

MODERN INDIAN HISTORY: 4

RISE OF INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

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Rise and Growth of Indian Nationalism

Stimulus-Response Debate

Traditional Indian historiography explains rise and growth of Indian Nationalism in terms of Indian response to stimulus generated by British Rule through creation of new institutions, new opportunities, resources etc. In other words, Indian Nationalism grew partly as a result of colonial policies and partly as a reaction to colonial policies.

But this theory gives a very simple and one-dimensional understanding of the rise of Indian nationalism which is not completely true as well; more over it shows the better face and positive role of colonial rule in development of nationalism. In reality the growth of Indian national consciousness in the latter half of the nineteenth century was not to the liking of British colonial rulers. That's why British scholars deliberately described India as mere 'geographical expression' and some of them forecasted that India will never become a united nation.

When the closing decade of 19th century demonstrated that nationalism had grown and was gaining strength, British scholars holding a new position started giving credit to British Raj for the growth of Indian nationalism. As R. Coupland wrote:

"Indian nationalism was the child of British Raj, and British authorities blessed its cradle."

But reality was that, Indian nationalism was an unwanted child of Raj whom it refused to feed at birth and sought to strangle it subsequently.

Thus it would be more correct to say that Indian nationalism was partly the product of a world wide upsurge of the concepts of nationalism and right of self-determination initiated by the French revolution, partly the result of Indian Renaissance, partly the offshoot of modernisation initiated by the British in India and partly developed as a strong reaction to British imperial policies in India.

Major factors responsible for the growth of Indian nationalism can be discussed under following heads:

Impact of British Rule:

British colonial rulers followed modern methods- political, military, economic and intellectual- to establish and continue their stronghold over India and for fuller economic exploitation of India's resources. A dose of modernisation was an essential concomitant of the colonial scheme of administration and this modernisation- distorted though it was- generated some developments and one of these was growth of Indian nationalism.

Political and Administrative

Imperial Britain conquered the whole of India and created a larger state than that of Mauryas or the great Mughals as a result India became politically unified under British hegemony. While Indian provinces were under "direct" rule of British, Indian States were under "indirect" British

rule. Thus British sword imposed political unity in India and despite imperial efforts to sow communal, regional, and linguistic antagonism, pan-Indianism grew.

British also established a highly centralised administrative system in India that brought administrative unity inside the country. Under one rule, one administrative framework, one set of law, unified judicial set up, administrative officers, etc. India got a new dimension of administrative unity which strengthened hitherto cultural unity that had existed in India for centuries. It created awareness among Indians that this vast united India belongs to them and by the way, created nationalism within them.

Development of rapid means of transport and communication:

Lord Dalhousie made a lasting contribution for Indians by introducing railways, telegraph, and new mode of postal system. Roads were connected with India from one end to the other.

Though, all these were meant to serve imperial interest, the people of India capitalised it. The railway compartment reflected a united India. All persons, from North to South and East to West, rich and poor and master and servant - all were found inside it. It narrowed down gap among them and gave them the feeling that they all belonged to this vast India which was under the grip the British raj.

Impact of Western Education:

The introduction of English education in 1835 was a milestone in the British administration. It was primarily meant to create an educated Indian mass who would be faithful servants to the British raj. However, with the gradual march of time, the English educated Indians became the pioneers in the socio-politico-economical and religious reforms in India. English system of education opened to the newly educated Indians the floodgates of liberal European thoughts. The liberal and radical thoughts of European writers like Milton Shelley, Bentham, Mill, Spenser, Rousseau and Voltaire and inspired the Indian intelligentsia with the ideals of liberty, nationality and self-government and made clear to them the anachronism of British rule in India.

Men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Feroz Shah Mehta, Dadabhai Nairobi, SurendraNath Banerjee championed the cause of liberty, equality humanitarianism etc. The role of Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Cavour in the unification of Italy, the unification of Germany by Bismarck, the French Revolution, American War of Independence, etc. influenced their mind and these intelligent and well informed persons formed the nucleus for the newly-arising political unrest and it was this section of the society which provided leadership to the Indian political associations.

Thus, gradually, the English educated Indians became the torch-bearers of Indian nationalism and aroused national consciousness in the minds of millions of Indians.

Rise of Middle class Intelligentsia:

British administrative and economic innovations gave rise to a new urban middle class in town. This class, prominent because of its education, new position and its close ties with the ruling

class came to the forefront. The new middle class was a well-integrated all-India class with varied background but a common foreground of knowledge ideas and values. It was a minority of Indian society, but a dynamic minority. It had a sense of unity of purpose and of hope. Thus this middle class proved to be the new soul of modern India and in due course infused the whole of India with its spirit. This class provided leadership to the Indian National Congress in all its stages of growth.

Understanding of contradiction in Indian and colonial interest:

People came to realise that colonial rule was the major cause of India's economic backwardness and that the interest of the Indians involved the interest of all sections and classes- peasants, artisans, handcraftsmen, workers, intellectuals the educated and the capitalist. The nationalist movement arose to take up the challenge of these contradictions inherent in the character and policies of colonial rule.

Rediscovery of India's glorious past through Historical researches:

The nineteenth century Indian Renaissance created several avenues in the field of oriental studies. Western scholars like Max Muller, Sir William Jones, Alexander Cunningham, etc. translated several ancient Sanskrit texts of this land and established before the people the glorious cultural heritage of India.

Inspired by them, the Indian scholars like R.D. Banerjee, R.G. Bhandarkar, Mohan Mukhopadhyaya Haraprasad Shastri, Bal Gangadhar Tilak etc. rediscovered India's glory from the history of this land. This encouraged the people of India who felt that they were the decedents of grand monarchs of this country and ruled by foreigners. This flared up the fire of nationalism.

The theory put forward by European scholars that the Indo-Aryans belong to the same ethnic group of mankind from which stemmed all the nations of Europe gave a psychological boost to educated Indians. All this gave a new sense of confidence to the educated Indians and inspired them with a new spirit of patriotism and nationalism.

Impact of Contemporary European Movements:

Contemporary strong currents of nationalist ideas which pervaded the whole of Europe and South America did stimulate Indian nationalism. A number of national states came into existence in South America on the ruins of the Spanish and Portuguese empires. In Europe the national liberation movement of Greece and Italy in general and of Ireland in particular deeply stirred the emotion of Indians. Educated Indians touring Europe were greatly impressed by these nationalist movements. Surendranath Banerji delivered lectures on Joseph Mazzini and the "Young Italy" movement organised by him. Lajpat Rai very often referred to the campaign of Garibaldi and the activities of Carbonaris in his speeches and writings. Thus, European nationalist movement did lend strength to the developing nationalism in India.

Progressive character of Socio-religious reform movements:

The national awakening in the nineteenth century was largely due to the socio-religious movements launched by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Vivekananda, Syed Ahmad Khan, Annie Besant etc. These reformers championed the causes of human equality, individual liberty, abolition of social disparity and so on. This reformed the minds of Indians and awakens them from centuries of thraldom.

The memory of the Revolt of 1857:

When nationalism was flaring up in the minds of Indian people, the memory of the Great Revolt of 1857 flashed back before them. The heroic action of Nana Sahib, Tata Tope, Rani Laxmi Bai and other leaders of the Revolt became fresh in their mind. It inspired the people to cherish with their memory and to give a toe fight to the British.

Growth of vernacular literature:

The influence of western education prompted the educated Indians to reflect the idea of liberty, freedom, and nationalism through the vernacular literature. They aimed at arousing the mass to oppose British rule being surcharged by the spirit of nationalism.

BankimChandra Chatterji's **Anand Math** (which contained the song *Vande Mataram*) and Dinabandhu Mitra's play **Nil Darpan** extorted tremendous influence upon the people and created anti-British feelings among them. Bharatendu Harish Chandra's play **Bharat Durdasa** reflected the miserable condition of Indian mass under British rule.

Besides several eminent poets and writers in different languages, e.g. Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali, Vishnushastri Chiplunkar in Marathi, Lakshminath Bezbaroa in Assamese, Mohammad Hussain Azad and Altaf Hussain Hali in Urdu etc. contributed a lot to rouse nationalism among the local people through their writings.

Emergence of modern Press and newspapers:

Press and magazines played a dominant role in injecting national feelings in the minds of Indians. Raja Rammohan Roy was the pioneer of Indian press and journalism. He edited *Sambad Kaumudi* in Bengali and *Mirat-ul-Akbar* in Persian.

Gradually, several newspapers were edited in different parts of the country in several languages. To mention a few notable ones, The Amritbazar Patrika, Hindu Patriot, Indian Mirror, Sanjivani in Bengali, the Maratha Kesari, Native Opinion, Indus Prakash in Maharashtra; The Hindu, Kerala Patrika, Andhra Prakashika in Madras; The Tribune, Akbar-i-Am, Koh-i-Noor in Punjab etc. were the important publications that reflected the colonial rule of the bruisers and aroused nationalism in the minds of Indian people.

Economic exploitation by the British:

British paralyzed Indian economy by draining wealth from this country. The industrial revolution in England helped in the productive process and they needed markets all over the world for selling their products and also needed raw-materials for their factories.

India was robbed away in both the ways i.e. by providing market for the British goods and supplying raw materials for the factories of England. The creation of absentee landlords by the British and in association with them the local money-lenders exploited the Indian mass and made them poorer and poorer.

The adverse effects of British exploitation were reflected in Indian economy. Dadabhai Naoroji with his theory of agricultural decay; G. V. Joshi and Ranade with their charges against the ruin of Indian handicrafts brought before the people the exploitative policy of the British which ruined the Indian economy, factory, handicrafts etc. and brought untold miseries to the people and made them poor. This psychologically developed a hatred for foreign rule and love for Swadeshi goods and Swadeshi rule. The spirit of nationalism received a powerful stimulus in the process.

Racialism:

The Englishmen considered themselves as superior in all respects than the Indians. They never wanted to offer the Indians higher jobs even though they were qualified and intelligent. The age limit for Indian Civil Service examination was kept at twenty-one and the examination was held at England.

Aurobindo Ghosh was declared disqualified in horse-riding and could not get through that examination, even if he had qualified the written examination. Thus, the colonial rule was well apparent before the educated Indians who became the vanguard in spreading discontent against the British rule among the Indian mass.

Lord Lytton's reactionary policies:

The administration of Lord Lytton discharged venom in the minds of Indian people. He celebrated a ceremony at Delhi Durbar when Queen Victoria assumed the title Kaiser-e-Hind (the Empress of India) when the country was famine-stricken. He imposed heavy taxes on the people of India and spent a large chunk of money in the Afghan war. During his time, the Arms Act was passed which prohibited the Indians from keeping arms without licence. His Vernacular Press Act infuriated Indians. Thus, Lytton's' unpopular acts provoked a great storm of opposition in the country and led to the organisation of various political associations for carrying on anti-government propaganda in the country.

The Ilbert Bill controversy:

During the period of Lord Ripon as Viceroy, the Ilbert Bill was passed. It empowered the Indian judges to try the Europeans. It created hue and cry among the Europeans and their pressure led to reform the bill inserting a clause whereby a jury of 50% Europeans was required if an Indian judge was to face a European on the dock. Finally, a solution was adopted by way of

compromise: jurisdiction to try Europeans would be conferred on European and Indian District Magistrates and Sessions Judges alike. However, a defendant would in all cases have the right to claim trial by a jury of which at least half the members must be European. This clearly exposed the mala-fide intention of the British authority and clearly projected their racial antagonism. The bitter controversy deepened antagonism between the British and Indians and was a prelude to the formation of the Indian National Congress the following year.

The birth of Indian National Congress:

The birth of Indian National Congress in 1885 gave a final spark to the growth of national consciousness among the Indians. Soon, the National Congress gained momentum in the nook and corner of India. It expressed the desires of the people before the British authorities. Through many mass movements and their important leaders the congress became able to give an ideological fight to the British raj.

Political Associations before INC

The political associations in the early half of the nineteenth century were dominated by wealthy and aristocratic elements, local or regional in character, and through long petitions to the British Parliament demanded

- a. Administrative reforms,
- b. Association of Indians with the administration, and
- c. Spread of education.

The political associations of the second half of the nineteenth century came to be increasingly dominated by the educated middle class—the lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers, etc. and they had a wider perspective and a larger agenda.

Political Associations in Bengal:

The Bangabhasha Prakashika Sabha was formed in 1836 by associates of Raja Rammohan Roy.

The Zamindari Association, more popularly known as the 'Landholders' Society', was founded in 1838 by Dwarkanath Tagore to safeguard the interests of the landlords. Although limited in its objectives, the Landholders' Society marked the beginning of an organised political activity and use of methods of constitutional agitation for the redressal of grievances.

The Bengal British India Society was founded in 1843 by the efforts of George Thompson with the object of "the collection and dissemination of information relating to the actual condition of the people of British India... and to employ such other means of peaceful and lawful character as may appear calculated to secure the welfare, extend the just rights and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects".

In 1851, both the Landholders' Society and the Bengal British India Society merged into the **British Indian Association**.

It sent a petition to the British Parliament demanding inclusion of some of its suggestions in the renewed Charter of the Company, such as:

1. Establishment of a separate legislature of a popular character
2. Separation of executive from judicial functions
3. Reduction in salaries of higher officers
4. Abolition of salt duty, Akbari and stamp duties.

These were partially accepted when the Charter Act of 1853 provided for the addition of six members to the governor-general's council for legislative purposes.

The East India Association was organised by **Dadabhai Naoroji** in 1866 in London to discuss the Indian question and influence public men in England to promote Indian welfare. Later, branches of the association were started in prominent Indian cities.

The Indian League was started in 1875 by **Sisir Kumar Ghosh** with the object of "stimulating the sense of nationalism amongst the people" and of encouraging political education.

The Indian Association of Calcutta superseded the Indian League and was founded in 1876 by younger nationalists of Bengal led by **Surendranath Banerjee** and **Ananda Mohan Bose**, who were getting discontented with the conservative and pro-landlord policies of the British Indian Association.

The Indian Association of Calcutta was the most important of pre-Congress associations and aimed to:

1. Create a strong public opinion on political questions, and
2. Unify Indian people on a common political programme.

Branches of the association were opened in other towns and cities of Bengal and even outside Bengal. The membership fee was kept low in order to attract the poorer sections to the association.

Political Associations in Bombay:

On the lines of British India Association of Calcutta, on 26th August 1852 was founded the **Bombay Association** with the object of 'memorialising from time to time the Government authorities in India or in England for the removal of existing evils, and for prevention of proposed measures which may be deemed injurious or for the introduction of enactments which may tend to promote the general interests of all connected with this country'. The Bombay Association sent a petition to the British parliament urging the formation of new legislative council to which Indians should be also represented. It also condemned the policy of exclusion of Indians from all higher services, lavish expenditure on sinecure posts given to Europeans. However, the Bombay Association did not survive for long.

The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was founded in 1867 by **Mahadeo Govind Ranade** and others, with the object of serving as a bridge between the government and the people.

The Bombay Presidency Association was started by Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozshah Mehta and K.T. Telang in 1885.

Political Associations in Madras

A branch of British Indian association of Calcutta was set up at Madras under the name of **Madras Native Association**. The Madras Association also sent petition to the parliament on the eve of the passing of the Charter Act of 1853 making demands similar to the British India Association and Bombay Association. Right from its inception, it was worked by some officials, possessed very little vitality, had hardly any hold upon the public mind, and languished into obscurity after 1857.

The Madras Mahajan Sabha was founded in 1884 by M. Viraraghavachari, B. Subramaniya Aiyer and P. Ananda- charlu to co-ordinate the activities of local associations and 'to provide a focus for the non-officials intelligence through the presidency'. At its conference held on 29, 31 December 1884 and 1-2 January 1885 the Sabha demanded expansion of legislative councils, representation of Indians in it, separation of judicial from revenue functions etc.

Foundation of the Congress: The Myth and the reality

The foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was not a sudden event, or a historical accident. It was the culmination of a process of political awakening that had its beginnings in the 1860s and 1870s and took a major leap forward in the late 1870s and early 1880s. The year 1885 marked a turning point in this process, for that was the year the political Indians, the modern intellectuals interested in politics, who no longer saw themselves as spokesmen of narrow group interests, but as representatives of national interest vis-a-vis foreign rule, as a 'national party,' saw their efforts bear fruit. The all-India nationalist body that they brought into being was to be the platform, the organizer, the headquarters, the symbol of the new national spirit and politics.

Indian National Congress was founded in December 1885 by seventy-two political workers. It was the first organized expression of Indian nationalism on an all-India scale. A.O.Hume, a retired English ICS officer, played an important role in its formation. But why was it founded by these seventy- two men and why at that time?

Myth:

A powerful and long-lasting myth, the myth of '**the safety valve**', has arisen around this question. Generations of students and political activists have been fed on this myth. But despite widespread popular belief, this myth has little basis in historical fact. The myth is that the Indian National Congress was started by **A.O. Hume** and others under the official direction, guidance and advice of no less a person than **Lord Dufferin**, the Viceroy, to provide a safe, mild, peaceful, the massed institutional outlet or safety valve

inevitably leading towards a popular and violent revolution.

Consequently, the revolutionary potential was nipped in the bud.

The core of the myth, that a violent revolution was on the cards at the time and was avoided only by the foundations of the Congress, is accepted by most writers; the liberals welcome it, the radicals use it to prove that the Congress has always been compromising if not loyalist vis-a-vis imperialism, the extreme right use it to show that the Congress has been anti-national from the beginning. All of them agree that the manner of its birth affected the basic character and future work of the Congress in a crucial manner.

Lala Lajpat Rai maintained that the INC was organized to serve as a 'safety valve' for the growing unrest in the country and strengthen the British Empire. He wrote that the idea was not only to save the British rule that threatened it but even to strengthen it...the redress of political grievances and the advance of India was only a by-product and of secondary importance.

Reality:

It will not be correct to trace the genesis of the INC to the efforts of a single individual like A.O. Hume or assume that it appeared as a sudden efflorescence. Rather various political organizations in different parts of India and the ferment of ideas had already prepared the ground and the foundation of Indian National Congress in 1885 was only a visible embodiment of that national awakening.

Recent researches have proved that A.O. Hume was an enlightened imperialist. He was alarmed at the growing gulf between the rulers and the ruled. Hume saw with considerable misgivings the establishment of the Indian National Conference in 1883 by S.N. Banerjee, 'a dismissed government servant' of 'advanced political views' who had done much to popularize the ideas and teachings of Italian nationalists like Mazzini and Garibaldi. Hume decided to bypass this Indian National Conference and instead organize 'a loyal and innocuous' political organization.

And moreover proofs are there that being a keen student of eastern religion Hume was under influence of some **gurus** and **mahatmas** of Tibet who claimed to possess supernatural occult powers that they could communicate and direct from thousands of miles, enter any place go anywhere, sit anywhere unseen, and direct men's thoughts and opinions without their being aware of it. Hume believed all this. He was keen to acquire these occult powers by which the **Chelas** (disciples) could know all about the present and the future. He started a 'correspondence' with the mahatmas in Tibet. He also began to use his connection with the mahatmas to promote political objectives dear to his heart — attempting to reform Indian administration and make it more responsive to Indian opinion. When these gurus told him that poor men of India were pervaded with a sense of the hopelessness of the existing state of affairs; and with the support of educated middle class such discontentment can erupt as a national revolt. He decided to avoid such situation. Thus guided by his belief in such mahatmas and not by Dufferin, Hume was motivated to create a political organisation which can reduce such discontentment (as told by mahatmas, no real evidences are there for any such possible revolt that time).

And finally Hume did succeed in organizing the Indian National Congress and made it at least in the beginning a forum for pro-British and anti-Russian propaganda to avoid both of possible threat to British Raj.

As for the question of the role of A.O. Hume, if the founders of the Congress were such capable and patriotic men of high character, and the ground was already prepared for the formation of a national political association (congress) why did they need Hume to act as the chief organizer of the Congress? It is undoubtedly true that Hume impressed — and, quite rightly — all his liberal and democratic contemporaries, including Lajpat Rai, as a man of high ideals with whom it was no dishonour to cooperate. But the real answer lies in the conditions of the time. Considering the size of the Indian subcontinent, there were very few political persons in the early 1880s and the tradition of open opposition to the rulers was not yet firmly entrenched. Courageous and committed persons like Dadabhai Naoroji, Justice Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta, G. Subramaniya Iyer and Surendranath Banerjea (one year later) cooperated with Hume because they did not want to arouse official hostility at such an early stage of their work. They assumed that the rulers would be less suspicious and less likely to attack a potentially subversive organization if its chief organizer was a retired British civil servant. Gokhale, with his characteristic modesty and political wisdom, gazed this explicitly in 1913: 'No Indian could have started the Indian National Congress. . . if an Indian had. . . come forward to start such a movement embracing all India, the officials in India would not have allowed the movement to come into existence. If the founder of the congress had not been a great Englishman and a distinguished ex-official, such was the distrust of political agitation in those days that the authorities would have at once found some way or the other to suppress the movement.'

In other words, if Hume and other English liberals hoped to use the Congress as a safety-valve, the Congress leaders hoped to use Hume as a lightning conductor. And as later developments show, it was the Congress leaders whose hopes were fulfilled.

Conditions under which Indian National Congress was formed:

On the surface, the nationalist Indian demands of pre-congress periods were:

1. No reduction of import duties on textile import
2. no expansion in Afghanistan or Burma,
3. the right to bear arms,
4. freedom of the Press,
5. reduction of military expenditure,
6. higher expenditure on famine relief,
7. Indianization of the civil services,
8. the right of Indians to join the semi-military volunteer corps,
9. the right of Indian judges to try Europeans in criminal cases,
10. the appeal to British voters to vote for a party which would listen to Indians

These demands look rather mild, especially when considered separately. But these were demands which a colonial regime could not easily concede, for that would undermine its authority over the colonial people. It is true that any criticism or subversive of the system. Pre congress associations organised various campaign over these demands with limited success.

The new political thrust in the years between 1875 and 1885 was the creation of the younger, more radical nationalist intellectuals most of whom entered politics during this period. They established new associations, having found that the older associations were too narrowly conceived in terms of their programmes and political activity as well as social bases.

A sign of new political life in the country was the coming into existence during these years of nearly all the major nationalist newspapers The Hindu, Tribune, Bengalee, Mahraua and Kesari.

By 1885, the formation of an all-India political organization had become an objective necessity, and the necessity was being recognized by nationalists all over the country. Many recent scholars have furnished detailed information on the many moves that were made in that direction from 1877. These moves acquired a greater sense of urgency especially from 1883 and there was intense political activity. The **Indian Mirror** of Calcutta was carrying on a continuous campaign on the question. The **Indian Association** had already in December 1883 organized an All-India National Conference and given a call for another one in December 1885

Meanwhile, the Indians had gained experience, as well as confidence, from the large number of agitations they had organized in the preceding ten years. Since 1875, there had been a continuous campaign around cotton import duties which Indians wanted to stay in the interests of the Indian textile industry. A massive campaign had been organized during 1877-78 around the demand for the Indianization of Government services. The Indians had opposed the Afghan adventure of Lord Lytton and then compelled the British Government to contribute towards the cost of the Second Afghan War. The Indian Press had waged a major campaign against the efforts of the Government to control it through the Vernacular Press Act. The Indians had also opposed the effort to disarm them through the Arms Act. In 1881-82 they had organized a protest against the Plantation Labour and the Inland Emigration Act which condemned plantation labourers to serfdom. A major agitation was organized during 1883 in favour of the Ilbert Bill which would enable Indian magistrates to try Europeans. This Bill was successfully thwarted by the Europeans. The Indians had been quick to draw the political lesson. Their efforts had failed because they had not been coordinated on an all-India basis. On the other hand, the Europeans had acted in a concerted manner. Again in July 1883 a massive all-India effort was made to raise a National Fund which would be used to promote political agitation in India as well as England. In 1885, Indians fought for the right to join the volunteer corps restricted to Europeans, and then organized an appeal to British voters to vote for those candidates who were friendly towards India. Several Indians were sent to Britain to put the Indian case before British voters through public speeches, and other means.

It thus, becomes clear that the foundation of the Congress was the natural culmination of the political work of the previous years: By 1885, a stage had been reached in the political development of India when certain basic tasks or objectives had to be laid down and struggled for. **Moreover these objectives were correlated and could only be fulfilled by the coming together of political workers in a single organization formed on an all- India basis.** The men who met in Bombay on 28 December 1885 were inspired by such objective and hoped to initiate the process of achieving them.

Moderate Phase and Early Congress:

Their Ideology & Objectives:

As India had just entered the process of becoming a nation or a people, the first major objective of the founders of the Indian national movement was to promote this process, to weld Indians into a nation, to create an Indian people. It was common for colonial administrators and ideologues to assert that Indians could not be united or freed because they were not a nation or a people but a geographical expression, a mere congeries of hundreds of diverse races and creeds. The Indians did not deny this but asserted that they were now becoming a nation. India was as Tilak, Surendranath Banerjee and many others were fond of saying — a nation-in-the-making. The Congress leaders recognized that objective historical forces were bringing the Indian people together. But they also realized that the people had to become subjectively aware of the objective process and that for this it was necessarily to promote the feeling of national unity and nationalism among them.

Above all, India being a nation-in-the-making its nationhood could not be taken for granted. It had to be constantly developed and consolidated. **The promotion of national unity was a major objective of the Congress and later its major achievement.**

The Congress leaders realized that the diversity of India was such that special efforts unknown to other parts of the world would have to be made and national unity carefully nurtured. In an effort to reach all regions, it was decided to rotate the Congress session among different parts of the country. The President was to belong to a region other than where the Congress session was being held.

To reach out to the followers of all religions and to remove the fears of the minorities a rule was made at the 1888 session that no resolution was to be passed to which an overwhelming majority of Hindu or Muslim delegates objected. In 1889, a minority clause was adopted in the resolution demanding reform of legislative councils. According to the clause, wherever Parsis, Christians, Muslims, or Hindus were a minority their number elected to the Councils would not be less than their proportion in the Population. The reason given by the mover of the resolution was that India was not yet a homogenous country and political methods here had, therefore, to differ from those in Europe. **The early national leaders were also determined to build a secular nation, the Congress itself being intensely secular.**

The second major objective of the early Congress was to create a common political platform or programme around which political workers in different parts of the country could gather and conduct their political activities, educating and mobilizing people on an all-India basis. This was to be accomplished by taking up those grievances and fighting for those rights which Indians had in common in relation to the rulers.

reform. At the second session, the President of the Congress, Dadabhai Naoroji, laid down this rule and said that National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation.' Congress was, therefore, not the right place to discuss social reforms. 'We are met together,' he said, 'as a political body to represent to our rulers our political aspirations.'

Modern politics — the politics of popular participation, agitation mobilization — was new to India. The notion that politics was not the preserve of the few but the domain of everyone was not yet familiar to the people. No modern political movement was possible till people realized this. And, then, on the basis of this realization, an informed and determined political opinion had to be created. **The arousal, training, organization, and consolidation of public opinion were seen as major tasks by the Congress leaders.** All initial activity of the early nationalism was geared towards this end.

The first step was seen to be the politicization and unification of the opinion of the educated, and then of other sections. **The primary objective was to go beyond the redressal of immediate grievances and organize sustained political activity along the lines of the Anti-Corn Law League** (formed in Britain by Cobden and Bright in 1838 to secure reform of Corn Laws). The leaders as well as the people also had to gain confidence in their own capacity to organize political opposition to the most powerful state of the day. All this was no easy task. A prolonged period of politicization would be needed and early nationalists provided that successfully with their persistent efforts through various petitions, prayers, and memorials.

As part of the basic objective of giving birth to a national movement, it was necessary to create a common all-India national-political leadership, that is, to construct what Antonio Gramsci, the famous Italian Marxist, calls the headquarters of a movement. Nations and people become capable of meaningful and effective political action only when they are organized. They become a people or 'historical subjects' only when they are organized as such. The first step in a national movement is taken when the 'carriers' of national feeling or national identity begin to organize the people. But to be able to do so successfully, these 'carriers' or leaders must themselves be unified; they must share a collective identification, that is, they must come to know each other and share and evolve a common outlook, perspective, sense of purpose, as also common feelings. **According to the circular which, in March 1885, informed political workers of the coming Congress session, the Congress was intended 'to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other.** W.C. Bonnerji, as the first Congress President, reiterated that one of the Congress objectives was the 'eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country,' and 'the promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in (all) parts of the Empire.'

In other words, the founders of the Congress understood that the first requirement of a national movement was a national leadership. The social- ideological complexion that this leadership would acquire was a question that was different from the main objective of the creation of a national movement. This complexion would depend on a host of factors: the role of different social classes, ideological influences, outcomes of ideological struggles, and so on.

The early nationalist leaders saw the internalization and indigenization of political democracy as one of their main objectives. They based their politics on the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, or, as Dadabhai Naoroji put it, on 'the people, not peoples for their Kings.'

From the beginning, the Congress was organized in the form of a Parliament. In fact, the word Congress was borrowed from North American history to connote an assembly of the people. The proceedings of the Congress sessions were conducted democratically, issues being decided

through debate and discussion and occasionally through voting. It was, in fact, the Congress, and not the bureaucratic and authoritarian colonial state, as some writers wrongly argue, which indigenized, popularized and rooted parliamentary democracy in India.

Similarly, the early national leaders made maintenance of civil liberties and their extension an integral part of the national movement. They fought against every infringement of the freedom of the Press and speech and opposed every attempt to curtail them. They struggled for separation of the judicial and executive powers and fought against racial discrimination.

It was necessary to evolve an understanding of colonialism and then a nationalist ideology based on this understanding. In this respect, the early nationalist leaders were simultaneously learners and teachers. No ready-made anti-colonial understanding or ideology was available to them in the 1870s and 1880s. They had to develop their own anti-colonial ideology on the basis of a concrete study of the reality and of their own practice.

There could have been no national struggle without an ideological struggle clarifying the concept of us as a nation against colonialism as an enemy. They had to find answers to many questions. For example, is Britain ruling India for India's benefit? Are the interests of the rulers and the ruled in harmony, or does a basic contradiction exist between the two?

In finding answers to these and other questions many mistakes were made. For example, the early nationalists failed to understand, at least till the beginning of the 20th century, the character of the colonial state. But, then, some mistakes are an inevitable part of any serious effort to grapple with reality.

True, the early national leaders did not organize mass movements against the British. But they did carry out an ideological struggle against them. It should not be forgotten that nationalist or anti-imperialist struggle is a struggle about colonialism before it becomes a struggle against colonialism. And the founding fathers of the Congress carried out this 'struggle about colonialism' in a brilliant fashion.

From the beginning, the Congress was conceived not as a party but as a movement. Except for agreement on the very broad objectives, it did not require any particular political or ideological commitment from its activists. It also did not try to limit its following to any social class or group. As a movement, it incorporated different political trends, ideologies and social classes and groups so long as the commitment to democratic and secular nationalism was there. From the outset, the Congress included in the ranks of its leadership persons with diverse political thinking, widely disparate levels of political militancy and varying economic approaches.

To sum up: The basic objectives of the early nationalist leaders were to lay the foundations of a secular and democratic national movement, to politicize and politically educate the people, to form the headquarters of the movement, that is, to form an all-India leadership group, and to develop and propagate an anti-colonial nationalist ideology.

-1905 Methods of political works of early national leaders (1885)

The national leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozshah Mehta, W.C. Bonnerjee who dominated the Congress policies in early times were staunch believers of 'liberalism' and 'moderate' politics and came to be labelled as moderates to distinguish them from the neo-nationalists of the early

twentieth century who were referred to as the extremists.

The moderate political activity involved constitutional agitation within the confines of law and showed a slow but orderly political progress. **Economic critique of colonialism was not developed completely and early Moderates had some faith in British benevolence.** Thus, in starting moderates believed that British basically wanted to be just to the Indians but were not aware of the real condition. Therefore, if public opinion could be created in the country and public demands presented to the government through resolutions, petition, meetings, etc. the authorities would concede these demands gradually.

To achieve these ends they worked on a two-pronged methodology – one, create a strong public opinion to arouse consciousness and national spirit and then educate and unite people on common political questions; and two, persuade the British government and British public opinion to introduce reforms in India on the lines laid out by nationalist. For this purpose a British Committee of the Indian National Congress was established in London in 1899 which had India as its organ. Dadabhai Naoroji spent a substantial portion of his life and income campaigning for India's case abroad. In 1890, it was decided to hold a session of Indian National Congress in London in 1892, but owing to British election in 1891 the proposal was postponed and never revived later.

Many later writers and critics have concentrated on the methods of political struggle of the early nationalist leaders, on their petitions, prayers, and memorials. It is, of course, true that they did not organize mass movements and mass struggles. But the critics have missed out the most important part of their activity — that all of it led to politics, **to the politicization of the people.** Justice Ranade, who was known as a political sage, had, in his usual perceptive manner, seen this as early as 1891. When the young and impatient twenty-six-year-old Gokhale expressed disappointment when the Government sent a two-line reply to a carefully and laboriously prepared memorial by the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, Ranade reassured him: 'You don't realize our place in the history of our country. These memorials are nominally addressed to Government, in reality they are addressed to the people, so that they may learn how to think in these matters. This work must be done for many years, without expecting any other result, because politics of this kind is altogether new in this land.'

Even when Dadabhai Naoroji and R.C. Dutta exposed the truth of economic drain of India in British hands, moderates thought that time was not ripe for a direct challenge to the British rule. Therefore, it was considered to be appropriate to try and transform the colonial rule to approximate to a national rule.

Contribution of moderate nationalists:

Major contributions of moderate nationalists can be discussed under following four heads:

1. Economic critique of British colonialism:

The early nationalists, led by Dadabhai Naoroji, R. C. Dutta, Dinshaw Wacha and others, carefully analysed the economy of India under British rule, and put forward the 'Drain Theory' to explain the British exploitation of India. They opposed the transformation of self-sufficient Indian economy into a colonial economy (supplier of raw material and importer of finished goods). Thus moderates were able to create an all-Indian public opinion that

British rule in India was a major cause of India's poverty and economic backwardness. (As this topic is very imp. from examination perspective, it is discussed in detail under next heading).

2. Constitutional reforms and Propaganda in Legislature:

Legislative councils in India had no real official power till 1920. Yet, work done in them by the nationalists helped the growth of national movement. The Imperial Legislative council constituted by the Indian Council Act (1861) was an impotent body designed to disguise official measures as having been passed by a representative body. Indian members were few in number- thirty years from 1862 to 1892 only forty five Indians were nominated to it, most of them being wealthy, lands and with loyalist interest. Only a handful of political figures and independent intellectuals such as Syed Ahmed Khan, Kritodas Pal, V. N. Mandlik, K.L.Nukar and RasBehari Ghosh were nominated.

From 1885 to 1892, the nationalist's demands for constitutional reforms were centred around-

- a. Expansion of council that is greater participation of Indians in council
- b. Reform of council that is more powers to councils, especially greater control over finance

The early nationalist worked with the objective of a democratic self-government. Their demands for constitutional reforms were conceded in the form of the Indian Council Act 1892.

These reforms were severely criticised at Congress sessions, where the nationalist made no secret of their dissatisfaction with them. Now they demanded a majority of elected Indians in council and the power to vote upon and amend the budget. **They gave the slogan "No taxation without representation."** Gradually the scope of constitutional demands was widened and Dadabhai Naoroji (1904), Gopal Krishna Gokhle (1905), and LokManya Tilak (1906) demanded self-government like the self-governing colonies of Canada and Australia. Also, leaders like Pherozshah Mehta and Gokhale put government policies and proposals to severe criticism.

The British has intended to use the councils to incorporate the more vocal among Indian leaders, so as to allow them to let off their "political steam", while the impotent councils could afford to remain deaf to their criticism. But the nationalists were able to transform these councils into forums for ventilating popular grievances, for exposing the defects of an indifferent bureaucracy, for criticising government policies/proposals, raising basic economic issues, especially regarding public finance.

The nationalists were, thus, able to enhance the political stature and build a national movement while undermining the political and moral influence of imperialist rule. This

~~ut at the same time generating anti~~

~~the nationalists failed to widen the democratic base of the movement by not including the masses, especially women, and not demanding the right to vote for all.~~

3. Campaign for General Administrative Reforms:

These include the following:

- a. Indianisation of government service on the economic grounds that British civil servants very high emoluments while inclusion of Indians would be more economical; on political grounds that, since salaries of British bureaucrats were remitted back home and pensions paid in England, this amounted to economic drain; on moral grounds that Indians were being discriminated against by being kept away from positions of trust and responsibility.
- b. Separation of judiciary from executive functions.
- c. Criticism of an oppressive and tyrannical bureaucracy and an expensive and time consuming judicial system.
- d. Criticism of an aggressive foreign policy which resulted in annexation of Burma, attack on Afghanistan and suppression of tribals in North-West.
- e. Increase in expenditure on welfare (i.e., health, sanitation), education—especially elementary and technical, irrigation works and improvement of agriculture, agriculture banks for cultivators, etc.
- f. Better treatment for Indian labor abroad in other British colonies, who faced oppression and racial discrimination.

4. Defence in Civil Rights:

These rights included the right to speech, thought, association and a free press. Through an incessant campaign, the nationalists were able to spread modern democratic ideas, and soon the defence of civil rights became an integral part of the freedom struggle. It was due to increased consciousness that there was a great public outrage at the arrest of Tilak and several other leaders and journalists in 1897 and at the arrest and deportation of the Natu brothers without a trial.

An evaluation of Moderates and their Limitations:

Moderates represented the most progressive force of the time and they were able to create a wide national awakening of all Indians having common interest and the need to rally around a common programme against a common enemy, and above all, the feeling of belonging to one nation. They trained people in political works and popularised modern ideas. Their political work was based on hard realities, and not on shallow sentiments, religion etc.

They exposed the exploitative character of colonial rule, thus undermining its moral foundations. Thus, they created a strong base for more vigorous and mass based national movement in the following years.

Their limitation lies in the fact that they failed to widen their democratic base and the scope of their demands. The moderate phase of national movement remained with a narrow social base and the masses played a passive role. This was because the early nationalists lacked political faith in the masses; they felt that there were numerous divisions and sub-divisions in the Indian

society, and the masses were generally ignorant and has conservative ideas and thoughts. The moderates felt that these heterogeneous elements had first to be welded into a nation before their entry into the political sphere. But they failed to realise that it was during the freedom struggle and political participation that these diverse elements were to come together.

Because of the lack of mass participation the moderates could not take militant political positions against the authorities. The latter nationalists differed from the moderates precisely on this point. Still, the early nationalists represented the emerging Indian nation against the colonial interests.

Economic critique of colonialism

Of all the national movements in colonial countries, the Indian national movement was the most deeply and firmly rooted in an understanding of the nature and character of colonial economic domination and exploitation. Its early leaders, known as Moderates, were the first in the 19th century to develop an economic critique of colonialism. This critique was, also, perhaps their most important contribution to the development of the national movement in India — and the themes built around it were later popularized on a massive scale and formed the very pith and marrow of the nationalist agitation through popular lectures, pamphlets, newspapers, dramas, songs, and prabhat pheries.

Indian intellectuals of the first half of the 19th century had adopted a positive attitude towards British rule in the hope that Britain, the most advanced nation of the time, would help modernize India. In the economic realm, Britain, the emerging industrial giant of the world, was expected to develop India's productive forces through the introduction of modern sciences and technology and capitalist economic organization. It is not that the early Indian nationalists were unaware of the many political, psychological, and economic disabilities of foreign domination, but they still supported colonial rule as they expected it to rebuild India as a spit image of the Western metropolis.

The process of disillusionment set in gradually after 1860 as the reality of social development in India failed to conform to their hopes. They began to notice that while progress in new directions was slow and halting; overall the country was regressing and under-developing. Gradually, their image of British rule began to take on darker hues; and they began to probe deeper into the reality of British rule and its impact on India.

Leaders who developed the theory:

Three names stand out among the large number of Indians who initiated and carried out a detailed analysis of the rule during the years 1870-1905. The tallest of the three was **Dadabhai Naoroji**, known in the pre-Gandhian era as the Grand Old Man of India. Born in 1825, he became a successful businessman but devoted his entire life and wealth to the creation of a wind Ramdas Chalghar government in India. His near contemporary

Romesesh Chandra Dutt declared the value of modern industrial development.

Dutt, a retired ICS officer, published **The Economic History of India** at the beginning of the 20th century in which he examined in minute detail the entire economic record of colonial rule since 1757.

These three leaders along with G.V. Joshi, G. Subramaniya Iyer, G.K. Gokhale, Prithwis Chandra Ray and hundreds of other political workers and journalists analysed every aspect of the economy and subjected the entire range of economic issues and colonial economic policies to minute scrutiny. They raised basic questions regarding the nature and purpose of British rule.

Eventually, they were able to trace the process of the colonization of the Indian economy and conclude that colonialism was the main obstacle to India's economic development. They clearly understood the fact that the essence of British imperialism lay in the subordination of the Indian economy to the British economy. **They delineated the colonial structure in all its three aspects of domination through trade, industry, and finance.**

Various forms/methods of economic exploitation discussed under critique:

The essence of 19th century colonialism, they said, lay in the transformation of India into a supplier of food stuffs and raw materials to the metropolis, a market for the metropolitan manufacturers, and a field for the investment of British capital.

The early Indian national leaders were simultaneously learners and teachers. They organized powerful intellectual agitations against nearly all the important official economic policies. They used these agitations to both understand and to explain to others the basis of these policies in the colonial structure. They advocated the severance of India's economic subservience to Britain in every sphere of life and agitated for an alternative path of development which would lead to an independent economy. An important feature of this agitation was the use of bold, hard-hitting and colourful language. The nationalist economic agitation started with the assertion that Indians were poor and were growing poorer every day. Dadabhai Naoroji made poverty his special subject and spent his entire life awakening the Indian and British public to the 'continuous impoverishment and exhaustion of the country'.

The early nationalists did not see this all-encompassing poverty as inherent and unavoidable, a visitation from God or nature. It was seen as man-made and, therefore, capable of being explained and removed. In the course of their search for the causes of India's poverty, the nationalists underlined factors and forces which had been brought into play by the colonial rulers and the colonial structure. The problem of poverty was, moreover, seen as the problem of increasing of the 'productive capacity and energy' of the people, in other words as the problem of national development. This approach made poverty a broad national issue and helped to unite, instead of divide, different regions, and sections of Indian society.

Economic development was seen above all as the rapid development of modern industry. The early nationalists accepted with remarkable unanimity that the complete economic transformation of the country on the basis of modern technology and capitalist enterprise was the primary goal of all their economic policies.

industrialisation, because of their whole

early nationalists looked upon all other issues such as foreign trade, railways, tariffs, currency and exchange, finance, and labour legislation in relation to this paramount aspect.

At the same time, nearly all the early nationalists were clear on one question: However great the need of India for industrialization, it had to be based on Indian capital and not foreign

capital. Ever since the 1840s, British economists, statesmen, and officials had seen the investment of foreign capital, along with law and order, as the major instrument for the development of India.

The early nationalists disagreed vehemently with this view. They saw foreign capital as an unmitigated evil which did not develop a country but exploited and impoverished it. They further argued that instead of encouraging and augmenting Indian capital, foreign capital replaced and suppressed it, led to the drain of capital from India and further strengthened the British hold over the Indian economy. In essence, the early nationalists asserted that genuine economic development was possible only if Indian capital itself initiated and developed the process of industrialization. Foreign capital would neither undertake nor could it fulfil this task.

A major problem the early nationalists highlighted was that of the progressive decline and ruin of India's traditional handicrafts. Nor was this industrial prostration accidental they said. It was the result of the deliberate policy of stamping out Indian industries in the interests of British manufacturers.

The British administrators, on the other hand, pointed with pride to the rapid growth of India's foreign trade and the rapid construction of railways as instruments of India's development as well as proof of its growing prosperity. However, the nationalists said that because of their negative impact on indigenous industries, foreign trade and railways represented not economic development but colonization and underdevelopment of the economy. What mattered in the case of foreign trade, they maintained, was not its volume but its pattern or the nature of goods internationally exchanged and their impact on national industry and agriculture. And this pattern had undergone drastic changes during the 19th Century, the bias being overwhelmingly towards the export of raw materials and the import of manufactured goods.

Similarly, the early nationalists pointed out that the railways had not been coordinated with India's industrial needs. They had therefore, ushered in a commercial and not an industrial revolution which enabled imported foreign goods to undersell domestic industrial products. Moreover, they said that the benefits of railway construction in terms of encouragement to the steel and machine industry and to capital investment — what today we would call backward and forward linkages — were reaped by Britain and not India.

According to the early nationalists, a major obstacle to rapid industrial development was the policy of free trade which was, on the one hand, ruining India's handicraft industries and, on the other, forcing the infant and underdeveloped modern industries into a premature and unequal and, hence, unfair and disastrous competition with the highly organized and developed industries of the West. The tariff policy of the Government convinced the nationalists that British economic policies in India were basically guided by the interests of the British capitalist class.

axes were the nationalists strongly critical of

they averred, as to overburden the poor while letting the rich, especially the foreign capitalists and bureaucrats, go scot-free. To vitiate this, they demanded the reduction of land revenue and abolition of the salt tax and supported the imposition of income tax and import duties on products which the rich and the middle classes consumed.

On the expenditure side, they pointed out that the emphasis was on serving Britain's imperial needs while the developmental and welfare departments were starved. In particular, they condemned the high expenditure on the army which was used by the British to conquer and maintain imperialist control over large parts of Asia and Africa.

Economic Drain Theory

The focal point of the nationalist critique of colonialism was the drain theory. The nationalist leaders pointed out that a large part of India's capital and wealth was being transferred or 'drained' to Britain in the form of salaries and pensions of British civil and military officials working in India, interest on loans taken by the Indian Government, profits of British capitalists in India, and the Home Charges or expenses of the Indian Government in Britain.

The drain took the form of an excess of exports over imports for which India got no economic or material return. According to the nationalist calculations, this drain amounted to one-half of government revenues, more than the entire land revenue collection and over one-third of India's total savings. (In today's terms this would amount to eight per cent of India's national income).

The acknowledged high-priest of the drain theory was Dadabhai Naoroji. It was in May 1867 that Dadabhai Naoroji put forward the idea that Britain was draining and 'bleeding' India. From then on for nearly half a century he launched a raging campaign against the drain, hammering at the theme through every possible form of public communication. The drain, he declared, was the basic cause of India's poverty and the fundamental evil of British rule in India. Thus, he argued in 1880: it is not the pitiless operations of economic laws, but it is the thoughtless and pitiless action of the British policy; it is the pitiless eating of India's substance in India, and the further pitiless drain to England...that is destroying India.'

Other nationalist leaders, journalists, and propagandists followed in the foot-steps of Dadabhai Naoroji. R.C. Dutt, for example, made the drain the major theme of his **Economic History of India**.

The drain theory incorporated all the threads of the nationalist critique of Colonialism, for the drain denuded India of the productive capital its agriculture and industries so desperately needed. Indeed, the drain theory was the high watermark of the nationalist leaders' comprehensive, interrelated, and integrated economic analysis of the colonial situation. Through the drain theory, the exploitative character of British rule could be made visible. By attacking the drain, the nationalists were able to call into question in an uncompromising manner, the economic essence of imperialism.

Moreover, the drain theory possessed the great political merit of being easily grasped by a nation of peasants. Money being transferred from one country to another was the most easily understood of the theories of economic exploitation, for the peasant daily underwent this

experience vis-a-vis the state,

could arouse people more than the thought that they were being taxed so that others in far off lands might live in comfort. The contradiction between the Indian people and British imperialism was seen by people to be insoluble except by the overthrow of British rule. It was, therefore, inevitable that the drain theory became the main staple of nationalist political agitation during the Gandhian era.

Effects of economic critique of colonialism:

This agitation on economic issues contributed to the undermining of the ideological hegemony of the alien rulers over Indian minds. Any regime is politically secure only so long as the people have a basic faith in its moral purpose, in its benevolent character. The secret of British power in India lay not only in physical force but also in moral force, that is; in the belief sedulously inculcated by the rulers for over a century that the British were the Mai-Baap of the common people of India — the first lesson in primary school language textbooks was most often on ‘the benefits of British rule.’ The nationalist economic agitation gradually undermined these moral foundations. It corroded popular confidence in the benevolent character of British rule — in its good results as well as its good intentions.

The corrosion of faith in British rule inevitably spread to the political field. In the course of their economic agitation, the nationalist leaders linked nearly every important economic question with the politically subordinated status of the country.

Step by step, issue by issue, they began to draw the conclusion that since the British Indian administration was ‘only the handmaid to the task of exploitation,’ pro-Indian and developmental policies would be followed only by a regime in which Indians had control over political power. The result was that even though most of the early nationalist leaders were moderate in politics and political methods, and many of them still professed loyalty to British rule, they cut at the political roots of the empire and sowed in the land the seeds of disaffection and disloyalty and even sedition. This was one of the major reasons why the period 1875 to 1905 became a period of intellectual unrest and of spreading national consciousness — the seed-time of the modern Indian national movement.

While until the end of the 19th century, Indian nationalists confined their political demands to a share in political power and control over the purse, by 1905 most of the prominent nationalists were putting forward the demand for some form of self-government. Here again, Dadabhai Naoroji was the most advanced. Speaking on the drain at the International Socialist Congress in 1904, he put forward the demand for ‘self-government’ and treatment of India ‘like other British Colonies.’

A year later in 1905, in a message to the Benares session of the Indian National Congress, Dadabhai categorically asserted: ‘Self-government is the only remedy for India’s woes and wrongs.’ And, then, as the President of the 1906 session of the Congress at Calcutta, he laid down the goal of the national movement as “self-government or *Swaraj*,” like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies.’

While minds were being prepared and the goal formed, the mass struggle for the political emancipation of the country was still in the womb of time. But the early nationalists were laying Strong and enduring foundations for the national movement to grow upon. They sowed the seeds of nationalism well and deep. They did not base their nationalism primarily on the pastajpeysctotest abstract or shallow Sentiments or mechanistic nationalism in a brilliant scientific modern colonialism and of the chief contradiction between the interests of the Indian people and British rule.

Policy of Divide and Rule- Muslim Communalism and evolution of Muslim League

Reasons behind growth of communalism

Along with the rise of nationalism, communalism too made its appearance around the end of the nineteenth century and posed the biggest threat to the unity of the Indian people and the national movement. Communalism is basically an ideology. It is the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result, common social, political, and economic interests.

In communalism it is considered that the social, cultural, economic, and political interests of the followers of one religion are dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the followers of another religion and most of the time the followers of different religions or of different religious 'communities' are seen to be mutually incompatible, antagonistic, and hostile.

It is not true that communalism was a remnant of, or survival from, the medieval period. Though religion was an important part of people's lives and they did sometimes quarrel over religion. There was hardly any communal ideology or communal politics before the 1870s. Communalism is a modern phenomenon. It has its roots in the modern colonial socio-economic political structure. Communalism emerged as a result of the emergence of new, modern politics based on the people and on popular participation and mobilisation.

It made it necessary to have wider links and loyalties among the people and to form new identities. This process required the birth and spread of modern ideas of nation, class, and cultural-linguistic identity. These identities, being new and unfamiliar, arose and grew slowly and in a zigzag fashion.

Quite often people used the old, familiar pre-modern identity of caste, locality, sect, and religion to make wider connections and to evolve new identities. This has happened all over the world. But gradually the modern and historically-necessary identities of nation, nationality, and class have prevailed.

Unfortunately, in India this process has remained incomplete for decades; India has been for the last 150 years or more a nation in the making. In particular, religious consciousness was transformed into communal consciousness in some parts of the country and among some sections of the people. The question is why did this happen?

In particular, modern political consciousness was late in developing among the Muslims. As nationalism spread among the Hindus and Parsis of the lower-middle class, it failed to grow equally rapidly among the Muslims of the same class. Hindus and Muslims had fought shoulder to shoulder during the Revolt of 1857. In fact, after the suppression of the Revolt, British officials had taken a particularly vindictive attitude towards the Muslims, hanging 27,000 Muslims in Delhi alone.

From now on the Muslims were in general looked upon with suspicion. But this attitude changed in the 1870s. With the rise of the nationalist movement the British statesmen grew apprehensive about the safety and stability of their empire in India.

To check the growth of a united national feeling in the country, they decided to follow more actively the policy of 'divide and rule' and to divide the people along religious lines, in other words, to encourage communal and separatist tendencies in Indian politics.

For this purpose they decided to come out as 'champions' of the Muslims and to win over to their side Muslim zamindars, landlords, and the newly educated.

During 1850s, Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College was established at Aligarh. English Principals like Archibald, Theodore Beck or Morrison of this institution played an important role in keeping Muslims away from mainstream and inculcating in them a feeling of separation.

Sir W.H. Gregory, while appreciating the Resolution of Government of India on Muslim education wrote to Dufferin in Feb. 1886, "I am confident, that it will bear good fruits, indeed, it seems to have done so already by the complete abstention of the Mohammedan from Brahmins and Baboo agitation. It will be a great matter to sweeten our relations with this portion of the Indian population, the bravest, and at one time, the most dangerous."

The seeds of communalism were sown during Lord Lytton's Vice-royalty (1876-80). A deputation of Muslims led by His Highness Sir Agha Khan demanded on Oct. 1, 1896 separate electorate.

They also fostered other divisions in Indian society. They promoted provincialism by talking of Bengali domination.

They tried to utilise the caste structure to turn non-Brahmins against Brahmins and the lower castes against the higher castes. In Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where Hindus and Muslims had always lived in peace, they actively encouraged the movement to replace Urdu as the court language by Hindi.

In other words, they tried to use even the legitimate demands of different sections of Indian society to create divisions among the Indian people. The colonial government treated Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs as separate communities. It readily accepted communal leaders as authentic representatives of all their co-religionists.

It permitted the propagation of virulent communal ideas and communal hatred through the press, pamphlets, posters, literature, and other public platforms. This was in sharp contrast with its frequent suppression of the nationalist newspapers, writers, etc.

In the rise of the separatist tendency along communal lines, Syed Ahmad Khan played an important role. Though a great educationist and social reformer, Syed Ahmad Khan became towards the end of his life a conservative in politics. He laid the foundations of Muslim communalism when in the 1880s he gave up his earlier views and declared that the political interests of Hindus and Muslims were not the same but different and even divergent. He also preached complete obedience to British rule.

When the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, he decided to oppose it and tried to organise along with Raja Shiva Prasad of Varanasi a movement of loyalty to the British rule.

He also began to preach that, since the Hindus formed the larger part of the Indian population, they would dominate the Muslims in case of the weakening or withdrawal of British rule. He

urged the Muslims not to listen to Badruddin Taiyabji's appeal to them to join the National Congress.

These views were, of course, unscientific and without any basis in reality. Even though Hindus and Muslims followed different religions, their economic and political interests were not different for that reason. Hindus were divided from fellow Hindus, and Muslims from fellow Muslims, by language, culture, caste, class, social status, food and dress habits, and social practices and so on. Even socially and culturally the Hindu and the Muslim masses had developed common ways of life. A Bengali Muslim and a Bengali Hindu had much more in common than a Bengali Muslim and a Punjabi Muslim had. Moreover, Hindus and the Muslims were being equally and jointly oppressed and exploited by British imperialism.

Even Syed Ahmad Khan had said:

"Do you not inhabit the same land? Are you not burned and buried on the same soil? Do you not tread the same ground and live upon the same soil? Remember that the words Hindu and Mohammedan are only meant for religious distinction otherwise all persons, whether Hindu or Mohammedan, even the Christians who reside in this country, are all in this particular respect belonging to one and the same nation. When all these different sects can be described as one nation, they must each and all unite for the good of the country which is common to all."

But, despite of all this, communal and separatist trend of thinking grew among the Muslims. This was to some extent due to the relative backwardness of the Muslims in education and in trade and industry. Muslim upper classes consisted mostly of zamindars and aristocrats. Because the upper- classes Muslims during the first 70 years of the nineteenth century were very anti-British, conservative and hostile to modern education the number of educated Muslims in the country remained very small consequently, modern Western thought with its emphasis on science, democracy and nationalism did not spread among Muslim intellectuals, who remained traditional and backward.

Later, as a result of the efforts of Syed Ahmad Khan, Nawab Abdul Latif Badruddin Tyabji and others, modern education spread among Muslims. But the proportion of the educated was far lower among Muslims than among Hindus, Parsis or Christians.

Similarly, the Muslims had also taken little part in the growth of trade and industry. The small number of educated persons and men of trade and industry among the Muslims made it possible for the reactionary big landlords to maintain their influence over the Muslim masses.

Landlords and zamindars, whether Hindu or Muslim, supported the British rule out of self-interest. But, among the Hindus, the modern intellectuals and the rising commercial and industrialist class had pushed out the landlords from leadership. Unfortunately, the opposite remained the case with the Muslims.

The educational backwardness of the Muslims had another harmful consequence. Since modern education was essential for entry into government service or the professions, the Muslims had also lagged behind non-Muslims in this respect.

Moreover, the government had consciously discriminated against the Muslims after 1858, holding them largely responsible for the Revolt of 1857. When modern education did spread among the Muslims, the educated Muslim found few opportunities in business or the

professions. He inevitably looked for government employment. And, in any case, India being a backward colony, there were very few opportunities of employment for its people.

In these circumstances, it was easy for the British officials and the loyalist Muslim leaders to incite the educated Muslims against the educated Hindus.

Syed Ahmad Khan and others raised the demand for special treatment for the Muslims in the matter of government service. They declared that if the educated Muslims remained loyal to the British, the latter would reward them with government jobs and other special favours.

Some loyalist Hindus and Parsees too tried to argue in this manner, but they remained a small minority. The result was that while in the country as a whole, independent and nationalist lawyers, journalists, students, merchants and industrialists were becoming political leaders, among the Muslims loyalist landlords and retired government servants still influenced political opinion.

Bombay was the only province where the Muslims had taken to commerce and education quite early; and there the National Congress included in its ranks such brilliant Muslims as Badruddin Tyabji, R.M. Sayani, A. Bhimji and, the young barrister, Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

We can sum up this aspect of the problem with a quotation from Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India*:

"There has been a difference of a generation or more in the development of the Hindu and the Muslim middle classes, and that difference continues to show itself in many directions, political, economic, and other. It is this lag which produces a psychology of fear among the Muslims."

Moreover, the manner in which Indian history was taught in schools and colleges in those days also contributed to the growth of communalist feelings among the educated Hindus and Muslims. British historians and, following them, Indian historians described the medieval period of Indian history as the Muslim period. The rule of Turk, Afghan and Mughal rulers was called Muslim rule. Even though the Muslim masses were as poor and oppressed by taxes as the Hindu masses, and even though both were looked down upon by the rulers, nobles, chiefs, and zamindars, Whether Hindu or Muslim, with contempt and regarded as low creatures, yet these writers declared that all Muslims were rulers in medieval India and all non-Muslims were the ruled. They failed to bring out the fact that ancient and medieval politics in India, as politics everywhere else, were based on economic and political interests and not on religious considerations.

Rulers as well as rebels used religious appeals as an outer colouring to disguise the play of material interests and ambitions. Moreover, the British and communal historians attacked the notion of a composite culture in India.

The Hindu communal view of history also relied on the myth at Indian society and culture had reached great, ideal heights in the ancient period from which they fell into permanent and continuous decay during the medieval period because of 'Muslim' rule and domination.

The basic contribution of the medieval period to the development of Indian economy and technology, religion and philosophy, arts and literature, culture and society, and fruits vegetables and dress was denied. All this was seen by many contemporary observers. Gandhiji,

for example, wrote: "Communal harmony could not be permanently established in our country so long as highly distorted versions of history were taught in her schools and colleges, through the history textbooks."

In addition, the communal view of history was spread widely through poetry, drama, historical novels and short stories, newspapers and popular magazines, children's magazines, pamphlets and, above all, orally through the public platform, classroom teaching, socialisation through the family and private conversation.

The founding fathers of Indian nationalism fully realised that the welding of Indians into a single nation would be a gradual and hard task, requiring prolonged political education of the people. They, therefore, set out to convince the minorities that the nationalist movement would carefully protect their religious and social rights while uniting all Indians in their common national, economic, and political interests. In his presidential address to the National Congress of 1886, Dadabhai Naoroji had given the clear assurance that the Congress would take up only national questions and would not deal with religious and social matters.

In 1889, the Congress adopted the principle that it would not take up any proposal which was considered harmful to the Muslims by a majority of the Muslim delegates to the Congress. Many Muslims joined the Congress in its early years. In other words, the early nationalists tried to modernise the political outlook of the people by teaching that politics should not be based on religion and community.

Unfortunately, while militant nationalism was a great step forward in every other respect, it was to some extent a step back in respect of the growth of national unity. The speeches and writings of some of the militant nationalists had a strong religious and Hindu tinge. They emphasised ancient Indian culture to the exclusion of medieval Indian culture. They identified Indian culture and the Indian nation with the Hindu religion and Hindus. They tried to abandon elements of composite cultures. For example, Tilak's propagation of the Shivaji and Ganapati festivals, Aurobindo Ghosh's semi-mystical concept of India as mother and nationalism as a religion, the terrorists' oaths before the goddess Kali and the initiation of the Anti-Partition agitation with dips in the Ganga could hardly appeal to the Muslims. In fact, such actions were against the spirit of their religion, and they could not be expected as Muslims to associate with these and other similar activities.

Nor could Muslims be expected to respond with full enthusiasm when they saw Shivaji or Pratap being hailed not merely for their historical roles but also as 'national' leaders who fought against the 'foreigners'. By no definition could Akbar or Aurangzeb be declared a foreigner, unless being a Muslim was made the ground for declaring one a foreigner. In reality, the struggle between Pratap and Akbar, or Shivaji and Aurangzeb had to be viewed as a political struggle in its particular historical setting. To declare Akbar or Aurangzeb a 'foreigner' and Pratap or Shivaji a 'national' hero was to project into past history the communal outlook of twentieth century India. This was not only bad history; it was also a blow to national unity.

wholly coThis does not mean that militant nationalists were anti-

from it, most of them are including Tilak, favoured Hindu-Muslim unity. To most of them, the motherland, or Bharatmata, was a modern notion, being in no way linked with religion. Most of them were modern in their political thinking and not backward looking. Economic boycott, their chief political weapon, was indeed very modern as also their political organisation. Tilak, for

example, declared in 1916: "He who does what is beneficial to the people of this country, be he a Mohammedan or an Englishman, is not alien.'Alienness' has to do with interests. Alienness is certainly not concerned with white or black skin or religion." Even the revolutionary terrorists were in reality inspired by European revolutionary movements, for example, those of Ireland, Russia, and Italy, rather than by Kali or Bhawani cults. But, there was a certain Hindu tinge in the political work and ideas of the militant nationalists. **This proved to be particularly harmful as clever British and pro-British propagandists took advantage of the Hindu colouring poison the minds of the Muslims.**

The result was that a large number of educated Muslims either remained aloof from the rising nationalist movement or became hostile to it, thus, falling an easy prey to a separatist outlook.

The Hindu tinge also created ideological openings for Hindu communalism and made it difficult for the nationalist movement to eliminate Hindu communal, political, and ideological elements within its own ranks. It also helped the spread of a Muslim tinge among Muslim nationalists.

Even so, quite a large number of advanced Muslim intellectuals such as the barrister Abdul Rasul and Hasrat Mohani joined the Swadeshi movement, Maulana Azad joined the revolutionary terrorists, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah became one of the leading younger leaders of the National Congress.

The economic backwardness of the country, the consequence of colonial underdevelopment, also contributed to the rise of communalism. Due to the lack of modern industrial development, unemployment was an acute problem in India, especially for the educated. There was, in consequence, an intense competition for existing jobs. Far-sighted Indians diagnosed the disease and worked for an economic and political system in which the country would develop economically and in which, therefore, employment would be plentiful. However, many others thought of short-sighted and short-term remedies as communal, provincial or caste reservation in jobs. They aroused communal and religious and, later, caste and provincial passions in an attempt to get a larger share of the existing, limited employment opportunities. To those looking desperately for employment such a narrow appeal had a certain immediate attraction. **In this situation, Hindu and Muslim communal leaders, caste leaders and the officials following the policy of 'divide and rule' were able to achieve some success.**

Many Hindus began to talk of Hindu nationalism and many Muslims of Muslim nationalism. The politically immature people failed to realise that their economic, educational and cultural difficulties were the result of common subjection to foreign rule and of economic backwardness, and that only through common effort could they free their country, develop it economically and thus solve the underlying common problems, such as unemployment.

Muslim League

The separatist and loyalist tendencies among a section of the educated Muslims and the big Muslim Nawabs and landlords reached a climax in 1906 when the All India Muslim League was founded under the leadership of Aga Khan, the Nawab of Dhaka, and Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk.

Founded as a loyalist, communal and conservative political organisation, the Muslim League made no critique of colonialism, supported the partition of Bengal, and demanded special

safeguards for the Muslims in government services.

Later, with the help of Lord Minto, the Viceroy, it put forward the demand for separate electorates. Their demands of communal representation in the Imperial Legislative Council and District Boards, adequate share in the public service and local bodies, adequate safeguards for the protection and promotion of Muslim culture and weight to the Muslims to protect their legitimate interests were accepted through Minto-Morley Reforms known as Government of India Act of 1909. This Act devised a novel method to distribute and balance the power. It came as the first effective dose of communalization of Indian politics.

Thus, while the National Congress was taking up anti-imperialist economic and political issues, the Muslim League and its reactionary leaders preached that the interests of Muslims were different from those of Hindus.

The Muslim League's political activities were directed not against the foreign rulers, but against Hindus and the National Congress. Hereafter, the League began to oppose every nationalist and democratic demand of the Congress. It thus played into the hands of the British who announced that they would protect the 'special 'interests' of the Muslims.

The League soon became one of the main instruments with which the British hoped to fight the rising nationalist movement and to keep the emerging intelligentsia among Muslims from joining the national movement. To increase its usefulness, the British also encouraged the Muslim League to approach the Muslim masses and to assume their leadership.

It is true that the nationalist movement was also dominated at this time by educated town-dwellers but, in its anti-imperialism, it was representing the interests of all Indians rich or poor, Hindu or Muslim. On the other hand, the Muslim League and its upper-class leaders had little in common with the interests of the Muslim masses, who were suffering as much as the Hindu masses at the hands of foreign imperialism.

This basic weakness of the League came to be increasingly recognised by patriotic Muslims. The educated Muslim young men were, in particular, attracted by radical nationalist ideas.

The militantly nationalist Ahrar movement was founded at this time under the leadership of Maulana Mohamed Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Hasan Imam, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and Mazhar-ul-Haq.

These young men disliked the loyalist politics of the Aligarh School and the big Nawabs and zamindars. Moved by modern ideas of self-government, they advocated active participation in the militant nationalist movement.

Similar nationalist sentiments were arising among a section of traditional Muslim scholars led by the Deoband School. The most prominent of these scholars was the young Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who propagated his rationalist and nationalist ideas in his newspaper Hilal which he brought out in 1912 at the age of 24.

Maulana Mohamed Ali, Azad and other young men preached a message of courage and fearlessness and said that there was no conflict between Islam and nationalism.

In 1911 war broke out between the Ottoman empire (Turkey) and Italy, and during 1912 and 1913 Turkey had to fight the Balkan powers. The Turkish ruler claimed at this time to be also the Caliph or religious head of all Muslims; moreover, nearly all of the Muslim holy places were situated within the Turkish Empire. A wave of sympathy for Turkey swept India. A medical mission, headed by Dr M.A. Ansari, was sent to help Turkey. Since Britain's policy during the Balkan War and after was not sympathetic to Turkey, the pro Turkey and pro-Caliph or Khilafat sentiments tended to become anti-imperialist.

In fact, for several years from 1912 to 1924 the loyalists among the Muslim League were completely overshadowed by nationalist young men.

Unfortunately, with the exception of a few persons like Azad who were rationalists in their thinking, most of the militant nationalists among Muslim young men also did not fully accept the modern secular approach to politics. The result was that the most important issue they took up was not political independence, but protection of holy places and of the Turkish Empire. Instead of understanding and opposing the economic and political consequences of imperialism, they fought imperialism on the ground that it threatened the Caliph and the holy places of Islam. Even their sympathy for Turkey was on religious grounds. Their political appeal was to religious sentiments. Moreover, the heroes and myths and cultural traditions they appealed to belonged not to ancient or medieval Indian history but to West Asian history.

It is true that this approach did not immediately clash with Indian nationalism. Rather, it made its adherents and supporters anti-imperialist and encouraged the nationalist trend among urban Muslims. But in the long run this approach too proved harmful, as it encouraged the habit of looking at political questions from a religious view point. In any case, such political activity did not promote among the Muslim masses a modern, secular approach towards political and economic questions.

Simultaneously, Hindu communalism was also being born and Hindu communal ideas were arising. Many Hindu writers and political workers echoed the ideas and programme of Muslim communalism and the Muslim League. From the 1870s, a section of Hindu zamindars, moneylenders, and middle-class professionals began to arouse anti-Muslim sentiments. Fully accepting the colonial view of Indian history, they talked and wrote about the 'tyrannical' Muslim rule in the medieval period and the 'liberating' role of the British in 'saving' Hindus from 'Muslim oppression'. In Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, they took up, correctly, the question of Hindi, but gave it a communal twist, declaring, totally unhistorical, that Urdu was the language of Muslims and Hindi of Hindus. All over India, anti-cow daughter propaganda was undertaken in the early 1890s. The campaign was, however, primarily directed not against the British but against Muslims; the British cantonments, for example, were left free to carry on cow slaughter on a large scale.

The Punjab Hindu Sabha was founded in 1909. Its leaders attacked the National Congress for trying to unite Indians into a single nation. They opposed the Congress' anti-imperialist politics, fighting against the British argued that Hindus should placate the foreign government in the interest of Hindus.

One of its leaders Lai Chand declared that a Hindu should believe that he was "a Hindu first and an Indian later." The first session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha was held in April 1915 under the president ship of the Maharaja of Kasim Bazar. But it remained for years a rather weak

organisation. One reason was the greater weight and influence of the modern secular intelligentsia and middle class among Hindus. Among Muslims, on the other hand, landlords, bureaucrats, and traditional religious leaders still exercised dominant influence. Moreover, the colonial government gave Hindu communalism few concessions and little support', for it relied heavily on Muslim communalism and could not easily simultaneously placate both these forms of communalism.

Partition of Bengal and Swadeshi Movement 1903-1908:

With the start of the Swadeshi Movement at the turn of the century, the Indian national movement took a major leap forward. Women, students and a large section of the urban and rural population of Bengal and other parts of India became actively involved in politics for the first time. The next half a decade saw the emergence of almost all the major political trends of the Indian national movement. From conservative moderation to political extremism, from terrorism to incipient socialism, from petitioning and public speeches to passive resistance and boycott, all had their origins in the movement. The richness of the movement was not confined to politics alone. The period saw a breakthrough in Indian literature, music, science, and industry. Indian society, as a whole, was experimenting and the creativity of the people expanded in every direction.

The Swadeshi Movement had its genesis in the anti-partition movement which was started to oppose the British decision to partition Bengal. There was no questioning the fact that Bengal with a population of 78 million (about a quarter of the population of British India) had indeed become administratively unwieldy. Equally there was no escaping the fact that the real motive or partitioning Bengal was political. Indian nationalism was gaining in strength and partition expected to weaken what was perceived as the nerve centre of Indian nationalism at that time. The attempt, at that time in the words of Lord Curzon, the Viceroy (1899-1905) was to 'dethrone Calcutta' from its position as the 'centre from which the Congress Party is manipulated throughout Bengal, and indeed which the Congress Party centre of successful intrigue' and 'divide ,the Bengali speaking population.'

The partition of the state intended to curb Bengali influence by not only placing Bengalis under two administrations but by reducing them to a minority in Bengal itself as in the new proposal Bengal proper was to have seventeen million Bengali and thirty-seven million Oriya and Hindi speaking people! Also, the partition was meant to foster another kind of division— this time on the basis of religion. The policy of propping up Muslim communalists as a counter to the Congress and the national movement, which was getting increasingly crystallized in the last quarter of the 19th century, was to be implemented once again. Curzon's speech at Dacca, betrayed his attempt to 'woo the Muslims' to support partition. With partition, he argued, Dacca could become the capital of the new Muslim majority province (with eighteen million Muslims and twelve million Hindus) 'which would invest the Mohammedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussulman Viceroys and Kings.' The Muslims would thus get a 'better deal' and the eastern districts would be freed of
essor wather piean of the influence of Calcutta.'

way in which partition was imposed disregarding public opinion saw that it was good political strategy;

The Indian nationalists clearly saw the design behind the partition and condemned it unanimously. The anti-partition and Swadeshi Movement had begun. In December 1903, the

partition proposals became publicly known, immediate and spontaneous massive protest followed.

Surendranath Banerjea, Krishna Kumar Mitra, Prithwishchandra Ray and other leaders launched a powerful press campaign against the partition proposals through journals and newspapers like the *Bengalee*, *Hitabadi* and *Sanjibani*. Vast protest meetings were held and numerous petitions were sent to the Government of India and the Secretary of State.

Even, the big zamindars who had hitherto been loyal to the Raj, joined forces with the Congress leaders who were mostly intellectuals and political workers drawn from journalism, law and other liberal professions.

This was the phase, 1903 to mid-1905 when moderate techniques of petitions, memoranda, speeches, public meetings and press campaigns held full sway. The objective was to turn to public opinion in India and England against the partition proposals by preparing a fool proof case against them. The hope was that this would yield sufficient pressure to prevent this injustice from occurring.

The Government of India however remained unmoved. Despite the widespread protest, voiced against the partition proposals, the decision to partition Bengal was announced on 19 July 1905. It was obvious to the nationalists that their moderate methods were not working and that a different kind of strategy as needed. Within days of the government announcement numerous spontaneous protest meetings were held in mofussil towns such as Dinajpur, Pabna, Faridpur, Tangail, Jessor, Dacca, Birbhum, and Barisal. It was in these meetings that the pledge to boycott foreign goods was first taken in Calcutta; students organized a number of meetings against partition and for Swadeshi. The formal proclamation of the Swadeshi Movement was, made on the 7 August 1905, in meeting held at the Calcutta town hall. The movement; hitherto sporadic and spontaneous, now had a focus and a leadership that was coming together. At the 7 August meeting, the famous Boycott Resolution was passed.

Even Moderate leaders like Surendranath Banerjea toured the country urging the boycott of Manchester cloth and Liverpool salt. On September 1, the Government announced that partition was to be effected on 6 October 1905. The following weeks saw protest meetings being held almost every day all over Bengal; some of these meetings, like the one in Barisal, drew crowds of ten to twelve thousand. That the message of boycott went home is evident from the fact that the value of British cloth sold in some of the mofussil districts fell by five to fifteen times between September 1904 and September 1905.

The day partition took effect — 16 October 1905 — was declared a day of mourning throughout Bengal. People fasted and no fires were lit at the cooking hearth. In Calcutta a *hartal* was declared. People took out processions and band after band walked barefoot, bathed in the Ganges in morning and then paraded the streets singing *Bande Mataram* which, almost spontaneously, became the theme song of the movement. People tied *rakhis* on each other's

~~abindranath tagore symbol of the unity~~

sed two ~~hunger in the~~ day Anandamohan Bose meetings.

It was apparent that the character of the movement in terms both its goals and social base had begun to expand rapidly.

The message of Swadeshi and the boycott of foreign goods soon spread to the rest of the country: Lokamanya Tilak took the movement to different parts of India, especially Poona and Bombay; Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai spread the Swadeshi message in Punjab and other parts of northern India. Syed Haidar Raza led the movement in Delhi; Rawalpindi, Kangra, Jammu, Multan and Haridwar witnessed active participation in the Swadeshi Movement; Chidambaram Pillai took the movement to the Madras presidency, which was also galvanized by Bipin Chandra Pal's extensive lecture tour.

The Indian National Congress took up the Swadeshi call and the Banaras Session, 1905, presided over by G.K. Gokhale, supported the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement for Bengal. The militant nationalists led by Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo Ghosh were, however, in favour of extending the movement to the rest of India and carrying it beyond the programme of just Swadeshi and boycott to a full-fledged political mass struggle. The aim was now *Swaraj* and the abrogation of partition had become the 'pettiest and narrowest of all political objects.' The Moderates, by and large, were not as yet willing to go that far. In 1906, however, the Indian National Congress at its Calcutta Session, presided over by Dadabhai Naoroji, took a major step forward. Naoroji in his presidential address declared that the goal of the Indian National Congress was 'self-government or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies.' The differences between the Moderates and the Extremists, especially regarding the pace of the movement and the techniques of struggle to be adopted, came to a head in the 1907 Surat session of the Congress where the party split with serious consequences for the Swadeshi Movement.

In Bengal, however, after 1905, the Extremists acquired a dominant influence over the Swadeshi Movement. Several new forms of mobilization and techniques of struggle now began to emerge at the popular level. The trend of 'mendicancy,' petitioning and memorials was on the retreat. The militant nationalists put forward several fresh ideas at the theoretical, propagandistic, and programmatic plane. Political independence was to be achieved by converting the movement into a mass movement through the extension of boycott into a full-scale movement of non-cooperation and passive resistance. The technique of 'extended boycott' was to include, apart from boycott of foreign goods, boycott of government schools and colleges, courts, titles and government services and even the organization of strikes. The aim was to 'make the administration under present conditions impossible by an organized refusal to do anything which shall help either the British Commerce in the exploitation of the country or British officialdom in the administration of it.' While some, with remarkable foresight, saw the tremendous potential of large scale peaceful resistance, others like Aurobindo Ghosh (with his growing links with revolutionary terrorists) kept open the option of violent resistance if British repression was stepped up.

Among the several forms of struggle thrown up by the movement, it was the boycott of foreign goods which met with the greatest visible success at the practical and popular level. Boycott and public burning of foreign cloth, picketing of shops selling foreign goods, all became common in remote corners of Bengal as well as in many important towns and cities throughout tensils, ~~washroom~~. Women refused to wear ~~refused to~~ foreign clothes and even sugar. The movement also innovated with considerable success different forms of mass mobilization. Public meetings and processions emerged as major methods of mass mobilization and simultaneously as forms of popular expression. Numerous meetings and processions organized at the district, taluqa and village levels, in cities and towns, both testified to the

depth of Swadeshi sentiment and acted as vehicles for its further spread.

These forms were to retain their pre-eminence in later phases of the national movement. Corps of volunteers (or *samitis* as they were called) were another major form of mass mobilization widely used by the Swadeshi Movement. The Swadesh Bandhab Samiti set up by Ashwini Kumar Dutt, a school teacher, in Barisal was the most well-known volunteer organization of them all. Through the activities of this Samiti, whose 159 branches reached out to the remotest corners of the district, Dutt was able to generate an unparalleled mass following among the predominantly Muslim Peasantry of the region. The *samitis* took the Swadeshi message to the villages through magic lantern lectures and Swadeshi songs, gave physical and moral training to the members, and did social work during famines and epidemics, organized schools, training in Swadeshi craft and arbitration courts. By August 1906 the Barisal Samiti reportedly settled 523 disputes through eighty-nine arbitration committees. Though the *samitis* stuck their deepest roots in Barisal, they had expanded to other parts of Bengal as well. British officialdom was genuinely alarmed by their activities, their growing popularity with the rural masses.

The Swadeshi period also saw the creative use of traditional popular festivals and *melas* as a means of reaching out to the masses. The Ganapati and Shivaji festivals, popularized by Tilak, became a medium for Swadeshi propaganda not only in Western India but also in Bengal. Traditional folk theatre forms such as *jatras* i.e. extensively used in disseminating the Swadeshi message in an intelligible form to vast sections of the people, many of whom were being introduced to modern political ideas for the first time.

Another important aspect of the Swadeshi Movement was the great emphasis given to self-reliance or 'Atmasakti' as a necessary part of the struggle against the Government. Self-reliance in various fields meant the re-asserting of national dignity, honor and confidence. Further, self-help and constructive work at the village level was envisaged as a means of bringing about the social and economic regeneration of the villages and of reaching the rural masses. In actual terms this meant social reform and campaigns against evils such as caste oppression, early marriage, the dowry system, consumption of alcohol, etc. One of the major planks of the programme of self-reliance was Swadeshi or national education. Taking a cue from Tagore's Shantiniketan, the Bengal National College was founded, with Aurobindo as the principal. Scores of national schools sprang up all over the country within a short period. In August 1906, the National Council of Education was established. The Council, consisting of virtually all the distinguished persons of the country at the time, defined its objectives in this way- 'to organize a system of Education Literary; Scientific and Technical — on National lines and under National control from the primary to the university level. The chief medium of instruction was to be the vernacular to enable the widest possible reach. For technical education, the Bengal Technical Institute was set and funds were raised to send students to Japan for advanced learning.

Self-reliance also meant an effort to set up Swadeshi or indigenous enterprises. The period saw a mushrooming of Swadeshi textile mills, soap and match factories; - tanneries, banks, insurance companies, shops, etc. While many of these enterprises, whose promoters were ~~unable to survive~~ ~~entangled~~ with patriotic zeal the success of others such as Acharya P.C. Ray's Bengal Chemicals famous.

It was, perhaps, in the cultural sphere that the impact of the Swadeshi Movement was most marked. The songs composed at that time by Rabindranath Tagore, Rajani Kanta Sen,

Dwijendralal Ray, Mukunda Das, Syed Abu Mohammed, and others later became the moving spirit for nationalists of all hues, 'terrorists, Gandhian or Communists' and are still popular.

Rabindranath's *Amar Sonar Bangla*, written at that time, was to later inspire the liberation struggle of Bangladesh, and was adopted as the national anthem of the country in 1971. The Swadeshi influence could be seen in Bengali folk music popular among Hindu and Muslim villagers (Palligeet and Jan Gân) and it evoked collections of India fairy tales such as, Thakurmar Jhuli (Grandmother's tales) written by Daksinaranjan Mitra Majumdar which delights Bengali children to this day. In art, this was the period when Abanindranath Tagore broke the domination of Victorian naturalism over Indian art and sought inspiration from the rich indigenous traditions of Mughal, Rajput, and Ajanta paintings. Nandalal Bose, who left a major imprint on Indian art, was the first recipient of a scholarship offered by the Indian Society of Oriental Art founded in 1907. In science, Jagdish Chandra Bose, Prafulla Chandra Ray, and others pioneered original research that was praised the world over. In sum, the Swadeshi Movement with its multi-faceted programme and activity was able to draw for the first time large sections of society into active participation in modern nationalist into the ambit of modern political ideas.

The social base of the national movements now extended to include a certain Zamindari section, the lower middle class in the cities and small towns and school and college students on a massive scale. Women came out of their homes for the first time and joined processions and picketing. This period saw, again for the first time, an attempt being made to give a political direction to the economic grievances of the working class. Efforts were made by Swadeshi leaders, some of whom were influenced by International socialist currents such as those in Germany and Russia, to organize strikes in foreign managed concerns such as Eastern India Railway and Clive Jute Mills, etc. While it is argued that the movement was unable to make much headway in mobilizing the peasantry especially its lower rungs except in certain areas, such as the district of Barisal, there can be no gainsaying the fact that even if the movement was able to mobilize the peasantry only in a limited area that alone would count for a lot. This is so peasant participation in the Swadeshi Movement marked the very beginnings of modern mass politics in India. After all, even in the later, post-Swadeshi movements, intense political mobilization, and activity among the peasantry largely remained concentrated in specific pockets. Also, while it is true that during the Swadeshi phase the peasantry was not organized around peasant demands, and that the peasants in most parts did not actively join in certain forms of struggle such as, boycott or passive resistance, large sections of the peasants, through meetings, jatras, constructive work, and so on were exposed for the first time to modern nationalist ideas and politics.

Annulment of Partition

It was decided to annul the partition of Bengal in 1911 mainly to curb the menace of revolutionary terrorism. The annulment came as a rude shock to the Muslim political elite. It was also decided to shift the capital to Delhi as a sop to Muslims, as it was associated with the Muslim glory, but the Muslims were not pleased. Bihar and Orissa were taken out of Bengal and Assam was made a separate province.

Drawbacks of Swadeshi Movement-A critical Analysis:

The main drawback of the Swadeshi Movement was that it was not able to garner the support of the mass of Muslims and especially of the Muslim peasantry. The British policy of consciously attempting to use communalism to turn the Muslims against the Swadeshi Movement was to a large extent responsible for this. The Government was helped in its designs by the peculiar situation obtaining in large parts of Bengal where Hindus and Muslims were divided along class lines with the former being the landlords and the latter constituting the peasantry. This was the period when the All India Muslim League was set up with the active guidance and support of the Government. More specifically, in Bengal, people like Nawab Salimullah of Dacca were propped up so centres of opposition to the Swadeshi Movement. Mullahs and maulvis were pressed into service and, unsurprisingly, at the height of the Swadeshi Movement communal riots broke out in Bengal.

Given this background, some of the forms of mobilization adopted by the Swadeshi Movement had certain unintended negative consequences. The use of traditional popular customs, festivals and institutions for mobilizing the masses—a technique used widely in most parts of world to generate mass movements, especially in the initial stages —was misinterpreted and distorted by communalists backed by the state. The communal forces saw narrow religious identities in the traditional forms utilized by the Swadeshi movements whereas in fact these forms generally reflected common popular cultural traditions which had evolved as a synthesis of different religious 'prevailing among the people.'

By mid-1908, the open movement with its popular mass character had all but spent itself. This was due to several reasons.

First, the government, seeing the revolutionary potential of the movement, came down with a heavy hand. Repression took the form of controls and bans on public meetings, processions and the press. Student participants were expelled from Government schools and colleges, debarred from Government service, fined, and at times beaten up by the police. The case of the 1906 Barisal Conference, where the police forcibly dispersed the conference and brutally beat up a large number of the participants, is a telling example of the government's attitude and policy.

Second, the internal squabbles, and especially, the split, in 1907 in the Congress, the apex all-India organization, weakened the movement. Also, though the Swadeshi Movement had spread outside Bengal, the rest of the country was not as yet fully prepared to adopt the new style and stage of politics. Both these factors strengthened the hands of the government.

Between 1907 and 1908, nine major leaders in Bengal including Ashwini Kumar Dutt and Krishna Kumar Mitra were deported, Tilak was given a sentence of six years imprisonment, Ajit Singh and Lajpat Rai of Punjab were deported, and Chidambaram Pillai and Harisarvottam Rao from Madras and Andhra were arrested. Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh retired from active politics, a decision not unconnected with the repressive measures of the Government. Almost with one stroke the entire movement was

Third, the Swadeshi Movement lacked an effective organization and party structure. The movement had thrown up programmatically the entire gamut of Gandhian techniques such as passive resistance, non-violent non-cooperation, the call to fill the British jails, social reform, constructive work, etc. It was, however, unable to give these techniques a centralized,

disciplined focus, carry- the bulk of political - India, and convert these techniques into actual, practical political practice, as Gandhiji was able to do later.

Lastly, the movement declined partially because of the very logic of mass movements itself—they cannot be sustained endlessly at the same pitch of militancy and self-sacrifice, especially when faced with severe repression, but need to pause, to consolidate its forces for yet another struggle.

However, the decline of the open movement by mid-1908 engendered yet another trend in the Swadeshi phase i.e., the rise of revolutionary terrorism. The youth of the country, who had been part of the mass movement, now found themselves unable to disappear tamely into the background once the movement itself grew moribund and Government repression was stepped up. Frustrated, some among them opted for 'individual heroism' as distinct from the earlier attempts at mass action. With the subsiding of the mass movement, one era in the Indian freedom struggle was over.

It would be wrong, however, to see the Swadeshi Movement as a failure. The movement made a major contribution in taking the idea of nationalism, in a truly creative fashion, to many sections of the people, hitherto untouched by it. By doing so, it further eroded the hegemony of colonial ideas and institutions. Swadeshi influence in the realm of culture and ideas was crucial in this regard and has remained unparalleled in Indian history, except, perhaps, for the cultural upsurge of the 1930s this time under the influence of the Left.

Further, the movement evolved several new methods and techniques of mass mobilization and mass action though it was not able to put them all into practice successfully. Just as the Moderates' achievement in the realm of developing an economic critique of colonialism is not minimized by the fact that they could not themselves carry this critique to large masses of people, similarly the achievement of the Extremists and the Swadeshi Movement in evolving new methods of mass mobilization and action is not diminished by the fact that they could not themselves fully utilize these methods. The legacy they bequeathed was one on which the later national movement was to draw heavily.

Swadeshi Movement was only the first round in the national popular struggle against colonialism. It was to borrow this imagery used by Antonio Gramsci an important battle' in the long drawn out and complex 'war of position' for Indian independence.

The Split in the Congress and Rise of Revolutionary Terrorism

The Surat Split:

The Congress split at Surat came in December 1907, around the time when revolutionary terrorism had gained momentum. The two events were not unconnected.

In the month of December 1905, at the Benaras

extremists differences came to the fore. The extremist wanted to extend the boycott and Swadeshi movement to regions outside Bengal and also to include all forms of associations (such as government service, law courts, legislative council etc.) with in the boycott programme and thus start a nationwide mass movement. The extremist wanted a strong resolution supporting their programme at the Benaras session. The moderates, on the other hand, were

not in favour of extending movement beyond Bengal and were totally opposed to boycott of councils and similar associations. They advocated strictly constitutional methods to protest against the partition of Bengal. As a compromise, a relatively mild resolution condemning the partition of Bengal and the reactionary policies of Curzon and supporting the Swadeshi and boycott programme in Bengal was passed. This succeeded in averting a split for the moment.

At the Calcutta session of Congress in December 1906, the moderate enthusiasm had cooled a bit because of the popularity of extremists and revolutionary terrorists and because of communal riots. Here, the extremists wanted either Tilak or Lala Lajpat Rai as the president while the moderates proposed the name of Dadabhai Naoroji who was widely respected by all the nationalists. Finally Dadabhai Naoroji was elected as the president, and as a concession to the militants, the goal of the INC was defined as the "Swarajya or self-government like the United Kingdom or the colonies." Also a resolution supporting the programme of **Swadeshi, Boycott and National education** was passed. **The word Swarajya was mentioned for the first time but its connotation was not spelled out**, which left the field open for differing interpretations by the moderates and the extremists.

The extremists emboldened by the proceedings at the Calcutta session give a call for wide passive resistance and boycott of schools, colleges, legislative councils, municipalities, law-courts, etc. The moderates encouraged by the news that council reforms on the anvil, decided to tone down the Calcutta programme. The two sides seemed to be heading for a show down. The extremists thought that the people had been aroused and the battle for freedom had begun. They felt the time had come for the big push to drive the British out and considered the moderates to be a drag on the movement. They concluded that it was necessary to part company with the moderates even if it meant a split in the Congress. The moderates thought that it would be dangerous at that stage to associate with the extremists whose ant-imperialist agitation, it was felt, would be ruthlessly suppressed by the mighty colonial rule. The moderates saw in the council reforms an opportunity to realise their dream of Indian participation in the administration. Any hasty action by the Congress, the moderates felt, under extremists pressure was bound to annoy the liberals in power in England then. The moderates were no less willing to part company with the extremists.

The moderates did not realise that the Council Reforms were meant by the government more to isolate the extremists than to reward the moderates. The extremists did not realise that the moderate could act as their outer line of defence in face of state repression. Both sides did not realise that in a vast country like India ruled by a powerful imperialist country, only a broad based nationalist movement could succeed.

The extremist wanted the 1907 session to be held in Nagpur with Tilak or Lala Lajpat Rai as the president and reiteration of the Swadeshi, boycott, and national education resolutions. The moderates wanted this session at Surat in order to exclude Tilak from the presidency, since a leader from the host province could not be session president. Instead, they wanted Ras Behari Ghosh as the president and sought to drop the resolution on Swadeshi, Boycott and National education. Both side adopted the rigid positions, leaving no room for compromise. The split became **inevitable** and the Congress was now dominated by the moderates who lost no time in retreating Congress commitment to the goal of self-government within the British Empire and the constitutional methods only to achieve this goal.

The government launched a massive attack on the extremists between 1907 and 1911; five new laws were enforced to check anti-government activity. These legislations included the Seditious meetings Act, 1907; Indian Newspapers (incitement to offences) Act, 1908; Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908; and the Indian Press Act, 1910. Tilak, the main extremist leader was sent to Mandalay for six years. Aurobindo and Bipin Chandra Pal retired from active politics. Lajpat Rai left for abroad. The extremists were not able to organise an effective alternate party to sustain the movement. The moderates were left with no popular base or support, especially as the youth rallied behind the extremists.

After 1908, the national movement as a whole declined for a time. In 1914, Tilak was released and he picked up the threads of the movement.

The Government Strategy:

The British government in India had been hostile to the Congress from the beginning. Even after the moderates, who dominated the congress from the beginning, began distancing themselves from the militant nationalist trend which had become visible during the last decade of the nineteenth century itself, the government hostility did not stop. This was because in the government's view, the moderates still represented an anti-imperialist force consisting of basically patriotic and liberal intellectuals.

With the coming of Swadeshi and Boycott movement and the emergence of militant nationalist trend in a big way, the government modified its strategy towards the nationalists. Now, the policy was to be of rallying them (John Morley-the Secretary of State) or the policy of "carrot and stick." It may be described as the three pronged approach of repression-conciliation-suppression. In the first stage, the extremists were to be repressed mildly, mainly to frighten the moderates. In the second stage the moderates were to be placated through some concessions, and hints were to be dropped that more reforms would be forthcoming if the distance from the extremists was maintained. This was aimed at isolating the extremists. Now, with the moderates on its side the government could suppress the extremists with its full might. The moderates could then be ignored.

Unfortunately neither the moderates nor the extremists understood the implication of the strategy. The Surat split suggested that the policy of carrot and stick had brought rich dividends to the government.

Revolutionary Terrorism:

Revolutionary terrorism was a by-product of the process of the growth of militant nationalism in India. It required a more activist form as fallout of the Swadeshi and Boycott movement.

After the decline of the open movement, the younger nationalist who had participated in the movement found it impossible to disappear into the back ground. They looked for avenues to give expression to their patriotic energies, but were disillusioned by the failure of the leadership, even from the extremists, to find new forms of struggle to bring into practise the new militant trends. The extremist leaders, although they called upon the youth to make sacrifices, failed to create an affective organisation or find new forms of political works to tap these revolutionary energies. The youth, finding all avenues of peaceful political protest closed

to them under government repression, thought that if nationalist goals of independence were to be met, the British must be expelled physically.

Revolutionary terrorist programme:

The revolutionary terrorist considered but did not find it practical at that stage the options of creating a violent mass revolution throughout the country or of trying to subvert the loyalties of the army. Instead they opted to follow in the footsteps of nihilist or the Irish nationalist. This methodology involved individual heroic action such as organising assassination of unpopular British officials and of traitors and informers among the revolutionaries themselves; conducting swadeshi dacoities to raise funds for revolutionary activities; and organising military conspiracy with the help from enemies of Britain.

The idea was to strike terror in the hearts of the rulers, arouse people remove the fear of authorities from their minds. The revolutionaries intended to inspire the people by appealing to their patriotism, especially the idealist youth who would finally drive the British out. The extremist leaders failed to ideologically counter the revolutionaries by not highlighting the difference a revolution based on activity of the masses and one based on individual terrorist activity, thus allowing the individualistic terrorist to take root.

Revolutionary activities on various places in India:

Bengal:

By the 1870s, Calcutta's student community was honeycombed with secret societies, but these were not active. The first revolutionary groups were organised in 1902 in Midnapore (under Jnanendranath Basu) and in Calcutta (the Anushilan Samiti founded by Promotha Mitter, and including Jatindranath Banerjee, Barindra Kumar Ghosh and others). But their activities were limited to giving physical and moral training to the members and remained insignificant till 1907-08. In April 1906, an inner circle within Anushilan (Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Bhupendra Nath Dutta) started the weekly "Yugantar" and conducted a few abortive 'actions'. By 1905-06, several newspapers had started advocating revolutionary terrorism. For instance, after severe police brutalities on participants of the **Barisal Conference**, the Yugantar wrote-'the remedy lies with the people. The thirty crore people inhabiting India must raise their sixty crore hands to stop this curse of oppression. Force must be stopped by force.' Ras Behari Bose and Sachin Sanyal had organised a secret society covering far flung areas of Punjab, Delhi, and United provinces while others like Hemchandra Kanoongo went abroad for military and political training. In 1907, an abortive attempt was made on the life of the very unpopular West Bengal lieutenant governor, Fuller by the Yugantar group. In 1908, Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose threw a bomb at a carriage supposed to be carrying a particularly sadistic white judge Kingsford, in Muzzafarnagar. Two ladies instead got killed. Prafulla Chaki shot himself dead while Khudi Ram Bose was tried and hanged. The whole gang was arrested including the Ghosh

Cases@being Aurobindo and Barindra, who were tried in the

trial, Narendra Gosai who had turned approver was shot dead in jail. In February 1909 the public prosecutor was shot dead in Calcutta and in February a Deputy Superintendent of police met the same fate while leaving the Calcutta high court. In 1908 **Barrah dacoity** was organised by Dacca Anushilan under Pulin Das. Ras Behari Bose and Sachin Sanyal staged a spectacular bomb attack on viceroy Hardinge while he was making his official entry into the new capital in a

possession through chandni chowk in Delhi in December 1912.

The newspapers and journals advocating revolutionary terrorism included **Sandhya** and **Yugantar** in Bengal, and **Kal** in Maharashtra. In the end revolutionary terrorism emerged as the most substantial legacy of Swadeshi Bengal which had a spell on educated youth for a generation or more. But, an over emphasis on religion kept the Muslims aloof while it encouraged extremely idealistic heroism. No involvement of masses was envisaged, which, coupled with the narrow upper caste social base of the movement in Bengal, severely limited the scope of the revolutionary terrorist activity. Lacking a mass base, it failed to withstand the weight of the state repression.

Maharashtra:

The first of the revolutionary activities here was the organisation of the **Ramosi Peasant Force** by Vasudev Balwant Phadke in 1879, which aimed to rid the country of the British by instigating an armed revolt by disrupting communication lines. It hoped to raise funds for its activities through dacoity. It was suppressed prematurely. During the 1890s, Tilak propagated a spirit of militant nationalism including violence through Ganapati and Shiva festivals and his journals **Kesari** and **Maratha**. Two of his disciples- Chapekar brothers, Damodar and Bal Krishna murdered the plague commissioner of Poona, Rand and one Lieutenant Ayerst in 1897. Savarkar and his brothers organised Mitra Mela, a secret society, in 1899 which emerged with Abhinav Bharat (after Mazzini's Young Italy) in 1904. Soon Nasik, Poona, and Bombay emerged as centres of Bomb manufacturers. In 1909, Jackson, District Magistrate of Nasik was killed.

Punjab:

The Punjab extremism was fuelled by issues such as frequent famines coupled with rise in land revenue and irrigation tax, practise of beggar by zamindars and by the events in Bengal. Among those active here were Lal Lajpat rai who brought out Punjabi (with its motto of self-help at any cost) and Ajit Singh (Bhagat singh's uncle) who organised the extremist Anzuman-i-mohisban-i-watan in Lahore with its journal, **Bharatmata**. Before Ajit singh's group turned to extremism, it was acting in urging non-payment of revenue and water rates among Chenab colonists and Bari Doab peasants. Other leader included Aga Haider, Syed Haider Raza, Bhai Parmanand and radical urdu poet, Lalchand 'falak'.

Extremism in punjab died down quickly after the government struck in May 1907 with aban on political meetings and the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. After this Ajit Singh and a few other associates – Sufi Ambapradasad, Lalchand, Bhai Parmanad, Lala Hardayal- developed into full scale revolutionary terrorists.

Abroad:

The need for shelter, the possibility of bringing out revolutionary literature that would be immune from the Press Act and the quest for arms took Indian revolutionaries abroad. Shyamji Krishnavarma had started in London in 1905 an Indian Home Rule Society-'India House' as a centre for Indian students, a scholarship scheme to bring radical youths from India, and a journal 'The Sociologists'. Revolutionaries such as Savarkar and Hardayal became the members of India House. Madan Lal Dhingra of this circle assassinated the India office bureaucrat Curzon Wyllie in 1909. Soon London became too dangerous for the revolutionaries, particularly after

Savarkar had been extradited in 1910 and transported for life in the Nasik conspiracy case. New centres emerged on the continent- Paris and Geneva- from where Madam Bhikhaji Cama, a Parsi revolutionary who had developed contacts with French socialists and who brought out **Bande Matram**, and Ajit Singh operated. And after 1909 when Anglo-German relations deteriorated, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya chose Berlin as his base.

Morley-Minto Reforms 1909

The Morley-Minto Reforms, so named after Morley, the secretary of state, and Minto, the viceroy at that time, were preceded by two important events. In October 1906, a group of Muslim elites called the Shimla Deputation, led by the Agha Khan, met Lord Minto and demanded separate electorates for the Muslims and representation in excess of their numerical strength in view of 'the value of the contribution' Muslims were making 'to the defence of the empire'.

The same group quickly took over the Muslim League, initially floated by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca along with Nawabs Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Waqar-ul-Mulk in December 1906. The Muslim League intended to preach loyalty to the empire and to keep the Muslim intelligentsia away from the Congress.

The Reforms:

1. The number of elected members in the Imperial Legislative Council and the Provincial Legislative Councils was increased. In the Provincial Councils, non-official majority was introduced, but since some of these non-officials were nominated and not elected, the overall non-elected majority remained.
2. In the Imperial Legislative Council, of the total 68 members, 36 were to be the officials and of the 32 non-officials, 5 were to be nominated. Of the 27 elected non-officials, 8 seats were reserved for the Muslims under separate electorates (only Muslims could vote here for the Muslim candidates), while 6 seats were reserved for the British capitalists, 2 for the landlords and 13 seats came under general electorate.
3. The elected members were to be indirectly elected. The local bodies were to elect an electoral college, which in turn would elect members of provincial legislatures, who in turn would elect members of the central legislature.
4. Besides separate electorates for the Muslims, representation in excess of the strength of their population was accorded to the Muslims. Also, the income qualification for Muslim voters was kept lower than that for Hindus.
5. Powers of legislatures—both at the Centre and in provinces—were enlarged and the legislatures could now pass resolutions (which may not be accepted), ask questions and supplementaries, vote separate items in the budget but the budget as a whole could not be voted upon.
6. One Indian was to be appointed to the viceroy's executive council (Satyendra Sinha was the first to be appointed in 1909).

Evaluation of reforms:

The reforms of 1909 afforded no answer and could afford no answer to the Indian political problem. Lord Morley made it clear that colonial self-government (as demanded by the Congress) was not suitable for India, and he was against introduction of parliamentary or responsible government in India.

He said, "If it could be said that led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it."

The 'constitutional' reforms were, in fact, aimed at dividing the nationalist ranks by confusing the Moderates and at checking the growth of unity among Indians through the obnoxious instrument of separate electorates.

The Government aimed at rallying the Moderates and the Muslims against the rising tide of nationalism. The officials and the Muslim leaders often talked of the entire community when they talked of the separate electorates, but in reality it meant the appeasement of a small section of the Muslim elite only.

Besides, system of election was too indirect and it gave the impression of infiltration of legislators through a number of sieves.

And, while parliamentary forms were introduced, no responsibility was conceded, which sometimes led to thoughtless and irresponsible criticism of the Government. Only some members like Gokhale put to constructive use the opportunity to debate in the councils by demanding universal primary education, attacking repressive policies and drawing attention to the plight of indentured labour and Indian workers in South Africa.

The reforms of 1909 gave to the people of the country a shadow rather than substance. The people had demanded self-government but what they were given was 'benevolent despotism'.

First World War, Nationalist Response, and Ghadr

In the First World War (1914-1919) Britain allied with France, Russia, USA, Italy and Japan against Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Turkey. This period saw the maturing of Indian nationalism. The nationalist's response to British participation in the war was three fold:

1. The moderates supported the empire in the war as a matter of duty.
2. The extremist, including Tilak supported the war efforts in the mistaken belief that Britain would repay India's loyalty with gratitude in the form of self-government.
3. The revolutionaries decided to utilize the opportunity to wage a war against British rule and liberate the country.

The Indian supporters of British war efforts failed to see that the imperialist powers were fighting precisely to safeguard their own colonies and market.

Revolutionary Activity during First World War:

The revolutionary activity was carried out through the Ghadr Party in North America, Berlin Committee in Europe and some scattered mutinies by Indian soldiers, such as the one in Singapore. In India, for revolutionaries striving for immediate complete independence, the war seemed a heaven sent opportunity, draining India of troops and raising the possibility of financial and military help from Germany and Turkey- the enemies of Britain.

The Ghadr:

The Ghadr party was a revolutionary group organized around a weekly newspaper The Ghadr with its headquarters at San-Francisco and branches along the US coast and in the Far East.

These revolutionaries included mainly ex-soldiers and peasants who had migrated from the Punjab to the USA and Canada in search of better employment opportunities. They were based in the US and Canadian cities along the western coast. Pre-Ghadr revolutionary activity had been carried on by RamDas Puri, G.D. Kumar, Tarak Nath Das, Sohan Singh Bhakhna and Lala Har Dayal who reached there in 1911. Finally in 1913, the Ghadr was established. To carry out revolutionary activities the earlier activist had set up 'Swadesh Sewak Home' at Vancouver and 'United India House' at Seattle.

The Ghadr programme was to organize assassinations of officials, publish revolutionary and anti-imperialist literature, work among Indian troops stationed abroad, procure arms and bring about a simultaneous revolt in all British colonies.

The moving spirits behind the Ghadr party were Lala HarDayal, Ram Chandra, Bhagwan Singh, Kartar Singh Sharaba, Barkatullah, Bhai Parmanand. The ghadrites intended to bring about a revolt in India. Their plans were encouraged by two events in 1914- the Komagat Maru incident and the outbreak of First World War.

Komagata Maru incident:

The importance of this event lies in the fact that it created an explosive situation in Punjab. Komagata Maru was the name of a ship which was carrying 370 passengers mainly Sikh and Punjabi Muslims, would be immigrants from Singapore to Vancouver. They were turned back by Canadian authorities after two months of privation (a state in which food and other essentials for well-being are lacking) and uncertainty. It was generally believed that the Canadian authorities were influenced by the British government. The ship finally anchored at Calcutta in September, 1914. The inmates refused to board the Punjab bound train. In the ensuing clash with the police at Budge-Budge near Calcutta, 22 persons died.

Inflamed by this and with the outbreak of war the Ghadr leaders decided to launch a violent attack on British rule in India. They urged fighters to go to India. Kartar Singh Sharaba and Raghubar Dayal Gupta left for India. Bengal revolutionaries were contacted. Ras Behari Ghosh and Sachin Sanyal were asked to lead the movement. Political dacoities were committed to raise funds. The Punjab political dacoities of January to February 1915 had a somewhat new social content. In at least three out of five main cases, the raiders targeted the money lenders and the death records before decamping with the cash. Thus, an explosive situation was

created in Punjab. The Ghadrites fixed February 21st, 1915 as the date for an armed revolt in Ferozepur, Lahore and Rawalpindi garrisons. The plan was foiled at the last moment due to treachery. The authorities took immediate action aided by the Defence of India Rule, 1915. Rebellion regiments were disbanded, leaders arrested and deported and 45 of them hanged. Ras Behari Bose fled to Japan (from where he and Abani Mukherjee made many efforts to send arms) while Sachin Sanyal was transported for life.

The British met the war time threat by a formidable battery of repressive measures- the most intensive since 1857- and above all by the Defence of India Act passed in March 1915 primarily to smash Ghadr movement. There were large scale detentions without trials, special courts giving extremely severe sentences, numerous court marshals of army men. Apart from the Bengal terrorist and Punjab Ghadrites, radical Pan-Islamists- Ali Brothers, Maulana Azad, Hasrat Mohani -were interned for years.

Evaluation of Ghadr:

The achievement of the Ghadr movement lay in the realm of ideology. It preached militant nationalism with a complete secular approach. But politically and militarily, it failed to achieve much because it lacked an organized and sustained leadership, under-estimated the extent of preparation required at every level- organizational, ideological, financial and tactical strategic- and perhaps Lala Har Dayal was unsuited for the job of an organizer.

Revolutionaries in Europe:

The Berlin Committee for Indian Independence in 1915 by Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Bhupendranath Dutta, Lala Har Dayal and others with the help of German foreign office under 'Zimmerman Plan'. These revolutionaries aimed to mobilize the Indian settlers abroad to send volunteers and arms to India to incite rebellion among Indian troops there and to even organize an armed invasion of British India to liberate the country.

The Indian revolutionaries in Europe sent missions to Bagdad, Persia, Turkey and Kabul to work among Indian troops and the Indian prisoners of war and to incite anti-British feeling among the people of these countries. One mission under Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, Barkatullah and Obaidullah Sindhi went to Kabul to organize a 'provincial Indian government' there with the help of Crown Prince Amanullah.

Mutiny in Singapore:

Among the scattered mutinies during this period, the most notable was in Singapore on February 15, 1915 by Punjabi Muslim fifth light infantry and the 36th Sikh battalion under Jamadar Chisti Khan, Jamadar Abdul Gani, and Subedar Daud Khan. It was crushed after a fierce battle in which many were killed, later 37 persons were executed and 41 transported for life.

Revolutionary activity in India during War:

The revolutionary activity in India during this period was concentrated in Punjab and Bengal. The Bengal plans were a part of far flung conspiracy organized by Ras Behari Bose and Sachin

Sanyal in cooperation with returned Ghadrites in Punjab. In August, 1914 the Bengal revolutionaries reaped a rich haul of 50 Mauser pistols and 46000 rounds of ammunition from the Rodda firm in Calcutta through a sympathetic employee. Most Bengal groups were organized under Jatin Mukherji (or Bagha Jatin) and planned disruption of railway lines, seizure of Fort William and landing of German arms. These plans were ruined due to poor coordination, and Bagha Jatin died a hero's death near Balasore on the Orissa coast in September 1915.

There was temporary respite in revolutionary activity after the war because the release of prisoners held under the Defense of India Rules cooled down passion a bit; there was statement and the talk of constitutional reforms; and the coming of Gandhiji on the scene with programme of non-violent non-cooperation promised new hope.

Home Rule League Movement

The Home Rule Movement was the Indian response to the First World War in a less charged but a more effective way than the response of Indians living abroad which took the form of the romantic Ghadr adventure.

The Indian Home Rule Leagues were organised on the lines of the Irish Home Rule Leagues and they represented the emergence of a new trend of aggressive politics. Annie Besant and Tilak were the pioneers of this new trend.

Factors leading to the Movement:

Some of the factors were as follows:

- A section of nationalists felt that popular pressure was required to attain concessions from the Government.
- The Moderates were disillusioned with the Morley- Minto reforms.
- People were feeling the burden of wartime miseries caused by high taxation and a rise in prices, and were ready to participate in any aggressive movement of protest.
- The War, being fought among the major imperialist powers of the day and backed by naked propaganda against each other, exposed the myth of white superiority.
- Tilak was ready to assume leadership after his release in June 1914, and had made conciliatory gestures to reassure the Government of his loyalty and to the Moderates that he wanted, like the Irish Home Rulers, a reform of the administration and not an overthrow of the Government. He also said that the acts of violence had only served to retard the pace of political progress in India. He urged all Indians to assist the British Government in its hour of crisis.
- Annie Besant, the Irish theosophist based in India since 1896, had decided to enlarge the sphere of her activities to include the building of a movement for Home Rule on the lines of the Irish Home Rule Leagues.

The Leagues:

Both Tilak and Besant realised that the sanction of a Moderate-dominated Congress as well as full cooperation of the Extremists was essential for the movement to succeed. Having failed at

the 1914 session of the Congress to reach a Moderate-Extremist rapprochement, Tilak and Besant decided to revive political activity on their own.

By early 1915, Annie Besant had launched a campaign to demand self-government for India after the war on the lines of white colonies. She campaigned through her newspapers, New India and Commonweal, and through public meetings and conferences. At the annual session of the Congress in 1915 the efforts of Tilak and Besant met with some success.

It was decided that the Extremists be admitted to the Congress. Although Besant failed to get the Congress to approve her scheme of Home Rule Leagues, the Congress did commit itself to a programme of educative propaganda and to a revival of local-level Congress committees.

Not willing to wait for too long, Besant laid the condition that if the Congress did not implement its commitments, she would be free to set up her own League,—which she finally had to, as there was no response from the Congress.

Tilak and Besant set up their separate leagues to avoid any friction.

Tilak's League was set up in April 1916 and was restricted to Maharashtra (excluding Bombay city), Karnataka, Central Provinces, and Berar. It had six branches and the demands included swarajya, formation of linguistic states and education in the vernacular.

Besant's League was set up in September 1916 in Madras and covered the rest of India (including Bombay city). It had 200 branches, was loosely organised as compared to Tilak's League and had George Arundale as the organising secretary. Besides Arundale, the main work was done by B.W. Wadia and C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar.

The Home Rule agitation was later joined by Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai, Chittaranjan Das, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Tej Bahadur Sapru and Lala Lajpat Rai. Some of these leaders became heads of local branches.

Many of the Moderate Congressmen who were disillusioned with Congress inactivity, and some members of Gokhale's Servants of India Society also joined the agitation. However, Anglo-Indians, most of the Muslims and non-Brahmins from South did not join as they felt Home Rule would mean rule of the Hindu majority, mainly the high caste.

The Home Rule League Programme:

The League campaign aimed to convey to the common man the message of Home Rule as self-government. It carried a much wider appeal than the earlier mobilisations did and also attracted the hitherto 'politically backward' regions of Gujarat and Sindh.

The aim was to be achieved by promoting political education and discussion through public meetings, organising libraries and reading rooms containing books, conferences, organising classes for students on politics, propaganda through newspapers, pamphlets, posters, illustrated post-cards, plays, religious songs, etc., collecting funds, organising social work, and participating in local government activities.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 proved to be an added advantage for the Home Rule campaign.

Government Attitude:

The Government came down with severe repression, especially in Madras where the students were prohibited from attending political meetings. A case was instituted against Tilak which was rescinded by the High Court. Tilak was barred from entering the Punjab and Delhi. In June 1917, Annie Besant and her associates, B.P. Wadia and George Arundale, were arrested.

This invited nationwide protest. In a dramatic gesture, Sir S. Subramaniya Iyer renounced his knighthood while Tilak advocated a programme of passive resistance. The repression only served to harden the attitude of the agitators and strengthen their resolve to resist the Government.

Montagu, the secretary of state, commented that "Shiva ...cut his wife into fifty-two pieces only to discover that he had fifty-two wives. This is what happens to the Government of India when it interns Mrs Besant." The Government released Besant in September 1917.

Why the Agitation Faded Out by 1919:

1. There was a lack of effective organization.
2. Communal riots were witnessed during 1917-18.
3. The Moderates who had joined the Congress after Besant's arrest were pacified by talk of reforms (contained in Montagu's statement of August 1917 which held self-government as the long-term goal of the British rule in India) and Besant's release.
4. Talk of passive resistance by the Extremists kept the Moderates off from activity from September 1918 onwards.
5. Montagu-Chelmsford reforms which became known in July 1918 further divided the nationalist ranks.
6. Tilak had to go abroad (September 1918) in connection with a case while Annie Besant vacillated over her response to the reforms and the techniques of passive resistance. With Besant unable to give a positive lead and Tilak away in England, the movement was left leaderless.

Positive Gains:

- a. The movement shifted the emphasis from the educated elite to the masses and permanently deflected the movement from the course mapped by the Moderates.
- b. It created an organizational link between the town and the country, which was to prove crucial in later years when the movement entered its mass phase in a true sense.
- c. It created a generation of ardent nationalists.
- d. It prepared the masses for politics of the Gandhian style.
- e. The August 1917 declaration of Montagu and the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were influenced by the Home Rule agitation.
- f. Tilak's and Besant's efforts in the Moderate-Extremist reunion at Lucknow (1916) revived the Congress as an effective instrument of Indian nationalism.
- g. It lent a new dimension and a sense of urgency to the national movement.

Lucknow Session of the Indian National Congress 1916:

The nationalists soon saw that disunity in their ranks was injuring their cause and that they must put up a united front before the government. The growing nationalist feeling in the country and the urge for national unity produced two historic developments at the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in 1916 presided over by a moderate Ambika Charan Mazumdar.

First, the two wings of the Congress were reunited. Because the old controversies had lost their meaning and both the moderates and extremists realised that the split in the Congress had led to political inactivity. Tilak, released from jail in 1914, immediately saw the change in the situation and set out to unify the two streams of Congressmen. To conciliate the moderate nationalists, he declared:

"I may state once for all that we are trying in India, as the Irish Home-rulers have been all along doing in Ireland, for a reform of the system of administration and not for the overthrow of government; and I have no hesitation in saying that the acts of violence which have been committed in the different parts of India are not only repugnant to me, but have, in my opinion, only unfortunately retarded to a great extent, the pace of our political progress."

Annie Besant also made efforts for reunion. More over death of two Moderates, Gokhale and Pheroze Shah Mehta, who had led the moderate opposition to the extremists, facilitated the reunion.

On the other hand, the rising tide of nationalism compelled the old leaders to welcome back into the Congress Lokmanya Tilak and other militant nationalists. The Lucknow Congress was the first muted Congress since 1907. It demanded further constitutional reforms as a step towards self-government.

Second, at Lucknow, the Congress and the All India Muslim League sank their old differences and put up common political demands before the government.

While the War and the two Home Rule Leagues were creating a new sentiment in the country and changing the character of the Congress, the Muslim League had also been undergoing gradual changes. The younger section of the educated Muslims was turning to bolder nationalist politics. The War period witnessed further developments in that direction. Consequently, in 1914, the government suppressed the publication of the **Hilal of Abul Kalam Azad** and the **Comrade of Maulana Mohamed Ali**.

It also interned the **Ali Brothers** Maulana Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali and Hasrat Mohani and Abul Kalam Azad. The League reflected, at least partially, the political militancy of its younger members. It gradually began to outgrow the limited political outlook of the Aligarh school of thought and moved nearer to the policies of the Congress.

Other reasons for this shift in the league's position were

1. Britain's refusal to help Turkey (ruled by Khalifa who claimed religio-political leadership of all Muslims) in its wars in the Balkans (1912-13) and with Italy (during 1911) has infuriated the Muslims.

2. Annulment of partition of Bengal in 1911 had annoyed those sections of Muslims who had supported the partition.
3. The refusal of British Government in India to set up a university at Aligarh with powers to affiliate colleges over India also alienated Muslims.
4. The Calcutta session of Muslim League (1912) had committed the League to "working with other groups for a system of self-government suited to India, provided it did not come in the conflict with its basic objective of protection of interests of Indian Muslims." Thus, the goal of self-government similar to that of the Congress brought both sides closer.

While the League agreed to present joint constitutional demands with the Congress to the government, the Congress accepted the Muslim League's position on separate electorates. Finally, the unity between the Congress and the League was brought about by the signing of the Congress-League Pact, known popularly as the Lucknow Pact.

An important role in bringing the two together was played by Lokmanya Tilak and Mohammad Ali Jinnah because the two believed that India could win self-government only through Hindu-Muslim unity. Tilak declared at the time:

"It has been said, gentlemen, by some that we Hindus have yielded too much to our Mohammedan brethren. I am sure I represent the sense of the Hindu community all over India when I say that we could not have yielded too much. I would not care if the rights of self-government are granted to the Mohammedan community only. I would not care if they are granted to the lower and the lowest classes of the Hindu population. When we have to fight against a third party, it is a very important thing that we stand on this platform united, united in race, united in religion, as regard all different shades of political creed."

The two organisations passed the same resolutions at their sessions, put forward a joint scheme of political reforms based on separate electorates and demanded that the British government should make a declaration that it would confer self-government on India at an early date.

The main clauses of the Lucknow Pact:

1. There shall be self-government in India.
2. Muslims should be given one-third representation in the central government.
3. There should be separate electorates for all the communities until a community demanded for joint electorates.
4. System of weightage should be adopted.
5. The number of the members of Central Legislative Council should be increased to 150.
6. At the provincial level, four-fifth of the members of the Legislative Councils should be elected and one fifth should be nominated.
7. The strength of Provincial legislative should not be less than 125 in the major provinces and from 50 to 75 in the minor provinces.
8. All members, except those nominated, were to be elected directly on the basis of adult franchise.

9. No bill concerning a community should be passed if the bill is opposed by three-fourth of the members of that community in the Legislative Council.
10. Term of the Legislative Council should be five years.
11. Members of Legislative Council should themselves elect their president.
12. Half of the members of Imperial Legislative Council should be Indians.
13. Indian Council must be abolished.
14. The salaries of the Secretary of State for Indian Affairs should be paid by the British Government and not from Indian funds.
15. Out of two Under Secretaries, one should be Indian.
16. The Executive should be separated from the Judiciary

Negatives:

It was true that, the Lucknow Pact marked an important step forward in Hindu-Muslim unity. But unfortunately, it did not involve the Hindu and Muslim masses and it accepted the pernicious principle of separate electorates.

Moreover, it was based on the notion of bringing together the educated Hindus and Muslims as separate political entities; in other words, without secularisation of their political outlook, which would make them realise that in politics they had no separate interests as Hindus or Muslims. **The Lucknow Pact, therefore, left the way open to the future resurgence of communalism in Indian politics.**

Positives:

Despite being a controversial decision, the acceptance of the principle of separate electorates represented a serious desire to allay minority fears of majority domination. Secondly, the immediate effect of the developments at Lucknow was tremendous. The unity between the moderate nationalists and the militant nationalists and between the National Congress and the Muslim League aroused great political enthusiasm in the country.

Even the British government felt it necessary to placate the nationalists. Hitherto it had relied heavily on repression to quiet the nationalist agitation.

Large numbers of radical nationalists and revolutionaries had been jailed or interned under the notorious Defence of India Act and other similar regulations.

The government now decided to appease nationalist opinion by declaring its intention to grant self-government to Indians as contained in Montagu's August 1917 declaration.

And in July 1918 the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms were announced. But Indian nationalism was not appeased. In fact, the Indian national movement was soon to enter its third and last phase the era of mass struggle or the Gandhian Era

Montagu's Statement (1917):

To placate the nationalists, the government announced on 20 August 1917 that its policy in India "is of an increasing participation of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of Responsible Government of India as an integral part of the British empire" which is popularly known as Montagu's statement.

Importance of Montagu's Statement:

From now onwards, the demand by nationalists for self-government or Home rule could not be termed as seditious since attainment of self-government for Indians now became a government policy, unlike Morley's statement in 1909 that the reforms were not intended to give self-government to India.

Indian Objections:

The objections of the Indian leaders to Montagu's statement were twofold:

First, no specific timeframe was given.

Second, the government alone was to decide the nature and timing of advance towards a responsible government and the Indians were resentful that the British would decide what was good and what was bad for Indians.

Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and government of India Act, 1919:

In line with the government policy contained in Montagu's statement (August 1917), the Government announced further constitutional reforms in July 1918, known as Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms or Montford Reforms.

Based on these, the Government of India Act, 1919 was enacted. The main features of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were as follows.

Provincial Government—Introduction of Dyarchy:

Executive:

1. Dyarchy, i.e., rule of two—executive councilors and popular ministers—was introduced. The governor was to be the executive head in the province.
2. Subjects were divided into two lists: "reserved" which included subjects such as law and order, finance, land revenue, irrigation, etc., and "transferred" subjects such as education, health, local government, industry, agriculture, excise, etc.
The "reserved" subjects were to be administered by the governor through his executive council of bureaucrats, and the "transferred" subjects were to be administered by

- ministers nominated from among the elected members of the legislative council.
3. The ministers were to be responsible to the legislature and had to resign if a no-confidence motion was passed against them by the legislature, while the executive councilors were not to be responsible to the legislature.
 4. In case of failure of constitutional machinery in the province the governor could take over the administration of "transferred" subjects also.
 5. The secretary of state and the governor-general could interfere in respect of "reserved" subjects while in respect of the "transferred" subjects; the scope for their interference was restricted.

Legislature:

1. Provincial Legislative Councils were further expanded—70% of the members were to be elected.
2. The system of communal and class electorates was further consolidated.
3. Women were also given the right to vote.
4. The Legislative Councils could initiate legislation but the governor's assent was required. The governor could veto bills and issue ordinances.
5. The Legislative Councils could reject the budget but the governor could restore it, if necessary.
6. The legislators enjoyed freedom of speech.

Central Government—Still Without Responsible Government:

Executive:

1. The governor-general was to be the chief executive authority.
2. There were to be two lists for administration—central and provincial.
3. In the viceroy's executive council of 8, three were to be Indians.
4. The governor-general retained full control over the "reserved" subjects in the provinces.
5. The governor-general could restore cuts in grants; certify bills rejected by the Central Legislature and issue ordinances.

Legislature:

1. A bicameral arrangement was introduced. The lower house or Central Legislative Assembly would consist of 144 members (41 nominated and 103 elected—52 General, 30 Muslims, 2 Sikhs, 20 Special) and the upper house or Council of State would have 60 members (26 nominated and 34 elected—20 General, 10 Muslims, 3 Europeans and 1 Sikh).
2. The Council of State had tenure of 5 years and the Central Legislative Assembly had tenure of 3 years.
3. The legislators could ask questions and supplementaries pass adjournment motions and vote a part of the budget, but 75% of the budget was still not votable.
4. Some Indians found their way into important committees including finance.

Drawbacks:

The reforms had many drawbacks:

1. Franchise was very limited.
2. At the Centre, the legislature had no control over the governor-general and his executive council.
3. Division of subjects was not satisfactory at the Centre.
4. Allocation of seats for Central Legislature to provinces was based on 'importance' of provinces for instance, Punjab's military importance and Bombay's commercial importance.
5. At the level of provinces, division of subjects and parallel administration of two parts was irrational and hence unworkable.
6. The provincial ministers had no control over finances and over the bureaucrats, leading to constant friction between the two. Ministers were often not consulted on important matters too; in fact, they could be overruled by the governor on any matter that the latter considered special.
7. On the home government (in Britain) front, the Government of India Act, 1919 made an important change the secretary of state was henceforth to be paid out of the British exchequer.

Congress' Reaction:

The Congress met in a special session in August 1918 at Bombay under Hasan Imam's presidency and declared the reforms to be "disappointing" and "unsatisfactory" and demanded effective self-government instead.

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