



**VISION IAS**  
INSPIRING INNOVATION

# CLASSROOM STUDY MATERIAL **MODERN INDIA**

Part-2



DELHI



JAIPUR



HYDERABAD



PUNE



AHMEDABAD



LUCKNOW



CHANDIGARH



GUWAHATI

FOR DETAILED ENQUIRY,  
PLEASE CALL: +91 8468022022,  
+91 9019066066



ENQUIRY@VISIONIAS.IN



/C/VISIONIASDELHI



/VISION\_IAS



VISION\_IAS



WWW.VISIONIAS.IN



/VISIONIAS\_UPSC



# VISION IAS

[www.visionias.in](http://www.visionias.in)

---

## MODERN INDIAN HISTORY PART 2

S.N.	TOPIC	PAGE NO.
1.	The National Movement in 1940s	1-21
2.	Post War National Upsurge	22-37
3.	Contribution of Various Sections	38-71

sihagn27@gmail.com

**Copyright © by Vision IAS**

*All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Vision IAS*

# THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN 1940s

Student Notes:

## Contents

1. Second World War and Nationalist Response .....	2
1.1. CWC Meeting at Wardha (September 1939) .....	2
1.2. Government Response .....	3
1.3. Pakistan Resolution-Lahore (March 1940).....	3
2. August Offer .....	4
3. Individual Satyagrahas.....	4
4. Cripps Mission .....	5
4.1. Differences from the Past Proposals.....	5
4.2. Reasons for its Failure.....	6
5. Quit India Movement .....	6
5.1. Parallel Government Established at Many Places.....	7
5.2. Reaction of other Parties .....	8
5.3. Mass Participation .....	8
5.4. Critical Appraisal of the Movement.....	8
6. Effect of World War on India including Famine of 1943 .....	9
6.1. Administrative and Policy Failures.....	10
7. Rajagopalachari's Formula .....	11
7.1. The Proposal.....	11
7.2. Gandhi-Jinnah Talks of 1944 .....	11
7.3. Criticism of CR Formula .....	11
8. Desai-Liaquat pact .....	12
9. Wavell's Plan.....	12
9.1. The Plan.....	13
9.2. Reasons for Failure .....	13
10. Indian National Army.....	13
11. UPSC Previous Year Prelims Questions .....	15
12. UPSC Previous Years Mains Questions .....	16
13. Vision IAS Previous Years Mains Test Series Questions .....	17

sihagn27@gmail.com

Copyright © by Vision IAS

All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Vision IAS.

# 1. Second World War and Nationalist Response

The Second World War broke out on September 1939, when Germany attacked Poland. When the war broke out in Europe and the Congress was still vacillating in its response, its renegade leader Subhas Chandra Bose was arguing that the Indians were losing a rare opportunity, for they must take advantage of the empire's weakest moment. He was convinced in 1939, when disciplinary action was taken against him, that it was the result of "Right consolidation"; and now this hesitation to initiate a mass movement against the Raj was because of the same right-wing leaders. He, therefore, travelled alone across India to stir a movement, but did not get much enthusiastic response.

Back in Bengal, he forged a link with Muslim League, and decided to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement to destroy the **Holwell monument** that stood in Calcutta as a remainder of a Black hole tragedy which most people believed did never happen and was invented only to tar the memory of Siraj-ud-daula, the last independent ruler of Bengal. It was a campaign that had an obvious appeal to the Muslims and thus could further strengthen the Hindu-Muslim pact in Bengal. But before it could further strengthen, he was arrested by the British on 3 July 1940 under the Defense of India Act. The Holwell monument was later removed, but Bose remained incarcerated until he threatened to start a hunger strike in December. He was then released unconditionally, but kept under constant surveillance.

Congress position before war was clear as it had repeatedly declared that it would oppose any effort to use Indian men, money and resources in a war to serve British imperialism. The Congress' hostility to Fascism, Nazism, Militarism and Imperialism had been much more consistent than the British record. But the Indian offer to cooperate in the war effort had two basic conditions:

1. After the war, a constituent assembly should be convened to determine political structure of a free India
2. Immediately, some form of a genuinely responsible government should be established at the centre.

The offer was rejected by Linlithgow, the viceroy. The Congress argued that these conditions were necessary to win public opinion for war.

## 1.1. CWC Meeting at Wardha (September 1939)

Different opinions were voiced on the question of Indian support to British war efforts-

- Gandhi advocated an unconditional support to the Allied powers as he made a clear distinction between the democratic states of Western Europe and the totalitarian Nazis.
- The Socialists argued that the war was an imperialist one since both sides were fighting for gaining or defending colonial territories. Therefore, the question of supporting either of the two sides did not arise. Instead, advantage should be taken of the situation to wrest freedom by immediately starting a civil disobedience movement (supporting Bose views).
- Nehru made a sharp distinction between democracy and Fascism. He believed that justice was on the side of Britain, France and Poland, but he was also convinced that Britain and France were imperialist powers, and that the war was the result of the inner contradictions of capitalism maturing since the end of World War I. He, therefore, advocated no Indian participation till India itself was free. However, at the same time, no advantage was to be taken of Britain's difficulty by starting an immediate struggle.

The CWC resolution condemned Fascist aggression. It said that

- India could not be party to a war being fought for democratic freedom, while that freedom was being denied to India;
- If Britain was fighting for democracy and freedom, it should prove it by ending imperialism in its colonies and establishing full democracy in India;

- The government should declare its war aims soon and, also as to how the principles of democracy were to be applied to India.

The **Muslim League** viewed the war situation as one from which it could profit. Although its ultimate aim independence, yet it did not demand as a pre-condition for its support, immediate fulfillment of these aims, except merely an assurance from the Government that it would not be bypassed or ignored in any post war settlement between Congress and the British over India's future.

## 1.2. Government Response

Government's Response was entirely negative. By brushing aside the pro-British sympathies and warning of consequences, Linlithgow, in his statement tried to use the Muslim League and the Princes against the Congress. The government

- Refused to define British war aims beyond stating that Britain was resisting aggression;
- As a part of future arrangement, it would consult the representatives of several communities, parties and interests in India, and the Indian Princes as to how the Act of 1935 might be modified;
- It would immediately set up a **consultative committee** of Indian princes representatives and Politician with no real executive power whose advice could be sought whenever required.

The Government's **Hidden Agenda** was to take advantage of war to regain the lost ground from the Congress by provoking the Congress into a confrontation with the Government and then using the extraordinary situation to acquire draconian powers portraying Congress as Pro-Japan and Pro-German. Even before the declaration of the war, emergency powers had been acquired for the centre in respect of provincial subjects by amending the 1935 Act. Defense of Indian ordinance had been enforced the day the war was declared, thus restricting civil liberties. British Indian reactionary policies received full support from Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

When the Second World War started, Viceroy Linlithgow unilaterally declared India a belligerent on the side of Britain, without consulting the elected Indian representatives. In opposition to Linlithgow's action, the entire Congress leadership resigned from the local government councils.

The resignation of the Congress ministries proved unfortunate in many respects. Withdrawal by the Congress led to autocratic rule in many provinces. Also it gave an opportunity to the government to rely more and more on the support of the Muslim League and adopt an indifferent attitude towards the Congress. In fact, Jinnah and the Muslim League celebrated the occasion as a "**day of deliverance**"; dalit leader Ambedkar also supported them.

The war at this stage was still distant from the shore of Indian, yet many Congress leaders were alive to the issue of resisting fascism and therefore were keen to support British war efforts, and indeed the British Indian Army is the largest volunteer force, numbering 2,500,000 men during the war provided some constitutional concessions were promised.

Especially during the Battle of Britain in 1940, Gandhi resisted calls for massive civil disobedience movements that came from within as well as outside his party, stating he did not seek India's independence out of the ashes of a destroyed Britain. Similarly Nehru considered the Allied powers as imperialists and his philosophy and political perception leant towards the idea of an early struggle but that would have undermined the fight against Fascism. He finally went along with Gandhi and the Congress majority.

## 1.3. Pakistan Resolution-Lahore (March 1940)

The Muslim League passed Pakistan Resolution calling for grouping of geographically contiguous areas where Muslims are in majority (North-West, East) into independent states in which constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign and adequate safeguards to Muslims where they are in minority.



## 2. August Offer

Hitler's advances and the fall of Belgium, Holland and France put England in a conciliatory mood. To get Indian cooperation in the war effort, the Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, made the August Offer (August 1940) which proposed:

- A fresh proposal promising the expansion of the Executive Council to include more Indians.
- The dominion status as the objective for India.
- The establishment of an advisory war council.
- Giving full weight to minority opinion.
- The recognition of Indians' right to frame their own constitution (after the end of the war).

In return, it was hoped that all parties and communities in India would cooperate in Britain's war effort. The declaration marked an important advance over the existing state of things, as it recognized at least the natural and inherent right of the people of the country to determine the form of their future constitution, and explicitly promised dominion status.

However, the Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha on 21 August 1940 rejected this offer, and asserted its demand for complete freedom from the imperial power. Gandhi viewed it as having widened the gulf between Nationalist India and the British ruler. It was also rejected by Muslim League. The Muslim League asserted that it would not be satisfied by anything short of partition of India. The following proposals were put in:

- After the war a representative Indian body would be set up to frame a constitution for India.
- Viceroy's Executive Council would be expanded without delay.
- The minorities were assured that the government would not transfer power "to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in Indian national life."

In July 1941, the viceroy's executive council was enlarged to give the Indians a majority of 8 out of 12 for the first time, but the whites remained in charge of defence, finance and home. Also, a National Defence Council was setup with purely advisory functions.

## 3. Individual Satyagrahas

The Government had taken the adamant position that no constitutional advances could be made till the congress came to an arrangement with the Muslim leaders. It issued ordinance after ordinance taking away the Freedom of Speech and that of the press and the right to organize associations.

The Congress was in a confused state again after the August Offer. The radicals and leftists wanted to launch a mass Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi was ambivalent: at one stage he believed that war was against his principle of non-violence; then he promised the viceroy all support in his war efforts, and for that became a target of criticism from his own followers in the Congress. Ultimately, at the Ramgarh Congress in May 1940, he agreed to launch civil disobedience; but this would be Individual Satyagraha. The Individual Satyagraha was not to seek independence but to affirm the right of speech. The other reason of this Satyagraha was that a mass movement may turn violent and he would not like to see the Great Britain embarrassed by such a situation. This view was conveyed to Lord Linlithgow by Gandhi when he met him on September 27, 1940. The non-violence was set as the centerpiece of Individual Satyagraha. This was done by carefully selecting the Satyagrahis.

The first **Satyagrahi** selected was **Acharya Vinoba Bhave**, who was sent to Jail when he spoke against the war. Second **Satyagrahi** was **Jawahar Lal Nehru**. Third was **Brahma Datt**, one of the inmates of the **Gandhi's Ashram**. They all were sent to jails for violating the Defense of India Act. This was followed by a lot of other people. But since it was not a mass movement, it

attracted little enthusiasm and in December 1940, Gandhi suspended the movement. The campaign started again in January 1941, this time, thousands of people joined and around 20 thousand people were arrested.

Two developments in the latter half of 1941 changed the Indian situation. After overrunning a big part of Europe, Hitler invaded Russia on 22 June 1941. In the East, Japan attacked the American Naval fleet at Pearl Harbour and quickly swept the British from Malaya, Singapore, Indonesia and Burma, posing a serious threat to the security of India.

The German invasion of Russia confronted the Indian Communist with a dilemma. While the British Policies in India remained repressive and reactionary as ever, Britain now was an ally of Russia against Germany. In January 1942, the Communist Party of India called for full support to the anti-fascist "People's War".

The Congress leaders, released in December 1941, were anxious to defend Indian territory and go to the aid of the Allies. The CWC overrode Gandhi's and Nehru's objections and passed a resolution offering to cooperate with the Government in the defense of India, if

- Full independence was given after the war.
- Substance of power was transferred immediately.

It was at this time that Gandhi designated Nehru as his chosen successor.

## 4. Cripps Mission

At International level, Roosevelt raise the question of Indian political reforms with Churchill, Chiang-kai Shek on a visit to India in February 1941 expressed sympathy towards 'India's aspirations for freedom'. The labour leaders of Britain also put pressure on Churchill to seek active cooperation of the Indians in the war.

The Cripps mission was an attempt in late March 1942 by the British government to secure full Indian cooperation and support for their efforts in World War II. The mission was headed by Sir Stafford Cripps, a senior left-wing politician and government minister in the War Cabinet, who had actively supported the Indian national movement.

### Main Proposals

- An Indian Union with a dominion status would be set up; it would be free to decide its relations with the Commonwealth and free to participate in the United Nations and other international bodies.
- After the end of the war, a Constituent Assembly would be convened to frame a new constitution. Members of this assembly would be partly elected by the provincial assemblies through proportional representation and partly nominated by the princes.
- The British Government would accept the new constitution subject to two conditions:
  - Any province not willing to join the Union could have a separate constitution-making body and the British Government would negotiate a treaty to effect the transfer of power and to safeguard racial and religious minorities.
  - In the meantime, defense of India would remain in British hands and the governor-general's powers would remain intact.

### 4.1. Differences from the Past Proposals

- The making of the Constitution was to be solely in Indian hands now (and not "mainly" in Indian hands- as contained in the August Offer).
- A concrete plan was provided for the constituent assembly.
- Option was available to any province to have a separate constitution- a blueprint for India's partition.
- Free India could withdraw from the Commonwealth.
- Indians were allowed a large share in the administration in the interim period.

## 4.2. Reasons for its Failure

The Cripps Mission proposals failed to satisfy Indian nationalists and turned out to be merely a propaganda device for US and Chinese consumption. Various parties and group had objections to the proposals on different points.

The Congress objected to -

- The offer of dominion status instead of a provision for complete independence.
- The representation of the states by nominees and not by elected representatives
- Right to provinces to secede as this went against the principle of national unity.
- Absence of any plan for immediate transfer of power and absence of any real share in defense; the governor-general's supremacy had been retained, and the demand for governor-general being only the constitutional head had not been accepted.

Gandhi said that Cripps' offer of Dominion Status after the war was a "post-dated cheque drawn on a crashing bank".

The Muslim League objected to -

- Criticised the idea of a single Indian Union.
- Did not like the machinery for the creation of a constituent assembly and the procedure to decide on the accession of provinces to the Union.
- Thought that the proposals denied to the Muslims the right to self determination and the creation of Pakistan.

Other groups also objected to the provinces' right to secede. The liberals considered the secession proposals to be criticized the basis of the right to secede. The depressed classes thought that partition would leave them at the mercy of the caste Hindus. The Sikh objected that partition would take away Punjab from them.

Other Reasons -

- The incapacity of Cripps to go beyond the Draft Declaration and the adoption of a rigid, "take it or leave it" attitude added to the deadlock.
- Cripps had earlier talked of "Cabinet" and "National government" but later he said that he had only meant an expansion of the executive council.
- Cripps had designed the proposals himself, but they were too radical for Prime Minister Churchill and the Viceroy, and too conservative for the Indians; no middle way was found. The Cripps did not get either the cooperation of the viceroy or the support of his prime minister.
- It is also argued that Churchill did not sincerely wish the Mission to succeed; he merely wanted to show the world- and more particularly, his allies- that something was being done to resolve the Indian Political imbroglio.

There was little trust between the British and Congress by this stage, and both sides felt that the other was concealing its true plans. The failure of the Mission, as we have noted earlier, prepared the ground for a total confrontation between the Raj and the Congress. Congress moved toward the Quit India movement whereby it refused to cooperate in the war effort, while the British imprisoned practically the entire Congress leadership for the duration of the war.

## 5. Quit India Movement

The failure of the Cripps Mission plunged the country in to despondency and anger. The fuel that fed this was supplied not only by the hypocrisy of the British Government, but also by a host of other factors. The war situation was worsening day by day. After the fall of Singapore on 15 February, Rangoon on 7 March and Andamans on 12 March, 1942, the Imperial Japanese



Army advanced closer to India with the seas around India were dominated by the Japanese. Indians perceived an inability upon the part of the British to defend Indian soil breaking the myth of British invincibility-particularly on the seas. To many optimists it seemed that the end of the British Empire was imminent.

Also, Stafford Cripps returned home leaving behind a frustrated and embittered Indian people, who, though still sympathising with the victims of Fascist aggression, felt that the existing situation in the country had become intolerable and that the time had come for a final assault on imperialism.

Gandhi was not slow to feel this popular mood of militancy and realized that the moment of his final engagement with the Raj had arrived. "Leave India to God", Gandhi wrote in May 1942. "If that is too much, then leave her to anarchy. This ordered disciplined anarchy should go, and if there is complete lawlessness, I would risk it."

In 1942, there was a remarkable change in Gandhi's attitude and he seemed to be in unusually militant mood. As the possibility of a Japanese invasion become real, Gandhi refused to accept that the Japanese could be the liberators and believed that India in the hands of the Indian was the best guarantee against fascist aggression.

When the British remained unresponsive, Gandhi and the Indian National Congress began planning a major public revolt, the Quit India movement, which demanded immediate British withdrawal from India.

On 8 August 1942, the Quit India resolution was passed at the Bombay session of the All India Congress Committee (AICC). The draft proposed that if the British did not accede to the demands, a massive Civil Disobedience would be launched. However, it was an extremely controversial decision. At Gowalia Tank, Mumbai, Gandhi urged Indians to follow a non-violent civil disobedience. Gandhi told the masses to act as an independent nation and not to follow the orders of the British.

The British, already alarmed by the advance of the Japanese army to the India-Burma border, responded the next day by imprisoning Gandhi at the Aga Khan Palace in Pune. The Congress Party's Working Committee or national leadership was arrested all together and imprisoned at the Ahmednagar Fort. They also banned the party altogether. All the major leaders of the INC were arrested and detained. As the masses were leaderless the protest took a violent turn. Large-scale protests and demonstrations were held all over the country. Workers remained absent en masse and strikes were called.

The movement also saw widespread acts of sabotage, Indian under-ground organisation carried out bomb attacks on allied supply convoys, government buildings were set on fire, electricity lines were disconnected and transport and communication lines were severed.

As the time passed, underground activities came to be channeled into three streams, with a radical group under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan organizing guerrilla warfare at India-Nepal border, a centrist group led by Congress Socialist like Aruna Asaf Ali mobilizing volunteers throughout India for sabotage activities, and a Gandhian group led by Suchetra Kripalani and other emphasizing non-violent action and constructive programme.

The disruptions were under control in a few weeks and had little impact on the war effort. The movement soon became a leaderless act of defiance, with a number of acts that deviated from Gandhi's principle of non-violence. In large parts of the country, the local underground organizations took over the movement. However, by 1943, Quit India had petered out.

## 5.1. Parallel Government Established at Many Places

- Ballia (in August 1942 for a week) - under Gandhian Chittu Pandey. He got many Congress leaders released

- Tamluk (Midnapore from December 1942 to September 1944)- which undertook cyclone relief work, sanctioned grants to schools, supplied paddy from the rich to the poor, organized Bidyut Bahinis etc
- Satara (mid 1943 to 1945)- named “Prati Sarker”, was organized under leaders like Y.B.Chavan, Nana Patil, etc. Village libraries and Nyayadan Mandals were organized, prohibition campaigns were carried on and ‘Gandhi marriages’ were organized.

## 5.2. Reaction of other Parties

All the other major parties rejected the Quit India plan, and most cooperated closely with the British, as did the princely states, the civil service and the police. The Muslim League supported the Raj and grew rapidly in membership and in influence with the British.

Jinnah's Muslim League condemned the Quit India movement and participated in provincial governments as well as the legislative councils of the Raj. It encouraged Muslims to participate in the war. With this cooperation, the British were able to continue administering India for the duration of the war using officials and military personnel where Indian politicians could not be found. This would not prove to be feasible in the long term, however.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar, the leader of the dalits, who had joined the viceroy's executive council as a labour member just before the onset of the campaign, also did not support it. But once again, although many of his supporters did not join, evidence of dalit participation in the quit India movement in various regions and cross-caste unity cannot be denied.

Hindu Mahasabha too condemned the Quit India movement as “Sterile, unmanly and injurious to the Hindu cause” and stalwart Hindu leaders like V.D. Savarkar. B.S. Munje and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee whole heartedly supported British war efforts that were allegedly being wrecked by the Congress campaign. The other Hindu organization, RSS, which until now had its main base in Maharashtra, remained aloof as well.

The Communist Party of India, following the involvement of Russia in the war in December 1941, became another important Political group which did not support Quit India movement because of their “Peoples’ War” Strategy.

## 5.3. Mass Participation

Despite of that, Mass Participation was on many levels -

- **Youth**, especially the students (acting as couriers) of schools and colleges remained in the forefront.
- **Women**, especially school and college girls, actively participated, and included Aruna Asaf Ali, Suchetra Kripalani and Usha Mehta.
- **Businessmen** - through donations, shelter and material help,
- **Workers** went on strike and faced repression.
- **Peasants** of all strata were at the heart of movement. Even some zamindars participated. These peasants concentrated their offensive on symbols of authority and there was complete absence of anti-zamindar violence.
- **Government officials**, especially those belonging to lower levels in police (who passed on secret information to activists) and administration, participated resulting in erosion of government loyalty
- **Muslims** helped by giving shelter to underground activists. There were no communal clashes during the Movement.
- **Communists**, despite their anti-war line, felt the irresistible pull of the movement.

## 5.4. Critical Appraisal of the Movement

There is no doubt that the Quit India Movement was crushed, but it proved to be of epic proportion. The movement was conspicuous by a high level of popular participation and

sympathy for the national cause. It removed the illusion that the British Empire was morally justified and that the majority of the Indian masses were loyal and demanded continuation of British Rule. It was realized by the British that they were no longer wanted in India. In a letter to the Prime Minister, Wavell pointed out that it would be impossible to hold India by force after the war, given the likely state of the World opinion or the British popular opinion or even the army attitudes. The decision to start negotiations after the war was not the gift of the Labour Government but was influenced by the observation of Wavell. The Quit India movement placed the demand for independence on the immediate agenda of the national movement. All talks of dominion status were consumed in the fire of revolt. India could have nothing short of independence. After the movement, there was no retreat.

The worst fall-out of the movement was that the Congress, on account of the arrest of its leaders, was isolated from grass-root realities and the Constitutional politics. While the Congress leaders were languishing in Jails, the league was consolidating its position and establishing itself as a major force. The reorganization of the League reached fruition during this period. The league like congress also introduced two *anna* membership and began to build up bases in villages. It promised not only an Islamic state but also Peasant Utopia where Muslims peasant will be as prosperous, as Hindu Moneylenders, Landlords or Zamindars. On the whole, this process made the demand for Pakistan seem realistic.

## 6. Effect of World War on India including Famine of 1943

The Economic impact of War was initially beneficial to various groups of Indians. As Commodity prices rose, it benefited industrialist, merchants and rich peasants producing for the market; it took away the bad effects of the depression and for the peasants, it reduced the pressure of rent.

But in 1942 the main problem caused by the war was what Max Harcourt has described as “**a scarcity crisis**”, resulting from mainly a shortfall in the supply of rice. Between April and August the price Index for food grains rose by sixty points in north India. This was partly because of bad seasonal conditions and partly due to the stoppage in the supply of Burmese rice and the stringent procurement policy of the British. This Crisis resulted into Catastrophe in the form of **Bengal Famine**.

Estimates are that between 1.5 and 4 million people died of starvation, malnutrition and disease, out of Bengal's 60.3 million population, half of them dying from disease after food became available in December 1943. As in previous Bengal famines, the highest mortality was not in previously very poor groups, but among artisans and small traders whose income vanished when people spent all they had on food and did not employ cobblers, carpenters, etc. The famine also caused major economic and social disruption, ruining millions of families.

The food situation in India was tight from the beginning of the Second World War with a series of crop failures and localized famines which were dealt with successfully under the **Indian Famine Codes**. In Bengal in 1940-41 there was a small scale famine although quick action by the authorities prevented widespread loss of life. Food prices increased throughout India, and the Central Government was forced to undertake meetings with local government officials and release regulations of price controls.

The proximate cause of the famine was **a reduction in supply** with some increase in demand. The winter 1942 ‘aman’ rice crop which was already expected to be poor or indifferent was hit by a cyclone and three tidal waves in October. A fungus causing the disease known as “brown spot”, hit the rice crop and this was reported to have had an even greater effect on yield than the cyclone.

Bengal had been a food importer for the last decade. Calcutta was normally supplied by Burma. The British Empire had suffered a disastrous defeat at Singapore in 1942 against the Japanese military, which then proceeded to invade Burma in the same year. Burma was the world's

largest exporter of rice in the inter-war period. By 1940 15% of India's rice overall came from Burma, while in Bengal the proportion was slightly higher given the province's proximity to Burma. After the Japanese occupation of Burma in March 1942, Bengal and the other parts of India and Ceylon normally supplied by Burma had to find food elsewhere. However, there were poor crops and famine situations in Cochin, Trivandrum and Bombay on the West coast and Madras, Orissa and Bengal in the East. It fell on the few surplus Provinces, mainly the Punjab, to supply the rest of India and Ceylon. India as a whole had a deficit, but still exported small quantities to meet the urgent needs of the British-Indian Army abroad, and those of Ceylon.

## 6.1. Administrative and Policy Failures

**The Famine Inquiry Commission (1945)** documents a large number of administrative, civil policy and military policy failures. The failure to set up a food administration in 1939 and prepare for rationing was the key failure. The failure to enforce an India-wide food policy with an equality of sacrifice was another. Without this, the administrative controls must prevent any meaningful intervention. Political and administrative failures to set up a system for seizing surplus food in surplus areas also contributed (it was acceptable in deficit areas). There were many others which added to local shortages or otherwise increased the death rate, (e.g. Boat Denial Policy, Rice Denial Policy, various purchasing policies) but were not causes of the famine.

In December 1942 there was a shortage in Calcutta itself. Therefore government focused on getting supplies to Calcutta by trying to buy surplus stocks in the region. The quantities that District Officers were able to locate and purchase were considered too small to end the famine, so the Government introduced free trade in rice in Eastern India, hoping that traders would sell their stocks to Bengal; however this measure also failed to move large stocks to Bengal. In April and May there was a propaganda drive to convince the population that the high prices were not justified by the supply of food, the goal being that the propaganda would induce hoarders to sell their stocks. When these propaganda drives failed, there was a drive to locate hoarded stocks. Bengal's Minister of Civil Supplies, announced that there was no shortage of rice in Bengal and introduced a policy of intimidating 'hoarders': this caused looting, extortion and corruption but did not increase the amount of food on the market. When these drives continually failed to locate large stocks, the government realized that the scale of the loss in supply was larger than they had initially believed.

The Indian Army and allied troops acted only after Wavell became Viceroy and got permission from the Bengal Government. They had vehicles, fuel, men and administrators, which the civil authority did not, so they were much more effective than the civil authority in getting food to the starving outside Calcutta. The distribution was difficult and continued for five months after the November/December 1943 crop was harvested. However, they did not have much food to distribute.

**Another Effect of World War** on India was the creation of a popular mentality of Panic, as British power clearly seemed to be desperate and on the verge of imminent collapse. This was confirmed by the streams of refugees who came back from Malay and Burma, bringing with them horror stories of not only Japanese atrocities, but also of how British power collapsed in South East Asia and British authorities abandoned the Indian refugees to their fate, forcing them to traverse hostile terrain on foot, enduring hunger, disease and pain.

There was a widespread fear that if Japan invaded, the British would do the same in India too. And that seemed no longer a distant possibility, as the British initiated a harsh 'denial policy' in coastal Bengal by destroying all means of communications, including boats and cycles paying very little compensation. From May 1942, American and Australian soldiers began to arrive in India and soon became the central figures in stories of rape and racial harassment of civilian population. Rumours were rife, both fed by the Axis propaganda machine, and by Subhas Bose's **Azad Hind Radio**, broadcast from Berlin from March 1942.

## 7. Rajagopalachari's Formula

C. Rajagopalachari's formula (or C. R. formula or Rajaji formula) was a proposal formulated by Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari to solve the political deadlock between the All India Muslim League and Indian National Congress on independence of India from the British. The League's position was that the Muslims and Hindus of British India were of two separate nations and hence the Muslims had the right to their own nation when India obtained independence. The Congress, which included both Hindu and Muslim members, was opposed to the idea of partitioning India. With the advent of Second World War British administration required both parties to agree so that Indian help could be sought for the war efforts.

C. Rajagopalachari, a Congress leader from Madras, devised a proposal for the Congress to offer the League the Muslim Pakistan based on plebiscite of all the people in the regions where Muslims made a majority. Although the formula was opposed even within the Congress party, Gandhi used it as his proposal in his talks with Jinnah in 1944.

### 7.1. The Proposal

- The League was to endorse the Indian demand for independence and to co-operate with the Congress in formation of Provisional Interim Government for a transitional period.
- At the end of the War, a commission would be appointed to demarcate the districts having a Muslim population in absolute majority and in those areas plebiscite to be conducted on all inhabitants (including the non-Muslims) on basis of adult suffrage.
- All parties would be allowed to express their stance on the partition and their views before the plebiscite.
- In the event of separation, a mutual agreement would be entered into for safeguarding essential matters such as defence, communication and commerce and for other essential services.
- The transfer of population, if any would be absolutely on a voluntary basis.
- The terms of the binding will be applicable only in case of full transfer of power by Britain to Government of India.

### 7.2. Gandhi-Jinnah Talks of 1944

Although other Congress leaders were still in prison Gandhi was released on 5 May 1944. After his release Gandhi proposed talks with Jinnah on his two-nation theory and negotiating on issue of partition. The CR formula acted as the basis for the negotiations. Gandhi and Jinnah met in September 1944 to ease the deadlock. Gandhi placed the CR formula as his proposal to Jinnah. Nevertheless, Gandhi-Jinnah talks failed after two weeks of negotiations.

### 7.3. Criticism of CR Formula

The formulation although conceived the principle of Pakistan, it aimed to show that the provinces that Jinnah claimed as Pakistan also contained in itself large numbers of non-Muslims. Jinnah had placed the claim for British Indian Provinces then regarded as Muslim majority regions (in the north-west; Sind, Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab, and in the north-east, Assam and Bengal). Thus if a plebiscite was placed, Jinnah ran a risk partitioning Punjab and Bengal. Moreover, Jinnah considered that the League represented all Muslims and the adult franchise demanded by the formula was redundant.

Furthermore, the decision of Muslims to secede from India, according to the CR formula, would be taken not just by Muslims alone but by a plebiscite of the entire population even in the Muslim majority districts. This might well have diluted the enthusiasm of the people of these provinces about going their own separate way. Hence Jinnah rejected the initiative, telling his Council that it was intended to 'torpedo' the Lahore resolution; it was 'grossest travesty', a 'ridiculous proposal', 'offering a shadow and a husk – a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten



Pakistan, and thus trying to pass off having met out Pakistan scheme and Muslim demand'. While the formula kept most of the essential services together, Jinnah wanted a full partition and any relations would be dealt as a treaty alone.

Failure of the CR formula was seen as Congress' betrayal of the Sikhs by Akali Dal leaders like Master Tara Singh. Since the formula meant vivisection of Punjab, if agreed the Sikh community would be divided into two. Since Sikhs did not make a majority in any single district although being a very significant number in Punjab would have to be scattered between Muslim and Hindu nations.

The proposal had been detested by other leaders such as V. D. Sarvarkar and Syama Prasad Mookerjee of the Hindu Mahasabha and Srinivas Sastri of National Liberal Federation. However, Wavell the then viceroy of India, who had earlier insisted on the geographic unity of India stated that the talks based on the CR formula failed because Gandhi himself did "not really believe" in the proposal nor Jinnah was ready to "answer awkward questions" which would reveal that he had "not thought out the implications of Pakistan".

## 8. Desai-Liaquat pact

While Mohandas Gandhi and the entire Congress Working Committee had been arrested during the Quit India movement, from 1942 to 1945, Desai was one of few Congress leaders free. While pressing demands for the immediate release of political prisoners, Desai began secretive talks with Liaquat Ali Khan, the second-most important leader of the Muslim League. However this assertion has been seriously challenged by other eminent people like Sir Chiman Lal Setalwad who have stated that Gandhi had full knowledge of the ongoing negotiations. It was their intention to negotiate an agreement for a future coalition government, which would enable a united choice for Hindus and Muslims for the independent Government of India. In this deal, **Liaquat gave up the demand for a separate Muslim state in turn for parity of Muslims-to-Hindus in the council of ministers**. Conceding the League as the representative of Muslims and giving a minority community equal place with the majority Hindus, Desai attempted to construct an ideal Indian alliance that would hasten India's path for freedom while ending the Quit India struggle. While Desai was working without the knowledge of Gandhi, Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru or any other Congress leader, Khan had kept the deal a secret from his superior, Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

When a press report leaked the prospective deal in 1945, the respective parties were alarmed. While Desai presented full information to Gandhi, Jinnah and the League outrightly rejected any agreements, and Liaquat Ali Khan denied that such a pact was being negotiated. Desai's assertion that a deal had been reached was ridiculed by the League, while Congress leaders were angry at him for conducting such negotiations without informing them. Bhulabhai Desai would lead a major effort in March 1945 to get the House to defeat the unpopular war budget, but he had **lost political standing** in his own party owing to the **fallout of the Desai-Liaquat pact**. He was not given a ticket to contest elections for the Constituent Assembly of India on grounds of his ill-health, but also due to feelings in the Congress that Desai had been advancing his own power and popularity while the Congress leadership was imprisoned.

## 9. Wavell's Plan

Although the war in Europe came to an end in May 1945, the Japanese threat still remained. The Conservative Government in Britain led by Churchill was keen to reach a solution on the Constitutional question in India. The viceroy, Lord Wavell was permitted to start negotiations with Indian leaders. Congress leaders were released from jails in June 1945.

Why the Government was keen on a solution now?

1. The general election in England was scheduled for mid 1945. The Conservatives wanted to be seen as sincere on reaching a solution.
2. There was pressure from the Allies to seek further Indian cooperation in the War.

3. The Government wanted to divert Indian energies in to channels more profitable for the British

Student Notes:

## 9.1. The Plan

The idea was to reconstruct the Governor General's executive council pending the preparation of a new Constitution. For this purpose, a conference was convened by the Viceroy at Shimla in June 1945. The Shimla Conference was a meeting between Viceroy Wavell and the major political leaders of India to agree on and approve the Wavell Plan for Indian self-government. It reached a potential agreement for the self-rule of India that provided separate representation to Muslims and reduced majority powers for both communities in their majority regions. The main proposal of the Wavell Plan were as follows-

- With the exception of the Governor-General and the Commander-in Chief, all members of the executive council were to be Indians.
- Caste Hindus and Muslims were to have equal representation.
- The reconstructed council was to function as an interim government within the framework of the 1935 Act (i.e. not responsible to the Central Assembly)
- Governor-general was to exercise his veto on the advice of ministers.
- Representatives of different parties were to submit a joint list to the viceroy for nominations to the executive council. If a joint list was not possible, then separate lists were to be submitted.
- Possibilities were to be kept open for negotiations on a new constitution once the war was finally won.

## 9.2. Reasons for Failure

**Muslim League's stand** - Talks stalled, however, on the issue of selection of Muslim representatives. Seeking to assert itself and its claim to be the sole representative of Indian Muslims, the All-India Muslim League and its leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah refused to back any plan in which the Indian National Congress, the dominant party in the talks, appointed Muslim representatives. The league wanted some kind of veto in the council with decisions opposed to Muslims needing a two-third majority for approval. This scuttled the conference, and perhaps the last viable opportunity for a united, independent India. When the Indian National Congress and All India Muslim League reconvened under the Cabinet Mission the next year, the Indian National Congress was far less sympathetic to the Muslim League's requests despite Jinnah's approval of the British plan.

**Congress stand** The congress objected to the plan as "an attempt to reduce the Congress to the status of a purely caste Hindu party and insisted on its right to include members of all communities among its nominees"

**Wavell's Mistake** Wavell announced a breakdown of talks thus giving league a virtual veto. This strengthened the League's position as was evident from the elections in 1945-46 and boosted Jinnah's position.

## 10. Indian National Army

In 1940, a year after war broke out; the British had put Bose under house arrest in Calcutta. With progression of War in Europe, Bose believed that Germany was going to win. Although he did not like the totalitarianism or racism, he began to nurture the idea that the cause of Indian Independence could be furthered with the help of Axis powers and started exploring various possibilities. Finally, in the midnight of 16-17 January 1941 he fled from his Elgin Road residence in Calcutta incognito as an upcountry Muslim. He travelled to Kabul and then through Russia on an Italian passport; by the end of March he reached Berlin (Germany) to seek Hitler and Mussolini's help for raising an army to fight the British.

Subhas Bose met Goebbels and Hitler in Berlin, but did not receive much help from them. But there he secured German approval for two of his proposals:

- He would broadcast anti-British propaganda from Berlin
- He would raise "Free India" Unit from the Indian Prisoners of War (POWs) in Germany.

He was allowed to start his Azad Hind Radio and was handed over the Indian POWs captured in North Africa to start an Indian Legion, but nothing beyond that. The second item received an impetus when Germany declared war against Russia. "Free India" units were raised not only in Rome, Italy being an ally of Germany, but also in Paris which was then under German occupation. The full strength of the Legion was 3000.

But he could not get an Axis declaration in favour of Indian independence, and after German reverses at Stalingrad, that became even more difficult. Also, in light of Germany's changing fortunes, a German land invasion of India became untenable.

Meanwhile, a new stage of action was being prepared for him in Southeast Asia, where the Japanese were taking real interest in the cause of Indian Independence. India originally did not figure in the Japanese policy of Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, under which Japanese proposed to help Asians gain independence from western imperialism.

But by 1940 Japan had developed an India Policy and the following year sent Major Fuziwara to Southeast Asia to contact expatriate Indians who were organizing themselves into the Indian Independence Leagues under the leadership of men like Pritam Singh.

The idea of the Indian National Army (INA) was first conceived in Malaya by Captain Mohan Singh, an Indian officer of the British Indian army, when he decided not to join the retreating British Army and instead turned to the Japanese for help and agreed to cooperate with Fuziwara to raise an Indian Army with POWs to march alongside the Japanese to liberate India.

In June 1942, a united Indian Independence League, representing all Indians in Southeast Asia, was born as a civilian political body having controlling authority over the army. To chair this body, Rash Behari Bose, a veteran Bengali revolutionary then living in Japan, was flown in. By September, the INA was formally in existence. But its relationship with the Japanese was still far from satisfactory, as "Japanese duplicity" now became more than apparent. General Tojo, the Japanese prime minister, made a declaration in the Diet supporting Indian Independence. But beyond that, the Japanese were only prepared to treat INA as a subsidiary force, rather than an allied army. As Mohan Singh insisted on autonomy and allied status, he was removed from command and put under arrest. Rash Behari Bose tried to hold the banner for some time, but he was then too aged for the task. By the beginning of 1943 the first INA experiment virtually collapsed.

As Mohan Singh had often mentioned to the Japanese, the INA movement needed a new leader and outside India only one person could provide that leadership, and that was Subhas Chandra Bose. The Japanese now seriously considered the proposition and negotiated with the Germans to bring him to Asia. At last, after the long and arduous submarine voyage, in May 1943 Bose arrived in Southeast Asia and immediately took control of the situation, with Japanese assurance of help and equal treatment.

In October, he formed the Azad Hind Government, a Provisional Free Indian Government in exile, which was immediately recognized by Japan and later by eight other governments including Germany and Fascist Italy. And he became the supreme commander of its army, the Azad Hind Fauj or Indian National Army after its reorganization.

The Indian National Army composed of Indian POWs and volunteering Indian expatriates in South-East Asia, with the help of the Japanese. It had a women's regiment named after the legendary Rani of Jhansi of 1857 fame. Its aim was to reach India as a fighting force that would build on public resentment to inspire revolts among Indian soldiers to defeat the British raj.

The INA was to see action against the allies, including the British Indian Army, in the forests of Arakan, Burma and in Assam, laying siege on Imphal and Kohima with the Japanese 15th Army. During the war, the Andaman and Nicobar islands were captured by the Japanese and handed over by them to the INA.

But due to ill-fated Imphal campaign, which was finally launched on 8 march 1944 by Japan's Southern Army accompanied by two INA regiments, ended in a disaster. The INA failed owing to poor military leadership, disrupted logistics, poor supplies from the Japanese, and lack of training.

The retreat was even more devastating, finally ending the dream of liberating India through military campaign. It surrendered unconditionally to the British in Singapore in 1945. Bose, however, attempted to escape to Japanese-held Manchuria in an attempt to escape to the Soviet Union, which he increasingly viewed as anti-British. But on his way, on 18 August 1945 at Taihoku airport in Taiwan, he died in an air crash.

## 11. UPSC Previous Year Prelims Questions

1. With reference to Simon Commission's recommendations, which one of the following statements is correct?
  - (a) It recommended the replacement of diarchy with responsible government in the provinces
  - (b) It proposed the setting up of inter-provincial council under the Home Department
  - (c) It suggested the abolition of bicameral legislature at the Centre
  - (d) It recommended the creation of Indian Police Service with a provision for increased pay and allowances for British recruits as compared to Indian recruits

**Answer: A**

2. Who among the following were official Congress negotiations with Cripps Mission?
  - (a) Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel
  - (b) Acharya J. B. Kripalani and C. Rajagopalachari
  - (c) Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad
  - (d) Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai

**Answer: C**

3. After Quit India Movement, C. Rajagopalachari issued a pamphlet entitled "The Way Out". Which one of the following was a proposal in this pamphlet?
  - (a) The establishment of a "War Advisory Council" composed of representatives of British India and the Indian States
  - (b) reconstitution of the Central Executive Council in such a way that that all its members, except the Governor General and the Commander – in – Chief should be Indian leaders
  - (c) Fresh elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures to be held at the end of 1945 and the Constitutional making body to be convened as soon as possible
  - (d) A solution for the constitutional deadlock

**Answer: D**

4. Which one of the following observations is not true about the Quit India Movement of 1942?
  - (a) It was a non-violent movement
  - (b) It was led by Mahatma Gandhi
  - (c) It was a spontaneous movement
  - (d) It did not attract the labour class in general

**Answer: D**

5. Which of the following parties were established by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar?
  1. The Peasants and Workers Party of India.
  2. All India Scheduled Castes Federation.
  3. The Independent Labour Party.
 Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
  - (a) 1 and 2 only
  - (b) 2 and 3 only
  - (c) 1 and 3 only
  - (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: B**

6. The distribution of powers between the Centre and the States in the Indian Constitution is based on the scheme provided in the  
 (a) Morley-Minto Reforms, 1909 (b) Montagu-Chelmsford Act, 1919  
 (c) Government of India Act, 1935 (d) Indian Independence Act, 1947

**Answer: C**

7. The Congress ministries resigned in the seven provinces in 1939, because:  
 (a) The Congress could not form ministries in the other four provinces.  
 (b) Emergence of a 'left wing' in the Congress made the working of the ministries impossible.  
 (c) There were widespread communal disturbances in their provinces.  
 (d) None of the statements (a), (b) and (c) given above is correct

**Answer: D**

8. Quit India Movement was launched in response to  
 (a) Cabinet Mission Plan (b) Cripps Proposals  
 (c) Simon Commission Report (d) Wavell Plan
9. With reference to Congress Socialist Party, consider the following statements :  
 1. It advocated the boycott of British goods and evasion of taxes.  
 2. It wanted to establish the dictatorship of proletariat.  
 3. It advocated separate electorate for minorities and oppressed classes.  
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?  
 (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 3 only  
 (c) 1, 2 and 3 (d) None

10. With reference to Indian freedom struggle, consider the following events:  
 1. Mutiny in Royal Indian Navy  
 2. Quit Indian Movement launched  
 3. Second Round Table Conference  
 What is the correct chronological sequence of the above events?  
 (a) 1-2-3 (b) 2-1-3  
 (c) 3-2-1 (d) 3-1-2

11. In the Federation established by The Government of India Act of 1935, residuary powers were given to the  
 (a) Federal Legislature (b) Governor General  
 (c) Provincial Legislature (d) Provincial Governors

## 12. UPSC Previous Years Mains Questions

- Highlight the differences in the approach of Subhash Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi in the struggle for freedom. (2016)
- How different would have been the achievement of Indian independence without Mahatma Gandhi? Discuss. (2015)
- Examine critically the various facets of economic policies of the British in India from mid-eighteenth century till independence. (2014)
- In what ways did the naval mutiny prove to be the last nail in the coffin of British colonial aspirations in India? (2014)



## 13. Vision IAS Previous Years Mains Test Series Questions

Student Notes:

### 1. *Quit India Movement was not just an impulsive response of the masses. Analyse.*

#### **Approach:**

Arguments in favor and against should be discussed. Different phases, role of leaders, organizations etc can be helpful to answer the question.

#### **Answer:**

Quit India Movement prima facie seems to be just an impulsive response of the masses primarily because it has undergone an unprecedented violence by the masses. Secondly, it was leaderless movement as Quit India resolution was passed on 8 August and on 9 August Gandhi and other Congress leaders were arrested. Moreover, biggest party of India i.e. Congress was declared illegal. Further, unprecedented clashes of people with military and police were also observed. Apart from it, at some places the movement had taken the communal colour.

However, by this time people of the country have become more aware about politics and means of demonstrations. In urban India middle class played very important role to organise the movement. In big cities, demonstration were organised, trade unions called for general strikes. These activities put entire administration to standstill.

In countryside militant students played key role to organise the movement. They destroyed communications on a mass scale. Railway stations, post offices and police stations were destroyed by them. There were also some particular leaders who successfully tried to establish parallel govt. though such govt were short lived. Chittee Pandey in Ballia, Jaitiyo Sarkar in Midnapur and Prati Sarkar in Satara were some such examples.

Further there were certain well organised revolutionary activities which primarily sabotaged the war efforts through propaganda by various means. For example Usha Mehta ran a clandestine radio station "from somewhere in India"

Apart from it, underground organisations of militant activities were found. Prominent leaders of such organisations were Aruna Asaf Ali, Ram Manohar Lohia, Biju Patnail and JP. They provided line of command and source of guidance to activists throughout the country. They also collected and distributed money and materials like bombs, arms and dynamite to the underground groups.

### 2. *Cripps proposal was "a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank." Comment.*

#### **Approach:**

Straight forward question. Discuss the conditions at the time Cripps Proposal was made and how its proposals were for after the war is over and therefore rejected.

#### **Answer:**

Hitler's invasion in Russia and Japanese victory in Malaya, Singapore, Indonesia and Burma created insecurity to the British. They needed support of Indian political leaders to augment the war efforts. This led British govt. to send a mission headed by Sir Stafford Cripps to India to settle cooperation.

It recognised for the first time the right to dominion status of India. Cripps mission proposed that after the war fresh election shall be held. A constitution making body shall also be constituted. If a province expresses unwillingness to accept the constitution it will be free to refuse accession to the India Union.

Since, British was losing territory in South-East Asia, Hitler invaded on Britain's allies and Japan bombed Pearl Harbour, British were on losing side of the war. They have made proposal that most of the demands shall be fulfilled only when the war is over. Indian leader demanded no deferred solution for India and rejected Cripps proposal. Thus, Gandhiji termed it as "a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank."

**3. Highlight the salient features of British policy towards Princely states during the 20th century. How did the policy of Indian National Congress evolve towards democratic movements in the Princely States?**

**Approach:**

- Introduction should briefly define princely states and their linkage with The British rule.
- Major policies adopted by the British towards Princely states such as Policy of Subordinate Isolation, Subordinate Union and Equal Federation should find a mention in the subsequent discussion. Last two policies we have to highlight as 20<sup>th</sup> century relations were governed by them.
- In the last part discuss the Congress policy with specific inputs such as the Praja Mandal Movement.

**Answer:**

The territories, which were not direct rule of the British were known as Princely States. All of them recognized the paramountcy of the British Government and in return the British Guaranteed the Princes against any threat to their autocratic power, internal or external. The 20<sup>th</sup> century relations between the British and the States were governed by the policies such as Subordinate Union and Equal Federation.

Policy of Subordinate Union- This policy though adopted in 1858 governed the relations till 1935. Its features are as follows.

- Hitherto prevailing policy of annexation was abandoned and Policy of Intervention was adopted by which a ruler could be deposed.
- sanads were issued at regular intervals by Governor Generals laying down the principles of intervention.
- The Butler committee Report declared that the Princes had no sovereign authority.

Policy of Equal Federation was adopted under Government of India Act 1935. Its features are:

- It proposed the scheme of federation which rulers could join on their will and their terms.
- In proposed bi-cameral Parliament the states were representation.

The advance of national movement in British India, and the accompanying increase in political consciousness about democracy, responsible government and civil liberties had an inevitable impact on the people of the states. A democratic movement broke out in states during 20<sup>th</sup> Century demanding representation and justice culminating in the convening of the All India States' People's Conference (AISPC) in 1927. In this context the Policy of Indian National Congress was supportive of the people's movement:

- INC in its Nagpur session in 1920 urged princes to grant full responsible government in their states. But at the same time it did not look for direct participation in the movement. Congress reiterated its policy in 1927 resolution. Congress minister during 1937-39 kept encouraging people of States for movement by highlighting the differences in their rule and states.

- In 1938 Haripura session, Congress allowed its members to take part in their individual capacity.

As political awareness increased in these states as seen in the mushrooming of Praja Mandals the Congress changed its policy. Thus, in 1939 Tripuri Congress AISPC elected Jawaharlal Nehru as its president indicating the fusion between movement in British India and the Princely India.

**4. Communalism in India had its roots in the modern colonial socio-economic political structure. Explain.**

**Approach:**

- Give a detailed account as to why and how communalism in India had its roots in the modern socio-economic and political structure.

**Answer:**

It has been argued that communal consciousness arose as a result of the transformation of Indian society under the impact of colonialism and the need to struggle against it. The growing economic, political and administrative unification of regions and the country, the process of making India into a nation, the developing contradiction between colonialism and the Indian people and the formation of modern social classes and strata called for new ways of seeing one's common interests. They made it necessary to have wider links and loyalties among the people and to form new identities.

Thus, communalism emerged as a consequence of the emergence of modern politics, which marked a sharp break with the politics of the ancient or medieval or even pre-1857 periods.

**Modern colonial political structure**

- Communalism emerged as politics and as an ideology only after politics based on the people, politics of popular participation, politics based on the creation and mobilization of public opinion had come into existence.
- The process of grasping the new, emerging political reality and social relations with the aid of new ideas and concepts was a difficult and gradual process. It required the spread of modern ideas of nationalism, cultural-linguistic development and class struggle. But wherever their growth was slow and partial, people inevitably used the old, familiar pre-modern categories of self-identity such as caste, locality, region, race, religion, sect and occupation to grasp the new reality, to make wider connections and to evolve new identities and ideologies. In particular, religious consciousness was transformed into communal consciousness in some parts of the country and among some sections of the people. This was because there were some factors in the Indian situation which favoured its growth, it served the needs of certain sections of society and certain social and political forces.
- Though communalism was not inherent or inevitable in the Indian situation, it was not a mere conspiracy of power-hungry politicians and crafty administrators either. It had socio-economic and political roots. There was a social situation which was funneling it and without which it could not have survived for long.

**Modern colonial socio-economic structure**

- Communalism was one of the by-products of the colonial character of Indian economy, of colonial underdevelopment, of the incapacity of colonialism to develop the Indian economy. The resulting economic stagnation and its impact on

the lives of the Indian people, especially the middle classes who could not fall back on land, produced conditions which were conducive to division and antagonism within Indian society as also to its radical transformation.

- There were some who lacked a wider social vision and political understanding and looked to their narrow immediate interests and short-term solutions to their personal or sectional problems such as communal, caste, or provincial reservation in jobs.
- Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the absence of modern industrial development and development of education, health etc., unemployment was an acute problem in India. So, there was intense competition among the individuals for government jobs. In an attempt to get a larger share of existing economic opportunities, middle class individuals also began using group identities such as caste, province and religion to enhance their capacity to compete. Thus, some individuals from the middle classes did benefit, in the short run, from communalism, especially in the field of government employment. This gave an aura of validity to communal politics.
- Gradually, the spread of education to well-off peasants and small landlords extended the boundaries of the job-seeking middle class to the rural areas. This widened the social base of communalism to cover the rural upper strata of peasants and landlords.

Thus, communalism was deeply rooted in and was an expression of the interests and aspirations of the middle classes in a social situation in which opportunities for them were grossly inadequate in the absence of openings in industry, commerce, education etc. and government service being the main avenue of employment for the middle classes.

**5. *The outbreak of World War II in 1939 divided the nationalists over the next course of action in the freedom struggle. Elaborate. In this context, also examine the factors that led to INC launching the Quit India Movement.***

**Approach:**

- Write about both the areas of debate of the Nationalists post beginning of WWII.
- One cannot simply give the reasons why the INC launched the Quit India Movement. These reasons have to be related to the context of the decisions taken by the INC post 1939 in respect to the actions of the British. Building the context is important.

**Answer:**

After the beginning of WWII, The Government of India declared India to be at war with Germany without the consent of its people.

Indian leaders could not reconcile with this decision, however different point of view emerged among leaders. For example, the nationalists were then divided over the following course of action:

- On the question **whether to support the British in their war effort or not:**
  - **Gandhiji** was sympathetic towards the allies.
  - **Subhas Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru** and the **socialists** were against supporting the allies. Netaji Shubhash Chandra Bose considered it as an opportunity to defeat the imperial British government.

The Congress leadership decided that India would not join the war till the two conditions of a responsible interim government with immediate effect and promise of

a constituent assembly immediately after war to decide upon the constitution of free India are met. This was rejected by the British. Then differences on the **question of starting a Mass Satyagraha immediately arose among leaders:**

- **Gandhiji** and other leaders were against this as they felt:
  - The cause of the allies to be just and did not want to trouble them in the time of war.
  - There was a lack of Hindu-Muslim unity because of which the civil disobedience movement could degenerate into civil war or communal riots.
  - The right atmosphere did not exist as masses and the Congress organisation was not ready.
- The **left wing groups** felt that this was an opportunity to achieve freedom with an all out struggle, and hence were in favour.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru** was undecided about this till the last minute.

Though the Quit India Movement started in 1942, the events starting from 1939 played a role in its launch:

- The government had taken **draconian measures** and suppressed all civil liberties. All political activities, even peaceful, were declared illegal.
- Failure of **Cripps Mission** in 1942, which was unable to make any constitutional advance in favour of the Indian people. Its empty gesture convinced even leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, who were unwilling to hamper Britain's war effort, not to continue their silence.
- Increased **popular discontent** made the situation ripe for a mass movement.
- News of imminent British collapse due to the war
- Revamped Congress, consistent propaganda campaign, individual satyagraha.

Thus the context of events beginning with the WWII played a role in the INC launching the Quit India Movement.

sihagn27@gmail.com

Copyright © by Vision IAS

*All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Vision IAS.*



# POST WAR NATIONAL UPSURGES

Student Notes:

## Contents

1. INA Trials.....	23
1.1. Origin and Growth .....	23
1.2. INA under Subhash Chandra Bose .....	23
1.3. First Action.....	23
1.4. INA trials .....	23
2. Three Upsurges – Winter of 1945-46 .....	24
2.1. Pattern of Three Upsurges.....	24
2.2. Significance of the Three Upsurges .....	24
2.3. Effects of Three Upsurges .....	25
2.4. Causes of failure .....	25
3. General Elections 1945.....	25
3.1. Background.....	25
3.2. Importance of General Elections 1945-46 .....	25
3.3. Results .....	25
3.3.1. Significant Feature of Elections .....	26
4. The Cabinet Mission .....	26
4.1. Objectives .....	26
4.2. Major recommendations.....	26
4.3. Reactions to the Cabinet Mission Plan .....	27
5. Communal Holocaust and Interim Government .....	27
5.1. Interim Government.....	27
5.2. Working of interim government .....	27
6. Attlee's Statement .....	27
6.1. Government's motive behind Attlee's statement.....	28
6.2. Reactions to Attlee's statement.....	28
7. Growth of Communalism .....	28
7.1. Characteristics of Communalism .....	28
7.2. Reasons-for Growth of Communalism .....	28
8. Mountbatten Plan .....	29
8.1. Dickie Bird Plan.....	29
8.2. The reactions of Gandhi and Azad on Mountbatten Plan .....	30
9. India Independence Act.....	30
9.1. Main Provisions .....	30
10. Why Congress accepted partition?.....	30
11. UPSC Previous Years Prelims Questions .....	31
12. UPSC Previous Years Mains Questions .....	31
13. Vision IAS Previous Years Mains Test Series Questions .....	31

**Copyright © by Vision IAS**

*All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Vision IAS.*

# 1. INA Trials

## 1.1. Origin and Growth

The original idea of the INA was considered by an Indian officer of the British Indian Army Mohan Singh. During retreat of British army in Malaya, he decided not to join British but went to the Japanese army for help. Mohan Singh persuaded Japan to form a military wing consisting of Indians to counter British in different way. In accordance, Prisoners of war from India captured by the Japanese army were handed over to Mohan Singh. Their number grew tremendously by the end of 1942. Around forty thousand men joined the INA under the leadership of Mohan Singh.

INA though formed to counter British force by similar force would go into actual action only on the invitation of the Indian National Congress and the people of India.

The starting of the Quit India Movement gave a new boost to the cause of INA. Soon first division of the INA was formed. There was positive response from Japanese army because they were contemplating an Indian invasion. But sooner serious differences emerged between the Indian army officers led by Mohan Singh and the Japanese over the role that the INA was to play. Mohan Singh and Niranjana Singh Gill, the senior-most Indian officer to join the INA, were arrested.

## 1.2. INA under Subhash Chandra Bose

The second phase of the INA began under new leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose. Subhash Bose travelled to Germany, Japan and finally reached Singapore in mid-1943. Under his guidance, Provisional Government of Free India was established in Singapore. This provisional government declared war on Britain and USA and was recognized by Germany and Japan. He also set up INA headquarters, in Rangoon and Singapore. Large structural and functional reorganization began like new recruits were sought from civilians, funds were gathered, and special women's regiment "Rani Jhansi regiment" was formed.

## 1.3. First Action

One INA battalion which was commanded by Shah Nawaz was formed to work along with the Japanese Army. Its mandate was to proceed to the Indo-Burma front and participate in the Imphal campaign. It faced discriminatory treatment by the Japanese army like being denied rations, arms and being made to do menial work for the Japanese units. Such activity completely demoralised the INA units.

But, things started changing on global front with retreat of axis forces. The failure of the Imphal campaign, and the steady Japanese retreat nullified optimistic hopes of INA.

## 1.4. INA trials

The retreat of INA men with Japanese forces ended with the final surrender to the British in South-East Asia. INA had around 43000 soldiers out of which many perished, many fled and mixed with the civilians, but finally total of 16000 were captured. They were transported to India via Rangoon. Various detention camps had been organized in Jhingergacha and Nilganj near Calcutta, Kirkee near Pune, Attock, Multan and at Bahadurgarh near Delhi.

When prisoners of war INA men were brought back home and charged with guilty of crimes, a powerful national movement emerged in their defense. An announcement by the Government about trials of the INA soldiers to those guilty of brutality or active complicity, was made in August 1945.

The soldiers of the INA were taken to court martial at the Red Fort of Delhi. Around ten courts-martial were held. The first among them was the joint court-martial of Colonel Prem Sahgal, Colonel Gurubaksh Singh Dhillon and Major General Shah Nawaz Khan. All of them were charged of "Waging War against the King Emperor" as well as Murder and abetment of Murder.

The defence of the INA prisoners was taken up by many senior leaders like Bhulabhai Desai, Tej Bahadur Sapru, K.N. Katju, J. Nehru and Asaf Ali.

The INA trials were landmark development because:

1. The campaign for the release of INA prisoners was conducted at unprecedented, high intensity level throughout India. It received huge press coverage and publicity. Publicly made threats of revenge and number of meetings were held at all places.
2. INA campaign witnessed wide geographical reach and active participation of diverse social groups and political parties. This had two aspects.
  - One was the generally extensive nature of the agitation
  - The other was the spread of pro-INA sentiment to social groups hitherto outside the nationalist pale like for example Municipal Committees, Indians abroad and Gurudwara Committees subscribed liberally to the INA funds.
3. The cause was supported by many organizations with varying degree like Congress, Muslim League, Communist Party, Unionists, Akalis, Justice Party, RSS, Hindu Mahasabha etc

## 2. Three Upsurges – Winter of 1945-46

National upsurges turned into violent confrontations in many parts of India. There were three major upsurges:

1. Upsurge 1 (November 21, 1945) in Calcutta over INA trials  
It was a student procession. They tied together flags of Muslim League, Indian Congress and red flags as a symbol of anti-imperialist unity against British Empire. They marched to seat of government in Calcutta. Police lathi charged these protestors who refused to disperse against official orders. They retaliated by throwing stones and brickbats.
2. Upsurge 2 (February 11, 1946) in Calcutta against seven year sentence to Rashid Ali  
It was mainly protest by Muslim League students. Police arrested some protestors which provoked other students to defy Section 144. It resulted into more arrest and clash between police and protestors.
3. Upsurge 3 (February 18, 1946): In Bombay, strike by Royal Indian Navy. Naval Ratings of HMIS Talwar went on a strike to protest against:
  - Racial discrimination (demanding equal pay for Indian and white soldiers)
  - Unpalatable food
  - Abuse by superior officers
  - Arrest of a rating for scrawling "Quit India" on HMIS Talwar
  - INA trials
  - Use of Indian troops in Indonesia, demanding their withdrawal.

The rebellious ratings hoisted the tricolour, crescent and the hammer and sickle flags. Soon they went around Bombay in Lorries holding Congress flags threatening Europeans and policemen.

### 2.1. Pattern of Three Upsurges

All three upsurges showed a similar three-stage pattern.

1. A Group of protestors defies government authority and is heavily repressed
2. Local or city People Join in the cause and show support  
Such participation resulted into deepening of anti-British mood and paralysis of normal working of Calcutta and Bombay. People participated through meetings, processions, strikes, hartals etc.
3. People in Other Parts of the Country express Sympathy and Solidarity

### 2.2. Significance of the Three Upsurges

- Fearless action by masses

Student Notes:

- Revolt in the armed forces
- RIN revolt was major blow to government control on armed forces

## 2.3. Effects of Three Upsurges

British government granted some concessions as result of these upsurges:

- Instead of all trials for all INA soldiers, only those accused of murder or brutal treatment of fellow prisoners would be brought to trial
- Indian soldiers were withdrawn from Indo-China and Indonesia.
- Parliamentary delegation to India
- Cabinet Mission

## 2.4. Causes of failure

- Direct and violent conflict with authority has limitations. It has limited participation.
- Short-lived and confined to a few urban centres
- Communal unity witnessed was more organisational than a unity among the people.
- Congress did not officially support these upsurges because of their tactics and timing.

## 3. General Elections 1945

### 3.1. Background

Viceroy Lord Wavell announced that elections to the central and provincial legislatures would be held in December 1945 to January 1946. It was also announced that an executive council would be formed and a constitution-making body would be convened after these elections.

Although the Government of India Act, 1935 had proposed an all-India federation, it could not take place because the government held that the Princely states were unwilling to join it. Consequently, rather than choosing 375 members, only 102 elective seats were to be filled. Hence the elections to the central legislature were held under the terms of the Government of India Act 1919.

### 3.2. Importance of General Elections 1945-46

- The Indian National Congress emerged as the largest party
- The Muslim League won all Muslim constituencies, but failed to win any other seats. This election proved to be a strategic victory for Jinnah and the partitionists.
- Even though Congress won, the League had united the Muslim vote
- These were the last general elections in British India; consequent elections were held in 1951 in India and 1970 in Pakistan.

### 3.3. Results

#### Congress' Performance:

- It got 91% of non-Muslim votes.
- It captured 57 out of 102 seats in the Central Assembly.
- In the provincial elections, it got a majority in most provinces except in Bengal, Sindh and Punjab.
- The Congress majority provinces included NWFP and Assam which were being claimed for Pakistan.

#### Muslim League's Performance:

- It got 86.6% of the Muslim votes.
- It captured the 30 reserved seats in the Central Assembly.
- In the provincial elections, it got a majority in Bengal and Sindh.

- Unlike in 1937, now the League clearly established itself as the dominant party among Muslims.

#### **Punjab:**

A Unionist-Congress-Akali coalition under Khizr Hyatt Khan assumed power.

### **3.3.1. Significant Feature of Elections**

The elections witnessed communal voting in contrast to the strong anti-British unity shown in various upsurges due to

1. Separate electorates,
2. Limited franchise—for the provinces, less than 10% of the population could vote and for the Central Assembly, less than 1% of the population was eligible.

## **4. The Cabinet Mission**

Cabinet Mission was composed of three Cabinet Ministers of England.

- Sir Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India
- Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade,
- V Alexander, the First Lord of the Admiralty.

### **4.1. Objectives**

- Devise a machinery to draw up the constitution of Independent India
- Make arrangements for interim Government

The mission discussed with the various political parties, but it could not arrive at any agreed solution. So finally it announced its own recommendations.

### **4.2. Major recommendations**

1. It recommended an undivided India. There shall be a Union of India. It will deal with the defense, foreign affairs and communications. It also restricted the Communal representation.
2. All the members of the Interim cabinet would be Indians and there would be minimum interference by the Viceroy.
3. Formation of the constituent assembly on democratic principle of population
4. It recognized India's right to cede from the Commonwealth
5. The Union Government and its legislature were to have limited powers, dealing with Finance, Foreign Affairs and Communications. The union would have powers necessary to raise the finances to manage the subjects.
6. All subjects other than the Union Subjects and all the residuary powers would be vested in the provinces.
7. The Princely states would retain all subjects and all residuary powers.
8. A Constituent Assembly will be formed of the representatives of the Provincial Assemblies and the Princely states. Each province had to be allotted a total number of seats in proportion to its population.
9. The representation of the Provincial legislatures was to be break up into 3 sections.
  - i. Section A: Madras, UP, Central provinces, Bombay, Bihar & Orissa.
  - ii. Section B: Punjab, Sindh, NWFP, Baluchistan
  - iii. Section C: Assam and Bengal

Though the Cabinet Mission plan rejected the idea of separate Pakistan, yet it grouped the provinces in such a way that it gave weightage to the idea of Pakistan, because the Section B would get almost complete autonomy.

Student Notes:



### 4.3. Reactions to the Cabinet Mission Plan

- Congress
  - Accepted the proposals related to the Constituent assembly.
  - Rejected the idea of a weak centre and division of India in small states.
  - Against decentralization and for the idea of a strong centre.
  - Rejected the idea of the Interim Government as the Muslim league had been given disproportionate representation.
- Muslim league
  - When Congress declared that it could change the scheme through its majority in the Constituent Assembly, they rejected the plan.
  - Demanded for Pakistan as the only course left open to the Muslim League.
  - Called the Muslims to resort to "Direct Action" to achieve the land of their dream "Pakistan".
  - Fixed August 16, 1946 was as "Direct Action Day".

## 5. Communal Holocaust and Interim Government

Muslim league's call for direct action day changed the Indian scene very rapidly. There were communal riots on unprecedented level. Calcutta, Bombay, Bihar, Noakhali etc. were worst hit by them.

There was changed government attitude to get congress form interim government even if League stayed out. This attitude was different from Viceroy Wavell's Shimla meet. Such action was against long term British policy of encouraging communal forces, denying legitimacy to nationalist forces and those from congress.

### 5.1. Interim Government

Finally an interim government was formed under leadership of Nehru on September 2, 1946. Even after forming interim government, Congress continued opposing compulsory grouping.

Muslim league initially opposed to be part of interim government but Wavell brought it even after Muslim League didn't agree to

- Withdraw from direct action
- Rejection to cabinet mission's long term and short term plans

### 5.2. Working of interim government

Muslim league practiced obstructionist approach in the working of interim government. It didn't attend constituent assembly meeting. It also refused to attend informal meetings of cabinet to take decisions. The league started questioning decisions and appointments made by congress members. Finance minister of interim government Liaqat Ali Khan from Muslim League hamstrung functioning of other ministries.

For the Muslim League, it was continuation of struggle in one form or other. Many congress ministers threaten to withdraw their own nominees if League didn't change its attitude.

Finally Muslim League demanded the dissolution of constituent assembly.

## 6. Attlee's Statement

British Prime Minister Clement Attlee outlined following points:

- A deadline of 30 June 1948 for transfer of power even if Indian politicians had not agreed by the time on the constitution.

- British would transfer the power to provincial governments or some form of central government or other if constituent assembly was not fully representative. Thus it had clear hint of balkanization of India into numerous states.
- British powers and obligations with respect to princely states would lapse with transfer of power.
- Mountbatten would replace Wavell as viceroy.

### 6.1. Government's motive behind Attlee's statement

- Irreversible decline of the government authority was reality so quick withdrawal was necessary
- Government hoped to convince Indians about sincerity of British efforts and was keen to avoid any constitutional crisis.
- Fixed date would move things fast thus setting aside minor differences among various organizations.

### 6.2. Reactions to Attlee's statement

- Congress
  - Accepted the provision of transfer of power to more than one center as current constituent assembly can form constitution for areas
- League
  - Launched civil disobedience movement

## 7. Growth of Communalism

There are basically three broad stages of communalism in India

### 1. Communal Nationalism

A group of people belonging to a particular religious community has same secular interests even if these interests have nothing to do with religion.

### 2. Liberal Communalism

Two religious communities with different religious interests have different secular interests in the secular sphere also (i.e., in economic, political and cultural spheres).

### 3. Extreme Communalism

Different religious communities with different religious interests have incompatible secular interests; two communities cannot co-exist because the interests of one community come into conflict with those of the other.

### 7.1. Characteristics of Communalism

- The communalists claim to protect interests which do not exist, even by bypassing economic interests
- Communalism is a modern phenomenon emerged out of modern politics based on mass mobilisation and popular participation.
- Communalists are backed in their communal campaign by the colonial administration.
- India is a country where lack of education and low awareness of the outside world resulted into religion becoming a vehicle of communalism.

### 7.2. Reasons-for Growth of Communalism

#### 1. Socio-economic reasons

There was rivalry for jobs, trade and industry between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Economic backwardness of India and high unemployment added extra scope for the colonial government to use concessions, favours and reservations to fuel communal and separatist tendencies.

Late modern political consciousness among the Muslims and the dominance of traditional reactionary elements over the Muslim masses helped a communal outlook to take root.

## 2. British policy of divide and rule

After the Wahabi and 1857 revolts, Muslims were generally looked upon with suspicion. They were subjected to repression and discrimination by the Government. Introduction of English education had undermined Arabic and Persian learning. It further added to the economic backwardness and exclusion of the Muslims from service.

After the 1870s, with emergence of Indian nationalism and growing politicisation of the educated middle classes, the Government reversed its policy of repression of Muslims. Instead it started to push for concessions, favours and reservations, and used them against nationalist forces.

## 3. Communalism in history writing

Communal interpretation of Indian history portrayed the ancient phase as the Hindu phase and the medieval phase as the Muslim phase.

## 4. Side-effects of socio-religious reform movements

Reform movements such as Wahabi Movement among Muslims and Shuddhi among Hindus with their militant overtones made the role of religion more vulnerable to communalism.

## 5. Side-effects of militant nationalism

With the coming of militant nationalism, Hindu nationalist tinge was seen in the nationalist politics.

For example, Tilak's Ganapati and Shivaji festivals and anti-cow slaughter campaigns; Aurobindo's vision of an Aryanised world, Swadeshi Movement with elements like dips in the Ganga and revolutionary terrorism with oath-taking before goddesses etc.

## 6. Communal reaction by majority community

Majority community setting up militant organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh increased the difference.

# 8. Mountbatten Plan

Lord Mountbatten replaced Lord Wavell as the Viceroy in March 1947. He resolved to the transfer of power at the earliest opportunity, and worked out a compromise after prolonged discussions with the leaders of congress and the league.

The 3 June Plan or the Mountbatten Plan envisioned the actual division between the two new dominions. The border between India and Pakistan was determined by a British Government Commissioned report usually referred to as the Radcliffe Award after Sir Cyril Radcliffe.

The main contents of the plan were

1. The Constitution framed by the Constitution Assembly would not be applicable to those parts of India who were unwilling to accept it.
2. Punjab and Bengal were to be divided into two parts.
3. Referendum was to be used to ascertain the public opinion in North-West Frontier Province and Sylhet district in Assam.
4. The British Government would cease to exercise Paramount over the Indian states after independence.

The Muslim league's demands for a separate state were thus conceded. The Congress' position on unity was also taken into account while making Pakistan as small as possible. Mountbatten's formula was to divide India and at the same time retain maximum possible unity.

## 8.1. Dickie Bird Plan

Mountbatten prepared a "Dickie Bird Plan" earlier to June plan. The main proposal of this plan was that provinces should become first independent successor states rather than an Indian Union or the two dominions of India & Pakistan. As per this plan all the provinces were

proposed to be declared Independent. The states later would decide whether to join constituent assembly or not. Nehru rejected the plan right away and told him that this plan would invite Balkanization of India and would provoke conflict and violence.

Consequently, this plan was cancelled.

## 8.2. The reactions of Gandhi and Azad on Mountbatten Plan

Gandhi and Azad reacted against the partition of India as envisaged in the Mountbatten Plan. Gandhi was very much distressed and advised people not to accept partition by heart. He called the people to fight to reverse it. He was of the view that the plan was against the fraternity that the freedom movement has built over the years.

Azad also vehemently opposed Congress, nod to the plan. According to Azad, it was object surrender to the demands of the league. He viewed the plan as a deal by the leaders who succumbed to power temptation.

However, later on they were forced to accept the plan.

## 9. India Independence Act

The Indian Independence Act 1947 was as an act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that partitioned British India into the two new independent dominions of India and Pakistan.

### 9.1. Main Provisions

The Act's most important provisions were:

- division of British India into the two new and fully sovereign dominions of India and Pakistan, with effect from 15 August 1947
- partition of the provinces of Bengal and Punjab between the two new countries
- establishment of the office of Governor-General in each of the two new countries, as representatives of the Crown
- conferral of complete legislative authority upon the respective Constituent Assemblies of the two new countries
- termination of British suzerainty over the princely states, with effect from 15 August 1947, and recognized the right of states to accede to either dominion
- division of joint property, etc. between the two new countries, including in particular the division of the armed forces

## 10. Why Congress accepted partition?

- The partition ruled out balkanization of India which had even greater danger to Indian unity.
- The Congress was not consistent on the Partition.
  - In 1942, the Congress Working Committee criticized the secessionist idea.
  - But at the same time Congress committee said that it cannot think in terms of compelling the people of any territorial unit to remain in the Indian Union against their declared and established will.
- From 1940 onwards, the trend was against India's unity. Both Gandhi and the Congress had accepted the principle of Partition, based on consent of the areas concerned. For example, Gandhi himself offered Jinnah his plan for "two sovereign independent States" with a Treaty of Separation on defense, foreign affairs, etc.
- Direct action day observed by Muslim league and the incidents of Hindu-Muslim riot made Congress believe that partition was the only option if otherwise there could be lasting peace even if British leave India. And so Congress accepted the partition.

## 11. UPSC Previous Years Prelims Questions

1. With reference to Indian History, the Members of the Constituent Assembly from the Provinces were
  - (a) directly elected by the people of those Provinces
  - (b) nominated by the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League
  - (c) elected by the Provincial Legislative Assemblies
  - (d) selected by the Government for their expertise in constitutional matters
  
2. With reference to the Cabinet Mission, which of the following statements is/are correct?
  1. It recommended a federal government.
  2. It enlarged the powers of the Indian courts.
  3. It provided for more Indians in the ICS.
 Select the correct answer using the code given below.
 

(a) 1 only	(b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3	(d) None
  
3. The plan of Sir Stafford Cripps envisaged that after the Second World War
  - (a) India should be granted complete independence
  - (b) India should be partitioned into two before granting independence
  - (c) India should be made a republic with the condition that she will join the Commonwealth
  - (d) India should be given Dominion status

## 12. UPSC Previous Years Mains Questions

1. It would have been difficult for the Constituent Assembly to complete its historic task of drafting the Constitution for Independent India in just three years but for the experience gained with the Government of India Act, 1935. Discuss. (2015)

## 13. Vision IAS Previous Years Mains Test Series Questions

1. *What were the values and ideals, upon which the Indian National Movement was based?*

### Approach:

Elaborate on how our Nationalist leaders ingrained the basic ideals of democracy, secularism, socialistic orientation and fundamental rights into our national movement.

Conclude on the lines that these very ideals which had a civil libertarian, democratic and progressive outlook got institutionalized and were ingrained in the preamble of the Constitution.

### Answer:

A major aspect of the Indian National Movement was the modern ideals and values on which it was based. These ideals which encompassed the socio-economic and political sphere of the society were not only of democratic, civil libertarian and secular in nature but were also accompanied by a vision of a self-reliant economy, an egalitarian social order and an Independent foreign policy.

The Indian National Congress was organized on democratic lines and in the form of a Parliament. Not only debates and free expression of opinion was encouraged but some of the most important decisions were taken about heated debates and open voting. The nationalist fought for introduction of a representative government on the basis of popular elections based on adult franchise.

The nationalists fought against attacks by the state on the freedom of Press, expression and association, and made the struggle for these freedoms and civil liberties an integral part of the national movement.

During the course of the movement, an economic ideology was developed, which emphasized the need to develop India on the basis of Industrialization, independent of foreign capital, relying on the indigenous capital goods sector. A crucial role was envisaged for the public sector and a commitment was made towards economic planning which drove the policy of Independent India. Further, a pro-poor orientation was adopted by the movement, which got strengthened with the rise of leftists within the Congress party.

The emphasis on Swadeshi and village self-sufficiency by Gandhi laid the ideological grounding for the enshrinement of the idea of Panchayati Raj in directive principles while the Nehruvian emphasis on temples of modern India laid the foundation for heavy industries in the immediate post-independence era

Though the country was partitioned on communal lines, Secularism was a cherished goal of the Indian National Movement, culminated in enshrining secularism in the Constitution of free India. The leadership, especially under Mahatma Gandhi fought hard to inculcate secular values among the people and opposed the growth of Communalism.

And thus it is no accident that the ethos of the Indian national movement highlighted above has been clearly articulated in the preamble of India. Moreover, it is these ideals which were not only responsible for overthrowing the colonial masters but also have played a vital role in ensuring its survival over the past 60yrs.

**2. *When partition and independence of India was imminent, why didn't the Indian nationalist leaders accept the idea of continuing independent and autonomous princely states?***

**Approach:**

- The answer should firstly explain the context with respect to princely states at the time of independence
- The second part must explain the reasons why Indian nationalists detested idea of having lot many independent and autonomous states

**Answer:**

- Just before the independence of India, there were over 550 princely states which accepted suzerainty of British crown.
- With the passage of Indian independence act, 1947 by the British parliament, the suzerainty lapsed. But it meant that the newly independent India would now be interspersed with more than 550 states which were independent and autonomous
- Such as situation was not acceptable to Indian nationalists. The reasons include–
  - Indian nationalists feared that unity and integrity of India would be endangered by hundreds of large and small independent states interspersed within it, which were also sovereign.
  - Besides, people of states had also participated in the national freedom struggle. For instance the people of Hyderabad state had actively participated in Indian freedom movements of 20<sup>th</sup> century.
  - National freedom movement had long held that political power belonged to the people and not to the despotic rules
  - All India State's People's Conference has also been demanding integration with the rest of the country



- Thus not allowing integration would not only be morally wrong to the people of these states, but also imperil the unity and integrity of India. Hence the Indian leaders were in favor of integration.

**3. “The culture of democracy and respect for civil liberties in India is not ‘the lasting contribution of colonialism’, but a result of the national freedom movement.” Examine.**

**Approach:**

- Introduce the answer by explaining arguments and counter arguments in statement.
- Point out by giving examples how democratic values were popularized by National movement.

**Answer:**

The culture of representative democracy in India after independence is often considered as the result of colonial occupation, which made India familiar with the ideas and thoughts of democracy. Indian experts contend that representative democracy in India is not result of authoritarian, bureaucratic colonial regime but the national movement and dissemination of ideas by national movement where dissent was respected and civil liberties sought for.

- During early colonial occupation leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dorezio and Vidya Sagar fought for introduction of modern thoughts and education. They organized movements for introduction and expansion of civil liberties and rights of individual. Inspired from American and French revolution, they tried to
- From its foundation, in 1885, the Indian National Congress was organized on democratic lines. It relied on discussions at all levels. For example, the decision to start the Non-Cooperation Movement was taken by voting on the resolution moved by Gandhiji.
- Congress did not insist on uniformity of viewpoints or policy approach within its ranks. It not only tolerated but also encouraged different and minority opinions. Most of the other political organizations such as Kisan Sabha, Worker’s organization and revolutionary organizations functioned in manner of political democracies.
- The defence of civil liberties was also not narrowly conceived in terms of a single group or viewpoint. Political trends and groups otherwise critical of each other vigorously defended each other’s civil rights. The Moderates—Gopal Krishna Gokhale and others—defended the Extremist leader Tilak’s right to speak. And Congressmen, votaries of non-violence, defended Bhagat Singh and other revolutionary terrorists being tried in the Lahore and other conspiracy cases as also the Communists being tried in the Meerut Conspiracy Case.
- The modern notions of popular sovereignty, representative democracy and civil liberties were not prevalent in India before colonial rule nor were they result of colonialism. It was the national movement and not the bureaucratic colonial state that indigenized, popularized and rooted them in India.
- The colonial administration only tampered with civil liberties and resisted the nationalist demand for introduction of parliamentary system based on popular elections. Through various acts like Rowlett act, it tried to stifle the freedom and denied civil liberties. The introduction of modern institutions by colonial rulers was out the compulsion to protect their interests.

The opposition to the colonial ideology by national movement popularized democratic thoughts and tradition of Enlightenment, which succeeded in making democracy and civil liberties basic elements of Indian political ethos.

4. ***The Indian National Movement was not only inspired by developments around the world but also actively forged linkages with others on the issues of imperialism and colonialism. Explain.***

**Approach:**

The answer should contain the following parts:

- Very briefly explain how Indian National Movements was inspired by developments around the world – political, social etc. by giving examples
- Then show how India forged linkages on issues of imperialism and colonialism with examples

Try to give diverse examples, by showing linkages from different continents/events/movements, rather than restricting oneself to particular events and explaining only those in too much detail.

**Answer:**

Indian National Movement spanned many decades and our freedom fighters drew inspiration from world events as well as actively collaborated with such events.

**Influences:**

- American Revolution propagated the ideals of constitutional republic, along with the idea of No taxation without representation.
- The French revolution inspired our leaders to achieve the ideals of liberty and fraternity.
- The emergence of Japan as an industrialized state, Anglo-Boer wars, Italo-Ethiopian War (1895-96) broke the myth of racial supremacy.
- The Russian revolution inspired them to aim for an egalitarian society in free India.

**Linkages with others against Imperialism and Colonialism:**

Indian Diaspora also played a very important role in influencing the freedom struggle as well as forming linkages around the world.

**Support for Socialist ideals:**

- **2<sup>nd</sup> International** – Dadabhai Naoroji attended the Hague session of Socialist International and outlined India's support against war and imperialism. **Lala Lajpat Rai** also made contacts with American Socialists during his visit from 1914 to 1918
- India was the founding member of **International Labor Organization** in 1920s

**WWI** – The Ghadr movement in North America enlisted support for Indian freedom. In Europe, Berlin Committee for Indian Independence was established for drumming up Indian support.

**In 1920s and 30s**, radical activism influenced by the Irish home rule league. (M. N. Roy, Brajesh Singh, Shapurji Saklatvala).

V. J. Patel and the Indian-Irish Independence League (IIIL), formed in 1932 'to help by every means possible to secure the complete national, social and economic independence of the people of India and Ireland'

**In 1927**, Nehru attended the **Congress of Oppressed Nationalists** at Brussels. The conference was organised by political exiles and revolutionaries from Asia, Africa and Latin America, suffering from political and economic imperialism. Indian National congress also **opened a foreign department** to be in touch with the other peoples' movements.

**WWII**

- During the war, India lent support to other parts of the world like Ethiopia, Spain, China, and Czechoslovakia in their struggle against fascism and imperialism.
- In 1939, the **Japanese attack on China** was condemned and a medical team under Dr. Atal ( included Dr Kotnis) was sent to China. India supported China in the anti-fascist war and Myanmar was the venue of one of the biggest
- The INM supported the Palestinians on the **Palestine issue**. It sympathized with the Jews but was against partition of Palestine.

It is due to these linkages that after independence India became the leader of these newly independent nations and found the Non-aligned movement. It helped these nations resist the pressures of the cold war and also thwarted any attempts of neo-imperialism by the erstwhile imperial powers.

**5. *It was the British rule and its direct and indirect consequences which helped in the development of nationalist movement in India. Elucidate.***

**Approach:**

- Briefly mention about the British conquest of Indian sub-continent by various policies and their motives.
- Explain the direct and indirect consequences of British policies on the social, economic and political sphere of Indian life and how these policies clashed with Indian interest.

**Answer:**

Since India was a colony its interests were subservient to those of the British. Hence, British polities were aimed at subjugating India. However, these policies also led to a churning among Indians that was not seen before. The growth of nationalism was a consequence of the British rule.

**Direct Consequences**

- The **agrarian policies** led to government taking away large part of peasant's produce as land revenue while **artisan or handicraftsman** saw that the foreign regime had helped foreign competition ruin him and had done nothing to rehabilitate him.
- **Curb on basic freedoms** and use of repressive laws led to resentment and hate against foreign rule.
- **Racial treatment** meted out to Indians including the rulers and intelligentsia and discrimination against Indians led to rise of nationalist feelings.
- British officials and writers declared **Indians unfit for democracy** or self-government. This led to demands for administrative and legislative reforms.

**Indirect Consequences**

- Spread of education and modern thoughts led to the **rise of intelligentsia** which used its newly acquired modern knowledge to understand the sad economic and political condition of the country. They found that British policies in India, guided by British capitalists at home, were keeping the country economically backward.
- **Indian capitalist class** was slow in developing a national political consciousness. But its growth was severely checked by the trade, tariff, taxation, and transport policies of the government.

- **Workers in modern factories**, mines, and plantations found that the government sided with the foreign capitalists and government machinery was freely used against them.
- **Spread of western thoughts** like rational, secular, democratic outlook appalled and aroused every thinking and self-respecting Indian. People started emulating the contemporary nationalist movements across the world like American and French revolution, defeat of Russia by Ethiopia, rise of Japan.
- **Uniform and modern system of government**, railways, telegraph and a unified postal system unified India administratively. All this had brought the different parts of the country together and promoted mutual contact among the people, especially among the leaders.

As a result of these factors, people all over the country realised that they were suffering at the hands of a common enemy. These feelings united people from different classes and sections of society, who sank their mutual differences to unite.

**6. *Partition was a culmination of a communal politics that started developing in the opening decades of the twentieth century. Comment.***

**Approach:**

- Briefly introduce by mentioning the divisive policies adopted by the British for creating a communal divide.
- Trace the series of events that occurred right from the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century till the partition of India which ultimately shaped the communal politics on the Indian subcontinent.

**Answer:**

The adoption of **divide and rule** by the British, after the challenge faced by them in 1857, led to assigning religious identities to a functional use, within the modern political system. The logic of electoral politics deepened and hardened these identities. Community identities no longer indicated a simple difference between faith and belief. They came to mean active opposition and hostility between communities.

**Partition of Bengal in 1905**, though couched in administrative terms, had clear communal undertones. Similarly, **separate electorates** created by the colonial government in 1909 and expanded in 1919 crucially shaped the nature of communal politics. Muslims could now elect their own representatives in designated constituencies. This created a temptation for politicians working within the system to use sectarian slogans and gather a following by distributing favours to their own religious groups.

During 1920s and 30s communal tensions grew around a number of issues. Muslims were angered by music before mosques, cow protection movement and efforts of Arya Samaj to bring back others to Hindu fold (shuddhi). On the other hand, Hindus were angered by rapid spread of Tabligh (propaganda) and Tanzim (organisation) after 1923. During this period Muslim League was gaining voice, Hindu organizations like RSS were formed.

In this background, middle class publicists and communal activists sought to build greater solidarity within their communities by mobilising people against other community. This gave rise to riots in different parts of country.

In the provincial elections held in 1937, when Muslim league performed badly, it decided to resort to extreme communalism. In order to counter the propaganda, Hindu organisations such as Hindu Mahasabha and RSS also advocated for militant communal

nationalism. The main purpose was to encourage the Hindus to transcend the divisions of caste and re-define Hindu identity in opposition to Muslim identity. Communalists on both sides started seeking narrow interests often undermining national movement.

Muslim League now started asking for political demands with focus on Muslim majority areas of sub-continent. As a result, the demand for Pakistan was formalised gradually by 1940 as expressed in the famous '**Pakistan Resolution**'. It demanded grouping of all geographically contiguous Muslim majority areas into independent states.

Thus, the seed of an independent sovereign nation of Pakistan finally developed into a full-fledged tree in a matter of few decades. And in a short span of 7 years after resolution, an independent Pakistan comprising of Muslim majority areas of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province and Bengal was born in 1947 owing its origin to communal politics.

sihagn27@gmail.com

**Copyright © by Vision IAS**

*All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Vision IAS.*

# CONTRIBUTION OF VARIOUS SECTION OF INDIAN SOCIETY

Student Notes:

## Contents

1. Peasant Movement in India.....	40
1.1. The Initial Phase .....	40
1.1.1. Indigo Revolt (1859-60) .....	40
1.1.2. Pabna Movement (1872-76).....	40
1.1.3. The Deccan Peasants' Uprising (1875) .....	40
1.1.4. Punjab Peasants Discontent (1890-1900).....	41
1.1.5. Champaran Satyagraha (1917) .....	41
1.1.6. Kaira/Kheda Satyagraha (1918) .....	41
1.1.7. Kisan sabha Movement .....	41
1.1.8. Eka Movement.....	42
1.1.9. Moplah Rebellion (1921) .....	42
1.2. Changed Nature of Peasants Movements in 19 <sup>th</sup> Century After 1857.....	42
1.2.1. Weaknesses .....	43
1.3. The Role of the Indian National Congress in Peasant Movements.....	43
1.4. The Second Phase: Emergence of Class Conscious Organisations.....	43
1.4.1. Bardoli Satyagraha (1928) .....	44
1.4.2. The All India Kisan Congress/Sabha.....	44
1.4.3. Under Congress Ministries .....	44
1.4.4. Peasant Activity in Provinces .....	44
1.4.5. During the Second World War .....	45
1.4.6. Tebhaga Movement.....	45
1.4.7. Telangana movement .....	46
2. Working Class Movement against British Rule in India .....	46
2.1. Earlier Efforts .....	47
2.2. During Swadeshi Upsurge.....	47
2.3. During and after The First World War .....	47
2.4. The AITUC.....	47
2.5. The Trade Union Act, 1926 .....	48
2.6. Late 1920s .....	48
2.7. Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929) .....	48
2.8. Under Congress Ministries .....	49
2.9. During and after the Second World War .....	49
3. Indian Capitalist and Indian National Movement.....	49
3.1. Growth of Indian Capitalist Class.....	49
3.2. Their Ideology and Strategy and Attitude Towards National Movement .....	50
3.3. Criticism of Indian Capitalist and reality.....	52
4. Role of Women in National Movement.....	53
4.1. Role of Women in Independence Movement .....	54
4.1.1. Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi (19 November 1828 – 17 June 1858).....	55
4.1.2. Begum Hazrat Mahal (1820–1879) .....	55
4.1.3. Sarojini Naidu (February 13, 1879 – March 2, 1949), .....	55
4.1.4. Madam Bhikha Ji Cama (24 September 1861– 13 August 1936.) .....	56
4.1.5. Annie Besant (October 1, 1847 – September 20, 1933) .....	56
4.1.6. Arun Asaf Ali (July 16, 1909,–July 29, 1996) .....	56
4.1.7. Usha Mehta (March 25, 1920 – August 11, 2000).....	56
4.1.8. Kasturba Gandhi (April 11, 1869 – February 22, 1944), .....	57
4.1.9. Kamala Nehru (1899–1936).....	57



4.1.10. Vijaya Lakshmi Pundit (August 18, 1900 - December 1, 1990) .....	57
5. The Lower Caste Movements in Modern India .....	57
5.1. The Changing Scenario .....	58
5.2. Reactions against Brahminical Domination .....	58
5.2.1. Dravidian Movement .....	58
5.2.2. SNDP (Sri Narayan Dharma Pratipalan Movement) .....	59
5.2.3. Jyotirao Phule and the Satya Sodhak Samaj .....	59
5.2.4. Mahar Movement .....	60
5.3. Ambedkar's Dynamic Role .....	61
6. Middle Class Movements .....	61
6.1. Development of Middle Class .....	61
6.2. Form of Middle Class Movements .....	61
6.3. Participation in Freedom Struggle .....	62
7. UPSC Previous Years Prelims Questions .....	63
8. UPSC Previous Years Mains Questions .....	65
9. Vision IAS Previous Years Mains Test Series Questions .....	65

Student Notes:

sihagn27@gmail.com

**Copyright © by Vision IAS**

*All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Vision IAS.*

# 1. Peasant Movement in India

Historically the peasant movements in India can broadly be grouped in the following three distinct phases:

- 1. The Initial Phase (1857-1921):** This phase was characterized by the sporadic growth of peasant movements in the absence of proper leadership.
- 2. The Second Phase (1923-1946):** This phase was marked by the emergence of the class conscious peasant organizations. Its distinct feature was that during this period peasant movements were led by people who gave priority to kisan problems in the struggle for national liberation.
- 3. Post-Independence Phase:** This era witnessed the uninterrupted continuity of the agrarian movements due to the failure of the ruling party to resolve any of the basic problems of the toiling masses in rural India. The peasant struggles in this period were led predominantly by left political parties like the Communist Party of India (CPI), the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and the Socialist Party (SP) through their kisan organisations.

## 1.1. The Initial Phase

The tyranny of zamindars along with the exorbitant rates of British land revenue led to a series of spontaneous peasant uprisings in different parts of the country during this period. The periodic recurrence of famines coupled with the economic depression during the last decades of the 19th century further aggravated the situation in the rural areas and consequently led to numerous peasant revolts. The following were the notable agrarian movements of this phase:

### 1.1.1. Indigo Revolt (1859-60)

The Indigo revolt of Bengal was directed against British planters who forced peasants to take advances and sign fraudulent contracts which forced the peasants to grow Indigo under terms which were the least profitable to them. The revolt began in Govindpur village in Nadia district, Bengal and was led by Digambar Biswas and Bishnu Biswas who organised the peasants into a counter force to deal with the planters lathiyals (armed retainers).

In April 1860, all the cultivators of the Barasat subdivision and in the districts of Pabna and Nadia resorted to strike. They refused to sow any indigo. The strike spread to other places in Bengal. The revolt enjoyed the support of all categories of the rural population, missionaries and the Bengal intelligentsia.

This was vividly portrayed by Din Bandhu Mitra in his play, Neel Darpan enacted in 1869. It led to the appointment of an Indigo Commission in 1860 by the government by which some of the abuses of Indigo cultivation was removed.

### 1.1.2. Pabna Movement (1872-76)

In East Bengal the peasantry was oppressed by zamindars through frequent recourse to ejection, harassment, arbitrary enhancement of rent and use of force. The zamindars also tried to prevent them from acquiring the occupancy rights under the Act of 1859.

In May 1873 an Agrarian League was formed in the Yusufzahi Pargana of Pabna district (East Bengal). Payments of enhanced rents were refused and the peasants fought the zamindars in the courts. Similar leagues were formed in the adjoining districts of Bengal. The main leaders of the Agrarian League were Ishan Chandra Roy, Shambu Pal and Khoodi Mullah. The discontent continued till 1885 when the Government by the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 enhanced the occupancy rights.

### 1.1.3. The Deccan Peasants' Uprising (1875)

The Deccan peasants uprising was directed mainly against the excesses of the Marwari and Gujarati money lenders. Social boycott of moneylenders by the peasants was later transformed

into armed peasant revolt in the Poona and Ahmadnagar districts of Maharashtra. The peasants attacked the moneylender's houses, shops and burnt them down.

Their chief targets were the bond documents, deeds and decrees that the money lenders held against them. By June 1875 nearly a thousand peasants were arrested and the uprising completely suppressed. The Government appointed the Deccan Riots Commission to investigate into the causes of the uprising. The ameliorative measure passed was the Agriculturists Relief Act of 1879 which put restrictions on the operations of the peasants land and prohibited imprisonment of the peasants of the Deccan for failure to repay debts to the moneylenders.

#### ***1.1.4. Punjab Peasants Discontent (1890-1900)***

Rural indebtedness and the large scale alienation of agricultural land to non-cultivating classes led to the peasant discontent in Punjab. The communal complexion of the Punjab rural situation and the martial character of the Sikhs called for an early effective action by the government. The Punjab Land Alienation Act, 1900 was passed which prohibited the sale and mortgage of lands from peasants to moneylenders. The Punjab peasants were also given partial relief against oppressive incidence of land revenue demand by the Government and it was not to exceed 50% of the annual rental value of land.

#### ***1.1.5. Champaran Satyagraha (1917)***

The peasantry on the indigo plantations in the Champaran district of Bihar was excessively oppressed by the European planters. They were compelled to grow indigo on at least 3/20th of their land (tinkathia system) and to sell it at prices fixed by the planters.

Accompanied by Babu Rajendra Prasad, Mazhar -ul-Huq, J.B. Kripalani, Narhari Parekh and Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji reached Champaran in 1917 and began to conduct a detailed inquiry into the condition of the peasantry.

The infuriated district officials ordered him to leave Champaran, but he defied the order and was willing to face trial and imprisonment. Later the Government developed cold feet and appointed an Enquiry Committee (June 1917) with Gandhiji as one of the members. The ameliorative enactment, the Champaran Agrarian Act freed the tenants from the special imposts levied by the indigo planters.

#### ***1.1.6. Kaira/Kheda Satyagraha (1918)***

The Kaira (Kheda) campaign was chiefly directed against the Government. In 1918, crops failed in the Kheda districts in Gujarat but the government refused to remit land revenue and insisted on its full collection. Gandhiji along with Vallabhai Patel supported the peasants and advised them to withhold payment of revenues till their demand for its remission was met. The satyagraha lasted till June 1918. The Government had to concede the just demands of the peasants.

#### ***1.1.7. Kisan sabha Movement***

After the 1857 revolt, the Awadh taluqdars had got their land. This strengthened the hold of taluqdars or big land lords over the agrarian society of province. The majority of the cultivators were subjected to high rents, summary evictions (bedakhali), illegal levies, renewal fees or nazrana. The First World War had hiked the prices of food and the other necessities. This worsened the condition of UP peasants.

Mainly due to the efforts of home rule activists, kisan sabhas were organized in UP. The UP kisan sabha was set up in February 1918 by Gauri Shankar Mishra and Indra Narayan Dwivedi. Madan Mohan Malviya supported their efforts. By June 1919, the UP kisan sabha had 450 branches. Other prominent leaders included Jhinguri Singh, Durgapal Singh and Baba Ramchandra. In June 1920, Baba Ramchandra urged Nehru to visit these villages. During these

visits, Nehru developed close contact with the villagers.

In October 1920, the Avadh Kisan Sabha came into existence because of differences in nationalist ranks. The Awadh kisan sabha asked the kisans to refuse to till bedakhali land, not to offer hari or beggar (forms of unpaid labour), to boycott those who did not accept these conditions and to solve their disputes through panchayats.

From the earlier form of mass meetings and mobilization, the patterns of activity changed rapidly in January 1921 to the looting of bazaars, houses, granaries and clashes with the police. The centers of activity were primarily the districts of Rai Bareilly, Faizabad and Sultanpur.

The movement declined soon, partly due to government repression and partly because of the passing of the Awadh Rent (Amendment) Act.

### **1.1.8. Eka Movement**

Towards the end of 1921, peasant discontent resurfaced in some northern districts of United Province – Hardoi, Bahraich, Sitapur. The issue involved were:

- High rents – 50% higher than recorded rates.
- Oppression of tikhedars in-charge of revenue collection, and
- Practice of share rents.

The meetings of the Eka or the unity movement involved a symbolic religious ritual in which the assembled vowed that they would

- Pay only the recorded rent but would pay it on time
- Not leave when evicted
- Refuse to do forced labour
- Give no help to criminals
- Abide by panchayat decisions

The grassroots leadership of the eka Movement came from Madari Pasi and other low-caste leaders, and many small zamindars.

By March 1922, severe repression by authorities brought the movement to an end.

### **1.1.9. Moplah Rebellion (1921)**

In August 1921, peasant discontent erupted in the Malabar district of Kerala. Here Moplah (Muslim) tenants rebelled. Their grievances related to lack of any security of tenure, renewal fees, high rents, and other oppressive landlord exactions.

In 1920, the Khilafat Movement took over the tenant rights agitation (which had been going on in the Malabar region since 1916) after the Congress Conference held at Manjeri in April 1920. The arrest of established leaders of the Congress and the Khilafat movement left the field clear for radical leaders.

In the first stage of the rebellion, the targets of attack were the unpopular jenmies (landlords), mostly Hindu, the symbols of Government authority such as courts, police stations, treasuries and offices, and British planters.

But once the British declared martial law and repression began in earnest, the character of the rebellion underwent a definite change. It took communal tones because the class divide approximated the communal divide. The movement was severely depressed by December 1921

## **1.2. Changed Nature of Peasants Movements in 19<sup>th</sup> Century After 1857**

- Peasants emerged as the main force in agrarian movements, fighting directly for their own demands.
- The demands were centered almost wholly on economic issues.

- The movements were directed against the immediate enemies of the peasant- foreign planters and indigenous zamindars and moneylenders.
- The struggle were directed towards specific and limited objectives and redressal of particular grievances.
- Colonialism was not the target of these movements.
- It was not the objective of these movements to end the system of subordination or exploitation of the peasants.
- Territorial reach was limited.
- There was no continuity of struggle or long-term organization.
- The peasants developed a strong awareness of their legal rights and asserted them in and outside the courts.

### **1.2.1. Weaknesses**

- There was a lack of an adequate understanding of colonialism.
- The nineteenth century peasants did not possess a new ideology and a new social, economic and political programme.
- These struggles, however militant, occurred within the framework of the old societal order lacking a positive conception of an alternative society.

## **1.3. The Role of the Indian National Congress in Peasant Movements**

Despite the fact that the Indian National Congress came into existence in the late 19th century, it took cognizance of the peasant problems only in the second decade of the 20th century. In the initial years, the Congress laid exclusive stress on the needs of the Indian industrialist class, ignoring the urgency of agrarian problems. Its manifesto just reiterated some of the superfluous demands such as permanent settlement of land revenue and the abolition of salt tax etc. But the congress leaders remained scrupulously silent, about the problems of the vast bulk of tenants in zamindari areas during the earlier phase of the movement. With the appearance of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political scene, the Indian National Congress experienced a metamorphosis. Its sphere of influence was extended and it assumed a mass character. The Congress formed peasant communities in rural areas and took note of peasants' grievances. However, the peasant movements initiated by the Congress were invariably restricted to seeking relief against the excessive rates of land revenue, and were in no case directed against the zamindars.

## **1.4. The Second Phase: Emergence of Class Conscious Organisations**

In this phase emergence of independent class organisations of kisans in rural India was the most notable feature. Radical sections in the peasant movements increasingly realised that their interests were suffering against interest of the capitalists and land magnates. They felt that to protect the interests of the kisans, their own class organisations and leadership must be evolved.

Consequently, the kisan organisations came into existence in different parts of the country. The first Kisan Congress held at Lucknow in 1935 led to the formation of the All India Kisan Sabha. The programme of the Sabha reflected the aspirations and needs of the entire peasantry in agrarian India. The All India Kisan Sabha was composed of radical petty bourgeois individuals, within and outside the Indian National Congress. It was also supported and strengthened by the Congress Socialist Party and later on by the Communist Party of India. Reference can be made to some of the significant struggles launched by the Kisan Sabha in different parts of the country during the initial period of their inception. In Andhra Pradesh, it launched an anti-settlement agitation against zamindary 'zulum' in 1927. Swami Sahajanand, one of the eminent

leaders and pioneers of the All India Kisan Sabha led a heroic movement for the abolition of zamindari in Bihar. A powerful struggle was initiated against the oppressive forest laws in South India in 1927.

Similarly, in UP and other parts of India agitations were launched against the tyranny of zamindars. The growth of peasant movements exercised considerable pressure on the Indian National Congress. Despite this, the Karachi Congress charter did not touch even the fringe of the peasant problem. But the political pressure of the Kisan Sabha succeeded in the Faizpur Congress and paved the way for the formulation of the Congress agrarian programme. However, the Congress could not, under the pressure of the native bourgeois grant any radical concessions to the peasant demands, at the cost of jeopardizing the interests of zamindars. This was amply demonstrated by the performance of the Congress ministries during the short period that they were in office before independence.

In this period notable movements were:

#### ***1.4.1. Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)***

Enhancement of land revenue by 22% in the Bardoli district of Gujarat by the British government led to the organisation of a 'No-Revenue Campaign' by the Bardoli peasants under the leadership of Vallabhai Patel. Unsuccessful attempts of the British to suppress the movement by large scale attachment of cattle and land resulted in the appointment of an enquiry committee. The enquiry conducted by Broomfield and Maxwell came to the conclusion that the increase had been unjustified and reduced the enhancement to 6.03%.

During the 1930s, the peasant awakening was influenced by the Great depression in the industrialized countries and the Civil Disobedience Movement which took the form of non-rent, no-revenue movement in many areas. Also after the decline of the active phase movement (1932) many new entrants to active politics started looking for suitable outlets for release of their energies and took to organization of peasants.

#### ***1.4.2. The All India Kisan Congress/Sabha***

This sabha was founded in Lucknow in April 1936 with Swami Sahajanand Saraswati as the president and N.G.Ranga as the General Secretary. A kisan manifesto was issued and a periodical under Indulal Yagnik started. The AIKS and the congress held their session in Faizpur in 1936. The congress manifesto (especially the agrarian policy) for the 1937 provincial elections was strongly influenced by the AKIS agenda.

#### ***1.4.3. Under Congress Ministries***

The period 1937-39 was the high watermark of the peasant movements and activity under the congress Provincial rule. The chief form of mobilization was through holding kisan conferences and meetings where demands were aired and resolutions were passed. Mobilisation campaigns were carried out in the villages.

#### ***1.4.4. Peasant Activity in Provinces***

##### **Bihar:**

Sahajanand Saraswati was joined by Karyanand Sharma, Yadunandan Sharma, Rahul Sankrityayan, Panchanan Sharma, Jamun Karjiti, etc. In 1935, the Provincial Kisan Conference adopted the anti-zamindari slogan. The provincial Kisan Sabha developed a rift with the congress over the 'bakasht land' issue because of an unfavorable government resolution which was not acceptable to the sabha. The movement died out by August 1939.

##### **Andhra:**

This region had already witnessed a decline in the prestige of zamindar after their defeat by Congressmen in elections. Anti-zamindar movements were going on in some places. Many



provincial ryot associations were active. N. G. Ranga had set up, in 1933, the India Peasants' Institute. After 1936, the congress socialist started organizing the peasants. At many places, the summer schools of economics and politics were held and addressed by leaders like P.C.Joshi, Ajoy Ghosh and R.D Bhardwaj.

#### **Kerala:**

In the Malabar region, the peasants were mobilized mainly by the congress Socialist Party activists. Many 'Krashak Sanghams' (peasant organisations) came into existence. The most popular method was the marching of jaths or peasants groups to get their demands accepted. One significant campaign by the peasants was in 1938 for the amendment of the Malabar Tenancy Act, 1929.

#### **Punjab:**

The earlier peasant mobilization here had been organized by the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, the Kirti Kisan Party, the Congress and the Akalis. A new direction to the movement was given by the Punjab Kisan Committee in 1937. The main targets of the movements were the landlords of western Punjab who dominated the unionist ministry. The immediate issue taken up were resettlement of land revenue in Amritsar and Lahore and increase in water rates in canal colonies of Multan and Montgomery where feudal levies were being demanded by the private contractors. Here the peasants were on a strike and were finally able to win concessions.

The peasant activity in Punjab was mainly concentrated in Jalandhar, Amritsar, Hoshiyarpur, Lyallpur, Shaekhupura. The Muslim tenants-at-will of west Punjab and the hindu peasants of South-eastern Punjab (today's Haryana) remained largely unaffected.

Peasant activity was also organized in Bengal (Burdwan and 24 Pargana), Assam (Surma valley), Orissa, Central Provinces and NWFP.

### **1.4.5. During the Second World War**

Because of a pro-War line adopted by the communists, the All India Kisan Sabha was split on communist and non-communist lines and many veteran leaders like Sahjanand, Indulal Yagnik and N.G.Ranga left the sabha. But the Kisan Sabha continued to work among the people. It did notable work during the famine of 1943.

### **1.4.6. Tebhaga Movement**

The Tebhaga movement was a militant campaign initiated in Bengal by the Kisan Sabha (peasants front of Communist Party of India) in 1946. At that time share-cropping peasants (essentially, tenants) had to give half of their harvest to the owners of the land. The demand of the Tebhaga (sharing by thirds) movement was to reduce the share given to landlords to one third.

In September 1946, the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha gave a call to implement, through mass struggle, the Flood Commission recommendations of tebhaga -- two thirds' share to the bargardars, the share-croppers also known as bagchasi or adhyar, instead of the one-half share. The bargardars worked on lands rented from the jotedars. The communist cadres, including many urban student militias went to the countryside to organise the bargardars. The central slogan was "nij khamare dhan tolo"-i.e., sharecroppers taking the paddy to their own threshing floor and not to the jotedar's house, as before, so as to enforce tebhaga.

The storm centre of the movement was north Bengal, principally among Rajbanshis- a low caste of tribal origin. Muslims also participated in large numbers. The movement dissipated soon, because of the League ministry's sop of the Bargadari Bill (which provided that the share of the harvest given to the landlords would be limited to one third of the total, but the Act was not fully implemented.), an intensified repression, the popularisation of the Hindu Mahasabha's agitation for a separate Bengal and renewed riots in Calcutta which ended the prospects of

sympathetic support from the urban sections.

#### **1.4.7. Telangana movement**

This was the biggest peasant guerrilla war of modern Indian history affecting 3000 villages and 3 million population. The princely state of Hyderabad under Asafjahi Nizams was marked by a combination of religious-linguistic domination (by a small Urdu-speaking Muslim elite ruling over predominantly Hindu-Telugu, Marathi, Kannada-speaking groups), total lack of political and civil liberties, grossest forms of forced exploitation by deshmukhs, jagirdars, doras (landlords) in forms of forced labour (vethi) and illegal exactions.

During the war, the communist-led guerrillas had built a strong base in Telangana villages through Andhra Mahasabha and had been leading local struggles on issues such as wartime exactions, abuse of rationing, excessive rent and vethi.

The uprising began in July 1946 when a deshmukh's thug murdered a village militant in Jangaon taluq of Nalgonda. Soon, the uprising spread to Warangal and Khammam.

The peasants organised themselves into village sanghams, and attacked using lathis, stone slings and chilli powder. They had to face brutal repression. The movement was at its greatest intensity between August 1947 and September 1948. The peasants brought about a rout of the Razaqars-the Nizam's storm troopers. Once the Indian security forces took over Hyderabad, the movement fizzled out.

The Telangana movement had many positive achievement to its credit:

- In the villages controlled by guerrillas, vethi and forced labour disappeared.
- Agricultural wages were raised.
- Illegally seized lands were restored.
- Steps were taken to improve irrigation and fight cholera.
- Measures were taken to improve irrigation and fight cholera.
- An improvement in the condition of women was witnessed.

The autocratic-feudal regime of India's biggest princely state was shaken up, clearing the way for the formation of Andhra Pradesh on linguistic lines and realising another aim of the national movement in this region.

Thus peasant movement in India created an atmosphere for post-independence agrarian reforms, for instance, abolition of zamindari. They eroded the power of the landed class thus adding to the transformation of the agrarian structure.

## **2. Working Class Movement against British Rule in India**

The beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century heralded the entry of modern industry into India. The thousands of hands employed in construction of railways were harbingers of the modern Indian working class.

Further industrialisation came with the development of ancillary industries along with the railways. The coal industry developed fast and employed a large working force. Then came the cotton and the jute industries.

The Indian working class suffered from the same kind of exploitation witnessed during the industrialisation of Europe and the rest of the West, such as low wages, long working hours, unhygienic and hazardous working conditions, employment of child labour and the absence of basic amenities.

The presence of colonialism in India gave a distinctive touch to the Indian working class movement. The Indian working class had to face two basic antagonistic forces—an imperialist political rule and economic exploitation at the hands of both foreign and native capitalist

Student Notes:

classes. Under the circumstances, inevitably, the Indian working class movement became intertwined with the political struggle for national emancipation.

Student Notes:

## 2.1. Earlier Efforts

**The early nationalists, especially the Moderates:**

- Were indifferent to the labour's cause;
- Differentiated between the labour in the Indian-owned factories and those in the British-owned factories;
- Believed that labour legislations would affect the competitive edge enjoyed by the Indian-owned industries;
- Did not want a division in the movement on the basis of classes;
- Did not support the Factory Acts of 1881 and 1891 for these reasons.

Thus, earlier attempts to improve the economic conditions of the workers were in the nature of the philanthropic efforts which were isolated, sporadic and aimed at specific local grievances.

- **1870:** Sasipada Banerjee started a workingmen's club and newspaper Bharat Shramjeevi.
- **1878:** Sorabjee Shapoorji Bengalee tried to get a bill, providing better working conditions to labour, passed in the Bombay Legislative Council.
- **1880:** Narain Meghajee Lokhanday started the newspaper Deenbandhu and set up the Bombay Mill and Millhands Association.
- **1899:** The first strike by the Great Indian Peninsular Railways took place, and it got widespread support. Tilak's Kesari and Maharatta had been campaigning for the strike for months.

There were many prominent nationalist leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal and G. Subramanya Aiyar who demanded better conditions for workers and other pro-labour reforms.

## 2.2. During Swadeshi Upsurge

Workers participated in wider political issues. Strikes were organised by Ashwini Coomar Banerjee, Prabhat Kumar Roy Chaudhuri, Premtosh Bose and Apurba Kumar Ghosh. These strikes were organised in government press, railways and the jute industry.

There were attempts to form trade unions but these were not very successful.

Subramaniya Siva and Chidambaram Pillai led strikes in Tuticorin and Tirunelveli and were arrested.

The biggest strike of the period was organised after Tilak's arrest and trial.

## 2.3. During and after The First World War

The War and its aftermath brought a rise in exports, soaring prices, and massive profiteering opportunities for the industrialists but very low wages for the workers. This led to discontent among workers.

The emergence of Gandhi led to a broad-based national movement and the emphasis was placed on the mobilisation of the workers and peasants for the national cause. A need was felt for the organisation of the workers in trade unions.

International events like the establishment of a socialist republic in the Soviet Union, formation of the Comintern and setting up of International Labour Organisation (ILO) lent a new dimension to the movement of the working class in India.

## 2.4. The AITUC

The All India Trade Union Congress was founded on October 31, 1920. The Indian National Congress president for the year, Lala Lajpat Rai, was elected as the first president of AITUC and Dewan Chaman Lai as the first general secretary. Lajpat Rai was the first to link capitalism with imperialism—"imperialism and militarism are the twin children of capitalism".

The prominent Congress and swarajist leader C.R. Das presided over the third and the fourth sessions of the AITUC. The Gaya session of the Congress (1922) welcomed the formation of the AITUC and a committee was formed to assist it.

C.R. Das advocated that the Congress should take up the workers' and peasants' cause and incorporate them in the struggle for swaraj or else they would get isolated from the movement. Other leaders who kept close contacts with the AITUC included Nehru, Subhash Bose, C.F. Andrews, J.M. Sengupta, Satyamurthy, V.V. Giri and Sarojini Naidu.

In the beginning, the AITUC was influenced by social democratic ideas of the British Labour Party. The Gandhian philosophy of non-violence, trusteeship and class-collaboration had great influence on the movement. Gandhi helped organise the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association (1918) and through a protest secured a 27.5 per cent wage hike. (Later, the arbitrator's award ensured a 35 per cent raise.)

## 2.5. The Trade Union Act, 1926

### The Act:

- Recognised trade unions as legal associations;
- Laid down conditions for registration and regulation of trade union activities;
- Secured immunity, both civil and criminal, for trade unions from prosecution for legitimate activities, but put some restrictions on their political activities.

## 2.6. Late 1920s

Strong communist influences on the movement lent a militant and revolutionary content to it. In 1928 there was a six-month-long strike in Bombay Textile Mills led by the Girni Kamgar Union.

The whole of 1928 witnessed unprecedented industrial unrest. This period also saw the crystallisation of various communist groups, with leaders like S.A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed, P.C. Joshi, Sohan Singh Joshi etc.

Alarmed at the increasing strength of the trade union movement under extremist influence, the Government resorted to legislative restrictions. It passed the Public Safety Ordinance (1929) and the Trade Disputes Act (TDA), 1929. **The TDA, 1929**

1. Made compulsory the appointment of Courts of Inquiry and Consultation Boards for settling industrial disputes;
2. Made illegal the strikes in public utility services like posts, railways, water and electricity, unless each individual worker planning to go on strike gave an advance notice of one month to the administration;
3. Forbade trade union activity of coercive or purely political nature and even sympathetic strikes.

## 2.7. Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929)

In March 1929, the Government arrested 31 labour leaders, and the three-and-a-half-year trial resulted in the conviction of Muzaffar Ahmed, S.A. Dange, Joglekar, Philip Spratt, Ben Bradley, Shaikat Usmani and others. The trial got worldwide publicity but weakened the working class movement.

The workers participated during 1930 in the Civil Disobedience Movement but after 1931 there was a dip in the working class movement because of a split in 1931 in which the corporatist trend led by N.M. Joshi broke away from the AITUC to set up the All India Trade Union Federation. In 1935, the communists re-joined the AITUC. Now, the left front consisted of the communists, Congress socialists and the leftist nationalists like Nehru and Subhash.

## 2.8. Under Congress Ministries

During the 1937 elections, the AITUC had supported the Congress candidates. The Congress governments in provinces gave a fillip to the trade union activity. The Congress ministries were generally sympathetic to the workers' demands. Many legislations favourable to the workers were passed.

## 2.9. During and after the Second World War

Initially, the workers opposed the War but after 1941 when Russia joined the war on behalf of the Allies, the communists described the war as a "peoples' war" and supported it. The communists dissociated themselves from the Quit India Movement. A policy of industrial peace was advocated by the communists.

In the period 1945 to 1947, workers participated actively in the post-War national upsurges. In 1945, the dock workers of Bombay and Calcutta refused to load ships taking supplies to the warring troops in Indonesia.

During 1946, the workers went on a strike in support of the Naval Ratings. During the last year of foreign rule, there were strikes by workers of posts, railways and many other establishments.

## 3. Indian Capitalist and Indian National Movement

Among the various groups that participated in the national movement were several individual capitalists who joined the Congress. They fully identified with the movement, went to jails and accepted the hardships that were the lot of Congressmen in the colonial period. The names of Jamnalal Bajaj, Vadilal Lallubhai Mehta, Samuel Aaron, Lala Shankar Lal, and others are well known in this regard. There were other individual capitalists who did not join the Congress but readily gave financial and other help to the movement. People like G.D. Birla, Ambalal Sarabhai and Waichand Hirachand, fall into this category. There were also a large number of smaller traders and merchants who at various points came out in active support of the national movement. On the other hand, there were several individual capitalists or sections of the class who either remained neutral towards the Congress and the national movement or even actively opposed it.

### 3.1. Growth of Indian Capitalist Class

The economic development of the Indian capitalist class in the colonial period was substantial and in many ways the nature of its growth was quite different from the usual experience in other colonial countries. This had important implications regarding the class's position vis-a-vis imperialism.

First, the Indian capitalist class grew from about the mid-19th century with largely an independent capital base and not as junior partners of foreign capital or as compradors.

Second, the capitalist class on the whole was not tied up in a subservient position with pro-imperialist feudal interests either economically or politically. In fact, a wide cross section of the leaders of the capitalist class actually argued, in 1944-45, in their famous Bombay plan (the signatories to which were Purshottamdas Thakurdas, J.R.D. Tata, G.D. Birla, Ardesir Dalal, Sri Ram, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, A.D. Shroff and John Mathai) for comprehensive land reform, including cooperativization of production, finance and marketing.'

Third, in the period 1914-1947, the capitalist class grew rapidly, increasing its strength and self-confidence. This was achieved primarily through import substitution; by edging out or encroaching upon areas of European domination, and by establishing almost exclusive control over new areas thus accounting for the bulk of the new investments made since the 1920s. Close to independence, indigenous enterprise had already cornered seventy two to seventy three per cent of the domestic market and over eighty per cent of the deposits in the organized banking sector.

However, this growth, unusual for a colonial capitalist class, did not occur, as is often argued, as a result or by-product of colonialism or because of a policy of decolonization. On the contrary it was achieved in spite of and in opposition to colonialism — by waging a constant struggle against colonialism and colonial interests, i.e., by wrenching space from colonialism itself.

There was, thus, nothing in the class position or the economic interest of the Indian capitalists which, contrary to what is so often argued, inhibited its opposition to imperialism.

### 3.2. Their Ideology and Strategy and Attitude Towards National Movement

By the mid-1920s, Indian capitalists began to correctly perceive their long-term class interest and felt strong enough to take a consistent and openly anti-imperialist position. The hesitation that the class demonstrated was not in its opposition to imperialism but in the choice of the specific path to fight imperialism. It was apprehensive that the path chosen should not be one which, while opposing imperialism, would threaten its own existence, i.e., undermine capitalism itself.

Capitalist's class position vis-a-vis imperialism and vis-a-vis the course of the anti-imperialist movement, can be evaluated only after having a look at the emergence of the class as a political entity — a 'class for itself.'

Since the early 1920s, efforts were being made by various capitalists like G.D. Birla and Purshottamdas Thakurdas to establish a national level organization of Indian commercial, industrial and financial interests to be able to effectively lobby with the colonial government. This effort culminated in the formation of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in 1927, with a large and rapidly increasing representation from all parts of India. The FICCI was soon recognized by the British government as well as the Indian public in general, as representing the dominant opinion as well as the overall consensus within the Indian capitalist class.

The leaders of the capitalist class also clearly saw the role of the FICCI as being that of 'national guardians of trade, commerce and industry,' performing in the economic sphere in colonial India the functions of a national government. In the process, Indian capitalists, with some of the most astute minds of the period in their ranks, developed a fairly comprehensive economic critique of imperialism in all its manifestations, whether it be direct appropriation through home charges or exploitation through trade, finance, currency manipulation or foreign investments, including in their sweep the now fashionable concept of unequal exchange occurring in trade between countries with widely divergent productivity levels. The Congress leaders quite often saw their assistance as invaluable and treated their opinions and expertise on many national economic issues with respect.

The leaders of the capitalist class could clearly see the necessity of, the class to effectively intervene in politics. As Sir Purshottamdas, President of FICCI, declared "We can no more separate our politics from our economics". And he opined that 'Indian commerce and industry are intimately associated with and are, indeed, an integral part of the national movement — growing with its growth and strengthening with its strength.'

However, the Indian capitalist class had its own notions of how the anti-imperialist struggle ought to be waged. It was always in favour of not completely abandoning the constitutional path and the negotiating table and generally preferred to put its weight behind constitutional forms of struggle as opposed to mass civil disobedience. This was due to several reasons.

First, there was the fear that mass civil disobedience, especially if it was prolonged, would unleash forces which could turn the movement revolutionary in a social sense (i.e., threaten capitalism itself). So, whenever the movement was seen to be getting too dangerous in this sense, the capitalists tried their best to bring the movement back to a phase of constitutional opposition.



Second, the capitalists were unwilling to support a prolonged all-out hostility to the government of the day as it prevented the continuing of day-to-day business and threatened the very existence of the class.

Further, the Indian capitalists' support to constitutional participation, whether it be in assemblies, conferences or even joining the Viceroy's Executive Council, was not simply their getting co-opted into the imperial system or surrendering to it. Rather they used all this as a forum for maintaining an effective opposition fearing that boycotting these forums completely would help 'black legs' and elements who did not represent the nation to, without any opposition, easily pass measures which could severely affect the Indian economy and the capitalist class. However, there was no question of unconditionally accepting reforms or participating in conferences or assemblies. The capitalists were to 'participate on (their) own terms,' with 'no compromise on fundamentals,' firmly rejecting offers of cooperation which fell below their own and the minimum national demands.' It was on this ground that the FICCI in 1934 rejected the 'Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reforms for India as "even more reactionary than the proposals contained in the White paper."

Further, however keen the capitalists may have been to keep constitutional avenues open, they clearly recognized the futility of entering councils, etc., In 1930, the FICCI (in sharp contrast to the Liberals) advised its members to boycott the Round Table Conference (RTC) stating that '... no conference ... convened for the purpose of discussing the problem of Indian constitutional advance can come to a solution ... unless such a conference is attended by Mahatma Gandhi, as a free man, or has at least his approval.' This was partially because the capitalists did not want India to present a divided front at the RTC and because they knew only the Congress could actually deliver the goods.

Finally, it must be noted that for the capitalist class constitutionalism was not an end in itself, neither did it subscribe to what has often been called 'gradualism,' in which case it would have joined hands with the Liberals and not supported the Congress which repeatedly went in for non-constitutional struggle including mass civil disobedience. The capitalist class itself did not rule out other forms of struggle, seeing constitutional participation as only a step towards the goal, to achieve which other steps could be necessary. For example, G.D. Birla, who had worked hard for a compromise leading to the Congress accepting office in 1937, warned Lord Halifax and Lord Lothian that the 'Congress was not coming in just to work the constitution, but to advance towards their goal,' and if the 'Governors and the Services' did not play 'the game' or 'in case there was no (constitutional) advance after two or three years, then India would be compelled to take direct action,' by which he meant 'non-violent mass civil disobedience.'

This brings us to the Indian capitalists' attitude towards mass civil disobedience, which was very complex. While, on the one hand, they were afraid of protracted mass civil disobedience, on the other hand, they clearly saw the utility, even necessity of civil disobedience in getting crucial concessions for their class and the nation.

When, after the mass movement had gone on for considerable time, the capitalists, sought the withdrawal of the movement and a compromise (often mediating between the Government and Congress to secure peace), they were quite clear that this was to be only after extracting definite concessions, using the movement, or a threat to re-launch it, to bargain. In their 'anxiety for peace,' they were not to surrender or 'reduce (their) demands.' The dual objective of achieving conciliation without weakening the national movement, which after all secured the concessions, was aptly described by G.D. Birla in January 1931: 'We should ... have two objects in view: one is that we should jump in at the most opportune time to try for a conciliation and the other is that we should not do anything which might weaken the hands of those through whose efforts we have arrived at this stage.'

Further, however opposed the capitalist class may have been at a point of time to mass civil disobedience, it never supported the colonial Government in repressing it. In fact, the capitalists throughout pressurized the Government to stop repression, remove the ban on the

Congress and the press, release political prisoners and stop arbitrary rule with ordinances as a first step to any settlement, even when the Congress was at the pitch of its non-constitutional mass phase. The fear of Congress militancy or radicalization did not push the capitalists (especially after the late 1920s) to either supporting imperialism in repressing it or even openly condemning or dissociating themselves from the Congress.

The Indian capitalists' attitude had undergone significant changes on this issue over time. During the Swadeshi Movement (1905-08), the capitalists remained opposed to the boycott agitation. Even during the Non-Cooperation Movement of the early '20s, a small section of the capitalists, including Purshottamdas, openly declared themselves enemies of the Non Cooperation Movement. However, during the 1930s' Civil Disobedience Movement, the capitalists largely supported the movement and refused to respond to the Viceroy's exhortations (in September 1930) to publicly repudiate the Congress stand and his offer of full guarantee of government protection against any harassment for doing so.' In September 1940, they wrote Viceroy for 'granting political freedom to the country. . . even during the midst of war.'

Though, by the late 1920s, the dominant section of the Indian capitalist class began to support the Congress, the Indian national movement was not created, led or in any decisive way influenced by this class, nor was it in any sense crucially dependent on its support. In fact, it was the capitalist class which reacted to the existing autonomous national movement by constantly trying to evolve a strategy towards it. Further, while the capitalist class on the whole stayed within the nationalist camp, it did so on the most conservative end of the nationalist spectrum, which certainly did not call the shots of the national movement at any stage.

### 3.3. Criticism of Indian Capitalist and reality

The relative autonomy of the Indian national movement has been repeatedly not recognized, and it has been argued that the capitalists, mainly by using the funds at their command, were able to pressurize the Congress into making demands such as a lower Rupee-Sterling ratio, tariff protection, reduction in military expenditure, etc., which allegedly suited only their class? Further, it is argued that the capitalists were able to exercise a decisive influence over the political course followed by the Congress, even to the extent of deciding whether a movement was to be launched, continued or withdrawn. The examples quoted are of the withdrawal of civil disobedience in 1931 with the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the non-launching of another movement between 1945-47.

#### **These formulations do not reflect the reality for several reasons.**

First, a programme of economic nationalism vis-à-vis imperialism, with demands for protection, fiscal and monetary autonomy, and the like, did not represent the interest of the capitalist class alone, it represented the demands of the entire nation which was subject to imperialist exploitation. Even the leftists — Nehru, Socialists, and Communists — in their struggle against imperialism had to and did fight for these demands.

Second, the detailed working out of the doctrine of economic nationalism was done by the early nationalism nearly half a century before the Indian capitalists got constituted as a class and entered the political arena and began fighting for these demands. So there was no question of the Congress being bought, manipulated or pressurized into these positions by the capitalist class.

Third, while it is true that the Congress needed and accepted funds from the business community, especially during constitutional (election) phases there is no evidence to suggest that through these funds the businessmen were able to, in any basic way, influence the party's policy and ideology along lines which were not acceptable to it independently. Even the Congress dependence on funds has been grossly exaggerated.

Gandhiji's position on capitalist support is very revealing in this context. As early as 1922, while welcoming and even appealing for support from merchants and mill owners; he simultaneously maintained that, 'whether they do so or not, the country's march to freedom cannot be made to depend on any corporation or groups of men. This is a mass manifestation. The masses are moving rapidly towards deliverance and they must move whether with the aid of the organized capital or without.

Lastly, as for the capitalists' determining the course of the Congress- led movements, again there is little evidence to support this view. The Congress launched or withdrew movements based on its own strategic perceptions arising out of its understanding of the nature of the colonial state and its current postures, the organizational, political and ideological preparedness of the people, the staying power of the masses, especially when faced with repression, and so on. It did not do so at the behest, and not even on behalf of the capitalist class. In fact, almost each time the Congress launched mass movements, e.g., in 1905-08, 1920-22, 1930, 1932 and 1942, it did so without the approval of either the capitalist class as a whole or a significant section of it. However, once the movements were launched, the capitalist class reacted to it in a complex and progressively changing fashion, as discussed above.

Quite significantly, the Indian capitalists never saw the Congress as their class party or even as a party susceptible only to their influence. On the contrary, they saw the Congress as an open-ended organization, heading a popular movement.

In fact, it was precisely the increasing radicalization of the Congress in the Left direction in the 1930s, with the growing influence of Nehru, and the Socialists and Communists within the Congress, which spurred the capitalists into becoming more active in the political field. The fear of radicalization of the national movement, however, did not push the capitalists into the 'lap of imperialism,' as predicted by contemporary radicals and as actually happened in some other colonial and semi-colonial countries. Instead, the Indian capitalists evolved a subtle, many sided strategy to contain, the Left, no part of which involved a sell-out to imperialism or imperial interests.

The capitalists also realized, that 'A consistent . . . programme of reforms' was the most effective remedy against social upheavals.' It was with this reform perspective that the 'Post War Economic Development Committee,' set up by the capitalists in 1942, which eventually drafted the Bombay Plan, was to function. Its attempt was to incorporate 'whatever is sound and feasible in the socialist movement' and see 'how far socialist demands could be accommodated without capitalism surrendering any of its essential features.' The Bombay Plan, therefore, seriously took up the question of rapid economic growth and equitable distribution, even arguing for the necessity of partial nationalization, the public sector, land reform and a series of workers' welfare schemes.

Thus we see that clearly the Indian capitalist class was anti-socialist and bourgeois but it was not pro-imperialist. The maturity of the Indian capitalist class in identifying its long term interests, correctly understanding the nature of the Congress and its relationship with the different Classes in Indian society, its refusal to abandon the side of Indian nationalism even when threatened by the Left or tempted by imperialism, its ability to project its own class interests as societal interests, are some of the reasons which explains why, on the whole, the Indian national movement remained, till independence under bourgeois ideological hegemony, despite strong contending trends within it.

## 4. Role of Women in National Movement

Women in Indian freedom struggle have significantly contributed almost at par with their male counterparts in fighting the British yoke. The initiative, bravery, guts and headship that the women have showed in the freedom movements for the country's independence from colonial rule have given them widespread name, fame and significance in the Indian society. During the

uprising of 1857, women of the ruling class came together along with the men to fulfill their ambition for an independent India. Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar and the famous Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, Matangini Hazra, Sarojini Naidu had become iconic figures in the Indian political arena.

Indian women actively participated in the revolutionary movements for social changes during the national struggle for Independence. Thus, the participation of women was not restricted to one type of activity such as the non-violent Satyagraha Movement. Women's early contribution to the Indian national movement started in the late 19th Century with their involvement in the Indian National Congress. In 1890, Swarna Kumari Ghoshal, a women novelist and Kadambari Ganguly, the first woman graduate of the British Empire, went to attend the Indian National Congress meeting as a delegate. Even Sarojini Naidu requires to be mentioned with equal importance better known as 'Nightingale of India'. In the year 1905, National Movement for the country's independence took a crucial turn with the division of Bengal.

#### 4.1. Role of Women in Independence Movement

Women joined men to protest against the British rulers by boycotting foreign goods and resolving to buy only those goods produced in the territory of Bengal. Mrs. Nonibala Devi joined the new Jugantar Party which was dedicated to aggressive movement in the early 20th century. Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1915 and took up the demand for self-rule and later for Purna Swaraj through non-violent methods. His call to join the Satyagraha Movement witnessed women getting involved in all his programmes. Rani Gaidiniliu integrated the movement in North-East with the Indian freedom movement under Gandhiji. Some of the women who played a very active role in the Swadeshi Movement were Sarojini Naidu, Urmila Devi, Durgabai Deshmukh, S. Ambujammal, Basanti Devi, and Krishnabai Ram.

Women of educated and liberal families, as well as those from the rural areas actively joined Mahatma Gandhi in his non Cooperation Movement. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Sucheta Kripalani, Sarla Devi Chaudhurani, Muthulaksmi Reddy, Susheela Nair, and Aruna Asaf Ali are some the women freedom fighters who participated in the non-violent movement. Kasturba Gandhi and Kamala Nehru also participated in the National Movement. Lado Rani Zutshi and her daughters led the movement in Lahore. Indian women who joined the national movement belonged to all walks of life, all castes, religions and communities.

Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit hailed from a well-known family. Her father Motilal Nehru was the president of Congress and brother Jawaharlal Nehru went on to become India's Prime Minister. She was highly inspired by the personality of Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and by Sarojini Naidu. She participated in the Non Co-operation Movement to fight against the British rulers. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit attended many public lectures and represented the country abroad. She was a great fighter and took part in many of the freedom movements. In the year 1936, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit was elected in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly. Her political profession made her the first Women Cabinet Minister of India in the year 1937.

Aruna Asaf Ali was another renowned freedom fighter and a devoted sociologist. She was selected as the first Mayor of Delhi. Sarojini Naidu was a noted poet, and one of the great freedom fighters of the country. Sarojini Naidu actively campaigned for the Khilafat Movement. Active Participation of Women in Politics The Indian National Army (INA), which was established by Subhash Chandra Bose, was one of the most genuine and fearless movements undertaken by Indian men and women under the able and remarkable leadership of this great patriot. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose recruited around 1000 women for the Rani of Jhansi Regiment from different South East Asian countries. Dr. Lakshmi Swaminathan, who was a medical practitioner by profession, led this regiment. The women in the regiment were given the same training like their male counterparts. Even their uniform was similar to the men soldiers. The real impact of the INA may not have been in military terms, but it had a deep psychological impact on the women of India.

While there were significant numbers of women patriots who stood by Gandhiji and the Congress in the non-violent movement, women of Bengal and from other parts of India also participated in a vital role in various armed revolutions. Women played a major role in the Lahore Students Union of Bhagat Singh and the Kakori Train Robbery case. The Mahila Rashtriya Sangha was established by Latika Ghosh in the year 1928. Veena Das who shot at the Governor of Bengal, and Kamla Das Gupta and Kalyani Das, Kalpana datta, Pritilata Wadekar were all active within the respective revolutionary groups. Thus quite clearly women courageously participated in violent and non-violent movements of Indian independence.

The women in Indian freedom struggle have excelled as speakers, marchers, campaigners and tireless volunteers. They actively participated in the processions and rallies conducted by the Indian political parties. They always fought for Hindu-Muslim unity. The contribution of women in Indian freedom struggle is truly remarkable.

The list of great women whose names have gone down in history for their dedication and undying devotion to the service of India is a long one.

#### ***4.1.1. Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi (19 November 1828 – 17 June 1858)***

Rani Lakshmbai was one of the leading warriors of India's First freedom struggle who laid an outstanding influence on the succeeding women freedom fighters. She used to go into the battlefield dressed as a man. Holding the reins of her horse in her mouth she used the sword with both hands. She fought valiantly and although beaten she refused to surrender and fell as a warrior should, fighting the enemy to the last. Her remarkable courage inspired many men and women in India to rise against the alien rule. She was a symbol of bravery, patriotism, self-respect, perseverance, generosity and resistance to British rule. She fought till her last breath for the noble cause of India's independence.

#### ***4.1.2. Begum Hazrat Mahal (1820—1879)***

Begum Hazrat Mahal was a great Indian freedom-fighter who played a major role during India's First War of independence (1857-58). She was also known as the Begum of Awadh (Oudh) and was the wife of the then Lucknow ruler, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. She led a band of her supporters against the British, and was even able to seize the control of Lucknow. She worked in close association with other leaders of the India's First War of Independence, including Nana Sahib. Begum was not only a strategist but also fought on the battlefield. When the forces under the command of the British re-captured Lucknow and most part of the Awadh, she was forced to retreat. When her forces lost ground, she fled Oudh and organized soldiers again in other places. She turned down all offers of amnesty and allowances by the British rulers.

Finally, she took refuge in an asylum in Nepal, where she died in the year 1879. To acknowledge her endless effort in fighting for the freedom of country, the Government of India issued a stamp on her name.

#### ***4.1.3. Sarojini Naidu (February 13, 1879 – March 2, 1949),***

Sarojini Naidu, the Nightingale of India, was a distinguished poet, renowned freedom fighter and one of the great orators of her time. She was elected as the president of Indian National Congress. The dynamic phase of Sarojini's career was from 1917-1919. She campaigned for the Khilafat Movement.

When Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement, she proved a faithful lieutenant. With great courage she quelled the rioters, sold proscribed literature, and addressed frenzied meetings on the carnage at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. In 1930 when Mahatma Gandhi chose her to lead the Salt Satyagraha the stories of her courage became legion. After Gandhi's arrest she had prepared 2,000 volunteers under the scorching sun to raid the Dahrsana Salt Works, while the police faced them half a mile up the road with rifle, lathis (canes) and steel tipped clubs. She gave up writing poetry and fully devoted herself to emancipation of women,



education, Hindu-Muslim unity etc. She became a follower of Gandhiji and accompanied him to England. Whenever in England, she openly criticized British rule in India which caught the attention of scholars and intellectuals.

#### **4.1.4. Madam Bhikha Ji Cama (24 September 1861-- 13 August 1936.)**

Madam Cama fought for the freedom of the country till the last in her own way, and helped many revolutionaries with money and materials. She unfurled the first National Flag at the International Socialist Conference in Stuttgart (Germany) in 1907 and declared "This flag is of Indian Independence! Behold, it is born! It has been made sacred by the blood of young Indians who sacrificed their lives. I call upon you, gentlemen to rise and salute this flag of Indian Independence. In the name of this flag, I appeal to lovers of freedom all over the world to support this flag." A thousand representatives from several countries were attended. She traveled a lot of places including America and propagated about Indians struggle for Independence.

#### **4.1.5. Annie Besant (October 1, 1847 – September 20, 1933)**

Annie Besant an Irish lady the leader of the Theosophical Society joined the Indian National Congress and gave it a new direction. She was the first woman president of the Congress and gave a powerful lead to women's movement in India. She soon became a leading labour organizer, strike leader and reformer. She also became involved in Indian Nationalism and in 1916 established the Indian Home Rule League of which she became President. She started a newspaper, "New India", criticized British rule and was jailed for sedition. She came to be associated with rationalistic congress group of workers who did not appreciate Gandhi's views. She got involved in political and educational activities and set up a number of schools and colleges, the most important of which was Central Hindu College High School at Banaras which she started in 1913.

#### **4.1.6. Arun Asaf Ali (July 16, 1909,—July 29, 1996)**

Aruna became an active member of Congress Party and participated in public processions during the Salt Satyagraha. She was arrested on the charge that she was a vagrant and hence not released in 1931 under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact which stipulated release of all political prisoners. Other women co-prisoners refused to leave the premises unless she was also released and gave in only after Mahatma Gandhi intervened.

In 1932, she was held prisoner at the Tihar Jail where she protested the indifferent treatment of political prisoners by launching a hunger strike. Her efforts resulted in an improvement of conditions in the Tihar Jail but she was moved to Ambala and was subjected to solitary confinement. She edited 'Inqulab' a monthly journal of the Indian National Congress. On August 8, 1942, the AICC passed the Quit India resolution at the Bombay session. The government responded by arresting the major leaders and all members of the Congress Working Committee and thus tried to pre-empt the movement from success. Aruna Asaf Ali presided over the remainder of the session on 9 August and hoisted the Congress flag and this marked the commencement of the movement. The police fired upon the assembly at the session. Aruna was dubbed the Heroine of the 1942 movement for her bravery in the face of danger and was called Grand Old Lady of the Independence movement in her later years.

#### **4.1.7. Usha Mehta (March 25, 1920 – August 11, 2000)**

Usha Mehta is remembered for broad casting the Congress Radio, and she called it the Secret Congress Radio, an underground radio station, which was functioned for few months during the Quit India Movement of 1942.

She is also known as child leader as in 1928, eight-year-old Usha participated in a protest march against the Simon Commission and shouted her first words of protest against the British Raj: "Simon Go Back." As a child, she did not comprehend the significance of her actions except that



she was participating in a movement to free her country under the leadership of Gandhi. She and many other children participated in morning protests against the British Raj and picketing in front of liquor shops. During the Quit India Movement, Usha quickly became a leader. She moved from New Delhi to Mumbai, where she hoisted the tricolor on August 9, 1942 at Gawalia Tank Ground.

#### ***4.1.8. Kasturba Gandhi (April 11, 1869 – February 22, 1944),***

Kasturba Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's wife worked with him for many years. She was a leader of Women's Satyagraha for which she was imprisoned. She helped her husband in the cause of Indigo workers in Champaran, Bihar and the No Tax Campaign in Kaira, Gujarat. She was arrested twice for picketing liquor and foreign cloth shops, and in 1939 for participating in the Rajkot Satyagraha. She many times took her husband's place when he was under arrest. Kasturba suffered from chronic bronchitis. Stress from the Quit India Movement's arrests and ashram life caused her to fall ill. After contracting pneumonia, she died from a severe heart attack on February 22, 1944 while she was in prison along with Mahatma Gandhi.

#### ***4.1.9. Kamala Nehru (1899–1936)***

Kamala Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru's wife gave full support to her husband in his desire to work actively for the freedom struggle. In the Nehru home town of Allahabad, she organized processions, addressed meetings and led picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops. She played a prominent part in organizing the No Tax Campaign in United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh).

In the Non Cooperation movement of 1921, she organized groups of women in Allahabad and propagated use of khadi cloths. When her husband was arrested, to prevent him delivering a "seditious" public speech, she went in his place to read it out. She was twice arrested by British authorities. Kamala died from tuberculosis in Switzerland while Jawaharlal Nehru's was in prison. She spent some time at Gandhi's ashram with Kasturba Gandhi as well.

#### ***4.1.10. Vijaya Lakshmi Pundit (August 18, 1900 - December 1, 1990)***

She was the daughter of Motilal Nehru. She was greatly inspired by Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and impressed by Sarojini Naidu. She entered the Non Co-operation Movement to fight against the British rule.

Vijaya Lakshmi Pundit represented India in many of the conferences abroad. She attended numerous public lectures and challenged the British dominated delegate's rights to represent India therein. She was a great fighter and took parts in many of the freedom movement. She was arrested in 1932 and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. She was arrested in 1940 and yet again during the Quit India Movement in 1942.

#### **Conclusion**

Women shouldered critical responsibilities in India's struggle for freedom. They held public meetings, organized picketing of shops selling foreign alcohol and articles, sold Khadi and actively participated in National Movements. They bravely faced the baton of the police and went behind the iron bars and hundreds and thousands of Indian women dedicated their lives for obtaining freedom of their motherland.

## **5. The Lower Caste Movements in Modern India**

In medieval times the Indian religious reformers mostly attracted their followers from the lower castes. In contrast to this the socio-religious reform movements of the 19th century were mostly pioneered by the Upper Caste Hindus who condemned the caste system and untouchability. Unfortunately both these challenges though conceived in the spirit of enlightened social regeneration achieved marginal success.

## 5.1. The Changing Scenario

A number of circumstances in the 19th centuries created class consciousness among the lower castes who took upon themselves to struggle for caste equality. Their efforts resulted in the organization of various lower caste movements in South India and Western India.

The British Policy of Divide and Rule, the growth of Western system of education, the introduction of a common Indian Penal code (1861) and Code of Criminal Procedure (1872), the extension of the railway network (where every Indian could buy ticket of any class and occupy any seat available), the growth of national consciousness and the popularity of the modern political thought based on equality and social egalitarianism created a social and political climate in which the caste system could not be defended. The leading lights among the Lower Castes themselves organized caste movements.

## 5.2. Reactions against Brahminical Domination

In South India, the lower caste movements were a direct revolt against the Brahminical domination in the Madras Presidency. It is interesting to note that in 1916 a spokesman of the lower castes pointed out that out of the 15 members of the All India Congress Committee from Madras Presidency only one was a non-Brahman. Some of the lower caste leaders propagated that the Dravidians were the original inhabitants of India while the Aryans were the immigrants into India and they had brought the evil institution of the caste system with them. Manifestation of such feeling came as Dravidian movement.

### 5.2.1. Dravidian Movement

With the spread of Christianity and the western education, the non-Brahmin in the Madras presidency region developed a new awareness as a result of which resentment started growing among them against the domination by Brahmin and other higher castes in profession as well as in politics, especially the Congress Party. They believed that, if they had to make successful careers, the domination of Brahmins in professional and political life had to be first overthrown.

By 1914 this conflict between the emerging non-Brahmin urban middle class and the establishment of mostly Brahmin middle class and upper class took a sharp turn. **The non-Brahmin caste uniting themselves and the Non-Brahmin Manifesto published in 1916 was followed by the formation of South Indian Liberal Federation in 1917 by S.P. Theagaraya and Dr. T.M.Nair.** After the Montague Chelmsford Reforms 'South-Indian liberal federation' was converted into **Justice Party** to counter the political influence of the Congress.

However the Justice Party was a party of urban educated professional middle class elite in nature and therefore failed to build a mass base. **Soon after, the self-respect movement was founded in 1925 by E.V. Ramaswami Naicker.**

**The self-respect movement** was based on the Dravidian ideology to save the non-Brahmin from the tyranny of Brahmin who were considered Aryans. The self-respect movement aimed at removing the control of Brahmin from the social and political level and sought to wean the people away from the puranic ritualistic Hinduism necessitating the presence of Brahmin priest. He denounced Hinduism as an instrument of brahminical control and the laws of Manu as inhuman, the puranas as fairy tale. He ridiculed hindu god and goddesses and concluded **"There are certain things which cannot be mended but only ended. Brahminical Hindism is one such."** Naicker condemned religion as superstition and opposed imposition of Hindi on the Dravidians. **His followers called him Thanthai (father) and Periyar (great soul).**

It considered the Brahmin as the symbol of all exploitation. This movement was successful in appealing to the masses and acquired a mass following finally; In 1937 Naicker was elected the President of the Justice party and finally the self-respect movement and Justice Party were merged in 1944 to form Dravida Kazhagam headed by Naicker. It adopted a militant mass agitation strategy and advocated an egalitarian ideology condemning the caste system.

Later on in 1949, due to difference between the Naicker and C. N. Annadurai ( follower and friend of Naicker) who led the younger section in the Dravida Kazhaghham, there was a split leading to the formation of Dravida Munnetra Kazhaghham under Anna's leadership. The majority of the rank and file of D.K. joined the DMK. Initially the support base of DMK consisted of the lower middle class, students, lower castes like Nadars, Marwars and Adi Dravidians and unemployed youth, etc. Cinema was one of the effective media which was used by DMK to propagate its ideology and win a mass base.

A consequence of the DMK was the decline in the domination of Brahmins in Tamil Nadu, a new sense of release and freedom among the lower castes. However, later on as DMK tried to capture power, it gradually abandoned its reformist zeal and even the demand for creation of a separate Dravidian Nadu and acquired a character of one of the mainstream political parties with a rational support base.

### 5.2.2. SNDP (Sri Narayan Dharma Pratipalan Movement)

This movement was launched among the **Izhavas of Kerala** by their leader **Narayan Guru**. Traditionally, Izhavas were an untouchable castes of Toddy Trappers e.g. they had to stay away thirty four feet from the Namboodhari Brahmins. They suffered from many other disabilities both social and ritual. They were denied access to Hindu temples or to the bathing tank of Hindus. Their women were not allowed to cover their breast or to wear any footwear, nor could they build pucca house.

In the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the spread of modern humanistic and secular ideas and also the spread of egalitarian -ideas through Christianity, Izhavas came to view their situation as one of the deprivation and exploitation. Under the charismatic leadership of Sri Narayan Guru they rejected Brahminical domination and developed a new interpretation of Hinduism.

The new ideology was based on the principle of self-respect, honour and worth of individual. It was an ideology of protest against the Brahminical values system of hierarchy and pollution. Narayan Guru established a parallel source of legitimacy by establishing new institutions like temple priest, monk and monasteries. He openly criticised Gandhiji for his faith in Chaturvarna, which, he maintained, is the parent of the caste-system and untouchability. He pointed out that the difference in castes is only superficial and emphasized that the juice of all leaves of a particular tree would be the same in content. **He gave a new Slogan "One religion, one caste and one god for mankind".**

**Later T.V. Madhavan led the Vaikum Temple Road Entry Movement in 1927**, under the patronage of Mahatma Gandhi. After the two years of sustained Satyagraha the Izhavas were granted the right to use the road which ran near the Vaikum Temple which was owned by upper caste only. This was a historic victory against orthodox ideas-of pollution. Thus, the leaders of the movement were able to achieve for their followers all the basic rights in the field of religion, education, employment and politics.

The SNDP movement represented one of the most successful attempts of the untouchable castes to alter the traditional balance of power besides improving their own positions. It also demonstrated that it was possible to remain within the fold of Hinduism and yet escape from the stigma of untouchability. The new awareness arose among Izhavas tribes. The movement motivated them to take to modern education, which in the long run enabled them to access of the modern occupation and professions which carried high rewards in terms of prestige and wealth. Thus Izhavas as a community successfully raised their status in society.

### 5.2.3. Jyotirao Phule and the Satya Sodhak Samaj

In western India Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (1827-1890) struggled for the lower caste. Jyotiba was born at Poona in Mali caste (who supplies flowers and garlands). Some incidents of

Brahminical arrogance changed the outlook of Jyotiba. Once Jyotiba was scolded and insulted by a Brahman for his audacity in joining a Brahman marriage procession. The Brahmins also opposed Jyotiba in running a school for the lower castes and women. The Brahminical pressure compelled Jyotiba to close the school; under upper caste pressure Govindrao turned Jyotiba and his wife from leaving his family house.

Jyotiba believed that the Brahman under the pretext of religion tyrannized over other castes and turned them into their slaves. Jyotiba was ever critical of the Indian National Congress Leaders for their neglect of the interest on the weaker sections. He maintained that the Congress could not be called truly national unless it showed general interest in the welfare of the lower and backward castes.

**In 1873, Jyotiba started the Satya Shodhak Samaj (Truth Seeking Society) with the aim of securing social justice for the weaker section of society.** He opened a number of schools and orphanages for the children and women belonging to all castes. He was elected as a member of the Poona Municipal Committee in 1876. He published '**Dharma Tritiya Ratna**' (exposure of puranas), **Ishara** (A warning), and **Life of Shivaji** etc. In 1888 he was honoured with the title of Mahatma. Soon the mantle of fighting for the cause of depressed class was taken up by B.R. Ambedkar in twentieth century as a part of Indian national Movement.

#### **5.2.4. Mahar Movement**

Mahar are numerically significant caste of Maharashtra who was traditionally considered as untouchable. Normally, they were allocated menial task like sweeping, digging groves, removing caracasses of dead animals, cutting woods and playing music on ceremonial occasion in the village. They were denied access to civil amenities like wells, school and even service of Brahmins and Barbers etc. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Mahars started organizing themselves in fight against discrimination and to prove their status. They held conference in 1902 and insisted on recruitment to military and police service.

They were helped by the leaders of Non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra, especially by the depressed class Mission (1906) established by U.R. Shinde. The mission started separate schools and hostels for Mahars. Also, the efforts made by Mahatma Gandhi for the abolition of untouchability and overall impact of freedom struggle created new social awakening among them.

Later on, leadership for upliftment of Mahars was started by B.R. Ambedkar. Ambedkar provided a new movement and a radical turn of Mahar Movement. He rejected the Gandhian approach relying on change of the heart of caste Hindu and of incorporating the Harijan in the Sudra Varna; instead he adopted a new strategy of aggressive protest and resorted to political action.

He demanded separate electorate for the Harijans and during the late 20s, and early 30s several Satyagrahs were held for gaining entry into Hindu temple and Manusmriti was burnt to show their indignation against orthodox Hindus.

Ambedkar was disillusioned about the possibility of the Mahars or Harijan in general, being able to improve their condition within the fold of Hinduism. Thus, he decided to abandon Hinduism altogether and along with five lakhs Mahars embraced Buddhism.

**The ideology of Mahars Movement was different from that of SNDP movement. While the former relied on total rejection of Hindusim, the latter at interpretation of Hindusim. The reason for adopting Buddhism was its egalitarian ideology. Thus Mahars could escape the stigma of untouchable and other forms of discrimination.**

Moreover, the collective mobilization of Mahars in the course of social movement created a new awareness among the Mahars regarding their educational, economic and political rights. They took to modern education in large numbers which enabled them to secure the new occupation in the urban areas. Thus the overall social status of the Mahars was raised.

## 5.3. Ambedkar's Dynamic Role

B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) was crusader in the cause of the upliftment of the lower castes. He was a Mahar (untouchable caste) lawyer educated at the Columbia University. Bhimrao married Rambai of his own caste in 1905; she died in 1935. In 1948, Bhimrao married a second time Dr. Sharada Kabir who came from a Saraswati Brahmin Family of Bombay.

**In July 1924, Ambedkar started an organization in Bombay called 'Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha' for the moral and material progress of the untouchables.** He resorted to methods of agitation and launched Satyagraha to establish civic rights of the untouchables to enter the Hindu temples and draw water from public wells.

In 1930 Ambedkar entered national politics. He demanded separate electorates for the untouchables. He was nominated as a delegate of the three round tables Conference in London (1930-32). The Communal Award announced by the British Prime Minister on 17 August 1932 provided for separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. This upset Gandhiji who went on fast unto death; a final compromise popularly known as the Poona Pact (24 Sept., 1932) provided for reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes in the general constituencies.

In April 1942, he founded the Schedule Caste Federation as an all India party. Later, he announced that schedule caste would leave Hindu fold altogether. He along with many followers embraced Buddhism.

On the eve of independence, Ambedkar was nominated by the Congress Party as a member of the Constituent Assembly. His contribution in framing and piloting the India Constitution and the Hindu Code Bill are well recognized. Today, Ambedkar is remembered as the emancipator of the lower castes.

The new Constitution of Indian Republic has accepted the Principle of Equality for all Indian citizens and has abolished untouchability. The Untouchability (offences) Act 1955 spells out the punishment to be awarded for offences under this Act.

## 6. Middle Class Movements

### 6.1. Development of Middle Class

The middle class is placed between labour and capital. It neither directly owns the means of production that pumps out the surplus generated by wage labour power nor does it by its own labour produce the surplus which has use and exchange value.

The middle class comprises mainly of petty bourgeoisie and the white collar workers. In terms of occupation, shopkeepers, salesmen, brokers, government and non-government office workers, supervisors and professionals such as engineers, doctors etc constitute the middle class. Most of these occupations require at least some degree of formal education. The middle class is primarily a product of capitalist development and the expansion of the functions of the state in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Though the petty bourgeoisie and managers did exist in pre-capitalist society they constituted a tiny class. Industrial development and expansion of markets require not only a larger managerial class than earlier but also forced the state to shoulder the responsibilities of monitoring market competition and resolving the contradictions of capitalist development. This includes formation and implementation of welfare programmes to minimize tension in society. For carrying out these functions the state also required a managerial class. Formal education contributed to the expansion of this class.

### 6.2. Form of Middle Class Movements

Middle class movements are primarily analyzed in terms of the issues that they raise such as social reform movements, the nationalist movement, and human right movements and so on.



These movements are called mass movements as the issues are not class specific not affecting mainly the middle class. The issues are posed as societal problems. The leaders of such movements who belong to the middle class mobilize other classes for support.

Colonial rule established and introduced a capitalist economy, a new administrative system and English education in the early 19th century. Consequently a tiny educated class emerged in urban areas. The members of this class were upper caste Hindus and Muslims. They not only raised questions but also revolted against certain customs and traditions of the Hindu social system. These individuals known as social reformers were all those who were advocates of alterations in social customs which would involve a break with traditionally accepted patterns; they were those who convinced themselves that altered ways of thinking and behaving were positive values, sought to convince others to modify or entirely transform their ways of life.

These reformers either revolted individually or formed associations. These associations were of three types –general associations; caste reform associations and religious reform bodies. The Indian National Social Conference was formed in 1887. Social reform associations came into existence at provincial and local level. Some of them were formed around one issue such as widow remarriage, child marriage whereas others took up general issues related to social reform protesting against conservatism including protests against religious heads, superstitions, caste restrictions etc. Some reformers confined their activities to their castes. They formed caste associations and persuaded caste fellows to join for reformation of certain unacceptable practices.

The main thrust of the socio-religious reform movements was to revive or rejuvenate Hindu religion and society. This was basically to counter the impact of western culture and the efforts of Christian missionaries. The traditional social structure and religion were not able to cope with the new economic structure which was based on individualism. The reformers were striving to extend the principle of individual liberty to the sphere of religion.

There were keen internal rivalries but these were between caste and caste community not between class and class. Moreover those groups which felt a similarity of interest were themselves more the product of bureaucratic initiative than of economic change. Since these groups can be largely identified with the men educated in western styles and since it was these men whose hopes and fears went into the building of the new associations that emerged as the Indian National Congress a conceptual system based on elites, rather than on classes would seem more promising.

These elites belonged to middle class. Granting that the initiative came from the bureaucracy, it was intended to bring about economic change in society in general and middle class in particular.

### 6.3. Participation in Freedom Struggle

The middle class participated at various stages of India's freedom movement. The major events of their collective action were the partition of Bengal in 1906, the non-cooperation campaign in the early 1920s, the anti-Simon agitation in the mid-1920s, Civil Disobedience movements in the early 1930s and Quit India movement in 1942. Besides this there were a number of local-level campaigns organized and spontaneous against the British Raj.

Social reform among the Muslims began with the Aligarh movement led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. The main thrust of the movement was to persuade the Muslim landed gentry to take an English education, it was feared that the Muslims would be unable to compete with the Hindus and would remain backward. The Khilafat movement (1919-1924) led by the Muslim intelligentsia and the Ulema mobilized a cross section of the Muslims. Their claim was that the Sultan of Turkey was the custodian and defender, the protector of the holy places. The movement was supported by the Muslim groups and the Indian National Congress.



At the end of the 19th century the educated Hindu Middle Class of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh launched a series of agitations for the removal of Urdu and for its replacement by Hindi in the Devnagri script. Muslim intellectuals also launched a counter agitation in defense of Urdu.

Post-independence, the upper caste Hindu middle class launched struggles in Bihar and Gujarat against reservation for the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward castes. Upper caste government servants also launched agitation against the roster system which provided certain benefits to SC/ST employees. These agitations were primarily result of the conflict of economic interests between upper and deprived caste groups; middle class leaders of these agitations raised the issue of merit, secularism and efficiency.

Some sections of the middle class –white collar government employees, school and university teachers etc. launched movements on economic issues affecting them such as revision of pay scales, bonus, and job security. But in the course of the development of these movements these issues were side tracked and movements raised populist issues which appeal to various classes. They raised moral and cultural issues. For example the Bihar movement known as movement for social revolution in 1974 began with economic issues; it also raised issues of corruption, democratic rights and social reform.

The middle class of South India launched struggles during the 1950s and 1960s against the imposition of Hindi and for retention of English. For them it was a struggle against Hindu Imperialism. The middle class of linguistic groups such as Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu and Punjabi demanded formation of linguistic states in the 1950s. They launched agitations for these demands. For maintaining their cultural identity the middle class among the Tamils, the Punjabi, the Naga and the Mizos spearheaded agitation for the formation of separate states within or outside the Indian Union.

Regional or linguistic identities have been sharpened in India since independence and they have become a potential force consisting of the middle class which face competition from other classes of the society.

A small section of urban middle class intelligentsia has formed organizations at state and national levels for the protection of civil and democratic rights. They raise issues related to violation of civil and democratic rights of various strata of society including the oppressed classes. Thus, Indian middle class contributed in almost every movement in India and middle class intelligentsia played a great role in freedom struggle of India as well.

## 7. UPSC Previous Years Prelims Questions

1. With reference to Indian freedom struggle, Usha Mehta is well-known for
  - (a) Running the secret Congress Radio in the wake of Quit India Movement
  - (b) Participating in the second round Table Conference
  - (c) Leading a contingent of Indian National Army
  - (d) Assisting in the formation of Interim Government under Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

**Answer: A**

2. What was the reason for Mahatma Gandhi to organize a satyagraha on behalf of the peasants of Kheda?
  1. The Administration did not suspend the land revenue collection in spite of a drought
  2. The Administration proposed to introduce Permanent Settlement in Gujarat.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) Both 1 and 2
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer A**

3. With reference to Ryotwari Settlement, consider the following statements:

1. The rent was paid directly by the peasants to the Government.
2. The government gave Pattas to the Ryots.
3. The lands were surveyed and assessed before being taxed.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only  
(c) 1, 2 and 3 (d) None

Answer: C

4. The demand for the Tebhaga Peasant Movement in Bengal was for

- (a) the reduction of the share of the landlords from one-half of the crop to one-third
- (b) the grant of ownership of land to peasants as they were the actual cultivators of the land.
- (c) the uprooting of Zamindari system and the end of serfdom
- (d) writing off all peasant debts

5. Consider the following statements :

1. The first woman President of the Indian National Congress was Sarojini Naidu.
2. The first Muslim President of the Indian National Congress was Badruddin Tyabji.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

6. After the Santhal Uprising subsided, what was/were the measure/measures taken by the colonial government?

1. The territories called 'Santhal Paraganas' were created.
2. It became illegal for a Santhal to transfer land to a non-Santhal.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

7. Which one of the following is a very significant aspect of the Champaran Satyagraha?

- (a) Active all-India participation of lawyers, students and women in the National Movement
- (b) Active involvement of Dalit and Tribal communities of India in the National Movement
- (c) Joining of peasant unrest to India's National Movement
- (d) Drastic decrease in the cultivation of plantation crops and commercial crops

8. Who among the following were the founders of the "Hind Mazdoor Sabha" established in 1948?

- (a) B. Krishna Pillai, E.M.S. Namboodiripad and K.C. George
- (b) Jayaprakash Narayan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay and M.N. Roy
- (c) C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, K. Kamaraj and Veeresalingam Pantulu
- (d) Ashok Mehta, T.S. Ramanujan and G.G. Mehta

9. Consider the following pairs:

**Movement/Organization**

**Leader**

1. All India Anti-Untouchability League : Mahatma Gandhi
2. All India Kisan Sabha : Swami Sahajanand Saraswati
3. Self-Respect Movement : E. V. Ramaswami Naicker

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only  
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

10. Indigo cultivation in India declined by the beginning of the 20th century because of  
(a) peasant resistance to the oppressive conduct of planters  
(b) its unprofitability in the world market because of new inventions  
(c) national leaders' opposition to the cultivation of indigo  
(d) Government control over the planters
11. With reference to the history of India, "Ulgulan" or the Great Tumult is the description of which of the following events?  
(a) The Revolt of 1857 (b) The Mappila Rebellion of 1921  
(c) The Indigo Revolt of 1859 – 60 (d) Birsa Munda's Revolt of 1899-1900

Student Notes:

## 8. UPSC Previous Years Mains Questions

1. The women's questions arose in modern India as a part of the 19th-century social reform movement. What are the major issues and debates concerning women in that period? (2017)
2. Discuss the role of women in the freedom struggle especially during the Gandhian phase. (2016)
3. Defying the barriers of age, gender and religion, the Indian women became the torch bearer during the struggle for freedom in India. Discuss. (2013)
4. Several foreigners made India their homeland and participated in various movements. Analyze their role in the Indian struggle for freedom. (2013)

## 9. Vision IAS Previous Years Mains Test Series Questions

1. ***"The commercialization of agriculture, instead of benefitting the peasants, proved to be another instrument of British colonial exploitation in India". Examine the agricultural and revenue policies of British and its effects on Indian Peasants.***

### Approach:

Give details of all revenue arrangement and agricultural arrangements of English. Give a description of these effects on Indian peasants.

### Answer:

Commercialization of agriculture during British times involved bringing land under cash or commercial crops like indigo, sugarcane, coffee etc. However, peasants did not take up cultivation of commercial crops by choice. Rather it was forced upon them to serve the colonial interests as well as the self-interests of the landed intermediaries like the British planters, Zamindars, moneylenders, and the like.

Following is a brief account of the revenue policy of the British:

#### 1) Land Revenue Policy:

- a. British began leasing out land to highest bidder. In 1793, the British made a permanent settlement with a class of revenue collectors, who agreed to pay a fixed sum annually and perpetually to the Company and in lieu of that these revenue collectors were recognized as Zamindars or absolute owners of all land falling under their Zamindari; in the process depriving thousands of peasant proprietors of their land ownership rights and were reduced to the status of rent paying tenants. While the land revenue demands from the Zamindars was fixed, the rent to be realized by him from the tenant was left unspecified. This provided the Zamindars with the opportunity to exploit their tenants. Moreover the cultivators were mere tenants at the will of the Zamindars. The economic conditions of the tenants deteriorated considerably in Zamindari areas with their rights also not being defined by law.

- b. Mahalwari system, where villages considered to be Mahal was made the unit. Herein, lambardar collected the rent and got 7% commission. It was introduced in NWFP. But, the fixation and collection of individual share was at the discretion of the Mahaldar or Lambardar, who exploited the system for their own benefit.
  - c. Ryotwari system, where direct settlements were made with the ryots or peasants, who were recognized as owners of their land. But the rate of land revenue was very high and the methods of its collection were harsh and rigid. Consequently, the peasants often fell in the hands of moneylenders, who gave loans at very high rates of interest. Lands once mortgaged to the moneylenders could never be recovered due to high rates of interest. This led to a situation of perpetual conflict between the indebted peasants and moneylenders.
- 2) **Revenue from salt:** the British had monopoly over salt. They taxed salts in their territory and collected huge duty from it.
- 3) **Revenue from Opium**

#### **Agriculture Policy:**

- a) Introduction of commercial crops. Crops like sugarcane, cotton, jute, tea, coffee and indigo were introduced for market and not for self consumption. Peasants had to reserve a part of their farm as well as other resources for these crops.
- b) Non-encouragement of productive policy in agriculture: the only aim of the British English was to take as much rent as possible. The means to improve agriculture were kept aside but never properly used.

#### **Effect on Indian Peasants:**

- a) Rent was back breaking. In some cases as high as 75%. Intermediaries exploited the peasants. Proper efforts were not made for improving the agricultural sector. Peasants borrowed money, fell in arrears and became bonded labour.
- b) The opium policy forced the peasants to cultivate opium in their fields and sell them at low prices to the English.
- c) More impetus was given on growing cash crops rather than food grains. This made the country deficient in food grains.
- d) Peasants remain poor. They depended on crude implements to till the farms. Many of them starved.
- e) Recurring famines and frequent peasant revolts bear testimony to their deteriorating conditions.

## **2. Give an account of the weaknesses in the process of abolition of Zamindari system. Also evaluate the outcome of the abolition of the Zamindari system.**

#### **Approach:**

- Weaknesses highlighted should be specific to zamindari abolition and not general weaknesses of land reforms.
- Also the different problems in different states should be highlighted.
- Coverage of weaknesses should be wide including not just legal issues but social issues as well.
- Some relevant facts regarding outcomes will make the answer more comprehensive.

#### **Answer:**

Within two years of independence, zamindari abolition bills or land tenure legislation were introduced all over India. The Constituent Assembly, while drafting the constitution, also tried its level best to ensure that zamindari abolition bills can achieve their desired goals. However there were certain weaknesses in the overall process, which can be discussed as under:

1. In certain provinces, like Uttar Pradesh, the zamindars were permitted to retain lands that were declared to be under their personal cultivation, which was very vaguely defined. Moreover, in various provinces, there was no limit on the size of lands that could be declared to be under personal cultivation. This also led to eviction of tenants on large scale by zamindars to be able to show large proportion of lands to be under personal cultivation.
2. Zamindars used judicial system to defer the implementation of the laws. They repeatedly challenged the constitutionality of the laws and went right up to the Supreme Court. Even after losing their case, they refused to hand over the land records in their possession forcing the government to go through the lengthy process of reconstructing the land records.
3. Zamindars were also able to collude with the lower level revenue officials to delay or subvert the process of implementation.

Despite the resistance of the landlords, the process of zamindari abolition was essentially completed except may be in a few pockets in certain states like Bihar within a decade of independence. The main beneficiaries of the zamindari abolition were the occupancy tenants who had direct leases from the zamindars and now became the landowners. The process also led to many absentee zamindars actually turning to direct cultivation of the lands which they saved in the name of personal cultivation.

However there were little or no benefits for the lower tenants, share croppers and agricultural labourers. Their welfare needed proper implementation of the other aspects of land reforms which included tenancy reform and land ceilings.

**3. *Business groups in colonial India were guided by a pragmatic approach to issues and this explained why they maintained a policy of equidistance from both the government and the Congress. Discuss.***

**Approach:**

- The answer should begin by explaining the statement and then discuss the reasons responsible for such a policy of the business groups.
- Give examples which demonstrate the pragmatic approach of business groups to various issues.
- Conclude suitably.

**Answer:**

- The dependence of the business groups on the colonial government dictated that they adopt a pragmatic approach of combining pressure and compromise. Many of them were dependent on government orders for their products while all of them were dependent on it for favourable industrial and trade policies
- At the same time, they recognised the inherent conflict that existed between their interests and the interests of a colonial government, guided by the interests of British capital. They realised that a government of Indians would serve them better in the long run but the prevailing circumstances recommended a pragmatic issue-based approach
- Business groups preferred the mode of constitutional agitation and pressure group politics. They wanted a nationalist movement led by right-wing moderates rather than left-wing radicals and trade-unionists
- Many sections of merchants and entrepreneurs leaned towards Gandhi because of his emphasis on non-violence - which they saw as a defence against political radicalism - and his 'trusteeship' theory - which legitimised wealth

- The pragmatism of business groups was evident from their general aversion to various mass movements organised by the Congress but their engagement with it on various issues concerning them
- For instance, business groups maintained their distance from the Non-cooperation movement (NCM) in 1920-21 but they readily co-operated with the Swarajists in the legislature after the dissolution of the NCM. Similarly, industrialists did not whole-heartedly support the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) but they cooperated with Congress in the framing of Gandhi's 11 point ultimatum to Lord Irwin, which included three specific capitalist demands
- The 'Bombay Manifesto' of 1936, signed by 21 Bombay businessmen, openly criticised Nehru's socialist ideals but later under changed circumstances, many of the same businessmen formulated the 'Bombay Plan', which endorsed Nehru's socialism
- However, in conclusion it should be said that business groups were not a homogenous group. There were numerous differences between them. Some of them, especially the smaller traders, were fervent Congress supporters while many of the bigger industrialists were staunch loyalists, but on the whole, business groups in India tried to maintain an equilibrium with both sides.

**4. Explain how the peasant movements of the 20th century were deeply influenced by and had a marked impact on the national freedom struggle.**

**Approach:**

- Give a detailed account as to how and why the nationalist movement influenced the peasant movements and the impact of peasant movements on the national freedom struggle.

**Answer:**

The peasant movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were deeply influenced by the national movement as national movements awakened and politicized the peasants to join and be part of the large national movements.

They, in turn, reinforced the freedom struggle also. The interlinked relation between peasant movements and national freedom can be exemplified by looking into some of the prominent peasant movements and national movements.

- Peasants often took their grievances to the leaders of the national movement. Those leaders supported and led the peasant movements.
- Starting from the **Champaran Satyagraha** and **Kheda Satyagraha** link between national leaders and peasant's plight was set up. Both incidents led to awakening of peasants for their rights and widened the base for national movements.
- After the Home Rule League, the activists organized the **Kisan Sabha** in United Provinces and Bihar. These two movements impacted national movement as well.
- The peasants took part in the Non-Cooperation movements and led the boycott of foreign goods, courts, cloth when called upon to do so. Their participation made Congress a true representative of peasants.
- During the **Bardoli Satyagraha**, the peasants called Patel to lead the movement. During the movement Gandhiji also reached Bardoli to support the peasants' cause. K M Munshi and Lalji Narainji resigned from Bombay Legislative Council to support the movement. The **no-rent, no-revenue campaign** influenced the peasants and the peasant movements further deepened the freedom struggle.
- The peasants were active during the Quit India movement as well. The Quit India Resolution of 1942 had specific direction for peasants. Peasants actively



participated in the movement and had a huge impact on undermining the colonial authority in the villages.

- Nationalist movements not only made them aware of their rights but also made them realize that the real fight is with the colonial masters and not zamindars.

This led to a large participation of peasants in the next phase of the national movements like the participation of peasants increased from the Non-Cooperation to the Civil Disobedience movements and later on a much larger scale in Quit India movement widening the base of our freedom struggle.

**5. *Series of civil rebellions run like a thread through the first 100 years of British rule. In this context, explain the underlying factors and consequences of Paika Rebellion of 1817.***

**Approach:**

- Briefly mention the causes that led to civil rebellions.
- Explain the factors which specifically contributed to Paika Rebellion.
- Mention the consequences of Paika Rebellion.

**Answer:**

Civil rebellions were often led by deposed rajas and nawabs or their descendants, uprooted and impoverished zamindars, landlords and poligars, and ex-retainers and officials of the conquered Indian states. The major cause of all these civil rebellions taken as a whole was the rapid changes that the British introduced in the economy, administration and land revenue system.

**Paika Rebellion:**

Paikas were essentially the peasant militias of the Gajapati rulers of Odisha who rendered military service to the king during times of war, while taking up cultivation during times of peace. They unfurled the banner of rebellion against the British in 1817 to throw off the British yoke. The factors that led to Paika rebellion:

- The Paikas were alienated by the British regime, who took over the hereditary rent-free lands granted to them after the conquest of Khurda in 1803.
- They were subjected to extortion and oppression at the hands of the company government and its servants.
- The extortionist land revenue policy of the Company affected the peasants and the zamindars alike.
- A source of much consternation for the common people was the rise in prices of salt due to taxes imposed on it by the new government.
- The Company also abolished the system of cowrie currency that had existed in Odisha prior to its conquest and required that taxes be paid in silver. This caused much popular hardship and discontent.

**Consequences of the Rebellion:**

The Paikas under Baxi Jagabandhu, the hereditary chief of the militia army of the Gajapati King, rose in rebellion, taking support of tribals and other sections of society. The Paikas attacked British symbols of power, setting ablaze police stations, administrative offices and the treasury during their march towards Khurda, from where the British fled. The rebellion quickly spread to Puri, Pipli Cuttack and other parts of the province. The British tried to regain lost ground but faced stiff resistance from the rebelling Paikas. It took the British over three months to finally control the rebellion.

6. *In the course of the freedom struggle, as the participation of the working class evolved so did the position of the nationalist leadership towards it. Elucidate.*

Student Notes:

**Approach:**

- Trace the evolution of working class movement in India.
- Simultaneously relate various stages of the movement with the changing perspectives of the nationalist leaders with time.

**Answer:**

Indian working class had to face imperialist political rule and economic exploitation at the hands of both foreign and native capitalist classes. After the advent of modern industry, Indian working class suffered from low wages, long working hours, unhygienic and hazardous working conditions, absence of basic amenities etc.

Under these circumstances, Indian working class movement became intertwined with political struggle for national emancipation.

**First Phase (1875-1918)**

- Early nationalists were indifferent to workers' cause because they did not want a division in national movement on the basis of classes. Also, they differentiated between British and Indian owned factories and felt that laws favoring workers would hamper competitive edge of Indian factories.
- As a result, trade unions were of a sporadic or ad hoc nature, devoid of funds, regular membership, constitution, etc.
- However, some prominent nationalist leaders like B.C. Pal and G Subramanya Aiyer demanded pro-labour reforms.
- During Swadeshi movement, workers participated in variety of political issues. Various strikes were organised under the leadership of nationalists. However, attempts to form trade unions were not very successful.
- During WWI, establishment of Soviet Union, formation of Comintern and emergence of Mahatma Gandhi lent new dimension to the movement of working class and the focus shifted towards addressing workers' concerns.

**Second Phase (1918-1924)**

- During 1918-1921, several organised labour unions sprouted throughout country's industrial centres owing to economic miseries experienced by Indian working class by way of price rise, low wages, long hours of work etc.
- Recognising this, Gandhiji founded **Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association** in 1918, which desisted workers from taking militant class struggle against capitalists by advocating for class collaboration.
- Formation of national level **All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)** in 1920 helped in coordinating all India level activities and aimed at organizing the workers on a national scale. Thus, trade unionism accelerated and 1920s was the period of some of the biggest strikes in country.
- Nationalist leaders advocated for continuation of the struggle against imperialist domination by taking along the worker class. For e.g. C.R Das advocated for incorporating worker's cause in the struggle for Swaraj.

**Third Phase (1924-1934)**

- Recognizing this trend, the British Government passed **Trade Union Act, 1926** with an aim of directing labour movement into safe channel by putting restrictions on political activities of unions.
- After following a period of lull, working class activity was again spurred by emergence of Left Bloc in national movement under the leadership of S.A Dange, P.C Joshi etc.

- Strong communist influence on the movement lent a militant and revolutionary content to it. For instance, workers participated in massive Simon boycott demonstrations in 1927 and Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930s.
- There was considerable participation of workers in Civil Disobedience Movement, 1930.
- In early 1930s, trade union movement reached a low ebb when disunity and dissensions rose to a great height.

#### Fourth Phase (1935-1947)

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

The participation of the working class helped in economic and political gains, thus aiding the process of freedom struggle in a variety of ways.

sihagn27@gmail.com

Copyright © by Vision IAS

*All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Vision IAS.*

## 7 IN TOP 10 SELECTIONS IN CSE 2019



**2**  
AIR

**JATIN  
KISHORE**



**3**  
AIR

**PRATIBHA  
VERMA**



**6**  
AIR

**VISHAKHA  
YADAV**



**7**  
AIR

**GANESH KUMAR  
BASKAR**



**8**  
AIR

**ABHISHEK  
SARAF**



**9**  
AIR

**RAVI  
JAIN**



**10**  
AIR

**SANJITA  
MOHAPATRA**

## 9 IN TOP 10 SELECTIONS IN CSE 2018



**1**  
AIR

**KANISHAK  
KATARIA**



**2**  
AIR

**AKSHAT  
JAIN**



**3**  
AIR

**JUNAID  
AHMAD**



DELHI



JAIPUR



HYDERABAD



PUNE



AHMEDABAD



LUCKNOW



CHANDIGARH



GUWAHATI

FOR DETAILED ENQUIRY,  
PLEASE CALL: +91 8468022022,  
+91 9019066066



ENQUIRY@VISIONIAS.IN



/C/VISIONIASDELHI



/VISION\_IAS



VISION\_IAS



WWW.VISIONIAS.IN



/VISIONIAS\_UPSC