

NCERT Notes: The Moderate Phase Of The Indian National Movement [Modern Indian History For UPSC]

NCERT notes on important topics for UPSC [Civil Services Exam](#) preparation. These notes will also be useful for other competitive exams like Bank PO, SSC, state civil services exams and so on. In this article, you can read about the moderate phase of the Indian National Congress.

Indian nationalism arose in the latter half of the 19th century as a result of various factors like western education, socio-religious reforms, British policies and so on. In 1885, the Indian National Congress was formed which played a significant role in India's freedom movement.

The time period from 1885 to 1905 can be called the 'Moderate Phase'. The leaders of this phase are called moderates.

The Indian National Congress (INC)

- Formed in 1885 by Allan Octavian Hume, a retired British civil servant.
- Other founding members include Dadabhai Naoroji and Dinshaw Wacha.
- First session was held in Bombay under the presidency of Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee in 1885.
- First session was attended by 72 delegates from across the country.
- Viceroy of India at the time was Lord Dufferin who gave his permission to Hume for the first session.
- The Congress was formed with the intention of discussing problems faced by the people of the country irrespective of caste, creed, religion or language.
- It was basically a movement of the upper and middle class, western educated Indians in its moderate phase.
- Second session of the Congress was held in Calcutta in 1886 followed by the third in Madras in 1887.

Moderate phase (1885 – 1905)

- Moderate phase of the Congress (or the national movement) was dominated by the 'moderates'.
- They were people who believed in British justice and were loyal to them.

Prominent moderate leaders

Dadabhai Naoroji

- Known as the 'Grand old man of India.'
- He became the first Indian to become a member of the House of Commons in Britain.
- Authored 'Poverty and Un-British Rule in India' which focused on the economic drain of India because of British policies. This led to an enquiry on the matter.

Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee

- First president of the INC.
- Lawyer by profession. First Indian to act as Standing Counsel.

G Subramanya Aiyer

- Founded 'The Hindu' newspaper where he criticised British imperialism.
- Also founded Tamil newspaper 'Swadesamitran'.
- Co-founded the Madras Mahajana Sabha.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale

- Regarded as Mahatma Gandhi's political guru.
- Founded the Servants of India Society.

Sir Surendranath Banerjee

- Also called 'Rashtraguru' and 'Indian Burke'.
- Founded the Indian National Association which later merged with the INC.
- Cleared the Indian Civil Service but was discharged due to racial discrimination.
- Founded newspaper 'The Bengalee'.

Other moderate leaders included Rash Behari Ghosh, R C Dutt, M G Ranade, Pheroze Shah Mehta, P R Naidu, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Ananda Charlu, S Subramania Iyer and William Wedderburn.

Aims and demands of the moderates

- Education of the masses and organising public opinion, make people aware of their rights.
- Indian representation in the Executive Council and in the Indian Council in London.
- Reform of the legislative councils.
- Separation of the executive from the judiciary.
- Decreased land revenue tax and ending peasant oppression.
- After 1892, raised the slogan, "No taxation without representation."
- Reduced spending on the army.
- Abolishing salt tax and duty on sugar.
- Holding the ICS exam in India along with England to allow more Indians the opportunity to take part in the administration.
- Freedom of speech and expression.
- Freedom to form associations.
- Development of modern capitalist industries in India.
- End of economic drain of India by the British.
- Repealing the Arms Act of 1878.
- Increasing spending on education of Indians.

Methods of the moderates

- They believed in peaceful and constitutional methods to demand and fulfil those demands.
- Used petitions, meetings, resolutions, pamphlets, memoranda and delegations to voice their demands.
- Their method has been called 3P – Prayers, Petition and Protest.
- Had complete faith in the British justice system.
- Confined to the educated classes only. Did not try to employ the masses.
- They aimed only at getting political rights and self-government under British dominion.

Successes of the moderates

- Indian Councils Act of 1892 was the first achievement of the INC.
- This Act increased the size of the legislative councils and also increased the proportion of non-officials in them.
- They were able to sow the seeds of nationalism in the people.
- They popularised ideals like democracy, liberty and equality.
- They exposed many draining economic policies of the British.
- Leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale and M G Ranade were social reformers too and opposed child marriage and imposed widowhood.

Limitations of the moderates

- This phase of the national movement excluded the masses and only the educated elites participated in it.
- They did not demand complete independence from foreign rule.
- They did not understand the power of a mass movement of people unlike Gandhi who used this power.
- Drew most of their ideas from western political thinking which further alienated them from the people.