movement', the direct attack. Gandhi declared QIM as the last struggle of his life.

Gandhi permitted the use of violence because he knew that any mass movement cannot be free from violence. Gandhi knew that there will be no birth without blood. Non-violence was just a part of Gandhi's strategy to bring masses within the fold of national movement. According to **Francis Hutchins**, Gandhi was after all a politician. He was a strategist. Once he could bring masses into the movement, non-violence was no more needed.

Response of other groups towards QIM

- Ambedkar called it 'mad venture of Gandhi'.
- M. N. Roy held that Gandhi's action of QIM will strengthen fascist forces.
- Hindu Mahasabha called it 'injurious to Hindu cause'.
- Muslim League opposed it.
- Within Congress C Rajagopalachari feared that it will lead to uncontrollable anarchy.

Conclusion: Scholars like Bipin Chandra like held that This was a last gamble by Gandhi and even worth risking violence He also held that Gandhian strategy was to put govt. in dilemma. Since it was a peaceful protest, if government. uses force, then also it is criticized. If it does not use force, the authority of govt. is challenged. No govt. can allow challenge to its authority. Ultimately govt. must use force.

This will challenge the benevolent despotism. Quit India movement as a war of Manoeuvre –Gandhi followed the Gramscian method 'protracted movement in 2 stages known as

1. War of position before arriving at a point of direct action and
2. War of manoeuvre/frontal attack.

The Quit India movement in this sense was the war of manoeuvre and movement before were the example of war of position. Because Gandhi called QUIT India movement as the last movement against the British to root them out.

MILITANT AND REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS.

There used to be revolutionary movements in different phases. We cannot ignore the contribution of revolutionaries. Revolutionaries have filled the vacuum whenever mainstream movement was in passive phase. Revolutionaries displayed remarkable heroism, inspired youth to make sacrifices for motherland.

They have given the lost pride of manhood to the Indians back. Revolutionaries could not get the support of INC, they lacked resources, mass base yet they could inspire youth by their individual acts. It is to be noted that even Indian women also played an active role in the revolutionary movements. We can give example of Pritilata Waddedar, Kalpana Dutt, and Madam Bhikaji Kama etc.

The revolutionaries in India were inspired by

1. Bankimchandra Chatterji's ANANDMATH.
2. Sanchindranath Sanyal's-"BANDI JEEVAN".
3. BhagawatiCharan Vohra's-PHILOSOPHY OF BOMB.
4. Irish nationalist, Russian Nihilists and Russian revolutionaries.

Difference between a revolutionary and a terrorist: Revolutionaries are those who do not go for indiscriminate killing of civilians like terrorists. Revolutionaries target the oppressors. Hence there is a need to make a difference between the two acts where violence is used.

Critical Analysis: Revolutionaries have filled the vacuums whenever mainstream movement was in passive phase. Revolutionaries displayed remarkable heroism, inspired youth to make sacrifices for motherland. They have given the lost pride of manhood to the Indians back. Revolutionaries could not get the support of INC, they lacked resources, mass base yet they could inspire youth by their individual acts. It is to be noted that even Indian women also played an active role in the revolutionary movements.

PEASANT MOVEMENT

Peasants were one of the worst sufferers of colonialism. Because of

1. British land settlement policies.
2. Britisher's destroyed Indian handicrafts.

The history of peasant movement/revolts goes prior to the history of national movement. The subaltern school of historiography represented by Ranjit Guha, Gyanendra Pandey, Prof. Irfan Habib and even Sumit Sarkar have highlighted the role of peasantry. One of the most well-known peasant revolt was **indigo rebellion of 1860** documented by **Din Bandhu Mitra** in his **book NEEL DARPAN**.

Subaltern historians questioned the nationalist narratives that 'Gandhi organized peasants', according to Gyanendra Pandey, peasant insurrection in India was '**autonomous**' of the intervention of outside leaders. The way mainstream leaders dealt with the concerns of peasantry was just marginal.

Indian National Congress never made the problems of peasantry as the core issue. According to Ranjit Guha, Indian National Movement led by Gandhi was primarily elitist. Gandhi wanted peasantry to make compromises with the oppressors in the name of harmony between classes.



PHASES OF PEASANT MOVEMENTS

1ST PHASE – UP TILL 1920S

Congress did not take up the peasants cause. Once Gandhi emerged on the scene, he did bring the issue of peasantry in the agenda of congress but his approach was conciliatory. 2nd Phase – from 1930s onwards

Congress started organizing peasantry. However, Kisan Sabhas and peasant parties were emerging on their own and also because of the role of communists. Thus, not entirely dependent on Congress. In 1936 All India Kisan Sabha was formed under the leadership of Swami Sahajanand. The main demand of Kisan Sabhas was land reforms and regulation of rent.

3RD PHASE – 1940S

The two prominent movements of the times were Telangana movement and Tebhaga movement. It was inspired by communists, localized and autonomous in nature.

Peasant movement in Indian **reflected 2 ideologies –**

- **Gandhian nationalist** who worked along with the Indian freedom leaders like ALL INDIA KISAN SABHA formed under the leadership of Sahajanand Saraswati which also held a common session with congress for example, Faizpur session in 1936.
- **Communist led movements** like Telangana movement in Andhra Pradesh and Tebhaga movement in Bengal.

General survey of the peasant movement

Peasant unrest was expressed from peaceful agitation to armed revolt. Various Kisan movements centred around demands of

- **Abolition of zamindari** (Santhal rebellion, Moplah, Telangana revolts)
- **Restoration of land grabbed by Zamindars or money lenders or forced cultivation of particular crops** (Indigo worker's revolts)
- **Opposition to money lenders** (revolts in Maharashtra, Punjab-Kuka movement, and in Assam.
- Opposition to Beggar or forced labor
- Cheap access to water resources
- **Incapacity to pay the high taxes or Crop failure** (Eka movement in UP and Kheda Movement in Gujarat. Similar movements in Rajasthan, Darbhanga-Bihar and Gujrat).

Overall assessment: Peasantry in India could not play any concrete role either for itself or in the freedom struggle, comparable to peasantry in China. Mao himself was from the peasantry class, the organic intellectual of peasantry. No such leadership emerged in India. Peasantry remained divided on caste and religious lines.

There are many examples of spontaneous, localized revolts but there wasn't any all-India level organized effort. This is also one of the reasons behind the failure of land reforms even after independence.

However, peasant movement was not complete failure. Peasant movement was not only confined to fulfilling the rights of the peasants but also influenced mainstream politics; for example, first session of All India Kisan Sabha was held along with congress session in 1936 and congress and AIKS adopted the common programme, the idea was to project the Kisan movement as a part of the national movement though maintaining its separate identity as a class organization.

Peasant movements also contributed towards the various reforms granted by the Britishers for example

- The Government appointed an indigo commission to inquire into the problem of indigo cultivation.



- The Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act was passed in 1879.
- Success of struggles such as Indigo movement, Champaran movements proved that British rule can be successfully challenged at the same time brought peasant issues to national recognition

In the Broader sense the peasant movement helped in the growth of nationalism. They are part of various movements for the freedom struggle like the non-co-operation movement.

TRADE UNION MOVEMENT/WORKERS MOVEMENT

It is considered a weak movement. Even after independence, there has been no strong trade union movement. Trade unions have been junior partners of political parties, lacking autonomous character. Workers also remained divided on the lines of caste and religion. Their situation has been worse than the peasants.

Indian working class had to face imperialist political rule and economic exploitation at the hands of both foreign and native capitalist class. After the advent of modern industry, Indian working class suffered from low wages, long working hours, unhygienic and hazardous working conditions, absence of basic amenities etc. Under these circumstances Indian working-class movement became intertwined with political struggle for national emancipation

FIRST PHASE (1875-1918)

- **Early nationalists were indifferent to workers' cause, as they did not want a division in national movement on the basis of classes.** Also they also differentiated between British and Indian owned factories and felt that laws favouring workers would hamper competitive edge of Indian factories.
- **As a result, trade unions were of a sporadic or ad hoc nature,** devoid of funds, regular membership, constitution, etc.
- **NM Lokhande started 1st labour organisation in 1890 known as Bombay Mills hands association** which became a major step forwards towards the start of worker's movement in India.
- However, some prominent nationalist leaders like **B.C pal and G. Subramanya Aiyer** demanded pro-labour reforms.
- **During Swadeshi movement, workers participated in variety of political issues.** Various strikes were organized under the leadership of nationalists, however attempts to form trade unions were not very successful.
- **During WWI establishment of Soviet Union, formation of commintern** and emergence of Mahatma Gandhi lent new dimension to the movement of working class and the focus shifted towards addressing workers' concern.

SECOND PHASE (1918-1924)

- **During 1918-1921, several organized labour union sprouted throughout the country's** industrial centres owing to economic miseries experienced by Indian working class by way of price rise, low wages, long hour of work etc.
- Recognising this **Gandhiji founded Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association in 1918,** which desisted workers from taking militant class struggle against capitalists by advocating for class collaboration.
- **Formation of national level All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) in 1920** helped in co-ordinating all India level activities and aimed at organizing the workers on a national scale. Thus trade unionism accelerated and 1920 was the period of some of the biggest strikes in the country.

THIRD PHASE (1924-1934)

- **Recognising this trend the British government passed Trade Union Act 1926** with an aim of directing labour movement into safe channel by putting restrictions in political activities of unions.
- After following a period of dormancy working class activity was again spurred by emergence of left bloc in national movement under the leadership of **SA Dange, P.C Joshi etc.**
- **Strong communist influence on the movement** lent a militant and revolutionary content to it. For instance, workers participated in massive Simon Boycott demonstrations in 1927 and civil disobedience movement in 1930's.
- There was considerable **participation of workers in civil disobedience movement in 1930.**
- In early 1930 trade union movement reached a low ebb when disunity and dissensions rose to a great height.

FOURTH PHASES (1935-1947)

- **Next wave of working class activity came with provincial autonomy and formation of popular ministry in 1937.** Congress ministries in various provinces gave a fillip to trade union activity. They were sympathetic to worker's demand and passed several favourable legislations.
- After following a policy of Industrial peace during initial years of WWII **workers even participated in post war national upsurges.** They organised multiple strikes on economic issues under the direction and leadership of various nationalist leaders.

Limitations of the working class movement

- Overall the limitations of the trade union movements had the **Multiplicity of trade unions** that made them weak and vulnerable to all forms of pressure by the British government.
- **Workers also remained divided on the lines of caste and religion.** Their situation has been worse than the peasants.
- **Trade unions were of a sporadic or ad hoc nature,** devoid of funds, regular membership, constitution, etc.
- **Trade unions also remained divided based on ideology** of Gandhian movement and communist ideology.

CHRONOLOGY OF TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

- Emergence of modern workers in 19th century because of introduction of railways, post and telegrams.
- Organized labour movement was started by philanthropists like S SBengalee and Sasipad Banerjee.
- The first trade union/labour organization was formed by Lokhanday known as Bombay Mill hands association.
- There was a growth of socialist ideas in India because of Russian revolution. Hence some leaders started taking interest in organizing workers. Lala Lajapat Rai had great concern for the workers.
- Even Gandhi led the protest of workers in Ahmadabad Textile Mill.
- In 1920 AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress) was formed with Lala Lajapat Rai as the first president.
- AITUC was infiltrated by communists.
- Communists later on formed their own organization. 'Red flag trade union'.
- Communists later on again joined AITUC.
- Communist again left during QIM.
- Communist again joined AITUC.
- Later on Congress left AITUC and formed its own organization INTUC. (Indian National Trade Union Congress).

But despite being a weak movement, participation of the working class helped in economic and political gains adding to the process of Indian nationalism and the freedom struggle in variety of ways. Nationalist leaders advocated for continuation of the struggle against imperialist domination by taking along the worker's class.

For e.g., C.R das advocated for incorporating worker's cause in the struggle for Swaraj which made the freedom struggle inclusive and hitting the major strength of British that was Industry and to become a strong force against the Britishers.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

The participation of women in politics during freedom movement emerged a new area of research in historiography. For long, the contribution of women remained neglected. Despite being highly patriarchal society, women participated in the freedom movement in 'multiple modes'. There are examples where women could successfully protect their states in comparison to male counterparts. We can give the example of Bimbai Holkar who defeated British in guerrilla war. Rani Chenamma could protect the independence of her Kittoor state. During the revolt of 1857, Rani Laxmibai and Begam Hazarat Mehal played heroic roles.

Women got associated with INC. It was Gandhi who could use women resources in a skilful manner. Women played key role in the constructive programs, especially Khadi/Swadeshi. The prominent women leaders have been Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, Bhikaji Kama, Sucheta Kripalani and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. We can also give the example of Rani Gaindinelu, a Naga women who remained undeterred by colonial excesses and patriarchal barriers.

Besides participation in freedom movements, there were women leaders like Pandita Ramabai, Durgabai Deshmukh, Basanti Devi, Suniti Devi who played role in social and economic empowerment of women. The two important women organizations were YWCA (Young Women Christian Association) of 1875, and All India Women Conference of 1927. Thus women played dual role.

Rani Chenamma: Rani Chennamma, the queen of Kittur was one such warrior who led a war against British forces in early part of 19th Century, when not many rulers were familiar with the evil designs of the British. She was the first Indian ruler to lead an armed rebellion against the British East India Company. She was outnumbered and arrested, but she is still remembered for leading the revolt against British rule in India.

Rani Gaidinliu: Rani Gaidinliu was a Naga spiritual leader. Gaidinliu belonged to the Rongmei clan of the Zeliangrong tribe in the Tamenglong district of western Manipur. Born on January 26, 1915. At 13, she became associated with freedom fighter and religious leader, **Haipou Jadonang**, and became his lieutenant in his social, religious and political movement.

Jadonang, who was also a Rongmei, started the 'Heraka movement', based on ancestral Naga religion, and envisioned an independent Naga kingdom (or Naga-Raja). Rani Gaidinliu's association with Jadonang prepared her to fight the British. After the execution of Jadonang, she took up the leadership of the movement — which slowly turned political from religious. Rani started a serious revolt against the British and was eventually imprisoned for life. She was released after 14 years, in 1947.

Rani Laxmibai: Rani Lakshmibai was one of the brave warriors of India's struggle for Independence. In 1853, when the Maharaja of Jhansi died, Lord Dalhousie refused to acknowledge the child and applied the Doctrine of Lapse, and annexed the state. Rani Lakshmibai fought bravely against the British so as to save her empire from annexation. She died fighting on the battlefield on **17th June 1858**.

Begam Hazrat Mehal: Begum Hazrat Mahal was one of the few women who challenged the British during the revolt of 1857. Her maiden name was Muhammadi Khanum. She was born at Faizabad, Awadh. Later in life, she performed a mut'ah marriage with Nawab Wajid Ali Shah.

Awadh was annexed by the British East India Company in 1856 and Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Awadh was sent into exile to Calcutta. Hazrat Mahal decided to stay back in Lucknow along with her son Birjis Qadir. Hazrat Mahal was one of the primary figures in bringing about this uprising. "She has excited all Oudh," Her closest allies were **Nana Saheb** and **Maulvi Ahmad ullah Shah**.

Nationalist ideology and women issues: According to **Sumit Sarkar**, though women movement in India was started by men, women have been active participant in Congress yet the leaders of Congress were not full-blooded liberals. Women issue was never the core issue. Gandhi's movement was more about using women as a resource for the mass movement rather than upliftment of women as such. Like the concerns of peasantry, workers, women issues were also on the periphery.

We can see the patriarchal approach of the mainstream leaders on women issues in the form of strong protest against Ambedkar's Hindu Code Bill even by leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The Indian national movement was undoubtedly one of the biggest mass movement modern societies have ever seen. It was also popular and multi-class movement. It was basically the result of a fundamental contradiction between the interest of the Indian people and that of British colonialism. This anti-colonial ideology and critique of colonialism was disseminated during the mass phase of the movement which forged the ideal of Indian nationalism.

It is hard to think of any political phenomenon which remains so puzzling and diverse and about which less analytic consensus exists. Also, there is no widely accepted single perspective to describe the movement. No one has been able to demonstrate decisively either it was nationalism in true sense or a sense of cultural nationalism was created to fight the Britishers. Thus, there exist various perspectives as diverse as the country and national movement itself was to describe the Indian national movement.

IMPERIALIST PERSPECTIVE

Imperialist historians and administrators like Lord Curzon, Dufferin always challenged existence of India as a nation and claims of Congress as a representative of nation. According to them, India was nothing more than a geographical expression.

Imperial historians (Cambridge school scholars like Percival Spear), Louis Nene and Anil Seal suggest that the political activities happening on the subcontinent between 1857 to 1947 cannot be called as nationalist movement. Because Nation has to exist before national movement.

They call freedom struggle as communal movement and its leaders as power brokers. They were interested in getting the British favor for the members of their community. There was no 'great' idea behind political activities. They were guided by animal instincts. It was communal politics and formation of Pakistan is the logical outcome such movement. And the nature of politics in contemporary India has also not changed.

COLONIALIST PERSPECTIVE

- Beginning with James Mill's History of India, the colonialist view could be found in the works of many English historians. Mountstuart Elphinstone, Henry Elliot and John Dowson, W.W. Hunter, and Vincent Smith were some important historians who provided overarching interpretations of Indian history.
- The colonialist view rejected the idea of India as a nation. The diversity and disunity of India were always emphasized by the colonialist thinkers as justification for the colonial rule which was considered to have united it.
- When the Indian national movement began emerging in the late nineteenth century and matured during the twentieth century, the famous British historians such as John Strachey and **John Seeley** asserted that it was impossible to forge a nation in India because it has never had the characteristics of a nation nor it could ever have it in future.
- According to them, India was a conglomeration of different and often antagonistic religious, ethnic, linguistic and regional groups which could never be welded into a nation.
- According to Vincent Smith, there was a basic lack of unity among the Indians. Except during brief periods of imperial rules, Indian body politic always consisted of 'mutually repellent molecules'.
- Even when the national movement became a pan-Indian reality as a mass movement after the First World War, the colonialist historians questioned its effectiveness and attempted to highlight the religious, caste and linguistic divisions to deny it a national character.

LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE

- The liberal perspective on Indian national movement has been primarily dominated by the moderates who were prominent during the early phase of freedom struggle. Liberal concept of nationalism is that of the political nation. According to this theory, nationalism is a phase of history and nationalism emerge with modernisation.
- Leaders like **SN Banerjee, Gokhale, Dadabhai Naoroji** didn't accept imperialist interpretation. They held that India is a nation in making, for liberals the most important factor giving rise to Indian nationalism is the colonial rule.
- For Liberals nationalism requires some amount of modernization and rational thinking. Hence, they purposefully kept the masses out of national movement. They knew masses were not ready to join the modern nationalist politics.
- Nationalism which was in infant state needed to be safeguarded. During this phase nationalist leaders and scholars restricted their criticism of colonial rule to the economic aspect.
- According to them, the task of the national movement was to unite Indians from various regions and different walks of life into a single nation based on their common grievance.
- **Liberal scholars** regarded **India as 'a nation-in-the-making'** which was also **title of the the Surendranath Banerjee autobiography**
- They readily accepted that India was not yet a formed nation despite common history, geography and the elements of a common culture. They also accepted that nation and nationalism had not existed in India in the past.
- They acknowledged the incoherence of India and also the existence of multiplicity of identities in it. They also accepted that nation was not a natural or inevitable phenomenon but was a historical creation. But they denied that India could not become a nation.
- They argued that India was old civilization, but a new nation. Even those leaders, who highlighted the superiority of Indian civilization and glorified India's past, recognized the modernity of the Indian nation.

Criticism of the liberal perspective

- The first criticism came from the extremist or cultural nationalist. Cultural nationalist believed that we cannot attain Swaraj by praising British. Indian national movement should not be confined to elites.
- They held that India was a nation from the very beginning. There has been a cultural and spiritual unity throughout the sub-continent.
- They even wanted to prove that Indian culture, values and civilizational achievements have been much ahead of the west.

Cultural nationalist like **Aurobindo Ghosh** was not satisfied with defensive approach of early nationalists. He rather established that **India was not nation in the making but was a nation from the beginning**. He combined nationalism and patriotism to challenge the British discourse. Similarly, the other extremist leader "**Lajpat Rai**" also rejected the view that Indian nationalism developed

because of the British rule. In his book **Young India** (1916) he asserted that 'fundamentally India has been a nation for the last 2,000 years' and nationalism was not the product of British rule.

NATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

Nationalist leaders and scholars reject the imperial discourse. Early nationalists like Surendranath Banerjee accepted that India was not a nation but he also asserted that India was 'nation in the making'.

Cultural nationalist like Aurobindo Ghosh was not satisfied with mild and defensive approach of early nationalists. He rather established that India was not nation in the making but was a nation from the beginning. He combined nationalism and patriotism to challenge the British discourse.

Nationalist historians like **Dr. Tarachand** and **RC Mujumdar** have given following arguments.

1. It is wrong to suggest that the Congress led movement was a nationalist movement.
2. It is also wrong to suggest that the agenda of Congress was exclusive.
3. It is also wrong to suggest that no grand idea was inspiring political leaders at that time.

There was definite desire amongst Indians to emerge as a nation. Congress was a national party and its leadership was nationalist. Survival of India as a nation against all odds and enormous external and internal challenges suggest that we cannot dismiss the existence of India as a nation.

On a different note, Rabindranath Tagore portrayed India as a civilization where various invaders, such as Greeks, Shakas, Huns, Turks, Persians, Afghans etc, came and became assimilated in its ethos enriching its culture. India was, therefore, not simply a territorial unit but possessed a much broader civilizational and cultural unity. It was in this inclusive and assimilative spirit, and not in the disruptive political strife, that Tagore located India's national identity and differentiated it from European nationalism.

Along similar lines, Gandhi also visualized the India of the past and imagined an India of the future. **Subhash Chandra Bose**, in his **Indian Struggle**, argued that India possessed 'a fundamental unity' despite endless diversity. Jawaharlal Nehru also spoke about 'unity in diversity' and 'a cultural unity amidst diversity, a bundle of contradictions held together by strong but invisible threads'.

MARXIST INTERPRETATION

According to Benedict Anderson, nationalism is an 'invented tradition'. Nationalism is an instrument of a bourgeoisie class. Marx himself has analysed the Revolt of 1857. Unlike Savarkar, who established 1857 revolt as 'first war of independence, Marx suggested it to be a revolt by feudal elements.

MN Roy in his book *INDIA IN TRANSITION* has analysed the political activities under Congress and Gandhi. He suggests that Congress was a bourgeois party and Gandhi was a bourgeois leader. **AR Desai** in his book *SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF INDIAN NATIONALISM* and **RD Dutt** in his book *INDIA TODAY* have expressed similar opinions.

Sumit Sarkar in his book *MODERN INDIA* has warned the Marxist scholars for taking a casual approach. According to him, it is true that Congress program was not in the interest of the masses, nor congress struggle benefitted masses, but it is also true that Congress had no conscious or planned strategy against masses. It is also true that Indians were not so sharply divided that they could not be united.

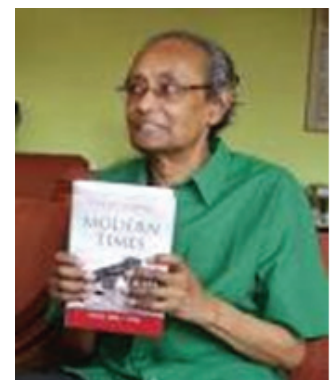
Bipin Chandra, despite being Marxist has suggested that the movement led by Congress can be called as a national movement. It was not only a national movement, but the most spectacular mass movement whose warmth is still felt.

DALIT PERSPECTIVE

Dalit perspective is represented by the works of many Dalit leaders and scholars. We can also call it as a subaltern perspective. One of the earliest expressions about the British raj was given by **Jyotiba Phule**. He was critic of Brahmanism and **held that Peshwa raj was worse than British raj**. He appreciated British for establishing rule of law for the first time.

Ambedkar was influenced by the ideas of Jyotiba Phule He rejected the idea of India as a nation. He rejected the claim of Congress led movement as national movement. His idea of nationalism was influenced by French revolution. According to him, '*nation is built on the feeling of fraternity*'. He never joined INC nor participated in Congress led programs. He supported Jinnah's demand, opposed Quit India movement and wanted that British should stay.

We can also bring the perspective of EV Ramaswamy Naikar, popularly known as Periyar. He initially joined INC but eventually left in 1925 on the presumption that Congress was the party of



Brahmins, there is no scope for the members of other communities. He joined Justice Party. He initiated self-respect movement against Brahminism. He supported Jinnah's demand for separate Pakistan, formed a political party Dravid Khadgam (DK) and even put forward the demand for separate state for Dravidians. Later on leaders like CM Annadurai and EVK Sampat came out of DK and formed DMK. (Dravid Munnetra Kadagam).

SUBALTERN PERSPECTIVE

- Sub-altern school is not satisfied with the traditional approach to history, which revolves around the elites. **Scholars like Ranajit Guha calls other perspectives as the blinkered view of history.** The way nationalist historians present the history of national movement, it appears as a **"spiritual biography of elites"**. It ignores the fact that there was an autonomous movement of masses. Protests by masses, peasants and workers has longer history than INC itself. Nationalist historians do not acknowledge the failure of INC to speak for the nation.
- The Subaltern historians, disenchanted with the Congress nationalism and its embodiment in the Indian state, rejected the thesis that popular mobilisation was the result of either economic conditions or initiatives from the top.
- **Gyanendra Pandey**, in **'Peasant Revolt and Indian Nationalism'** argues that peasant movement in Awadhi arose before and independently of the Non-cooperation movement. According to him, peasants' understanding of the local power structure and its alliance with colonial power was more advanced than that of the Congress leaders
- **Bhikhu Parekh** in his article **"Colonialism Tradition and Reform: An analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse"** criticised the elitist approach of Indian national movement states that Gandhi looked at himself as Yugh-Purush. Gandhi reduced Indian tradition as his resource. There was a limited role of masses in his strategy. He wanted masses to remain as his devotees. Gandhi projected his political programme as a spiritual struggle to create the ideal state.
- **Thus, the Sub altern school believed in the popular autonomous domain which was opposed to the elite domain of politics.** This domain of the subaltern was defined by perpetual resistance and rebellion against the elite.

In his essay **'The Prose of Counter-Insurgency'**, **Ranjit Guha** launched a scathing attack on the existing peasant and tribal histories in India for considering the peasant rebellions as 'purely spontaneous and unpremeditated affairs' and for ignoring the consciousness of the rebels themselves. He accused all the accounts of rebellions, starting with the immediate official reports to the histories written by the left radicals, of writing the texts of counter-insurgency which refused to recognise the agency of the people and 'to acknowledge the insurgent as the subject of his own history'.

According to Guha, they all failed to acknowledge that there existed a parallel subaltern domain of politics which was not influenced by the elite politics and which possessed an independent, self-generating dynamics. Its roots lay in pre-colonial popular social and political structures.

Shahid Amin, in his article **'Gandhi as Mahatma'**, studies the popular perception of Mahatma Gandhi. He shows that the popular perception and actions were completely at variance with the Congress leader's perception of Gandhi.

Similarly, **Sumit Sarkar**, in **'The Conditions and Nature of Subaltern Militancy'**, argues that the Non-cooperation movement in Bengal 'revealed a picture of masses outstripping leaders...and the popular initiative eventually alarmed leaders into calling for a halt'.

Thus, 'the subaltern group formed a relatively autonomous political domain with specific features and collective mentalities which needed to be explored, and that this was a world distinct from the domain of the elite politicians who in early twentieth century Bengal came overwhelmingly from high-caste educated professional groups connected with zamindari or intermediate tenure-holding'.

Partha Chatterjee View on Indian nationalism

PARTHA CHATTERJEE belongs to the **subaltern school of historiography**. He considers nationalism in colonies as "different yet derivative discourse". In his book **"Nationalist thought and colonial world; a nationalist discourse"** he suggests that the nationalist ethos in colonies have not only been heavily influenced by the western notions but also reflect ambivalent approach. Nationalism shares thematic similarities with the western form. It accepts hegemony of west. However, reflects problematic approach also calling for practices to end colonialism.

According to him, nationalism has evolved in three stages:

- **Moment of Departure:** Reflected in Bankim Chandra Chatterjee: it means nationalist consciousness was constructed through the hegemonising the influence of post enlightenment rationalistic thought
- **Moment of Maneuver:** Gandhian stage: Gandhi has mobilized masses in the support of his movements.
- **Moment of Arrival:** Nehruvian approach: when colonial state embraced the western model

In his **other book “NATION AND ITS FRAGMENTS”** he argues, that there were two domains:

- Material domain: the outer world
- Spiritual domain: the inner world

Intelligentsia used both domains. Thus, according to him, Indian nationalism represents an ambivalent character as it is indebted to both the western (materialistic/scientific) tradition and the Indian (spiritual) tradition.

Partha Chatterjee has critiqued this derivative discourse of nationalism. According to him, nationalist ideas in India developed in the private and more spiritual domain shielded from the dominant western discourse in the public sphere. The ‘construction’ of the imagined community has also been questioned. Elements of ethnicity or race cannot be the products of shared imagination alone.

SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE

Socialism in India is a result of influence of Russian revolution. It appealed to youth in India. Leaders like Nehru, Bose introduced socialism in Congress. Some radical congressmen, like JP Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev and Minoo Masani, led the foundation of Congress Socialist Party in 1934. They didn’t oppose the Congress but only wanted to radicalize the programme of Congress. They were also influenced by Gandhi.

Prominent Scholars: Nehru, SC Bose, JP Narayan, Minoo Masani, Acharya Narayan Dev, Ram Manohar Lohiya

Socialist perspective on Indian national movement

- **Jaya Prakash Narayan: Book: “Why Socialism?” (1935).** He was influenced by Marx. He found Gandhian programme utopian. He alleged that Gandhi is purposefully ignoring the contradictions present in India society. He was convinced that India needs socialist revolution. Any freedom can be realized only in the atmosphere of economic equality.
- **Acharya Narendra Dev in his book titled – “Socialism and National Revolution”.** He was extremely critical of Gandhi. He believed that Gandhi’s approach of reconciliation between classes is impractical. He did not like Gandhi’s overtly religious approach, he did not accept Gandhi’s sharp criticism of modern civilization.
- **Ram Manohar Lohiya**-He has given socialist interpretation of the Gandhian programme. He gave socialism in “Asian context” he also called for the 7 types of revolutions and he gave the concept of 4 pillared state.
- **Nehru-Nehru, wanted the country to accept the goal of socialism for free India. At the Lahore Session of the Congress (December 1929) in his Presidential address, Nehru said: I must frankly confess that I am a Socialist and a republican. On Indian national movement he held that** India’s immediate goal should be considered in terms of the ending of the exploitation of her people. Politically, it must mean independence and the severance of the British connection, which means imperialist domination. Economically and socially, it must mean the ending of all special class privileges and vested interests. Nehru adopted the vision of socialist pattern of Indian society at Awadhi session of INC.

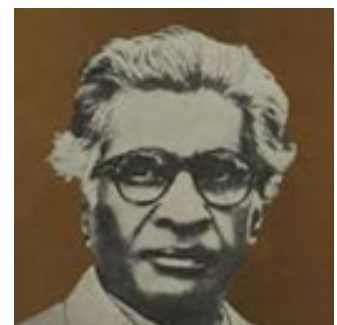
To conclude Socialist perspective was influenced by the Russian revolution. Leaders like Nehru, Bose introduced socialism in Congress. Some radical congressmen, also known as Young Turks like JP Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev and Minoo Masani, led the foundation of Congress Socialist Party in 1934. They didn’t oppose the Congress but only wanted to radicalise the programme of Congress. They were also influenced by Gandhi. They were comparatively successful in bringing socialist perspective in programme of congress. INC socialist maintained the organic link with the congress. They accepted the leadership of Gandhi despite ideological difference with Gandhi.

RADICAL HUMANIST PERSPECTIVE

Radical Humanism was advocated by MN Roy. He published his thoughts in New Humanism-A manifesto. He said radical humanism was called radical because it rejected many traditional political and philosophical assumptions and humanism as its focus was entirely on the needs and conditions of human beings.

Radical humanists did not articulate a clear perspective of Indian National Movement. However, their philosophical and ideological orientations help us understand their perspective.

MN Roy and his followers quit the Congress and dissolved their “League of Radical Congressmen” to create “Radical democratic Party” in 1939. They were opposed to the Congress regarding World War They favoured Indian support to the British to defeat the German fascist. They criticized the congress for the launch of Quit India Movement in 1942 and remarked it as Congress’s callous criminal neglect of national defence. Roy was criticized for his unpatriotic stand.



When it became clear that the allied forces would win the war, Roy was convinced that India would gain freedom peacefully. In 1944, he drew up a 10-year plan for reconstruction of peoples plan. It focused on agriculture, social service and self-financing.

In 1945, Radical democrats drew up a draft constitution for independent India. It envisaged the dissolution of feudal provinces and integration based on linguistic and culture homogeneity. The village committees and Gram Sabhas were given extensive powers such as igniting legislations recall of representatives and were conceived as main power centres.

Roy believed in revelation by concert persuasion. He called this New Orientation. He advocated party less organized democracy and co-operative economy. Radical humanists placed individual at the centre of their philosophy. Individual was to be on and in himself. Society and all other things were means to achieve this end. They were against supervisions and supernatural power.

They advocated

1. Rationalism
2. Democracy
3. Scientific approach to politics.

They separated philosophy from religion and took it close to science. Roy had witnessed capitalism and communism and was unsatisfied with both. One sacrificed individual and the other sacrificed freedom.

Radical humanist were concerned with both individual and freedom. Roy established the Frankfurt school in Dehradun. He started National Renaissance Institute. He believed that through Radical humanism, the greatest good of the greatest number could be achieved.

Thus, Radical humanists with their perspective of scientific humanism and cosmopolitan outlook favoured freedom by peaceful means and revolution by consent. They were convinced that rationalism of each individual would guide him to proper action.

Sudipto Kaviraj mentions M N Roy as a “remarkable failure” and one of the most unfortunate leaders and political philosopher. We see transition in his ideas. He started as a revolutionary but ended with radical humanist propagating the philosophy of new humanism. There was no consistency in his philosophy.

He charges M.N. Roy for committing the guilt of heteronomy. Heteronomy means application of the experiences of the history of some other country without understanding the differences Roy tried to apply the example of history of Germany w.r.t Indian national movement.

Conclusion: No historiographical attempt to paint a complete and general picture of the national movement is ever completely successful. For a nuanced understanding of an event like the Indian national movement, we have to keep our minds open to acknowledge the interplay of various forms of struggle and resistance, with varied social backgrounds and differences in paths and particular goals, working at the same time.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

YEAR	QUESTION
2022	Analyse the workers' movement in India in the pre-Independence period
2020	Role of socialists in Indian National Movement
2020	Trace the role of militant and revolutionary movements in Indian national movement.
2017	Differentiate Moderate Nationalism from Extremist/Militant Nationalism in terms of their objectives and means.
2015	Comment on: Satyagraha as a Strategy in the Indian National Movement
2015	Comment on: Efficacy of Satyagraha as moral resistance to colonial rule.
2012	Comment on: Significance of the Civil Disobedience Movement
2008	Comment on: "Swaraj is the culmination of Swadeshi and Sarvodaya."
2007	"Political reforms must precede not follow social reform" -Tilak. Elucidate.

YEAR	QUESTION	WORDS
2021	Analyze the Marxist perspective of the nature of Indian National Movement.	150
2019	Dalit perspective on Indian national movement. Discuss.	150
2019	National movement in India was anti-imperialist and increasingly radical in its socio-economic and political programmes. Discuss.	250
2018	Comment on: Revolt of 1857 is a 'Sepoy Mutiny' or 'First War of Independence'.	150
2017	Comment on: The success of Mahatma Gandhi lay in transforming both political and non-political movements into a unified nationalist movement.	150
2016	Critically examine the Radical Humanist perspective on Indian National Movement.	150
2013	Comment on: Marxist understanding of India's freedom movement	150
2011	Comment on: Dalit perspective on Indian National Movement	200
2010	Comment on: Indian nationalism as depicted in S.N. Banerjee's "A Nation in the making".	200
2009	Comments on: Radical Humanism	200

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- BIPIN CHANDRA-MODERN INDIA
- IGNOU NOTES
- SHEKHAR BANDYOPADHYAY-FROM PLASSEY TO PARTITION AND AFTER

EXAM VITAMINS



TO BE FILLED BY THE STUDENTS

Scholars	Sayings
RANADE	
GOKHALE	
BIPIN CHANDRA	
SIR JOHN SEELEY	
ERNEST GELLNER	
STALIN	
AUROBINDO GHOSH	
LALA LAJPAT RAI	
HERDER	
JOHN STRACHEY	
NEHRU	
MN ROY	
TILAK	