

Handout 19: 19th c Socio-Religious Reform Movements

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The socio-religious reforms movement which appeared in India in the 19th century is characterized as **Indian renaissance**. These movements played an important role in the emergence of a liberal and progressive new India. It is projected as the harbinger of modern age in India.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, and Swami Vivekanand endeavoured to create a new India by liberating the masses from the clutches of prevailing evils. Defining moment of the 19th c was the creation of modern Indian man.

Reasons for emergence:

1. Response and reaction to the evils prevailing in India.
2. The role of orientalists in producing a knowledge of India's past
3. The role of English education and the impact of western liberal traditions
4. The role of Christian Missionaries
 - a. Positive factor: spread of education.
 - b. Negative factor: attack of Hinduism with efforts at proselytization
5. The role of social legislations under British government
6. Rise of new social groups in India

reform

- 1) Rise of intelligentsia
- 2) language, literature, print media.
- western education
- Christianity
- reason + faith
- women question.
- state intervention.

revival.

- social and religious reform transform to political Gole.
- 2) Christianity
- communal identity.
- 3) revivalism
- urban -rural
- 5 antcaste movements

social groups
brahmo samaj
ramkrishna mission
atamiy sabha.
pathana samaj

renaissance
reformation
enlightenment

- 1) Hindu reform movements.
- 2) Hindu revivalist movements
- 3) Muslims reform+ revivalist movements
- 4) women's question
- 5) anti caste movements.
- 6) press.

Categories of Socio-religious Response to British Rule

The contact with the West evoked a chain of reactions among the intelligentsia. But the response from the intellectual world was not monolithic. Some were traditional intelligentsia trying to resist alien influences while others were reformists trying to modernize Indian society. Both of these spoke similar language but there were certain differences too. Roughly speaking, four major reactions of the period are easy to identify:

Radical reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessively westernized. • Rejected the indigenous tradition and religion as inferior to the supposedly superior tradition of the West. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry Vivian Derozio • Young Bengal Movement
critical Moderate reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aimed at a synthesis of the best ingredients from both the Western and Eastern cultures. • With the spirit of reason, they became critical of tradition and embarked upon the project of wholesale socio-religious reform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rammohan Roy • Brahmo Samaj • Prarthana Samaj • Gopal Krishna Gokhale • Agarkar • Aligarh Movement
Revivalist critical traditionalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upheld their own civilization, valued their culture, and suggested only to eliminate the diseased, dysfunctional, irrational, obsolete or dead parts rather than borrowing uncritically from outside. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arya Samaj • Bankim Chandra • Ramakrishna Mission • Aurobindo • Theosophical Society
Orthodox or conservative traditionalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anchored to the traditional culture and religion, it organised itself in defence of Hinduism. • European ways were described as unworthy. • Developed great pride in the ancient past of India, especially the high traditions of Hinduism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radhakanta Deb • Gurukul faction of Arya Samaj

These reactions, however, were not always mutually exclusive. Such reactions could be overlapping in character.

Nature and Character of the Reform Movement

Basic emphasis of Indian renaissance was on following Values:

- **Rationalism:**

- It was applicable in every sphere of life e.g. child marriage was criticised not simply on the basis of moral & social values but also on the basis of human science. Likewise, Dadabhai Naoroji made a criticism of colonial economy on the basis of thorough application of liberal ideas.

- **Humanism:**

- Here humanism means the restoration of human dignity and to keep greater importance to human beings in relation to divine. Apart from that, it gives greater importance to this worldliness in comparison to other worldliness (life after death is other world).
- Humanism believes that every person is born good only the circumstances make a person bad.
- **Focus on improving this worldly life** was visible in the reform movements of 19th century. The reformers were disinterested in other worldliness; they did not invest their time and energy in unnecessary philosophical speculations.

- **Liberal and progressive**

- The reformers wanted to liberate Indians from clutches of prevailing evils. They did not attack Hinduism as a whole but targeted only evils. Their intention was to recast old religion into new form, to create a new India society with forward looking outlook.

- **It was basically a social movement than a religious one.**

- The basic concern of reformers was society not religion. But because the two were so much inter-woven, social reforms required religious reforms too.
- Reform movements were **composite in character** because they targeted evils prevailing in **social, religious as well as political life**. RRM Roy was the first modern political agitator in India.

- **Mix of reform and revivalism**

- English education in India initially attracted Indians to western liberal ideas. However, they soon realized the contradictions between British professed values and their actions, leading to a sense of reaction and a shift towards the traditional Indian model. Indian reformers were influenced by both western and traditional elements, with some emphasizing westernized ideas and others focusing more on traditional elements. The reformers' ideologies reflected a combination of both impact and reaction, with varying degrees of dominance for each influence.

- **Ideological challenge to the west**

- The socio-religious reforms movement was inspired by western elements but it gave an ideological challenge to western elements itself. It tried to explore

weaknesses in the western model. Eg RRM wrote Precepts of Jesus wherein he exposed weaknesses of Christianity as well.

- **Religious universalism:**

- It meant while working within the parameter of particular religious sect one has rise above sectarian boundary.

- **Assimilatory nature:**

- They accepted good elements from everywhere. The positive elements were adopted from India's **past** as well as from **western** societies.

- **Democratic outlook:**

- Reforms targeted **each section of population** so that every Indian could live a **dignified life**. This democratic **awakening** manifested itself initially in society and religion. Moreover, the reforms emphasized **equality of mankind**. They were **against discrimination** based on birth or any other ground.

- **Nationalistic outlook**

- Nationalism was also dominant in the reform movements because the reformers targeted divisive socio-religious practices. They tried to bring Indian of different castes and communities together so that one India could be created.

- **Peaceful manner:**

- Emphasize on **peaceful method** was another important identity of Indian socio-religious reform movements. Reforms propagated their message without attacking anybody, in **non-violent** manner.

- They represented **Indian renaissance**.

- Renaissance means rebirth/restoration/revival of past but Indian renaissance was futuristic. The reformers were inspired by the vision of better and brighter future. This renaissance paved the way for the emergence of new India.

(1) Young Bengal Movement

- **Henry Vivian Derozio** (1809-31) worked as a lecturer at Hindu college.
 - His outlook was shaped by the influence of French Revolution and English radicalism.
 - He was in favour of Indianization of services and emphasized women's liberation and western education.
He also raised the issue of tenants' security.
- Young Bengal
 - A group of radical youths gathered under his magnetic leadership. He created a band of followers in Hindu college.
 - To promote free discussion and exchange of ideas, Derozio formed the **Academic Association** in 1828 in the Hindu College.
 - Another organisation setup was the '**Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge**' founded in 1838. Tarachand Chakravarty was the president of the society and it had 200 members.
 - The Derozians also published a magazine **Parthenon** (according to another view it was **Athenaeum**).
 - They were influenced by the writings of thinkers such as Mill, Bentham, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Thomas Paine.
 - They were encouraged to criticise and scrutinise the evil practices like idolatry, caste system, untouchability etc.
 - Later he was expelled from the college.
- They came to the realization that the conservative and superstitious practices of Hindu society were too primitive to withstand logical scrutiny. Motivated by their studies, they were determined to bring about a radical transformation in society. They attacked rituals & social taboos and pleaded for radical change in society. It promoted the spirit of secularism in Bengal.
 - Mere verbal criticism of the prevalent abuses of the Hindu society was not their only programme, they went much beyond it. Intoxicated by the spirit of European enlightenment, they decided to renounce Hinduism publicly. One member of the group wrote, "if there is anything that we hate from the bottom of our heart, it is Hinduism."
- Limitations: Derozio was inclined to take a sharp break from the past. The Young Bengal had indeed a revolutionary agenda, though in actual fact it failed to turn things upside down.



- Such startling demonstration of radicalism, which shocked the Hindu conservatives were too many. It couldn't maintain the balance between tradition & reforms and thus it couldn't get acceptance in Bengali society. Derozio was eventually removed from his position on the charge of misguiding the students.
 - The Young Bengal movement was confined to a small section of the English educated middle class of Calcutta.
- Significance
 - The movement was not in vain. The Young Bengal radicals, under the influence of European reason, were able to raise new questions hitherto unasked. They could not supply the answers to the questions they raised, but, the points they raised were very important.
 - The Young Bengal radicals played a significant role in shaping a modern and better India, laying the foundation for its emergence. Their contributions to the Indian national movement in subsequent years were substantial.
 - Though Derozio's family was from Portugal, he considered India as his motherland. He nurtured a deep sense of patriotism. He was perhaps the first modern nationalist poet in India. Two famous poems written by Derozio were – 'To India - My Native Land' and 'The Fakir of Jungheera'.

'The Fakir of Jungheera'

My country! In thy days of glory past
A beauteous halo circled round thy brow
and worshipped as a deity thou wast—
Where is thy glory, where the reverence now?
Thy eagle pinion is chained down at last,
And grovelling in the lowly dust art thou,
Thy minstrel hath no wreath to weave for thee
Save the sad story of thy misery!

(2) RRM Roy

"All modern reform movements educational, social and political have started from him and all Indian reformers of the present day are spiritually his children" – H.C. Zacharias in Renascent India

- He was the father of the socio-religious reforms movement. He is also considered as the first modern man in India.
- He taught his disciples and followers new ideas derived from Western thought but there was a constant attempt on his part to blend these Western thoughts with Indian tradition.
- He had multicultural impact on his personality. He studied Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and European literature. Firstly, he came under the influence of Arabic-Persian culture then that of Hindu-Buddhist culture and finally under the influence of western culture. He faced off with many evangelical missionaries and tried to improve the Hinduism in light of modern scientific temper and logical thinking.
- To start a crusade against the prevalent religious and social vices and injustices, Raja Ram Mohan Roy used four methods.
 - Establishment of religious associations
 - Publication of books and newspapers
 - Holding discussion and debates
 - Setting up educational institutions.
- **Religious Reforms – Vedanta**
 - He made a sincere attempt to lay a common foundation of a **universal religion** based on **the doctrine of Unity of Godhead**. He criticized idolatry, polytheism and clericalism.
 - **Scholarly work** to preach the idea of monotheism and meaningless rituals.
 - While in Murshidabad, in 1803-04 Raja Ram Mohan Roy wrote **Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin** (A Gift to Monotheists) in Persian with an introduction in Arabic.
 - In order to take the message of **Upanishads** to common masses, he translated them in colloquial Bengali. (Katha, Ken, Isa, Mundoka and Mandukya). He also published Gayatrir Artha (Meaning of the Gayatri) and Atmanantratma Vivek (translation of Shankracharya's work).
 - Through his book **Manazarat-ul-Adiyan** (Discussions on various religions), he tried to highlight the similarities among different religions.



- Although Vedic religion in India allowed the worship of multiple gods, Rammohan emphasized monotheism as a response to Christianity, highlighting a different tradition in Indian religious thought. Therefore, one can argue that his focus on monotheism was a result of **his encounter with Christianity**. To counter the challenge of Christianity, Roy produced **Precepts of Jesus** in 1820s, which portrayed Christ more as a moral human figure, rather than the religious. He denied divine Christ and espoused Jesus as a historic mortal. In contrast to orthodox Christianity of Trinitarianism he **acknowledged Unitarianism** as a more rational and responsible religion with its active involvement in social reform issues. Thus, he successfully defended Hinduism by combating the Christian missionaries intellectually.



- Though he gave due importance to holy texts of all religions i.e., Rigveda, Upanishads, Bible and Quran, but he gave more importance to reason. He advocated for the use of **reason and critical thinking** in understanding religious and philosophical concepts. Any idea or belief which was not based on reason and rationality, he had no hesitation in rejecting it.

- It was his firm confidence in the utility of 'reason' which forced him to oppose polytheism, idolatry, practice of Sati and other evils of Hindu society.
- He applied the same yardstick for Islam and Christianity. He accepted many ideas and philosophies of Islam and in fact, was greatly influenced by it, but rejected the Islamic concept of 'blest' and 'cursed'.
- Similarly, he rejected the ideas of 'Trinity' and 'Miracles', the fundamental principles of Christianity.

- At one level RRM was very keen to uphold the pristine Aryan Vedic religion but at another level he placed great stress on **individuality**. Atman for him was all about self, free-thinking individual with freedom to realize godhood.
- **Humanism** in Vedanta

- **Synthesis of East & West:**

- His personality reflected the synthesis between oriental and western culture both.
- He respected the traditional philosophy of the East, but at the same time, he believed that the western culture and education alone could infuse rational and scientific approach and bring forth the necessary regeneration of Indian society.
- He continued with his indigenous dress, he used to wear sacred thread & even his concept of monotheism was equally inspired by Upanishadic philosophy. Likewise, he was inspired by the western concept of liberalism & Enlightenment.

- **Reforms Programme:**

- The ideal of free-thinking individual which had in its center a deep faith in rationalism was employed to make an assessment of the social practices. He made an attack over **religious rituals** like idol worship & Brahmanic supremacy.
- He denounced the pathetic condition of women, widow marriage prohibition, practice of kulinism, and **Sati system**. He also demanded inheritance rights for women in property.
- **Anti-Sati campaign**
 - He argued that the practice of sati was designed more to secure the temporal happiness of the surviving relatives than the spiritual welfare of the deceased and his wife.
 - He asked his followers to go to this ancient Hindu scriptures to find out if had any legitimacy. Such a deep intellectual element assessment of a religious tradition became contingent on scriptural authority.
 - Organized anti-Sati vigilance party. Its members kept watch on different burning ghats to prevent sati. He could save atleast two women with his efforts.
 - Published many tracts and pamphlets against Sati.
 - He faced the challenges posed by the orthodox Hindus like Radha Kant Deb of Dharmasabha, Subramanya Shastri of Madras, Sankar Sastri of Madras Government College, and Mrityunjay Vidyalankar of Fort William College.
 - He not merely campaigned in favor of sati pleaded with the government for more direct intervention in social practices. He convinced the British Indian government of the necessity of abolishing Sati.

- **Journalism:**

- He was the **pioneer of Indian journalism**. He brought journals in Bengali, Persian, Hindi and English to educate public opinion. In 1820, he founded a Bengal journal **Sambad Kaumudi**. It regularly editorialised against Sati, denouncing it as barbaric and un-Hindu. In 1822, he started **Mirat-ul-Akbar** to propagate his ideas on religion. But in 1823, the government passed a Press Ordinance, enforcing licensing regulation. In response, Raja Rammohan had to close down the newspaper.

- **Education:**

- Roy believed education to be an implement for social reform. Hew was one of the earliest propagators of modern education.
- 1817: **Hindu College** at Calcutta, in collaboration with David Hare
- 1822: **Anglo-Hindu school** where western science, philosophy and literature were taught. Debendranath Tagore was a student of this school.
- 1825: **Vedanta College** (his teachings of monotheistic doctrines were incorporated with modern western curriculum. Indian learning as well as western social and physical courses were included.)

- **Bengali:**

- He took keen interest in the development of Bengali language. He made some contribution by compiling a Bengali grammar and by authorizing pamphlets and journals. He wanted to make Bengali a vehicle of modern intellectual thought.
- **Institutional Work:**
 - In 1814-15, he started **Atmiya Sabha**, a philosophical discussion circle in Calcutta to propagate the monotheistic ideals of the Vedanta.
 - **Brahmo Samaj** (Brahmo Sabha in 1828, renamed as Brahmo Samaj in 1829)
 - It was started as a movement against the debased practices in Hindu religion and to make people aware of Vedic Hinduism
 - The Samaj had following provisions:
 - The Samaj was open for all caste and creeds for the worship of Brahma.
 - Idol, image, statute, painting or portrait of any sort was not admitted within the Samaj building.
 - Sacrifice or religious rituals inside the Samaj building, was also not allowed. The worship was performed through prayers and meditation and readings from Upanishads. Ram Mohan himself wrote a pamphlet **Anusthan** (1829) prescribing the mode of worship to be followed in the Samaj.
 - This movement remained confined to the educated middle class of Calcutta and it failed to bring any radical change immediately.
 - In Brahmo Samaj, after Raja Ram Mohan Roy, two different trends were visible. The first trend verges on traditionalism under the leadership of Devendra Nath Tagore while the second one reflected radicalism under Keshav Chandra Sen.

Rammohun was a firm believer in internationalism and in free cooperation between nations. He took a keen interest in international events and everywhere he supported the cause of liberty, democracy, and nationalism and opposed injustice, oppression and tyranny in every form.

- The news of the failure of the Revolution in Naples in 1821 made him so sad that he cancelled all his social engagements.
- He celebrated the success of the Revolution in Spanish America in 1823 by giving a public dinner.
- He condemned the miserable condition of Ireland under the oppressive regime of absentee English landlordism.
- He publicly declared that he would emigrate from the British Empire if Parliament failed to pass the Reform Bill.

(3) Evolution of Brahmo Samaj

The foundation of the Brahmo Samaj was the culmination of the religious thought and activities of Rammohan Roy. It also marked the beginning of the Brahmo movement.

The Brahmo Samaj in its early days confined itself mainly to spiritual and devotional work. As a social force it was virtually non-existent. After Rammohan's departure to English and then death in 1833 it began to languish. It was **Debendranath Tagore** who revived it afterwards in 1840s.

- Debendranath was a product of the best in the traditional Indian learning and the new thought of the West. He infused a new life into the Brahmo Samaj. He initially sought to popularise the ideas of Rammohan by founding the **Tattvabodhini Sabha** (1839), **Tattvabodhini school** (1840) and **Tattabodhini Patrika** (1843). The Sabha aimed at the diffusion of the fundamental truth of all Shastras of the Hindus, and the truth about Brahma as inculcated in the Vedanta. In 1859, Tattvaboshini Sabha was dissolved into Brahmo Samaj.

- **Debendranath at the helm of Brahmo**

- He boldly resisted the ultra-radical trend. Debendranath continued the same search for pristine Hinduism, but there was a difference. Unlike
- Rammohan, who was more firmly embedded in Vedic religious thought, put great stress of rationalism to assess religious practices, he had imbibed some influence from Sufism and more tilted towards devotionalism and mysticism. He was also aware of the fact that Vedic religion had polytheistic content.

- An important dimension was his constant engagement with Christianity. He was willing to engage with Christianity and combat it by going back to this source of pristine Hinduism.
- The Brahmo movement had hitherto remained confined to Calcutta. It was during his time that the Brahmo movement began to spread out. Particularly it became strong in Eastern Bengal with the establishment of Dacca Brahmo Samaj.



Debendranath

Tagore (1817-1905) was the founder in 1848 of the Brahmo religion. His efforts helped in the foundation of Bethune school, Shantiniketan, British Indian Association. Radhakanta Dev conferred on him the title of 'Protector of National Religion' who protected Indian youth from the influence of Christianity.

- The Brahmos by the 1850s had begun to acquire a distinct sectarian identity as well.

- When severe famine broke out in upper India (1860) Christian missionaries under Alexander Duff organised themselves for famine relief. Keshab too felt that it was his duty to serve the people.
- The volunteers of Brahmo Samaj established the Calcutta College in 1862 for educating the young men of Bengal. Keshab was opposed to the idea of a 'godless education' which was being imparted in government schools. He wanted intellectual progress alongwith religious development.
- They also performed intercaste marriages in 1861.
- Bambodhini Patrika (a journal for women) was started to encourage the female education.



KC Sen (1838-84) formed a reformist society **Sangat Sabha** from which many of the foremost Brahmos of later days drew their first inspiration. He was the editor of 'Indian Mirror', a fortnightly. He started a Bangla newspaper **Sulabh Samachar** in 1870.

Brahmo Sectarianism

1866 Schism	
Debendranath's faction Adi Brahmo Samaj	Keshub Chandra Sen's faction Brahmo Samaj of India (Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNT preferred slow and cautious social transformation and not radical social reforms. He was willing to maintain the connection with the mainstream Hindu society. • He wanted the Samaj to concentrate more on intellectual work rather than direct action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCS wanted to adopt a more radical position on the <u>social</u> issues of caste and women than Tagore. Due to his effort, Brahmo Marriage Act, 1872 was passed which abolished early marriage (14 for girls, 16 for boys), sanctioned widow remarriage and intercaste marriage and polygamy was made penal. • The membership of the Samaj was open to all irrespective of caste, creed, colour, or sex. He wanted to make <i>Brahma Samaj different from Hinduism</i>. • He also wanted to spread fast in Bombay and Madras presidencies. He also toured north India in 1868, and argued that to regenerate the country, religion should be made the basis of all reform movements. He felt that only when the Bengalis,

	Punjabis and Madrasis would combine and work together, the suffering and distress of India would end. Keshub, thus, initiated an all India movement for social reform.				
	<p style="text-align: center;">1878 Schism</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;">Nava Vidhana of KCS</th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;">Sadharan Brahmo Samaj</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"> KCS tried to blend features of Vaishnava religion with Brahmo religious practice. He tried to build bridges with mainstream Hindu society. He became a devotee of Ramakrishna and tried to bring in Guruhsip. He started Kirtans practice. KCS also allowed his daughter to be married to the prince of Cooch Behar even though she was a minor. It was against the Brahmo Marriage Act 1872. </td> <td style="padding: 2px;"> Shivanath Shastri and Bijoy Krishna Goswami found KCS's leadership as inadequate. These more radically inclined Brahmos refused to accept KCS's leadership. Anand Mohan Bose was very active as the first president. It became more anti-caste in attitude. The Sadharan Samaj gradually reverted to the teaching of the Upanishads and carried on the work of social reform. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Nava Vidhana of KCS	Sadharan Brahmo Samaj	KCS tried to blend features of Vaishnava religion with Brahmo religious practice. He tried to build bridges with mainstream Hindu society . He became a devotee of Ramakrishna and tried to bring in Guruhsip . He started Kirtans practice. KCS also allowed his daughter to be married to the prince of Cooch Behar even though she was a minor . It was against the Brahmo Marriage Act 1872.	Shivanath Shastri and Bijoy Krishna Goswami found KCS's leadership as inadequate. These more radically inclined Brahmos refused to accept KCS's leadership. Anand Mohan Bose was very active as the first president. It became more anti-caste in attitude. The Sadharan Samaj gradually reverted to the teaching of the Upanishads and carried on the work of social reform.
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It was later revived by Rabindranath Tagore when he took over its leadership in 1911.					

(4) Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891)

- The unfinished crusade which Rammohan launched against the oppression of women, was later carried on by Vidyasagar.
- Vidyasagar had a very ambitious educational project which included women's education and mass education but the campaign for widow remarriage was certainly the main item on his agenda. He is chiefly remembered for his role in a **long struggle in favour of widow remarriage**.
 - He started to **write in the Tattvabodhini Patrika** to arouse public opinion.
 - He made an **intense study of the Shastras** and discovered a particular sloka in *Parashar Samhita* to support widow remarriage.
 - He also wrote a **book** on widow remarriage which was published in 1853.
 - A **petition** was sent to the legislative council by Vidyasagar and others demanding legalisation of widow remarriage.
 - **The Act** legalising widow remarriage was finally passed on in **1856** by **Dalhousie**.
 - But after 1857 when the British tried to trade on a more conservative path. They were not very keen anymore to enforce this law, they wanted to soft-pedal.
 - In this context that the ICV tried to mobilize opinion in favour of widow remarriage and for the same reason he had earned the hostility of the conservative social leaders.
- **Press** – he helped in the starting of a newspaper **Somprakash** in 1858 along with Dwarkanath Vidyabhushan. It was the **first Bangla newspaper to indulge in political discussions**.
- He realised that education would be the chief instrument required for the emancipation of women. Thus, he laboured hard for **female education**.
 - He was associated with the foundation of the Hindu female school which subsequently came to be known as the **Bethune Female School**. (1849)
 - He also established other schools in the interior for the spread of women's education.
- Vidyasagar was a prolific and vigorous writer.
 - His efforts to simplify and modernise **Bengali prose** were significant. He also rationalised and simplified the Bengali **alphabet and type**.



After Vidyasagar's death, Rabindranath Tagore reverently wrote about him: "One wonders how God, in the process of producing forty million Bengalis, produced a man!"

Bombay Presidency

Reform movements were strong in the Bombay-Poona cultural belt.

- **Balshastri Jambhekar (1810-46)**

- Started Darpan (1832) the first vernacular newspaper in the western India. He specifically dealt with the issues of widow remarriage in his newspaper leading to public debate.
- As a professor in Elphinstone college, he pupiled future leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji and Atmaram Pandurang.
- He understood the importance of public libraries started some of them in Bombay. He founded 'The Bombay Native General Library'. The **Students' Literary and Scientific Society** was its offshoot. It was formed in 1848 by the educated youths of Maharashtra. One of the chief aims of society was women's education.

- In 1851, **Jotiba Phule** and his wife **Savitribai Phule** started a girls' school in Poona. Phule also led a crusade against untouchability and the exploitation of the lower castes by the upper castes.

- **Jagannath Shankar Seth and Bhau Daji**

- Among the active promoters of girls schools in Bombay.

- **Vishnu Shastri Pandit** formed the *Widow Remarriage Association* in the 1850s.

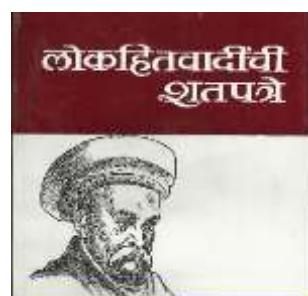
- **Karsondas Mulji** (1832-71) started the **Satya Prakash** in Gujarati in 1852 to advocate widow remarriage.

- **Gopal Hari Deshmukh** (Lokhitavadi, 1823-92)

- He championed the cause of new learning and social regeneration. He was popularly known as **Lokhitavadi** for writing **Shatapatre** in the weekly named **Prabhakar**.

- He promoted education of women, and wrote against arranged child marriages, dowry system, and polygamy, opposed caste system and religious orthodoxy.
- Deshmukh founded a public library in Pune.

- He argued with courage in 1840s that "Brahmins should give up their foolish concepts; they must accept that all men are equal and that everybody has a right to acquire knowledge..."



- **Vishnushatri Chiplunkar** (1850-82) started the monthly **Nibandhamala** in 1874.
 - Subjects included contemporary status of the vernacular language, propriety of using foreign words in Marathi, state of India, freedom of press, apart from social reform.
- **Behramji Malabari** (1853-1912), a Parsee social reformer, sought to abolish the brutal practice of child-marriage.
 - His efforts led to the Age of Consent Act of 1891.
 - He founded **Seva Sadan** in 1908. It specialized in taking care of destitute women with education, medical and welfare services.



This agenda of social reform in the Western India was complemented by the work of some scholars, who drew inspiration from Orientalist scholars and undertook painstaking examinations and translations of Sanskrit texts in order to rediscover glories of Indian civilization.

- **Kashinath Trimbak Telang** (1850-93)
 - A Bombay High court judge
 - Translated Bhagavad Geet in English – considered as a standard translation
 - Mudrarakshasa of Vishakhadatta
- **Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik** (1833-99)
 - Student at Elphinstone college
 - Translation of Yajnavalkya Smriti and Manu Smriti in English
 - Founded **Native Opinion**, a bi-weekly journal in 1864
- **Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar** (1837-1925)
 - Student at Elphinstone college
 - Historian as well as orientalist scholar
 - Social reformer – Girl's education

Manav Dharma Sabha (Surat, 1844-50s)

- Founded by Mehtaji Durgaram Mancharam, Karsondas Mulji, Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar.
- Public meetings to spread monotheism, discourage idolatry, oppose caste system, support widow remarriage and stop superstitions.

Paramhansa Mandali (1849)

- It followed the iconoclastic radical tradition of the Derozians in Bengal.
- To avoid confrontation with society, it operated like a secret society.

- Revelation of its membership in 1860 led to its demise.

Prarthana Samaj (Bombay, 1867)

- Progress of Western education created a critical group looking for reform. Two visits of Keshub Chandra Sen to Bombay in 1864 and 1867 had a profound impact.
- Personalities
 - Founder president was **Atnaram Pandurang**
 - Ram Krishna Gopal Bhandarkar and Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901) were the true guiding spirits of the Samaj.
 - Other people associated: N.G. Chandavarkar, K.T. Telang
- **Philosophy**
 - Prarthna Samaj, often referred to as '**Protestant Hinduism**', emerged as a sister organization of the Brahmo Samaj.
 - Like **Brahmo** movement, the Prarthana Samaj also preached monotheism, denounced idolatry and priestly domination. It sought to gain support for abandoning caste, introducing widow remarriage, abolishing purdah and child marriage, and encouraging female education.
 - But unlike **Brahmos** (esp **Sadharan Brahmos**), it was not very keen to alienate the mainstream society. It rather developed a cautious approach, syncretism and connected itself to the **Maharashtrian bhakti tradition**. *Modernisation was to be accommodated within the cultural space of tradition, without signalling a sharp break*. It made Prarthana Samaj relatively **more acceptable** to the larger society.
 - The Prarthana Samajists concentrated more upon **social reform as their 'actual work'** rather than the 'faith'. They kept alive the great ideals of popular saints of Maharashtra like Namdev, Tukaram and Ramdas and encouraged the society to rise above superstitions and malpractices. They emphasized the belief that God can be realised only by **serving man**. Thus, they connected the spiritual teachings of religion with practical duties in life. Their efforts included promoting social cohesion through communal dining and inter-caste marriages, advocating for widow remarriage, establishing night schools for the underprivileged, and creating shelters and missions for marginalized groups in society.
 - But there was one thing in common with Brahmo Samaj. Most of the **early leaders of modern nationalism** in the Western India came from the Prarthana Samaj. It was from within this reform movement the early nationalists had their early training.



Atmaram Pandurang
(1823-98) was a physician. He founded Prarthana Samaj as well as Bombay Natural History Society. He was a brother of Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar and a classmate of Dadabhai Naoroji and Bhau Daji at Elphinstone.

- **Spread**

- Branches were opened in Poona, Surat, Ahmedabad, Karachi, Kirkee, Kolhapur and Satara.
- Because of their good work and a neutral stand, the Prarthna Samaj movement spread in the South too. This was also due to the efforts of Viresalingam Pantulu. But its effect was more felt in the Bombay Presidency, where it was responsible for the growth of nationalism.

- **Schism**

- Eventually in the 1880s, the Prarthana Samaj initiative was to a large extent undermined by the **Arya Samaj's challenge** in the region. It encountered its initial crisis due to its cautious approach. In 1875, Swami Dayanand Saraswati visited Gujarat and Maharashtra, presenting the potential for a more radical and assertive religious movement. Some members of the Samaj, led by S.P. Kelkar, were drawn to the Swami's Aryan ideology and decided to separate.
- Although the dissident group eventually re-joined the Prarthana Samaj, this event signalled the **start of a distinct form of religious politics in western India**, characterized more by cultural chauvinism than by reformist ideals. In the 1890s the challenge against reformism became more pronounced by the sanatanists.



Rao Bahadur Justice MG Ranade (1842-1901) was a social reformer, economist and pioneer of political activity in the western India. He formed **Poona Sarvajanik Sabha** in 1870. He was also editor of **Induprakash** journal. Aurobindo Ghosh wrote his series New Lamps for the Old in Induprakash.



Success and failure of Socio-Religious Reform Movements





Reformism vs Revivalism:

Reformists and revivalists both thought in terms of a great Indian civilization and the need for restoring the purity of this culture that had over time been contaminated. So, on one hand, there was an element of revivalism in the reform movements. And on the other hand, revivalism was not always blind faith or obscurantism. Thus, to distinguish very clearly between reformism and revivalism becomes difficult. Reformists were more inclined to accept the West without hesitation, while revivalists were less receptive to Western learning.

- While both reformists and revivalists **shared a fascination for ancient knowledge**, the ultimate distinction lay in the reformists' **greater willingness to blend Western knowledge with Indian traditions**. Revivalism argued that everything contributed by the West to Indian culture could be found in the Vedas and ancient traditions.

Revivalism manifested in various dimensions and featured multiple facets.

- **Religious Revivalism:** Those who thought that monotheism was an accepted practice in the Indian past and it now needed to be revived, notwithstanding the provocation by Christianity. This was a part of the cultural engagement that the Indian intellectuals.
- **Cultural Revivalism:** It involved efforts to rediscover and promote traditional Indian philosophies, art forms, literature, and customs, while also advocating for social and religious reforms. It played a significant role in reviving and promoting classical Indian music, dance forms, martial arts, Yoga, and classical languages etc. It also emphasized the importance of regional languages and literature. Prominent authors and poets emerged in various regional languages, such as Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali and Subramania Bharati in Tamil, who contributed to the revival and promotion of regional literature. Traditional Indian painting styles like Mughal, Rajput, and Tanjore paintings saw a resurgence during this period.
- **Political Revivalism:** The notion that India was inherently a divided nation compelled scholars and intellectuals to delve into the annals of history to uncover evidence of Indian unity and political cohesion in classical or ancient times. Some intellectuals went as far as suggesting that democratic institutions had flourished in ancient India, thus emphasizing the quest for democracy, and focusing on institutions such as assemblies and councils in Indian governance.

This aspect of revivalism was not simply a call to return to the past, but rather a re-evaluation of tradition in order to engage with modernity and embrace modern ideas, whether political, social, or religious. Its ultimate objective was the creation of a modern India. So, it was a modernist ideology couched in a language that would be reminiscent of certain revivalist ideas.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94)

- Bankim was impressed by the **Gaudiya Vaishnavism**'s cultural efflorescence of the 14th and 15th c in Bengal. He was a **critique of the philosophy** in the sense of its emphasis on renunciation (vairagya) rather than political and social power.
- He **blended both Indian and Western culture.**
 - On the one hand, he believed in the superiority of Indian religion and culture, on the other hand, he appreciated the material and technical success of the West. According to him, both are necessary for the progress of India.
- His famous work titled **Anand Math** depicts the journey from Bengali Nationalism to Indian Nationalism. Drawing from the Shakti tradition of Bengal, he personified India as a Mother Goddess known as **Bharat Mata**. Another notable work on the Sanyasi rebellion authored by him is **Devi Chaudhurani**.



Ramkrishna Paramhansa (1836-86)

- He was a priest at Dakshineshwar Temple of goddess Kali.
- Though, not educated, he learned Vedanta from Totapuri and philosophy of Sufism from Govind Das.
- He practiced **Universal Vedanta philosophy**, which was tolerant, inclusive, cosmopolitan, and progressive.
 - He did not condemn idol-worship unlike Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The essence of Ramkrishna's teachings was the realisation of God as the highest human ideal in whatever manner or mode of worship one liked.
 - He propagated the thought of Vedanta among the **common people** and explained it by giving examples from day-to-day life.
 - Although his teaching was based on ancient and traditional concept, it was very refreshing and modern because he made **humanism** as the theme of his philosophy. He did not discriminate man from man and religion from religion. He was not a revivalist, he preferred to use Hinduism for the progress of society by connecting it with humanism.
He believed that to serve humanity is to serve the God. He said, '**Jiva is Siva**' (all living beings are God). Based on this precept, Swami Vivekanand, his disciple, laid the foundation of Ramakrishna mission.



His earlier name was Gadadhar. It was given to him by a Vedantic saint Totapuri.

- Despite being a Kali worshipper, he was **non-sectarian** in approach. He did not establish any new religious sect and tried to connect Hinduism with the idea of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.
- Policy of religious tolerance and non-eclecticism
 - He tried to perceive God not only through Hinduism but also through Christianity and Islam. He believed that the essence of all religions is one. For him Ram, Allah, Christ, Hari were different names for the same God. He emphasized that the different sects recommend the different path to reach the same goal. ('Joto Mat, Tato Path') He highlighted that the unity of human beings through the idea of unity of God.



- **Sayings of Ramkrishna**

- *Taka mati, mati taka.*
- *Women are, all of them, the veritable images of Shakti.*
- *Knowledge leads to unity, but Ignorance to diversity.*
- *Lovers of God do not belong to any caste.*
- *Never get into your head that your faith alone is true and every other is false. Know for certain that God without form is real and that God with form is also real.*

	<p>Rani Rashmoni, a lady zamindar, inherited zamindari after her husband's death. With superior managerial skills and charitable works in the city of Calcutta, she impressed the people. She successfully resisted British in many cases like fishing tax in Ganga, restraints on Puja procession. She provided tacit support to Vidyasagar's campaign for widow remarriage. She also built Dakshineswar Kali Temple in 1855 and appointed Ramkrishna as its head priest.</p>
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Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) and Ramkrishna Mission

Narendra Nath Dutta, popularly known as Swami Vivekananda, emerged as the real spiritual successor of Ramkrishna. He was educated in an English school and had read the philosophies of John Stuart Mill, Rousseau, Hegel, Duma, Dante, etc. He was a 'rationalist' and Ramkrishna Param Hansa was a 'traditionalist', yet they came closer.

Vivekananda was a revivalist who recognized the greatness of ancient Hindu culture but saw how corruption had undermined it within Hinduism. He aimed to restore its original glory by removing unholy practices.

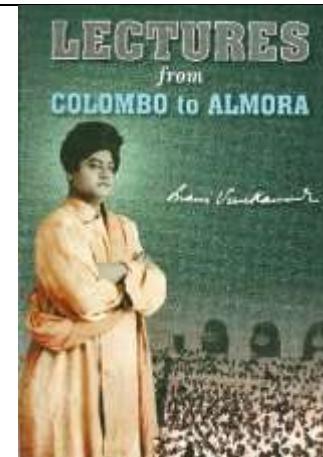


- **Philosophy:** Neo-Vedantism

- Basic ideas:
 - Through Gyan (knowledge), Karma (action) and Bhakti (devotion) one can reach the God.
 - Social and religious customs can be acceptable only when they are rational.
 - He called all religions as true religions, so no purpose can be achieved through religious conversion.
- Vedanta philosophy gives emphasis over the unity between Brahma and soul. But Vivekanand modified this concept, and he saw Brahma on the face of millions of poor. For him, service of the poor was worship to the God. So, his Vedantism was pragmatic Vedantism as it linked religion with social work.
- While he asserted that while spirituality and religions were the biggest strengths of the eastern culture, he also vehemently opposed the religious pomp and rituals. Making spiritualism practical was an important contribution of Vivekananda.

- **Visit to the West**

- He addressed the gathering as 'sisters and brothers of America', which instantly touched the heart, mind, and soul of the audience. His speech made headlines in the newspapers of U.S.A.
- Vivekananda set up Vedanta Society in different cities of USA and made many Americans and English his disciples, including Margaret Nobel (Sister Nivedita).



Lectures from Colombo to Almora (1897) is a book of Swami Vivekananda based on the lectures he delivered in Sri Lanka and India after his return from the West.

- He also went to Paris, Vienna, Egypt and removed the misconception about Hinduism and Indian culture. When he returned to India, he was already a well-known figure in India, thanks to his warm reception in the west.

- **Man-making Mission:**

- He popularized the Sanskrit verse, “Arise, Awake and Stop Not till the Goal is Reached” from Katha Upanishad, the goal being to gain freedom from the foreign British yoke. He exhorted his countrymen to straighten their backs so no foreigner could ride on them. Time and again Vivekananda reminded Indians to be “mighty lions” and “not meek lambs.”
- “What we want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel. We have wept long enough. No more weeping, but stand on your feet and be men. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want.”
- “Before you read Geeta, make sure you are strong and to become strong you must play football.”

- **Nation-building:**

- He instilled in Indians the spirit of nationalistic pride and vigor based on unique **spiritual heritage** of the Vedas, Upanishads, and Vedanta (spiritualistic nationalism)
- **Modernisation:** He believed that for the development of India there should be a free exchange between western elements and oriental elements. Although it is true that India is far ahead of west in spiritual richness, but it had to learn something from west in the field of science and technology. Thus, he attempted to combine Indian spirituality with Western material progress, maintaining that the two supplemented and complemented one another.
- He considered social upliftment a necessary corollary to nation-building and **rejected religious and social division**. He rejected caste inequality and
- untouchability. Likewise, he rejected communal distinctions. He argued that until India overcomes caste, ethnic, and regional divisions, she cannot become a great power. He opposed superstitious beliefs, casteism and untouchability. Once he remarked, *“Our religion is confined to our kitchens, and we have become 'do not*



Two monasteries were founded by him, one at Belur and the other at Mayavati in Uttrakhand (Advaita Ashrama). These monasteries were meant to train young men who would eventually become sannyasis of the Ramakrishna Mission.

Belur Math is the heart of the Ramakrishna movement. It is notable for its architecture that fuses Hindu, Islamic, Buddhist, and Christian art and motifs as a symbol of unity of all religions.

touchist'. Our God is in our vessels and our religion is that I am pious, do not touch me."

- He emphasized **social work**. He believed that the majority of educated people of India should work for eradicating poverty and hunger.
 - He travelled extensively in different parts of India and experienced the real India-the illiterate and poverty-stricken India.
 - Initially his mission was involved in helping the famine-affected people, later the mission broadened its horizon and set up orphanages, hospitals, libraries, etc. Thus, Vivekananda's movement was basically a humanitarian and *social service movement rather than a social reform movement*. Instead of challenging rituals or idol worship, he gave emphasis on removing poverty and illiteracy.
 - He emphasised the fact that till the millions of poor are not given basic amenities by the state, India could never emerge to be a modern nation.
 - The spirit of 'Daridranarayana' also suited socialist ideology. He made every educated person responsible for illiteracy in India, who after receiving education, forgets his brothers and sisters.
- He himself laid foundation of the **Ramakrishna Mission** (1896). He inspired the Sanyasis to work for mankind instead of renouncing the world.
 - Mystical movement of Ramkrishna ultimately acquired the character of a kind of a monastic order under Vivekananda. Its objective was making India stronger again; culturally, intellectually, socially.
 - "*Give me 100 energetic young men and I shall transform India*"
- Vivekananda edited **Prabuddha Bharat** (in English) and **Prabodhini** (in Bengali)

He inspired thousands of educated Indians, especially Hindus and helped them in developing self-confidence. No other social reformer inspired the educated Hindus so much as Vivekananda. He died long ago (1902) but his movement is alive. "Swami Vivekananda saved Hinduism and saved India. But for him we would have lost our religion and would not have gained our freedom." – C Rajagopalachari



Sister Nivedita (Margaret Noble, 1867-1911) was an Irish disciple of Swami Vivekanand. She ran girls' school in Calcutta and engaged herself in famine relief activity. She took an active interest in promoting Indian history, culture, and science. She toured India to appeal to the youth to spend life selflessly in the service of nation. She was closely associated with Anushilan Samiti revolutionaries and Aurobindo. She inspired artists like Abanindranath Tagore, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Nandalal Bose and E. B. Havell to develop a pure Indian school of art. She encouraged Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose to pursue pure science. She introduced Vande Mataram song as a school prayer.

Speech delivered by Swami Vivekananda on September 11, 1893, at the first World's Parliament of Religions.

Sisters and Brothers of America,

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world, I thank you in the name of the mother of religions, and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

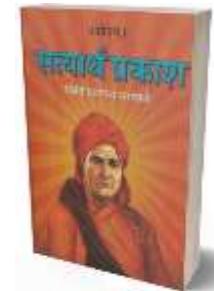
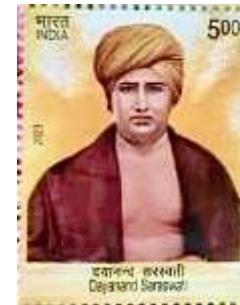
My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honor of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: "As the different streams having their sources in different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: "Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling

through paths which in the end lead to me." Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) and Arya Samaj

- His childhood name was **Mulshankar**. He was born in Morbi, Gujarat in 1824.
 - He strongly argued for the **infallibility of Vedas** as the true foundation of Hinduism. He considered them the fountainhead of all knowledge and full of scientific thinking. He gave slogan of **Go Back to Vedas**, but he endorsed the Varna system of the Vedas. But his approach was not revivalist. He criticized all the social evils based on the Vedic system. He made an attack on religious ritualism like idol worship, temple cult, clericalism etc, and rejected social evils like Sati system, untouchability, caste system, child marriage etc. He supported women's education and inter-caste marriages.
 - His motto, 'Go back to the Vedas' threatened to rout the vested interests of priests and they even conspired to assassinate him. In 1863, he hoisted the **Pakhand Khandini** flag.
- **Satyarth Prakash** (Hindi, Benaras, 1875)
 - The central theme of Dayanand's exposition was his **dualist doctrine** of mind and matter. To him, God and the human soul were two absolutely separate forces in the creation and functioning of the universe. According to him, every man must take full responsibility of his action. Nevertheless, he accepted the traditional Hindu doctrines of **transmigration of soul** and **karma**.
- Though he promoted revivalism & traditionalism, he was also influenced by the west.
 - In certain matters he was impressed with the achievement of the west. He praised **discipline & dedication** among western people to their religion.
 - Like Christianity, which is based on a **single text**, Dayanand also made similar attempt to make the whole of Hinduism based completely on Vedas.
 - He applied the **western scientific temper and rationalism** against the west itself.



- When Dayanand Saraswati came to Bombay in 1874, he met Mahadev Govind Ranade, and with his help the **Arya Samaj** was founded in **1875** at Bombay.

- The Arya Samaj movement was basically a **revivalist movement**, which wanted to revive the ancient Aryan tradition in modern times because the Samaj felt that these principles were not time-bound. There was **no room for idol worship** in Arya Samaj. Rather, Vedic sacrifices were given central position. **Welfare of entire mankind** was the objective and in social matters there was belief in the fatherhood of God, brotherhood of man, equality of gender, social justice to all.
- It started as a reaction against Islam, Christianity, and Western thought. It attempted to **defend Hindu culture and wanted to reform it from within**.
- Earlier Arya Samaj was active in Maharashtra, but it gained wider acceptance in Punjab and UP. He shifted the HQ to **Lahore** in 1877.
- In the early years, Dayanand Saraswati tried to come to terms with Brahmo Samaj and even arranged a conference in Calcutta in 1869. But the attempt failed. Soon, Arya Samaj **surpassed Brahmo Samaj in Punjab**.



As 19th century drew to the close, the intonation began to change. From the intellectual revivalism of Dayanand Saraswati it became more preoccupied with the question of proselytization (Shuddhi). After Dayananda, this movement was **divided into two factions** in 1893:

College faction	Moderate and more progressive	Lala Lajpat Rai, Lala Hansraj	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concentrated on setting up Dayanand Anglo-Vedic Colleges. First one setup in Lahore in 1886.
Gurukul faction	More revivalist in nature	Lala Lekhram, Lala Munshiram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on Brahmacharya and Vedas. Founded Gurukul in Haridwar in 1902. Raised issues like adoption of Devnagari script and ban on cow slaughter. Encouraged Shuddhi reconversion and Sanghatan movement.

- Limitations:**

- Among Indian scholars, Dayanand was different in the sense that he never came in touch with western education. While reacting to the cultural invasion of Christianity, he came to be excessively hostile to the western elements.

- He tried to reform Hinduism, but he found all collective wisdom in Vedas only. So, Arya Samaj over time became a revivalist movement. He gave a slogan 'Back to the Vedas', but the belief in varna system didn't inspire lower class Hindus for whom Vedas couldn't provide a respectable place.
- Although, even other Hindu reformers gave emphasis to the glory of ancient India, Arya Samaj gave too much emphasis to the achievements of ancient India while drawing a line of demarcation between ancient & medieval India. One was identified with Hindus and another with Muslims. So, it indirectly encouraged a degree of communal consciousness.
- Above all, the Shuddhi movement started by Swami Dayanand became a major factor behind rise of pan-Indian Hindutva later. Lala Munshiram (**Swami Shraddhanand**) played a key role in Shuddhi and Sanghatan movement in 1920s. He was assassinated by Abdul Rashid.



Arya Samaj as a social reform and social service movement is still alive. In post-independent India, it was more involved in organizing/arranging inter-caste marriage and freeing the bonded labour. The work done by Swami Agnivesh in this field is truly commendable.



Shiv Narayan Agnihotri (1850-1929) founded the **Dev Samaj** in 1886 in Lahore, rejecting Brahmo rationalism and drawing on the concept of the Guru as an enlightened soul as its central tenet. He still retained elements of Brahmo reformism/radicalism.

Theosophical Society

- The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 at New York by **Madam H.P. Blavatsky** (1831-1891), a Russian-German lady, and **Col. H.S. Olcott** (1832-1907), an American. These were some western scholars who were influenced by Indian culture and thinking.
- Basic idea
 - To **revive the ancient religions of Asia**, mainly Hinduism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. The Theosophy did not believe in differences between these religions.
 - To attain knowledge of God by spiritual ecstasy, direct intuition, propagating Hindu beliefs, reincarnation and karma; drawing inspiration from the philosophy of the Upanishads-Samkhya, Yoga and Vedanta school of thought.
 - A theosophist could be of any religion and without giving up his earlier faith could become a Theosophist. In its meetings, prayers of all religions were organised.
 - However, Madame Blavatsky's main emphasis had been on the occult than spiritual. She composed a text, *Isis Unveiled*. It became the key text of the movement.
- Though **Adyar** (near Madras) became its headquarters in 1882, Blavatsky lived mostly in London and Olcott in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) where he propagated Buddhism. The Theosophical society flourished with the arrival of Madame Annie Besant, an Irish lady. She joined the Theosophical Society in 1882 and came to India in 1893 after the death of Madam Blavatsky. Dr. Besant became the **President of The Theosophical Society in 1907**, after the death of O.S. Olcott.
 - She was impressed by the Hindu culture and adopted Hindu way of life – its dress, food and social manners. She **preached Bhagvad Gita**, wrote a commentary on the Ramayana and Mahabharata.
 - She founded the **Central Hindu School** in Banaras in **1898** with the purpose of teaching Hinduism to Hindus and giving Hinduism a spearhead thus ensuring its future. Later, in 1915, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya developed the same school into a **BHU** in 1916.
- Though this society could not influence the masses, it gave a sense of confidence among the Indians regarding their culture.





Political Activities of Annie Besant

- She dedicated herself in politics in later part of her life.
- She joined Indian National Congress in 1915 and became its first woman **President in 1917** (Calcutta).
- She was also instrumental in **bringing Tilak back into Congress** at Lucknow session (1916).
- She also started the **Home Rule League** in 1916 on the pattern of the Irish Home Rule League and propagated progressive views through her newspaper '**New India**' and '**Common Weal**'.

Handout 21: Women's Movement in 19th c

Nikhil Sheth

"All nations have attained greatness only by paying respect to its women. That country and that nation that do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever in future. The principal reason why your race is so much degraded is that you had no respect for these living images of Shakti." – Vivekananda.

The subjection of Indian women in the pre-British Period was rooted in the social, religious, economic and political structure of that period. Many social evils against women were being practised in Indian society. The practice of Sati, Child marriage, polygamy, female infanticide, deprivation from education and other basic human rights, deprivation of a widow from a second marriage as well as of the right to inherit property, were only some of the common evils.

Factors which encouraged reformers for social upliftment of women

- **Positive impact of British rule**
 - British introduced capitalist economy, and the legal and political regime based on the principles of the individual equality and freedom, at least theoretically. It did not recognize the inequalities based on birth, sex, caste or community. Western education, western liberal thought, modern institutions, modern means of transportation and communication played a positive role in the emancipation of women.
- **Challenge of the civilizational critique by the West**
 - British scholar James Mill declared that only such civilization can be characterized as progressive under which the condition of women is good. On this basis, Indian civilization was denounced by both British reformers & James Mill. So, Indian reformers took it as a challenge for working for the upliftment of women's condition.
- **Overall social reform agenda:**
 - Almost all social reformers of the nineteenth and the twentieth century gave attention to the issue of women emancipation and their rights. It was ardently felt that most of the social evils were deeply associated with the poor condition of women in India such as the caste system, infanticide, untouchability etc. Improved condition of women would automatically remove most other social ills.

Specific Reforms

Initiatives by male reformers: from RRM Roy to Dayanand Saraswati, almost all advocated the eradication of deplorable social condition of women. They generally depended on the government support to ban social evils through various penal provisions.

- **Restriction on female infanticide:** This was a very heinous social crime. Earlier the steps had been taken by the company to ban it on the basis of Bengal Regulation of 1795 and that of 1804 but serious efforts to ban it in practice started in 1830s.
- **Abolition of Sati system:** RRM started a campaign, then in 1829 at the initiative of Bentinck, Sati system was banned in Bengal. In 1830, it was extended to Madras and Bombay as well.
- **Window Remarriage Act of 1856:** The right of widows to remarry was strongly advocated by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in Bengal and by Malabari, Narmad, Justice Ranade and K. Natrajan in Bombay. Due to their consistent efforts, Lord Dalhousie's Government passed The Widow Remarriage Act in 1856. Hindu widows now started being permitted legally to remarry, contrary to what the Shastras permitted.
 - In Madras, Veereshlingam continuously fought for promotion of widow remarriage.
 - Likewise, in Bombay, DK Karve consistently made efforts to encourage widow remarriage.
- **Child Marriage:** Almost all reformers denounced this social evil and demanded government initiative to ban it.
 - Due to the efforts of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, age of consent was fixed at 10 in the Indian Penal Code of 1860.
 - In 1872, the **Christian Marriage Act** was enacted to raise the marriage age of boys and girls to 18 and 14 years respectively.
 - Later, in 1876, **Brahmo Marriage Act** was introduced.
 - Further, in 1891, at the initiative of *Behramji Malabari*, **Age of Consent Bill** was introduced to increase the age from 10 to 12.
 - Behramji Malbari published his messages in "Notes on Infant marriage and enforced widowhood" in 1884.
 - Malabari through his journal 'Indian Spectator', created awareness and argued how child marriage was eroding the Hindu race at its roots.



Narmadashankar

Dave (Narmad, 1833-86) was a student at Elphinstone Institute. He is considered to be the founder of modern Gujarati literature. His newsletter Dandiyo propagated the social reform cause, including widow remarriage. His poem Jai Jai Garavi Gujarat is now the state anthem of Gujarat.

- Later at the initiative of Harvilas Sharada (an Arya Samajist), Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 (**Sharada Act**) was passed to increase age for both boys (18) and girls (14) for marriage.
- These developments not only improved the social condition of women but also sent a message across, that everything is achievable if only one fights for it.

- **Anti-Devdasi movement**

- The institution of temple prostitution (Devdasi) was prevalent in different parts of India, especially in South India, as their temples had a kind of grandeur to them. Devdasis formed a hereditary caste of women who consecrated themselves in early childhood to temple service. In the guise of dancing and singing they worked or were rather, forced to work, as prostitutes in the temple.
- **Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi**, a social reformer, started a movement against this practice, which resulted in a ban on trafficking of minors (1925).

- **Women education:**

- The **Wood's Dispatch** (1854) and the **Hunter Commission** (1882) recommended encouragement of women education, but more than the State, the social reformers and the Christian missionaries opened schools for girls and put these good intentions into actual practice.
- European Efforts: The **Church Missionary Society** started the first boarding school for girls in Tirunelveli in 1821.
- Indian social reformers gave great importance to women education because they believed that education brought with it, awareness, and self-confidence.

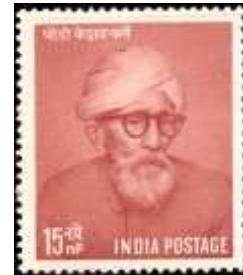
- Bengal

- **Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar**, with the help of John Elliot Drinkwater (JED) Bethune, founded the first school for girls, 'Hindu Balika Vidyalaya', in May 1849, for the girls of high caste families. It was later renamed as **Bethune School** in 1856.
- Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar did a lot in the field of women education in the status of the supervisor of Bethune school, he laid the foundation of at least 35 girls' schools. Vidyasagar succeeded, to a great extent, in removing the prejudices against female education in the country.



- Western India

- The alumni of Elphinstone college at Bombay took initiative to promote girls' education.
- **Mahatma Phule and Savitribai Phule** started first girls' school at Bhidewada in Pune in 1848.
- **(Maharshi) Dhondo Keshav Karve** started India's first women's university SNDT in 1916 at Pune.



- Widespread poverty of the majority of Indian population became one of the major hurdles in the growth of women's education. Yet, the steady growth of women's education was reflected in the fact that the number of girls attending schools rose from 12.3 lakh in 1917 to 28.9 lakh in 1937.

The process of social reform for women took a new turn when the nationalist movement started and women, especially in Gandhian movement, joined it. Thousands of women took active part in political mass movement, picketing of liquor shops, marching in demonstrations, courting jails, facing lathi-charges and even bullets. Many of them worked as ministers, under-secretaries and Deputy Speakers of provincial legislatures when Congress governments were formed in 1937. Indian women also became members of local boards and municipalities. Thus, a new awakening took place among the Indian women. Now, they were ready to write their own destiny.



Speaking to the Indian Social conference at Calcutta in 1906, **Sarojini Naidu** said, "instruction may mean accumulation of knowledge, but education is an immeasurable, beautiful and indispensable atmosphere in which we live and move and have our being... How then shall a man dare to deprive a human soul of its immemorial inheritance of liberty and life? Your fathers, in depriving your mothers of that birthright, have robbed you, their sons, of your just inheritance. Therefore, I charge you restore to your women their ... rights... you are, therefore, not the real nation-builders... Educate your women and the nation will take care of itself..."



That there was a sense of great achievement among women and of new spaces opening up for them was beautifully put by the Tamil nationalist poet **Subramanya Bharati** in his poem, "**The Dance of Liberation**", in 1920

Dance! Rejoice!

*Those who said it is evil for women to touch books are dead.
The lunatics who said they would lock women in their houses,
cannot show their faces now.*

Achievements and Limitations of the Women's Reforms

- Gradually, women joined the mainstream of Indian life and their social condition slightly improved.
 - First two female graduates in India were from Calcutta University – Kadambini Ganguly and Chandramukhi Basu.
 - **Kadambini Ganguly** was also the first female speaker in Indian National Congress.
- **Limitations:**
 - The early 19th century women's upliftment programme was **initiated by male reformers** and high caste Hindus.
 - So, it was not a complete program for female empowerment in modern sense. The reformers couldn't become free from the impact of patriarchy. They were inclined to work for the social upliftment of women, but they were not ready to encourage women liberation.
 - The reforms were **initiated from above** without creating a proper social climate for that so they proved less effective.
 - Even after the abolition of sati system, the sati system was still idealized in common consciousness and folk literature.
 - In spite of legal ban to widow remarriage, only 38 widows get married in whole 19th century. (eg even today we take dowry...)
 - It was the failure of the reforms movement that the question of women came to be **viewed within the sectarian boundary**. So, even today the Hindus could talk about the issues of their own women & Muslim reformers have to work for Muslim women. So, finally, the objective of a uniform civil code became a distant dream.

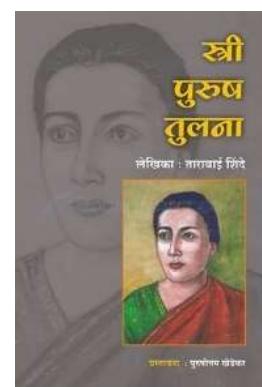
Women Reformers

Women reformers came forward in this regard only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. They had begun to think, speak, and act themselves. *The challenged the notion of women being mere subjects for liberal law and education.*

Western India

- **Savitribai Phule** along with her husband founded the first girls school in Pune.
 - Savitribai Phule chose poetry on education, women's liberty and oppression of the lower castes were recurrent themes.
 - She wrote a *powada* (ballad) on English language and prayers to speak of the injustice done to the untouchable Shudra castes.
- **Pandita Ramabai:** She was a Sanskrit scholar and social reformer. She remained active in Maharashtra and led the foundation of a widow ashrama.
 - In 1878, Calcutta University conferred on her the titles of **Pandita** and **Sarasvati** in recognition of her knowledge of various Sanskrit works.
 - She founded **Arya Mahila Samaj** to promote women education and campaign against child marriage.
 - She converted to **Christianity** in 1880s in England. She **translated Bible**, from original Hebrew/Greek into Marathi.
 - She toured in the USA to collect funds for destitute Indian women. With the funds raised she started **Sharada Sadan** for child widows in Pune, in which MG Ranade also helped her. The more famous orphanage, **Mukti Mission** (salvation) opened at Kedgaon in 1898.
 - She wrote **Stri Dharma Niti** and **High-Caste Hindu Woman**.
 - She was one of the 10 women delegates to the Congress Session of 1889.
- **Tarabai Shinde:**
 - In 1882, Tarabai Shinde's book, **Stree Purush Tulana** generated heated discussions in public. It was a critique of patriarchy and caste system. She questioned the status of women in society. She insisted that the faults, commonly ascribed to women, such as superstition, suspicion, treachery and insolence, could be as much found in men.

This book is considered as the first modern feminist book in India. Her exploration of deep-seated connections to religion, caste, and patriarchal norms — was an unexplored territory till then.



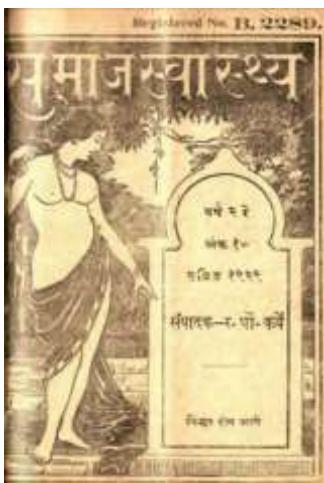
Eastern India:

- Rabindranath Tagore's sister **Swarnakumari Debi** launched "Sakhi Samiti" with the aim of training widows to learn, to teach and thus become the most powerful agents of spreading education among women in 1886.
- **Begum Rokeya Shekhawat:**
 - At her initiative, girls' schools were founded at Patna and Calcutta
- **Aghorekamini Nari Samiti** was based in Bengal. It adhered to empower women through spread of education among them. It campaigned against ill-treatment of women workers by the tea planters.
- **Banga Mahila Vidyalaya** (Bengali Women's College), established at Kolkata in 1876, was the *first women's liberal arts college* in India.
- **Kamini Roy** was a great Indian feminist. She took part in the Ilbert Bill agitation. She worked with Banga Mahila Samiti in their social reform projects.



South India

- **Sister Subbulakshmi:** She was a Christian missionary and social reformer who dedicated her life to education and the welfare of women in Tamil Nadu. She played a crucial role in establishing schools and empowering women through education.



RD Karve (1882-1953) was a pioneer in initiating family planning and birth control for masses in Mumbai in 1921. Because of his views about family planning, population control, and women's right to experience sexual/sensual pleasure as much as men he had to face opposition from the conservative elements in society.

- Karve started the very first birth control clinic in India in 1921, the same year when the first birth control clinic opened in London.
- He started a Marathi magazine *Samaj Swasthya* in 1927 where he discussed issues of society's well-being through population control through use of contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies and induced abortions. He promoted responsible parenting by men, gender equality, and women's empowerment and right to experience sexual/sensual pleasure.
- Three cases were slapped against him for 'spreading vulgarity'. Instead of encouraging Karve's humanitarian work, leaders of various religions had come together to pull him down. Dr BR Ambedkar defended him in one of these cases.

Revivalist Movement

In the 19th century, the decline of the Mughal Empire, the Muslims increasingly became politically insignificant. With the rise of British Colonialism, there was an arrival of Christian missionaries, the political reassertion of Hindus. While the Hindus were quick to accept Western education, the Muslims refused to accept it. Thus, Muslims came under the influence of English education and western ideas very late. So, they were carried away by a revivalist spirit which sought to revive the past and purify Islam.

There were two effective revivalist movements in the early part of the 19th century India:

1. Faraizi/Faraidi Movement in Eastern Bengal

- a. The Faraizi movement was a peasant-cum-religious movement. It earned the name from Arabic word-'Farz' (duty).
- b. It was organised in eastern Bengal under the leadership of **Hazi Sariyattullah** and his son Dadu Miya.
- c. Religious Aspect
 - i. On his return to India from Hajj in 1799, where he was influenced by Wahabism, Shariatullah conjectured that the Muslims of India had been declining as a community mainly since they were practicing Islam, which borrowed rituals from Hinduism and Sufism.
 - ii. They preached a change in the mode of dress to distinguish the Muslims from the non-Muslims.
 - iii. The movement wanted Bengali Muslims to follow pure Islam by discarding borrowings from other religions like worship at Muslim shrines, floating of the bhera (ceremonial boat), ceremonial dances, planting of banana trees (phallic symbols) around the house on the first menstruation of a girl.
 - iv. The Faraizis suspended Friday and Id prayers thinking of India under the British as dar-al-harb (enemy's territory) where these prayers are not required.
- d. Economic Aspect
 - i. The movement was organised against local zamindars (mostly Hindus) and the British indigo planters. It enjoyed the support of local peasants who were the main sufferers under the British rule. To mobilise the Muslim peasant, its leaders used religious symbols.
 - e. The movement under the leadership of Dadu Miyan, son of Haji Shariat-ul-Allah, became revolutionary. He organised the movement from village to the provincial level with a Khalifa (authorised deputy) at each level. He organised a para-military force to fight the goons of landlords and the police. He was arrested many times, but after his death in 1862 his movement survived only as a religious movement.

2. Wahabi Movement in North India (Tariqa-e-Muhammadiya)

- a. Teachings of Abd al-Wahab influenced by the Delhi school of Islam. Its objective was to purify Islam by getting rid of any Sufi and Hindu influences, introduce sharia

laws and to restore Dar-ul Islam in India. This movement was led by **Sayyid Ahmad Barelvī**.

- b. A nationwide organisation with an elaborate secret code for its working under spiritual vice-regents (Khalifas) was set up, and Sindh in north western tribal belt was chosen as a base for operations. Since Dar-ul-Harb (the land of kafirs) was to be converted into Dar-ul-Islam (the land of Islam), a jihad was declared against the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab. Thus, initially, this movement was against Sikhs in Punjab.
- c. Sayyid Ahmed paid a visit to Calcutta in 1820 and gained immense popularity. When the British conquered Punjab in 1849, the Wahabi movement targeted the British as well.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Aligarh Movement

- Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-98), the founder of the Aligarh movement is a leading figure in the stream of Muslim movement. He worked as a magistrate in the British Government and was posted at different places in the United Province (U.P.). His organised movement to reform the Muslim society was started from Aligarh and was, therefore, called the Aligarh movement.



- **Literary Work:**

- Sir Ahmad Khan edited "**Tehzeeb-ul-Akhlaq**", a monthly journal.
- He was pioneer in prose writing in Urdu language. He wrote two famous books in Urdu- **Asbab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind** (1858) and Asar-us-Sanadid (on Delhi's architecture)

- **Education reform:**

- The failure of the revolt of 1857 was a great shock for Indians in general and elite (Ashraf) Muslims, in particular. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan represented the elite Muslims. He was quick to learn that the only way to survive for Muslims was to modernise their institutions and be loyal to the British rule.
- The ground-work was done at Ghazipur (Eastern U.P.) itself where in 1864, he founded a **modern school and scientific society** to popularise western sciences among Muslims in India. The society translated works on physical sciences into Urdu, the language of masses in northern India.
- **Trip to the west:** During a trip to England in 1869, Sayyid Ahmad was impressed by British technology, high literacy rates, and a sense of achievement. He believed that cultural superiority and worldly success were connected. He thought that older educated Muslims in India held positions of power, but now, Englishmen in England had exclusive access to equivalent education. Sayyid Ahmad aimed to spread education in India while merging religion and education together.

- **British Support:**

- Sayyid Ahmad's concept aligned well with the colonial policy outlined in Hunter's Indian Mussalmans, which aimed to educate a new generation of Muslims with Western knowledge while retaining familiarity with their own religious principles.

- Sayyid Ahmad's efforts to promote English education among Muslim elites received significant support from the British. The Aligarh College received a personal donation of Rs 10,000 from Viceroy Lord Northbrooke.
 - Sir Sayyid Ahmad was regarded by the British as a champion and representative of the Muslim community.
 - Getting support of British was easier but to garner favourable opinion among Muslim Ashraf class was difficult. He had to **re-interpret Quran** according to current context of Muslim life to persuade Muslims to accept the western education.
 - In 1886, he founded the **Mohammedan Anglo-oriental Conferences** with a view to
 - Enrich the Urdu language through translations of valuable scientific works. Exert political pressure for the acceptance of Urdu as the secondary language in all government and private schools;
 - Emphasise on women education for the development of future generations;
 - Formulate a policy for higher education of Muslim students in Europe.
 - Foundation of **Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental college** (1875) to spread modern education among Muslim youths.
- Notions of Nationalism: He advised the Muslims to keep **away from anti-British movement**. With Theodore Beck, he formed **United India Patriotic Association**.
 - Sayyid Ahmad aimed to foster a sense of Muslim solidarity and promote a **qaum** (nation, community) mentality among Aligarh students. He sought to demonstrate that Muslims were loyal rather than hostile to British rule. Sayyid Ahmad advised Muslims to **distance themselves from the Indian National Congress** and expressed concern that Muslims would be marginalized in a representative political system with Hindu population as majority. Thus, unfortunately, from the start, Syed Ahmad Khan and the Aligarh movement fell victim to the **misguided belief that development for Muslims could only be achieved through a pro-British policy**.
 - Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan held a hostile stance towards the Indian National Congress, leading to the Muslim reforms movement taking a separate path from the mainstream national movement. This has led many historians to view him as a **pioneer of Muslim separatism and a precursor to the concept of the two-nation theory**. However, in one of his notable speeches, Sir Sayyid emphasized the importance of both Hindus and Muslims, comparing them to the **two beautiful eyes of a bride**, and asserting their equal indispensability.
 - What is also important is the success and significance conferred on these ventures by **colonial patronage**.

Deoband Movement

- This school, founded by **Md. Qasim Nanotavi** (1833-77) and **Abdul Rashid Ghangohi** (1829-1905) believed in traditional Islamic thought and was opposed to the British system. The real aim of this school was to reestablish contact between the alim (scholars) and the average Muslims and to reorientate the Muslim Community to its original cultural and religious identity.
- They were veterans of the 1857 Revolt, and attempted to train students in Islamic learning, but along the lines of **western style**, leading to the emergence of a 'Protestant Islam'. The seminary they set up at Deoband took its curriculum from an earlier one in the *farangi mahal* (foreign quarters) of Lucknow. It was a **traditionalist course** of studies, whereas modern science was being ignored.
- They wanted to build a **bridge between Islamic and the modern western rationalist school**.
 - They hoped that a student, if he so wished, could join a modern school or university after completing his theological education at Deoband. Thus, Deoband School regarded itself as an institution, complementary and preliminary to modern westernised schools.
 - Although it was modelled entirely on western educational institutional structures, the Deoband Seminary actually played a **significant role in developing a unified and orthodox Islam in India**. The seminary produced *madrassa* teachers and became prominent at a later stage, for the number of *fatwas* it issued.
- The Deoband group, maintained a "**muted anti-British temper**," and generally supported **Congress** nationalism in the twentieth century.
 - They criticized Sayyid Ahmad's Aligarh school, his theological innovations, and his loyalty to the British. In fact, they even issued a **Fatwa against Saiyyad Ahmad Khan**.
 - **Maulana Abul Kalam** was affiliated with this movement.
 - The Deobandis vehemently **opposed the two-nation theory** advocated by the Muslim League and Mohammad Ali Jinnah, which led to the creation of Pakistan.



Other movements among Muslims

- **Ahl-e-Hadis movement**
 - It emerged in mid-19th century as an offshoot of Tariqa-e-Muhammadiya movement of the 18th century. It was led by Nawab Siddaq Hasan Khan (of Bhopal) and Syed Nazir Hussain.
 - It rejected everything introduced into Islam after Qur'an, Sunnah, Hadith and the early eras. It was most well known for its vehement opposition to veneration of sufi saints.
- **Ahmadiya Movement**
 - Founded by **Mirza Gulam Ahmad** in the later half of the 19th century in a place called Qazini in Punjab. This movement, which checked the growth of Shuddhi

movement and Christianity. It defended Islam from Arya Samaj and Christian missionaries.

- In 1889, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad declared himself as 'Masih', and '**Mahdi**' (a minor prophet). Later, he also declared himself as incarnation of Krishna and Jesus. The majority of the Muslims, however, opposed both Ghulam Ahmad and his followers known as Ahmadiyas or Qadiyanis. Slowly it became a distinct sect in Islam. However, in Pakistan they are treated as non-Muslims.
- **Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani's *Pan-Islamism*** (inherently anti-nationalist)
 - Jamal Afghani from Iran believed that embracing Western education could empower Muslims to overcome Western imperialism and establish a global Islamic caliphate.
 - He criticized those who rejected modern education, but he viewed Muslims as a united global community (ummah). Afghani criticized Sir Syed for focusing solely on the situation of Indian Muslims and argued that they should be seen as part of a global Muslim community.

Handout 23: Caste Movements (19th century)

Nikhil Sheth

The socio-religious reforms movements of the 19th c were initially organized by the Indian elites and high caste Hindus. So, inspite of criticism of caste system and untouchability, no serious effort was made to bring some practical solution. So, it was the lower caste intellectuals who took the issues related to equality and social upliftment directly into their hands.

Caste Movement expressed mainly in two forms:

- **Sanskritization** (caste mobility)
- **Radical social protest** (rejection of caste system)

Sanskritization:

- Some caste groups placed at the relatively lower level of caste hierarchy claim superior ritual status by following the upper caste behavioural norms, by accepting the taboos that the upper caste practiced. This is an **emulation of Brahmanical norms** relating to *private behavior or public postures*.
 - e.g. imitation of social practices such as sati, child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage, temperance etc.
- Usually, such initiates toward Sanskritization come from **relatively affluent sections** among the lower castes.
- Sanskritization was a **traditional method**. It had been continuing in Indian society for a long stretch of time. E.g. formation of Rajputs.
- Claiming ritual status on the basis of certain traditional behavioural norms also involved a certain **degree of revivalism** as well. Because invariably many of these caste groups actually would visualize a fairly respectable position of theirs in the past which they sought to restore. Example the **cow protection movement** in northern India.



- **Mhishya Movement (South and southwest Bengal)**
 - Sections of the Kaivarta community (a lower caste group) became materially wealthy and started claiming Kshatriya status claiming that they were offspring of Kshatriya rulers. started to call themselves Mahishya.
 - In 1897, they formed 'Jati Nirdharni Sabha'. In 1901, they established the central Mahishya Committee.
- Similar aspirations of claiming superior Kshatriya status was seen in **Rajbanshis** of **northern Bengal**.
- **Namshudra Movement:** A different kind of movement was of **Namshudra peasants in eastern Bengal**
 - These peasants belonged to a very low strata of the caste hierarchy.
 - They were historically classified as a lower-caste Hindu community, faced social discrimination and economic deprivation.
 - Unlike the Mahishyas, who could be admitted into the Brahmin households, the Namshudras were actually debarred from entering into Brahmin households and with them the Brahmins had no physical connection or touch
 - The Namashudra movement aimed to address social and economic discrimination and assert their rights and dignity. They became very organized. Led by reformers like **Harichand Thakur** (1812-78) and **Guruchand Thakur** in the 19th century, the it sought to challenge the caste-based hierarchy and advocate for social equality.
 - Political significance was a major catalyst.
 - **Social Reform:** They emphasized education, social upliftment, and empowerment of the Namshudras through their teachings and writings.
 - **Sanskritization:** Aspirations even among the Namshudras were in part adoption of the behavioral norms of the upper caste. They asked their women not to go to the fields, not to serve in other households etc.
 - **Religious Reform:** **Matua protest sect.** It aimed to liberate the Namashudras from the dominance of higher-caste Hindus and promote an inclusive and egalitarian interpretation of Hinduism. This included challenging discriminatory practices and rituals imposed upon the community. This movement inherited some protestant elements of popular Vaishnavism of Bengal.
 - So, there was certain amount of transcendence of radicalism over Sanskritization. This movement thus tried to break the limitations of Sanskritization and acquired a more protestant, a more radical dimension, where Brahmanical orthodoxy was not only challenged but was sought to be subverted.

Radical Social Protest: Non-Brahmin Movements

However, not all castes at all times followed this same behavioural trajectory. One cannot simply apply this framework for entire India because Indian society has a very strong regional feature. Caste movement used Sanskritization in varied manner to fulfil aspirations for mobility. At times, depending on situations, depending on the kind of leadership of the caste groups, the materially affluent section among some of these caste groups went against the Brahminical orthodoxy. They felt confident and powerful enough to challenge the Brahmanical domination and broke the limitations of Sanskritization. These were movements which instead of seeking positional changes within the caste system, questioned the fundamentals of this social organisation, the most notable of them being the non-Brahman movements in western and southern India and some of the more radical movements among the dalit groups.

Apart from Sanskritization, there were **other avenues of social mobility** and claiming superior ritual status. British rule came with a certain opportunity for the low caste people.

- Colonial rule disengaged caste system from its pre-colonial contexts:
 - **Land** became a marketable commodity.
 - **Equality before law** became the established principle of judicial administration.
 - Opportunities that are created by the **new educational system** which was open to all.
 - **Public employment** was thrown open to all.
- **Christianity** provided many of these low caste groups with the possibility of an escape from a social order dominated by Brahminical orthodoxy.
- Beginning of **caste surveys, census operations** which enumerated and classified the population on all-India basis.

Maharashtra

Jyotiba Phule took the lead and raised lower caste issues.

- He came from Mali (gardener) caste, the people who were Untouchables but who were becoming prosperous over time, got education and this education became a major incentive for him to claim a higher status for his community.
- His idea was to become more respectable but in order to establish their rights, Jotiba Phule was actually traveling back to history. He had a very **radical interpretation of caste problem** in India.
 - In his *Ballad of Raja Chatrapati Shivaji Bhonsale* (1869), Phule depicted all lower-caste people as the original inhabitants of India and forgotten descendants of the



heroic race of Kshatriyas. The King Bali was refigured as representing the utopias of beneficence, prosperity and casteless order.

- He proposed his own version of Aryan invasion theory. As the old warrior castes, bahujans had once enjoyed a respectable position of pre-eminence in the society. The invading Aryans were Vishnu worshipper and they defeated natives and converted them into Shudras. He thus believed that Aryans had instituted the caste system as a framework for subjugation.
- He introduced a Marathi word **dalit** (broken, crushed) as a descriptor for those people who were outside the traditional varna system.
- He sought to unite both the non-Brahman peasant castes as well as dalit groups in a common movement. He underplayed the social-differences that divided mali-kunbi, mang-mahar or Shudra-Ati-Shudra.

- He had a **cosmopolitan view**

- He kept an eye over developments in the US, was familiar with American civil war and abolition of slavery. In his book **Gulamgiri**, he compared the condition of African-American slaves with the status of low-caste Indians. In this book, he thanked Christian missionaries and the British colonists for making the exploited castes realize that they are worthy of all human rights.

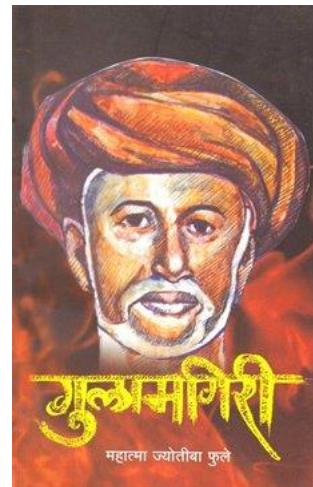
- He also supported the **cause of peasants**.

- In his book **Shetkaryancha Aasud** (1881), he analyzed the reasons behind the decline of Shudra peasants.

- He laid the foundation of **Satya Shodhak Samaj** (1873-74)

- Through this samaj, he **opposed idolatry, priestcraft and denounced the caste system**.
- Satyashodhak Samaj campaigned for the **spread of rational thinking** and modern education.
- Started to publish **Satya Shodhak journal**.

- Finally, he worked for **women education**, along with his wife Savitribai Phule. He championed **widow remarriage**. He established an **orphanage** to reduce the rate of **infanticide**.



Some more personalities:

- Later in Satara region Satya Shodhak Samaj progressed under **Mukundrao Patil**. Mukundrao Patil Published a journal **Dinmitra** from 1910 onwards.
- Later the leaders like **Keshavrao & Dinkarao Jawalakar** started to lead an 'Anti Brahmin Movement' in Poona.

- At the end of 19th Century, the Caste movement of Maharashtra started to be organized under the leadership of **Gopal Baba Walangkar**. He published the monthly journal **Vital-Vidhvansak** (destroyer of Brahmanical pollution) targeted at the Brahmanical Orthodoxy. It was the first journal in India with untouchable people as target reader group. In 1894, Walangkar presented a memorandum to the government in which he demanded status of Kshatriya & reservation in Jobs for 'Mahars'.

Over time, the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra split into two distinct tendencies.

- One was the kind of aspiration was to **claim a superior status in the past**. Some people tried to **rise up in the social hierarchy and in the ritual hierarchy**.
- The other was a **more radical tendency** which became an **attack on the caste system itself**. Subsequently, some of these men who participated in this kind of a social movement against casteism became linked with the Congress.

Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur (1874-1922)	Vitthal Ramji Shinde (1873-1944)
	
<p>He carried out various progressive reforms for the lower caste subjects of his state. Primary education to all regardless of caste and creed was one of his most significant priorities. He also ensured suitable employment for students thus educated, thereby creating one of the earliest affirmative action (50% reservation to weaker sections) programs in history.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He formed Depressed Classes Mission in 1906 in Bombay. In 1919 he gave evidence before the Southborough Franchise Committee, asking for the special representation for the untouchable castes. In his book Bhartiya Asprushyatecha Prashna (1933), he examined the Hindu religion and social culture to oppose the caste system, idol worship, meaningless rituals and inequities against women and depressed classes.

Dr. BR Ambedkar (1891-1956)

- During the early 20th century, the first graduate among Mahars i.e. Bhim Rao Ambedkar was active and he was radical in his approach also.
- He rejected the caste system and Brahmanic supremacy. He pleaded for the abolition of the practice of Mahars carrying waste and dead animals. He fought to abolish mahar vatans, to relieve Dalits of their socio-economic oppression.
- He participated/led in three satyagrahas for Dalits:
 - Kalaram temple entry movement, Nashik
 - Mahad Satyagraha for equal access to public tank, Colaba
 - Parvati temple entry movement, Pune
- In the first Round Table Conference, he raised the demand for separate electorate for untouchables on the ground that they are separate from Hindus.
- In 1956, he, along with 3.5-4 lakh followers became Buddhists and led to the formation of Navayan Buddhism.
- Newspaper
 - Mooknayak, Bahishkrit Bharat
- Books by Ambedkar
 - Castes in India
 - The Annihilation of Caste
 - Riddles in Hinduism
 - Who were the Shudras?
 - What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables
 - The Buddha and His Dhamma
 - Pakistan, or The Partition of India
- Parties and Organizations
 - Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha, Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Caste Federation



(more to be discussed later)

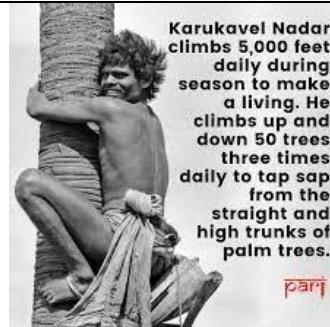
(a) Nadars were actually toddy-tappers. They were known as **Shanans** and they were untouchables. A section once they became somewhat wealthy through participation in commerce they wish to be known as **Nadars**. Over time they started a movement to gain respectability. They gradually transformed themselves—between the 1820s and the 1880s—from being ‘unclean toddy-tappers’ to ‘Kshatriya’ Nadars.

Nadar in the 18th century became exposed to Christianity. Some of them **became Christians** to become upwardly mobile. Others following the **model of Sanskritization claimed Kshatriya status** and tried to gain self-respect.

- The occasion for this transformation was a controversy over the wearing of breast cloths by the women of this caste in the 1820s. Nadar women had to fight for many decades from 1820s till 1850s to gain the right to wear upper garments in public (Channar revolt)
- Radical Shanans countered their unclean status by adopting the sacred thread, giving a twist to this symbol of prestige.
- They participated in the temple entry movements.
- Soon, they began to express their political ambition soon after.



Nangeli's sacrifice



Karukavel Nadar climbs 5,000 feet daily during season to make a living. He climbs up and down 50 trees three times daily to tap sap from the straight and high trunks of palm trees.

PARI

Toddy Tapper, Kerala
(PARI)

(b) Ezhava community once again was of toddy tappers. They also participated in the choir industry.

- By that time, it was a flourishing choir industry. Some of these Ezhavas became quite prosperous. They earned money by participating in coir trade and they got into these new institutions of learning. So just like among Nadars, you see rise of elites also among Ezhavas as well which was capable of challenging the forces of orthodoxy.
- They claimed a superior status and such claims came to be sustained by a certain degree of material prosperity which the Ezhava elites had acquired through participation in new professions, new educational system, through practice of medicine and ayurvedic lessons in Sanskrit schools.



A female labour working in coir industry

Ezhavas started a major movement under **Sri Narayan Guru** (1856-1928) in Travancore.

- In 1902-03 Shri Narayan Guru, Dr. Palpu (first Ezhava graduate) & a great Malayali poet, N. Kumaran Asan (disciple of Narayan Guru) formed an institution called **Sri Narayan Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNP Yogam)**, which worked for the social upliftment of Ezhavas.

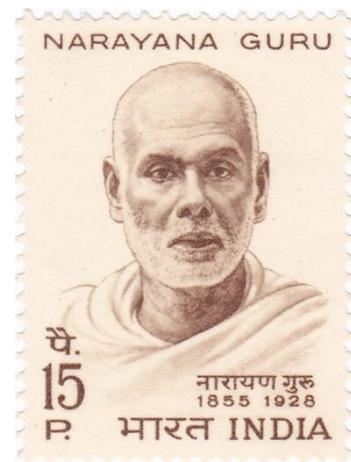
- Sri Narayana Guru focused on socio-economic empowerment and cultural reforms for the underprivileged. He navigated the challenges posed by caste Hindu rulers of Travancore, apathy of the British state and proselytization by missionaries.

- **Sanskritization**

- One of the main thrusts of this movement was to challenge the Brahmanical order by adopting their ritual codes for the Ezhava community.
- He asked his follower to discontinue toddy-tapping and prefer better professions.
- One of the ways to question the domination of the orthodoxy was to create their own institutions, they setup their own Shiva temples and Ezhava priests were administering spiritual needs of the fellow members SNP managed these temples. So, this movement operated within Sanskritization.

- But by the turn of the century, there was a **greater degree of radicalism** and there were attempts to cross the limits of Sanskritization.

- Narayan Guru had given a slogan 'one god, one religion, one caste'
 - "All human beings are born from a mother. Brahmin and Paraya both are born in the same way. Hence, they belong to the same Jathi, Narajathi (humankind)."
 - He said, "Ask not, say not, think not caste". Guru supported inter-caste marriages and inter-dining. He himself officiated several inter-caste marriages.
 - When he was stopped from entering the temple, his disciples started the temple entry movement for untouchables **Vaikom Satyagraha** in 1920s.
 - Guru proclaimed that there was no distinction of Religion or God between human beings and called upon people to abstain from violence and religious conflicts to promote universal peace, harmony and prosperity.
 - Guru convened the first religious parliament in Asia at Aluva Adwaitha Ashram on 10th February 1924 in which leaders of almost all religions took part.
- Later, they began to adopt more radical ideas and started using the language of atheism. His disciple **Sahodaran Ayyapan** said, "**no god no religion no caste.**"



Ayyankali (1863-1941) worked for the betterment of Pulayar community and removing disabilities of untouchables in Kerala.



Tamil Nadu

Similar patterns were visible in **Madras Presidency** where you see some **intermediate powerful groups** like the Nayars, Vellalas, and Kammas, who are powerful for reasons of material prosperity, who were English educated. They were intermediary groups who claimed superior status.

Here, **a distinct Dravidian identity** was sought to be forged as a counterpoint to Brahmanic dominance. The lead here was taken by members of the **Vellala** caste.

- In the late-nineteenth century Madras Presidency, the Brahmins, comprising only 3 percent of the population, held 42 percent of government jobs.
- They prided themselves on their education, especially in English, and viewed Sanskrit as a prestigious classical language, while dismissing Tamil, the language of the common people. This fueled the anti-Brahman movement in the south, where **Tamil language became a symbol of devotion and provoked strong emotions**.
- Additionally, the non-Brahman Tamil elite drew upon missionary and Orientalist **theories of the Aryan invasion** to argue that the caste system was not indigenous to the south, that it was an imposition by the Brahmins from the north who tried to colonize Tamil–Dravidian culture.

The anti-Brahman movement found its political forum in the **Justice Party** that came into being in 1916.

- Founded by Sir Pitti Theagaraya Chetty, Dr T M Nair, and Dr C Natesa Mudaliar.
- Consciously constituted as a party of non-Brahmans, the Justice Party published a Non-Brahman Manifesto and opposed the Congress and its political programme.
- The party showed its full loyalty to the colonial administration and vied for privileges offered by government-sponsored reforms. Indeed, it demanded separate representation for non-Brahmans in legislative councils, as had been granted to the Muslims in the Morley–Minto reforms of 1909.
- Following the allocation of reserved seats to non-Brahmans in the Montagu–Chelmsford reforms in 1919, the Justice Party contested the elections to the Madras Legislative Council, in open opposition to the Congress programme of non-cooperation. The Congress

had boycotted the elections. The Justice Party remained in power until 1926, and then from 1930-37.

However, it soon came into clashes with a **more militant group of non-Brahmans**, who had developed **non-Brahmanism** as a political theory and ideology, drawing upon the writings, in Telugu and Tamil, of **S. Raghavayya Chowdary** and **E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker** respectively.

E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker or Periyar (Great Man) (1879-1973)

- He joined Indian National Congress in 1919 and was associated with Gandhian Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920. Later he was disillusioned and started organising lower caste movements in **Self Respect movement**.(1925) It took a different political trajectory than Justice Party's stance. He was more radical and argued for overthrow of caste system altogether.
- He started a Tamil weekly journal called **Kudi Arasu** (People's Government) in 1925 and **Revolt** in English in 1928. Kudi Arasu became the main vehicle for propagating the political programme of the 'Self-Respect' movement.
- Father of Dravidian Movement
 - He promoted the principles of **rationalism, self-respect, and women's rights**.
 - He took a radical stand **against the caste system**.
 - He wanted to abolish untouchability. He took part in the **Vaikom Satyagraha**. He fought for access to temples and wells for all.
 - He promoted abandoning the usage of caste prefixes.
 - Marriage ceremonies performed by him himself without support of any Brahmin. (**self-respect marriages**)
 - Periodically, the movement organized dramatic assaults on religious and priestly symbols like beating of priest and idols with shoes, and burned sacred texts.
 - This was more radical than the Justice Party, which rebuffed Brahmins for their 'skills to pass exams'. He almost equated **anti-Brahminism** with **anti-Hinduism**.
 - In 1937, C Rajagopalachari (CM, Madras Presidency) introduced Hindi as a compulsory language in schools. It led to a series of **anti-Hindi agitations** which were supported by Ramasamy. He opposed the domination of Hindi and emphasised the distinct cultural identity of the Tamil nation.
 - In 1938, the Justice Party and Self-Respect Movement came together, representing the merger of the party and the movement and Ramasamy became the head of the **Justice Party**, and in 1944 it transformed into **Dravidar Kazhagam**.



- DK was anti-Brahmin, anti-Congress, and anti-Aryan (i.e. North Indian), and launched a movement for an independent Dravida nation. He advocated for an *independent Dravida Nadu*.

Iyoothee Thass (1845-1914) was a prominent anti-caste activist from Tamil Nadu. He famously converted to Buddhism and called upon the Paraiyars to do the same, arguing that this was their original religion. He had opposed Swadeshi Movement as led by Brahmins.



Later **Mahatma Gandhi** himself took the cause of the lower castes.

- He made anti-untouchability programme as a part of non-cooperation movement.
- After Civil disobedience movement, Gandhi fully concentrated over this question. The **Harijan upliftment programme** was organised under his guidance.
 - He formed an 'All India Harijan Sangh' in 1932.
 - In 1932 he formed an 'Anti Untouchable League'
 - Started to Publish a Journal 'Harijan'

Thakkar Bapa was another prominent leader of lower caste group. Gandhi called him 'Father of Harijans'.



Emergence of modern political consciousness

An ideology known as nationalism holds that all people have a shared cultural consciousness. It is when people in a country begin to think of themselves as being a part of a single family. The state becomes a nation when its citizens have a shared past heritage and when they believe that their future is also intertwined.

The spirit of modern Indian Nationalism emerged around the middle of 19th century due to a variety of factors. British rule with its direct and indirect consequences provided the material, moral, and intellectual conditions for the development of a national movement.

Unintended role of British colonial rule in creating modern Indian nationalism:

- **Politico integration** was carried to create an extensive British Indian empire.
- **Uniform laws, judicial system and administrative structure**
- **English education**
 - Western education was designed to colonize Indian mind and breed sense of loyalty. Initially Indians were impressed, moved, and spellbound due British material progress.
 - In reality, Indians selectively appropriated English education and learnt political rights and Enlightenment philosophy they acquired the ability to study the foreign evil and soon started crafting criticism of colonialism.
 - a. They started using the language of politics that they had imbibed through their exposure to Western political ideals.
 - b. It was through their engagement with Western political thought that they espoused nationalism as a legitimate political ideal for the Indians to achieve a status of equality with the West.
 - English language emerged as lingua-franca of the rising intelligentsia.
- **Rail, telegraph and unified postal networks** were created for tighter control over India and to facilitate more efficient exploitation. However, it also gave rise to pan-Indian contacts and strengthened Indian unity. It made possible new associations, bonds, idea of unified India.
- **Modern Press** was originally started by some disgruntled British India officers to fulfil their own interest.

These initiatives were undertaken to fulfilling the British colonial interest and not for the benefit of India. The positive impact of these changes was unintended, indirect and accidental by-product.

Negative Role:

- **The British rule in India was colonial in character.** It was despotic, anti-people, unethical, immoral, unfeeling, insensitive and alien.
- **Economic integration**
 - Creation of **all-India poverty**:
 - Indian interests were subordinated to the British interests and Indian resources were exploited by every possible means.
 - a. It became the major cause of economic backwardness and halted India's economic, socio-cultural, political, and intellectual growth.
 - b. Every class and section of Indian society (peasants, artisans, workers, capitalists, and rising class of intellectuals) suffered due to it.
 - c. This suffering triggered a strong sense of anti-British discontent among the masses.
- **Cultural/ideological Imperialism: British propaganda**
 - Indians were never able rule themselves in the past, and they are destined to be ruled by the foreigner.
 - Uncivilized and degraded culture and thus Indians unfit for democracy.
 - Reform agenda, Humiliation, Missionary criticism and Conversion
- **Racism**
 - Europeans developed social code of ethics. They believed in the theory of superior race and considered Indians as inferior race. They portrayed Indians as uncivilized and untrustworthy.

Thus, the British rule created circumstances for the birth of Indian nationalism but at same time it should be understood that it was essentially colonial. Both are antithetical to each other. British tried to suppress Indian nationalism from the very beginning rather than being facilitator of it.

There were many peasant/tribal rebellions against the British in the post 1858 decades.

- Wahabi movement of Muslims under Barelvi – finally suppressed in 1870s
- Kuka movement of Sikhs under Ram Singh – brutally suppressed in 1872
- Peasant uprisings – Indigo (Bengal), Pabna (Bengal), Deccan Riots (Maharashtra)
- Tribal uprisings – Rampa (AP), Mundas (Chota Nagpur), Tikendrajit (Manipur) and Vasudeo Balwant Phadke (MH)

Numerous such rebellions indicate the widespread discontent prevailing against the British rule in the country. However, most of them were localized, didn't post any serious threat to the British rule, and thus easily crushed.

Emerging tiny middle-class intelligentsia created an ideological background.

Besides such uprisings, by the mid 19th century, there was also a gradual emergence of the middle class. It happened due to the circumstances created by colonization of India by the British.

The middle class hopes that British rules would modernize India soon evaporated. It started to recognize that British rule was hindering their progress.

- Economically, India remained backward, politically there was no growth of self-government despite the pretensions, and culturally there was increasing lack of confidence as well as hostile British attitude towards educated Indians.
- Moreover, there was racial arrogance of the British
 - Europeans held all the high-ranking positions while Indians faced discrimination in every sphere of life (judiciary, train compartments, hospitals, parks etc.)
 - Educated Indians were first to feel the humiliation, yet such racial dominance appalled every self-respecting Indian.
- Most importantly, the foreign/alien character of British produced a counter feeling of patriotism.

Thus, the conflict between British interest and Indian interests → rise of anti-colonial consciousness. This realization motivated Indians to protest against colonial rule, with the expanding middle class leading the way in the national struggle for independence. That led to the beginning of the modern national movement which represented all sections of the population.

Rapidly spreading **Print Culture** led to the emergence of **modern public sphere**.

- Emergence of **modern Press** (intellectual unification)
 - There emerged several journals with nationalist content and vision in both English and vernacular. By 1870s, vernacular print media proliferated and became more effective and played major role.
 - Press was the chief instrument to spread message of patriotism and spread all-India consciousness.
 - a. Role:

- i. Political education/awareness, politicization and propaganda:
Newspapers tried to educate people by raising important issues and to spread ideas about political rights among the common people.
 - ii. It was through the print media that people living in disparate regions were able to establish a certain kind of communication with one another.
 - iii. They actually carried news information with which the local context always was not associated. For example, a newspaper published in a small district in Bengal carried information about how the textile mills were actually trying to establish their strongholds in western India against many obstacles created by Imperial rule and therefore imperial rule deserve to be condemned.
 - iv. Role of opposition to scrutinize government actions/policies: Issues like racial discrimination, injustice to Indians, economic exploitation were highlighted to argue that British rule resulted in economic and intellectual subordination of Indians to Britain.
- It played imp role in the rise of Indian nationalism. By 1875, 400+ Indian owned newspapers, mostly in vernaculars and readership of around 1.5 lakh.
 - a. Bengalee and Amrita Bazar Patrika in Bengal
 - b. Kesari, Mahratta, Indu Prakash and Voice of India in Bombay
 - c. The Hindu in Madras
 - d. Tribune in Punjab

- **Drain Theory and Economic Nationalism**

- The Drain theory put forward by leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji exposed the true face of the British rule in India. It explained how India was being systematically impoverished by the British and connected Indian poverty hunger and reoccurring famine to it.
- This realization of the impact of British rule opened the eyes of Indian intelligentsia and they started demanding politico-administrative reforms.

- **New History Writing**

- During British rule, India's rich cultural heritage and past was rediscovered. It inculcated dignity, identity and patriotic instincts.
- The nationalist school of Indian history started to emerge in the late 19th century. These nationalist historians highlighted the glorious achievements of India in the past to instill a sense of pride in the heart and mind of Indians and this gradually got transformed into national pride.

- a. Ashoka, Chandragupta: The decipherment of Ashokan's Edicts in 1837 revealed the existence of subcontinental political unity during the Mauryan era.
- b. Art, heritage, spirituality
- c. Regional patriotic literature
- d. The nationalist historians portrayed Gupta period as the Golden Age of Indian history. The politico-admin, socio cultural achievements of Gupta's were highlighted.
- e. Existence of Indo-Aryans as the same ethnic group as British boosted the confidence of educated Indians.
- These interpretations shattered the myth of white man's burden.
- **Awareness of International events**
 - American Revolution of 1776 was the first expression of nationalism in modern sense. The success of American revolutionaries inspired the educated class all over the world.
 - The developments associated with French Revolution resulted in the spread of national awakening not only in France but also in many other countries.
 - When Germans and Italians were successful in uniting and creating powerful nations, Indians also started-thinking along the same line and a powerful spirit of Indian nationalism emerged.
- **Patriotic literature:**

Subramaniam Bharathi	Tamil
Bharatendu Harishchandra	Hindi
Altaf Hussain Hali	Urdu
Vishnushastri Chiplunkar	Marathi
Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Tagore	Bengali
Lakshminath Bezbarua	Assamese

First Indian reaction came in the cultural sphere. Socio-religious Reform:

- To modernize Indian society in light of western rationalism. The reformers examined the existing ideas, beliefs and practice in the light of new knowledge. They promoted rational and scientific outlook among the people. They were greatly in favour of logic and reason. Such awakening among the people gradually transformed into nationalist thinking.
- The reformers of 19th century condemned divisive social evils such as casteism and untouchability. The attitude of purity and pollution prevailing among upper sections of population were strongly condemned. These efforts weakened the internal social divisions

and strengthened socio-cultural unity. Thus, it paved the way for common national identity among Indians.

- As it spread all over the country and communities, it also spread the message of political content – which was nationalist. However, its speed was slow and halting.
- The reformers highlighted common cultural elements, because of this, a collective cultural consciousness was created among the educated Indians. It gradually percolated downwards and infected every Indian with the spirit of nationalism. This paved the way for the rise of Indian nationalism.

With this started the emergence of **modern political association**. This confrontation of middle class with the British rulers during the second half of the 19th century may be considered in two phases.

- Before 1885: Unorganized, spasmodic, lacking initiative, only temporary responses to provocations and lacking plan.
- After 1885: Grew in strength and self-confidence, INC became the rallying centre of the political movement, agitation acquired momentum of its own. Attainment of responsible self-government became the principal objective.

Predecessor political organizations: First Generation

Modern political consciousness had made itself manifest as early as the times of RRM Roy. He was the first Indian leader to start an agitation for political reforms in India. His work was continued by liberals, conservatives and radicals in some way or the other in 1830s and 1840s.

Year	Organisation	Founders	Aims and Objectives
1836	Bangabhasha Prakasika Sabha	Associates of Raja Ram Mohan Roy	Discussing government policy and seeking redressal through petitions and memorandums. (<i>first modern political organization in India</i>)
1838	Landholders Society/ Zamindari Association	Dwarkanath Tagore, Radhakant Deb	To safeguard the interests of the landlords of Bengal. It is credited with launching organised political activity in India using constitutional methods. Controlled and dominated by the absentee landowners, the high browed elites of northern part of Calcutta

1839	British India Society	William Adam	To improve the situation of Indians by letting the people of Britain know about their suffering.
1843	Bengal British India Society	George Thompson	Established in opposition to the zamindari Association. To protect and promote general public interest. Young Bengal people.

Predecessor political organizations: Second Generation

However, it was finally in 1850s that the first major voluntary organizations with exclusively Indian membership came into being. The occasion was the discussion about the renewal of the Company Charter in 1853. On the eve of the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company, there are three important associations in the three presidency towns.

British India Association	Calcutta	1851	First president Radhakant Deb, first secretary Dwarakanath Tagore. British Indian Association also tried to setup branches elsewhere in the country.
Bombay Association	Bombay	1852	Jagannath Shankar Sheth, Dadabhai Naoroji, Naoroji Ferdunjee, Bhau Daji Lad etc. In the early stage Bombay's politics was dominated by the sethiyas, the very powerful Parsi merchants.
Madras Native Association	Madras	1852	Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty (He was the owner of the first Indian-owned newspaper in Madras named The Crescent. He was the first Indian member of Madras Chamber of Commerce)

Features:

- **Membership:** These earliest associations were in the cities of Calcutta/Madras/Bombay. They were dominated by notables, 'prominent Indians' and thus represented interest of landed aristocratic class.
- **Demands:** These people desired improvement in administration and system of government
 1. Greater part in administration
 2. Complaint against dual system

3. Complaint against expensive administration and high taxation
4. Neglect of public work and education and suggest measures etc.

- **Methods**

1. Sending petitions and proposals to British parliament to express demands, esp on the eve of the renewal of the Charter in 1853

No demand incorporated in the Charter Act, 1853. Yet, such politics indicates the evolution of modern sector of Indian politics.

Post 1857: Inauguration of Victorian Era

The period after 1858 witnessed a gradual widening of the gulf between the educated Indians and British Indian administration.

As Indians studied the character of British rule and became aware of the consequences, they became more critical of the British policies and gradually became politically active. Now, these initial political associations no longer satisfy them. They became increasingly discontented with the conservative and pro-landlord policies of these initial political associations.

Lord Canning	1858-62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoria's Proclamation • The Government of India Act, 1858 • Indian Council's Act, 1861 • Introduction of the system of Budget • Introduction of Portfolio system • Indian Civil Service Act, 1861 • Indian Penal Code, 1860 • Police Act, 1861 • Indian High Courts Act, 1861 • Archaeological Survey of India, 1861 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigo Revolt in Bengal
Earl of Elgin	1862-63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calcutta, Bombay and Madras High Courts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppressed Wahabi Movement
Sir John Lawrence	1864-69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bhutan War, 1864 (annexation of Assam and Bengal Duars) • Est of Shimla as summer capital of India, 1864 • Est of Allahabad High Court, 1866 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keshub Chandra Sen established Nava Vidhan (New Dispensation)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Famine Commission of Henry Campbell (Odisha famine 1866) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of Prarthana Samaj, 1867
Earl of Mayo	1869-72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started Census operation, 1872 • Mayo college at Ajmer, Rajmukar college at Rajkot • Financial Decentralization, 1870 • Statistical Survey of India, 1872 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keshub Chandra Sen established Indian Reform Association (1870) • Formation of Pune Sarvajanik Sabha • Assassinated by a Pathan Sher Ali Afridi
Lord Northbrook	1872-76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic Performances Act, 1876 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppressed Kuka Revolt • Formation of Satyashodhak Samaj, 1873 • Formation of Arya Samaj, 1875 • Formation of Muhammad Anglo-Oriental College by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, 1875
Lord Lytton	1876-80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Titles Act, 1876 (Empress of India – Kaisar-e-Hind) • First Delhi Durbar, 1877 • Great Famine, 1876-78 and Strachey Commission • Vernacular Press Act, 1878 • Arms Act, 1878 • Civil Service Age: 21 to 18 • Second Anglo-Afghan War, 1878-80 	
Lord Ripon	1880-84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Factory Act, 1881 • First Complete Census of India, 1881 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repealed Vernacular Press Act, 1882 • Resolution on local self-government, 1882 • Hunter Commission on Education, 1882 • Famine Codes, 1883 • Civil Service Age: 19 to 21 • Ilbert Bill, 1883 	
Lord Dufferin	1884-88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885 • Third Anglo-Burmese War, 1885 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of INC, 1885
Lord Lansdowne	1888-94	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of Consent Act, 1891 • Second Factory Act, 1891 • Indian Councils Act, 1892 • Durand Line, 1893 	
Earl of Elgin	1894-99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Famine and Bubonic Plague, 1896 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramkrishna Mission, 1897 • Assassination of Rand by Chapekar Brothers, 1897
Lord Curzon	1899-05	<i>To be discussed later</i>	

(A) Lord Canning (1856-62):

1. Queen's Proclamation 1858: Direct takeover of Indian colony

- Loyalty of princes in 1857 rewarded. No further annexations. Princes were cultivated as bulwark against future upsurge.
- Social policy became conservative, reactionary.
 - There was no interference in society.
 - There was theoretical equality but increased racism in reality.
 - Divide and Rule

2. Middle class estrangement

- Indigo disturbances (1859): A peasant revolt against oppressive planters in Bengal also became the first peasant revolt with middle-class participation.
- Income Tax imposition (1860): without any control over expenditure led to some protests.

3. Indian Councils Act (1861):

a. Transformed Viceroy's Executive Council

- i. Miniature cabinet (portfolio system)
- ii. Expansion: EC + 12 members
 1. 50% members non-officials (either Indian or British).
 2. No statutory requirement of Indian appointments. Yet, beginning to associate Indians.

b. Formed a central though rudimentary legislative body. It was called as **Imperial Legislative Council**

- i. No elections but nominations.
- ii. No real powers: (Chiefly advisory in nature, a consultative body without any active role)
 1. Can't discuss budget or move financial proposal without prior approval.
 2. Cannot discuss the actions of the bureaucracy at all.
- iii. The Indian Penal Code of 1860, which defines crime and punishment in the country, was discussed and passed in this Council Chamber.

(B) Lord Lytton (1876-80):

The late 1870s was a period of conservative dominance in British policy in England. In the same series, Lord Lytton enacted a series of repressive laws. He is known as the most repressive and inglorious Viceroy. His tenure was the most controversial tenure due to a series of obnoxious Acts.

1. Extravagant **Delhi Durbar 1877** on Jubilee of Queen Victoria's rule amidst ravaging famine

Three Delhi Durbars			
1877	Lord Lytton	Queen Victoria (r. 1837-1901)	Did not attend in person
1903	Lord Curzon	King Edward VII (r. 1900-1910)	Did not attend in person
1911	Lord Hardinge	King George V (r. 1910-1936)	Most spectacular of all as Attended the event in person.

2. The expensive **cost of the Second Anglo-Afghan War** burdened the Indian finances.

3. Racist Arms Act, 1878

- a. It took away the right of India to bear arms without licence unlike Europeans.

4. Problem of Civil Services

- a. System of appointment through competitive examination was started in 1854. Still, Indians remained procedurally excluded due to –
 - i. London as the centre of examination
 - ii. Syllabus favouring Englishmen
 - iii. Progressive reduction in the age limit (1853 – 23 to 1876 – 19 by Lytton)
The effect of lowering the age was to exclude Indians.

- b. In 1879, Lytton also closed Covenanted service to Indians altogether and instituted **Statutory Civil Service** where certain number of Indians every year were to be appointed (max 1/6th)
- c. It was keenly opposed by Indians.

5. Vernacular Press Act, 1878

- a. It was gagging device to muzzle native press through enforcing censorship, deposit and confiscation.

6. In 1879, Import duty was reduced on British cotton goods to facilitate the entry of British products in India at the cost of Indian manufacturers.

These anti-India measures initiated by the Lord Lytton intensified the anti-British discontent among the people and the level of nationalist awakening reached new heights.

Predecessor political organizations: Third Generation

This framework of the provincial politics began to undergo changes in the 1870s. The public sphere of the print media was expanding rapidly. In many of the towns and cities associations began to be formed by a group who broke away from these parent bodies in order to establish the independence and autonomy of the middle classes.

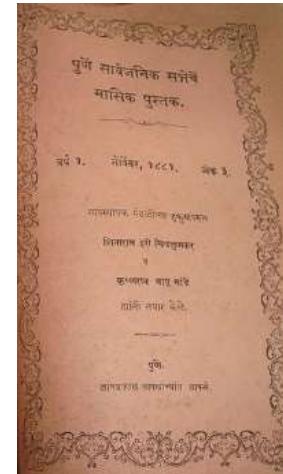
- These middle-class educated elites, the professional people who had been able to consolidate their power or their influence in social life through the educational, legal institutions or judicial institutions.



- They provided the main leadership partly because of their ability to lead the public, partly because of their ability to speak the language that the British rulers would be able to understand and also because of their exposure to liberal education from which they had imbibed the liberal political ideas which they wish to use against the despotic character of British rule.
- They were more forthright in the criticism of the government policies and didn't hesitate even to hold protest meetings.

Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (1870)

- It was established by GV Joshi, Bhagwanrao Pant Pratinidhi etc but major role performed by Mahadev Govind Ranade
- It worked for social reform as well as political reform.
- Activities
 - Devoted much attention to study of economic problems and drew govt attention.
 - Mukhtayarnama (letters of attorney) from 17,000 people
 - Sent petition to House of Commons demanding direct representation.
 - Started a journal in 1878 to advocate land reforms, formation of agricultural banks, spread of education, improvement of judicial administration.



India League (Calcutta, 1875) by Motilal Ghosh, Shishir Kumar Ghosh

Indian National Association (Calcutta, 1876) by SN Banerjee and Anandmohan Bose

- It was established the same year when Lord Lytton came to India and duly opposed his regressive policies.
- Its objective was to create strong body of public opinion in country and create a unity of Indian people on the basis of common aspirations and political interests.
- To attract wider public, it kept its membership fee low for poorer classes.
- It soon established many branches in Bengal and a few outside Bengal too.

Madras Mahajan Sabha (1884)

- The middle-class intelligentsia, primarily lawyers belonging to a Tamil Brahmin community, who clustered around the famous newspaper called The Hindu.
- Main activity in south India was The Hindu in 1870s – great organ of public awakening.
- Founded by M Viraraghavachari, G Subramaniam Iyer and P Ananda Charlu

Bombay Presidency Association (1885)

- The graduates, no longer the Parsees alone, but the graduates who are Marathas, Brahmins province, who had migrated from interior Maharashtra and gone to Bombay to take up English education to be able to acquire the ability to join modern professions and services, they formed their own organization.
- By the new generation of MG Ranade, KT Telang, Pherozeshah Mehta etc.
 - These are the graduates of Elphinstone college.
- It helped in the hosting of INC in 1885 in Bombay.

These organizations came with new demands: Fighting for limited reforms.

- Increasing representation in **civil service** and **legislative councils**
- Reducing military expenditure and home charges
- Imposing import duty on cotton goods etc.

These were not overtly anti-British demands, are still conservative but national in character. There was a new awareness of equality and wanting share in the administration of their own country.

However, their activities remained confined largely to their own regions. It was the defeat of some of the liberal measures of the government under Ripon's Viceroyalty, particularly the Ilbert bill reform, that impressed upon the Indian leadership the need for creating a powerful organization at the national level in order to be able to influence government policy.

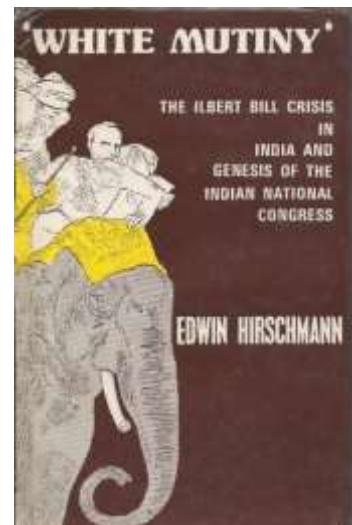
(C) Lord Ripon (1880-84)

In 1880, a new liberal government of Gladstone was set up in England. Thus, Lord Ripon was sent to India to repair the damage done by his dictatorial predecessor. He meant well and tried to conciliate public opinion. However, the reality is complex and never favourable to Indians under colonial structure.

1. Repeal of Vernacular Press Act, 1882
2. Amending Arms Act
3. Afghan war was brought to end.
4. Civil Service Age: 19 to 21
5. Hunter Commission on Education, 1882
6. Famine Codes, 1883
7. The first Factory Act, 1881
8. First Complete Census of India, 1881
9. Resolution on Local self-government (LSG), 1882
 - a. Self-governing institutes were extended to rural areas (District boards)
 - b. Strength of official element was reduced to 1/3rd
 - c. Elective principle was adopted for non-official posts.

Ilbert Bill Controversy in 1883, a major eye-opener for provincial leaders.

- CP Ilbert (Law Member), at the behest of Lord Ripon, proposed to give Indian judges power to try European offenders in the mofussils. It was a proposal for judicial equality.
- Yet, it aroused bitter fury among Europeans.
 - Against this measure an organized agitation was conducted by the chambers of commerce, particularly the planters' interest who had this habit of killing plantation labourers and arguing that a minor injury had caused death.
 - Thus, Europeans launched organized protest to ensure the continuation of their Racial privileges. The ugly face of racism came out: How can native judges try us?
 - They mobilized the Anglo-Indians, Eurasian communities and organized a massive agitation in Calcutta. Public meetings in the largest square in which they actually fulminated against this measure.
- The British government comes under immense pressure. Ripon finally succumbed to pressure and found compromise. This modification defeated the very purpose of Ilbert bill



because the modified bill allowed European to demand a trial by a jury in which not less than half of judges were to be European.

Importance:

- It proved that the British criminals tend to have impunity despite rule of law (racism).
- It was the last straw of humiliation.
- Ilbert bill controversy denied justice. It was an attack on human dignity. It was a clear indication of the subordinate position of even English educated intelligentsia.
- This controversy convinced Indians that the British rule was essentially racist and the British would never accept Indians as equal. This realization intensified the anti-British discontent and greatly strengthened the spirit of nationalism.
- It demonstrated the value of organized agitation community.
 - White demonstration/propaganda/organization – now Indians tried to imitate it for more effective modern politics.
- Necessity of an all India organization to be able to mobilize public opinion in such cases.

Need of all India organization:

- Many political activities by several political organizations since 1850s had prepared the ground for creation of all India political organisation.
- This organization was expected to bring together the politically conscious individuals who were scattered across the country.
- Many issues of all India character had remained unfulfilled so far, for example:
 - Creation of National Fund to appeal to British voters
 - Volunteer Corps: allowing Indians to be part of it.

Already some steps were taken in this direction. **SN Banerjee** had started All India National Conference in 1883 in Calcutta and its second session was to take place in 1885.

- However, Indians still needed to overcome regional jealousies.
- Moreover, if such an all-India party was started by an Indian, then British would have definitely opposed.

It is at this juncture, enters **AO Hume**, a retired ICS officer and there was a parallel effort to form Indian National Congress.

Formation of the Indian National Congress

Indian National Congress was established in Dec 1885 at Bombay by group of Indian nationalists under the leadership of AO Hume, who is popularly known as founder of the Congress. Congress was the first pan-India nationalist platform. Its foundation marked the beginning of the politics of national unity. It carried anti-British struggle into a movement which culminated in independence of India in 1947.

Its foundation is interpreted differently by different scholars and has been at centre of historical controversy for long time.



Safety Valve Theory: (myth)

Safety valve theory was put forward by Lala Lajpat Rai in his paper Young India. According to this theory, Congress was established by A.O. Hume to act as a safety valve for British Indian empire.

Theory: Hume wanted Congress to work as a platform from which Indians leaders could raise issues concerning the masses. Senior British officials were expected to initiate necessary means were to remove grievances among people so that level of discontent among masses could come down, there would not be a mass revolt and British Indian empire could remain safe.

Following developments led to the emergence Conspiracy theory much after Hume was long dead.

- After 1905, Congress started becoming hostile, extremist and radical, and started going beyond the path of constitutionalism. So, some Englishmen started blaming Hume for the troubles posed to British rule by Congress. To answer this charge, his colleague and biographer **William Wedderburn** tried to whitewash his image in his biography (1913). He claimed:
 - a. Hume had seen **seven secret reports** which had data regarding seething discontent among Indians → He thus thought there was a need for an organization of Indians to voice their opinion to take the steam off. A representative organization in India could be used as a safety valve.
 - b. This initiative of Hume was taken in association with and **approval of Lord Dufferin**.

That is the basis of a safety valve theory which sees the congress as a kind of a command performance performed by a man like Hume, in consonance with the bureaucracy. This argument given by Wedderburn was later subscribed by some Indian political leaders to support their own political views.

- **Extremists** wanted to blame moderate Congress for being loyalists.
- **Leftist** thought it was a proof of the anti-revolution tendency of the moderate leadership.

However, later research disproved any such claims:

These theories which actually try to link the congress with a certain kind of command performance have reduced the story to the level of detective fiction. These are not actually valid arguments are valid explanations.

- Those 7 secret volumes were never found.
- In 1950s, Dufferin private papers declassified. He was also not appreciative of Hume, he rather suspected that Hume is teaching Indians the Irish techniques which were troublesome to Britain.

Thus, now this conspiracy theory is totally rejected. The reality is that the foundation of Congress in 1885 was not the result of any sudden development. It was culmination of long process of nationalist political activities going on in India since 1850s.

Critical Analysis of the Role of AO Hume:

We should acknowledge the very important contribution that Allan Octavian Hume made to the emergence of the Congress. But the larger circumstances necessary for a pan-Indian political platform were already there when Hume emerged on the scene. While Indian leaders in the different parts of India were already moving towards the formation of a political body of a countrywide scale, Hume's enthusiastic support hastened its birth.

His **intent** was clear: He was enlightened liberal imperialist. He was concerned about the wide gap and distress prevailing between the government and the people. He genuinely believed in the desirability of self-government for the people of India.

His **role** was very crucial in formation of Congress.

- He toured the entire subcontinent.
- He persuaded prominent Indian leaders to come together in a national body to secure alleviation of grievances and to obtain representation in provinces and centre.

It seems rather that it was the Early Nationalists (and not British government) who benefitted by association with Hume. Hume's role was very instrumental for the Early Congress in the two respects:

- To overcome regional jealousies
- To shelter potential British onslaught

Thus, one can say that it was Moderates who used Hume as lightening conductor (phrase used by Bipin Chandra)



The Story of First Five Congress Sessions

Year	President	Delegates	Significance
Bombay, 1885 (Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit School)	WC Banerjee	72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First time, political unity by educated class, determined to shape new India as per their vision. Attempts to eliminate regional differences, inculcate democratic habits. Delegates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38 Bombay, 21 Madras, 4 Bengal Only 2 Muslims (eg Rahimatulla Sayani) Demands: civil rights, administrative, financial and military reforms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of a commission to enquire into the working of the Indian Administration India Council in London should be abolished. Creation of legislative councils for the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), Sindh and Awadh – more responsive Reduction of Military Expenditure Civil Services Reforms for Indianization Opposed increasing military expenditure Criticized Upper Burma annexation

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed separation of executive and judiciary • Proposed re-imposition of import duty on finer classes of cotton goods • Urged encouragement of indigenous manufactures • Demanded promotion of general and technical education • Reduction of government control over education
Calcutta 1886	Dadabhai Naoroji	343	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost five times of the first session. • SN Banerjee's Indian National Association merged with INC. It created the basis of what is known as the politics of national unity.
Madras 1887	Badruddin Tyabji	702	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospects of attracting more Muslims. • The government became alert and uneasy.

British reaction:

Initially, the government was only curious and not apprehensive.

However, from 1887-88, the stance of the government started to harden.

- British officers started arguing that there is no Indian nation, it's merely a geographic expression. There is no organic whole or social unity. So, for peace and order, British are required.
- They also relied on statistics to prove how little important and unrepresentative was the new English educated middle class.
- Zamindars and Princes were also used to mobilize the support against the INC.
- Realizing that the growing unity of Indian people poses threat to the British empire, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan was encouraged to raise the voice in opposition to INC (divide-and-rule policy).
 - He did so in 1887 Lucknow speech. He was awarded Knighthood within a week of the speech.
 - He also started United Patriotic Association, but it didn't last.

To counter this, AO Hume withstood the pressure and tried to create popular base for the INC.

- Propaganda campaign – large number of public meetings
- 2 pamphlets in 12 languages – almost 5 lakh copies were printed

- Muslims were assured – no new decision if any one community unitedly opposes (later it was passed as a resolution in the 4th congress)

The huge success of the fourth Congress session vindicated the Congress stance.

Allahabad 1888	George Yule	1248	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge attendance despite open government hostility • Almost 1/6th were Muslims. (2à33à81à221) • The Congress resolved not to debate social or religious matters for ensuring the support of religious minorities.
Bombay 1889	Sir William Wedderburn		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 registered lady delegates, including social reformer Pandita Ramabai, Rabindranath Tagore's sister Swarnakumari Devi and Calcutta University's first lady graduate Kadambini Ganguly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kadambini Ganguly became first female to address the Congress. • 254 Muslim delegates • Significantly, it was attended by 41 'simple' cultivators and two working artisans.

Thus, Congress established its position as a major political organization. Now, British could not neglect its demands for progress.

Moreover, the need for propaganda outside India and esp. in England was recognized and in 1889, the **British Committee of Indian National Congress** was setup with William Wedderburn as Chairman, William Digby as Secretary and Dadabhai Naoroji and many other Englishmen as members. The journal India was founded to propagate Congress views in England.

Despite scant respect shown to the Congress by Viceroy Dufferin and his immediate successors, its pressure for constitutional reforms yielded the first fruit with the 1892 Council Act.

Indian Councils Act 1892 (Lord Cross Act)

Enlargement of Imperial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marginal expansion of Imperial and Provincial legislative councils (12à16) • As earlier, no less than half were to be non-official.
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Legislative Council	
Powers of the <i>impotent</i> Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can discuss Budget but no voting. Can ask questions but no supplementary Cannot pass resolutions. Cannot move amendments. Viceroy: overriding and veto powers
Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electoral principle kept outside the text of the Law but conceded in the speech while presenting the Bill. While nominating members, consideration to be given to representatives of provincial councils, zamindars, chambers of commerce, major municipalities, Universities, district boards etc.

Thus, it offered enlargement of the council, extension of its functions and partial introduction of the electoral principle.

These steps were not intended as steps towards granting responsible or representative government, but as a means of providing the Government as source of information regarding Indian opinion.

Yet, it was enacted due to INC demands, which is the recognition of the Congress.

In 1894, at this point, Hume finally left India. With his departure, the unifying figure was gone, so the internal differences within moderates and extremists started to become intense.

British response to Congress after 1892

- Hostility didn't abate when moderate Congress distanced itself from militant nationalism.
 - Verbal attacks continued (Seditious Brahmins, Factory of sedition etc)
 - Regressive policy: attack on Press freedom in late 1890s
 - British soon became eager to finish off the Congress. Thus, Curzon policy of assisting its demise.
- However, with the beginning of the Swadeshi, the stance changed. Now, the new policy was to rally the moderates, isolate the extremists, suppress them, and then ignore the moderates. Moreover, divide and Rule became even more extensive.

GS Foundation 2024: Modern India

Handout 25: Politics of Moderates (1885-1905)

Nikhil Sheth

The first 20 years of the INC is the era of Moderates. INC was **not a radical** organisation from the beginning. It was moderate in both goals and means. They hoped to gain freedom gradually and step-by-step.

Early Nationalists believed that massed need to be awakened before even taking the cause for freedom. Their **agenda** was:

- Creation of public interest in political questions
- Formulate popular demands on national basis
- Organize public opinion.

Demands (not complete independence but specific demands)

- **Councils Reforms**
 1. More Indians participation in both central and provincial legislatures. They should have real powers.
 2. By 1900, the claims for swarajya (self-government) like that in Australia or Canada.
- **Administrative Reforms**
 1. Indianization of ICS: Simultaneous exam, increase in age limit, remove limit on the number of Indians in the service
 2. Appointment of Indians to ranked officers in the army
 3. Separation of judiciary from executive
 4. Criticism of delays in and costs of justice delivery
 5. Opposed aggressive foreign policy and wars with Afghanistan, Burma, suppression of NE tribals etc.
 6. Urged government for public welfare activities, expansion of primary education and more facilities for higher education.
- **Defence of Civil Rights**
 1. Modern civil rights: freedoms of speech, press, thought and association.
 2. Promoting Jury system to protect rights of Indians
- **Economic Reforms**
 1. Imposition of custom duties on foreign goods to protect nascent Indian industries
 2. Reduction of land revenue
 3. To check exploitation of plantation workers
 4. Refer to Drain of Wealth section.

The **method** of the moderates was not street agitation, but **liberal constitutional means**. They didn't believe in mass political agitation but rather preferred:

- Forming associations (most important being the INC itself)
- Holding meetings
- Giving speeches
- Drafting/Submitting petitions and memorandums
- Journalism (criticism of govt policies through press)

Thus,

- Both demands and methods of the moderates were liberal in character. (**whiggish**)
- The moderates were progressive nationalists. They were inspired by the vision of better and brighter future of the people as well as the country.
- They were westernized in their outlook. Most of them were western educated.
- They were secular in character. The members of Congress were coming from all the permanent Indian faiths. The first four presidents of Congress were belonging to four different religions.
- Their method was nonviolent in character. They believed in the efficacy of peaceful means.
- Moderates were democratic in outlook. They demanded democratization of Indian politico-admin system so that Indians could participate effectively in running affairs of state.
- Moderate nationalists were egalitarian in their outlook. They were against discrimination on the basis of race culture or any others ground.

Attitude towards the masses:

- **Opposed militant mass movement and lacked faith in the politics of masses.**
 - Believed that militant **mass struggle** could be waged **only after** the heterogenous elements of Indian society had been **welded into a nation**.
 - They assumed that **illiterate masses cannot represent** themselves. They need middle class leaders. They assigned masses a **passive role**.
 - However, the notion that the masses had their political rights had not come at this point of time in India. All of this quickly changed in a manner of 2 decades in India.
- Their Swarajya was not meant for all, rather it is meant only for educated Indians. However, their demands were not only for the elites but concerned the common people as well.

In short, these are all liberal methods of constitutional agitations, all while continuously and sincerely professing loyalty.

- They believed that if **public opinion was created**, organized and popular **demands presented to the authorities** through petitions, meetings, resolutions and speeches, the authorities would concede the demands gradually. (*educate Indians*)
- Next to educating Indian public opinion, they worked to **educate British public** opinion. It required active public propaganda in Britain.
 - In 1889, a British Committee of INC was founded. It started a journal called India in 1890.
 - Dadabhai spent major part of his life and income in England in popularizing case for India.

Question of “loyalty”

Moderates were sincere in their repeated profession of loyalty to crown

- First Congress: Three Cheers for Queen Victoria 27 times
- They had belief in **providential nature of the Raj**. Moderates believed that the British empire is the **force of modernisation**.
 - “In my belief, a greater calamity could not befall India than for England to go away and leave her to herself.” – Dadabhai
 - So, they expected the British government to bring essential reforms in India.
- They understood that the foundation of the **INC itself was the outcome of the British rule**.
 - Dadabhai in Calcutta Congress (1886) said that no such thing like INC would be possible in the time of Vikramaditya or Akbar. It is British who brought law and order, safety and now people could leave their property and family back and assemble in Calcutta. Thank you for that.
- Moreover, there was **fear of suppression**.
 - They also noticed how brutally British had suppressed 1857 and felt that time was not yet ripe for such a challenge.
 - India was not ready and culture of open opposition to the Crown was not yet there.
- They were influenced by **western liberal tradition**. They were not against the British rule, only against the un-British aspects of the British rule.
 - They didn't demand expulsion of British from India, rather they wanted democratic rights.
 - They even claimed their anxiety to get grievances addressed partly to help the Crown become popular in India.
- Later when they took note of the evils of the British rule and the failure of the government to accept nationalist demands for reform, many of them stopped talking of loyalty to the British rule and **started demanding self-government instead**.

In the early years, the INC had among its leaders some **Englishmen**.

Allahabad	1888	George Yule
Bombay	1898	William Wedderburn
Madras	1894	Alfred Webb
Bombay	1904	Henry Cotton
Allahabad	1910	William Wedderburn
Calcutta	1917	Annie Besant

Most important contribution was in the Economic Field.

- Moderates' vision was to create India as an industrialized country under the aegis of Indian capital. Their major concern was to protect and promote Indian industries.
- Important exponents:

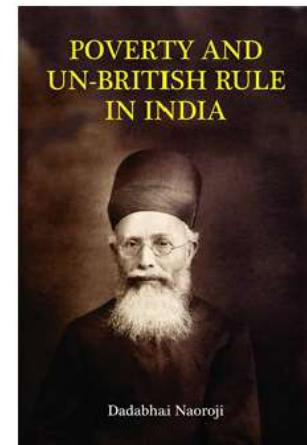
Author	Book
Dadabhai Naoroji	Poverty and Un-British Rule in India
Justice MG Ranade	Essays on Indian Economy
Romesh Chandra Dutt	The Economic History of India
William Digby	Prosperous British India
Subramaniam Iyer	Some Economic Aspects of British Rule in India

Other important exponents of the Economic Criticism

- Rao Bahadur GV Joshi
- Dinshaw Wachha

The details of the Economic criticism:

- Detailed study the question of poverty.
 - Dadabhai Naoroji was first to attempt to calculate per capita income of Indians. He estimated that it was 20 Rs in 1867-68.
- After becoming aware of the poverty, attempted a scientific economic analysis.
 - Earlier, in the 18th c, it was loot and tribute thus visible. Now, in the 19th c, it is more sophisticated, less visible methods. It consists of Free Trade and Foreign Capital.
- Main thrust: Drain of Wealth
 - Meaning: unilateral outflow of capital to other country without anything in return
 - Pipelines of Drain
 - Various Estimates of Drain



- RC Dutt: 50% of net revenue (around 20 million)
- Ranade: 33% of net revenue
- Dadabhai: 25% of net revenue
- William Digby: 30 million per year
- Modern historian: 17m, represented less than 2% of exports value over this period.

Not only that the British were blamed for the growing backwardness and poverty but some solutions were suggested as **remedy**.

- Stop the Drain
 - Reduce land revenue burden on peasantry, abolish high taxes (eg on salt)
 - Condemned military expenditure.
 - Appoint Indians to as many high posts as possible
 - Opposed large-scale investment of foreign private capital in Indian railways, plantations and industries as it led to suppression of Indian capitalists and strengthened British stranglehold.
- Develop Indian economy
 - Development of agricultural banks to save peasantry from clutches of the moneylenders, large-scale extension of irrigation to save country from famines, extension of permanent settlement, repeal of forest laws.
 - Modern Industry and technology based on Indian capital
 - For rapid development of Indian industries – need for government protection through import tariff protection and direct government aid. (Opposed countervailing excise duty)
 - Spread of technical education
 - Popularization of the idea of swadeshi and boycott.

Significance of Economic Criticism (although economic argument, it had political and ethical consequences)

- It helped in the development of **Nationalism that is based on scientific anti-colonial analysis** and not obscurantist past. Of all the anti-colonial movements, Indian is the one most deeply rooted in the understanding of the nature of colonial exploitation.
- Exposed and attacked the **economic essence of colonization**.
 - Proved that **poverty** is due to British imperialism. Such conclusion questioned the basic purpose of colonialism itself.
 - Linked poverty to colonialism → undermined the ideological foundations/hegemony of the benevolent rule, corroded moral authority
- Easy to grasp for **common people**
 - Created anger and helped Indians unite

- To solve the economic issues → we need political rights
- It became the **major plank for all the future leaders** to criticize the British rule. It was accepted by Moderates, Extremists, Socialists, Communists, Gandhi, Nehru...

Limitation: Due to the own weakness of the moderates, they could not convert the anger generated into effective agitation. They didn't connect Drain of Wealth with Swadeshi as a political tool, which was later done by extremists.

Survey of some important Moderate leaders

• **Dadabhai Naoroji**

- Grand old man of India
- Huge contribution to the study of poverty and generating thesis of Drain of Wealth
- Didn't stop at discussing only the question of economy but spent 50+ years trying to get political rights in Britain and in India.
- East India Association (London, 1866)
- He canvassed in Britain, also contested many times and once became an MP in the House of Commons.
- Congress President 3 times: 1886, 1893, 1906



• **Justice MG Ranade**

- Taught virtues of industrialization to the entire generation.
- Didn't exactly agree with DoW but focussed more on entire socio-economic regeneration.
- Founder of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (1870), major force behind Prarthana Samaj (1867)
- Also formed Indian National Social Conference (1887)



• **Pherozshah Mehta** (successful Bombay lawyer)

- Studying his contribution is like studying history of Congress from 1885-1915. He participated in the INC from the day one, initially as the follower of Dadabhai and once he left for England, he had his one-man control over INC organization.
- Considered as the Moderate among moderates.



• **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**

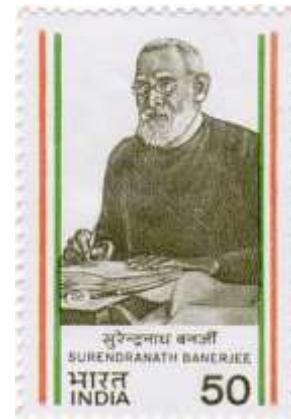
- Student of MG Ranade and later became the guru of Mahatma Gandhi
- Hugely respected for personal rectitude, support to gender cause and backward people.
- First major moderate leader to go for fulltime social-political work by rejecting profession.
- He gave the evidence of misuse of Indian finances to Welby Commission
 - Legislative work (Bombay Legislative Council 1899, Imperial Legislative Council in 1901)
 - Fearless, intellectual, and sharp criticism of government
 - Most famous for budget analysis.



- Asked for free and universal basic education.
- Attitude

- He didn't consider Legislative council as the battlefield, but an arena to change the opinion of the opponent.
- Converted the Legislative Councils into open universities for people.

- Servants of India Society in 1905 – to promote both nationalism and social service
- Congress President at Benares in 1905



- **SN Banerjee**

- One of the first-generation ICS officers from India but had to resign for no mistake of his own
- Brilliant orator and started schools/colleges and also newspapers etc
- Most effective phase: during Swadeshi movement – he sternly opposed the partition of Bengal and was not willing to compromise at all.
- Book: Nation in the Making

- **G Subramanya Iyer**

- Editor of **The Hindu** for first 20 years (1878-98).
- Also started **Swadeshmitran**, a Tamil language newspaper
- Honour of tabling first resolution in the first Congress (1885) with KT Telang.
- Play a significant role in economic nationalism



- Others

- **Badruddin Tyabji**
 - Efforts to bring Muslims in the Congress
 - Opposed by Wahabis as well as loyalists (led by Sir Sayyid)
 - Third President of Congress (1887)
 - Later became the first Muslim judge in the Bombay High Court.
- **Rahimatullah Sayani**
 - Congress President in 1896 (12th Session): This year is known for the first time singing of Vande Mataram in Congress Session
- RC Dutt
- Dinshaw Wacha
- C Vijayaraghavachariar
- P Ananda Charlu
- PR Naidu
- Sankaran Nair
- Ghosh – Lalmohan, Anandmohan, Manmohan

- WC Banerjee
- Madanmohan Malaviya
- Pandit Ayodhyananath

Assessment of limitations and weaknesses of the moderates

During the moderate phase, the Indian National Congress met with **limited success** with respect to its declared objectives. They were unable to create effective pressure on the colonial regime to accept their demands in any meaningful way.

- Very meagre concrete immediate and direct achievements
- **Elite, English-educated, upper caste social background**
 - Lawyers, journalists, landlords, merchants etc
 - No special efforts to promote representation of lower castes as well as Muslims. (savarna bias)
 - No anti-zamindar or anti-moneylender proposal. They Opposed to Bengal Tenancy Act (1885), Punjab Land Alienation Act (1900)
- **Not full-time political activists**
 - Lawyers and Journalists made about 70% delegates
- **Ineffective methods** (Gandhi: Slow Party) due to inherent limits to the effectiveness of liberal constitutional methods under colonial framework
 - Politics of prayers, petition and memorials.
 - Gradualism: not ready to take a big jump.
- Constant **professions of loyalty** were not attractive to people.
- Failure to make INC a genuine full-fledged party. It remained a “**3-day tamasha**”, a part time affair during annual sessions. Thus, it limited its ability to respond and lead.
- They **lacked faith in the masses**, their propaganda didn’t reach the masses. As their mass base remained limited, and so did their power to pressure the government.
- **They didn’t keep the pace with changes**. They couldn’t see that their own success made their politics obsolete, and they failed to accept the new demands. Thus, they tried for exclusion of extremists from the Congress which further weakened them.

However, it doesn’t mean that the moderates were of all failure They were the torch bearers of Indian nationalism.

- **Congress pressure was responsible for**
 - **Council Act of 1892** included the provisions of the election for the first time, under moderates’ pressure.
 - **Welby Commission**
 - **Aitchison Commission**
 - In 1893, a resolution was introduced in the British House of Commons providing for holding of CSE simultaneously in India along with London.

- Moderates were the **first-generation nationalists**, they worked hard against heavy odds to convince the British of need of initiating reforms in India.
- **National awakening:** arousing feelings of common nation, exploitation and common enemy
 - The writings and speeches of moderates brought about maturity among Indian nationalists. As a result of this the national struggle could keep on gaining strength.
- **Political work based on concrete study** of hard facts and not narrow appeal to religious sentiments or emotional appeal to hoary past.
- **Mercilessly exposed** the exploitative character of the British empire. With the systematic economic criticism of the colonial economy, they exposed the hollowness of British claim of paternal regime. It was their most commendable achievement which exposed the true character of the British Raj.
- **Trained people** in the art of political work, popularized ideas of democracy, civil liberties etc. Indians became familiar with modern politics.
- **Formed Indian National Congress.** Their all India, secular approach gave legitimacy to the Congress, helping it emerge as a true representative of all Indians.
- **Represented Indians** in the provincial and imperial legislative councils
- **Evolved national political and economic programs/objectives** for future political struggle.

While the weakness of the Early nationalists was removed by the later generation, its achievements were to serve as the base for a more vigorous national movement in future. The perceived ineffectiveness of moderate politics inspired the next generation of nationalists to search for new methods of struggle. As a result, passive resistance and mass politics emerged as the preferred method of nationalists from the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, despite many weaknesses, the early nationalists laid the foundation for the national movement to grow upon.

Handout 25: Extremist Phase

Nikhil Sheth

From almost the beginning, militant nationalism (Extremist) school existed but it started becoming popular in the late 1890s. However, it was at the beginning of the 20th century, they found favourable political climate to come forward. This led to radical transformation in Indian national movement and lead the second phase of the national movement.



The factors behind the emergence of militant nationalism:

The emergence of extremism at the turn of the century was a response and reaction to the evils of colonialism and the politico-economic and cultural environment prevailing in India.

- **Economic Factors:**

- There was no development of Indian industries, and no protection/promotion by the Government. Instead, there was a series of terrible famines and bubonic plague around during mid-1890s. Between 1896 to 1900, about 90 lakh Indians died in the famines.
- Growing discontent among educated youth due to unemployment

- **Recognition of the true nature of the British rule (*not providential but exploitative*)** played the most important role.

- Primary and technical education was not making any progress. British, on the other hand, were highly suspicious of educated Indians.
- Complete disappointment with the Indian Councils Act 1892. Instead of giving more political rights, even the existing political rights were attacked.
- The promise of progress was not kept. Rather, the policy of divide-and-rule led to a series of communal riots.

- **Dissatisfaction with the moderates**

- Moderates brought questions of racist discrimination and economic drain to the fore but kept on **professing loyalty** to the Crown. It created the frustration among the people with the moderate style of politics.
- Thus, the politics of the moderates was based on the belief that the British rule could be reformed from within but the failure of moderates to attain practical success gradually undermined the belief. As **British failed to accommodate any of the demands** of the moderates, it produced **disillusionment** among the

nationalists. Consequently, the **weaknesses** of moderates' methods became apparent and a **demand for more vigorous political action** started.

- **Impact of cultural heritage and socio-religious movements: Growth of self-respect and self-confidence**
 - By the end of the 19th century, Indians acquired faith in their own capacity to govern and develop their country.
 - Revivalist sentiments aroused the feelings of pride in the past and self-respect. Vivekanand's triumphant tours inspired fresh hope of glorious future and superiority of East over West. (Also, Bankim, Dayanand Saraswati)
 - Tilak, Aurobindo, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Bipin Chandra Pal preached the message of self-respect and development of national character.
- **International influences** encouraged militant nationalism in India.
 - Rise of Japan was a warning of new wind blowing over Asia.
 - Defeat of Italy by Ethiopia (1896) and of Russia by Japan (1905)
 - Revolutionary movements in Ireland and Russia.
- **The policy of repression and suppression** pursued by the British Indian government also pushed nationalist of younger generation towards extremism.
 - In 1898, CrPC was amended by amending the sedition clause 124 A.
 - Tilak was awarded 18 months of RI for praising Chapekar brothers and raising nationalist issues.
 - **The reactionary policies of Lord Curzon** added fuel to the fire of extremism.
 - **Finally, the partition of Bengal** in 1905 created the circumstance required for emergence of extremism in forefront in anti-British struggle. The moderate politics lost its mass appeal because nobody was ready to listen that British was just and fair.

Old generation of Indian leaders was being replaced by **new generation**. This new age was started by majorly 4 important leaders: Lal-Bal-Pal + Aurobindo.

Goals:

- About immediate political demands, they had no quarrel with the moderates. But they **set in the goal of swaraj more boldly**. They *deeply hated the foreign rule* and declared Swaraj to be their clear-cut goal.
 - "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it"
 - The **meaning of Swaraj** was different for different leaders.
 - Tilak meant a government formation by the Indians
 - Aurobindo Ghosh interpreted it as complete independence
- They wanted reforms to happen **at faster rate**, leading towards their end goal. (Impatient Party: Gandhi)

Methods: (Petition → Agitation)

- They spurned the moderate methods of petition/prayer as “mendicancy.”
 - They were critical of the deferential and supplicatory attitude of the moderates. They didn’t have belief in the British sense of justice and fair-play.
 - Instead, they wanted public agitation and mass mobilization to force British to grant concessions. They didn’t remain confine to only constitutional means, but also included extra-constitutional means.
 - Lala Lajpat Rai: *“No nation is worthy of any political status if it cannot distinguish between begging rights and claiming them”*
 - Aurobindo in ‘New Lamps for Old’ exposed the weaknesses of moderate politics.
 - Tilak: *“We will not achieve any success in our labours if we croak once a year like a frog.”*
- **Awakening and Mobilization of the masses**
 - Impatient to throw off foreign yoke, the Extremists concentrated on building mass support for national movement. They believed that **Indians must work out their own salvation** and make efforts to rise from their degraded position.
 - They had **deep faith in the strength of the masses**, and they planned to achieve **swaraj through mass action**.
 - Thus, their target audience was not British public opinion but Indian public opinion. They pressed for political work among the masses.
 - For mass mobilization however, requirement was:
 - Spreading the feeling of nationalism + Awareness about their rights
 - Generating self-confidence and not being afraid of British (Full of boldness and self-confidence, they considered no personal sacrifice too great for the good of the country.)
 - Finally, a mass agitation to seek resolution of grievances
 - Thus,
 - The movement no longer remained elitist in its social composition because most of the extremist leaders came from middle and lower middle sections of Indian society.
 - The movement started to assume mass character during extremist phase. Mass agitations and demonstrations were organized by the extremists leaders.
- However, for such mobilization of people and opinion, the extremist leaders readily used religious/quasi-religious issues. Thus, extremists:
 - **Rejected social reform as an attack on culture.** Extremists attacked the moderates and reformers incessantly as ‘de-nationalized’, lacking pride in country and culture. For them, the task of social reform was secondary issue and drained energies from the political struggle and also weakened the Hindu solidarity.

- Tilak broke with moderates on the issue of the Age of Consent Act. He wanted that reforms should be initiated by Indian themselves without allowing the foreign government to intervene.
 - However, antipathy to untouchability and the need to eliminate it were formulated by Lala Lajpat Rai.
- To link the elites with the masses, they appealed to the three principal ties common to both educated westernized elites and the peasantry and lot of common people – **language, history, and religion.**
- Casting off the yoke of English use wherever possible, they wrote and spoke in regional languages which were understood by common people.
 - As a means of heightening patriotic fervor, they fostered pride in glorious past, when Hindu kings and warriors rule the land.
 - Shiv Jayanti started by Tilak to create the culture of worship of national heroes.
 - The most effective was the use of religious symbolism and terminology to instill in Hindus a fervent devotion to the Motherland.
 - Religious ceremonies were used.
 - Homage to motherland in the form of **Vande Mataram** proved to be extremely emotive, and virtually touched the soul of the people of India.
 - Conceptualization of Bharat Mata – Avanindranath Tagore



Avanindranath Tagore painted Bharat Mata in 1905

According to Dr Karan Singh “For him, (Sri Aurobindo), India was no mere geographical entity, no mere physical and material land mass, no mere intellectual concept, but a goddess incarnate, a mighty mother who for centuries has cradled and nourished her children and who at that time, was groaning under the yoke of a foreign oppressor – her pride shattered, her glory ground to dust”.

Thus India as a nation was eulogized by Sri Aurobindo as the mother, but a mother in chains, and the primary duty of her sons was to win freedom for the Mother, to strive by every possible means to liberate her from her shackles.

- Apart from Neo-Vedantism of **Vivekananda**, **Bankim** Chandra's eulogy of Krishna not only as an ideal man and a nation builder but also for his basic message of Karmayoga in Bhagavad Geeta
- Lala Lajpat Rai: "*Our first want, then, is to raise our patriotism to the level of religion and to aspire to live or die for it.*"
- Aurobindo: "*Nationalism is not a mere political programme; Nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to live.... If you are going to be a nationalist, if you are going to assent to this religion of Nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit. You must remember that you are the instruments of god.*"
- **Expansion of idea of nation:**
 - Moderates were primarily inspired by European experience of territorial nationalism, leading to the concept of nation-state, which was bound to be secular by definition.
 - Extremists made a departure by adding a religious symbolism and cultural dimension to it. The extremist concept of nationalism was developed around the notion of motherhood which underlined the inalienable relationship between a nation and her children.
- Thus, extremists focused on Indian values, culture for inspiration. Nationalist literature, paintings, and music were used to mobilise masses. Along with political-economic dimensions, the national movement assumed cultural dimension in this phase.
- **Specific program** was based on *principle of reducing Indian dependence on the British in every possible way.*
 - **Boycott** of foreign goods and promotion of **Swadeshi**
 - Boycott was the most effective instrument to dent the British interests in India. Along with the boycott of foreign goods, swadeshi goods were promoted to encourage Indian industries.
 - Use of parallel government instead of going to British administration and courts.
 - Promoting **National Education**
 - The objective was to educate Indian youth about the ideas of self-reliance, prepare them for the freedom struggle, free them from indoctrination by government schools and popularise the method of Swaraj.



Bombay Swadeshi Cooperative Store,
1905

- At the same time, they wanted the youth to have a Swadeshi alternative to government schools.
- Non-cooperation or **Passive resistance**
 - Extremists were ardent preachers of non- cooperation.
 - For example, Tilak asserted that people of India are the ‘great factor with which the administration of India is controlled.’ According to him, cooperation of people acted like a ‘great lubricant which enabled the gigantic machinery to work smoothly.’ He reminded people of the power they possessed in ‘making administration impossible if they choose to make it.’
- **Cooperative organisations**
 - Extremists encouraged **cooperative organization on voluntary basis** for rural sanitation, organising fairs and pilgrimages and relief work during calamities.

In essence, this program was much like Gandhian program produced in 1920.

In this entire process, the contribution of Lal-Bal-Pal and Aurobindo is seminal. They radicalised entire Congress, made mass appeal and mobilized entire country against Bengal Partition. Swadeshi movement launched in 1905 to oppose partition of Bengal was the finest example of the extremist movement.

A Speech by Tilak

Your revolution must be bloodless; but that does not mean that you may not have to suffer or to go to jail. Your fight is with bureaucracy who will always try to curb and suppress you. But you must remember that consistently with the spirit of laws and the bloodlessness of the revolution, there are a hundred other means by which you may and ought to achieve your object which is to force the hands of the bureaucracy to concede the reforms and privileges demanded by the people. You must realise that you are a great factor in the power with which the administration in India is conducted. You are yourselves the useful lubricants which enable the gigantic machinery to work so smoothly.

Though down-trodden and neglected, you must be conscious of your power of making the administration impossible if you but choose to make it so. It is you who manage the railroad and the telegraph, it is you who make settlements and collect revenues, it is in fact you who do everything for the administration though in a subordinate capacity. You must consider whether you cannot turn your hand to better use for your nation than drudging on in this fashion. Let your places be filled by Europeans on the splendid salary of eight annas a day if possible ! You must seriously consider whether your present conduct is self-respectful to yourselves or useful to the nation.

You must imitate your rulers only in one thing, namely, in maintaining an unfailing succession of public workers. If one Lala Lajpat Rai is sent abroad, another ought to be found to take his place as readily as a junior Collector steps into the shoes of a senior. It is vain to hope that your petitions will have the effect of releasing Lala, though it is well known that the Government do not mean to keep him a prisoner all his life. His deportation is intended not so much to penalise Lala Lajpat Rai as to terrorise those that would follow his example, and if their agitation stopped as soon as one deportation took place, Government will run away with the idea that terrorism had triumphed.

	Moderates	Extremists
Social Basis	Upper Middle Class	Lower Middle Class
Objectives	Largely similar. Moderates accepted Swarajya (self-rule) only under extremist pressure.	
Programs	Prayers, petitions, memorials	Completely rejected moderate methods as political mendicancy. Alternatively suggested “Passive Resistance”: Swarajya, Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education
Perceptions of the west	Believed in the providential nature of the British rule. They believed in the basic supremacy of western ideas like democracy, liberalism, secularism etc. Therefore, persistent appeal to British public opinion for redressal of grievances caused by Anglo-Indian bureaucracy.	Extremists considered this as an act of national humiliation. Extremists believed in rich cultural heritage of India. They were impressed with the scientific and technical development of the west, but they were not willing to accept western cultural supremacy.

Some important Extremist leaders

- **Lokmanya Tilak** (**firebrand politician**, Father of Indian Unrest)
 - “No man preached gospel of Swaraj with such consistency and insistence of Lokmanya” by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920
 - Swarajya would not come easy or automatically, it would require sacrifice. Tilak’s entire life is a life of sacrifice and making people ready for sacrifices.
 - Public life of 40 years in two parts –
 - 1880-1900: Provincial Phase
 - Active in Deccan Education Society
 - Newspapers: Kesari and Maratha
 - Control of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha by 1895 by ousting Gokhale faction. Gokhale had to start his own **Deccan Sabha**
 - 1900-1920: National Phase
 - Books: Orion, Arctic Home of Vedas and Geeta Rahasya.
 - For Tilak, Geeta is the highest source of ethical life and call to duty. It is not a sectarian scripture. Philosophy of Geeta is rallying call for Indians to perform karma and not sannyas.
 - For mass mobilisation
 - Opposing social reform led by British.
 - Broke with moderates on the issue of Age of Consent Act 1891.
 - In 1895, he opposed moderates to hold National Social Conference in tandem with INC session as it would divide society.
 - Started Sarvajanik Ganapati (1894) and Shiv Jayanti (1895)
 - *“Our ancestors have already left us occasions for gathering people together, lets use them”*
 - Took up issues of popular distress
 - During 1896-97 famine that ravaged Maharashtra, he started **No-Tax campaign** by sending volunteers to the peasants to awaken them of their rights. He asked famine-stricken peasants to withhold tax payment if their crops had failed.
 - *“Govt’s task is to legislate but it is we who have to ensure implementation. For that we are ready to write 100 times and ask 1000 times.”*
 - **Swadeshi:** Like moderates he protested against the counter-veiling excise duty that hurt the cotton industry. However, unlike moderates, he called people to boycott and bonfire and promote the cause of Swadeshi.



- “British have not come here for philanthropy, but for their own selfish interests. If Indian people are made aware of that, we can attack those selfish interests”
- **Plague:**
 - After famine 1896, there came plague epidemic in 1897 in Pune. British took stringent measures, forcibly entering houses. Tilak strongly denounced the harshness.
 - When Rand (anti-Plague commissioner) was murdered by Chapekar brothers, Tilak was implicated on charge of inciting violence (sedition). After sedition trial, he was sent to 18 months jail.
- Tilak had used press very effectively as an instrument of propaganda against the government.
 - Judge Strachey: “absence of affection is disaffection”
 - First national political leader to suffer imprisonment for political cause
- **Bipin Chandra Pal (Bengal)**
 - Roots in social reforms and Brahmo Samaj → thus moderate in 1890s. However, he spent two years in the west, and became radicalized.
 - Established journal **New India** in 1902, with which he popularized the ideal of Swaraj to be achieved through self-help and self-sacrifice. In 1905, he started **Bande Mataram** (it was edited by Aurobindo secretly)
 - He was an excellent orator and virtually swept the country with brilliant and forceful explanation of the concepts like Swaraj and Swadeshi. He was excommunicated from Madras Presidency in 1907 on account of ‘inflammatory speeches’.
 - Distanced himself from Tilak’s Hinduism as base of nationalism, and talked of ‘composite patriotism’.
 - After 1908, he virtually retired from active politics.
- **Aurobindo** (born on 15 August 1872)
 - Main ideology in Bengal, produced similar to Tilak ideology of extremism.
 - Three phases of public life
 - 1893-1905: Returned to India after 14 years and spent some years in Baroda.
 - 1906-1910: Only about 4 years of active political public life
 - 1910 onwards: Spiritual Phase
 - Wrote **New Lamps for Old** series of articles in **Indu Prakash of Bombay** in 1893.



- Contempt for slow reforms. He was more inspired by French Revolution. Thus, he dismissed INC as ‘middle class organization’ and looked towards masses to overthrow British.
 - To arouse masses, he turned to Bankim’s Hinduism. Also **emphasised on Shakti**, which attracted him.
 - He wrote a pamphlet **Bhavani Mandir** (1905) which was inspired by Anand Math. He talked about Goddess Bhawani to link with Shivaji Maharaj.
 - *He was the first in India to declare that the aim of political action was to declare total independence from the foreign country.*
 - He played a critical role in formulating the policies of boycott and passive resistance including armed rebellion if needed. He was interested in forming secret associations, preparing for violence. With brother Barindra Ghosh, formed Anushilan Samiti.
 - In 1908, he was arrested in the Alipore Conspiracy Case and was acquitted in 1909. After the release, he tried to revive the nationalist movement and to that end, he started two journals – **Karmayogi** in English and **Dharma** in Bengali.
 - But he soon realized that the nation was not ready for such a movement. His **Uttarpura speech (1909)** marks the transition from political journey to spiritual one. He went to **Pondicherry in 1910** to pursue spiritual goal and remained there until his death in 1950.
- **Lala Lajpat Rai (Punjab)**
- He had attended Allahabad Congress of 1898. He was sent to England in 1905 with Gokhale to canvass British political opinion for reforms in India. But he shared Tilak’s views on moderate policy of mendicancy and compromise.
 - In 1886, he helped in setting up Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School at Lahore. Himself **Arya Samajist of College faction**, he was unhappy over Congress efforts to win over Muslims.

Aurobindo was convinced that imitation of Europe was not at all conducive to India’s regeneration. He argued “For a nation which is not attempting to Imprint its personality on such a movement is moving towards self-sterilization and death.”

He, therefore, exhorted the Indian people to uphold the Sanatana Dharma which was the essence of their national personality. “I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it, it moves and grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatana Dharma it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma.... That is nationalism”.

- This issue came to head when INC refused to take stance on **Punjab Land Alienation Act 1900**.
- He was **deported to Mandalay** in 1907 without trial for taking part in political agitation in Punjab.
- Believing that it was important to explain India's position to the world, he left for **Britain** in 1914. At this time, World War I broke out and he was unable to return to India, and therefore he then left for the **USA** to gather support for the Indian cause. In the USA, he founded the **Indian League of America** in 1917 and wrote a book called '**Young India**'.
- After coming **back to India**, he once again plunged into national struggle. He was brutally assaulted by the British police while opposing the Simon Commission in 1928
- His prominent works include:
 - Story of My Deportation (1908)
 - United States of America: A Hindu's Impression (1916)
 - England's Debt to India (1917)



Critical Analysis of the Contribution of the Extremists:

1. Success

The extremists transformed the anti-British character of Indian national movement completely.

- a. The first and the foremost contribution of the extremists was the significant contribution to the **growth of concept of nationalism**. The imagery of India as the mother in bondage and the sacred duty of her children to free her continued to inspire the generations of patriots. They added cultural dimension to the national movement.
- b. With **great personal sacrifice and suffering**, the extremist leaders inspired a large number of people to work for the national movement. Tilak was the first to defy the British by opposing the repressive policies and gladly suffered 18 months of rigorous imprisonment. It was the first act of major defiance from among the political leaders of the new generation and he was hailed overnight as Lokmanya for it and emerged as the national icon.
- c. The movement started to **become mass-movement**, as a result of efforts made by extremists. Common sections of urban population, women etc started participating in national struggle.
- d. They gave **new programs and methods** of struggle to the national movement. Extremist brought anti British struggle in streets, during moderate phase it was limited to conference halls and chambers.
- e. Rise of extremists **infused remarkable energy** in anti-British struggle. Government came under serious pressure as a result of which the process of constitutional reforms gained speed. The enactment of reform Act of 1909 and 1919 can be cited as an example.

2. Limitations

- a. The extremist leaders **failed to appreciate the contribution of moderates**. They criticized moderated as weak nationalists and mendicants. This extremely critical attitude towards moderates resulted in serious ideological divide in the Congress. The Surat Split in 1907 was the outcome of the same.
- b. The use of **religious programs and slogans** by extremists adversely affected the secular character of national movement. It allowed the critics of Congress to portray it was a Hindu organization.
 - i. At times, the extremists' anger at Muslim collaboration with the British spurred them to engage in overtly anti-Muslim activity, heedless of the fact that in doing so they were ruining the chances of creating a united anti-British movement. It has been argued that it was one of the reasons for the formation of Muslim League in 1906. While it is true that Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan had dissociated himself from Congress quite earlier in 1887-88, the

religious nature of the new nationalism certainly contributed to further alienation of Muslim leaders and masses.

- ii. However, it should be noted that there were many shadings of views among Extremists. Some were quite insensitive to Muslim sensibilities, while others were not.
- c. The **reactionary elements** among the extremist sometimes took frontstage. The Age of Consent Act created the impression as if extremists were against social reforms.
- d. Despite all fury and bravado, and immense amount of personal sacrifice, the extremists **couldn't really build up a mass movement**. It was only during the anti-partition movement that they were able to mobilize masses to a respectable scale.
- e. They took **ambivalent stance towards the issue of violence**.
 - i. Aurobindo, of course, didn't rule out violent methods.
 - ii. Even Tilak had consistently taken an ambivalent attitude on the issue of violence though he never openly supported the violence methods.
 - iii. When Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were deported, they inspired a new revolutionary movement which became Ghadar movement.
 - iv. It is argued that extremists became the ideological progenitor of the violent revolutionary movement which subsequently emerged and occupied some of the space vacated by extremists on the national stage.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920): Address to the Indian National Congress, 1907

Two new words have recently come into existence with regard to our politics, and they are *Moderates* and *Extremists*. These words have a specific relation to time, and they, therefore, will change with time. **The Extremists of today will be Moderates tomorrow, Just as the Moderates of today were Extremists yesterday.** When the National Congress was first started and Mr. Dadabhai's views, which now go for Moderates, were given to the public, he was styled an Extremist, so that you will see that the term Extremist is an expression of progress. We are Extremists today and our sons will call themselves Extremists and us Moderates. Every new party begins as Extremists and ends as Moderates. The sphere of practical politics is not unlimited. We cannot say what will or will not happen 1,000 years hence - perhaps during that long period, the whole of the white race will be swept away in another glacial period. We must, therefore, study the present and work out a program to meet the present condition.

It is impossible to go into details within the time at my disposal. One thing is granted, namely, that this government does not suit us. As has been said by an eminent statesman - the government of one country by another can never be a successful, and therefore, a permanent government. **There is no difference of opinion about this fundamental proposition between the old and new schools.** One fact is that this alien government has ruined the country. In the beginning, all of us were taken by surprise. We were almost dazed. We thought that everything that the rulers did was for our good and that this English government has descended from the clouds to save us from the invasions of Tamerlane and Chingis Khan, and, as they say, not only from foreign invasions but from internecine warfare, or the internal or external invasions, as they call it. . . . **We are not armed, and there is no necessity for arms either. We have a stronger weapon, a political weapon, in boycott.** We have perceived one fact, that the whole of this administration, which is carried on by a handful of Englishmen, is carried on with our assistance. We are all in subordinate service. This whole government is carried on with our assistance and they try to keep us in ignorance of our power of cooperation between ourselves by which that which is in our own hands at present can be claimed by us and administered by us. The point is to have the entire control in our hands. I want to have the key of my house, and not merely one stranger turned out of it. **Self-government is our goal; we want a control over our administrative machinery. We don't want to become clerks and remain [clerks].** At present, we are clerks and willing instruments of our own oppression in the hands of an alien government, and that government is ruling over us not by its innate strength but by keeping us in ignorance and blindness to the perception of this fact. Professor Seeley shares this view. Every Englishman knows that they are a mere handful in this country and it is the business of every one of them to befool you in believing that you are weak and they are strong. This is politics. We have been deceived by such policy so long. What the new party

wants you to do is to realize the fact that your future rests entirely in your own hands. If you mean to be free, you can be free; if you do not mean to be free, you will fall and be forever fallen. So many of you need not like arms; but if you have not the power of active resistance, have you not the power of self-denial and self-abstinence in such a way as not to assist this foreign government to rule over you? This is boycott and this is what is meant when we say, boycott is a political weapon. We shall not give them assistance to collect revenue and keep peace. We shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers or outside India with Indian blood and money. We shall not assist them in carrying on the administration of justice. We shall have our own courts, and when time comes we shall not pay taxes. Can you do that by your united efforts? If you can, you are free from tomorrow. Some gentlemen who spoke this evening referred to half bread as against the whole bread. I say I want the whole bread and that immediately. But if I can not get the whole, don't think that I have no patience.

I will take the half they give me and then try for the remainder. This is the line of thought and action in which you must train yourself. We have not raised this cry from a mere impulse. It is a reasoned impulse. Try to understand that reason and try to strengthen that impulse by your logical convictions. I do not ask you to blindly follow us. Think over the whole problem for yourselves. If you accept our advice, we feel sure we can achieve our salvation thereby. This is the advice of the new party. Perhaps we have not obtained a full recognition of our principles. Old prejudices die very hard. Neither of us wanted to wreck the Congress, so we compromised, and were satisfied that our principles were recognized, and only to a certain extent. That does not mean that we have accepted the whole situation. We may have a step in advance next year, so that within a few years our principles will be recognized, and recognized to such an extent that the generations who come after us may consider us Moderates. This is the way in which a nation progresses, and this is the lesson you have to learn from the struggle now going on. This is a lesson of progress, a lesson of helping yourself as much as possible, and if you really perceive the force of it, if you are convinced by these arguments, then and then only is it possible for you to effect your salvation from the alien rule under which you labor at this moment.