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1. Decline of the Mughals

The Mughal dynasty founded by Zahiruddin Babur following his decisive victory at the battle of Panipat in 1526 continued to grow in size under his successors. It reached its territorial climax under Aurangzeb (1657-1707) when the Mughal Empire was stretched from Kashmir in the North to Jinji in South and from Hindukush in the West to Chittagong in the East. But the process of decline had set in during the time of Aurangzeb and it could not be arrested by his weak successors. Ironically such territorial gains by Aurangzeb instead of increasing the strength of the empire actually weakened the foundations because of his socio-religious policies which, in sharp contrast to his ancestors, were intolerant and fundamentalist in nature.

After Aurangzeb's death in 1707 the empire kept shrinking in size and kept weakening. In the 150 years period between 1707 when Aurangzeb died and 1857 when the last of the Mughals Bahadur Shah Zafar was deposed by the British there were as many as 12 Mughals who occupied the throne. Two of the longest surviving, Muhammad Shah (1719-48) and Shah Alam (1759-1806) of these witnessed devastating attacks by Nadirshah (1739) and Ahmadshah Abdali, who attacked six times during 1748-67. These aggressions left the foundations of the Mughal Empire completely shaken apart from leading to rebellion, revolt and cessation by regional powers all around.

Causes of the downfall of the Mughal Empire can be analysed under following heads:

1.1. Aurangzeb's Responsibility

Although the expansion of Mughal Empire reached its optimum point under Aurangzeb yet it only resembled an inflated balloon. The Mughal Empire had expanded beyond the point of effective control and its vastness only tended to weaken the centre.

His policy of religious bigotry proved counterproductive and provoked a general discontent in the country and the empire was faced with the rebellions of Sikhs, the Jats, the Bundelas, the Rajputs and above all, the Marathas. Aurangzeb was orthodox in his outlook and he tried to remain within the framework of Islamic law which was developed outside India in vastly dissimilar situations and could hardly be applied rigidly to India.

The failure of Aurangzeb to respect the susceptibilities of his non-Muslim subjects on many occasions, his adherence to the time-worn policy towards temples and re-imposition of jizyah (per capita tax levied on a section of an Islamic state's non-Muslim citizens) as laid down by the Islamic law did not help him to rally the Muslims to his side or generate a greater sense of loyalty towards a state based on Islamic Law. On the other hand, it alienated the Hindus and strengthened the hands of those sections which were opposed to the Mughal Empire for political or other reasons.

Aurangzeb's mistaken policy of continuous war in Deccan was again a fatal blow to Mughal Empire. It was continued for 27 years and drained the resources of the empire completely. So Aurangzeb's various such steps marked the start of Mughal Empire's decline.

1.2. Weak successors of Aurangzeb

The Mughal system of government being despotic much depended on the personality of emperor, thus succession of weak emperors was reflected in every field of administration. All the emperors after Aurangzeb were weaklings and therefore unable to meet the challenges both internal and external. Bahadur Shah I (1702-1712) was too old to maintain the prestige of the empire and he liked to appease all parties by profuse grants of titles and rewards. Due to his such attitude he was nick named "Shah-i-Bekhabar" (The Headless king), Jahandar Shah (1712-13), the next in succession, was a wildly extravagant fool, Farrukshiyar was a complete

coward, while Muhammad shah spent more of time in watching animal fights. Due to his addiction to wine and woman, Muhammad shah got a title of "Rangeela". Ahmad shah was even one step ahead in his sensual pursuit and extended the harem (a separate place for concubines/wives of emperor) to a very large area where he spent weeks or months. In administration he also took equally foolish decisions. Thus successors were evidently weak and the huge task of managing such a vast Mughal empire was far beyond their capacity.

1.3. Degeneration of Mughal Nobility

There was also the degeneration of the Mughal nobility. When the Mughals came to India, they had a hardy character. But too much of wealth, luxury and leisure softened their character. Their harems became full. They got wine in plenty. They went in palanquins to the battle-fields. Such nobles were not fit to fight against the Marathas, the Rajputs and the Sikhs. The Mughal Nobility degenerated at a very rapid pace.

The chief reason for the degeneration of the nobility was that gradually it became a closed corporation. It gave no opportunity of promotion of capable men belonging to other classes as had been the case earlier. The offices of the state became hereditary and the preserve of people belonging to a few families. Another reason was their incorrigible habits of extravagant living and pompous display which weakened their morale and drained their limited financial resources. Most of the Nobles spent huge sums on keeping large harems, maintaining a big staff of servants etc. and indulged in other forms of senseless show.

The result was that many of the nobles became bankrupt in spite of their large Jagirs. Dismissal from service or loss of Jagirs spelt ruin for most of them. That promoted many of them to form groups and factions for securing large and profitable Jagirs. Others turned themselves into grasping tyrant who mercilessly fleeced the peasants of their Jagirs. Many Nobles became ease-loving and soft. They dreaded war and became so much accustomed to an extravagant way of life that they could not do without many of the luxuries even when they were on military campaigns.

The Mughal Nobility was corrupt and fact-in-ridden. By giving suitable bribes, any Government rule could be evaded or any favour secured. The interests of the Mughal Empire did not appeal to them. The British regularly bribed Mughal Nobles for getting their work done. Even the highest nobles took bribes which were called Peshkash or presents. That lowered the tone of administration. With the passage of time, corruption and bribery increased. Later on, even some of the Mughal Emperors shared the money which their favourites charged as Peshkash from people desirous of getting a post or seeking a transfer. Factionalism kept on growing till it extended to all branches of administration the two major causes of functionalism were struggle for Jagirs and personal advancement and struggle for supremacy between the Wazir and the monarch. Thus faction fights weakened the monarchy, gave a chance to the Marathas, Jats etc. to increase their power and to interfere in the court politics and prevented the Emperors from following a consistent policy. Factionalism became the most dangerous bane of the Mughal Rule from 1715 onwards. To save themselves from these faction fights, the Mughal Emperors depended upon unworthy favourites and that worsened the situation.

1.4. Court Factions

Towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign influential nobles at the court organised themselves into pressure groups. Though these groups were formed on clan or family relationships, personal affiliations or interests were the dominating factors. These groups kept the country in a state of perpetual political unrest. The 'turani' or central Asian party consisted of nobles from trans-oxiana. During the reign of Muhammad Shah, Asaf Zah, Nizam-ul-mulk, Kamruddin and Zakariya Khan were the principle leaders of Turani faction, while the leaders of the Persian faction were Amir Khan, Ishaq Khan and Saadat Khan. These factions kept their own retainers who were mostly recruited from central Asia or Persia as the case might be. Together these two factions known as the Mughal or Foreign Party were pitched against the Hindustani party

whose leaders during this period were Sayyid Abdulla Khan and Sayyid Hussain Ali (sayyid brothers), who enjoyed the support of the Hindus. Each faction tried to win the emperor to its view point and poised his ears against the other faction. They fought battles, upsetting the peace of the country and could not manage administration properly. Even in the face of foreign danger these hostile groups could not forge a united front and often intrigued with the invader. The personal interest of Nizam-ul-mulk (kilich khan) and Burhan-ul-mulk (saadat khan) led them to intrigue with Nadir Shah.

1.5. Defective Law of Succession

Another cause was the absence of the law or custom, of the firstborn child to inherit the family estate (primogeniture), in preference to siblings, in the matter of succession to the throne. The result was that every Mughal Prince considered himself to be equally fit to become the ruler and was prepared to fight out his claim. After the death of Bahadur Shah, the various claimants to the throne were merely used as tools by the leaders of rival factions to promote their own personal interests.

Zulfikar Khan acted as the king-maker in the war of succession which followed after the death of Bahadur Shah I in 1712. Likewise, the Sayyid Brothers acted as king-makers from 1713 to 1720. They were instrumental in the appointment of four kings to the throne. After them Mir Mohammad Amin and Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk acted as king-makers. Thus the absence of the law of succession contributed to the decline of the Mughal Empire.

1.6. The rise of Marathas

Another important factor which contributed to the decline of the Mughal Empire was the rise of the Marathas under the Peshwas. They consolidated their position in Western India and then started entertaining plans for a Hindu-Pad Padshahi or a Greater Maharashtra Empire. The dream could be realised only at the cost of the Mughal Empire. The gains of the Marathas were the loss of the Mughals.

The Marathas became the strongest power in Northern India in the mid-eighteenth century. They played the role of king-makers at the Delhi Court. They acted as the defenders of the country against foreign invaders like Ahmad Shah Abdali. It is true that the Marathas did not succeed in their great mission but their conquests in Northern India in the 18th century gave a death-blow to the Mughal Empire. The inability of the Mughal Emperors to accommodate the Marathas and to adjust their claims within the framework of the Mughal Empire, and the consequent breakdown of the attempt to create a composite ruling class in India; and the impact of all these developments on politics at the court and in the country, and upon the security of the north-western passes.

1.7. Military Weaknesses

Another cause of Mughal downfall was the deterioration and demoralization in the Mughal Army. The abundance of riches of India, the use of wine and comforts had their evil effects on the Mughal Army and nothing was done to stop the deterioration. The soldiers cared more for personal comforts and less for winning battles. A number of military vices may be attributed to the degenerate Mughals; indiscipline, luxurious habits, inactivity and commissariat and cumbersome equipment.

The impotence of the Mughal Armies was declared to the world when the Mughals failed to recapture Qandhar in spite of three determined efforts made by them. In 1739, Nadir Shah not only plundered the whole of Delhi but also ordered wholesale massacre. When such a thing happened without any effort on the part of the ruler to stop it, he forfeited the right to command allegiance from the people. The Mughal States was a police state and when it failed

to maintain internal order and external peace, the people lost all their respect for the Government.

The demoralization of the army was one of the principal factors in the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. The source of the weakness was the composition of the army which consisted chiefly of contingents maintained by the great nobles from the revenues of assignments held by them for that purpose. As the authority of the sovereign relaxed, the general tendency among the great nobles was naturally to hold them as their own those assignments which maintained their personal troops.

The general laxity of discipline converted the army into a mob. Drill was unknown and a soldier's training which he might undergo or as he liked, consisted in muscular exercise and an individual practice in the use of the weapons with which he was armed. He mounted guard or not as he liked. There was no regular punishment for military crimes. Aurangzeb himself habitually overlooked a matters of course acts of treason, cowardice and deliberate neglect of duty before the enemy.

About the military system of the Mughals, it is contended that their weapons and methods of war had become outmoded. They put too much reliance on artillery and armoured cavalry. The artillery was local in action and ponderous in movement. It was rendered stationary by huge tail of camp which looked like a city with its markets, tents, stores and baggage. All kinds of people, men and women, old and young, combatants and non-combatants, besides elephants, cattle and beasts of burden, accompanied the Mughal Army.

On the other hand, the Maratha cavalry was swift and elusive like wind. They suddenly erupted on Mughal Camps and launched damaging attacks on their posts. Before the Mughals could get time for recovery, the Marathas, "like water parted by the oar," closed and fell on them.

At the turn of the 18th century, musketry made rapid progress and became prominent in the methods of warfare. Swift running cavalry of matchlock men was superior to army equipped with heavy artillery and armour-clad cavalry. In spite of that, the Mughals refused to change their old methods of warfare and no wonder they were defeated by the Marathas.

1.8. Economic Bankruptcy

After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire faced financial bankruptcy. The beginning had already been made in the time of Aurangzeb and after his death; the system of tax farming (assigning the responsibility for tax revenue collection to private citizens or groups) was resorted to. Although the Government did not get much by this method, the people were ruined. They were taxed to such an extent that they lost all incentive to produce.

Shah Jahan had increased the state demand to one-half of the produce. The extravagant expenditure by Shah Jahan on buildings was a crushing burden upon the resources of the country. The venality of the officials and the tyrannical caprice of the Mughal Governors, added to the misery of the people who had little or no means, for obtaining redress. Aurangzeb's long war in Deccan besides emptying the royal treasury almost ruined the trade and industry of the country. The marches of the imperial army damaged crops in the Deccan, While the beasts of burden ate away all standing crops and greenery. The emperor ignored all complaints brought to him because of financial difficulties. Whatever little was left was destroyed by Maratha raiders- Maratha horses were fed on standing crops and Maratha soldiers destroyed whatever property they found too heavy to be carried. The peasant gave up the agriculture and took life of plunder and highway robbery.

Under later Mughals as provinces asserted their independence one after the other and ceased the payment of any revenue to the center, the numerous wars of succession and political turmoil coupled with the lavish living of the emperors emptied the royal treasury to the extent

that salaries of soldiers could not be paid regularly. The financial collapse came in the time of Alamgir II who was practically starved by his Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk and it is stated that Alamgir II had no conveyance to take him to the Idgah and he had to walk on foot.

1.9. Nature of Mughal State

Mughal government was essentially a police government and confined its attention mainly to the maintenance of internal and external order and collection of revenue. The Mughals also failed to effect a fusion between Hindus and Muslims and create a composite nation whatever little effort was made by akbar to weld the people into a nation was undone by bigotry of Aurangzeb and his worthless successors. Many Indian chiefs looked upon Mughal rulers as foreigners and as enemies of India and Hindu religion which gave the Marathas, the Rajputs and others their awaited opportunity.

1.10. Invasion of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali

The invasion of nadir shah in 1739 gave a death blow to the stumbling Mughal Empire. Besides depleting the Mughal treasury of its wealth, it exposed to the world the military weakness of the empire and its utter degeneration. Turbulent element in the country so far kept in check by the name and prestige of empire rose in rebellion. The repeated invasion of nadir's successors Ahmad Shah Abdali deprived the empire of frontier provinces of Punjab Sindh, Kashmir etc. The Mughal authority has so greatly shrunk that in 1761 Abdali fought the battle of panipat not against Mughal Empire but against the Marathas who virtually controlled the whole of northern India. For about a decade 1761-72 a virtual afghan dictatorship under Naji-ud-daula was set up in Delhi.

1.11. Coming of the Europeans

With the weakness of Mughal central authority in the 18th century, war-lordism raised its early head. The European company also acted as war lords and profited from the confused times. The European company out did Indian princes in every sphere whether it was trade and commerce or diplomacy and war. The territorial gains of the English East India Company destroyed all chances of the revival of the Mughal Empire. The British won the Battle of Plassey and continued to expand their Empire in the Deccan and in the Gangetic Region. With the passage of time, they were able to establish their hold over the whole of India and there could be not be any chance for the revival of the Mughal Empire.

2. Rise of Regional Powers

By 1761, the Mughal Empire was Empire only in name, as its weaknesses had enabled the local powers to assert their independence. Yet the symbolic authority of the Mughal Emperor continued, as he was considered to be a source of political legitimacy. The new states did not directly challenge his authority and constantly sought his sanction to legitimise their rule. **The emergence of these states in the eighteenth century, therefore, represented a transformation rather than collapse of the polity.** It signified a decentralisation of power and not a power vacuum or political chaos.

Some of these states such as Bengal, Awadh and Hyderabad, may be characterised as 'succession states'. They arose as a result of assertion of autonomy by governors of Mughal provinces with the decay of central power. Others, such as the Maratha, Afghan, Jat and Punjab states were the product of rebellions by local chieftains, zamindars and peasants against Mughal authority. Not only did the politics in the two types of states or zones differ to some extent from each other, but there were differences among all of them because of local conditions. Yet, in many areas of governance these states continued the Mughal institutions and the administrative systems. Apart from the successor states and the rebel states, there

were also a few principalities like the Rajput kingdoms, Mysore and Travancore, which already enjoyed considerable amount of autonomy in the past and now in the eighteenth century became completely independent.

None of these states, however, succeeded in arresting the economic crisis which had set in during the 17th century. All of them remained basically rent-extracting states. The zamindars and jagirdars, whose number and political strength constantly increased, continued to fight over the income from the agriculture, while the condition of the peasantry continued to deteriorate. While these states prevented any breakdown of internal trade and even tried to promote foreign trade, they did nothing to modernise the basic industrial and commercial structure of their states. This largely explains their failure to consolidate themselves or to ward off external attack.

2.1. Bengal

The province of Bengal gradually became independent of Mughal control after Murshid Quli Khan became the governor or *Nazim* of Bengal. He was given the unprecedented privilege of holding the two offices of *nazim* and *diwan* (collector of revenue) simultaneously. The division of power, which was maintained throughout the Mughal period to keep both the imperial officers under control through a system of checks and balances, was thus done away with. This helped Murshid Quli, who was already known for his efficient revenue administration, to consolidate his position further. The foundation of Bengal state was of course his very successful revenue administration, which even in the days of political chaos elsewhere in the Empire, made Bengal a constant revenue paying surplus area. This efficient collection system was operated through powerful intermediary zamindars. But along with the rise of zamindars as a new powerful elite in the province, there was also the growing importance of merchants and bankers during this period.

Murshid Quli Khan died in 1727, and his son-in-law Shuja-ud-din ruled Bengal till 1739. In that year, Alivardi Khan deposed and killed Shuja-ud-din's son, Sarfaraz Khan, and made himself the Nawab. These three Nawabs gave Bengal a long period of peace and orderly administration and promoted its trade and industry. It was Alivardi's reign, which marked a virtual break with the Mughals. The major problem for Alivardi came from outside – he has to face Maratha depredations. Ultimately in 1751, Alivardi came to terms with the Marathas by agreeing to pay *chauth* (one-fourth of the revenue) and handing over Orissa. However one major fallout of Maratha raids was the disruption of Bengal trade, particularly of the overland trade with north and west India. But it was short-lived and recovery was aided by a massive increase in European trade.

Alivardi died in 1756, nominating his grandson Siraj-ud-daula his successor. But his succession as challenged by other contenders for the throne resulting in intense court factionalism, as the overmighty zamindars and commercial people felt threatened by an extremely ambitious and seertive young nawab. This destabilised the administration of Bengal and the advantage was taken by the English East India Company, which acquired foothold in Bengal through what is popularly known as the Plassey conspiracy of 1757 that ended the rule of Siraj-ud-daula. (This will be dealt in details in later sections.)

2.2. Oudh/Awadh

The subah of Awadh was extended from Kanauj district in the west to the river Karmnasa in the east.

It became virtually independent in 1722 when Saadat Khan was appointed its Governor. He succeeded in suppressing lawlessness and disciplining the big zamindars. He also carried out a fresh revenue settlement and thus, increasing the financial resources of his government.

Saadat Khan's successor was his nephew Safdar Jang, who was simultaneously appointed the *wazir* of the Empire in 1748 and granted in addition the province of Allahabad. 1753 marked an important turning point in the political history of north India, by signifying the visible succession of Awadh and Allahabad from the remainder of the dwindling Empire. After Safdar Jung's death, his son Shuja-du-daula was appointed the governor of Awadh. When Afghan leader Ahmad Shah Abdali arrived again in India to engage Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat (1761), Shuja joined the Afghan invader to see his local opponents, the Marathas, humbled and weakened. Within his own domain of Awadh and Allahabad his autonomy and power remained unchallenged till his encounter with the English East India Company in 1764. His involvement in the struggle between the British and the deposed Nawab of Bengal, Mir Qasim, led to his defeat by the British in the battle of Buxar (1764). (This will be dealt in details in later sections.)

2.3. Hyderabad and the Carnatic

The autonomous kingdom of Hyderabad was founded in 1724 by a powerful noble at the imperial court, Chin Qulich Khan, who eventually took the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah. He never openly declared his independence from the Central government but in practice he acted like an independent ruler. He subdued the refractory zamindars and showed tolerance towards the Hindus who had economic power in their hands and as result, Hyderabad witnessed the emergence of a new regional elite who supported the nizam.

After the death of nizam, Asaf Jah, Hyderabad began to experience a series of crises. During the subsequent years, the Marathas, Mysore and the Carnatic – all settled their territorial scores against Hyderabad. The situation improved again after 1762 during the period of Nizam Ali Khan, who seized control of the administration and during his long reign lasting up to 1803, he settled border disputes with his neighbours giving Hyderabad the much desired political stability.

The Carnatic was one of the *subahs* of the Mughal Deccan and as such came under the Nizam of Hyderabad's authority. But just as in practice the Nizam had become independent of Delhi, so also the Deputy Governor of the Carnatic, known as the Nawab of Carnatic, had freed himself of the control of the Viceroy of the Deccan. Later, after 1740, the affairs of the Carnatic deteriorated because of the repeated struggle for its Nawabship and this provided for an opportunity to the European trading companies to directly interfere in Indian politics.

2.4. The Sikhs

Founded at the end of the 15th century by Guru Nanak, the Sikh religion spread among the Jat peasantry and other lower castes of the Punjab. The transformation of the Sikhs into a militant, fighting community was begun by Guru Hargobind. It was, however, under the leadership of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and last Guru of Sikhs, that they became a political and military force. Aurangzeb was initially not very hostile to the Sikhs; but as the community grew in size and challenged the central authority of the Mughals, the emperor turned against them. Religious intolerance launched under the Aurangzeb's reign also provoked opposition from Sikh. After Guru Gobind Singh's death, Banda Bahadur rallied together the peasants and the lower castes of the Punjab and carried on a vigorous though unequal struggle against the Mughal army. However he failed because Mughal centre was still strong and the upper classes and castes of Punjab joined forces against Banda Bahadur for his championship of the lower castes and rural poor.

The invasion of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali and the consequent dislocation of Punjab administration gave the Sikhs an opportunity to rise once again. With the withdrawal of Abdali from the Punjab, they began to fill the political vacuum. Between 1765 and 1800 they brought the Punjab and Jammu under their control. But at this stage, power in the Sikh polity became

more horizontally structured, as *misls*, or combinations based on kinship ties, now held territories as units. The political authority in Punjab remained decentralized and more horizontally dispersed during this whole period until Ranjit Singh, the chief of the Sukerchakia *misal*, tried to raise a more centralized Sikh state at the end of the eighteenth century. By the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809, the English recognized him as the sole sovereign ruler of Punjab. By the time of his death, his authority was recognized in territories between the river Sutlej and the mountain ranges of Ladakh, Karakoram, Hindukush and Sulaiman.

At the central level of *darbar* politics also Ranjit Singh maintained a careful balance between the powerful Sikh chiefs on the one hand and on the other freshly recruited military commanders from among the peasants of central Punjab and the non-Punjabi nobles, such as Dogra Rajputs from Jammu. This delicate balancing game functioned well until Ranjit Singh's death in 1839. Within a decade of his death independent Sikh rule disappeared from Punjab, as a struggle for power among the mighty Sikh chiefs and the royal family feuds helped the English to take over without much difficulty.

2.5. The Marathas

Like all other powers that emerged and moved against the Mughal Empire, Maratha also had a history of suppression by the empire, especially in the war of 27 years, which started with an invasion of the Maratha Empire by Mughals under Aurangzeb in 1681. The Mughal strategy consisted of steady pressure on Maharashtra's forts, beating Maratha forces in the field when they could bring them to a battle and devastating Maharashtra's countryside. It can be inferred that the brutal attitude of the Mughal troops toward the Maratha partially functioned as a basis for hostility between two groups. Furthermore, since the Marathi believed in Hinduism, the religious intolerant positions adopted by the Muslim Mughal Empire provoked the resentment of the Marathas.

When Aurangzeb died after forty years of futile warfare in the Deccan, the Marathas still remained to be subjugated. The Maratha kingdom was, however, certainly weakened and the process was further exacerbated due to the civil war between Shahu at Satara and his aunt Tara Bai at Kolhapur who had carried out an anti-Mughal struggle since 1700 in the name of her son Shivaji II. The contest with the Tarabai faction was settled later in the Treaty of Warna in 1731, which gave the state of Kolapur to Shivaji II. In 1719, by helping the Sayyid brothers establish a puppet emperor in Delhi, *peshwa* (prime minister) Balaji Viswanath secured for his master a Mughal *sanad* (imperial order) recognizing Shahu's right to *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* (one-fourth and one-tenth respectively of government revenue) in six Mughal provinces of Deccan, *chauth* of Malwa and Gujarat and independent status in Maharashtra.

After Maratha civil war was brought to an end, the control of the state gradually passed on from the line of Shivaji to that of the peshwas. After Balaji Vishwanath died in 1720, he was succeeded as Peshwa by his 20-year-old son Baji Rao I. By 1740, when Baji Rao died, the Marathas had won control over Malwa, Gujarat and parts of Bundelkhand. The Maratha families of Gaekwad, Holkar, Sindhia and Bhonsle came into prominence during this period. In the short period of 20 years he had changed the character of the Maratha state. From the kingdom of Maharashtra it had been transformed into an Empire expanding in the North. He, however, failed to lay firm foundations of an empire. New territories were conquered and occupied but little attention was paid to their administration. The Marathas did not try to overturn the local zamindars for the payment of yearly tributes. A civilian system of revenue administration took time to emerge in this newly conquered region and this was a feature typical of all Maratha conquests.

After the death of Baji Rao, his son Balaji Bajirao, better known as Nana Saheb (1740-61) was appointed in his place. This was indeed the peak period of Maratha glory when all parts of India

had to face Maratha depredations. In face of an Afghan invasion overrunning Lahore and Multan, a treaty in 1752 brought the Mughal emperor under the protection of Marathas. The Maratha expedition to Punjab was, however, short-lived and soon a Sikh rebellion put any end to Maratha authority in this region. In any case, the Marathas by then had gained mastery over large parts of north India; but there was never any attempt to establish an empire. It was only in Khandesh, Malwa and Gujarat that they tried to put in place some kind of administration; their conquest elsewhere would seldom go beyond plunder and levying of chauth and sardeshmukhi. As a result it was difficult to maintain this mastery and soon an Afghan invasion under Ahmad Shah Abdali dealt a deadly blow to Maratha glory.

In the crucial Third Battle of Panipat, the Maratha forces under Sadasiv Rao Bhao were routed by Abdali and this marked the beginning of the decline of Maratha power. The peshwa died within weeks and as the young peshwa Madhav Rao tried to gain control of the polity, factionalism among the Maratha sardars raised its ugly head. This faction fighting increased further after Madhav Rao's death in 1772. His uncle Rahunath Rao tried to seize power, but was opposed by a number of important Maratha chiefs. Out of frustration, Rahunath Rao went over to the British and tried to capture power with their help. This resulted in the First Anglo-Maratha war. (This will be dealt in details in later sections.)

It was perhaps only the Maratha state that had the potential to develop into a new pan-India empire replacing the Mughals; but that potential was never fully realized because of the nature of the Maratha polity itself. Marathas produced a number of brilliant commanders and statesmen needed for the task. But the Maratha sardars lacked unity and they lacked the outlook and programme which were necessary for founding an all-India Empire. And so they failed to replace Mughals. They did, however, succeed in waging continuous war against the Mughal Empire. The Maratha state ultimately declined not so much because of factionalism, but because of the increasing power of the English in the Deccan. It was difficult for the Marathas to resist this efficient army. The only way the Marathas could have stood up to the rising British power was to have transformed their state into a modern state. This they failed to do.

Causes for Maratha defeat in Third Battle of Panipat -

- Abdali's forces outnumbered the Maratha forces.
- Near famine conditions prevailed in the Maratha camp as the road to Delhi was cut off.
- The Maratha policy of indiscriminate plunder has estranged both Muslim and Hindu powers like Jats and Rajputs.
- Mutual jealousies of the Maratha commanders considerably weakened their side.
- Abdali's forces were better organised and also better equipped. Use of swivel guns mounted on camels caused havoc in the Maratha forces.

Political significance of Third Battle of Panipat -

- Though Maratha suffered heavy loss of human lives in the battle, Maratha power soon began to prosper as before. It continued to do so for forty years until British supremacy was established by the second Anglo-Maratha war (1803).
- By the death of great Maratha captains, path was opened for the guilty ambitions of Raghunath Rao.
- It lowered Maratha prestige in the Indian political world.
- Maratha dream of an all India empire was irrevocably lost.
- It cleared the way for the rise of British Empire in India.

2.6. The Jats

The agriculturists Jat settlers living around Delhi, Mathura and Agra had revolted against the oppressive policies of Aurangzeb. However the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb suppressed the revolt but the area remained disturbed. Though originally a peasant uprising, the Jat revolt, led by zamindars, soon became predatory. The Jat state of Bharatpur was set up by Churaman and Badan Singh. Jat power reached its highest glory under Suraj Mal (1756-1763), who compelled the Mughal authorities to recognize him. He successfully withstood a siege by Abdali's army and supported the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat. He tried to lay the foundation of an enduring state by adopting the Mughal revenue system. But after his death in 1763, the Jat state declined and was split up among petty zamindars most of whom lived by plunder.

2.7. Rohelas and Bangash Pathans

Muhammad Khan Bangash, and Afghan adventurer established his control over the territory around Farrukhabad, between what are now Aligarh and Kanpur. Similarly during the breakdown of administration following Nadir Shah's invasion, Ali Muhammad Khan carved out a separate principality, known as Rohilkhand, at the foothills of the Himalayas between the Ganga in the south and the Kumaon hills in the north. The Rohelas clashed constantly with Awadh, Delhi and the Jats.

2.8. Rajputs

After Aurangzeb's death, weakened central authority created new opportunities for aggrandizement by provincial officers. During the first three decades of the eighteenth century, nascent regional kingdoms in several Northern provinces began to appear. The strained relationship of the Rajputs with the Mughals led them to the formation of an anti-Mughal league. Ajit Singh, Jay Singh II and Durgadas Rathod led the league. During the tussle between the Sayyid brothers, the Rajputs followed several policies in order to fulfill their self-interest. In this way the Rajputs won the prestigious posts in the Mughal court during the Sayyid brothers. Thus the Rajputs got the power of controlling vast Empire extending from Delhi to Surat on the Western coast.

Apart from this in Rajasthan, the leading Rajput emirs energetically overturned the intricate imperial administrative controls imposed on that province. Rajputs dedicated considerable efforts into expanding their home territories, in order to build near-autonomous regional kingdoms. Furthermore, as the Mughal Empire was gradually being burdened with difficulties, rajas stopped paying tribute.

The desire for independence partially arose from the harsh treatments they were granted, dating back to the reign under Aurangzeb. The ruthless campaigns of Aurangzeb in Rajasthan as well as his religious intolerance, including revival of Jizyah, significantly aroused anger of many Rajputs. The insults which had been offered to their chiefs and their religion and the ruthlessness and unnecessary severity of Aurangzeb's campaigns in their (Rajput's) country left a sore which never healed. A race which had been the right arm of the Mughal Empire at the beginning of the reign was hopelessly alienated, and never again served the throne without distrust.

2.9. Mysore

Next to Hyderabad the most important power that emerged in South India was Mysore under Haider Ali. The kingdom of Mysore had preserved its precarious independence ever since the end of the Vijayanagar Empire and had been only nominally a part of the Mughal Empire. Haider modernised his army with French experts, who trained an efficient infantry and artillery and infused European discipline into the Mysore army. Haider, and later his son Tipu Sultan,

introduced the system of imposing land taxes directly on the peasants and collecting them through salaried officials and in cash, thus enhancing enormously the resource base of the state.

The state of Mysore under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan was involved in establishing a centralised military hegemony. Its territorial ambitions and trading interest got it engaged in a state of constant warfare. Haider Ali had invaded and annexed Malabar and Calicut in 1766, thus expanding the frontiers of Mysore significantly. They were in conflict with Marathas and other powers in the region like Hyderabad and then the English on whom Haider Ali inflicted a heavy defeat near Madra in 1769. After his death in 1782, his son Tipu Sultan followed his father's policies. His rule came to an end with a defeat at the hands of the English in 1799 – he died defending his capital Srirangapatnam. (This will be dealt in details in later sections.)

Unlike other eighteenth century states which did not challenge the political legitimacy of the Mughal emperor, in a symbolic gesture to proclaim his independence, Tipu issued coins without any reference to the Mughal emperor; and instead of Emperor Shah Alam's name he inserted his own name in the *khutba* (Friday sermons at the mosques); finally, he sought a *sanad* from the Ottoman Khalif to legitimise his rule. But he too did not completely sever links with the Mughal monarch. Being a "realist" as he was, Tipu recognised Mughal authority when it suited him and defied it when it did not.

2.10. Travancore

Further south, the southernmost state of Travancore had always maintained its independence from Mughal rule. It gained in importance after 1729 when its king Martanda Varma started expanding his dominions with the help of a strong and modern army trained along Western lines. The Dutch were ousted from the region; the English were made to accept his term of trade and local feudal chief were suppressed. He undertook many irrigation works, built roads and canals, and gave active encouragement to foreign trade. Travancore withstood the shock of a Mysorean invasion in 1766 and under Martanda Varma's successor Rama Varma its capital became a centre of scholarship and art. In his death towards the closing years of the eighteenth century the region lost its former glory and soon succumbed to British pressure, accepting a Resident in 1800.

3. Advent of Europeans

After Aurangzeb's death, disintegration of Mughal Empire had accelerated. On the other hand, European nations with their advancements in the field of maritime navigation and their trading ambitions were on the lookout for establishing monopoly on the trade with the 'East Indies'. India obviously had to be the prime target as it offered maximum scope for trading and profiteering. The first ones to arrive on the scene were the Portuguese.

3.1. Portuguese

Portugal's king Henry (1393-1460) encouraged maritime navigation by opening training and research institutes for the purpose. Portuguese were the first one to have navigated the entire African coast line. In 1497 Vasco da Gama commenced his voyage under the patronage of King Emmanuel and finally Vasco-da-Gama landed at Calicut on 21st May 1498, and the sea route to India was discovered. Thus the Portuguese came to India. Vasco-da-Gama was well-received by the Zamorin of Calicut Mana Vikramma. When Vasco-da-Gama went back he carried with him products of the East. He returned to India two more times.

The Government of Portugal established the Portuguese Trading Company to regulate trade and commerce. The company was to function under a Viceroy. Francisco De Almeida became the 1st Portuguese Viceroy in India. He initiated the Blue Water Policy, which aimed at the Portuguese

Mastery of the Sea and confined Portuguese relationship with India only for the purpose of trade & commerce.

Alfonzo-De-Albuquerque (1509-1550) was the greatest Portuguese Viceroy in India. The Portuguese trading centres which were confined to Calicut & Cochin were now extended to other places under Albuquerque. He conquered Goa in 1510 from the Sultan of Bijapur. West Asia in the Persian Gulf and Malaysia in the East were also conquered, Diu & Daman also became Portuguese trading centres. In Bengal, Hooghly & Balasore became the Portuguese trading centres. Goa became the Headquarters of the Portuguese in India. Albuquerque thus made the Portuguese strong in India. He was an efficient administrator, he integrated the locals into the administration. He encouraged the propagation of Christianity & inter-marriage with the natives. The Viceroys who came after Albuquerque were weak & inefficient. As a result the Portuguese began to decline in India. In 1661 Portugal was at war with Spain and needed support from England. This led to the marriage of Princess Catherine of Portugal to Charles II of England, who imposed a dowry that included the insular and less inhabited areas of southern Bombay while the Portuguese managed to retain all the mainland territory north of Bandra up to Thana and Bassein. This was the beginning of the strong English presence in India as well. Thus Portuguese finally left India in the mid-17th Century A.D. But three of their settlements, namely Goa, Diu & Daman remained in their hands till 1961.

Causes for Decline of Portuguese:

1. After Albuquerque the Portuguese administration in India became inefficient because his successors were weak & inefficient.
2. The Portuguese officials were neglected by the home government. Their salaries were low. Thus they indulged in corruption and malpractice.
3. The Portuguese adopted forced inter-marriage & conversion to the Christian faith which made the natives hostile.
4. In 1580 Portugal was merged with Spain which neglected the Portuguese interest in India.
5. The Portuguese had to face the stiff competition of the Dutch in India.
6. Portuguese discovered Brazil which diverted their attention from India.

The Impact of Portuguese:

1. The Portuguese began to spread Christianity in the Malabar & the Konkan coast. Missionaries like St. Francis Xavier, Father Rudolf & Father Monserrate played a leading role in propagating the Christian faith.
2. The Missionaries started schools & colleges along the west coast, where education was imparted in the native language.
3. The missionaries undertook research on Indian history and culture. F. A. Heras has made a deep study on the Indus Valley Civilization.
4. The Portuguese brought the printing press to India. The Bible came to be printed in the Kannada & Malayalam language.
5. The Portuguese brought some crops to India like Tobacco, some fruits & vegetables were also introduced by him potatoes, lady's finger, chilly, pineapple, sapota, groundnuts, etc.

3.2. The Dutch

The Portuguese were followed by the Dutch. The East India Company of Netherlands was formed in 1592 to trade with East Indies. Cornelius Houtman is the first Dutch to come to India. The Dutch established trading centres at Nagapatnam in Tamil Nadu, Machalipatnam in Andhra Pradesh, Chinsora in Bengal & at Mahe on the Malabar Coast. The headquarters of the Dutch in India was Nagapatnam. The Dutch could not withstand the stiff competition of the Portuguese and the English and thus left India. The complete monopoly of the Dutch over trade and commerce of Indonesia was another reason as to why they left India.

3.3. The Danes

Denmark was a minor colonial power to set foot in India. The Danish East India Company was formed in 1616 and they established trading outposts at Tranquebar in Tamil Nadu (1620), a colony called Fredericknagore, in honor of their ruler King Frederick the Vth near Serampore, West Bengal in 1755. Occupied twice by the English during their war with Denmark, Fredericknagore failed as a commercial venture. In 1777, after the Danish company went bankrupt, Serampore became a Danish crown colony. However, Serampore's commercial failure was compensated by its immense success on the cultural front. Since the British banned missionary activities in their territories, Serampore became a safe haven for missionaries in India.

In 1799, Reverend William Carey and two fellow Baptist missionaries established a printing press in Serampore to print copies of the Bible. In 1819, Carey established the Serampore College, the first institution to impart western style higher education in Asia. In 1827, a Royal Charter by the King of Denmark declared it as a university at par with those in Copenhagen and Kiel. In 1845, Denmark ceded Serampore to Britain, thereby ending the nearly 150 years of Danish presence in Bengal.

3.4. The British

After British victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 the merchants and traders of the country started thinking in terms of engaging in direct trade with 'the East Indies'. In 1599 a resolution was passed under the chairmanship of the Lord Mayor to form an 'Association' to trade directly with India. On 31-December 1600 Queen Elizabeth granted a charter to the governor and directors of 'Company of merchants of London trading directly with East Indies' to 'traffic and trade freely into and from the East Indies, in the countries and parts of Asia and Africa and into and from all islands, ports, havens, cities, creeks, towns and places of Asia, Africa and America or any of them. The charter was given for 15 years with provision for its termination at 2 years' notice. Subsequently King James I made it perpetual with clause for termination at 5 years notice 'if the monopoly in trade was found to be injurious to the people at large'.

First two voyages of the company were financed through shares purchased by its members with promise of proportionate division of profit yielded 500% to 600% profit by trade through the Spice Islands with a factory at Bantam. The factory had to be shut down because of resistance from the Dutch. The third voyage under Captain Hawkins headed for Surat in India. From Surat Captain Hawkins went to the court of Jahangir to secure concessions for the company's trade. The concessions were granted but were soon revoked under pressure from vested interests in the court.

In 1612 Captain Best defeated the Portuguese fleet in the Battle of Swalley near Surat and got permission for setting up a factory at Surat.

In 1615 Sir Thomas Roe was sent by King James I to the court of Jahangir who granted trading concessions to the British despite opposition from his court.

In 1622 the British consolidated their position by helping Iran to secure possession of Ormuz from the Portuguese. Same year they set up factories at Aramgaon and Masulipatnam.

In 1633 Factories were set up at Balasore and Hariharpur in Orissa.

In 1640 Madras was bought and a factory was set up at Fort St George. This was followed by setting up a factory at Hooghly in 1651 and lease of the island of Bombay from King James II at a nominal rent of Pound sterling 10.

IN 1688 the British suffered a minor reversal when they fought with Saista Khan the Governor of Bengal and were defeated. They were told to get out of the Mughal territory and also close down their factory at Surat. They immediately made peace and regained their lost position. The peace agreement was followed by permission for another factory near Calcutta and purchase of the three villages of Sutanati, Govindpur and Kalikata which are the centre of present day Kolkata.

IN 1714 John Surman accompanied by William Hamilton a physician who had treated emperor Faruk Shiyar of some undisclosed disease called on the emperor pleading for more concessions. In July 1717 the emperor issued a farman (royal order) whereby the British were allowed duty free trade in Bengal in lieu of Rs. 3000 per annum, a sum of Rs. 10000 as a one-time settlement for all the outstanding dues for the Surat factory and duty free trade without any consideration within the Hyderabad state. The company was also allowed to use their own currency minted at Bombay throughout India.

Internal developments of the company:

Between 1615 and 1686 the company grew from strength to strength. It was allowed to grant commissions to its captains in 1615. In 1625 the Governors and Directors of the company were given judicial powers in civil as well as criminal matters. In 1661 the company was authorised to send ships of war with men and ammunitions for the safety of its possessions overseas. In 1683 it got full powers to declare war and to make peace as also to raise, train and maintain an army. Three years later in 1686 it got the authority to appoint Admirals of its navy and to coin money of all species.

Between 1698 and 1702 the company suffered some reverses when the government of Great Britain was in need of 2 million pounds sterling which the company was unable to make available. A parallel company emerged who was granted license for monopoly trade and the old company was given notice to wind up its operations in 2 years. A compromise was worked out under which the two companies operated together for seven years after which the old company surrendered its charter in 1709 to queen Anne and the new company stepped into its shoes as 'united company of merchants of England trading to the east indies'.

3.5. The French

License for trading with India and the East indies was first granted by King Louis XII in 1611 but was not followed up seriously. In 1664 King Louis XIV granted another license under the governorship of Colbert. The company was to concentrate on India with Madagascar as the half-way house. In 1667 first French factory was set up at Surat with Francis Caron as its Director-General. A factory at Masulipatnam was also established in 1669. Caron was replaced in 1672 by Francis Martin who founded Pondicherry in 1673 under a grant from the king of Bijapur Sher Khan Lodhi.

In 1693 the Dutch snatched Pondicherry but it was restored to the French under the treaty of Reswick. Between 1697 and 1739, the French consolidated their position by adding Chandernagor, Balasore and Kasimbazaar in their possessions. They got Mahe and Karaikal as reward for helping the winning party in the first Carnatic war (Anglo-French war). The real trouble between the French and the English men started when the French won control of Tanjore which the British considered vital for their trade security.

4. Anglo-French struggle for supremacy

English and French Companies were inevitably drawn into politics due to their trade interests. After the decline of the Mughal central authority, Mughal viceroys of Deccan were unable to protect trade interests of the European companies against the exactions of the subordinate

officials or raids of the Marathas. Hence, European companies came to the conclusion that they required to develop their militaries to protect themselves. Both British and French companies wanted to maximise their profits. They sought to reduce all competition and gain monopolistic control.

4.1. First Carnatic war

Genesis of the conflict can be traced to the Anglo-French hostility back home. Dupleix who succeeded Dumas as the French Governor advised his British counterpart to maintain neutrality which was not agreed to by the British. Dupleix took two simultaneous actions. He approached the governor of Carnatic Anwar-ul-din for instructions to the British and also messaged the French governor of Mauritius La Bourdonnais for reinforcements. When asked by Anwar ul din to maintain peace the British agreed but when Dupleix saw that reinforcements had come under La Bourdonnais from Mauritius he decided to strike and won. He captured the British possessions in Fort St George, Madras and other nearby areas. The victory was soured because of differences between Dupleix and La Bourdonnais. Peace finally came with the treaty of Aix La Chappelle in 1748 when the British got back Madras and the French got Louisburg in North America.

4.2. Second Carnatic war

After the death of Nizam ul mulk Asif Jah of Hyderabad in 1748 his second son Nasir Jung and son in law Mujaffar Jung were fighting for succession. The son in law was helped by the French (Dupleix) and the son by the British. Dupleix's party won resulting in increase in the French possessions and a personal jagir worth 10000 pounds annually. After Robert Clive's arrival on the scene the British recaptured Arcot and established control over whole of Carnatic. Dupleix was recalled in 1754 and his successor Godeheu signed treaty with the British undoing all that Dupleix had achieved.

4.3. Third Carnatic war

In 1756 the seven years' war had started in Europe and the two sides started fighting in India as well. Count Lally the French Commander-in-Chief in India captured Fort St. David and recalled Bussy the French General who had remained in Deccan after the French victory in the first Carnatic battle. After Bussy's recall Salabat Jung of Deccan came under British influence and the British General Eyre Coote defeated Count Lally recapturing the lost British possessions. Normalcy returned with the signing of the Peace of Paris (1763) signed by representatives of Great Britain on one side and the United States, France, and Spain on the other.

4.4. Reasons for the defeat of French against the British

In the struggle for supremacy between British and French, British emerged victor after the end of the Third Carnatic War (1758-63). Following reasons were responsible for British victory:

- French were focussed at the same time on Continental expansion in Europe which divided their resources.
- French government was despotic, dependent on the monarch and inferior to the English system of government.
- French East India Company was a state department and wasn't run as professionally as the British East India Company, whose shareholders always focussed on finances of the company. In contrast, shareholders were guaranteed dividends in France and French East India Company had to be subsidised on several occasions.
- British recognised the importance of Bengal, the resources of which were liberally used in the third Carnatic War. In contrast, French influence in Hyderabad did not yield them

adequate benefits. In fact, it has been rightly said that no general could have won India by starting from Pondicherry as a base and contending with a power which held Bengal.

- Overall, British navy were more superior.
- Count de Lally, who was sent at a critical time, was high-headed and of a violent temper. He greatly alienated his compatriots.

5. The British in Bengal

5.1. The black hole incident

In anticipation of the seven years' war the British had started fortifying their factories in Bengal which was objected to by Siraj ud daula the governor of Bengal. There were other complaints which the governor was receiving against the British including harassment of the masses by the company's employees. Some businessmen whom Siraj ud daula wanted in his custody for misdemeanours were given refuge by the British who refused to hand over the fugitives to the Nawab. Siraj ud daula therefore ordered the British to close down their factories and vacate their possessions in Calcutta and Kasimbazaar, but the Company paid no heed. As a consequence, Siraj organized his army and laid siege to the fort. The garrison's commander organised an escape, leaving behind 146 soldiers under the command of John Zephaniah Holwell, a senior East India Company bureaucrat who had been a military surgeon. However, desertions by allied troops made even this temporary defence ineffectual, and the fort fell on 20 June, 1756. Following the surrender, Holwell and the other Europeans were placed for the night in the company's local lockup for petty offenders, popularly known as the Black Hole. It was a room 18 feet (5.5 metres) long and 14 feet (4 metres) wide, and it had two small windows.

According to Holwell, 146 people were locked up, and 23 survived. The incident was held up as evidence of British heroism and the nawab's callousness. However, in 1915 British schoolmaster J.H. Little pointed out Holwell's unreliability as a witness and other discrepancies, and it became clear that the Nawab's part was one of negligence only. The details of the incident were thus opened to doubt. A study in 1959 by author Brijen Gupta suggests that the incident did occur but that the number of those who entered the Black Hole was about 64 and the number of survivors was 21.

The British sent Robert Clive and Admiral Watson to avenge the atrocity committed on the British subjects. After a brief battle the Nawab agreed to restore the British to their previous position.

5.2. Battle of Plassey

Robert Clive who had not yet fully reconciled, entered into a conspiracy with the Nawab's Commander-in-Chief Mir Jafar and his Chief of treasury Rai Durlabh and marched the British forces towards Plassey (1757). As part of the pre-planned conspiracy Mir Jafar defected along with his forces to the British side and the battle was over. Mir Jafar became the Nawab and as reward granted Jagir North of Calcutta to Clive. Besides, 24 Parganas were granted to the company in addition to cash payment of Rs 1 crore and a huge amount in deferred payments in installments. The arrangement broke the finances of Bengal and Mir Jafar didn't survive on the throne for more than 2 years. His son in law Mir Qasim who was aspiring to be the Nawab of Bengal sought support from Clive who readily obliged. Mir Qasim's ascendance to the throne resulted in greater influence of the British. Mir Qasim also shifted his capital from Murshidabad to Munghyr. Dual government had been established in Bengal after the British obtained the right to have a Diwan of their choice appointed from the Emperor and the right to have a Nizam of their choice appointed from the Nawab.

Importance of the battle of Plassey

- The battle was hardly important from the military point of view. It was a mere skirmish. The English army didn't show military superiority. It was desertion in the Nawab's camp and treason that resulted in the victory of Clive. Clive excelled in the game of diplomacy and used Jagat Seth and Mir Jafar to win without fighting.
- It gave the British the access to the rich resources of Bengal. These were used to win the wars in Deccan including defeating the French in the Third Carnatic war, and also to extend influence over Northern India.
- Company virtually monopolised the trade and commerce in Bengal. The French never recovered their lost position in Bengal; the Dutch made a last attempt, but were defeated in the Battle of Bedara in 1759. From commerce the British proceeded to monopolise political power in Bengal.
- A gradual transformation was brought about in the nature of the East India Company. It no longer was merely a commercial body, but became a military Company having significant landed property, which could only be maintained by arms.

5.3. The Battle of Buxar

After his defeat in 1763 Mir Kasim took refuge under the Nawab of Avadh. Because of a clash of interest between the British and the Nawab of Avadh with each eyeing the territory of Bengal for their expansion a clash was seen to be imminent. As a gesture of gratitude to the Avadh Nawab who had granted him shelter in his territory Mir Kasim had agreed to bear the battle expenses. In May 1765 the combined might of the Nawab of Avadh, Mir Kasim and some French men who had joined the fray just because it was against their traditional rivals was defeated by the British taking away from Mir Kasim and his ilk any trace of will to fight. Therein probably lies the importance of the battle of Buxar which according to some historians 'riveted the shackles of company rule upon Bengal'.

Reasons for the battle of Buxar

Some historians suggest that Mir Kasim was working for political independence. However, available evidence suggests that this was not the case since he did not seek the three assigned districts, or questioned Company's monopoly in saltpetre trade or their share in the chunam trade of Sylhet. The main reason for the exasperation of Mir Kasim was the overstepping of the Company from its legal and political authority. Company deployed the use of gomasthas (an Indian agent in British East India Company) for coercing the population. Mir Kasim wanted restore the jurisdiction of his courts over gomasthas.

Privilege of Dastak which exempted the Company from paying taxes on trade was misused by the Company officials to indulge in private trade, without payment of any duties. This gave an unfair advantage to company's officials over the native traders. Mir Kasim took the desperate measure of abolishing all duties for inland trade, this placing the Indian merchants on the same footing as the British. Though, this was his legitimate right, it wasn't acceptable to the Company. Moreover, Calcutta Council wanted a war because they hoped that the new ruler that they would appoint would present them with lavish gifts and presents. Mir Kasim did not wish to establish his supremacy in administration; he just wanted that the terms of the treaty be followed in letter and spirit.

Significance of the battle of Buxar

It reconfirmed the verdict of the battle of Plassey. If Plassey was won by taking recourse to diplomacy and treachery, Buxar showed the might and the strength of the British. It resulted in Nawab of Awadh becoming a grateful subordinate. Mughal emperor became a pensioner of Company. Doors to Delhi and Agra lay open for the Company. Nawabs of Bengal and Awadh did

not challenge the superior position of the Company again. Victory of Buxar made British a great power of Northern India and contenders for the supremacy of whole country.

5.4. Settlement with Awadh

By the **Treaty of Allahabad (1765)**, Nawab of Awadh Shuja-ud-Daula was confirmed in his possessions on the following conditions:

- Surrendering Allahabad and Kora to Mughal emperor Shah Alam
- Rs 50 lakhs were paid to Company as war indemnity
- Balwant Singh, zamindar of Benaras was confirmed in full possession of his estate.

Reasons as to why Clive did not annex Awadh.

- Annexing Awadh would have placed Company under an obligation to protect extensive land frontier, which could have been open to attack by the Afghans under Ahmad Shah Abdali and the Marathas.
- Awadh was created as a buffer state.
- A treaty of friendship converted Shuja-ud-Daula into a loyal of Company bound by self-interest.

5.5. Settlement with Shah Alam II and Introduction of Dual system in Bengal

By the **Second Treaty of Allahabad (August 1765)**, the fugitive Emperor, Shah Alam was taken under the Company's protection and was to reside at Allahabad. Shah Alam issued a firman (royal order) which granted Company the Diwani functions of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in return of an annual payment of Rs 26 lakhs to the emperor. Company also provided for the expenses of the Nizamat functions.

The system of government where Company exercised Diwani functions, while the Nawab of Bengal was responsible for the Nizamat functions, came to be known as the Dual system. However, it was a sham as it was the East India Company which exercised all political power, and merely used the Nawab and its administration as an instrument for their purposes.

Clive's justification of the Dual System:

Clive wanted to maintain Nawab as a shadow authority which the Company should seem to venerate.

- Open assumption of authority would have shown the true colours of Company and might have resulted in uniting Indian princes against it.
- Company did not wish to generate much interest in England regarding the functioning of the company. It wanted to avoid interference of British Parliament.
- It was also doubtful whether other European Companies would acknowledge Company's subahship and pay duties that they paid to Nawabs of Bengal.
- Open assumption of political power would have attracted the attention of other European powers. A conglomerate of European powers against British as during American War of Independence was not desirable.
- Company did not have adequate personnel to run the administration of Bengal.
- Directors of the Company were more interested in financial and commercial gains rather than territorial acquisitions. Dual system would serve Company's interests well.

As a result of the system, Company acquired real power without any responsibility.

Evil effects of the Dual system:

- Administrative breakdown resulted as Nawab had to power to enforce law and provide justice, and Company disavowed all responsibility. In the countryside, the dacoits roamed freely and the Sannyasi raiders reduced the government to a mockery.
- Decline of agriculture as the peasants suffered from over-assessment and harshness in exactions from the government officials.
- Disruption of trade and commerce resulted from Company's servants monopolising internal trade of Bengal. They would undersell the Indian merchants in the local markets.
- Ruination of Industry and Skill.
- Moral degradation set in the Bengal society. There was no longer incentive to work as almost all profits were exacted by Company's officials and only bare minimum remained. The society became static and showed unmistakable signs to decay.

6. Administrative measures taken by the British from 1773 to 1853

East India Company was basically a trading company which to secure its business interests manipulated the local rulers engaging, in the process, in warfare and annexation of territories which are activities alien to a trading company. The British government facilitated these activities of the company by granting them charters with powers to recruit and maintain an army and a navy, and confer Magistracy on its employees for preservation of order; all in the name of protecting and furthering the company's business interests. In return the company made an annual payment of four million pounds sterling to the government.

After annexation of vast territories in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and some areas in the South following armed conflicts with the local Rulers news started trickling into England about some of the highhandedness of the company's men against the natives. This resulted in demands of government's control over its functioning. The matter was referred by the British parliament to a select committee and after taking in to consideration the committee's recommendations the Regulatory Act of 1773 was passed.

6.1. Regulating Act of 1773

This act is of great constitutional importance as

- a. It was the first step taken by the British government to control and regulate the affairs of the east India company in India
- b. It recognised, for the first time, the political and administrative functions of the company.
- c. It laid the foundations of central administration in India.

Salient features of the act:

1. The Regulating Act although implying the ultimate sovereignty of the British Crown over new territories, asserted that the Company could act as a sovereign power on behalf of the Crown. It could do this while concurrently being subject to oversight and regulation by the British government and parliament. The company was also required to appoint a governor general with a four member council in Calcutta who was to act as the highest administrative authority in the company's possessions in India. Governor General in council were also required to be appointed for Madras and Bombay but they were to act in subordination to the governor general in Calcutta
2. The Court of Directors of the East India Company (60 members) were required under the Act to submit all communications regarding civil, military, and revenue matters in India for scrutiny by the British government.

3. For the governance of the Indian territories, the act asserted the supremacy of the Presidency of Fort William (Bengal) over those of Fort St. George (Madras) and Bombay.
4. It also nominated a Governor-General (Warren Hastings) and four councillors for administering the Bengal presidency (and for overseeing the Company's operations in India). The subordinate Presidencies were forbidden to wage war or make treaties without the previous consent of the Governor-General of Bengal in Council, except in case of imminent necessity. The Governors of these Presidencies were directed in general terms to obey the orders of the Governor-General-in-Council, and to transmit to him intelligence of all important matters.
5. The Regulating Act also attempted to address the prevalent corruption in India: Company servants were henceforth forbidden to engage in private trade in India or to receive "presents" from Indian nationals.
6. It provided for the establishment of a Supreme Court at Calcutta 1774 comprising one chief justice and three other justices. The governor general could make rules and regulations for running the administration but these were to be deposited in the Supreme Court for their scrutiny.

This was followed by the Judicature Act of 1781, the Pitts' India Act of 1784 and the Declaratory Act of 1788.

6.2. The Judicature Act of 1781

The Judicature Act of 1781 extended the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to all the inhabitants of Calcutta and at the same time excluded the Governor General and his council members from its jurisdiction for acts done by them in their official capacity. The requirement of depositing the rules and regulations made by the governor general with the Supreme Court was also dispensed with because of the inconvenience it caused.

6.3. Pitts India Act, 1784

To rectify the drawbacks of regulating act of 1773 British Parliament brought Pitts India Act, 1784. It was also the first attempt on the parliament to control the company indirectly.

Important provisions of Pitt's India Act, 1784:

1. It distinguished between commercial and political functions of company.
2. A **Board of control** (governing board) was constituted with six members, two of whom were members of the British Cabinet and the remaining from the Privy Council. The Board also had a president, who soon effectively became the minister for the affairs of the East India Company. The Act stated that the Board would henceforth "superintend, direct and control" the government of the Company's possessions, in effect controlling the acts and operations relating to the civil, military and revenues of the Company.
3. The **Governor General –in-council** of the Company was reduced to **three from four** members, and the governor-general, a crown appointee, was authorized to veto the majority decisions.
4. The governors of Bombay and Madras were also deprived of their independence. The governor-general was given greater powers in matters of war, revenue and diplomacy.
5. The supreme court of Calcutta was meant only for English subjects.
6. The act authorized court of directors to make all the recruitments in India.

By a supplementary act passed in 1786 Lord Cornwallis was appointed as the second governor-general of Bengal, and he then became the effective ruler of British India under the authority of the Board of Control and the Court of Directors. The constitution set up by Pitt's India Act did not undergo any major changes until the end of the company's rule in India in 1858.

Besides the above charters granted to the company were also revised from time to time and at regular intervals of 20 years in 1793, 1813, 1833 and 1853.

6.4. Charter act of 1793

The Act made only fairly minimal changes to either the system of government in India or British oversight of the Company's activities. Most importantly, the Company's trade monopoly was continued for a further 20 years. Salaries for the staff and paid members of the Board of Control were also now charged to the Company. Other provisions of the Act included:

- The Governor-General was granted extensive powers over the subordinate presidencies.
- The Governor-General's power of over-ruling his council was affirmed, and extended over the Governors of the subordinate presidencies.
- Senior officials were forbidden from leaving India without permission.
- Royal approval was mandated for the appointment of the Governor-General, the governors, and the Commander-in-Chief.
- The East India Company was empowered to grant licences to both individuals and Company employees to trade in India (known as the "privilege" or "country" trade), which paved the way for shipments of opium to China.

The Company's charter was next renewed by the Charter Act of 1813.

6.5. Charter Act of 1813

The East India Company Act 1813, also known as the Charter Act of 1813, was an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom which renewed the charter issued to the British East India Company, and continued the Company's rule in India. Its important provisions were as follow

1. The Company's commercial monopoly was ended, except for the tea trade and the trade with China. Reflecting the growth of British power in India.
2. The Act expressly asserted the Crown's sovereignty over British India.
3. It allotted Rs. 100,000 (1 lakh) to promote education in India.
4. Christian missionaries were allowed to come to British India and preach their religion.
5. The power of the provincial governments and courts in India over European British subjects was also strengthened by the Act.
6. Financial provision was also made to encourage a revival in Indian literature and for the promotion of science.

6.6. Charter act of 1833

This act was final step towards centralism in India.

Important Provisions of Charter Act of 1833

1. Complete ended monopoly on all items of trade including tea and opium (complete free trade policy). East India Company became purely administrative body.
2. The Charter Acts of 1833 centralized the administration in India. The Governor General of Bengal, according to the act was declared as the Governor General of India. The First Governor General of India was Lord William Bentinck.
3. Governor General in council got powers of superintendence, direction and control of the whole civil and military government and the revenues of India.
4. It attempted to introduce a system of open competition for selection of civil servants, and stated that the Indian should not be debarred from holding any place, office and employment under the company. However this provision was negated after opposition from court of directors.

5. The charter Act of 1833 enlarged the Executive council by the addition of fourth member (Law Member) for legislative purposes. T.B Macaulay was the first law member.
6. All the laws and enacts passed by the legislative council were called as Acts of the Government of India, before this they were called as regulations.
7. It provided for the appointment of a law commission in India
8. The Act provided that there would be no indiscrimination made between the Indian and the British residents in Indian provinces on the basis of caste, creed and religion Charter of 1833 made provision to create uniform and codified system of law in India.

6.7. Charter Act of 1853

It was the last of the series of charter acts.

1. The Act separated, for the first time, the legislative and executive functions of the Governor-General's Council.
2. It made 4th member of governor general in council at par with other members as right to vote was conferred to him. It provided for further addition of 6 members to governor general in council known as 'Legislative Councilors'. Six Members were the Chief Justice and a puisne judge of Calcutta Supreme Court, and four representatives, one each from Bengal, Madras, Bombay and NWFP. Therefore, the total number of members became 10. This Legislative wing of the council functioned as a mini parliament, adopting the same procedure as British parliament. Thus, legislation, for the first time, was treated as the special function of the government.
3. Relieved the governor general from the responsibility of governor of Bengal (Lord Dalhousie became first governor general without the additional responsibility) A lieutenant governor was appointed for Bengal (Andrew Fraser).
4. Renewed the term of East India Company for an indefinite period;
5. Reduced the number of Board of Directors from 24 to 18 and 6 out of them were nominated;
6. Indian Civil Service became an open competition. Macaulay was made Chairman of the Committee on the Indian civil services (Macaulay committee). Written competitive exams started from 1854.
7. The Act for the first time introduced local representation in the Indian (Central) Legislative Council. The Governor-General's Council had six new legislative members out of which four members were appointed by the local (provincial) governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal and Agra.

7. Revenue Administration, Police, Judiciary and Civil Services

7.1. Land Revenue Policy under British East India Company

Since the acquisition of Diwani rights for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765, a major concern of Company was to increase the land revenue collection, which historically was the major source of revenue for the state in India. Warren Hastings got rid of Indians completely from revenue collection. In 1772, he introduced a new system known as the 'farming system', in which European district collectors were made in charge of revenue collection. Land was farmed to the highest bidder for five years. Most of the revenue-farmers were speculators who did not have any permanent interest in the land and tried to extort maximum revenue from the cultivators. The result was that many revenue contractors fell in heavy arrears, many had to be arrested for default and the ryot (farmer) deserted the land. The bias of Warrant Hastings against centralization worked against an effective system of land revenue collection.

7.2. Permanent Settlement System

Features:

It was introduced in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Banaras division of modern UP, and Northern Carnatic in the 18th century. The zamindars were recognised as the owners of land and a ten years' settlement was made with them in 1790. In 1793, under Governor General Lord Cornwallis the decennial settlement was declared permanent and the zamindars and their legitimate successors were allowed to hold their estates at that very assessed rate for ever. The state demand was fixed at 89% of rental.

Reasons for the introduction of Permanent Settlement system:

- This ensured a fixed and stable income for Company. It also saved the government from the expensed on making periodical assessments and settlements.
- A permanent settlement, it was hoped would end corruption as the officials would not be able to alter assessment at will.
- The burden of revenue collection was given to the intermediaries or Zamindars. This eased the burden of administration on the part of Company.
- It was thought at that time, that a revenue demand which was fixed, would lead to investments in agriculture on the part of the Zamindars as the increase in revenue would benefit them. Cornwallis thought that the company could increase its revenue by taxing trade and commerce. However, this did not happen.
- A loyal group was created whose interests were in the continuation of British rule in India.

Consequences:

- State proved to be a great loser in the long run as prospective share in the increase in land revenue were sacrificed.
- Since the land revenue was to be fixed for perpetuity, it was fixed at a high level – the absolute maximum, and the customary rates were increased. This placed a high burden of revenue.
- Though a fixed revenue demand was placed with the Zamindars, no rules were placed regulating the collection of revenue from the peasants. As a result, Zamindars placed exorbitant demands.
- Absentee landlordism was a consequential feature. Zamindars took no interest in the development of agriculture.
- Peasants suffered from the double injustice of surrendering their property rights and being left entirely at the mercy of Zamindars.

7.3. Ryotwari System

This system was first introduced in Malabar, Coimbatore, Madras and, Madurai by **Sir Thomas Munro**. Subsequently, this system was extended to Maharashtra, East Bengal, parts of Assam and Coorg.

Main reasons behind its adoption were:

1. In permanent settlement areas, land Revenue was fixed. Over the years, agriculture prices/exports increased but government's income did not increase. (Because middlemen-zamindars pocketed the surplus)
2. Zamindars were oppressive which resulted in frequent agrarian revolts in the permanent settlement areas.

3. In Bihar, Bengal, there existed Zamindar/feudal lords since the times of Mughal administration. But Madras, Bombay, Assam did not have Zamindars/feudal lords with large estates. So, it was hard to 'outsource' work, even if British wanted.
4. In case of Ryotwari there is no middlemen for tax collection thus farmer has to pay less taxes which increased their purchasing power that resulted in increased demand for readymade British products in India.

Consequently, all subsequent land tax or revenue settlements made by the colonial rulers were temporary settlements made directly with the peasant, or 'ryot' (e.g., the ryotwari settlements). This model was based on English yeomen farmers.

Features:

1. Government claimed the property rights to all the land, but allotted it to the cultivators on the condition that they pay taxes. In other words, it established a direct relation between the landholder and the government.
2. Farmers could use, sell, mortgage, bequeath, and lease the land as long as they paid their taxes. In other words Ryotwari system gave a proprietary right to the landholders.
3. If they did not pay taxes, they were evicted
4. Taxes were only fixed in a temporary settlement for a period of thirty years and then revised.
5. Government had retained the right to enhance land revenue whenever it wanted.
6. Provided measures for revenue relief during famines but they were seldom applied in real life situation.

Consequences:

1. Farmers had to pay revenue even during drought and famines, else he would be evicted.
2. It amounted to replacement of large number of zamindars by one giant zamindar called East India Company.
3. Although ryotwari system aimed for direct Revenue settlement between farmer and the government but over the years, landlordism and tenancy became widespread. Because textile weavers were unemployed so they started working as tenant farmers for other rich farmers. In many districts, more than 2/3 of farmland was leased.
4. Since Government insisted on cash revenue, farmers resorted to growing cash crops instead of food crops. And cash crop needed more inputs which resulted in more loans and indebtedness.
5. After end of American civil war, cotton export declined but government didn't reduce the revenue. As a result most farmers defaulted on loans and land was transferred from farmers to moneylenders.

7.4. Mahalwari System

It was implemented in Gangetic valley, north-west provinces, parts of central India and Punjab. Because in North India and Punjab, joint land rights on the village were common. So, British decided to utilize this traditional structure in a new form known as Mahalwari system.

Features

1. The revenue was determined on the basis of assessment of the produce of a Mahal (estate consisting of several villages). Here the settlement was made with the whole village community jointly and separately and taxation was imposed on the village community.
2. The village community had to distribute these tax collection targets among the cultivators
3. Each individual farmer contributed his share in the revenue.
4. Everyone was thus liable for the others' arrears.

5. But still the ownership rights were vested with the individual peasants thus Farmers had right to sell or mortgage their property.
6. The village community did not necessarily mean entire village population. It was a group of elders, notables of high castes.
7. A village inhabitant, called the Lambardar, collected the amounts and gave to the British
8. British periodically revised tax rates.

Consequences

1. Since Punjab, Northern India had fertile land. So British wanted to extract maximum Revenue out of this region. Land Revenue was usually 50% to 75% of the produce.
2. As generations passed, fathers divided land among sons which resulted in fragmentation of farms and farms became smaller and smaller thus productivity declined. But still British demanded Revenue in cash. So, farmers had to borrow money to pay taxes in the case of crop failures.
3. As a result, more and more farms passed into the hands of moneylenders. When farmer failed to repay debt, Moneylender would take away his farm but he has no interest in self-cultivation so he would be leasing it to another farmer.
4. Thus, sub-leasing, indebtedness and landlessness became more and more common in Mahalwari region.

Mahalwari was also called Modified Zamindari system because in Mahalwari areas, the Land revenue was fixed for the whole village and the village headman (Larnbardar) collected it. Meaning theoretically Village itself was a landlord/zamindar. Other names for this system were Joint rent, 'joint lease', 'brotherhood' tract (mahal) holding and 'gram wari' etc.

7.5. Police administration

1791 Cornwallis organised a regular police force to maintain law and order and to modernise the old Indian system. He established Thanas (circles) in a district under a Daroga (an Indian) and a superintendent of police as the head of a district. He relieved the Zamindars of their police duties.

In 1808 Lord Mayo appointed an SP for each division helped by a number of spies but these spies committed plundering on local people.

In 1814 by an order of court of directors, the appointment of darogas and their subordinates was abolished in all possessions of the company except in Bengal.

Lord William Bentinck abolished the office of the SP. The Collector/Magistrate was now to have the police force in his jurisdiction and the commissioner in each division was to act as the SP. This arrangement resulted in a badly organised police force, putting a heavy burden on the collector/magistrate. Presidency towns were the first to have the duties of the collector/magistrate separated.

7.6. Judiciary

Earlier, the administration of justice used to be under the Zamindars and was arbitrary in nature

Reforms under Warren Hastings:

District Diwani adalats were established in districts to try civil disputes. These adalats were placed under the collector and had Hindu laws applicable for Hindus and Muslim laws for Muslims. The appeal from district Diwani adalats lay to the Sadar Diwani Adalat.

District Fauzdari adalats were setup to try criminal disputes and were placed under an Indian officer assisted by Qazis and Muftis. These Adalats were also under general supervision of the collector. The approval for capital punishment and for acquisition for property lay to the Sadar

Nizamat Adalat at Murshidabad. Under regulating act of 1773 a Supreme Court was established at Calcutta.

Reforms under Cornwallis:

The District Fauzdari Courts were abolished and, instead, four Circuit Courts were established at Calcutta, Dhaka, Murshidabad and Patna. These Circuit courts had European judges and were to act as court of appeal for both civil and criminal cases.

Sadar Nizamat Adalat was shifted to Calcutta and put under Governor General and members of supreme council assisted by chief Qazis and chief Muftis. District diwani adalat was now designated as the District, City or the Zila Court and placed under a district judge. The collector was relieved from magisterial functions.

He introduced Code de Cornwallis a judicial procedure code. The Cornwallis code provided for:

1. There was a separation of revenue and justice administration.
2. European subjects were also brought under jurisdiction.
3. Government subjects were answerable to the civil courts for actions done in their official capacity.
4. The principle of Sovereignty of Law was established.

The gradation of civil courts was established:

1. Munsiff's court under Indian officers.
2. Registrar's court under a European Judge.
3. District Court under district judge.
4. Four circuit courts as provincial courts of appeal.
5. Sadar Diwani Adalat at Calcutta.
6. King in Council for appeals of 5000 pounds and above.

Reforms under William Bentinck:

The four circuit courts were abolished and their functions were transferred to collectors under the supervision of the Commissioner of revenue and circuit. Sadar Diwani Adalat and Sadar Nizamat Adalat were set up at Allahabad for convenience of people of upper provinces. Till now Persian was the official language in courts, now the suitor has the option to use Persian or a vernacular language, while in Supreme Court English language replaced Persian.

In 1833 a law commission was set up under Macaulay for codification of Indian laws. As a result Civil procedure code, 1859 and Indian Penal Code, 1860 and a Criminal Procedure Code, 1861 were prepared.

7.7. Civil Services

The word civil services for the first time appeared in the records from 1757. The office of the District Collector was created for the first time in 1771 by Lord Warren Hastings. However, it was Lord Cornwallis, who is regarded as the founding father of modern Indian Civil Services. He created police service, judicial service and revenue services, formulated the code of conduct for civil servants and laid down the procedure for their promotion. Indians were barred from high posts from very beginning. The reasons for exclusion of Indians were:

1. The belief that only English could establish administrative services serving British interests.
2. They believed that Indians were incapable, untrustworthy and insensitive to British interests.
3. High competition among Europeans themselves for lucrative posts was there, so they didn't offer them to Indians.

In 1800 Lord Wellesley founded the Fort William College to train civil servants. However, from 1806, the Fort William College was replaced by Hailey Bury College in London to train civil servants.

The 1813 Charter Act the office of civil servants as the civil service with an annual salary of 500 pounds. Lord William Bentinck restored, and revived magisterial powers of district collector which was divested by Lord Cornwallis.

Charter act of 1853 ended the companies' patronage and provided for open competition in recruitment. Although theoretically it was made open but the relevant provisions were never really implemented until 1858.

7.8. Sources of Company's Income in India

Land revenue was the major source of revenue for the state. Other sources of revenue included customs and excise duties, opium and salt trade, tributes received from Indian states, income from forests, stamps, registration etc.

East India Company had the monopoly of trade in salt. It was manufactured along the Coromandel and Malabar Coast through the process of solar evaporation of sea water. Even though, Madras manufactured sufficient salt, it was imported from U.K. for consumption in Bengal, albeit at a much higher price.

Opium was cultivated in British territories of Banaras and Patna and Indian states. East India Company had monopoly on the trade of opium produced in the British territories and was sold at a profit of more than 200%. Forcible introduction of opium into Chinese markets led to Opium wars (1839-42).

8. Significant Policies/Administrative Measures to Consolidate the Empire

8.1. British policy towards Indian States

The evolution of relations between the British authority and states can be traced under following broad stages:

1. Policy of Relative Isolationism (before 1740):

British were more commercial and enterprising company thus initially when they did not have consolidated their position, they had to maintain the policy of isolationism. Commercial interest of British compelled them to often depend upon the native princes. Also the British were cautious to the fact that they were aliens in the soil of India and hence any aggressive policy would mean devastation.

2. East India Company's struggle for equality with Indian States from a position of subordination(1740-1765)

Starting with Anglo-French rivalry with the coming of Dupleix in 1751, the East India Company asserted political identity with capture of Arcot (1751). With the battle of Plassey in 1757, the East India Company acquired the political power next only to the Bengal Nawabs. In 1765 with the acquisitions of diwani rights of Bengal, Bihar and Odhisa, the east India Company became a significant political power.

3. Policy of Ring- Fence(1765-1813)

In the north, constant threat of Marathas remained and in south Haider Ali became a scourge to the British imperialism. A new policy was required to tackle this situation as a result ring fencing policy was introduced. This policy was reflected in Warren Hastings' wars

against the Marathas and the Mysore, and aimed at creating buffer zones/states to defend the company's frontiers and protected from direct onslaught of the enemies secondly from these states British would operate against enemies. This was put into practice in Anglo-Mysore war when Hyderabad was used as the buffer state. Similarly, the Awadh and Rohilkhand were used as buffer states against Marathas. **Wellesley's policy of Subsidiary Alliance** was an extension of ring fence policy. The buffer states and the ring fencing provinces would not any longer remain the same, rather, they were first brought under control of British and from there the policy of expansionism would be carried out effectively.

4. Policy of Sub-ordinate Isolation (1813-57)

Lord Warren Hastings replaced the policy of mutual reciprocity and amicability in relations between princely states and British with policy of sub-ordinate isolation. Under this policy as many as 145 native states in central India, 20 in Rajputana (present day Rajasthan) and another 145 in the Kathiawad region were brought (actually bullied) into submission by the company so that it could extract whatever advantages it wanted in terms of land, agricultural produce or any kind of revenue for promoting its trade interests and multiplying profits. Subject to this limited interest the native sovereign was left uninvolved in any other manner. The infamous 'doctrine of lapse' whereby the company could take complete control and possession of a native state in case there was any problem of succession after the ruler's death or incapacity to rule. Even after the conquest and annexation, isolation took place as the British never treated the princely states as the part of British Empire in India. Rather what they did was, they controlled each and every important aspect of administration and retained the princes for other regular affairs.

(A next phase in the British's relationship with the native states termed as '**subordinate union policy**' which unfolded after 1858, will be dealt with later)

8.2. Subsidiary Alliance

Lord Wellesley (1798-1805) was sent in India to counter the threat of Napoleon, who had reached Egypt and was planning to invade India via Red Sea.

Wellesley decided that the best way to counter Napoleon was to make sure that he got no assistance from any Indian ruler. This required political influence. He laid down the principles of subsidiary alliance in detail. Indian states were coaxed into accepting the alliance. Otherwise, force was used.

Salient features of subsidiary alliance:

- External relations were surrendered to the care of the Company. No state was to declare war without the permission of the Company. Also, mediation of Company was required to negotiate with other states.
- Company troops were required to be stationed within the territory of the states. For the maintenance of these troops, larger states gave the sovereign rights over certain parts of their territory to the Company, while smaller states were required to pay in cash.
- A British resident was required to stay in the state.
- Company was not to interfere in the internal affairs.
- States were required to take permission of the Company in employing Europeans.

Advantages to Company:

- This allowed the Company to maintain additional troops at strategic locations without any significant expense.

- It disarmed the Indian states and deprived the Indian princes any means of forming any confederacy against the British.
- By stationing their troops in the territory of Indian states, British gained control of strategic and key locations in India.
- It acquired the power to effectively counteract any possible French moves in India.
- Company acquired 'territories in full sovereignty' of certain territories which were granted to them by Indian states in lieu for the upkeep of the British army.

Nawab of Hyderabad (1798 and 1800), rulers of Mysore (1800), Raja of Tanjore (1799), Nawab of Awadh (1801), the Peshwa (1801), Bhonsle Raja of Berar (1803), the Scindhia (1804) and Rajput states were made to sign treaties.

8.3. Doctrine of lapse

Lord Dalhousie held that the rulers of the states which were tributary and owed subordination to British government required the assent of the British government for adoption which it has a right to refuse. As for the principalities that were created or revived by the grants of the British government, Dalhousie held that succession should never be allowed to go by adoption. British government has no right related to adoption in case of 'protected allies.'

Doctrine of lapse was not a new instrument. As early as 1834, the Court of Directors had laid down that in case of failure of lineal successors the permission to 'adopt' was an indulgence that "should be the exception, not the rule, and should not be granted but as a special mark of favour and approbation. Dalhousie contribution lay in applying it uniformly. He did not neglect any opportunity in consolidating the territories of the East India Company.

The states annexed by the application of Doctrine of Lapses under Lord Dalhousie were Satara (1848), Jaitpur and Sambhalpur (1849), Baghat (1850), Udaipur (1852), Jhansi (1853) and Nagpur (1854).

8.4. Foreign policy and Important domestic events

Political and administrative consolidation of the country impelled government of India to reach out for natural, geographical frontiers for defence which some time resulted in border clashes. Secondly the British government had as its major aims in Asia and Africa:

1. Protection of invaluable Indian empire.
2. Expansion of British commercial and economic interests.
3. Keeping other European imperialist powers whose colonial interests came in conflict with those of British, at an arm's length.

While the interests served were British the money spent and the blood shed was the Indian. A general survey of India's relation with its neighbours is as follows:

8.5. Nepal

The British desire to reach out to natural geographical frontiers brought them into conflict first of all with the Nepal in 1814; a border clash resulted into war which ended with a treaty in favour of British.

1. Nepal accepted a British resident.
2. Nepal ceded the districts of Garhwal and Kumaon, and abandoned claims to tarai.
3. Nepal also withdrew from Sikkim.

This brought many advantages to British. It got better facilities for trade with Central Asia. It acquired hill stations such as Shimla, Mussorie and Nainital. Gorkhas joined the British Indian army in large numbers.

8.6. Burma

The expansionist urges of the British fueled by lure of forest resources, market for British manufacturers and the need to check French ambitions in Burma and in rest of South East Asia, finally resulted in the annexation of Burma after three wars.

First Burma War (1824-26) was fought in wake of Burmese expansion westwards and their occupation of Arakan and Manipur, which posed a threat to Assam and Brahmaputra valley. This led to continuous friction between Bengal and Burma. British forces occupied Rangoon in 1824. Finally peace was established in 1826 with the **Treaty of Yandabo**. Burma recognized the Manipur as an independent state and the terms of treaty allowed the British to acquire most of the Burma's coastline and also a firm base in Burma for future expansion. The other Burma wars were fought in 1852 and 1885 respectively.

8.7. Afghanistan

In the early nineteenth century, increased Russian influence in Persia replaced British influence and thwarted an English scheme for establishments of new route by river Euphrates to India. Especially after the Treaty of Turkmanchai (1828) between Persian and Russia, the English got alarmed about possible Russian plans for India. Soon there was a search for a scientific frontier from the Indian side. Passes of north-west seemed to hold the keys to gateway of India. The need was felt for Afghanistan to be under control of a friendly prince.

Auckland who came to India in 1836 as the Governor General, advocated a forward policy. The Amir of Afghanistan, Dost Mohammad, wanted British friendship but made it conditional on the British to help him recover Peshawar from Sikhs, a condition which the British government in India rejected. Dost Mohammad now turned to Russia and Persia for help. When Auckland heard about the arrival of Russian envoy Yan Vitkevich in Kabul and the possibility that Dost Mohammad might turn to Russia for support, his political advisers exaggerated the threat. British fears of a Russian invasion of India took one step closer to becoming a reality when negotiations between the Afghans and Russians broke down in 1838. The Persians, with Russian support, attempted the Siege of Herat (1838) but backed down when Britain threatened war.

Russia, wanting to increase its presence in South and Central Asia, had formed an alliance with Persia, which had territorial disputes with Afghanistan as Herat had been part of the Persian Empire under Safavids dynasty before 1709. To tackle the situation a tripartite treaty (1838) was entered into by British, Sikhs and Shah Shuja (who has been deposed from the Afghan throne in 1809 and had been living since then as a British pensioner at Ludhiana). The treaty provided that:

1. Shah Shuja be enthroned with the armed help of the Sikhs and Company will remain in the back ground providing the financial assistance.
2. Shah Shuja will conduct foreign affairs with the advice of the Sikhs and British.
3. Shah Shuja agreed to give up his sovereign rights over Amirs of Sindh in return of a large sum of money.
4. Shah Shuja recognized Maharaja Ranjit Singh's (the Sikh Ruler) claims over the afghan territories on the right bank of river Indus.

But soon there was a drastic change in political situation of that area because of the removal of original irritants – as Persia lifted its claim to siege Herat and Russia recalled envoy from Kabul, but still British decided to go ahead with their forward policy and this resulted in the First Afghan war (1838-42). The British intention was to establish a permanent barrier against scheme of aggression from the North West. The British denied that they were invading Afghanistan, claiming they were merely supporting its legitimate Shuja government against foreign interference and factious opposition.

An English army entered triumphantly into Kabul (August 1839) after a successful attack. Most of the tribes had already been won over by bribes. Dost Mohammad fled with his loyal followers across the passes to Bamyan, and ultimately to Bukhara. In August 1839, after almost thirty years, Shuja was again enthroned in Kabul. But Shah Shuja was unacceptable to Afghans. The Afghans resented the British presence and the rule of Shah Shuja. As the occupation dragged on, British allowed their soldiers to bring their families to Afghanistan to improve morale; this further infuriated the Afghans, as it appeared the British were setting up a permanent occupation. Dost Mohammad unsuccessfully attacked the British and their Afghan protégé, and subsequently surrendered and was exiled to India in late 1840.

By this time, the British had vacated the fortress of Bala Hissar and relocated to a cantonment built to the northeast of Kabul. The chosen location was indefensible, being low and swampy with hills on every side. To make matters worse, the cantonment was too large for the number of troops camped in it.

Between April and October 1841, disaffected Afghan tribes were flocking to support Dost Mohammad's son, Akbar Khan, in Bamiyan and other areas north of the Hindu Kush Mountains, organized into an effective resistance by chiefs such as Mir Masjidi Khan and others. In November 1841, a senior British officer, Sir Alexander 'Sekundar' Burnes, and his aides were killed by a mob in Kabul. The British forces took no action in response, which encouraged further revolt. The British situation soon deteriorated when Afghans stormed the poorly defended fort inside Kabul. In the following weeks the British commanders tried to negotiate with Akbar Khan. Macnaghten (a British civil servant in India nominated to the Governorship of Bombay) secretly offered to make Akbar Afghanistan's 'wajir' in exchange for allowing the British to stay, while simultaneously disbursing large sums of money to have him assassinated, which was reported to Akbar Khan. A meeting for direct negotiations between Macnaghten and Akbar was held near the cantonment on 23 December 1841, but Macnaghten and the three officers accompanying him were seized and slain by Akbar Khan.

The commander William Elphinstone had partly lost command of his troops already and his authority was badly damaged. Compelled by situations, in January 1842, he went under an agreement provided for the safe exodus of the British garrison and its dependents from Afghanistan. The departing British contingent numbered around 16,500, of which about 4,500 were military personnel, and over 12,000 were camp followers. The military force consisted mostly of Indian units and one British battalion.

On the way they were attacked by Ghilzai warriors as they struggled through the snowbound passes. The evacuees were killed in huge numbers as they made their way down the treacherous gorges and passes lying along the Kabul River, and were massacred at the Gandamak pass before the only survivor reached the garrison at Jalalabad which was under British control. The grandiose plan of forward policy exploded like a balloon and this war cost India around one and half crore rupees and nearly 20000 men.

Under a new expedition, the British reoccupied Kabul in September 1842, but having learnt their lessons well, they arrived at a settlement with Dost Mohammad by which the British evacuated Kabul and recognized him as independent ruler of Afghanistan.

Second Afghan war took place during 1878-80.

8.8. Anglo-Mysore Wars

The Anglo-Mysore Wars were a series of wars fought in India over the last three decades of the 18th century between the Kingdom of Mysore and the British East India Company, represented chiefly by the Madras Presidency.

The **First Anglo–Mysore War (1767–1769)** saw Hyder Ali gain some measure of success against the British but suffer heavy defeats at the hands of the Marathas. Hyder Ali's alliance with the Nizam of Hyderabad against the British too was a failure owing to defeats of their combined power against the British and later the spread of mutual suspicion between the two Islamic powers. The Kingdom of Mysore regained some of its lost lands and had to relinquish many territories to the south of Mysore to the British.

The **Second Anglo–Mysore War (1780–1784)** witnessed bloodier battles with fortunes fluctuating between the contesting powers. This war saw the rise of Sir Eyre Coote, the British commander who repeatedly defeated Hyder Ali. But Hyder and his son Tipu prevailed and this led to the last British-Indian treaty with an Indian ruler on equal footing. The war ended in **1784 with the Treaty of Mangalore**, at which both sides agreed to restore the other's lands to the state existing before the war.

In the **Third Anglo–Mysore War (1789–1792)**, Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore and an ally of France, invaded the nearby state of Travancore in 1789, which was a British ally. The resultant war lasted three years and was a resounding defeat for Mysore. The war ended after the 1792 siege of Seringapatam and the signing of the **Treaty of Seringapatam**, according to which Tipu had to surrender half of his kingdom to the British East India Company and its allies.

The **Fourth Anglo–Mysore War (1799)** saw the defeat of Tipu Sultan and further reductions in Mysorean territory. Mysore's alliance with the French was seen as a threat to the East India Company and Mysore was attacked from all four sides. Tipu's troops were outnumbered in proportion of 4:1 in this war. Mysore had 35,000 soldiers, whereas the British commanded 60,000 troops. The Nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas launched an invasion from the north. The British won a decisive victory at the Battle of Seringapatam in 1799. Tipu was killed during the defence of the city. Much of the remaining Mysorean territory was annexed by the British, the Nizam and the Marathas. The remaining core, around Mysore and Seringapatam, was restored to the Indian prince belonging to the Wodeyar dynasty, whose forefathers had been the actual rulers before Hyder Ali became the de facto ruler. The Wodeyars ruled the remnant state of Mysore until 1947, when it joined the Union of India.

8.9. Anglo–Maratha Wars

The **Anglo–Maratha Wars** were three wars fought in the Indian sub-continent between Maratha Kingdom and the British East India Company.

First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-82):

The first Anglo Maratha War took place between Marathas and British during 1775-1782. The main cause for this war was the Struggle for power between Sawai Madhar Rao and Raghunath Rao. Madhav Rao was supported by Nanaphadnavis. Raghunath Rao (Raghoba), who murdered the then peshwa Narayan Rao, Approached British for help to be installed as peshwa against Madhar Rao, the newly born post humous son of Narayan Rao, Nanafadnavis formed a confederation with clever Marath chiefs to extend cooperation to young peshwa Madhav Rao, The British wanted to take the advantage of struggle by supporting on behalf of one party namely Raghunath Rao. **The British entered into a pact with Raghunath Rao at Surat in 1775.** Raghunath Rao promised British to surrender **Salsette** and **Bessien** if the British install him as peshwa. The combined armies of British and Raghunath Rao attacked peshwa and succeeded. But all this was done by the Bombay Government without the permission of superior Government at Calcutta. In Calcutta council opponents of Warren Hasting were in Majority. They declared the treaty was unjust.

Colonel Upton was sent to poonato negotiate with Maratha lender Nana Fadnavis. **Nana Fadnavis entered into a treaty with British on March 1, 1776. It is called Purandhar treaty.** As

per this treaty Salsette and Bessien were given to British. Raghunath Rao was sent to Gujrat with pension of Rs.25,000 per annum.

But this treaty was ineffective due to the shelter given by the Bombay Government to Raghunath Rao. The war began again when the court of Directors Upheld the Surat treaty. The British troops marched to Poona. **But they were defeated at Talegaon and compelled to sign Wadgaon treaty in January 1779.** As per this treaty British surrendered all the territories taken by the British Government since 1773. Later the British Governor-General in Bengal, Warren Hastings, rejected the treaty on the grounds that the Bombay officials had no legal power to sign it, and ordered Goddard to secure British interests in the area by sending an army under Goddard. He captured Ahmedabad and Bassein but failed to advance to Poona. Hastings sent another army under Popham. The Marath chiefs now expressed their willingness to enter into treaty with the British. Mahadaji Sindia started negotiations and **a treaty of Salbai** was concluded on May 17, 1782 between British and Marathas. As per the treaty of Salbai status quo was maintained. This treaty gave the British 20 years of peace with the Marathas. This treaty also helped the British to exert pressure on Mysore with the help of Marathas to recover their territories from Hyder Ali.

Second Anglo-Maratha War 1803-05:

Wellesley's desire to impose subsidiary Alliance on Marathas and his aggressive policy of interfering into the internal affairs of the Marathas was the main cause for the war. The Maratha leaders, Mahadaji Sindia and Nana Fadnis who played prominent role in first Anglo-Maratha war died in 1793 and 1800 respectively. There was a struggle in the Maratha politics between Daulat Rao Sindia, successor of Mahadaji Sindia and Yashwant Rao Holkar for power. Holkar reached near the sight of Poona. Then Baji Rao II fled to Bassein and concluded subsidiary alliance with the British on Dec. 31, 1802. This was not acceptable to other Maratha leaders. So, they wanted to fight with the British. Consequently second Anglo-Maratha war broke out in 1803. Sindia, Holkar and Bhonsle fought in the second Anglo-Maratha war. Wellesley defeated the armies of Sindia and Bhonsle at Assaye in September 1803 and at Argaon in November, 1803. Then **the treaty of Deogaon** was concluded on December 17, 1803 between Raghujibhonsle and the company. As per this treaty Bhonsle agreed to cede the English the province of Cuttack, Balasore and territory west of the river Warda and accepted the subsidiary alliance with British. Later Sindia's army was defeated at Aligarh and finally at Laswar by the British. Sindia concluded the treaty of **Surji Arjunnagar** with British on December 30, 1803. As per this treaty Sindia agreed to cede the territory between the river Ganga and Yamuna, Anmadnagar, Broach and parts of Bundelkhand. As per the **treaty of Burhanpur** (Feb. 27, 1804), Sindia agreed to enter into subsidiary alliance with British. Holkar continued the war with British. The East India Company realised that the policy of expansion through war was costly and reduced profits. The company's debt was increased. Therefore Wellesley was recalled from India. The company entered into peace treaty with Holkar on 24 December, 1805. This treaty is called **Rajpurghat Treaty**. As per this treaty Yashwanth Rao Holkar agreed to renounce all claims to the area north of the Bundi hill. British also promised not to disturb Holkar's possessions in Mewar and Malwa. **The treaty of Rajpurghat marked the end of the second Anglo-Maratha war.**

The Third Anglo-Maratha war (1817-18)

The third war (1817–18) was the result of an invasion of Maratha territory in the course of operations against Pindari robber bands by the British governor-general, Lord Hastings. The Peshwa's forces, followed by those of the Bhonsle and Holkar, rose against the British (November 1817), but the Sindia remained neutral. Peshwa attacked the British Residency at Poona in November, 1817. But the Maratha chiefs were defeated. The Peshwa was defeated at Ashti; Appa Sahib of Nagpur was defeated at Sitabaldi Hills; Malhar Rao Holkar was defeated at

Mehidpur. Daulat Rao Sindia concluded a treaty with British on Nov. 5 1817. It is called **Treaty of Gwalior**. This treaty made Sindia a mere spectator in the Third Anglo-Maratha war. Malhar Rao Holkar concluded the **Treaty of Mandasor** with British on January 6, 1818. Peshwa was dethroned and pensioned off. He was sent to Bithur near Kanpur. The British annexed all his territory. The British created kingdom of Satara out of Peshwa's lands to satisfy Marathas. The Maratha chiefs existed at the mercy of British after this war.

8.10. Annexation of Sindh

The British East India Company started its occupation of Sindh at the time when it was ruled by Balochi tribesmen of Dera Ghazi Khan. Most of them were Talpur (a branch of Laghari tribe), Laghari, Nizamani, Murree, Gopang and other Balochi tribesmen. Karachi was the first area in the province to be occupied by the British East India Company in 1839. Four years later, most of the province (except for the State of Khairpur) was added to the Company's domain after victories at **Miani** and **Dubba**. Many people helped the British in the conquest of Sindh, including a Hindu government minister of Sindh, Mirs of Khairpur, Chandio Tribesmen, and Khosa Tribesmen.

Charles Napier had brought first army consisting of mostly Bengali soldiers. The Balochi ruling forces of Sindh used to attack the British led armies in the darkness of night. The Bengali soldiers could not compete in those war techniques, and they used to run away. Then, Charles Napier hired Khosa Baloch tribesman (from Dera Ghazi Khan) in his army, to fight with the ruling Balochis of Sindh, who were also originally from Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab. Chandio Baloch Sardar brought a cavalry of 10,000 to support Charles Napier in the Miani war, but did not participate in the actual war, and his armies stood on reserve to attack in case Charles Napier lost the war. For his role, Chandio sardar got Chandka (present day Larakana, Qambar-Shahdadkot districts) as Jagir.

Talpurs of Khairpur also got Khairpur state as gift from Charles Napier for non-participation in the war. The first Aga Khan had helped the British in the conquest of Sindh and was granted a pension as a result. Finally Sindh was made part of British India's Bombay Presidency in 1847.

8.11. Anglo-Sikh Wars

Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845–46; 1848–49), two campaigns fought between the Sikhs and the British. They resulted in the conquest and annexation by the British of the Punjab in northwestern India.

The first Anglo-Sikh war (1845–46) was precipitated by mutual suspicions and the turbulence of the Sikh army. The Sikh state in the Punjab had been built into a formidable power by the Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who ruled from 1801 to 1839. Within six years of his death, however, the government had broken down in a series of palace revolutions and assassinations. By 1843 the ruler was a boy—the youngest son of Ranjit Singh—whose mother was proclaimed queen regent. Actual power, however, resided with the army, which was itself in the hands of *panchs*, or military committees. Relations with the British had already been strained by the refusal of the Sikhs to allow the passage of British troops through their territory during the First Anglo-Afghan War (1838–42).

Having determined to invade British India under the pretext of forestalling a British attack, the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej River in December 1845. They were defeated in the four bloody and hard-fought battles of Mudki, Ferozpur, Aliwal, and Sobraon. The British annexed Sikh lands east of the Sutlej and between it and the Beas River; Kashmir and Jammu were detached, and the Sikh army was limited to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry. A British resident was stationed in Lahore with British troops.

The Second Sikh War (1848-49) began with the revolt of Mulraj, governor of Multan, in April 1848 and became a national revolt when the Sikh army joined the rebels on September 14. Indecisive battles characterized by great ferocity and bad generalship were fought at Ramnagar (November 22) and at Chilianwala (Jan. 13, 1849) before the final British victory at Gujarat (February 21). The Sikh army surrendered on March 12, and the Punjab was then annexed.

Thus after the Battles of Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) which established British dominion over East India, the Anglo-Mysore wars (1766–1799), the Anglo-Maratha Wars (1775–1818), Annexation of Sindh (1843) and finally the Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845–1849) consolidated the British claim over South Asia, resulting in the British Empire in India, though resistance among various groups such as the Afghans and the Burmese would last well into the 1880s.

9. Economic Impact of Colonial Policies in India

9.1. Distinct Stages of Colonialism in India and their Impact on Indian Economy

Stage 1: This was Pre-colonialism stage when British East India Company competed with other European powers for trade with India. Since India mostly exported and imported very few items, British were required to pay in Bullion. In fact, balance of trade was so heavily in favour of India that high import duties were placed on Indian goods like linen etc.

Stage 2: In 1765, after the battle of Buxar, in the treaty concluded with Mughal emperor Shah Alam, British acquired the Diwani rights of Bengal. British used the land revenue that was extracted to buy Indian goods and export them. Though the export of India increased, India did not gain anything. Thus the 'drain of wealth' started. The demand of land revenue was increased, which impoverished the peasantry. The famine of 1769-70 resulted in death of one-third of the population.

Stage 3: With the emergence and dominance of the ideas of laissez-faire Capitalism and free-market in England, monopoly of East India Company was gradually abolished through Charter acts of 1813 and 1823. This changed the character of Indo-British trade. So far, India had mostly been an exporting nation; now onwards it became an importing country.

Of course, free trade was practised only one way; that is, import duties on Indian goods remained exorbitantly high. The 'free trade' between India and Britain was largely in favour of Britain due to restriction placed on Indian exports. India mainly exported raw materials and imported industrial goods.

Stage 4: With the surplus capital that Britain acquired, investments were made in India. These related to the development of Railways, Telegraph etc. However, contracts were given to British capitalists. Even ancillary industries did not develop in India. Ancillary goods were mostly imported. Profits made by British investments in India were sent back.

9.2. Impact of Political Currents in British Administration over the Policies in India

With the coming of the Tory party into power under the leadership of Lord Grey, Benthamites (supporter of Jeremy Bentham's ideas of economics mainly utilitarianism) and Humanitarians became active in the matter of reforms in England. As a result, the court of directors thought that in order to renew their charter in 1833, they would have to bring in socio-economic reforms in India. Lord Bentinck was advised to remove the most conspicuous abuses in the Indian society.

The purpose of Christian missionary activity in India was to spread Evangelisation. This found a number of supporters in Britain. Charter act of 1813 lifted all restriction on the entry of missionaries of the U.K. into India.

Above all, it was the business interests of the capitalist class in Britain that advocated a stronghold over the Indian Territory to safeguard their commercial interests. Policy of laissez-faire which favoured free trade led to gradual abolition of monopoly of East India Company. **It is noticeable that trade was free only one way; high duties were placed on Indian goods that were imported by Britain.**

Other Important Developments in India before 1857

9.3. Postal System

Before 1837, the East India Company's dominions in India had no universal public postal service, one that was shared by all regions. Although courier services did exist, connecting the more important towns with their respective seats of provincial government (*i.e.* the Presidency towns of Fort William (Calcutta), Fort St. George (Madras), and Bombay), private individuals were, upon payment, only sparingly allowed their use. **That situation changed in 1837, when, by Act XVII of that year, a public post, run by the Company's Government, was established in the Company's territory in India.** Post offices were established in the principal towns and postmasters appointed. The postmasters of the Presidency towns oversaw a few provincial post offices in addition to being responsible for the main postal services between the provinces. Postal services required payment in cash, to be made in advance, with the amount charged usually varying with weight and distance.

After the recommendations of the commission appointed in 1850 to evaluate the Indian postal system were received, Act XVII of 1837 was superseded by the **Indian Postal Act of 1854**. Under its provisions, the entire postal department was headed by a Director-General, and the duties of a Postmaster-General were set apart from those of a Presidency Postmaster; the former administered the postal system of the larger provinces (such as the Bombay Presidency or the North-Western Provinces), whereas the latter attended to the less important Provinces (such as Ajmer-Merwara and the major Political Agencies such as Rajputana). Postage stamps were introduced at this time and the postal rates fixed by weight, dependent no longer also on the distance traveled in the delivery.

9.4. Telegraph

Before the advent of electric telegraphy, the word "telegraph" had been used for semaphore signalling (optical telegraph). During the period 1820–30, the East India Company's Government in India seriously considered constructing signalling towers ("telegraph" towers), but by mid-century, electric telegraphy had become viable, and hand signalling obsolete.

Dr. W. B. O'Shaughnessy, a Professor of Chemistry in the Calcutta Medical College, received permission in 1851 to conduct a trial run for a telegraph service from Calcutta to Diamond Harbour along the river Hooghly. Four telegraph offices, mainly for shipping-related business, were also opened along the river that year. The telegraph receiver used in the trial was a galvanoscope of Dr. O'Shaughnessy's design and manufactured in India. When the experiment was deemed to be a success a year later, the Governor-General of India, **Lord Dalhousie**, sought permission from the Court of Directors of the Company for the construction of telegraph lines from Calcutta to Agra, Agra to Bombay, Agra to Peshawar, and Bombay to Madras, extending in all over 3,050 miles and including forty-one offices. The permission was soon granted; the first Telegraph Act for India was the British Parliament's Act XXXIV of 1854. When the public telegrams service was first set up in 1855, the charge was fixed at one rupee for every sixteen words (including the address) for every 400 miles of transmission.

By February 1855 all the proposed telegraph lines had been constructed and were being used to send paid messages. Dr. O'Shaughnessy's instrument was used all over India until early 1857,

when it was supplanted by the Morse instrument. By 1857, the telegraph network had expanded to 4,555 miles of lines and sixty two offices, and had reached as far as the hill station of Ootacamund in the Nilgiri Hills and the port of Calicut on the southwest coast of India.

It should be noted that during the Indian rebellion of 1857, more than seven hundred miles of telegraph lines were destroyed by the rebel forces, mainly in the North-Western Provinces. **The East India Company was nevertheless able to use the remaining intact lines to warn many outposts of impending disturbances. The political values of the new technology were, thus, driven home to the Company** and, in the following year, not only were the destroyed lines rebuilt, but the network was expanded further by 2,000 miles.

9.5. Development of 'Press' in India

Press was introduced by the Portuguese in 16th century. Initial attempts to publish newspapers were made by the disgruntled East India Employees. **James Augustus Hickey published the first newspaper in India entitled The Bengal Gazette in 1780.** It was seized in 1782 due to the outspoken criticism against the Governor General and the Chief Justice.

The censorship of Press Act, 1799

Fearing French menace, Lord Wellesley imposed almost wartime restrictions on the press. Pre-censorship was imposed. Due to the progress of liberal views that were gaining ground in England, the restrictions were repealed by Lord Hasting and pre-censorship done away with in 1818.

The Licensing Regulations for Press, 1823

Interim Governor General John Adams gave a practical shape to his reactionary views through regulations that required every printer and publisher to obtain a license for starting or using a press. The Governor-General had the right to cancel a license or call for a new application. These regulations were mainly directed against the Vernacular newspapers. **Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Mirat-ul-Akbar was one of the newspapers that had to stop publication.**

William Bentinck was in favour of liberalising press. He thought that this would provide vent to the political feelings of Indians. However, he has to resign in 1835 to due ill health. It was left to his faithful successor Charles Metcalfe, officiating Governor-General (1835-36), to complete press reforms. As a result, he has been called as the 'Liberator of Indian press.' He repealed the regulations of 1823. A new press act was passed which required a declaration giving the account of premises of publication. This led to a growth of newspapers all over the country.

9.6. Railways

In 1845, the Court of Directors of the East India Company, forwarded to the Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie, a number of applications they had received from private contractors in England for the construction of a wide ranging railway network in India, and requested a feasibility report. It was suggested, that three experimental lines be constructed and their performance evaluated.

Contracts were awarded in 1849 to **the East Indian Railway Company** to construct a 120-mile railway from **Howrah-Calcutta to Raniganj**; to the **Great Indian Peninsular Railway Company** for a service from **Bombay to Kalyan**, 30- miles away; and to the **Madras Railway Company** for a line from **Madras city to Arkonam**, a distance of 39- miles.

Although construction **began first, in 1849**, on the East Indian Railways line, **it was the first-leg of the Bombay-Kalyan line—a 21-mile stretch from Bombay to Thane—that, in 1853, was the first to be completed.**

The feasibility of a train network in India was comprehensively discussed by Lord Dalhousie in his **Railway minute** of 1853. The Governor-General vigorously advocated the quick and widespread introduction of railways in India, pointing to their political, social, and economic advantages.

The first leg of the East Indian Railway line, a broad gauge railway, **from Howrah to Pandua**, was opened in 1854, and the entire line up to Raniganj would become functional by the time of the Indian rebellion of 1857.

But it should be noted that the railway lines were not built out of the Indian exchequer but by private enterprise. Thus, it gave the English capital and enterprise a chance of investment. Subsequently, railway lines in India were mostly built by Indian companies under a system of 'Government guarantee.'

Development of railways was also not accompanied by the development of ancillary industries. Thus, it heralded a 'commercial revolution' by penetrating deep into the markets of India rather than facilitating 'industrial revolution.'

9.7. Canals

The first irrigation works undertaken during East India Company's rule were begun in 1817. Consisting chiefly of extensions or reinforcements of previous Indian works, these projects were limited to the plains north of Delhi and to the river deltas of the Madras Presidency.

In 1835–36, Sir Arthur Cotton successfully reinforced the Grand Anicut Dam in the Kaveri River Delta, and his success prompted more irrigation projects on the river. A little farther north, on the Tungabhadra River, several low dams constructed by Krishna Deva Raya were also extended under British administration.

The Western Jamna Canal was repaired by British army engineers and it reopened in 1820. The Doab Canal was reopened in 1830 after considerable renovation involved raising the embankment. Farther west in the Punjab region, the 130-mile long Hasli Canal, was extended by the British in the Bari Doab Canal works during 1850–57.

The first new British work with no Indian antecedents was the **Ganges Canal** built between 1842 and 1854. Contemplated first by Col. John Russell Colvin in 1836, it did not at first elicit much enthusiasm from its eventual architect Sir Proby Thomas Cautley, who balked at idea of cutting a canal through extensive low-lying land in order to reach the drier upland destination. However, after the Agra famine of 1837–38, during which the East India Company's administration spent a large sum on famine relief, the idea of a canal became more attractive to the Company's budget-conscious Court of Directors.

Later with the supportive stand of, James Thomason as Lt. Governor at north western provinces, and Lord Dalhousie as Governor-General of India, canal construction, under Cautley's supervision, went into full swing. A 350-mile long canal, with another 300 miles of branch lines, was completed. The Ganges Canal was officially opened in 1854 by Lord Dalhousie.

10. Critical Analysis of British Policies

India is perhaps the sole example in human history where a trading company took over the reins of government and continued to be a trading company even thereafter. Quite obviously the first and the last objective of the company continued to be profit making. Governance instead of being a vehicle for public welfare was reduced and degenerated to a tool for maximising the company's profits. The most visible impact of the company's policies therefore was disempowerment of the upper class zamindars, impoverishment of the common man and total marginalisation of the local artisans. Critical analysis of some of these policies can be done in the light of their effect over masses, under following heads:-

10.1. Extent of the Change in the Life in Indian Villages

Prior to British, villages were community centred. These were self-sufficient in nature. However, the system of administration turned the existing systems upside down. Village panchayats were made deprived of their traditional judicial and executive functions.

Land revenue demand traditionally ranged from one-sixth to one-third of the rent before the advent of the British. This increased substantially under the British. As a result of the land revenue system established by the British, land became a commercial entity. In a significant departure with the previous practises, tax had to be paid in cash. Due to the cyclic nature of Indian agriculture owing to heavy dependence on monsoon, there were fluctuations in the yield, due to which peasants were unable to pay the tax. Since in the case of non-payment, they faced eviction, recourse to payment through money-lenders was taken, which created heavy indebtedness of the farmers and they were exploited by high interest rates of money-lenders as well. Bedakhali (eviction) from the land in case of non-payment was a common practise. New social classes like the landlord, the trader, the moneylender, and the landed gentry shot into prominence.

British put in place new judicial mechanisms. Laws were written down and codified. Courts of law were established. As a result, traditional judicial mechanisms were eroded. Common people did not understand the new judicial setup. Advocates were required who remained beyond the avail by common people due to their high fees.

Handicrafts and other traditional industries were destroyed as a result of the economic policies of British.

10.2. Impact on the Handicraft Industry in India

British economic policy in India was primarily to serve the economic interests of the business class in Britain. Some expected British to introduce modern industry in India. However, what was witnessed was the gradual 'deindustrialisation' of Indian industries.

The ruination of Indian industries was due to the following reasons:

- Loss of the traditional patrons like Indian princes, Nawabs and other administrators who patronised fancy arts and handicrafts and often employed the best craftsmen on a regular salary basis.
- New classes, namely of European officials and western educated Indian professional class arose under the British rule. These poured scorn of everything that was Indian.
- After introduction of free trade after 1813, British goods made in industries flooded the Indian markets. Cheap imported cotton goods spelled ruination of the Indian weaving industry.
- Construction of Railways further enabled penetration of British goods into Indian markets.
- High import duties were imposed on Indian goods in Britain.
- Indian artisans were compelled to divulge their trade secrets.
- Special privileges were given to British manufacturers in India.

10.3. Famines

These were the inevitable consequence of British policies and exposed the real nature of British paternalism. During the rule of the East India Company India suffered from twelve famines and four severe scarcities.

In the Bengal famine of 1769-70, almost one-third of the population of Bengal province was wiped out. No major relief features were taken by the state; rather the company servants profited through hoarding of grains.

Under the East India Company, no attempt was made to formulate any general system of famine relief or prevention. However, the provincial governments and district officers tried various experiments to offer relief through measures like storage of grains by the Government, penalties on hoarding, bounties on imports, advancing loans for sinking of wells and so on.

10.4. Education

Western education in India started due to the efforts of Christian missionaries, for whom, education was not an end-in-itself, but a means to evangelisation.

Initially, the British did not accept the responsibility of imparting education to Indians living in territory under their administrative jurisdiction. In continuance from the medieval times, education in India was mostly imparted in the form of study of religious teaching scriptures and philosophy, which were mostly crammed rather than understood. It had failed to modernise itself and did not develop the spirit of scientific enquiry and rationality.

Early efforts to foster Oriental learning were through opening up of Calcutta Madrasa (1781) and Sanskrit college (Banaras, 1792). Due to the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Ray Hindu College opened in Calcutta in 1817.

The first beginning towards state administered education was made with the Charter act of 1813, when amount of one lakh rupees was sanctioned for education.

However, there was debate between the Orientalists and Anglicists. Former wanted to impart education in Indian languages while the latter preferred English as a medium of education.

The debate went in favour of the Anglicists, when in the famous Macaulay's minutes (1835), it was decided to use English as a means of education.

English was favoured to create a class of Indians, who were Indian in flesh but British in their thinking. English educated officials were also required to carry out the administrative tasks of the Company. English educated also became the market for British manufactured goods from neckties to shoes.

In 1854, Wood's dispatch made a departure from the policy and decided that the medium of education would be mother tongue in primary, mix of mother tongue and English in secondary and high school level, and English in college and university education.

Politically, the interests of western educated class, which consisted of doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers etc. was aligned with the continuation of British rule in India. They consciously or unconsciously became supporter of British rule in India.

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INDIAN RENAISSANCE AND REFORM MOVEMENT

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1. Background and Causes of the Reform Movement

Indian Society in the 19th century was caught in a vicious web created by religious superstitions and dogmas. All religions in general and Hinduism in particular had become a compound of magic, animism, and superstitions. The abominable rites like animal sacrifice and physical torture had replaced the worship of God. The priests exercised an overwhelming and unhealthy influence on the mind of people. The faithful lived in submission, not only to God, the powerful and unseen, but even to the whims, fancies, and wishes of the priests.

Social Conditions were equally depressing. The most distressing was the **position of women**. The birth of a girl was unwelcome, her marriage a burden and her widowhood inauspicious. Another debilitating factor was **Caste**. It sought to maintain a system of segregation, hierarchically ordained on the basis of ritual status, hampering social mobility and fostered social divisions. There were innumerable other practices marked by constraint, status, authority, bigotry and blind fatalism. Rejecting them as features of a decadent society, the reform movements sought to create a social climate for modernization.

The conquest of India by the British during the 18th and 19th century exposed some serious weaknesses and drawbacks of Indian social institutions. The response, indeed, was varied but the need to reform social and religious life was a commonly shared conviction. It also brought in completely new sets of ideas and social world. The exposure to post-Enlightenment rationalism that came to signify modernity brought a change in the outlook of a select group of Indians.

The introduction of western education and ideas had the far reaching impact on the Indian Society. Through the glasses of utility, reason, justice, and progress, a select group of individuals began to explore the nature of their own society. There was a gradual emergence of public opinion. The debates between the Orientalists, scholars of Eastern societies like India on one side, and the Utilitarians, Liberals and Missionaries on the other also enabled the penetration of ideas, at least amongst the upper section of society. The resultant cultural change led to introspection about Indian traditions, institution, and culture.

The socio intellectual revolution that took place in the nineteenth century in the fields of philosophy, literature, science, politics and social reforms is often known as **Indian Renaissance**. An important part of this Renaissance was reforming Hinduism from within on the basis of Post-Enlightenment rationalism. The Renaissance was especially focused in Bengal and is popularly known as the Bengal Renaissance. However, the use of 'renaissance' is slightly problematic as in European history it is used to refer to the "rebirth" or revival of Greco-Roman learning in the fifteen and sixteenth centuries after the long winter of the dark medieval period. But in Indian context, it implied rediscovering rationalism from within India's past.

2. Social and Religious Reform Movement

Social Reform Movement are linked with different ideas including presence of Colonial government, Economic and Social backwardness of society, influence of modern western ideas, rise of intellectual awakening in the middle class and poor position of women in society. British rule in India acted as a catalyst to deep seated social changes. Western culture also influenced the Indian Life and thought in several ways. The most important result of the impact of western culture was the replacement of blind faith in current traditions, beliefs, and conventions by a spirit of rationalism.

The major social problems which came in the purview of the reforms movements were emancipation of women in which sati, infanticide, child marriage and widow re-marriage were taken up, casteism and untouchability, education for bringing about enlightenment in society. In the religious sphere main issues were idolatry, polytheism, religious superstitions, and exploitation by priest.

Important characteristics of Social Reform Movement included leadership by wide emerging Intellectual middle class. Reform movement started in different parts of India in different period but having considerable similarities. They were link with one region or one caste. It was clear to them that without religious reformation, there cannot be any social reformation. Two Intellectual criteria of social reform movement included-

- Rationality
- Religious Universalism

Social relevance was judged by a **rationalist** critique. It is difficult to match the uncompromising rationalism of the early Raja Rammohan Roy or AkshaykumarDutt. Rejecting Supernatural explanations, Raja Rammohan Roy affirmed the principle of causality linking the whole phenomenal universe. To him demonstrability was the sole criterion of truth. In proclaiming that 'rationalism is our only preceptor', AkshaykumarDutt went a step further. All natural and social phenomena, he held, could be analysed and understood by purely mechanical processes. This perspective not only enabled them to adopt a rational approach to tradition but also to evaluate the contemporary socio-religious practices from the standpoint of social utility and to replace faith with rationality. In the BrahmoSamaj, it led to the repudiation of the infallibility of the Vedas, and in the Aligarh Movement, to the reconciliation of the teachings of Islam with the needs of the modern age. Holding that religious tenets were not immutable, Syed Ahmed Khan emphasized the role of religion in the progress of society: if religion did not keep pace with and meet the demands of the time it would get fossilized as in the case of Islam in India.

Similarly, while the ambits of reforms were particularistic, their **religious perspective was universalistic**. Raja Ram Mohan Roy considered different religion as national embodiments of Universal theism. The BrahmoSamaj was initially conceived by him as a Universalist church. He was a defender of the basic and universal principles of all religions- the monotheism of the Vedas and the Unitarianism of Christianity- and at the same time attacked polytheism of Hinduism and the trinitarianism of Christianity. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan echoed the same idea: all prophets had the same din (faith) and every country and nation had different prophets. This perspective found clearer articulation in Kehsub Chandra Sen's ideas saying that our position is not that truths are to be found in all religions, but all established religions of the world are true. He also gave expression to the social implication of this Universalist perspective saying that whosoever worships the True God daily must learn to recognize all his fellow countrymen as brethren. Caste would vanish in such a state of a society.

The Universalist perspective was not a purely philosophic concern; it strongly influenced the political and social outlook of the time, till religious particularism gained ground in the second half of the nineteenth century. For instance, despite Muslim tyranny were epithets often used to describe the pre-colonial rule, this was referred not a religious but a political institutions. The emphasis was not on the word 'Muslim' but on the word 'tyranny'. This is amply clear from Syed Ahmed Khan's description of the pre- colonial system: 'The rule of the former emperors and rajas was neither in accordance with the Hindu nor the Mohammadan religion. It was based upon nothing but tyranny and oppression; the law of might was that of right; the voice of the people was not listened to.' The yardstick obviously was not religious identity but liberal and democratic principles. This, however, does not imply that religious identity did not influence the social outlook of the people; in fact, it did very strongly. The reformers' emphasis on universalism was an attempt to contend with it. However, faced with the challenge of colonial culture and ideology, universalism, instead of providing the basis for the development of a secular ethos, retreated in to religious particularism.

The socio religious reform movement, as a whole, was against backward element of traditional culture in terms of both religious and social evils. The focus was on regeneration of traditional

institutions including medicine, education, and philosophy and so on. There were differences in methods of those reform movements but all of them were concerned with the regeneration of society through social and educational reforms.

In terms of their limitations, it can be said that these movements were not able to reach vast masses of peasantry and urban poor and there were inadequate focus on composite culture and heritage of masses including music, art, architecture and literature, and science and technological achievement. Each of these reform movements was confined, by and large, to a region or other and also was confined to a particular caste and religion.

In a nutshell, it can be argued that in the evolution of modern India the reform movements have made very significant contribution. They stood for the democratization of the society, removal of superstitions and decadent customs, spread of enlightenment and development of a rational and modern outlook. This led to the national awakening in India.

3. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj

Ram Mohan Roy, the father of Indian Renaissance was versatile genius, who opposed the idolatry, denounced Sati, polygamy and abuses of the caste system, favoured remarriage of Hindu widows. He started the '**Atmiya Sabha**' in 1815 and carried a consistent struggle against the religious and social malpractices. In first philosophical work "Tuhfat-ul-Muwahiddin" he analysed major religions of the world in light of reason and social comfort

As a reformist ideologue, Roy believed in modern scientific approach and principles of human dignity and social equality. He put his faith in monotheism. He wrote **Gift to Monotheists** and translated the **Vedas** and the **five Upanishads** into Bengali to prove his conviction that ancient Hindu texts support monotheism. In **percepts of Jesus** (1820), he tried to separate the moral and philosophical message of the New Testament, which he praised, from its miracle stories. **Sambad Kaumudi** (founded in 1921) was a **Bengali** weekly newspaper published from **Kolkata** in the first half of the 19th century by Raja **Ram Mohan Roy**. **Sambad Kaumudi** regularly editorialised against **Sati**, denouncing it as barbaric and un-Hindu. It was the main vehicle of **Ram Mohan Roy's** campaign against **Sati**. In August 1828, Roy founded the **Brahmo Sabha** which was later renamed '**Brahmo Samaj**' (The society of God). Object of the **Brahmo Samaj** was the worship and adoration of the eternal, unsearchable, immutable God. It opposed idol worship and stayed away from practice of priesthood and sacrifice. The worship was performed through prayers, meditation, and readings from the Upanishads. Great emphasis was laid on "promotion of charity, morality, benevolence, and strengthening of the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds"

It should be clearly understood that Ram Mohan Roy never intended to establish a new religion. He only wanted to purge Hinduism of the evil practices that has crept into it. Roy remained a devout Hindu till the end of his life and always wore the sacred thread.

From the beginning the appeal of **Brahmo Samaj** had remained limited to the intellectuals and educationally enlightened Bengalis living in the towns. The orthodox Hindu led by **Raja Radhakant Deb** organised the '**Dharma Sabha**' with the object of countering the propaganda of **Brahmo Samaj**. The early death of Ram Mohan Roy in 1833 left the **Brahmo Samaj** without the guiding soul and a steady decline set in.

Debendranath Tagore, father of Rabindranath Tagore founded the **Tatvabodhini Sabha** in 1839 to propagate **Rammohun Roy's** ideas. The **Tatvabodhini Sabha** and its organ the **Tatvabodhini Patrika** promoted a systematic study of India's past in Bengali language and helped spread rational outlook. Tagore was a product of the best in traditional Indian learning and western thought, and gave a new life to **Brahmo Samaj** and a definite form and shape to the theist movement, when he joined the samaj in 1842. He worked on two fronts: Within

Hinduism, the BrahmoSamaj was a reformist movement; outside, it resolutely opposed the Christian Missionaries for their criticism of Hinduism and their attempt at conversion. Under his leadership branches of the Samaj were established in various towns and the Brahmo massage spread in the countryside of the Bengal.

The BrahmoSamaj experienced another phase of energy and vigor when **Keshub Chandra Sen** was made the acharya by Debendranath Tagore soon after the former joined the Samaj in 1858. Keshub was instrumental in popularizing the movement, and branches of the samaj were opened outside Bengal in the United Provinces, Punjab, Bombay, Madras and other towns. Unfortunately, Debendranath did not like some of Sen's ideas which he found too radical, such as cosmopolitanisation of the samaj's meetings by inclusion of teaching from all religions and his strong views against the caste system, even open support to inter caste marriages. Thus by virtue of his position Debendranath Tagore dismissed Keshub Chandra Sen from the office of Acharya in 1865.

Keshubsen and his followers broke away from Brahmosamaj in 1866 and established what was called the '**BrahmoSamaj of India**'. Debendranath's more orthodox group came to be known as the '**AdiBrahmoSamaj**'. There was a second schism in the BrahmoSamaj on the issue of radical social reforms being preached by Keshub Chandra Sen. The schism, after the marriage of Keshub's 13 year old daughter to the minor prince of Cooch Behar with all the orthodox Hindu rituals caused another split in Keshub's Brahmosamaj of India, resulting in formation of **SadharanBrahmoSamaj in 1878**, organized on more democratic lines.

The role of the BrahmoSamaj as the '**first intellectual movement which spread the ideas of rationalism and enlightenment in modern India**' cannot be over-emphasized. Its liberal approach to social and religious questions won the approbation of Europeans and Indians alike. Its educational and social reform activities instilled a new confidence which, in turn, contributed to the growth of national movement. A number of BrahmoSamajists were later prominent in the struggle of Independence.

Contribution of BrahmoSamaj

The overall contribution of BrahmoSamaj may be summed thus-

- It denounced polytheism and idol worship.
- It discarded faith in divine incarnations.
- It denied that any scripture could enjoy the status of ultimate authority transcending human reason and conscience.
- It took no definite stand on the doctrine of karma and transmigration of soul and left it to individual Brahmos to believe either way.
- It criticized the caste system.

4. Young Bengal Movement and Henry Vivian Derozio

During the late 1820s and early 1830s, there emerged a radical, intellectual trend among the youth in Bengal, which came to be known as the 'Young Bengal Movement'. This trend was more modern than even Rammohun Roy's. A young Anglo-Indian, Henry Vivian Derozio, who taught at the Hindu College from 1826 to 1831, was the leader and inspirer of this progressive trend. Drawing inspiration from the great French Revolution, Derozio inspired his pupils to think freely and rationally, question all authority, love liberty, equality, and freedom, and oppose decadent customs and traditions. The Derozians also supported women's rights and education. Also, Derozio was perhaps the first nationalist poet of Modern India.

The Derozians, however, failed to have a long term impact. Derozio was removed from the Hindu College in 1831 because of his radicalism. The main reason for their limited success was

the prevailing social condition at that time, which was not ripe for the adoption of radical ideas. Further, support from any other social group or class was absent. The Derozians lacked any real link with the masses; for instance, they failed to take up the peasants' cause. In fact their radicalism was bookish in character. But, despite their limitations, the Derozians carried forward Roy's tradition of public education on social, economic, and political questions.

5. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

The great scholar and reformer, Vidyasagar's ideas were a happy blend of Indian and western thought. He believed in high Moral values, was a deep humanist, and was generous to the poor. In 1850, he became the principal of Sanskrit College. He was determined to break the priestly monopoly of scriptural knowledge, and for this he opened the Sanskrit College to break the self-imposed isolation of Sanskrit learning. Also, as an academician, he evolved a new methodology to teach Sanskrit.

Vidyasagar started a movement in support of widow remarriage which resulted in legislation of widow remarriage. He was also a crusade against child marriage and polygamy. He did much for the cause of Women's education. As government inspector of schools, he helped organize thirty-five girls' schools many of which he ran at his own expense. As secretary of Bethune School (established in 1849), he was one of the pioneers of higher education for the women in India. The first lawful Hindu widow remarriage was celebrated in Calcutta in 1856 under the inspiration and supervision of Vidyasagar.

6. Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj

AryaSamaj ("Noble Society") is a Hindu reform movement founded by Swami Dayananda on 7 April 1875. He was a sannyasi who promoted the Vedas. Dayananda emphasized the ideals of brahmacharya (chastity). Swami Dayananda wandered as an ascetic for fifteen years (1845-60) in search of truth. The first AryaSamaj Unit was formally set up by him at Bombay in 1875 and later the headquarters of the samaj were established at Lahore.

Swami Dayanand gave the mantra, "Go back to Vedas" as he believed that priestly class and Puranas had perverted Hindu religion. He wrote a book SatyarthPrakash which contains his philosophical and religious ideas. He believed that every person had the right to have direct access to God. It started the **Shuddhi Movement** to bring back those Hindus who had converted to Islam and Christianity.

Today, temples set up by AryaSamaj are found all over India. The organization also has played an important role in spread of education through its network of schools known by name of Dayanand Anglo Vedic (DAV) schools in India.

In bringing about a national awakening in the country, the samaj played a dual role at once progressive and retrogressive. Thus in attacking religious superstition, propagating mass education, inculcating equality of man to man as well as between man and woman, it acted as a catalyst for progressive reform. Yet in proclaiming the Vedas to be infallible, it denied the individual the exercise of his own independent judgement and substituted one supremacy, that of the Brahmins, by another.

Unlike the BrahmoSamaj, the PrathanaSamaj and several other 19th century reformist movements, the AryaSamaj never cut itself aloof from the mainstream of Hindu thought. In its formative phase the samaj made a signal contribution to the nationalist upsurge, yet after the twenties it contributed, however, unwillingly, to the growth of communal political consciousness.

7. Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda

Ramakrishna Paramhansa was a mystic who sought religious salvation in the traditional ways of renunciation, meditation and devotion. He was a saintly person who recognized the fundamental oneness of all religions and emphasized that there were many roads to God and salvation and the service of man is the service of God. The teaching of Ramakrishna Paramhansa formed the basis of the Ramakrishna Movement.

The two objectives of the movements were:

- To bring into existence a band of monks dedicated to a life of renunciation and practical spirituality, from among whom teachers and workers would be sent out to spread the Universal message of Vedanta as illustrated in the life of Ramakrishna
- In conjunction with lay disciples to carry on preaching, philanthropic and charitable works, looking upon all men, women and children, irrespective of caste, creed or color, as veritable manifestations of the Divine.

Narendranath Datta (1862-1902), who later came to be known as Swami Vivekananda spread Ramakrishna's message and tried to reconcile it to the needs of contemporary Indian Society. He emerged as the preacher of neo-Hinduism. Certain spiritual experiences of Ramakrishna, the teaching of the Upanishads and the Gita and the examples of the Buddha and Jesus are the basis of Vivekananda's message to the World about human values. He subscribed to the Vedanta, which he considered a fully rational system with a superior approach. His mission was to bridge the gulf between paramartha (service) and vyavahara (behavior), and between spirituality and day-to-day life.

Vivekananda was a great humanist. He believed in the fundamental oneness of God and said, "For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam, is the only hope." Emphasizing social action, he declared that knowledge without action is useless. He lamented the isolationist tendencies and the touch-me-not attitude of Hindus in religious matters. He frowned at religion's tacit approval of the oppression of the poor by the rich.

Vivekananda founded Ramakrishna Mission in 1897, headquarters of which is at Belur near Kolkata. He used Ramakrishna Mission for humanitarian relief and social work. The mission stands for religious and social reform. Vivekananda advocated the doctrine of service- the service of all beings. The service of jiva(living objects) is the worship of Shiva. Life itself is religion. By service, the Divine exists within man. Vivekananda was for using technology and modern science in the service of mankind. Ever since its inception, the Mission has been running a number of schools, hospitals and dispensaries. It offers help to the afflicted in times of natural calamities like famines, floods and epidemics. The Mission has developed into a worldwide organization. It is a deeply religious body, but it is not a proselytizing body. It does not consider itself to be a sect of Hinduism. In fact, this is one of the strong reasons for the success of the Mission. Unlike the AryaSamaj, the Mission recognizes the utility and value of image worship in developing spiritual fervor and worship of the eternal omnipotent God, albeit it emphasizes the essential spirit and not the symbols or rituals. It believes that the philosophy of Vedanta will make a Christian a better Christian, and a Hindu a better Hindu.

At the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893, Swami Vivekananda made a great impression on people by his learned interpretations. The keynote of his opening address was the need for a healthy balance between spiritualism and materialism. Envisaging a new culture for the whole world, he called for a blend of the materialism of the west and the spiritualism of the East in to a new harmony to produce happiness for mankind.

8. Theosophical Society

The Theosophical society was founded in the United States by Madam H.P. Blavatsky and Colonel H.S. Olcott in 1875. The two theosophist leaders reached India in 1882 and set up their Headquarters at Bombay before moving to Adyar, in Madras. By 1884, the society had 100 branches in India, apart from several in Europe and America.

The movement was revived and revitalized by Annie Besant who came out to India in 1893, after the death of Madame Blavatsky. She succeeded Olcott as the president of society in 1907 and endeared herself to large numbers of People by preaching the wisdom of Krishna and Gita, thus turning theosophy 'into something specifically Hindu'. In fact, that would largely explain the uniqueness of this movement- it was inaugurated by a non-indian who was a great admirer of Hinduisim.

Theosophical Movement won great popularity for its work in the education of youth. Mrs Besant's established the Central Hindu School at Benaras later developed by Madan Mohan Malaviya into the Benaras Hindu University. The society opened schools for boys, for women, for the depressed classes and took part in the Boy scouts movements.

9. M G Ranade and PrarthanaSamaj

Justice MahadevGovindRanade (1842 –1901) was a distinguished Indian scholar, social reformer and author. He was a founding member of the Indian National Congress and owned several designations as member of the Bombay legislative council, member of the finance committee at the centre, and the judge of Bombay High Court.

A well-known public figure, his personality as a calm and patient optimist would influence his attitude towards dealings with Britain as well as reform in India. During his life he helped establish the Poona SarvajanikSabha and the PrarthanaSamaj, and would edit a Bombay Anglo-Marathi daily paper, the Induprakash, founded on his ideology of social and religious reform.

A man of varied interest, an economist, politician, historian, and social reformer, Ranade did not let his official work interfere with his duty to the country and its people. He sketched out a policy that would make India progress economically. He published books on Indian economics and on Maratha history. He saw the need for heavy industry for economic progress and believed in Western education as a vital element to the foundation of an Indian nation. He felt that by understanding the mutual problems of India and Britain both reform and independence could be achieved to the benefit of all and insisted that an independent India could only be stable after such reforms were made.

With his friends DrAtmaramPandurang, BalMangeshWagle and VamanAbajiModak, Ranade founded the PrarthanaSamaj, a Hindu movement inspired by the BrahmoSamaj, espousing principles of enlightened theism based on the ancient Vedas. PrarthanaSamaj was started with inspiration from Keshav Chandra Sen, a staunch Brahma Samajist, with the objective of carrying out religious reforms in Maharashtra.

The four point social agenda of PrarthanaSamaj were

- Disapproval of caste system
- Women education
- Widow remarriage
- Raising the age of marriage for both males and females

The **Main difference** between the PrarthanaSamaj and Brahma Samaj was that the members of the Prarthanasamaj remained Hindus and started progressive reforms within Hinduism as Hindus whereas the Brahma Samaj assailed Hinduism by forming an organization more or less

outside the Hindu orbit. They were much attracted to the ideals of the modern west, and proceeded to imitate Western methods of education.

Ranade founded the **Poona Sarvajanik Sabha** and later was one of the originators of the Indian National Congress. He has been portrayed as an early adversary of the politics of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and a mentor to Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

Ranade was a founder of the **Social Conference movement**, which he supported till his death, directing his social reform efforts against child marriage, the shaving of widows' heads, the heavy cost of marriages and other social functions, and the caste restrictions on traveling abroad, and he strenuously advocated widow remarriage and female education. He was one of the founders of the Widow Marriage Association in 1861. Ranade attempted to work with the structure of weakened traditions, reforming, but not destroying the social atmosphere that was India's heritage.

10. Satyashodhak Samaj and Jyotiba Phule

Jyotiba Phule belonged to the Mali (gardener) community and organized a powerful movement against upper caste domination and brahminical supremacy. Phule founded the Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers' Society) in 1873, with the leadership of the samaj coming from the backward classes, Malis, Telis, Kunbis, Saris, and Dhangars.

The main aims of the movement were

- Social service
- Spread of education among women and lower caste people

Phule's works, Sarvajanik Satyadharma and Ghulamgin, became source of inspiration for the common masses. Phule used the symbol of Rajah Bali as opposed to the brahmins' symbol of Rama. Phule aimed at the complete abolition of caste system and socio-economic inequalities. This movement gave a sense of identity to the depressed communities as a class against the Brahmins, who were seen as the exploiters.

11. Other Social Reformers

11.1. Balshastri Jambhekar

He is known as Father of Marathi journalism for his efforts in starting journalism in Marathi language with the first newspaper in the language named 'Darpan' in the early days of British Rule in India. He was one of the pioneers in Bombay who attacked orthodoxy and tried to reform popular Hinduism.

Other prominent reformers in western India were **Gopalhari Deshmukh (Lokhitawadi)** and **Gopal Ganesh Agarkar** who attacked Hindu orthodoxy and criticized blind dependence on tradition and false glorification of past.

11.2. Pandita Ramabai

A renowned social reformer of Maharashtra fought for the rights of women and spoke against the practice of child marriage. She promoted girls education and started the Arya Mahila Samaj in 1881, in Pune, to improve the condition of women, especially child widows. In 1889, she established the Mukti Mission, in Pune, a refuge for young widows who had been deserted and abused by their families. She also started Sharda Sadan which provided housing, education, vocational training, and medical services to widows, orphans and the visually challenged. She also wrote many books showing the hard life of women, including child brides and child widows. The Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission is still active today.

11.3. Kandukuri Veeresalingam:

He was born on 16 April 1848. He was a social reformer who first brought about a renaissance in Telugu people and Telugu literature. He was influenced by the ideals of BrahmoSamaj particularly those of KeshubChunder Sen. He got involved in the cause of social reforms. In 1876 he started a Telugu journal and wrote the first prose for women. He encouraged education for women, and started a school in Dowlaishwaram in 1874. He started a social organisation called Hitakarini (Benefactor). Unfortunately, he passed away on 27 May 1919.

Table of Reform Movements (Among Hindus)

Eastern India	• BrahmoSamaj • TattvabodhiniSabha • BrahmoSamaj of India • Young Bengal Movement • PrarthanaSamaj
Western India	• Student's Library and Scientific Society • ParamhansaMandalis • SatyashodhakSamaj • Servants of India Society
Southern India	• SNDP Movement • VokkaligaSangha • Justice Movement • Self-respect Movement • Temple Entry Movement
Pan India	• Ramkrishna Movement • AryaSamaj • Theosophical Movement

12. Muslim Reform Movements

The Muslim community, like their Hindu counterpart was equally caught by religious diktats and fatwa's issued by the Muslim Clerics class. Many Muslim leaders also believes that Islam in India had been degenerated, under the influence of Hinduism, hence need to be reformed. They took upon themselves the task of purifying and strengthening Islam resulting in Wahabi and Faraizi Movement. Apart from this, the official Government view on the revolt of 1857 held the Muslims to be the main conspirators. This view was further strengthened by the activities of the Wahabis. Hence the need for a cooperative attitude towards the British to improve the community's social condition was felt by many liberal Muslim. This resulted in Aligarh Movement.

12.1. Wahabi/ Walliullah Movement

Shah Walliullah inspired this essentially revivalist response to western influences and the degeneration which had set in among Indian Muslims. He was the first Indian Muslims leader of the 18th century to organize Muslims around the two fold ideals of this movement.

- The desirability of harmony among the four schools of Muslims jurisprudence which had divided the Indian Muslims
- The recognition of the role of individual conscience in religion where conflicting interpretation were derived from the Quran and the Hadis

The teachings of Walliullah were further popularized by Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Ahmed Bareilvi who also gave them a political perspective. India was considered to be dar-ul-Harb(land of kafirs) and it needed to be converted to dar-ul-Islam(land of Islam).

12.2. Titu Mir's Movement

Titu Mir was a disciple of Sayyid Ahmed Raebarehvi, the founder of Wahabi Movement. Titu Mir organised the Muslim peasants of Bengal against the Hindu landlords and the British indigo planters. The British records say it was a militant movement which wasn't completely true.

12.3. Faraizi Movement

The movement also called the Fara'idi Movement because of its emphasis on the Islamic pillars of faith, was founded by Haji ShariatAllah. Its scene of action was East Bengal, and it aimed at the eradication of social innovations current among the Muslims of the region.

Under the leadership of Haji's son, DuduMian, the movement became revolutionary from 1840 onwards. He gave the movement an organizational system from the village to the provincial level with a khalifa or authorized deputy at every level. The movement survive merely as a religious movement without political overtones after the death of DuduMian in 1862.

12.4. Ahmadiya Movement

This movement was founded by MirzaGhulam Ahmed in 1889. It was based on liberal principles. It described itself as the standard bearer of Mohamedan Renaissance, and based itself, like BrahmoSamaj, on the principle of Universal religion of all humanity, opposing jihad. The movement spread western liberal education among the Indian Muslims. However, the Ahmadiya Movement, like Baha'sm which flourished in the west Asian Countries, suffered from mysticism.

12.5. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Aligarh Movement

Syed Ahmed Khan, born in 1817 in a respectable Muslim family, was a loyalist member of the judicial services of the Government. After retirement in 1876, he became a member of Imperial Legislative Council in 1878. His loyalty earned him a knighthood in 1888. He wanted to reconcile western scientific education with the teaching of the Quran which were to be interpreted in the light of contemporary rationalism and science even though he also held the Quran to be the ultimate authority.

In pursuit to stimulate a process of growth among Indian Muslims through better education and employment opportunities, a section of Muslims led by Syed Ahmed Khan was ready to allow the official patronage. He argued that Muslim should first concentrate on education and jobs and try to catch up with their Hindu Counterparts who had gained the advantage of an early start. Syed's progressive social ideas were propagated through his magazine **Tahdhib-ul-Akhlaq** (Improvement of Manners and Morals)

The Aligarh Movement emerged as a liberal, modern trend among the Muslim intelligentsia based on Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh. It aimed at spreading:-

- Modern education among Indian Muslims without weakening their allegiance to Islam.
- Social reforms among Muslims relating to purdah, polygamy, widow remarriage, women's education, slavery, divorce, etc.

11.6. Deoband Movement

Deoband Movement was established by Mohammad QasimNanautavi (1832-1880) and Rashid AhamdGangohi (1828-1916) as a revivalist movement with the twin objectives of propagating pure teachings of Quran and Hadis among Muslims and keeping alive the spirit of jihad against the foreign rule.

In contrast to the Aligarh Movement which aimed at the welfare of Muslims through western education and support of the British government, the aim of Deoband Movement was moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community.

13. The Sikh Reform Movement

The formation of the two Singh Sabhas at Amritsar and Lahore in the 1870's was the beginning of religious reform movement among the Sikhs. The setting up of Khalsa College in Amritsar in 1892 helped promote Gurumukhi, Sikh learning and Punjabi literature. In 1920, the **Akali movement** which rose in Punjab started the cleansing of the management of the Gurudwaras or Sikh Shrines, from the corrupt Mahants (Priest).

14. Parsi Reform Movement

14.1. SevaSadan

A parsi social reformer, **Behramji M. Malabari**, founded the Sevasadan in 1885. The organization specialized in taking care of those women who were exploited and then discarded by society

14.2. RahnumaiMazdayasnanSabha or Religious reform Association

It was founded by **NaroujiFurdonji, DadabhaiNaoroji, S.S.Bengalee** and others to begin religious reform among the Parsis. They played important role in the spread of education, especially among girls. They also campaigned against orthodox practices in Parsi religion.

15. Misc Movements

15.1. Sri Narayan Guru Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Movement

This movement was an example of a regional movement born out of conflict between the depressed classes and upper non-Brahmin castes. It was started by **Sri Narayan Guru Swamy** among the Ezhavas of Kerala, who were a caste of toddy trappers and were considered to be untouchables. The Ezhavas were the single largest caste group in Kerala. Sri Narayan Guru initiated a programme of action- the Sri Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam- 1902. The SNDP Yogam took up several issues, such as

- The right of admission to public schools
- The recruitment to government services
- Access to roads and entry to temples
- Political Representation

The movement as a whole brought transformative structural changes such as upward social mobility, shift in traditional distribution of power and a federation of 'backward castes' into a large conglomeration.

15.2. Self-Respect Movement

South India witnessed a different kind of reform movement where **EV RamasamyNaiker (Periyar)** opposed Brahminical religion through his **Self-Respect Movement**. This movement was started by **E.V.RamaswamyNaicker**, a Baliya Naidu, in the mid-1920s. The movement aimed at nothing short of a rejection of brahminical religion and culture which Naicker felt was the prime instrument of exploitation of the lower castes.

15.3. Vaikom Satyagraha

It was led by K P Kesava, was launched in Kerala demanding throwing open of Hindu Temples and roads to untouchables. Again, in 1931 when Civil disobedience Movement was suspended, **temple entry movement** was organized in Kerala.

15.4. Deva Samaj

It was founded in 1887 at Lahore by **Shiv Narain Agnihotri**. This sect emphasized on the eternity of the soul, the supremacy of the guru, and the need for good action. It called for an ideal social behaviour such as not accepting bribes, avoiding alcohol, and non-vegetarian food. Its teachings were compiled in a book, Deva Shastra.

15.5. Dharma Sabha

Radhakant Deb founded this sabha in 1830. An orthodox society, it stood for the preservation of status quo in socio-religious matters, opposing even the abolition of sati. However, it favoured the promotion of western education, even for girls.

15.6. Radhaswami Movement

Tulsi Ram, a banker from Agra, also known as Shiv Dayal Sahab, founded this movement in 1861. The Radhaswamis believe in one Supreme Being, supremacy of the guru, a company of pious people (satsang), and a simple social life.

15.7. The servants of India Society

Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the liberal leader of Indian National Congress, founded the Servants of India Society in 1905. The aim of the society was to train national missionaries for the service prepare a cadre of selfless workers who were to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit.

16. Social Legislations in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries

In the early decades of the nineteenth century there began internal movements within Hindu Society against its own customs and practices. In the light of the changing consciousness among the people, the Government too changed its policies. It was a coincidence that the British initiated social legislation when the Indian reformers created an opinion in their favour.

The East India Company proceeded very hesitantly and cautiously against the abolition of the custom of sati till Ram Mohan Roy represented the view of rational Indians against the evil. On 4 December, 1829, by **Regulation XVII of the Government, the custom of sati** was declared illegal and punishable by the Criminal Courts.

A less significant social measure than the abolition of sati was the introduction of widow marriage. Opinion in its favour developed very slowly though no widespread interest was noticed. The abolition of sati indirectly brought into prominence the problem of the fate and future of the young widows who were saved from destruction but thrown into a pitiable state of existence. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar launched a campaign for widow marriage.

Such justifications had no meaning unless law came to the help of the widows for their marriage and subsequent legal status. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, therefore, presented a petition to the Government on behalf of about one thousand prominent persons. Accordingly, on 26th July, 1856, the Act XV was passed legalizing widow marriage and giving the status of legitimacy to the children of the married widows. After the Widow Marriage Act 1856, the Bengal reformers became desirous of abolishing polygamy by legislation. Vidyasagar was the

mastermind behind this move as well. In June-July 1856, petitions signed by fifty thousand men and women were submitted to the Government to abolish polygamy. In spite of the Act, the cause of remarriage of Hindu widows did not make much headway. Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in Bengal and Vishnu Shastri in Western India put their heart and soul into propagating this reform. A Widow Remarriage Association was started in Bombay in 1866. Prof. D. R. Karve founded the Widow Home in Poona in 1896. Several legislations, starting from 1807, forbade slavery and slave trade and keeping slaves or trafficking in them became an offence under the Indian Penal Code, enacted in 1860. Another brutal custom of **“hook-swinging” (a ritualistic torture practised among the Mandan Indians, in which a voluntary victim was suspended from hooks attached to the flesh of the back) was suppressed in 1865**. Another Act passed in 1872, at the instance of the Brahmo Samaj, abolished polygamy and marriage of minor girls (below 14 years) and sanctioned inter-caste marriages and remarriages of widows.

Several important measures were also taken in the cause of female education. The initial efforts in this direction were made by the Christian missionaries. But the social reformers also greatly contributed towards the growth of female education. A mention ought to be made in this regard of the efforts of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar who opened nearly 35 girls' schools in 1857-58 in Bengal. Prof. Karve founded several educational institutions in Maharashtra, the most notable being India's first Women's University in Bombay in the early 20th century. The spread of female education led to several other social reforms of great consequences, such as, the abolition of purdah, which further led to the participation of women in the freedom struggle.

But there came a sudden turn in the social policy of the British India. The Rising of 1857 swept over the country and prolonged discussions were held in England on the possible causes of Indian discontent. Rightly or wrongly, one of the causes was supposed to be British Interference with the socio-religious habits of the people. The new administration wrongly decided not to interfere in the social affairs of the Indian people.

Before the transfer of power, the Government of the East India Company had to their credit two more meritorious works, namely, the suppression of human sacrifice among the Khonds of the Orissa-Madras hill tracts, and the abolition of infanticide among the Rajputs and Bedis in the north and North West.

In the twentieth century, policies regarding social change mainly resulted from Indian opinion rather than from British interests. The progress of western education and the growth of political consciousness created a new atmosphere in the country affecting various socio-economic problems. The press played a useful role in giving appropriate prominence to these issues.

The Child Marriage Restraint Act XIX of 1929 (popularly known as Sarda Act) was a long awaited social measure in favour of which opinion had been growing for many years. It came into force on 1 April, 1930. 'No Marriage to which a child i. e., a male under 18 years of age or a female under 15 years of age, is a party may be solemnized.

List of Legislative Measures for Women

- Bengal regulation (1829) banning sati
- Bengal Regulations (1795, 1804) declaring infanticide illegal
- Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act, 1856
- Age of Consent Act, 1891
- Sarda Act, 1929
- Special Marriage Act, 1954
- Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
- Hindu Succession act, 1956
- Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act

- Maternity Benefits Act, 1961
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

17. Social Reform Movement - An Analysis

17.1. Character of the Social Reform Movement

- **Target of the Social reform Movement**

The targets of the intellectual attack were the existing socio-cultural evils and malpractices such as obscurantism, superstitions and irrationality imbedded in the Society. The social reform movement did not, however, attack the social system as a whole; their attack was mainly only on the perversions and distortions that had crept into it. They did not advocate a sharp rupture in the existing social structure of the country.

- **Reformation and not revolution**

They did not stand for structural transformation; changes were sought within the framework of the very structure. In a word, they were advocates of reform and not exponents of revolution. The upliftment of the position of women, late marriage, monogamy, widow-marriage, elimination of caste distinctions, monotheism, etc., did not signify any revolutionary change in the society. Even they themselves were not unaware of the reformist nature of their ideas and endeavours. The course they delineated for transformation was to be evolutionary, and not revolutionary.

- **Urban Phenomenon**

The intellectual movement in India was an urban phenomenon; it originated and greatly operated in the urban areas only. The main means used for the propagation of ideas add for the creation of favourable public opinion were the urban communication channels such as the press, lectures, and sabhas, propaganda network.

- **Spread of the Movement**

Despite being a localised affair, it was, however, not regional in its inspirations and aspirations. Although their activities remained confined to certain urban pockets, the intellectuals extended their vision to comprehend the problems of different regions and the country as a whole. Moreover, they made conscious attempts to undermine the notions of provinciality and regional distinctions.

17.2. Contributions of the Social Reform Movement

- In spite of the opposition from the orthodox sections of the society, these movements contributed towards liberating people from the exploitation of priests. The religious texts were translated into vernacular languages; there was more emphasis on interpretation of scriptures and simplification of rituals, thus making worship a more personal experience.
- The movement gave the upcoming middle class cultural roots and reduced the sense of humiliation that the British powers had created.
- Modern, rational, secular, and scientific outlook was promoted realizing the need of the modern era. The reformers aimed at modernisation rather than outright westernization. A favourable social climate was created to end India's cultural and intellectual isolation from the world.
- It was greatly due to the constant endeavours of the reformers that abolition of Sati and legalisation of widow-marriage were achieved during the nineteenth century. There was much intellectual fervour, prolonged agitation and acute discussion during the controversy over the age of Consent Bill, Such debates, even if they failed to bring about any concrete change immediately, raised the level of consciousness.
- The ideas and activities of the intellectuals were directly or indirectly related to the task of

nation-building and national reconstruction. The social reform movement, as a matter of fact, was not an isolated phenomenon; it was loaded with wider national political and economic considerations. In a way, the social reform movement was a prelude to nationalism.

17.3. Limitations of the Social Reform Movement

- **Narrow Social Base**

Reform in practice in any case affected a very small minority. Only the educated and urban middle class was involved in the social reform movement, while the needs of vast majority of peasants and the urban poor were ignored.

- **Movement did not reach rural India**

Given the situation of **widespread illiteracy in the rural areas** and because of the absence of modern and diversified communications network, they were doomed to have a very limited audience, mainly urban-based. Thus even in terms of its practical appeal the movement remained urban, besides its other limitations.

- **Casteism remained strong**

Caste distinctions remained strong and the religious and social practices did not die away. Caste and customs proved to be hard to eradicate from Indian consciousness. The tendency of the reformers to appeal to the greatness of the past and to rely on scriptural authority led to compartmentalising religions as also alienating high caste Hindus from lower caste Hindus.

- **Communal Consciousness**

Overemphasis on religious, philosophical aspects of culture while underemphasizing secular aspects led to the Hindus praising ancient Indian History and Muslims confining to the medieval history. This created a notion of two separate segments of people and increased communal consciousness.

18. Stand of Congress over Social Issues

Congress, which was founded in 1885, deliberately avoided social issues till 1917. In the annual session of 1887, Dadabhai Naoroji said that Congress was a political body meant to convey the political aspirations to British, and not to discuss social reforms. This was because it was so difficult at that time to create consensus on political issues, that to create consensus on social issues would have been nearly impossible.

Indian National Social Conference which was founded in 1887 by M.G. Ranade and Raghunath Rao, met on the side-lines of the Congress annual cells, deliberated on social issues. It has also been called as the social cell of Congress. However, due to opposition of Tilak and other extremists in 1895, Social Conference has to disassociate itself completely from Congress.

Position changed in 1917: extremists and moderates had shed their differences and Congress and Muslim League were on a same platform by this time. There was an anticipation of British promise for eventual self-government. Hence, it was required to broad base the national movement. There were also certain calls from lower classes asking for representation according to numbers of 'Depressed classes'. A resolution was passed in 1917 urging upon the people to remove all disabilities imposed by custom upon the depressed classes. Lokmanya Tilak also denounced untouchability and asked for active steps to be taken to abolish it. However, no concrete steps were taken in this direction.

Gandhiji's leadership introduced a major change in the position towards untouchability. In 1923, the Congress decided to take active steps for the removal of untouchability. The basic strategy was to educate and mobilise opinion among caste Hindus over the issue.

19. Previous Years Questions

1. What was the character of socio-religious reforms in the 19th century and how did they contribute to the national awakening in India? 2007/30 marks
2. Characterize the main features of Indian Renaissance? 2006/15 marks
3. In what way did Ramakrishna infuse a new vigour and dynamism into Hinduism? 1999/10 marks
4. Assess the contributions of IshwarchandraVidyasagar to the making of modern India? 1999/10 marks
5. The name of Raja Ram Mohan Roy stands foremost in the field of religious and social reforms. Elucidate 1997/10 marks
6. 'Swami Vivekananda might well be called the father of Indian Nationalism.' Elucidate. 1997/10
7. Discuss the various aspects of social legislation introduced by the East India Company in the first half of the nineteenth century. 1995/ 15 marks
8. Discuss the role of Theosophical Society in the history of religious movement in India. 1991/10 marks
9. Give a critical account of the Ramakrishna Mission with special reference to the role played by Swami Vivekananda. 1990/10 marks
10. Explain the significance of the following in the socio- religious context (50 words each) 1986/10 marks
 - a) Faraizi Movement
 - b) Suddhi Movement
 - c) Self Respect Movement
 - d) Rahnumai Mazda Yasnam
 - e) The Wahabi Movement

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EARLY UPRISING AGAINST THE BRITISH AND REVOLT OF 1857

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1. Introduction

After the battle of Plassey in 1757, the political control of the East India Company increased and by the end of the eighteenth century, the British emerged as the main power in India. As the Company gained in political sphere it became imperative to introduce and implement policies in the fields of land revenue, law and order, and set-up an administration. Implementation of such policies created turmoil in the Indian society and led to changes. Moreover, Company's main aim was to utilize the resources of India for the development of England. These changes led to dislocation in the socio-cultural, economic and political life of the people. The subsequent turmoil led to outbreak of rebellion in different parts of the country. Rebellions were not confined to the later period of the British Empire but were a constant feature of it from its very beginning, culminated in to the revolt of 1857. **Erosion of the traditional forms of authority** and **increased economic pressure** were two basic reasons for these uprisings.

The Revolt of 1857 was the most dramatic instance of traditional India's struggle against foreign rule. But it was no sudden occurrence. It was the culmination of a century long traditions of fierce popular resistance to British domination.

The establishment of British power in India was a prolonged process of piecemeal conquest and consolidation and the colonization of the economy and society. This process produced discontent, resentment and resistance at every stage.

1.1. Social Base of the Rebellions

At a time when the newly created class of urban intelligentsia was reaping the benefits of the British rule, it were the traditional sections of society whose lives had been almost completely changed for the worse, who rebelled.

The series of civil rebellions were often led by deposed rulers or their descendants, uprooted and impoverished zamindars, landlords and poligars (landed military magnates in South India) and ex-retainers and officials of the conquered Indian States. The backbone of the rebellions, their mass base and striking power came from the rack-rented peasants, ruined artisans and demobilized soldiers.

Political religious movements like Faqir uprising and Sanyasi uprising were led by the religious mendicants whose religious practices couldn't be understood by the British.

1.2. Causes of the Rebellions

- The major cause of all these civil rebellions taken as a whole was the rapid changes the British introduced in the economy, administration and land revenue system. These changes led to the disruption of the agrarian society, causing prolonged and widespread suffering among its constituents.
- Above all, the colonial policy of intensifying demands for land revenue and extracting as large an amount as possible produced a veritable upheaval in Indian villages. In Bengal, for example, in less than thirty years land revenue collection was raised to nearly double the amount collected under Mughals. The pattern was repeated in other parts of the country as British rule spread and aggravating the unhappiness of the farmers was the fact that not even a part of the enhanced revenue was spent on the development of agriculture or the welfare of the cultivator.
- Thousands of zamindars and poligars lost control over their land and its revenue either due to the extinction of their rights by the colonial state or by the forced sale of their rights over the land because of their inability to meet the exorbitant land revenue demanded. The proud zamindars and poligars resented this loss even more when they were displaced by

rank outsiders-government officials and the new men of money- merchants and money lenders. Thus they, as also the old chiefs, who had lost their principalities, had personal scores to settle with the new rulers.

- Peasants and artisans, as indicated earlier, had their own reasons to rise up in arms and side with the traditional elite. Increasing demands for land revenue were forcing large numbers of peasants into growing indebtedness or into selling their lands. The new landlords, bereft of any traditional paternalism towards their tenants, pushed up rents to ruinous heights and evicted them in case of non- payment. The economic decline of the peasantry was reflected in twelve major and numerous minor famines from 1770 to 1857.
- The new courts and legal system gave a further fillip to the dispossession of land and encouraged the rich to oppress the poor. Flogging, torture and jailing of the cultivators for arrears of rent or land revenue or interest on debt were quite common. The ordinary people were also hard hit by the prevalence of corruption at the lower levels of the police, judiciary and general administration. The petty officials enriched themselves freely at the cost of the poor. The police looted, oppressed and tortured the common people at will. William Edwards, a British official, wrote in 1859 that the police were 'a scourge to the people' and that 'their oppression and exaction form one of the chief grounds of dissatisfaction with our governments.'
- The ruins of Indian handicraft industries, as a result of the imposition of free trade in India and levy of discriminatory tariffs against Indian goods in Britain, pauperized millions of artisans. The misery of the artisans was further compounded by the disappearance of their traditional patrons and buyers, the princes, chieftains and zamindars.
- The scholarly and priestly were also active in inciting hatred and rebellion against foreign rule. The traditional rulers and ruling elite had financially supported scholars, religious preachers, priests, pundits and maulvis and men of arts and literature.

1.3. Classification of the Popular Uprisings

Political-religious Movements - Fakir Uprising, Sanyasi Uprising, Pagal Panthis, Wahabi Movement, Faraizi Movement, Kuka Movement and Moplah Rebellions

Movement by deposed rulers and Zamindars- Velu Thampi and Polygar Rebellions

Movements by the dependents of the deposed ruler- Ramosi Uprising, Gadkari Revolt and Sawantwadi Revolt

Tribal Movements-

- Non-Frontier Tribal movements- These are divided in three phases
 - First Phase- 1795-1860: Santhal Rebellion and Khond uprising
 - Second Phase- 1860-1920: Munda uprising and Koya Rebellion
 - Third Phase- 1920-1947: Rampa Rebellion and Chenchu tribal Movements
- Frontier Tribal Movements: Khasi Uprising, Singphos Rebellion and Rani Gaidiniliu's Naga Movement

2. Politico- Religious Movements

These movements erupted in the early phase of colonial expansion. In this phase religion provided the framework to locate and understand the colonial rule and articulate resistance. The main politico-religious movements were the Fakir Uprising, Sanyasi Rebellion, PagalPanthis, Wahabi Movement, Faraizi Movement and Kuka Movement and Moplah rebellion.

2.1. Fakir Uprising (Bengal, 1776-77)

Fakirs were a group of wandering Muslim religious mendicants. Shortly after the annexation of Bengal in 1776-77, Majnum Shah, the leader of these fakirs, began to levy contributions on the zamindars and peasants and, defied the British Authority. After Majnum Shah's death, Chirag Ali Shah, supported by pathans, Rajputs and the disbanded Indian soldiers extended the operations to the northern districts of Bengal. Two famous Hindu leaders who supported him were Bhawani Pathak and Devi Chaudhaurani. The Fakir led by Chirag Ali Shah gained considerable strength and attacked English factories, seized their goods, cash, arms and ammunitions. There were a number of skirmishes between the fakirs and the Company's troops. The fakirs were finally brought under the control at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

2.2. Sanyasi Uprising (Bengal, 1770-1820s)

The Hindu Naga and Giri armed Sanyasis once formed a part of the armies of the Nawabs of Awadh and Bengal, and also of the Maratha and Rajput chiefs. The immediate cause of the rebellion was the restrictions imposed on the pilgrims visiting the holy places. The Sanyasis raided the English factories and collected contributions from the towns, leading to a series of conflicts between the large bands of Sanyasis and the British forces. After nearly half-a-century long strife, the Sanyasi Uprising ended in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

2.3. Pagal Panthis

Karam Shah was the founder of the pagalpanth- a semi religious sect having influence in the northern district of Bengal. An activist fervor to the sect was imparted by Tipu, the son and successor of Karam Shah. Tipu was motivated by both religious and political motives and took up the cause of the tenants against the oppression of the Zamindars. Tipu captured Sherpur in 1825 and assumed royal power. The insurgents extended their activities to Garo Hills. The area remained disturbed till the 1830s and 1840s.

2.4. Wahabi Movement

An Islamic revivalist movement founded by Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareilly, who was inspired by the teachings of Abdul Wahab (1703-87) of Saudi Arabia and Shah WaliUllah of Delhi. Syed Ahmed condemned the western influence on Islam and advocated a return to pure Islam and society.

Syed Ahmed was declared as Imam (desired leader) and a countrywide organization with an elaborate secret code for its working under spiritual vice-regents (khalifas) was set up, and Sithana in north-western tribal belt was chosen as a base for operations. In India, its important centre was at Patna though it had its missions in Hyderabad, Madras, Bengal, UP and Bombay. Since the Dar-ul-Harb (the land of kafirs) was to be converted into Dar-ul-Islam (the land of Islam), a Zehad was declared against the Sikh kingdom of Punjab. After the defeat of the Sikh ruler and incorporation of the Punjab into East India Company's dominion in 1849, the British dominion in India became the sole target of the Wahabi's attacks.

A series of military operations by British in 1860s on the Wahabi base in Sithana and various court cases of sedition on the Wahabis weakened the Wahabi resistance, although sporadic encounters with the authorities continued into the 1880s and 1890s.

2.5. Faraizi Revolt

The Faraizis were the followers of a Muslim Sect founded by Haji Shariat-Allah of Faridpur in Eastern Bengal. They advocated radical religious, social- political changes. Shariat- Allah's son DaduMiyan (1819-60) organized his followers with an aim to expel the English intruders from

Bengal. The sect also supported the cause of the tenants against the Zamindars. The Faraizi disturbance continued from 1838 to 1857. Most of the Faraizis joined the Wahabi ranks.

2.6. Kuka Revolt

This movement was founded in 1840 by Bhagat Jawahar Mal (also called Sian Saheb) in western Punjab. When the British took the Punjab, the movement transformed from a religious purification campaign to a political one. Its basic tenets were abolition of caste and similar discriminations among Sikhs, discouraging the eating of meat and intake of alcohol and drugs, and encouraging women to step out of seclusion.

2.7. Moplah Rebellions (Malabar 1835-1921)

The Moplah rebellions of Malabar, South India, were not only directed against British but also the Hindu Landlords. The relations of the Arabs traders with the Malayali society can be traced back to the ninth century. The traders helped the local Hindu chieftains and were granted concessions. Many of the Arab traders settled in Malabar marrying mostly Nayar and Tiyyar women; and the subsequent descendants came to be known as Moplahs. Their numbers also increase with the conversion of Hindus from the lower castes, especially the Cherumars who were slave laborers and hoped to gain better social status upon conversion. Though the years the Moplahs settled, became agriculturalists and joined the ranks of landless laborers, cultivating tenants, fishermen and petty traders.

In the traditional Malabar land system, the Jenmi held land by birthright and were mostly high-caste Hindus, and let it out to others for cultivation. The other main sections of the Malabar society were the Kanamdar, who were mostly Moplahs, the verumpattamdar (cultivators) and agricultural laborers. The peasants were mostly the Muslim Moplahs. The land was given by the ruling raja to Namboodiri Brahmins whose obligation was to look after the temple and related institutions, and to the chieftains (mostly Nayars), who provided martial aid when needed. Traditionally, the net produce of the land was shared equally between the three. But during the reign of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, Namboodiri Brahmins and Nayar Chiefs fled and the subsequent vacuum was filled by the Moplahs.

The conflict arose when after Malabar's cession to the British in 1792 and the return of the exiled Namboodiri Brahmins and Nayars, the government re-established and acknowledged their landlord rights. The British by recognizing the Jenmis as the absolute owners of the land gave them the right to evict the tenants at will. This reduced the other two to the status of tenants and leaseholders. The courts and the law officers sided with the Jenmis. Once the Jenmi landlords, who had the backing of the revenue officials, the law court and the police started tightening their hold and demands on the subordinate classes, the Moplah peasantry rose up in revolt. According to Dhanagare, the first outbreak occurred in 1836 and during the period of 1834-54 there were 22 uprisings, with the ones in 1841 and 1849 being quite serious. The first phase of the uprisings from 1836 to 1854 witnessed 22 revolts and had messianic overtones. The faithful sacrificed their lives in the belief that as Ahadis they would go straight to heaven. The second phase of the revolt was recorded in 1882-85, while another spate of outburst in 1876 was also there.

3. Movement by the Deposed Rulers and Zamindars

This category of the rebellions was affected by the aggressive policy of annexation by the British and the subsequent disturbances in the economy of the regions. The problems were accentuated by the exacting land revenues. These uprisings are mainly known either by the name of the leader or the region where they occurred. Velu Thampi and Polygar Rebellions are two main Uprisings in this category.

3.1. Velu Thampi (Travancore, 1808-09)

In 1808-09, Velu Thampi, the Dewan of Travancore, rose up in rebellion against the British attempt to remove him from the Dewanship and the heavy burden imposed on the state through the Subsidiary Alliance System. In one of the ensuing skirmishes Velu Thampi was injured and died in forest. However, even though dead, he was publicly hanged as an example to the fate of those who rose against the British.

3.2. Polygar Rebellions (Kurnool, 1799-1805)

Polygars were the offshoots of the Nayankara system prevalent in the Vijaynagar Administration. The Polygars were quite similar to the Rajputs of North India, and were given land in exchange for military service when called upon. However, their influence and power increased beyond the traditional lines and they often acted as sovereigns, even to the extent of extracting taxes from the people. But as the company's government wanted to augment its own sources of revenues, it sought to control the Polygars. The conflict in this case, as in others, was on the question of the collection of taxes, rather on, who should collect it, the traditional classes or the Company Officials. In September 1799, in the first Polygar War, the polygars of Tirunelveli District rose up in open rebellion. A column of Company troops was speedily deployed against them, while dire warnings were issued to polygars in other parts of the south not to join the rebellion. Kattabomma Nayak of Panchalamkurichi was considered as the main leader of the rebellion. Though he managed to escape initially, he was later captured in Pudukottai, and publicly hanged in front of other Polygars as a warning. Subramania Pillai, a close associate of Kattabomma Nayak, was also publicly hanged and his head was fixed on a pike at Panchalamkurichi. Soundra Pandian Nayak, another rebel leader, was brutally assassinated by having his head dashed against a village wall.

The Second Polygar war of 1800-01, given the magnitude of participation, is also known as the "South Indian Rebellion". It was directed by a confederacy consisting of Marudu Pandian of Sivaganga, Gopala Nayak of Dundigal, Kerala Verma of Malabar and Krishnappa Nayak and Dhoondaji of Mysore. The rebellion broke out when a band of Polygar armies bombed the combined forces of the polygars. The suppression was followed by signing of the Carnatic Treaty on July 31, 1801, whereby the British assumed direct control over Tamil nadu. The Polygar system, which had flourished for two and half centuries, came to a violent end and the company introduced the Zamindari settlement in its place.

Incidentally Nana Sahib, Tantya Tope and Begum Hazrat Mahal were all deposed rulers and Kunwar Singh was one of the unsatisfied zamindars, who were local leaders in revolt of 1857.

4. Movement by the Dependents of the Deposed Rulers

These rebellions were caused by the aggressive policy of annexation by the British and the subsequent disturbances in the economy of the regions.

Three main revolts can be clubbed under this category were Ramosi Uprising, Gadkari Uprising and Sawantwadi Revolt. It is interesting to note that these three revolts occurred in the Maratha Region.

4.1. Ramosi Uprising (1822, 1825-26)

The Ramosis, who served in the lower ranks of the Maratha army and police, revolted in Satara in 1822, under the leadership of **Chittur Singh** in protest against heavy assessment of land revenue and the harsh methods of its collection. The Ramosis plundered the regions around Satara and attacked the forts. In 1825-26, they again rose up in rebellion under the banner of Umaji on account of acute famine and scarcity in Pune. For three years they ravaged the

Deccan. Finally, the British Government pacified them not only by condoning their crimes but also by offering them land grants and recruiting them in the Hill Police.

4.2. Sawantwadi Revolt (1844)

The revolt in Sawantwadi region in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra state, was led by **Phond Sawant**, a Maratha sardar, who with the help of other sardars and Desais, among whom Anna Sahib was prominent, captured some forts. When the British troops drove out these rebels from the forts, they escaped to Goa, leading to great turmoil in the region. A number of Sawantwadi rebels were tried for treason and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Ultimately, after the imposition of martial law and meting out brutal punishment to the rebels, order could be restored in Sawantwadi region.

4.3. Gadkari Revolt (1844)

The revolts in and around Kolhapur region of Maharashtra state, were led by **Gadkaris**. They were hereditary servants attached to Maratha forts, were disbanded. That is the reason; there was revolt, led by Daji Krishna Pandit.

5. Tribal Movements/Tribal Uprisings

Tribal movements are further subdivided into two categories along two main divisions of tribes based on the geographical region occupied.

- a) **Non- Frontier Tribe:** constitute 89 percent of the total tribal population. The non- frontier tribes were mainly confined to central India, West-Central India and Andhra. Among the tribes that participated in the movements were Khonds, Savara, Santhal, Munda, Oraon, Koya, Kol, Gond and Bhil. The uprising of these tribes were quite volatile and constitute some of major uprising.
- b) **Frontier Tribes:** of the seven North-eastern frontier states of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

5.1. Status of Tribes in Relation to the Mainstream Society

Tribals are located on the fringes of the mainstream society and constitute the lower stratum. Tribals, Adivasis, Aborigines were usually the original inhabitants of vast tracts in western, central, southern, eastern, and north eastern parts of the country. With the exception of the north east, they had been reduced to a minority with the influx of outsiders and exposed to rapid changes. Barring a few, especially the frontier tribes, most tribes had some form of contact with the mainstream society. The socio economic differentiation amongst them in comparison to the mainstream society was significantly less. The tribes were politically autonomous and had their own system of justice.

5.2. Economic Base of Tribal Population

Shifting agriculture, hunting, Fishing and forest produce form the mainstay of their economic base. Use of forest products and shifting agriculture were very important parts of the tribal economy.

5.3. Causes of Tribal Movements

1. **Imposition of Land revenue Settlement:** Expansion of agriculture by the non- tribals to tribal area or over forest cover led to the erosion of tribal traditions of joint ownership and increased the socio-economic differentiation in the egalitarian structure of the tribal society.

2. **Work of Christian Missionaries** brought about further changes in the socio economic and cultural equation of the tribals and the mainstream society plus in turbulent times, the tendency of the missionaries to refuse to take up arms or in discouraging people from rising against the government made the missionaries to be viewed as extension of colonialism and were often attacked by the rebels.
3. Increasing demand for good from early nineteenth century- first for the royal navy and then railways, led to increasing control of government over forest land. The establishment of the **Forest department in 1864, Government Forest Act(1865) and Indian Forest Act in 1878** together established complete government monopoly over Indian forest land. Shifting Agriculture, a wide spread practice amongst the various tribal communities was banned from 1864 onwards on the reserved forest. Restrictions were imposed on the previously sanctioned timber and grazing facilities.
4. Extension of settled agriculture led to influx of non tribals in the tribal areas. These outsiders exploited them and extension of settled agriculture led to the loss of land by the tribals which reduced them to agricultural labourers.
5. Some of the tribal uprising took place in reaction to the effect of the landlords to impose taxes on the customary use of timber and grazing facilities, police exaction, new excise regulations, exploitation by low country traders and money lenders, and restrictions on shifting cultivation in forest.
6. The rebellions by the non-frontier tribals were usually reactions against **outsiders (dikus)**, local landlords and rulers, the support provided to the later by the British administration and intervention by them in the life of the tribals. The indigenous names for these tribal movements were **Meli, Hool and Ul-Gulan**.
7. Introduction of the notion of private property- Land could be bought, sold, mortgaged which led to loss of land by the tribals.

5.4. Nature of Tribal Movements

The Colonial intrusion and the triumvirate of trader, money lender and revenue farmer in sum disrupted the tribal identity to a lesser or greater degree. **In fact, ethnic ties were a basic feature of tribal rebellions. The rebels saw themselves not as a discreet class but as having a tribal identity. At this level the solidarity shown was of a very high order. Fellow tribals were never attacked unless they had collaborated with the enemy.**

5.5. Three Phases of the Tribal Movements

Tribal movements are divided into following three phases

The First Phase (1795-1860)

It coincided with the rise, expansion and establishment of the British Empire. The leadership emerged from the upper crust of the tribal society led by the traditional section whose privileges had been undermined by colonization of India.

Main Tribal Uprisings- Santhal rebellion; Khond Uprisings; Early Munda Uprisings

5.5.1. Santhal Rebellion

Among the numerous tribal revolts, the Santhalhool or uprising was the most massive one. With the introduction of permanent settlement in Bengal in 1793, the Santhals were employed as labourers with the promise of wages or rent free lands. However they were forced to become agricultural surfs, exploited at will. The first rebellion of messianic character erupted in **1854 under Bir Singh of Sasan in Lachimpur**.

The second Santhal rebellion of 1855-56 was marked by some of the worst features of elemental tribal passion and open denunciation of the british rule. The Santhal, who lived in the

area between Bhagalpur and Rajmahal, known as Daman-i-koh, rose in revolt; made a determined attempt to expel the outsiders- the dikus- and proclaimed the complete 'annihilation' of the alien regime. The rebellion covering the districts of Birbhum, Singbhum, Bankura, Hazaribagh, Bhagalpur and Monghyr in Orissa and Bihar was precipitated mainly by economic causes. The social conditions which drove them to insurrection were described by a contemporary in the Calcutta Review as follows: 'Zamindars, the Police, the revenue and court alas have exercised a combined system of extortions, oppressive exactions, forcible dispossession of property, abuse and personal violence and a variety of petty tyrannies upon the timid and yielding Santhals. Usurious interest on loans of money ranging from 50 to 500 percent; false measures at the haat and the market; willful and uncharitable trespass by the rich by means of their untethered cattle, tattoos, ponies and even elephants, on the growing crops of the poorer race; and such like illegalities have been prevalent. The Company's government too protected the oppressors rather than redressing the grievances which turned them against the British.

Under the leadership of two brothers **Siddhu and Khanu**, more than 10000 santhals assembled in June 1855, when a divide order was issued asking the santhals to break the control of their oppressors and "take possession of the country and set up a government of their own." Within a month a rebellion had assumed a formidable shape. The rebels cut-off the postal and railway communication between Bhagalpur and Rajmahal, proclaimed the end of the company's rule and commencement of the santhal regime. They attacked the houses of money-lenders, zamindars, white planters, railway engineers and British officials. The open war with the British continued till 1856, when the rebel leaders were finally captured and the movement was brutally suppressed.

5.5.2. Khond Uprising

The Khonds lived in vast hill tracts stretching from Tamil-nadu to Bengal, covering central provinces, and in virtual independence due to the inaccessible mountainous terrain. Their uprisings from 1837 to 1856 were directed against the British, in which the tribals of Ghumsar, china-ki-medi, kalahandi and Patna actively participated. The movement was led by **Chakra Bisoi** in the name of the young Raja. The main issue was the attempt by the government to suppress human sacrifice (Mariah), introduction of new taxes by the British and the influx of Zamindars and sahookars (money-lenders) into their areas which was causing the tribals untold misery. The British formed a Maria agency, against which the Khonds fought with Tangi, a king of battle axe, bows-arrows and even swords. Latter **Savaras** and some local militia clans also joined in, led by **Radha Krishna Dand Sena**. Chakra Bisoi disappeared in 1855 after which the movement petered out.

5.5.3. Early Munda Uprising

In the period of 1789-1832, the Munda rose up in rebellion seven times against the landlords, dikhus, money-lenders and the British, who instead of protesting them sided with the oppressors. In the post 1857 period with a hope of better future many Mundas turned to the Evangelical Lutheran mission, which was overseeing mission work in Chhotanagpur. However, many apostates became more militant and broke away, spear heading the cause of seeking redressal of their grievances once they realized that the missionaries could not provide the solution to them. Their movement identified as 'sardariladai' or 'war of the leaders' was fought with the aim of expelling dikhus; and restoration of the Munda domination over their homeland. The tribal chiefs rose up against the erosion of **Khuntkatti System or Joint tenures**. While it failed it did not peter out but remained dormant and in need of a charismatic leader. It was given a new life by **Birsa Munda in 1899**.

5.5.4. Bhils and Kolis Uprisings

The Bhils were concentrated in the hill ranges of Khandesh in the previous Maratha territory. British occupation of this region in 1818 brought in, the outsiders and accompanying dislocations in their community life. A general Bhil insurrection in 1817-19 was crushed by the British Military forces and though some conciliatory measures were taken to pacify them, they again revolted under the leadership of **Seva Ram** in 1825 and the situation remained unsettled until 1831 when the Ramosi Leader Umaji Raje of Purandhar was finally captured and executed. Minor revolts again took place in 1836 and 1846 as well.

The Bhils' local rivals for power, the Kolis of Ahmednagar district, also challenged the British in 1829, but were quickly subdued by a large army contingent. The seeds of rebellion however persisted, to erupt again in 1844-46, when a local Koli leader successfully defied the British government for two years.

The Second Phase (1860-1920): It includes **Munda Uprising** under **Birsamunda**; **Koya Rebellion**. It will be discussed in next chapter.

The Third Phase (1920-1947): It includes **Tanabhat movement/Oraon Movement**, **Rampa rebellion**, and **Chenchu tribal movement**. It will be discussed in next chapter.

5.6. Movements of the Frontier Tribes

The other region to have witnessed tribal movements of considerable proportion was the North-Eastern frontier. The region differed substantially from the rest of the tribal India in two basic aspects. Here the tribals formed an overwhelming majority and thus were relatively economically and socially secure. The other factor was that because of their geo-political situation and historical background of living in the vicinity of the international border in relative isolation, this region was not completely integrated with in the politico-economic system of colonialism and remained somewhat cut-off from the cultural patterns of the main land.

These characteristics affected the types of movements that occurred here. In the first place with one striking exception these movements tended to remain aloof from the freedom struggle often incorporating a demand for political autonomy either within the Indian union or as a separate unit. This was also because many of the tribes were living on the international frontier and thus shared ethnic and cultural affinities with tribesmen across the border. Similarly in contrast to central-India, there was hardly any agrarian forest-based movement as the tribals remained in possession of land and surrounding forests except Tripura.

The movements in the north-east were by and large revolutionary or revivalist, rather than having **sanskritising tendency** which the plains tribal movement often incorporated. This again was partly on account of their relative isolation from the Hindu society, and a strong Christian missionary influence in their process of modernization. The movements in the North-East tended to be political and secular with a definite progressive course, unlike those of Chhotanagpur which were often followed by long periods of dormancy or even extinction.

Two aspects may be noted in these movements, which differentiated them from the anti-British movements in the plains-

First tribals deeply resented British penetration in their areas, which took place somewhat later here than in the plains. The British penetrated the area during the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26), Annexed the Jaintia hills in 1832, including the earlier 25 khasi states. Each of these events was followed by revolts. **Second**, these movements under the traditional chiefs continued much later than in the plains.

Main frontier uprisings before 1857 were: Khasi Uprising, Ahom Revolt and Singphos Rebellion.

5.6.1. Khasi Uprising

As a result of the Burmese war, the British occupied the hilly region between Garo and Jaintiahills, in intention of building a road linking the Brahmaputra valley with Sylhet passing through the entire length of the Khasi domain. Conscriptions of labourers for road construction led the khasis to revolt under the leader ship of **Tirut Singh**, a khasi chief. The Garos joined them. The long and harassing warfare with Khasis continued for four years and was finally suppressed in early 1833.

5.6.2. Ahom Revolt

The british had pledged to withdraw after the first Burma war(1824-26) from Assam but in contrast, the British attempted to incorporate the Ahoms territories in the company's dominion after the war. This sparked off a rebellion in 1828 under the leadership of **Gomdhar Konwar**. Finally the company decided to follow a conciliatory policy and handed over upper Assam to Maharaja Purandar Singh Narendra and parts of the kingdom was restored to the Assamese king.

5.6.3. Singhphos Rebellion

While the British were engaged in a harassing warfare with the Khasis, the Singhphos broke into open rebellion in early 1830, which was suppressed after 3 months. But the Singhphos remained in a mood of sullen discontent and again rose in rebellion in 1839, when they killed the British political agent. In 1843 the **Singhphos Chief Nirang Phidu** attacked the British garrison and killed several soldiers. In **1849, Khasma Singhphos** attacked British village in Assam and was captured in 1855.

Rani Gaidiniliu's Naga Movement (1905-31) was another such movement which will be covered in later chapters.

6. Peasant movements

When the elites of the Indian society were busy in initiating and social reforms to change their society from within to answer the moralistic critiques of the West, the rural society was responding to the imposition of colonial rule in an entirely different way. In contrast to the urban intelligentsia, who were also the chief beneficiaries of colonial rule, the response of the traditional elite and the peasantry, who were losing out as a result of colonial impositions, were that of resistance and defiance, resulting in a series of unsuccessful attempts at restoring the old order. Not that peasant revolts were unknown in Mughal India; indeed, they became endemic in the first half of the eighteenth century as the rising revenue demands breached the Mughal compromise and affected the subsistence provision of the peasants, and the Mughal provincial bureaucracy became ever more oppressive and rigorous in collecting it. The tendency became even more pervasive as the colonial regime established itself, enhanced its power and introduced a series of revenue experiments, the sole purpose of which was to maximize its revenue income. Ruin of handicraft added to the situation. Thus it can be said that resistance to colonial rule was there as old as the rule itself. Some of the peasant rebellions in pre-1857 India were participated exclusively by the tribal population whose political autonomy and control over local resources were threatened by the establishment of British Rule and the advent of its non-tribal agents. But as the time line of peasant movement mainly stretches from 1857 to 1957 we will discuss it in detail in next chapters.

Thus it is evident that the colonial rule even, during the days of the east India Company witnessed numerous uprising and disturbances. The nature of these disturbances varied from elitist grievances as manifested in the rebellions headed by deposed rulers to the popular grassroots or people's movement, as exemplified by various tribal movements. These varied

grievances reached their climax in the revolt of 1857, which in spite of targeting certain groups of Indians remains the prominent uprising against the British before the beginning of the Indian Freedom movement.

7. Revolt of 1857

The Revolt of 1857 has been hailed as the **watershed** in the colonial history of British India. Battle of Plassey in 1757 marked the beginning of the political influence of the England East India Company, an influence which ended in 1858 when the Crown rule was established in British India. A decade short of a century later in 1947, India gained independence. It is also regarded as an historic landmark for its suppression was followed by some fundamental changes in the administration of India.

The Revolt of 1857 was fundamentally different from earlier rebellions by the soldiers, peasants and tribal's of the nineteenth century. Prior to this, the mutinies and rebellions had remained sporadic or local affairs. However, unlike these, the scale and spread of the Revolt of 1857 was larger; sepoys at many centre mutinied and this was accompanied by civil disturbances. Unexpected as it was, it managed to shake the British. Though by the end of 1857 itself the British had started to regain control, the Revolt of 1857 remains a significant event.

What differentiated the Revolt of 1857 from the earlier uprisings was that unlike the preceding mutinies and revolts, which were limited to a relatively smaller area, within a town or at the most a few districts, the 1857 Revolt escalated to an unprecedented degree and the participation was wider

Areas affected by the Revolt of 1857- In Bengal, it was primarily the Bengal army which was recruited from North Western Provinces and especially Awadh, that rose up in mutiny. The sepoys were joined by the civilians from the North, Central and Western India.

Areas that did not participate in the Revolt -The Punjab, Bengal, most of Central Provinces, The coast and the south remained largely unaffected by it. While the Bombay and the Madras regiments did not participate in the revolt, the Gurkha and the Punjabi Soldier fought on behalf of the English to put down the rebels.

8. Causes of the Revolt

The revolt did not happen overnight rather it was a product of the character and policies of colonial rule. The Cumulative effect of British expansionist policies, economic exploitation and administrative innovation over the years had adversely affected the positions of all- rulers of Indian states, sepoys, zamindars, peasants, traders, artisans, pundits, maulvis etc. The simmering discontent burst in the form of a violent storm in 1857 which shook the British Empire in India to its very foundations.

The causes of the revolt emerged from all aspects- socio-cultural, economic and political- of daily existence of Indian population cutting through all sections and classes. These causes were

8.1. Economic Causes

The colonial policies of East India Company destroyed the traditional economic fabric of Indian society. The peasantry was never really to recover from the disabilities imposed by the new and a highly unpopular revenue settlement. Impoverished by heavy taxation, the peasants resorted to loans from money lenders/ traders at usurious rates, the latter often evicting the former on non-payment of debt dues. These moneylenders and traders emerged as the new landlords, while the scourge of indebtedness has continued to plague Indian society to this day.

British rule also meant misery to the artisans and handicraftsmen. The annexation of Indian states by the company cut off their major source of patronage. Added to this, British policy of discouraged Indian handicrafts and promoted British goods. The highly skilled Indian craftsmen were forced to look for alternative sources of employment that hardly existed, as the destruction of Indian handicrafts was not accompanied by the development of modern Industries. Karl Marx remarked in 1853: "It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian handloom and destroyed the spinning Wheel England began with depriving the Indian cottons from the European market; it then introduced twist into Hindustan and in the end inundated the very mother country of cotton with cottons"

Zamindars, the traditional landed aristocracy, often saw their land rights forfeited with frequent use of a quo warranto by the administration. This resulted in a loss of status for them in the villages. In Awadh, the storm centre of the revolt, 21000 taluqdars had their estates confiscated and suddenly found themselves without a source of income, **"unable to work, ashamed to beg, condemned to penury"**. These dispossessed taluqdars seized the opportunity presented by the sepoy revolt to oppose the British and regain what they had lost.

The ruination of Indian industry increased the pressure on agriculture and land, the lopsided development in which resulted in pauperization of the country in general.

8.2. Political Causes

The east India company's greedy policy of aggrandizement accompanied by broken pledges and oaths resulted in loss of political prestige for it, on the one hand, and caused suspicion in the minds of almost all ruling princes in India, on the other, through such policies as of 'Effective Control', 'Subsidiary Alliance' and 'Doctrine of Lapse'. The right of succession was denied to Hindu princes. The right of succession was humbled when on Prince Fariquddin's death in 1856, whose succession had been recognized conditionally by Lord Dalhousie, Lord Canning announced that the next prince on succession would have to renounce the regal title and the ancestral Mughal palaces, in addition to renunciations agreed upon by Prince Fariquddin.

The Annexation of Awadh in 1856 was a blow to the prestige of the ruling classes, the local population and the sepoys. Apart from Delhi, Awadh was the second most important centre of the revolt. Multiple causes were present here in their true form. About three-fourth of the Company's sepoys were recruited from Awadh and any change in the agrarian set-up and in the cultural fabric would also be acutely felt by them. Annexation of Awadh in 1856 on the pretext of maladministration became an important cause for many of those who participated. The annexation led to disbanding of the Nawab's army and also affected the entire aristocracy, which in turn severely affected the economy of the region.

Initially, when the British were expanding their hold over India and consolidating their rule, they were careful in showing due deference to Indian Princes and their privileges. But as their confidence grew, there was an attempt by the British to take away the nominal authority of the native Princes and their pensions were greatly reduced. This created unease among the various regional kingdoms. The earlier treaties made with the Indian Princes came to be increasingly disregarded. Policy of 'Doctrine of Lapse' was aggressively followed under Lord Dalhousie and came to be widely resented. By following the Doctrine of Lapse, the adopted sons of the deceased kings were derecognized as heirs to the throne, which subsequently led to the annexation to a large number of Kingdoms. Satara (1848), Nagpur, Sambalpur and Baghat (1850), Udaipur (1852) and Jhansi (1853) to name a few, were annexed by the British.

However, each of these states was brought under the British rule for their strategic, administrative and military value. Annexation of Jhansi was important in order to further improve the Company's internal administration in Bundelkhand. **Satara** was geographically

placed between two principal military stations in the Bombay Presidency; and lay along the main lines of communication between Bombay and Madras. **Nagpur** was “placed right across the main lines of communication between Bombay and Calcutta”. Aside from administrative expediency, Lord Dalhousie had a firm belief that if placed under the direct administration of the Company’s Government, people would enjoy disgruntled and deposed Princes or guardians of some of these annexed states became leaders of the revolt in their regions.

Annexation of the Princely or Native States, which were previously left largely undisturbed, added to the growing apprehension amongst the Princes regarding the future of their sovereignty. The forfeiture or reduction of the princely pensions also affected them and their dependents.

The collapse of rulers- the erstwhile aristocracy- also adversely affected those sections of the Indian society which derived their sustenance from cultural and religious pursuits.

8.3. Administrative Causes

Rampant corruption in the Company’s administration, especially among the police, petty officials and lower law courts, and the absentee sovereigntyship character of British rule imparted a foreign and alien look to it in the eyes of Indians

8.4. Socio-Religious Causes

Racial overtones and a superiority complex characterized the British administrative attitude towards the native Indian population. The activities of Christian missionaries who followed the British flag in India were looked upon with suspicion by Indians. The attempts at socio-religious reform such as abolition of sati, support to widow remarriage and women’s education were seen by a large section of population as interference in the social and religious domains of Indian society by outsiders. These fears were further compounded by the Government’s decision to tax mosque and temple lands and legislative measures, such as the **Religious Disabilities Act, 1856**, which modified Hindu Customs, for instance declaring that a change of religion did not debar a son from inheriting the property of his heathen father.

8.5. Influence of Outside Events

The revolt of 1857 coincided with certain outside events in which the British suffered serious losses- the first Afghan War (1838-42), Punjab War (1845-49), Crimean Wars (1854-56), Santhal rebellion (1855-57). These had obvious psychological repercussions.

8.6. Discontent among Sepoys

The conditions of service in the Company’s Army and cantonments increasingly came into conflict with the religious belief and prejudices of the sepoys. Restrictions on wearing caste and sectarian marks and secret rumors of proselytizing activities of chaplains (often maintained on company’s expenses) were interpreted by Indian sepoys, who were generally conservative by nature as interference in their religious affairs.

To the religious Hindu of the time, crossing the seas meant loss of caste. In 1856 Lord Canning’s Government passed the **General Service Enlistment Act** which decreed that all future recruits to the Bengal Army would have to give an undertaking to serve anywhere their services might be required by the Government. This caused resentment.

Then Indian Sepoy was equally unhappy with his emoluments compared to his British counterpart. A more immediate cause of the sepoys’ dissatisfaction was the order that they would not be given the Foreign Service allowance (bhatta) when serving in Sind or in Punjab. The annexation of Awadh, home of many of the sepoys, further inflamed their feelings.

The Indian sepoy was made to feel a subordinate at every step and was discriminated against racially and in matters of promotion and privileges. The discontent of the sepoys was not limited to matters military; it reflected the general disenchantment with and opposition to British rule. The sepoy, in fact, was a **'peasant in uniform'** whose consciousness was not divorced from that of the rural population. The Army voiced grievances other than its own; and the movement spread beyond the Army.

Finally, there had been a long history of revolts in the British Indian Army- in Bengal (1764), Vellore (1806), Barrackpore (1825) and during the Afghan Wars (1838-42) to mention just a few.

9. Main Events of Revolts

The immediate trigger for the start of the uprising was apparently trivial. The 'Brown Bess' smooth broke muskets of the military were replaced by the new Enfield rifles because of the light weight and having already proven its efficacy in the Crimean war. To load the rifle the soldiers had to extract from a pouch a cartridge which had a patch greased reportedly with pork fat. The patch had to be opened by using teeth. The Muslim soldiery showed reluctance for this drill because of their religious considerations and many non-Muslim troops also joined out of solidarity with their Muslim brethren. To the British commanding officers this was an act of gross indiscipline. The soldiers' stubborn refusal was first noticed in the 19th Native Infantry in Behrampur. The entire regiment was disbanded and the soldiers marched towards their homes in Awadh. This was followed by shooting of Sergeant Major by Mangal Pandey and wounding two British officers on 29 March 1857. He was subsequently caught and hanged. His regiment the 34 Native Infantry was disbanded and the soldiers too started marching towards their homes. Matters precipitated when on 23 April 1857, 80 soldiers of the 3 Light Cavalry who refused to use the cartridges were ordered to be court martialled. The court sentenced every single one of them to 10 years imprisonment but they were all got released from the quarter guard by their comrades who after killing and wounding their British superiors started a free for all march. They reached Delhi on 11 May 1857 where Bahadurshah Zafar was proclaimed the Emperor of India. Soon after Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, Tantya Tope, the Begum of Awadh and Thakur Kanwar Singh of Arrah joined the uprising.

Initial success of the rebels can be attributed to the absence of British forces in significant numbers from the scene of action as bulk of them were still deployed in the Punjab in the aftermath of the Afghan wars. They were however quick to redeploy and within less than a month supremacy of the British Arms was restored. The Rani of Jhansi was killed. Bahadurshah Zafar was tried and exiled to Rangoon where he breathed his last. The Begum of Awadh and some Maratha leaders escaped to Nepal and the first war of India's independence from the British colonial masters came to an end.

10. Prominent Leaders of the Revolts

At Delhi the nominal and symbolic leadership belonged to the **Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah**, but the real command lay with a court of soldiers headed by **General Bakht Khan** who had led the revolt of Bareilly troops and brought them to Delhi. The court consisted of ten members, six from the army and four from the civilian departments. The court conducted the affairs of the state in the name of the emperor. Emperor Bahadur Shah was perhaps the weakest link in the chain of leadership of the revolt. His weak personality, old age and lack of leadership qualities created political weakness at the nerve centre of the revolt and did incalculable damage to it.

At Kanpur, the natural choice was Nana Saheb, the adopted son of the last Peshwa, Baji Rao II. He was refused the family title and, banished from Poona, was living near Kanpur. Nana Saheb expelled the English from Kanpur, proclaimed himself the Peshwa, acknowledged Bahadur Shah as the emperor of India and declared himself to be his governor. Sir Hugh Wheeler,

commanding the station, surrendered on June 27, 1857.

Begum Hazrat Mahal took over the reins at Lucknow where the rebellion broke out on June 4, 1857 and popular sympathy was overwhelmingly in favour of the deposed Nawab. Her son, **Birjis Qadir**, was proclaimed the Nawab and a regular administration was organized with important offices shared equally by Muslims and Hindus. Henry Lawrence, the British resident, the European inhabitants and a few hundred loyal sepoys took shelter in the residency. The residency was besieged by the Indian rebels and Sir Henry was killed during the siege. The command of the besieged garrison devolved on Brigadier Ingles who held out against heavy odds. The early attempts of Sir Henry Havelock and Sir James Outram to recover Lucknow met with no success. Finally, Sir Colin Campbell, the new commander-in-chief, evacuated the Europeans with the help of Gorkha regiments. In March 1858, the city was finally recovered by the British, but guerilla activity continued till September of the same year.

At Bareilly, Khan Bahadur, a descendant of the former ruler of Rohilkhand, was placed in command. Not enthusiastic about the pension being granted by the British, he organized an army of 40,000 soldiers and offered stiff resistance to the British.

In Bihar, the revolt was led by Kunwar Singh, the zamindar of Jagdishpur. An old man in his seventies, he nursed a grudge against the British who had deprived him of his estates. He unhesitatingly joined the sepoys when they reached Arrah from Dinapore.

Maulvi Ahmadullah of Faizabad was another outstanding leader of the revolt. He was a native of Madras and had moved to Faizabad in the north where he fought a stiff battle against the British troops. He emerged as one of the revolts' acknowledged leaders once it broke out in Awadh in May 1857.

The most outstanding leader of the revolt was Rani Laxmibai, who assumed the leadership of the sepoys at Jhansi. Lord Dalhousie, the governor-general, had refused to allow her adopted son to succeed to the throne after her husband Raja Gangadhar Rao died, and had annexed the state by the application of the infamous 'Doctrine of Lapse'. Driven out of Jhansi by British forces, she gave the battle cry- "main apni Jhansi nahin doongi" (I shall not give away my Jhansi). She was joined by **Tantya Tope**, a close associate of Nana Saheb, after the loss of Kanpur. Rani of Jhansi and Tantya Tope marched towards Gwalior where they were hailed by the Indian Soldiers. The Scindhia, the local ruler, however decided to side with the English and took shelter at Agra. Nana Saheb was proclaimed the Peshwa and plans were chalked out for a march into the south. Gwalior was recaptured by the English in June 1858.

For more than a year the rebels carried on their struggle against heavy odds.

11. Suppression of the Revolt

Towards the middle of 1857, the English started regaining the lost control. Under the Governor-General Lord Canning, who gained the sobriquet of "Clemency Canning" on account of his voice of reason against the demands for brutal retributions by his own countrymen on the rebels, troops from Calcutta, the Punjab and Madras were galvanized. By July of 1858, the Revolt was declared to be officially over. On July 16, 1857, Bithur and Kanpur were wrestled away from Nana Sahib, who, it is claimed, escaped to Nepal. Tantya Tope, his prime minister, threw his forces behind Rani Laxmibai.

Sir Archdale Wilson, Nicholson and Sir John Lawrence were the Military officers who freed Delhi from rebels. The Kashmiri Gate in Delhi was blown up in September; the city and the Red Fort were captured after desperate fighting. The city was sacked by the British Soldiers and the people were massacred mercilessly.

Delhi was captured on September 20, 1857, after prolonged and bitter fighting, with Bahadur Shah II surrendering. He was found guilty by trial and exiled with his favorite Queen Zinnat Mahal and her sons in Rangoon. He died on November 7, 1862. Three of his younger sons were shot dead publicly on September 2, 1857 at Khooni Darwaza, Delhi. In retribution, the British forces almost depopulated Delhi. The siege of Delhi lasted from July 1, 1857 to September 20, 1857.

Thus the great House of Mughals was finally and completely extinguished. In Awadh, Lucknow was captured in March 1858, with Begum Hazrat Mahal escaping to Nepal and Maulvi Ahmadullah killed in an encounter in June 1858. The struggle was carried forward by the distressed taluqdars till late 1858.

Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi is perhaps the most famous personality of the Revolt of 1857. Apart from her bravery in combating the British forces, she is famous for her capture of the Gwalior Fort in May-June, 1858. By capturing Gwalior, she had hoped to break the lines of communication between the British in North India and the Bombay Presidency Province, while simultaneously garnering the support of the Marathas against the British. Alarmed, British Army was dispatched under Commander Sir Hugh Rose to capture Gwalior. Rani met her death on June 17, 1858, during the battle for Gwalior.

The renowned Maratha leader and a close accomplice of Nana Sahib, Tantya Tope managed to escape to the Jungles of central India where he continued to fight the British in guerrilla warfare only to be betrayed by a zamindar friend. He was captured while sleeping and sentenced to death on April 15, 1859. By the end of 1859, all leaders of the revolt were dead with two of them, Begum Hazrat Mahal and Nana Saheb escaping to Nepal.

By the end of 1859, British authority over India was fully re-established. The British Government had to pour immense supplies of men, money and arms into the country, though Indians had to later repay the entire cost through their own suppression.

The revolt was ruthlessly crushed by the British. The British adopted the policy of '**no prisoners**', which meant that the rebels were executed en masse. Large numbers of rebels were simply tied to the mouth of the cannons and blown to bits. Sometimes the entire pro-rebel villages were wiped out. This British retaliation is called '**the Devil's Wind**' and reflects the hostile mood of the time.

12. Reasons of its Failure

- The revolt of 1857 failed because it suffered from weak leadership and was hardly organized with any coordination or central leadership. The principal rebel leaders- Nana Sahib, Tantya Tope, Kunwar Singh, and Laxmibai- were no match to their British opponents in generalships. On the other hand, the East India Company was fortunate in having the services of men of exceptional abilities in the Lawrence Brothers, John Nicholson, James Outram, Henry Havelock, Edward etc.
- The Indian Soldiers were poorly equipped materially, fighting generally with swords and spears and very few guns and muskets. This proved a major handicap when dealing with the well trained and equipped British troops, who were equipped with the latest weapons of war like the Enfield rifle. The electric telegraph kept the Commander-in-Chief informed about the movements and strategy of the rebels.
- The revolt failed to extend to all parts of the country and large sections of the population did not support it. And some section infacts threw their support behind the British acted as "Break waters to storm". Some of the loyalists were the Nizam of Hyderabad, Sikander Begum of Bhopal, Sir Jang Bahadur (Minister of Nepal) and Maharaja Scindhia of Gwalior.

There was absence of Support from the intelligentsia, who viewed this revolt as backward looking and mistakenly hoped the British would usher in an era of modernization.

- The different groups of rebels fought for different reasons and served their respective leaders. Each sought restoration of the older order of their leaders. By hailing Bahadur Shah as the Emperor of Hindustan, the rebels sought to revert back to the medieval political order rather than replace it with an alternate political authority. Nana Sahib and Tantya Tope sought to revive the Maratha power while Rani Laxmibai, her own control over the lost territories.
- Punjab didn't rise in revolt because of which the British army deployed in large numbers in the region could be redeployed for tackling the rebels; the Gurkha soldiers sided with the British.

13. Changes Introduced after the Suppression of the Revolt

British control was re-established but some major changes in the administrative policies and set-up were introduced.

- After the revolt, the English East India Company's rule came to an end by an Act for Better Government of India, 1858, declaring Queen Victoria as the sovereign of British India. The administration of India was taken over directly by the British Crown.
- The Governor-General of India was given an **additional title**, the **Viceroy** and was a representative of the Crown. By a special Act both, the Board of Directors and the Board of Control were abolished. In their place the office of the Secretary of State for India was created. He was assisted by an Indian Council of 15 members.
- The Indian Army was thoroughly reorganized. It had a higher proportion of Europeans in it and they were to be responsible for manning the artillery and the field.
- The importance of having Native States as allies was realized during the revolt. Had more Native States allied with the rebels then the British suzerainty would have faced a real threat. Henceforth, concrete efforts were made to woo the Native Princes as allies. The policy of ruthless conquest in India was given up. The British realized the mistake of antagonizing the rulers of the Indian states. Under the Proclamation, also known as the **Magna Carta of the Indian people**, which was read out by Lord Canning at a Durbar held in Allahabad on November 1, 1858, the earlier treaties of the English East India Company with the Princes were affirmed. The Queen's Proclamation thus sought to pay due regard to the ancient traditions and customs of India. Indian Princes were given to right to adopt. It marked an end to the policy of annexation and establishment of almost feudal like relations between the Crown and the native princes.
- The Proclamation declared that **all Indians would be eligible to enter the administrative services** on the basis of their education and ability, irrespective of race and creed. Administrative changes were made in the executive, legislative and judicial arenas with greater participation of Indians. This change was visible in the **Indian Councils Act of 1861**, the **Indian High Court Act of 1861** and the **Indian Civil Services Act of 1861**. The beginnings of elective representation of Indians in politics, which created competition amongst the various communities, can be traced back to the post-revolt period.
- Unconditional pardon was granted to the rebels except those who had been responsible for the murder of the British during the revolt.
- The post-revolt period saw the British actively pursuing the policy of **"Divide and Rule"** towards the general populace. Two opposite policies were at work. While on one hand, India was being brought under a unified system of administration and governance, on the other hand, for political necessity, India's diversity was being highlighted in order to depict

the claims and needs of different sections as divergent. As late as 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps claimed "in the great subcontinent of India there are more than one people..." This claim of diversity was later countered by the efforts of the nationalists to affirm the uniformity of Indians, which in turn often led to papering over of the divergent demands of the different communities, regions and sections.

- The British believed that the Revolt of 1857 was instigated primarily by the Muslims when the sepoys hailed the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah II as the Emperor of Hindustan. Moreover, the English were the direct successors of the Mughal rule, which lent credence to the belief of the Muslim instigated revolt. Consequently, the British adopted a conservative attitude towards the Muslims for almost a decade after the revolt. It was only under the Governor- Generalship of Lord Mayo and with the publication of Sir William Hunter's book, "The Indian Musalmans", in 1871 which addressed the grievance of the Muslims of Bengal and their backward status in comparison to the Hindus, that the British Government undertook some measures to alleviate the conditions of Muslims. The book presented the loss of Muslims as the gain of the Hindus. Later this work and belief led to the growth of Muslim separatism and widened the fault lines between the two communities.
- In the aftermath of the Revolt, India was made to bear the entire financial burden of the outbreak and suppression of the revolt. The public debt of India increased approximately by 98 million sterling, which in turn added 2million sterling to the annual interest charges.

14. Significance of the Revolt

The significance of the Revolt of 1857 lies in the fact that it voiced, through violently, the grievances of various classes of people. The British were made to realize that all was not under control in British India.

- Modern Nationalism was unknown in India yet the revolt of 1857 played an important role in **bringing the Indian people together and imparting to them the consciousness of belonging to one country.** It had seeds of nationalism and anti- imperialism but the concept of common nationality and nationhood was not inherent to the revolt of 1857. One may say that the revolt of 1857 was the first great struggle of Indians to throw off British Rule. It established local traditions of resistance to British rule which were to pave the way for the modern national movement.
- **Hindu Muslim Unity Factor-** During the entire revolt, there was complete cooperation between Hindus and Muslims at all levels- people, soldiers, leaders. All rebels acknowledged Bahadur Shah Zafar, a Muslim, as the emperor and the first impulse of the Hindu sepoys at Meerut was to march to Delhi, the Mughal imperial Capital. Rebel and sepoys, both Hindu and Muslims, respected each other's sentiments. Immediate banning of cow slaughter was ordered once the revolt was successful in a particular area. Both Hindus and Muslims were well represented in leadership, for instance Nana Saheb had Azimullah, a Muslim and an expert in political propaganda, as an aide, while Laxmibai had the solid support of Afghan Soldiers. Thus the events of 1857 demonstrated that the people and politics of India were not basically communal before 1858.
- The Revolt was written about and discussed not only within the confines of India but also in England, France and Germany. Benjamin Disraeli in the House of Commons on 27 July 1857, asked, "Is it a military mutiny, or is it a national revolt?" Karl Marx in the summer of 1857 expressed the same doubt in the pages of New York Daily Tribune: "What he (John Bull) considers a military mutiny", he wrote, "Is in truth a national revolt". According to Marxist historians, the 1857 revolt was "the struggle of the soldier-peasant democratic combine against foreign as well as feudal bondage". Some views such as those of L.E.R. Rees

Christians or **T. R. Holmes** who saw in it a **conflict between civilization and barbarism** were also forwarded.

15. British Policies During 1861-1900

15.1. Indian Civil Service Act of 1861

During company's time, all post in Presidency was reserved and many more appointments were made than actually planned. These all appointments were regularized and schedule for future was created (Schedule Post). For being a Civil Servant, 7 year service in India was required and appointment was invalid if it was not approved by Secretary of State within 12 months.

15.2. Indian High Court Act of 1861

It amalgamated Supreme Court and Sadar Diwani Adalat in Presidency town and British Crown establish High Court of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras by which former Supreme Court, Sadar Nizamut Adalat and Faujdari Adalat were abolished and each High Court was a Supreme Court in its region. Similarly by the High Court Act of 1865, Governor General was empowered to alter the limits of jurisdiction. e.g. by the Act of 1869, Jurisdiction was extended to all Indian Subjects (from native Christian)

15.3. Royal Title Act of 1876

Queen Victoria assume the title of "Empress of India"

15.4. Indian Council Act of 1861

There was change in composition of Governor General Executive council for legislative purposes. Power of legislation was restore to Bombay and Madras which was taken away by Charter Act of 1833. Similarly Governor General was empowered to appoint President of Council in case of his absence from Head Quarter. His decision could be overruled by Crown through Secretary of State. Governor General was having power to issue ordinance in extra ordinary circumstances valid for 6 months. There was no distinction between Legislative Power of Centre and Local Council however Governor General Sanction was required in certain cases. Councils were proposing for Bengal, Punjab and North West under Lieutenant Governor and Nominated Member.

15.5. Indian Council Act of 1892

Circumstances included Role of Congress resolution in 1885 and 1889 demanding reforms and expansions with increase proportion of elected members. Local Councils were to be setup for Punjab, North West and Awadh. Governor General council was enlarge and was empowered to make regulations and prescribe the manner in which regulation were to be put in effect so Secretary of State believe it was possible for Governor General to make arrangement by which certain person might be presented to him.

There was Official Majority in Council and representative element was introduced as District Board, Municipalities, Universities, and Chamber of Commerce were empowered to return their member to council so for 1st time, representative element were introduced through indirect election. The members could ask questions but no supplementary question could follow. Similarly, member could discuss budget but were not allowed to vote and could ask question on public interest with some restrictions.

15.6. Other Major Financial and Administrative Policies

In terms of financial policies and separation of power since 1833, financial power with Governor General Council and Provincial Government were not having any power of taxation. It

was Lord Mayo inaugurated financial devolution in India with heads of expenditure i.e. Reserved and Transfer head in 1860. In times of Lord Lytton, it was John Strachey who transfers Heads of expenditure like revenue (land), excise, stamps and General administration to provincial government. It was Lord Rippon who abolished the System of Fixed grant by central government to provinces and assigns certain source of revenue and share from central source to provincial government i.e. Imperial Head, Provincial Head and Divided Head. There was **Royal Commission on Decentralization** in 1907 which had focus upon Distribution of Finances on need based attitude and central government was not to interfere with revenue assignment to provincial government.

In terms of Local Self-government, Presidency Town were having Municipal Government But it was Act X of 1842 that 1st attempt was made in Bengal to have Municipal Government to enable public to have better public health and conveyances. Therefore different Municipal Act were passed and report were submitted by **Royal Army Sanitary Commission (1863)** authorizing process of election to be used for constitution of municipal institution. Similarly in 1881, Government of Rippon passed resolution for sense of responsibility, action and involvement of Public representation on Local Bodies leading to Local Self Government Act of 1882 resulting in to formation of local board throughout the country having sufficient fund and in rural areas, these board will replace Local Consultative committee having independent status and non official chairman as far as possible and same was true for urban board and district councils.

16. Previous Years Questions

1. 'What began as a fight for religion ended as a war of independence, for there is not the slightest doubt that the rebels wanted to get rid of the alien government and restore the old order of which the king of Delhi was the rightful representative.' Do you support this viewpoint? (1999/ 15 marks)
2. What administrative changes were introduced in India after 1858? What were the objectives of these changes? (2001/30 marks)
3. What are the salient features of Government of India Acts of 1858? (2007/15 marks)
4. Examine the Policy of Subordinated Union towards Princely states. (2005/ 30 marks)
5. Discuss the character of major Tribal Uprisings in British India in the nineteenth Century. (2003/15 marks) (1994/15 marks)
6. Trace the growth and development of University education till 1919 (1991/15 marks)
7. 'The recruitment of Indians to the Civil Services was the most important question in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.' Explain. (1989/ 15 marks)
8. How did the British illustrate Lord Canning's policy in treating the Indian Princes as 'Breakwaters in the storm'. (1995/10 marks)
9. "Dalhousie's predecessors had acted on the general principles of avoiding annexations, if these could be avoided. Dalhousie acted on the principles of annexation, if he could do so legitimately. His annexations were both of war and peace." Analyze (2010/ 25 Marks)
10. The economic policies followed by the British led to the transformation of India's economy in to a colonial economy. They disrupted the traditional structure of the Indian economy. Explain how this happened with special reference to agricultural rural employment and development of our industries. (1983/ 35 marks)

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1. Rise and Growth of Indian Nationalism

1.1. 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:

1.2. 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.

1.3. Political and Administrative Unification of India

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.

1.4. 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.

1.5. 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 Nairbi, 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.

1.6. 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.

1.7. 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, handicraftsmen, 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.

1.8. 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.

1.9. 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.

1.10 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 thralldom.

1.11. 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.

1.12. 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.

1.13. 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.

1.14. 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. josh 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.

1.15. Racism

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.

1.16. 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.

1.17. 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.

1.18. 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.

2. 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.

2.1. 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, Abkari 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 Banerjea** 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.

2.2. 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**, **Pheroze Shah Mehta** and **K.T. Telang** in 1885.

2.3. 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.

3. 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?

3.1. 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, and constitutional outlet or safety valve for the rising discontent among the masses, which was 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.

3.2. 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 Banerjee (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.

3.3. 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 hegemony over the colonial people. It is true that any criticism or demand no matter how innocuous in its appearance but which cannot be accommodated by a system is in the long-run 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.

4. Moderate Phase and Early Congress

4.1. 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.

For the same reason the Congress was not to take up questions of social reform. At its second session, the President of the Congress, Dadabhai Naoroji, laid down this rule and said that 'A 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 new lesson that Kings are made for 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.

4.2. Methods of Political Works of Early National Leaders (1885-1905)

The national leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozshah mehta, W.C. Bonnerjea who dominated the Congress policies in early times were staunch believer 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 lined 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.

4.3. Contribution of Moderate Nationalists

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

4.3.1. Economic Critique of British Colonialism

The early nationalists, led by Dadabhai Nouroji, 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 moderated 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).

4.3.2. 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, Kiritodas Pal, V. N. Mandlik, K.L.Nulkar 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 Gokhale (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 helped in generating anti-imperialist sentiments among the public. **But at the same time, 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.**

4.3.3. 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.

4.3.4. Defence in Civil Rights

These rights included the right to speech, thought, association and a free press. Through an incessant campaign, the nationalist 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.

4.4. 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.

5. 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.

5.1. 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 national movement in India. His near contemporary Justice **Mahadev Govind Ranade** taught an entire generation of Indians the value of modern industrial development. **Romesh Chandra 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.**

5.2. 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.

Consequently, because of their whole-hearted devotion to the cause of industrialization, the 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.

The early nationalists strongly criticized the colonial pattern of finance. Taxes were so raised, 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.**

5.3. 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, landlords, moneylenders, lawyers, and priests. No other idea 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.

5.4. 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 appeals to abstract or shallow sentiments or on obscurantist appeals to the past. They rooted their nationalism in a brilliant scientific analysis of the complex economic mechanism of modern colonialism and of the chief contradiction between the interests of the Indian people and British rule.

6. Policy of Divide and Rule-Muslim Communalism and Evolution of Muslim League

6.1. 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 Archibold, 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 that 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.

This does not mean that militant nationalists were anti-Muslim or even wholly communal. Far 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.

6.2. 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 slaughter 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. Instead, they argued that Hindus should placate the foreign government in their fight against Muslims.

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.

7. 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 for 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 the 'pernicious influence of Calcutta.' And even Lord Minto, Curzon's successor was critical of the 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 was needed. Within days of the government announcement numerous spontaneous protest meetings were held in mofussil towns such as Dinajpur, Pabna, Faridpur, Tangail, Jessore, 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 hands as a symbol of the unity of the two halves of Bengal on a call of Rabindranath Tagore. Later in the day Anandamohan Bose and Surendranath Banerjea addressed two huge mass 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 the country. Women refused to wear foreign bangles and use foreign utensils, washer men refused to wash foreign clothes and even priests declined offerings which contained foreign 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, *taluka* 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 more endowed with patriotic zeal than with business acumen were unable to survive for long, some others such as Acharya P.C. Ray's Bengal Chemicals Factory, became successful and 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 Gàn) 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, jattras, constructive work, and so on were exposed for the first time to modern nationalist ideas and politics.

7.1. 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.

7.2. 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 'prevalent 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 rendered leaderless.

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 county, 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.

8. The Split in the Congress and Rise of Revolutionary Terrorism

8.1. 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 December 1905, at the Benaras session of INC presided over by Gokhale, the moderate-extremists differences came to the fore. The extremists 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.) within the boycott programme and thus start a nationwide mass movement. The extremists 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 gave 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 were 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 anti-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 extremists 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.

8.2. 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 come 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.

8.3. 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.

8.4. 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.

8.5. Revolutionary Activities on Various Places in India

8.5.1. 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 Anishilan Samiti founded by Promotha Mitter, and including Jatindranath Banerjee, Barindar 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 brothers, Aurobindo and Barindra, who were tried in the **Alipore Conspiracy Case**. During 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.

8.5.2. 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. Sawarkar and his brothers organised Mitra Mela, a secret society, in 1899 which emerged with Abhinav Bharat (after Mazzinni'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.

8.5.3. 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 a ban on political meetings and the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. After this Ajit Singh and a few other associates – Sufi Ambaprasad, Lalchand, Bhai Parmanand, Lala Hardayal- developed into full scale revolutionary terrorists.

8.5.4. 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.

9. 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

demanding 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.

9.1. 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).

9.2. 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'.

10. 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.

10.1. 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.

10.2. 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, Krtar Singh Sharaba, Barkatullah, Bhai Parmanand. The ghadrates 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.

10.3. 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, 1940. The inmates refused to board the Punjab bound train. In the ensuing 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, Hasart Mohani -were interned for years.

10.4. 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.

10.5. Revolutionaries in Europe

The berlin committee for Indian independence in 1915 by Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Bhupendra Nath Dutta, Lala Har Dayal and other 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.

10.6. 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.

10.7. 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.

11. 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.

11.1. Factors leading to the Movement

Some of the factors were as follows:

- a. A section of nationalists felt that popular pressure was required to attain concessions from the Government.
- b. The Moderates were disillusioned with the Morley- Minto reforms.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. 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.

11.2. 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.

11.3. 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 on national politics, holding 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.

11.4. 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 Aiyar 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.

11.5. 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.

11.6. 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.

12. 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.

12.1. 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

12.2. 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.**

12.3. Positives

Despite being a controversial decision, the acceptance of the principal 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.

13. 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.

13.1. 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.

13.2. 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.

14. 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.

14.1. Provincial Government—Introduction of Dyarchy

14.1.1. 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.

14.1.2. 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.

14.2. Central Government—Still Without Responsible Government

14.2.1. 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.

14.2.2. 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 had only male members, while 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.

14.3. 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.

14.4. 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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1. Methods of Gandhi and Reason for his Popularity

1.1. Early career of Gandhi at South Africa

Gandhiji landed at Durban in 1893 as a young barrister on a one-year contract to sort out the legal problems of Dada Abdullah, a Gujarati merchant. He was to all appearances an ordinary young man trying to make a living that time. But he was the first Indian barrister, the first highly-educated Indian, to have come to South Africa.

Indian immigration to South Africa had begun when the White settlers recruited indentured Indian labour, mainly from South India, to work on the sugar plantations. In their wake had come Indian merchants, mostly Memon Muslims. Ex-indentured labourers, who had settled down in South Africa after the expiry of their contract, and their children, many born in South Africa itself, constituted the third group of Indians that was in South Africa prior to Gandhiji's arrival. None of these groups of Indians had much access to education and certainly very little education in English; even the wealthy merchants often knew only a smattering of English necessary to carry on their trade. **The racial discrimination to which they were subjected, as part of their daily existence, they had come to accept as a way of life, and even if they resented it, they had little idea about how to challenge it. But young Mohandas Gandhi was not used to swallowing racial insults in order to carry on with the business of making a living.** He was the son of a Dewan (Minister) of an Indian state whose family, though in straitened economic circumstances, was widely respected in his native Kathiawad. Further, he had spent three years in London studying for the Bar. Neither in India nor in England had he ever come in contact with the overt racism that confronted him within days of his arrival in South Africa.

His journey from Durban to Pretoria, which he undertook within a week of his arrival on the continent, consisted of a series of racial humiliations. Apart from the famous incident in which he was bundled out of a first-class compartment by a White man and left to spend the night shivering in the waiting room, he was made to travel in the driver's box in a coach for which he had bought a first-class ticket, when he ignored the coach leader's order to vacate even that seat and sit on the foot-board, he was soundly thrashed. On reaching Johannesburg, he found that all the hotels became full up the moment he asked for a room to stay the night. Having succeeded in securing a first-class train ticket from Johannesburg to Pretoria (after quoting extensively from railway regulations), he was almost pushed out again from his railway compartment and was only saved this humiliation by the intervention of a European passenger.

On his arrival in Pretoria, where he was to work on the civil suit that had brought him to South Africa, he immediately convened a meeting of the Indians there. He offered to teach English to anybody who wanted to learn and suggested that they organize themselves and protest against oppression. He voiced his protest through the Press as well. Even though he had no plans of staying in South Africa at that stage, he tried his best to arouse the Indians in Pretoria to a sense of their own dignity as human beings and persuade them to resist all types of racial disabilities.

Having settled the law suit for which he had come, Gandhiji prepared to leave for India. But on the eve of his departure from Durban, he raised the issue of the bill to disenfranchise Indians, which was in the process of being passed by the Natal legislature. The Indians in South Africa begged Gandhiji to stay on for a month and organize their protest as they could not do so on their own, not knowing even enough English to draft petitions, and so on. Gandhiji agreed to stay on for a month and stayed for twenty years.

Gandhiji's experience in South Africa was unique in one respect. By virtue of being a British-educated barrister, he demanded many things as a matter of right, such as first-class train tickets and rooms in hotels, which other Indians before him had never probably even had the courage to ask for. Perhaps, they believed that they were discriminated against because they

were not 'civilized,' that is, 'westernized.' But Gandhiji's experience, the first of a westernized Indian in South Africa, demonstrated clearly, to him and to them as well, that the real cause lay in the assumption of racial superiority by the White rulers. His uniqueness in being the only western-educated Indian also simultaneously placed on his shoulders the responsibility of leading the struggle of the Indians against increasing racial discrimination. Wealthy Indian merchants, senior to the twenty-five-year-old barrister in experience and age, appointed him as their leader because he was the only one who could speak to the rulers in their own language, the only one who understood the intricacies of their laws and their system of government, the only one who could draft their petitions, create their organizations, and represent them before their rulers.

1.2. Moderate Phase of Struggle in South Africa

Gandhiji's political activities from 1894 to 1906 may be classified as the 'Moderate' phase of the struggle of the South African Indians. **During this phase, he concentrated on petitioning and sending memorials to the South African legislatures, the Colonial Secretary in London and the British Parliament.** He believed that if all the facts of the case were presented to the Imperial Government, the British sense of justice and fair play would be aroused and the Imperial Government would intervene on behalf of Indians who were, after all, British subjects. His attempt was to unite the different sections of Indians, and to give their demands wide publicity.

This he tried to do through the setting up of the **Natal Indian Congress** and by starting a paper called **Indian Opinion**. Gandhiji's abilities as an organizer, as a fund-raiser, as a journalist and as a propagandist, all came to the fore during this period. But, by 1906, Gandhiji, having fully tried the 'Moderate' methods of struggle, was becoming convinced that these would not lead anywhere.

1.3. Passive Resistance or Satyagraha Phase of Struggle in South Africa

The second phase of the struggle in South Africa, which began in 1906, was characterized by the use of the **method of passive resistance or civil disobedience, which Gandhiji named Satyagraha**. Its basic tenets were:

1. A satyagrahi was not to submit to what he considered as wrong, but was to remain truthful, non-violent and fearless.
2. He should be ready to accept suffering in his struggle against the evil-doer. This suffering was to be a part of his love for truth.
3. Even while carrying out his struggle against the evil-doer, a satyagrahi would love the evil-doer; hatred would be alien to his nature.
4. A true satyagrahi would never bow before the evil, whatever the consequence.
5. Only the brave and strong could practice satyagraha, which was not for the weeks and cowards. Even violence was preferred to cowardice. Thought was never to be separated from practice.

It was first used when the Government enacted legislation making it compulsory for Indians to take out certificates of registration which held their finger prints. It was essential to carry this on-person at all times. At a huge public meeting held on 11 September, 1906, in the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg, Indians resolved that they would refuse to submit to this law and would face the consequences. The Government remained adamant, and so did the Indians.

Gandhiji formed the Passive Resistance Association to conduct the campaign. The last date for registration being over, the Government started proceedings against Gandhiji and twenty-six others. The passive resisters pleaded guilty, were ordered to leave the country and, on refusing

to do so, were sent to jail. Others followed, and their numbers swelled to 155. The fear of jail had disappeared, and it was popularly called King Edward's Hotel.

General Smuts called Gandhiji for talks, and promised to withdraw the legislation if Indians voluntarily agreed to register themselves. Gandhiji accepted and was the first to register. But Smuts had played a trick; he ordered that the voluntary registrations be ratified under the law. The Indians under the leadership of Gandhiji retaliated by publicly burning their registration certificates. Meanwhile, the Government brought in new legislation, this time to restrict Indian immigration. The campaign, widened to oppose this. In August 1908, a number of prominent Indians from Natal crossed the frontier into Transvaal to defy the new immigration laws and were arrested. Other Indians from Transvaal opposed the laws by hawking without a license; traders who had licenses, refused to produce them. All of them were jailed. Gandhiji himself landed in jail in October 1908 and, along with the other Indians, was sentenced to a prison term involving hard physical labour and miserable conditions. But imprisonment failed to crush the spirit of the resisters, and the Government resorted to deportation to India, especially of the poorer Indians. Merchants were pressurized by threats to their economic interests.

At this stage, the movement reached an impasse. The more committed Satyagrahis continued to go in and out of jail, but the majority was showing signs of fatigue. The struggle was obviously going to be a protracted one, and the Government was in no mood to relent. Gandhiji's visit to London in 1909 to meet the authorities there yielded little result. The funds for supporting the families of the Satyagrahis and for running Indian Opinion were fast running out. Gandhiji's own legal practice had virtually ceased since 1906, the year he had started devoting all his attention to the struggle. At this point, Gandhiji set up Tolstoy Farm, made possible through the generosity of his German architect friend, Kallenbach, to house the families of the Satyagrahis and give them a way to sustain themselves. Tolstoy Farm was the precursor of the later Gandhian ashrams that were to play so important a role in the Indian national movement. Funds also came from India — Sir Ratan Tata sent Rs. 25,000 and the Congress and the Muslim League, as well as the Nizam of Hyderabad, made their contributions.

In 1911, to coincide with the coronation of King George V, an agreement was reached between the Government and the Indians, which, however, lasted only till the end of 1912. Meanwhile, Gokhale paid a visit to South Africa, was treated as a guest of the Government and was made a promise that all discriminatory laws against Indians would be removed. The promise was never kept, and Satyagraha was resumed in 1913. This time the movement was widened further to include resistance to the poll tax of three pounds that was imposed on all ex-indentured Indians. The inclusion of the demand for the abolition of this tax, a particularly heavy charge on poor labourers whose wages hardly averaged ten shillings a month, immediately drew the indentured and ex-indentured labourers into the struggle, and Satyagraha could now take on a truly mass character. Further fuel was added to the already raging fire by a judgement of the Supreme Court which invalidated all marriages not conducted according to Christian rites and registered by the Registrar of Marriages. By implication, Hindu, Muslim and Parsi marriages were illegal and the children born through these marriages illegitimate. The Indians treated this judgment as an insult to the honor of their women and many women were drawn into the movement because of this indignity.

Gandhiji decided that the time had now come for the final struggle into which all the resisters' resources should be channelled. The campaign was launched by the illegal crossing of the border by a group of sixteen Satyagrahis, including Kasturba, Gandhiji's wife, who marched from Phoenix Settlement in Natal to Transvaal, and were immediately arrested. A group of eleven women then marched from Tolstoy Farm in Transvaal and crossed the border into Natal without a permit, and reached New Castle, a mining town. Here, they talked to the Indian mine workers, mostly Tamils, and before being arrested persuaded them to go on strike.

Gandhiji reached New Castle and took charge of the agitation. The employers retaliated by cutting off water and electricity to the workers' quarters, thus forcing them to leave their homes. Gandhiji decided to march this army of over two thousand men, women and children over the border and thus see them lodged in Transvaal jails. During the course of the march, Gandhiji was arrested twice, released, arrested a third time and sent to jail. The morale of the workers, however, was very high and they continued the march till they were put into trains and sent back to Natal, where they were prosecuted and sent to jail. The treatment that was meted out to these brave men and women in jail included starvation and whipping, and being forced to work in the mines by mounted military police. Gandhiji himself was made to dig stones and sweep the compound. He was kept in a dark cell, and taken to court handcuffed and manacled.

The Governments' action inflamed the entire Indian community; workers on the plantations and the mines went on a lightning strike. Gokhale toured the whole of India to arouse Indian public opinion and even the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, condemned the repression as 'one that would not be tolerated by any country that calls itself civilized' and called for an impartial enquiry into the charges of atrocities. The use of brutal force on unarmed and peaceful men and women aroused widespread indignation and condemnation.

Eventually, through a series of negotiations involving Gandhiji, the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, C.F. Andrews and General Smuts, an agreement was reached by which the Government of South Africa conceded the major Indian demands relating to the poll tax, the registration certificates and marriages solemnized according to Indian rites, and promised to treat the question of Indian immigration in a sympathetic manner.

1.4. Outcome and Learning of the Movement

Non-violent civil disobedience had succeeded in forcing the opponents to the negotiating table and conceding the substance of the demands put forward by the movement. The blueprint for the 'Gandhian' method of struggle had been evolved and Gandhiji started back for his native land. The South African 'experiment' was now to be tried on a much wider scale on the Indian sub-continent.

The South African experiment prepared Gandhiji for leadership of the Indian national struggle. He had had the invaluable experience of leading poor Indian labourers, of seeing their capacity for sacrifice and for bearing hardship, their morale in the face of repression. South Africa built up his faith in the capacity of the Indian masses to participate in and sacrifice for a cause that moved them.

Gandhiji also had had the opportunity of leading Indians belonging to different religions: Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsis were all united under his leadership in South Africa. They also came from different regions, being mainly Gujaratis and Tamils. They belonged to different social classes; rich merchants combined with poor indentured labourers. Women came along with the men.

Another aspect of the South African experience also stood Gandhiji in good stead. He learnt, the hardest way, that leadership involves facing the ire not only of the enemy but also of one's followers. There were occasions on which Gandhiji was faced with a serious threat to his life may it be attack by white mob or an angry pathan follower.

Thus, Gandhiji learnt that leaders often have to take hard decisions that are unpopular with enthusiastic followers. **South Africa, then, provided Gandhiji with an opportunity for evolving his own style of politics and leadership, for trying out new techniques of struggle, on a limited scale, untrammelled by the opposition of contending political currents.** In South Africa, he had already taken the movement from its 'Moderate' phase into its 'Gandhian' phase. He already knew the strengths and the weaknesses of the Gandhian method and he was

convinced that it was the best method around. It now remained for him to introduce it into India.

1.5. Gandhiji's Arrival in India

Gandhiji returned to India, in January 1915, and was warmly welcomed. His work in South Africa was well-known, not only to educated Indians, but even to the masses who flocked to him for his 'darshan' at the Kumbh Mela at Hardwar. Gokhale had already hailed him as being 'without doubt made of the stuff of which heroes and martyrs are made.' The veteran Indian leader noticed in Gandhiji an even more important quality: 'He has in him the marvelous spiritual power to turn ordinary men around him into heroes and martyrs.'

On Gokhale's advice, and in keeping with his own style of never intervening in a situation without first studying it with great care, Gandhiji decided that for the first year he would not take a public stand on any political issue. He spent the year travelling around the country, seeing things for himself, and in organizing his ashram in Ahmedabad where he, and his devoted band of followers who had come with him from South Africa, would lead a community life. The next year as well, he continued to maintain his distance from political affairs, including the Home Rule Movement that was gathering momentum at this time. His political understanding did not coincide with any of the political currents that were active in India then. **His faith in 'Moderate' methods was long eroded** and he was not agree with the Home Rulers that the best time to agitate for Home Rule was when the British were in difficulty because of the First World War.

Further, he was deeply convinced that none of these methods of political struggle were really viable; the only answer lay in Satyagraha. His reasons for not joining the existing political organizations are best explained in his own words: 'At my time of life and with views firmly formed on several matters, I could only join an organization to affect its policy and not be affected by it. This does not mean that I would not now have an open mind to receive new light. I simply wish to emphasize the fact that the new light will have to be specially dazzling in order to entrance me.' **In other words, he could only join an organization or a movement that adopted "Non-violent Satyagraha" as its method of struggle.**

That did not, however, mean that Gandhiji was going to remain politically idle. During the course of 1917 and early 1918, he was involved in three significant struggles — in Champaran in Bihar, in Ahmedabad and in Kheda in Gujarat. The common feature of these struggles was that they related to specific local issues and that they were fought for the economic demands of the masses. Two of these struggles, Champaran and Kheda, involved the peasants and the one in Ahmedabad involved industrial workers.

2. Three Events that Launched Gandhi–Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad

2.1. Champaran (First Civil-Disobedience)

The story of Champaran begins in the early nineteenth century when **European planters had involved the cultivators in agreements that forced them to cultivate indigo on 3/20th of their holdings (known as the tinkathia system).** Towards the end of the nineteenth century, German synthetic dyes forced indigo out of the market and the European planters of Champaran, keen to release the cultivators from the obligation of cultivating indigo, tried to turn their necessity to their advantage by securing enhancements in rent and other illegal dues as a price for the release. Resistance had surfaced in 1908 as well, but the exactions of the planters continued till Raj Kumar Shukla, a local man, decided to follow Gandhiji all over the country to persuade him to come to Champaran to investigate the problem. Raj Kumar Shukla's decision to get Gandhiji

to Champaran is indicative of the image he had acquired as one who fought for the rights of the exploited and the poor. Gandhiji, on reaching Champaran, was ordered by the Commissioner to immediately leave the district. But to the surprise of all concerned, Gandhiji refused and preferred to take the punishment for his defiance of the law. This was unusual, for even Tilak and Annie Besant, when externed from a particular province, obeyed the orders even though they organized public protests against them. **To offer passive resistance or civil disobedience to an unjust order was indeed novel.** The Government of India, not willing to make an issue of it and not yet used to treating Gandhiji as a rebel, ordered the local Government to retreat and allow Gandhiji to proceed with his enquiry.

A victorious Gandhiji embarked on his investigation of the peasants' grievances. Here, too, his method was striking. He and his colleagues, who now included Brij Kishore, Rajendra Prasad and other members of the Bihar intelligentsia, Mahadev Desai and Narhari Parikh, two young men from Gujarat who had thrown in their lot with Gandhiji, and J.B. Kripalani, toured the villages and from dawn to dusk recorded the statements of peasants, interrogating them to make sure that they were giving correct information.

Meanwhile, the Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry to go into the whole issue, and nominated Gandhiji as one of its members. Armed with evidence collected from 8,000 peasants, he had little difficulty in convincing the Commission that the tinkathia system needed to be abolished and that the peasants should be compensated for the illegal enhancement of their dues. As a compromise with the planters, he agreed that they refund only twenty-five per cent of the money they had taken illegally from the peasants. Answering critics who asked why he did not ask for a full refund, Gandhiji explained that even this refund had done enough damage to the planters' prestige and position. As was often the case, Gandhiji's assessment was correct and, within a decade, the planters left the district altogether.

2.2. Ahmedabad Mill Workers Strike (First Hunger Strike)

Gandhiji then turned his attention to the workers of Ahmedabad. A dispute was brewing between them and the mill owners over the question of a 'plague bonus' the employers wanted to withdraw once the epidemic had passed but the workers insisted it stay, since the enhancement hardly compensated for the rise in the cost of living during the War. The British Collector, who feared a showdown, asked Gandhiji to bring pressure on the mill owners and work out a compromise.

Ambalal Sarabhai, one of the leading mill owners of the town, was a friend of Gandhiji, and had just saved the Sabarmati Ashram from extinction by a generous donation. Gandhiji persuaded the mill owners and the workers to agree to arbitration by a tribunal, but the mill owners, taking advantage of a stray strike, withdrew from the agreement. They offered a twenty per cent bonus and threatened to dismiss those who did not accept it.

The breach of agreement was treated by Gandhiji as a very serious affair, and he advised the workers to go on strike. He further suggested, on the basis of a thorough study of the production costs and profits of the industry as well as the cost of living, that they would be justified in demanding a thirty-five per cent increase, in wages.

The strike began and Gandhiji addressed the workers every day on the banks of the Sabarmati River. He brought out a daily news bulletin, and insisted that no violence be used against employers or blacklegs. Ambalal Sarabhai's sister, Anasuya Behn, was one of the main lieutenants of Gandhiji in this struggle in which her brother, and Gandhiji's friend, was one of the main adversaries.

After some days, the workers began to exhibit signs of weariness. The attendance at the daily meetings began to decline and the attitude towards blacklegs began to harden. In this situation,

Gandhiji decided to go on a fast, to rally the workers and strengthen their resolve to continue. Also, he had promised that if the strike led to starvation he would be the first to starve, and the fast was a fulfillment of that promise. The fast, however, also had the effect of putting pressure on the mill owners and they agreed to submit the whole issue to a tribunal. The strike was withdrawn and the tribunal later awarded the thirty-five per cent increase as the workers had demanded.

2.3. Kheda (First Non-Cooperation)

The dispute in Ahmedabad had not yet ended when Gandhiji learnt that the peasants of Kheda district were in extreme distress due to a failure of crops, and that their appeals for the remission of land revenue were being ignored by the Government. Enquiries by members of the Servants of India Society, Vithalbhai Patel and Gandhiji confirmed the validity of the peasants' case. This case was that as the crops were less than one-fourth of the normal yield, they were entitled under the revenue code to a total remission of the land revenue.

The Gujarat Sabha, of which Gandhiji was the President, played a leading role in the agitation. Appeals and petitions having failed, Gandhiji advised the withholding of revenue, and asked the peasants to 'fight unto death against such a spirit of vindictiveness and tyranny,' and show that 'it is impossible to govern men without their consent.'

Vallabhbhai Patel, a young lawyer and a native of Kheda district, and other young men, including Indulal Yagnik, joined Gandhiji in touring the villages and urging the peasants to stand firm in the face of increasing Government repression which included the seizing of cattle and household goods and the attachment of standing crops. The cultivators were asked to take a solemn pledge that they would not pay; those who could afford to pay were to take a vow that they would not pay in the interests of the poorer ryots who would otherwise panic and sell off their belongings or incur debts in order to pay the revenue. However, if the Government agreed to suspend collection of land revenue, the ones who could afford to do so could pay the whole amount.

The peasants of Kheda, already hard pressed because of plague, high prices, arid drought, were beginning to show signs of weakness when Gandhiji came to know that the Government had issued secret instructions directing that revenue should be recovered only from those peasants who could pay. A public declaration of this decision would have meant a blow to Government prestige, since this was exactly what Gandhiji had been demanding. In these circumstances, the movement was withdrawn. Gandhiji later recalled that by this time 'the people were exhausted' and he was actually 'casting about for some graceful way of terminating the struggle'.

2.4. Importance of these Events

Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda served as demonstrations of Gandhiji's style and method of politics to the country at large. They also helped him find his feet among the people of India and study their problems at close quarters. He came to possess, as a result of these struggles, a surer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the masses, as well as of the viability of his own political style. He also earned the respect and commitment of many political workers, especially the younger ones, who were impressed by his identification with the problems of ordinary Indians, and his willingness to take up their cause.

3. The Rowlatt Bills and Rowlatt Satyagraha

It was this reservoir of goodwill, and of experience of Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda, that encouraged Gandhiji, in February 1919, to call for a nation-wide protest against the unpopular legislation that the British were threatening to introduce. **Two bills, popularly known as the Rowlatt Bills after the man who chaired the Committee that suggested their introduction,**

aimed at severely curtailing the civil liberties of Indians in the name of curbing terrorist violence, were introduced in the Legislative Council. One of them was actually pushed through in indecent haste in the face of opposition from all the elected Indian members. This act of the Government was treated by the whole of political India as a grievous insult, especially as it came at the end of the War when substantial constitutional concessions were expected.

Constitutional protest having failed, Gandhiji stepped in and suggested that a Satyagraha be launched. A Satyagraha Sabha was formed, and the young members of the Home Rule Leagues who were more than keen to express their disenchantment with the Government flocked to join it. The old lists of the addresses of Home Rule Leagues and their members were taken out, contacts established and propaganda begun. The form of protest finally decided upon was the observance of a nation-wide hartal (strike) accompanied by fasting and prayer. In addition, it was decided that civil disobedience would be offered against specific laws.

The 6th of April was fixed as the date on which the Satyagraha would be launched. The movement that emerged was very different from the one that had been anticipated or planned. Delhi observed the 'hartal' on 30th March because of some confusion about dates, and there was considerable violence in the streets. This seemed to set the pattern in most other areas that responded to the call; protest was generally accompanied by violence and disorder. Punjab, which was suffering from the after effects of severe war-time repression, forcible recruitment, and the ravages of disease, reacted particularly strongly and both in Amritsar and Lahore the situation became very dangerous for the Government. Gandhiji tried to go to Punjab to help quieten the people, but the Government deported him to Bombay. He found that Bombay and even his native Gujarat, including Ahmedabad, were up in flames and he decided to stay and try to pacify the people.

4. Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

Events in Punjab were moving in a particularly tragic direction. In Amritsar, the arrest of two local leaders Saifuddin Kitchlew and Satyapal on 10th April led to an attack on the town hall and the post office; telegraph wires were cut and Europeans including women were attacked. The army was called in and the city handed over to General Dyer, who issued an order prohibiting public meetings and assemblies.

On 13 April, Baisakhi day, a large crowd of people, many of whom were visitors from neighbouring villages who had come to the town to attend the Baisakhi celebrations, collected in the Jallianwala Bagh to attend a public meeting. **General Dyer, incensed that his orders were disobeyed, ordered his troops to fire upon the unarmed crowd.** The shooting continued for ten minutes. General Dyer had not thought it necessary to issue any warning to the people nor was he deterred by the fact that the ground was totally hemmed in from all sides by high walls which left little chance for escape. The Government estimate was 379 dead, other estimates were considerably higher.

The brutality at Jallianwala Bagh stunned the entire nation. Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood in protest. The response would come, not immediately, but a little later. For the moment, repression was intensified, Punjab placed under martial law and the people of Amritsar forced into indignities such as crawling on their bellies before Europeans. **Gandhiji, overwhelmed by the total atmosphere of violence, withdrew the movement on 18th April 1919.** That did not mean, however, that Gandhiji had lost faith either in his non-violent Satyagraha or in the capacity of the Indian people to adopt it as a method of struggle. A year later, he launched another nation-wide struggle, on a scale bigger than that of the 'Rowlatt Satyagraha'.

5. Khilafat Movement

The last year of the second decade of the twentieth century found India highly discontented. Main reasons were

1. The Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and martial law in Punjab had belied all the generous wartime promises of the British.
2. The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms announced towards the end of 1919, with their ill-considered scheme of dyarchy satisfied few.
3. The Indian Muslims were incensed when they discovered that their loyalty had been purchased during the War by assurances of generous treatment of Turkey after the War — a promise British statesman had no intention of fulfilling. The Muslims regarded the Caliph of Turkey as their spiritual head and were naturally upset when they found that he would retain no control over the holy places which was his duty as Caliph to protect.
4. Even those who were willing to treat the happenings at Jallianwala Bagh and other places in Punjab as aberrations, that would soon be 'corrected', were disillusioned when they discovered that the Hunter Committee appointed by the Government to enquire into the Punjab disturbances was an eye wash and that the House of Lords had voted in favour of General Dyer's action and that the British public had demonstrated its support by helping the Morning Post collect 30,000 pounds for General Dyer.

The post-First World War period also saw the preparation of the ground for common political action by Hindus and Muslims:

1. The Lucknow Pact (1916) had stimulated Congress- Muslim League cooperation;
2. The Rowlatt Act agitation brought Hindus and Muslims, and also other sections of the society, together; and radical nationalist Muslims like Mohammad Ali, Abul Kalam Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Hasan Imam had now become more influential than the conservative Aligarh school elements who had dominated the League earlier.
3. The younger elements advocated militant nationalism and active participation in the nationalist movement. They had strong anti-imperialist sentiments.

In this atmosphere emerged the Khilafat issue around which developed the historic Non-Cooperation Movement.

5.1. Khilafat Issue

The Khilafat issue paved the way for the consolidation of the emergence of a radical nationalist trend among the younger generation of Muslims and the section of traditional Muslim scholars who were becoming increasingly critical of the British rule. This time, they were angered by the treatment meted out to Turkey by the British after the First World War.

The Muslims in India, as the Muslims all over the world, regarded the sultan of Turkey as their spiritual leader, Khalifa, so naturally their sympathies were with Turkey. During the War, Turkey had allied with Germany and Austria against the British. When the War ended, the British took a stern attitude towards Turkey— Turkey was dismembered and the Khalifa removed from power. This incensed Muslims all over the world. In India, too, the Muslims demanded from the British

1. That the Khalifa's control over Muslim sacred places should be retained, and
2. The Khalifa should be left with sufficient territories after territorial arrangements.

In early 1919, a Khilafat Committee was formed under the leadership of the Ali brothers (Shaukat Ali and Muhammad Ali), Maulana Azad, Ajmal Khan and Hasrat Mohani, to force the British Government to change its attitude to Turkey. Thus, the grounds for a country-wide agitation were prepared.

5.2. Development of Khilafat—Non-Cooperation Programme

For some time, the Khilafat leaders limited their actions to meetings, petitions, deputations in favour of the Khilafat. Later, however, a militant trend emerged, demanding an active agitation such as stopping all cooperation with the British.

Thus, at the All India Khilafat Conference held in Delhi in November 1919, a call was made for boycott of British goods. The Khilafat leaders also clearly spelt out that unless peace terms after the War were favourable to Turkey they would stop all cooperation with the Government. Gandhi, who was the president of the All India Khilafat Committee, saw in the issue a platform from which mass based and united non-cooperation could be declared against the Government.

5.3. Congress Stand on Khilafat

It was quite clear that the support of the Congress was essential for the Khilafat movement to succeed. However, although Gandhiji was in favour of launching Satyagraha and non-cooperation against the Government on the Khilafat issue, the Congress was not united on this form of political action.

Tilak was opposed to having an alliance with Muslim leaders over a religious issue and he was also skeptical of Satyagraha as an instrument of politics. So Gandhiji made a concerted bid to convince Tilak of the virtues of Satyagraha and of the expediency of an alliance with the Muslim community over the Khilafat issue. There was opposition to some of the other provisions of the Gandhi's non-cooperation programme also, such as boycott of councils. **Later, however, Gandhi was able to get the approval of the Congress for his programme of political action and the Congress felt inclined to support a non-cooperation programme on the Khilafat question because—**

1. It was felt that this was a golden opportunity to cement Hindu-Muslim unity and to bring Muslim masses into the national movement; now different sections of society—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, peasants, artisans, capitalists, tribals, women, students—could come into the national movement by fighting for their own rights and realising that the colonial rule was opposed to them;
2. The Congress was losing faith in constitutional struggle, especially after the Punjab incidents and the blatantly partisan Hunter Commission Report;
3. The Congress was aware that the masses were eager to give expression to their discontent.

6. Non-Cooperation Movement- Its Background, Programme & Evaluation

6.1. Muslim League's Support to Congress

The Muslim League decided to give full support to the Congress and its agitation on political questions. In early 1920, a joint Hindu-Muslim deputation was sent to the viceroy to seek redress of grievances on the issue of Khilafat, but the mission proved abortive.

In February 1920, Gandhi announced that the issues of the Punjab wrongs and constitutional advance had been overshadowed by the Khilafat question and that he would soon lead a movement of non-cooperation if the terms of the peace treaty failed to satisfy the Indian Muslims.

The Treaty of Sevres with Turkey, signed in May 1920, completely dismembered Turkey.

6.2. Major Events and Development of Movement

In June 1920 an all-party conference at Allahabad approved a programme of boycott of schools, colleges and law courts, and asked Gandhi to lead it. **On August 31, 1920 the Khilafat Committee started a campaign of non-cooperation and the movement was formally launched.** (Tilak had, incidentally, breathed his last on August 1, 1920.)

In September 1920 at a special session in Calcutta, the Congress approved a non-cooperation programme till the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs were removed and Swaraj was established. The programme was to include -

1. Boycott of government schools and colleges;
2. Boycott of law courts and dispensation of justice through Panchayats instead;
3. Boycott of Legislative Councils; (there were some differences over this as some leaders like C.R. Das were not willing to include a boycott of councils, but bowed to Congress discipline; these leaders boycotted elections held in November 1920 and the majority of the voters too stayed away);
4. Boycott of foreign cloth and use of khadi instead; also practice of hand-spinning to be done;
5. Renunciation of government honours and titles; the second phase could include mass civil disobedience including resignation from government service, and non-payment of taxes.

During the movement, the participants were supposed to work for Hindu-Muslim unity and for removal of untouchability, all the time remaining non-violent.

In December 1920 at the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress-

1. The programme of non-cooperation was endorsed;
2. An important change was made in Congress creed; now, instead of having the attainment of self-government through constitutional means as its goal, the Congress decided to have the attainment of swaraj through peaceful and legitimate means, thus committing itself to an extra-constitutional mass struggle;
3. Some important organisational changes were made: a Congress Working Committee (CWC) of 15 members was set up to lead the Congress from now onwards; Provincial Congress Committees on linguistic basis were organised; ward committees were organised; and entry fee was reduced to four annas
4. Gandhi declared that if the non-cooperation programme was implemented completely, swaraj would be ushered in within a year.

Many groups of revolutionary terrorists, especially those from Bengal, also pledged support to the Congress programme. At this stage, some leaders like Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Annie Besant, G.S. Kharpade and B.C. Pal left the Congress as they believed in a constitutional and lawful struggle while some others like Surendranath Banerjee founded the Indian National Liberal Federation and played a minor role in national politics henceforward. The adoption by the Congress of the non-cooperation movement initiated earlier by the Khilafat Committee gave it a new energy, and the years 1921 and 1922 saw an unprecedented popular upsurge.

6.3. Spread of the Movement

Gandhi accompanied by the Ali brothers undertook a nationwide tour. About 90,000 students left government schools and colleges and joined around 800 national schools and colleges, which cropped up during this time. These educational institutions were organised under the leadership of Acharya Narendra Dev, C.R. Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, Zakir Hussain, Subhash Bose (who became the principal of National College at Calcutta) and included Jamia Millia at Aligarh, Kashi Vidyapeeth, Gujarat Vidyapeeth and Bihar Vidyapeeth.

Many lawyers gave up their practice, some of whom were Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, C.R. Das, C. Raja- gopalachari, Saifuddin Kitchlew, Vallabhbhai Patel, Asaf Ali, T. Prakasam and Rajendra Prasad. Heaps of foreign cloths were burnt publicly and their imports fell by half. Picketing of shops selling foreign liquor and of toddy shops was undertaken at many places. Tilak Swaraj Fund was oversubscribed and one crore rupees collected. Congress volunteer corps emerged as the parallel police.

In July 1921, the Ali brothers gave a call to the Muslims to resign from the Army as that was unreligious. The Ali brothers were arrested for this in September. Gandhi echoed their call and asked local Congress committees to pass similar resolutions to that effect.

Now, the Congress gave a call to local Congress bodies to start civil disobedience if it was thought that the people were ready for it. Already, a no-tax movement against union board taxes in Midnapore (Bengal) and in Guntur (Andhra) was going on. In Assam, strikes in tea plantations, steamer services, Assam-Bengal Railways had been organised. J.M. Sengupta was a prominent leader in these strikes. In November 1921, the visit of the Prince of Wales to India invited strikes and demonstrations.

The spirit of defiance and unrest gave rise to many local struggles such as Awadh Kisan Movement (UP), Eka Movement (UP), Mappila Revolt (Malabar) and the Sikh agitation for the removal of mahants in Punjab.

6.4. Government Response

Talks between Gandhi and Reading, the viceroy, broke down in May 1921 as the Government wanted Gandhi to urge the Ali brothers to remove those portions from speeches which suggested violence. Gandhi realised that the Government was trying to drive a wedge between him and the Khilafat leaders and refused to fall into the trap.

In December, the Government came down heavily on the protestors. Volunteer corps were declared illegal, public meetings were banned, the press was gagged and most of the leaders barring Gandhi were arrested.

6.5. The Last Phase of the Movement

Gandhi was now under increasing pressure from the Congress rank and file to start the civil disobedience programme and the Ahmedabad session in 1921 (presided over, incidentally, by C.R. Das while still in jail; Hakim Ajmal Khan was the acting president) appointed Gandhi the sole authority on the issue. On February 1, 1922 Gandhi threatened to launch civil disobedience from Bardoli (Gujarat) if

1. Political prisoners were not released, and
2. Press controls were not removed.

However, the movement had hardly begun before it was brought to an abrupt end.

6.6. Chauri Chaura Incident

A small sleepy village named Chauri-Chaura (Gorakhpur district, UP) has found a place in history books due to an incident of violence on February 5, 1922 which was to prompt Gandhi to withdraw the movement. The police here had beaten up the leader of a group of volunteers campaigning against liquor sales and high food prices, and then opened fire on the crowd, which had come to protest before the police station.

The agitated crowd torched the police station with policemen inside who had taken shelter there; those who tried to flee were hacked to death and thrown back into the fire. Twenty-two policemen were killed in the violence. Gandhi, not happy with the increasingly violent trend of the movement, immediately announced the withdrawal of the movement.

The CWC met at Bardoli in February 1922 and resolved to stop all activity that led to breaking of law and to get down to constructive work, instead, which was to include popularisation of Khadi, national schools, and campaigning for temperance, for Hindu-Muslim unity and against untouchability. However, most of the nationalist leaders including C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Subhash Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru, however, expressed their bewilderment at Gandhi's decision to withdraw the movement.

In March 1922 Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to six years in jail. He made the occasion memorable by a magnificent court speech "I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen."

6.7. Reasons behind Withdrawal of the Movement

Gandhi felt that people had not learnt or fully understood the method of non-violence. Incidents like Chauri-Chaura could lead to excitement and fervour turning the movement generally violent. A violent movement could be easily suppressed by the colonial regime that could use the incidents of violence as an excuse to use the armed might of the state against the protestors.

Moreover, the movement was also showing signs of fatigue. This was natural as it is not possible to sustain any movement at a high pitch for very long. The Government seemed to be in no mood for negotiations.

The central theme of the agitation the Khilafat question also dissipated soon. In November 1922, the people of Turkey rose under Mustafa Kamal Pasha and deprived the Sultan of political power. Turkey was made a secular state. Thus, the Khilafat question lost its relevance. A European style of legal system was established in Turkey and extensive rights granted to women. Education was nationalised and modern agriculture and industries developed. In 1924, the caliphate was abolished.

6.8. Evaluation of Khilafat Non-Cooperation Movement

The tremendous participation of Muslims in the movement and the maintenance of communal unity was in itself no mean achievement. There is hardly any doubt that it was Muslim participation that gave the movement its truly mass character in many areas, at some places two-thirds of those arrested were Muslims. And it was, indeed, unfortunate that this most positive feature of the movement was not to be repeated in later years once communalism began to take its toll. The fraternization that was witnessed between Hindus and Muslims, with Gandhiji and other Congress leaders speaking from mosques, Gandhiji being allowed to address meetings of Muslim women in which he was the only male who was not blind-folded, all these began to look like romantic dreams in later years. The movement brought the urban Muslims into the national movement, but at the same time it communalised the national politics to an extent. Although Muslim sentiments were a manifestation of the spread of a wider anti-imperialist feeling, the national leaders failed to raise the religious political consciousness of the Muslims to a level of secular political consciousness.

With the Non-Cooperation Movement, nationalist sentiments reached every nook and corner of the country and politicised every strata of population—the artisans, peasants, students, urban poor, women, traders etc. It was this politicisation and activation of millions of men and women, which imparted a revolutionary character to the national movement.

Colonial rule was based on two myths one, that such a rule was in the interest of Indians and two, that it was invincible. The first myth had been exploded by the economic critique by Moderate nationalists. The second myth had been challenged by Satyagraha through mass

struggle. Now, the masses lost the hitherto all-pervasive fear of the colonial rule and its mighty repressive organs.

7. Swarajists and No Changers

The withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement in February 1922 was followed by the arrest of Gandhiji in March and his conviction and imprisonment for six years for the crime of spreading disaffection against the Government. The result was the spread of disintegration, disorganization and demoralization in the nationalist ranks. There arose the danger of the movement lapsing into passivity. Many began to question the wisdom of the total Gandhian strategy. Others started looking for ways out of the impasse.

7.1. Swarajist's Ideology

A new line of political activity, which would keep up the spirit of resistance to colonial rule, was now advocated by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru. They suggested that the nationalists should end the boycott of the legislative councils, enter them, expose them as 'sham parliaments' and as 'a mask which the bureaucracy has put on,' and obstruct 'every work of the council.'

This, they argued, would not be giving up non-cooperation but continuing it in a more effective form by extending it to the councils themselves. It would be opening a new front in the battle. C.R. Das as the President of the Congress and Motilal as its Secretary put forward this programme of 'either mending or ending' the councils at the Gaya session of the Congress in December 1922. Another section of the Congress headed by Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and C. Rajagopalachari, opposed the new proposal which was consequently defeated. Das and Motilal resigned from their respective offices in the Congress and on 1 January 1923 announced the formation of the Congress-Khilafat Swaraj Party better known later as the Swaraj Party. Das was the President and Motilal one of the Secretaries of the new party. The adherents of the council-entry programme came to be popularly known as 'pro-changers' and those still advocating boycott of the councils as 'no—changers.'

The Swaraj Party accepted the Congress programme in its entirety except in one respect— it would take part in elections due later in the year. It declared that it would present the national demand for self- government in the councils and in case of its rejection its elected members would adopt 'a policy of uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction within the councils, with a view to make the Government through the councils impossible.' The councils would, thus, be wrecked from within by creating deadlocks on every measure that came before them.

7.2. Leadership of Pro-Changers and No-Changers

Both Das and Motilal were highly successful lawyers who had once been Moderates but had accepted the politics of boycott and non-cooperation in 1920. They had given up their legal practice, joined the movement as whole time workers and donated to the nation their magnificent houses in Calcutta and Allahabad respectively. They were great admirers of Gandhiji but were also his political equals. Both were brilliant and effective parliamentarians. One deeply religious and the other a virtual agnostic, both were secular to the core.

Different in many ways, they complemented each other and formed a legendary political combination. Das was imaginative and emotional and a great orator with the capacity to influence and conciliate friends and foes. Motilal was firm, coolly analytical, and a great organizer and disciplinarian. They had such absolute trust and confidence in each other that each could use the other's name for any statement without prior consultation.

The no-changers, whose effective head was Gandhiji even though he was in jail, argued for the continuation of the full programme of boycott and non-cooperation, effective working of the constructive programme and quiet preparations for the resumption of the suspended civil disobedience.

7.3. Common Grounds and Differences between Pro-Changers and No-Changers

There was, of course, a lot of common ground between the two-

1. Both agreed that civil disobedience was not possible immediately and that no mass movement could be carried on indefinitely or for a prolonged period. Hence, breathing time was needed and a temporary retreat from the active phase of the movement was on the agenda.
2. Both also accepted that there was need to rest and to reinvigorate the anti-imperialist forces, overcome demoralization, intensify politicization, widen political participation and mobilization, strengthen organization, and keep up the recruitment, training and morale of the cadre.

In fact, the national movement was facing the basic problem that any mass movement has to face that was how to carry on political work in the movement's non-active phases? It was in the answer to this question that the two sides differed.

The Swarajists said that work in the councils was necessary to fill in the temporary political void. This would keep up the morale of the politicized Indians, fill the empty newspaper spaces, and enthuse the people. Electioneering and speeches in the councils would provide fresh avenues for political agitation and propaganda. Even without Congressmen, said the Swarajists, the councils would continue to function and, perhaps, a large number of people would participate in voting. This would lead to the weakening of the hold of the Congress.

Moreover, non-Congressmen would capture positions of vantage and use them to weaken the Congress. Why should such vantage points in a revolutionary fight be left in the hands of the enemy? By joining the councils and obstructing their work, Congressmen would prevent undesirable elements from doing mischief or the Government from getting some form of legitimacy for their laws.

In other words, the Swarajists claimed that they would transform the legislatures into arenas of political struggle and that their intention was not to use them, as the Liberals desired, as organs for gradual transformation of the colonial state, but to use them as the ground on which the struggle for the overthrow of the colonial state was to be carried out.

The no-changers opposed council-entry mainly on the ground that parliamentary work would lead to the neglect of constructive and other work among the masses, the loss of revolutionary zeal and political corruption. The legislators who would go into the councils with the aim of wrecking them would gradually give up the politics of obstruction and get sucked into the imperial constitutional framework, and start cooperating with the Government on petty reforms and piecemeal legislation. Constructive work among the masses, on the other hand, would prepare them for the next round of civil disobedience.

7.4. Union of Pro-Changers and No-Changers and Approach of Gandhiji

As the pro-changer no-changer clash developed, the atmosphere of dismay in nationalist ranks began to thicken and they began to be haunted by the fear of the repetition of the disastrous split of 1907. Pressure began to develop on the leaders to put a check on their public bickering.

Both groups of leaders began to pull back from the brink and move towards mutual accommodation. This trend was helped by several factors.

First, the need for unity was felt very strongly by all the Congressmen. Secondly, not only the no-changers but also the Swarajists realized that however useful parliamentary work might be, the real sanctions which would compel the Government to accept national demands would be forged only by a mass movement outside the legislatures — and this would need unity. Lastly, both groups of leaders fully accepted the essentiality of Gandhiji's leadership.

Consequently, in a special session of the Congress held at Delhi in September 1923, the Congress suspended all propaganda against council entry and permitted Congressmen to stand as candidates and exercise their franchise in forthcoming elections.

Gandhiji was released from jail on 5 February 1924 on health grounds. He was completely opposed to council-entry as also to the obstruction of work in the councils, which he believed was inconsistent with non-violent non-cooperation. Once again a split in the Congress loomed on the horizon. The Government very much hoped for and banked on such a split. When releasing the Mahatma, the Bombay Government had suggested that he 'would denounce the Swarajists for their defection from the pure principle of non-cooperation, and thus considerably reduce in legislatures their power for harm.

But Gandhiji did not oblige. Step by step, he moved towards an accommodation with the Swarajists. In fact, his approach towards the Swarajists at this stage brings out some of the basic features of his political style, especially when dealing with co-workers with whom he differed. Gandhiji's starting point was the fact that even when opposing the Swarajist leaders he had full trust in their bonafides. He described them as 'the most valued and respected leaders' and as persons who 'have made great sacrifices in the cause of the country and who yield to no one in their love of freedom of the motherland'.

Moreover, he and Das and Motilal Nehru throughout maintained warm personal relations based on mutual respect and regard. Immediately after his release, Gandhiji refused to publicly comment on council-entry till he had discussions with the Swarajist leaders. Even after meeting them, while he continued to believe in the futility and even harmful character of the Swarajists' programme, he remained convinced that public opposition to the 'settled fact' of council-entry would be counterproductive.

The courageous and uncompromising manner in which the Swarajists had functioned in the councils convinced Gandhiji that, however politically wrong, they were certainly not becoming a limb of imperial administration. To the contrary, he noted, 'they have shown determination, grit, discipline and cohesion and have not feared to carry their policy to the point of defiance. Once assume the desirability of entering Councils and it must be admitted that they have introduced a new spirit into the Indian Legislatures'.

Gandhiji was also pained by the bickering in the worst of taste among the proponents of the two schools. He was very keen to end this. In any case, felt Gandhiji, council entry had already occurred and now to withdraw would be 'disastrous' and would be 'misunderstood' by the Government and the people 'as a rout and weakness'. This would further embolden the Government in its autocratic behaviour and repressive policy and add to the state of political depression among the people.

The last straw came when the Government launched a full attack on civil liberties and the Swarajists in Bengal in the name of fighting terrorism. It promulgated an ordinance on 25 October 1924 under which it conducted raids on Congress offices and house searches and arrested a large number of revolutionary terrorists and Swarajists and other Congressmen including Subhas Chandra Bose and two Swarajist members of the Bengal legislature, Anil Baran

Roy and S.C. Mitra. Perceiving a direct threat to the national movement, as an answer to the Government's offensive against the Swarajists, Gandhiji decided to show his solidarity with the Swarajists by 'surrendering' before them. On 6 November 1924, Gandhiji brought the strife between the Swarajists and no-changers to an end, by signing a joint statement with Das and Motilal that the Swarajist Party would carry on work in the legislatures on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the Congress. This decision was endorsed in December at the Belgaum session of the Congress over which Gandhiji presided. He also gave the Swarajists a majority of seats on his Working Committee.

7.5. Achievements of Swarajist

Despite of the facts that Swarajists got only a few weeks to prepare for the elections and the franchise was extremely narrow, in elections to the legislative councils held in November 1923 they managed to do quite well. They won 42 out of 101 elected seats in the Central Legislative Assembly and got a clear majority in the Central Provinces; they were the largest party in Bengal; and they fared quite well in Bombay and U.P., though not in Madras and Punjab because of strong casteist and communal currents.

In the Central Legislative Assembly, the Swarajists succeeded in building a common political front with the Independents led by M.A. Jinnah, the Liberals, and individuals such as Madan Mohan Malaviya. They built similar coalitions in most of the provinces. And they set out to inflict defeat after defeat on the Government.

The legislatures, reformed in 1919, had a 'semblance' of power without any real authority. Though they had a majority of elected members, the executive at the centre or in the provinces was outside their control, being responsible only to the British Government at home. Moreover, the Viceroy or the Governor could certify any legislation, including a budgetary grant, if it was rejected in the legislature. **The Swarajists forced the Government to certify legislation repeatedly at the centre as well as in many of the provinces, thus exposing the true character of the reformed councils.** In March 1925, they succeeded in electing Vithalbhai Patel, a leading Swarajist, as the President of the Central Legislative Assembly.

Though intervening on every issue and often outvoting the Government, the Swarajists took up at the centre three major sets of problems on which they delivered powerful speeches which were fully reported in the Press and followed avidly every morning by the readers. One was the problem of constitutional advance leading to self-Government; second of civil liberties, release of political prisoners, and repeal of repressive laws; and third of the development of indigenous industries.

The Swarajist activity in the legislatures was spectacular by any standards. It inspired the politicized persons and kept their political interest alive. People were thrilled every time the all-powerful foreign bureaucracy was humbled in the councils. Simultaneously, during 1923-24, Congressmen captured a large number of municipalities and other local bodies. Das became the Mayor of Calcutta (with Subhas Bose as his Chief Executive Officer), and Vithalbhai Patel the President of Bombay Corporation, Vallabhbhai Patel of Ahmedabad Municipality, Rajendra Prasad of Patna Municipality, and Jawaharlal Nehru of Allahabad Municipality. The no-changers actively joined in these ventures since they believed that local bodies could be used to promote the constructive programme.

Despite their circumscribed powers, many of the municipalities and district boards, headed by a galaxy of leaders, set out to raise, however little, the quality of life of the people. They did excellent work in the fields of education, sanitation, health, anti-untouchability, and khadi promotion, won the admiration of friend and foe, and quite often aroused popular enthusiasm.

Thus, their great achievement lay in their filling the political void at a time when the national movement was recouping its strength. And this they did without getting co-opted by the colonial regime while some in their ranks fell by the wayside as was inevitable in the parliamentary framework, the overwhelming majority proved their mettle and stood their ground. They worked in the legislatures in an orderly disciplined manner and withdrew from them whenever the call came. Above all, they showed that it was possible to use the legislatures in a creative manner even as they promoted the politics of self-reliant anti-imperialism. They also successfully exposed the hollowness of the Reform Act of 1919 and showed the people that India was being ruled by 'lawless laws'.

7.6. The Drawbacks of Swarajists and Reasons behind their Weakening

The Swarajists suffered a major loss when C.R. Das died on 16 June 1925. Even more serious were a few other political developments. In the absence of a mass movement, communalism raised its ugly head and the political frustrations of the people began to find expression in communal riots. Actively encouraged by the colonial authorities, the communalists of all hues found a fertile field for their activities. Its preoccupation with parliamentary politics also started telling on the internal cohesion of the Swaraj Party.

For one, the limits of politics of obstruction were soon reached. Having repeatedly outvoted the Government and forced it to certify its legislation, there was no way of going further inside the legislatures and escalating the politics of confrontation. This could be done only by a mass movement outside. But the Swarajists lacked any policy of coordinating their militant work in the legislatures with mass political work outside. In fact, they relied almost wholly on newspaper reporting.

The Swarajists also could not carry their coalition partners for ever and in every respect, for the latter did not believe in the Swarajists' tactic of 'uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction.' The logic of coalition politics soon began to pull back the Swarajists from militant obstructionism.

Some of the Swarajist legislators could also not resist the pulls of parliamentary perquisites and positions of status and patronage. The Government's policy of creating dissension among the nationalists by trying to separate the Swarajists from the Liberals, militant Swarajists from the more moderate Swarajists, and Hindus from Muslims began to bear fruit.

In Bengal, the majority in the Swaraj Party failed to support the tenants' cause against the zamindars and, thereby, lost the support of its pro-tenant, mostly Muslim, members. Nor could the Swaraj Party avoid the intrusion of communal discord in its own ranks.

Very soon, a group of **Responsivists** arose in the party who wanted to work the reforms and to hold office wherever possible. The Responsivists joined the Government in the Central Provinces. Their ranks were soon swelled by N.C. Kelkar, M.R. Jayakar and other leaders. Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya too separated themselves from the Swaraj Party on Responsivist as well as communal grounds.

To prevent further dissolution and disintegration of the party, the spread of parliamentary 'corruption,' and further weakening of the moral fiber of its members, the main leadership of the party reiterated its faith in mass civil disobedience and decided to withdraw from the legislatures in March 1926. Gandhiji, too, had resumed his critique of council-entry.

7.7. Decline of Swarajists

The Swaraj Party went into the elections held in November 1926 as a party in disarray — a much weaker and demoralized force. It had to face the Government and loyalist elements and

its own dissenters on the one side and the resurgent Hindu and Muslim communalists on the other. A virulent communal and unscrupulous campaign was waged against the Swarajists. Motilal Nehru was, for example, accused of sacrificing Hindu interests, of favouring cow-slaughter, and of eating beef. The Muslim communalists were no less active in branding the Swarajists as anti-Muslim. The result was a severe weakening of the Swaraj Party. It succeeded in winning forty seats at the Centre and half the seats in Madras but was severely mauled in all other provinces, especially in U.P., C.P., and Punjab.

Moreover, both Hindu and Muslim communalists increased their representation in the councils. The Swarajists also could not form a nationalist coalition in the legislatures as they had done in 1923. Once again the Swarajists passed a series of adjournment motions and defeated the Government on a number of bills. Noteworthy was the defeat of the Government on the Public Safety Bill in 1928. Frightened by the spread of socialist and communist ideas and influence and believing that the crucial role in this respect was being played by British and other foreign agitators sent to India by the Communist International, the Government proposed to acquire the power to deport 'undesirable' and 'subversive' foreigners. Nationalists of all colours, from the moderates to the militants, united in opposing the Bill. In March 1929, having failed to get the Bill passed, the Government arrested thirty-one leading communists, trade unionists and other leftwing leaders and put them on trial at Meerut. This led to strong criticism of the Government by the nationalists. The Swarajists finally walked out of the legislatures in 1930 as a result of the Lahore Congress resolution and the beginning of civil disobedience.

7.8. Constructive Work by No-changers

In the meantime, the no-changers carried on laborious, quiet, undemonstrative, grass-roots constructive work around the promotion of khadi and spinning, national education and Hindu-Muslim unity, the struggle against untouchability and the boycott of foreign cloth. This work was symbolized by hundreds of ashrams that came up all over the country where political cadres got practical training in khadi work and work among the lower castes and tribal people. For example, there was the Vedchi Ashram in Bardoli taluqa, Gujarat, where Chimanlal Mehta, Jugatram Dave and Chimanlal Bhatt devoted their entire lives to the spread of education among the adivasis or kaliparaj; or the work done by Ravishankar Maharaj among the lower caste Baralyas of Kheda district.

In fact, Gandhian constructive work was multi-faceted in its content. It brought some much-needed relief to the poor, it promoted the process of the nation-in-the-making; and it made the urban-based and upper caste cadres familiar with the conditions of villages and lower castes. It provided Congress political workers or cadres continuous and effective work in the passive phases of the national movement, helped build their bonds with those sections of the masses who were hitherto untouched by politics, and developed their organizing capacity and self-reliance.

It filled the rural masses with a new hope and increased Congress influence among them. Without the uplift of the lower castes and Adivasis there could be no united struggle against colonialism. The boycott of foreign cloth was a stroke of genius, which demonstrated to rulers and the world the Indian people's determination to be free. National schools and colleges trained young men in an alternative, non-colonial ideological framework. A large number of young men and women who dropped out in 1920-21 went back to the officially recognized educational institutions but many often became whole time cadres of the movement.

As a whole, constructive work was a major channel for the recruitment of the soldiers of freedom and their political training— as also for the choosing and testing of their 'officers' and leaders. Constructive workers were to act as the steel frame of the nationalist movement in its active Satyagraha phase. It was, therefore, not accidental that khadi bhandar workers,

students and teachers of national schools and colleges, and Gandhian ashrams' inmates served as the backbone of the civil disobedience movements both as organizers and as active Satyagrahis.

8. Other Political Parties and Movements

The third decade of the twentieth century is a watershed in modern Indian history in more ways than one. While, on the one hand, this period marked the entry of Indian masses into the national movement, on the other hand, this period saw the basic crystallisation of the main political currents on the national scene.

These diverse political currents owed their origin partly to the coming on the scene of the Gandhian philosophy of Satyagraha based on truth and non-violence, as they embodied a positive or negative reaction to it. The international influence on Indian political thinkers during this phase was also more pronounced than before. The new forces to emerge during the 1920s included:

8.1. Spread of Marxism and Socialist Ideas

These ideas inspired many socialist and communist groups to come into existence and resulted in the rise of a left wing within the Congress, represented by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose. These young nationalists inspired by the Soviet Revolution and dissatisfied with Gandhian ideas and political programme, began advocating radical solutions for economic, political and social ills of the country.

These younger nationalists:

1. Were critical both of Swarajists and No-changers,
2. Advocated a more consistent anti-imperialist line in the form of a slogan for purna swarajya (complete independence),
3. Were influenced by an awareness, though still vague, of international currents,
4. Stressed the need to combine nationalism and anti-imperialism with social justice and simultaneously raised the question of internal class oppression by capitalists and landlords.

Among the communist groups, the Communist Party of India (CPI) was formed in 1920 in Tashkent (now, the capital of Uzbekistan) by M.N. Roy, Abani Mukherji and others after the second Congress of Comintern. M.N. Roy was also the first to be elected to the leadership of Comintern.

In 1924, many communists—S.A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed, Shaikat Usmani, Nalini Gupta—were jailed in the **Kanpur Bolshevik conspiracy case**. In 1925, the Indian Communist Conference at Kanpur formalised the foundation of the CPI. In 1929, the Government crackdown on communists resulted in the arrest and trial of 31 leading communists, trade unionists and left-wing leaders who were tried at Meerut in the famous **Meerut conspiracy case**. Workers' and peasants' parties were organised all over the country and they propagated Marxist and communist ideas. All these communist groups and workers' and peasants' parties remained an integral part of the national movement and worked within the Congress.

8.2. Activism of Indian Youth

All over, students' leagues were being established and students' conferences were being held. **In 1928, Jawaharlal Nehru presided over the All Bengal Students' Conference.**

8.3. Peasants' Agitations

In the United Provinces these agitations were for revision of tenancy laws including lower rents, protection against eviction and relief from indebtedness. Similar peasant agitations took place

in the Rampa region of Andhra, in Rajasthan, in ryotwari areas of Bombay and Madras. In Gujarat, the Bardoli Satyagraha was led by Patel (1928).

8.4. Growth of Trade Unionism

The trade union movement was led by All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) founded in 1920. Lala Lajpat Rai was its first president and Dewan Chaman Lai its general secretary. Tilak was also one of the moving spirits.

The major strikes during the 1920s included those in Kharagpur Railway Workshops, Tata Iron and Steel Works (Jamshedpur), Bombay Textile Mills (this involved 1,50,000 workers and went on for 5 months), and Buckingham Carnatic Mills. In 1928, there were a number of strikes involving 5 lakh workers. In 1923, the first May Day was celebrated in India in Madras.

8.5. Caste Movements

As in earlier periods, the varied contradictions of the Indian society found expression in caste associations and movements. These movements could be divisive, conservative and at times potentially radical, and included:

1. Justice Party (Madras)
2. Self-respect movement (1925) under "Periyar"—E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker (Madras)
3. Satyashodhak activists in Satara (Maharashtra)
4. Bhaskar Rao Jadhav (Maharashtra)
5. Mahars under Ambedkar (Maharashtra)
6. Radical Ezhavas under K. Aiyappan and C. Kesavan in Kerala
7. Yadavs in Bihar for improvement in social status
8. Unionist Party under Fazl-i-Hussain (Punjab).

8.6. Revolutionary Terrorism with a turn towards Socialism

This line was adopted by those dissatisfied with the nationalist strategy of the political struggle with its emphasis on non-violence. In this also, two strands developed:

- a) Hindustan Republican Association (H.R.A.)—in Punjab- UP-Bihar
- b) Yugantar, Anushilan groups and later Chittagong Revolt Group under Surya Sen-in Bengal

9. State's Peoples' Conference Movements (Praja Mandal Movements in Princely States)

The national movement in princely states started after 1920 after the non-cooperation movement which had taken place in the British provinces only. Under the national movement, the subjects of the princely states established people's organisation. The people's organisation started by the people of princely states for the national movement were, called '**Praja Mandals**' or '**Praja Parishads**'. The national movements in the princely states were also called **Praja Mandal movements**. The State's People's Conference brought together representatives from hundreds of Indian princely states including Baroda, Bhopal, Travancore and Hyderabad. It was established to encourage political dialogue between the princely class of India, and the British Raj, upon the issues of governance, political stability and future of India.

9.1. Nature of the Praja Mandal Movements

The Praja Mandal movements were oriented against the Feudalism and colonialism. The people of Praja Mandal movement fought against their feudal princes and the British administration simultaneously for their rights. The main demand of the Praja Mandal movements was the democratic rights.

9.2. Activities of Praja Mandal Movements

1. The people of the Praja Mandal Movements implemented the constructive programmes of the Indian National Movement in their princely states.
2. They established schools, used khadi, encouraged cottage industries and started agitation against the Untouchability.

9.3. The National Movement Associations in Princely States

9.3.1. The Hitvardhak Sabha

The Hitvardhak Sabha was founded in Poona in May 1921. The aim of this association was to solve the problems of the people of southern princely states.

9.3.2. Akhil Bhore Sansthan Praja Sabha

Wamanrao Patwardhan founded Akhil Bhore Sansthan Praja Sabha in Bhore region in November 1921. The aim of this Sabha was to fight for the problems related to people of Bhore region.

9.3.3. All India Association of the People's Council

In the Bombay session of All India Association of the People's Council in 1927, the princely states national movement was made a national level movement. The Bombay session of the Council demanded the responsible government and rights of citizenship for the people of Princely States.

The Madras Session of Congress also adopted the demands of Bombay session of All India Association of People's Council. In the Karachi Session of the Council in 1936, the Council rejected the clause of the 1935 Act wherein the nomination of Princes of the Princely states to the Imperial Legislature was allowed. The Karachi Session of the Council demanded that the right of election of representative should rest with the subjects of the princely states. The Council and other people's movement also struggled for the farmers loans, taxes etc. in the princely states.

9.3.4. Role of Congress in Praja Mandal Movement

The policy and programme of the congress party contributed to Praja Mandal Movement. The Gandhian Movement of Non Cooperation, civil disobedience, role of Congress in the organization of All India States People's Conference and declaration of objectives to be involved in States People's Movement in the Tripuri Congress session provided the morale booster to Praja Mandal Movement. The Indian National Congress joined hands with the People's Council and made it a part of national movement.

They worked with the aim of ending the British rule in India and integrating the princely states with India.

In Orissa the Congress leaders became instrumental in organization of State People's Conference in 1937 to enquire into the condition of the states, which was reconstituted in 1938 with H.K. Mahatab, Member of the congress working committee as its chairman. The installation of popular congress ministry in Orissa in July, 1937 inspired the people of feudatory states to carry on their crusade against the despotic rulers. **The congress leaders because of legal injunction could not participate in the movement of the States openly but they extended great moral support and much valuable indirect help to the movement.**

The prime-minister of Odisha province for 1937-39, Biswanath Das issued an appeal to the rulers of the States in November 1938 and urged upon them to accept the legitimate demands of the people and thus to restore peace and tranquility in their domain. Congress ministry in Orissa released few rebels of the State who were in provincial jail of Cuttack. The plight of the

people of feudatory states reflected in the enquiry report of Orissa State Committee, which was presented to Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy who came to Orissa in the first week of August, 1939. The Viceroy discussed the matter with the congress ministry. Thus the congress party actively co-operated the Praja Mandal agitation of Orissa states and gained popular esteem.

9.4. Importance of Praja Mandal Movements

The Praja Mandal Movement nakedly exposed the character of feudal polity and prepared the ground for integration of princely states. Thus the people's movement in the princely states was the reflection of inner desire of the people to merge into the main stream of the nation's political, social, economic and cultural life. As a result of the merging of the People's movement with the national movement, the princely states integrated with the independent India after 1947.

10. Simon Commission and Anti Simon Commission Agitation

10.1. Why constituted before declared time?

From the latter part of 1927 the curve of the mass anti-imperialist upsurge began to take a marked upward turn. As it was the British Government that provided a catalyst and a rallying ground by an announcement on 8 November 1927 of an all-White commission to recommend whether India was ready for further constitutional progress and on which lines.

Indian nationalists had for many years declared the constitutional reforms of 1919 as inadequate and had been clamoring for an early reconsideration of the constitutional question, but the Government had been adamant that the declared period of ten years must lapse before fresh proposals were considered.

In 1927, however, the Conservative Government of Britain, faced with the prospect of electoral & feat at the hands of the Labour Party, suddenly decided that it could not leave an issue which concerned the future of the British Empire in the irresponsible hands of an inexperienced Labour Government and it was thus that the Indian Statutory Commission, popularly known as the Simon Commission after its Chairman, was appointed. Lord Birkenhead, the Conservative Secretary of State was responsible for the appointment of the Simon Commission.

10.2. Indian Response

The response in India was immediate and unanimous. **That no Indian should be thought fit to serve on a body that claimed the right to decide the political future of India was an insult that no Indian of even the most moderate political opinion was willing to swallow.** The call for a boycott of the Commission was endorsed by the Liberal Federation led by Tej Bahadur Sapru, by the Indian Industrial and Commercial Congress, and by the Hindu Mahasabha. The Muslim League even split on the issue, Mohammed Ali Jinnah carrying the majority with him in favour of boycott.

It was the Indian National Congress, however, that turned the boycott into a popular movement. The Congress had resolved on the boycott at its annual session in December 1927 at Madras, and in the prevailing excitable atmosphere, Jawaharlal Nehru had even succeeded in getting passed a snap resolution declaring complete independence as the goal of the Congress.

But protest could not be confined to the passing of resolutions, as Gandhiji made clear in the issue of Young India - 'It is said that the Independence Resolution is a fitting answer. The act of appointment (of the Simon Commission) needs for an answer, not speeches, however heroic they may be, not declarations, however brave they may be, but corresponding action . . .'

10.3. Agitation

The action began as soon as Simon and his friends landed at Bombay on 3 February 1928. That day, all the major cities and towns observed a complete hartal, and people were out on the streets participating in mass rallies, processions and black-flag demonstrations. Everywhere that Simon went — Calcutta, Lahore, Lucknow, Vijayawada, Poona — he was greeted by a sea of black-flags carried by thousands of people. And ever new ways of defiance were being constantly invented.

The youth of Poona, for example, took advantage of the fact that for a long stretch between Lonavala and Poona the road and the rail-track ran within sight of each other. They climbed into a lorry and drove alongside the train that was carrying Simon and Company, waving black flags at them all the way from Lonavala to Poona. In Lucknow, Khaliqzaman executed the brilliant idea of floating kites and balloons imprinted with the popular slogan 'Go Back Simon' over the reception organized in Kaiserbagh by the taluqdars for members of the Commission.

If humour and creativity was much in evidence, so too was popular anger at the manner in which the police dealt with the protesters. Lathi charges were becoming all too frequent, and even respected and senior leaders were not spared the blows. In Lucknow, Jawaharlal and Govind Ballabh Pant were beaten up by the police. But the worst incident happened in Lahore where Lala Lajpat Rai, the hero of the Extremist days and the most revered leader of Punjab, was hit on the chest by lathis on 30 October and succumbed to the injuries on 17 November 1928. It was his death that Bhagat Singh and his comrades were seeking to avenge when they killed the white police official, Saunders, in December 1928.

10.4. Effect of Simon Agitation

The Simon boycott movement provided the first taste of political action to a new generation of youth. They were the ones who played the most active role in this protest, and it was they who gave the movement its militant flavour. And although a youth movement had already begun to take shape by 1927, it was participation in the Simon agitation that gave a real fillip to the formation of youth leagues and associations all over the country.

Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose emerged as the leaders of this new wave of youth and students and they travelled from one province to another addressing and presiding over innumerable youth conferences. **The upsurge among the youth also proved a fruitful ground for the germination and spread of the new radical ideas of socialism that had begun to reach Indian shores.** Jawaharlal Nehru had returned from Europe in 1927 after representing the Indian National Congress at the Brussels Congress of the League against Imperialism. He also visited the Soviet Union and was deeply impressed by socialist ideas. It was with the youth that he first shared his evolving perspective.

Although Jawaharlal Nehru's was undoubtedly the most important role, other groups and individuals too played a crucial part in the popularization of the socialist vision. Subhas Chandra Bose was one such individual, though his notion of socialism was nowhere as scientific and clear as Jawaharlal's. Among groups, the more important ones were the Naujawan Bharat Sabha in Lahore, and the small group of Communists who had formed the Workers' and Peasants' Parties with the specific aim of organizing workers and peasants and radicalizing the Congress from within. As a result, the young people who were being drawn into the anti-imperialist movement were also simultaneously becoming sympathetic to the ideas of socialism, and youth groups in some areas even developed links with workers' and peasants' struggles.

11. The Second Phase of Revolutionary Movements

The revolutionary terrorists were severely suppressed during World War I, with most of the leaders in jail or absconding. Consequently, in order to create a more harmonious atmosphere for the Montague-Chelmsford reforms, the Government released most of them under a general amnesty in early 1920. Soon after, the National Congress launched the Non Cooperation Movement and on the urging of Gandhiji, C.R. Das and other leaders, most of the revolutionary terrorists either joined the movement or suspended their own activities in order to give the Gandhian mass movement a chance.

But the sudden suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement shattered the high hopes raised earlier. Many young people began to question the very basic strategy of the national leadership and its emphasis on non-violence and began to look for alternatives. They were not attracted by the parliamentary politics of the Swarajists or the patient and undramatic constructive work of the no-changers. Many were drawn to the idea that violent methods alone would free India. Revolutionary terrorism again became attractive. It is not accidental that nearly all the major new leaders of the revolutionary terrorist politics, for example, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjea, Surya Sen, Jatin Das, Chandrashekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Shiv Varma, Bhagwati Charan Vohra and Jaidev Kapur, had been enthusiastic participants in the non-violent Non-Cooperation Movement.

Gradually two separate strands of revolutionary terrorism developed — one in Punjab, U.P. and Bihar and the other in Bengal. Both the strands came under the influence of several new social forces.

- One was the upsurge of working class trade unionism after the War. They could see the revolutionary potential of the new class and desired to harness it to the nationalist revolution.
- The second major influence was that of the Russian Revolution and the success of the young Socialist State in consolidating itself. The youthful revolutionaries were keen to learn from and take the help of the young Soviet State and its ruling Bolshevik Party.
- The third influence was that of the newly sprouting Communist groups, with their emphasis on Marxism, Socialism and the proletariat.

The revolutionaries in northern India were the first to emerge out of the mood of frustration and reorganize under the leadership of the old veterans, Ramprasad Bismil, Jogesh Chatterjea and Sachindranath Sanyal whose '**Bandi Jiwan**' served as a textbook to the revolutionary movement. **They met in Kanpur in October 1924 and founded the Hindustan Republican Association (or Army) (HRA) to organize armed revolution to overthrow colonial rule and establish in its place a Federal Republic of the United States of India whose basic principle would be adult franchise.**

11.1. Kakori Robbery

Before armed struggle could be waged, propaganda had to be organized on a large scale, men had to be recruited and trained and arms had to be procured. All these required money. The most important 'action' of the HRA was the Kakori Robbery. On 9 August 1925, ten men held up the number 8 Down train at Kakori, an obscure village near Lucknow, and looted its official railway cash. The Government reaction was quick and hard. It arrested a large number of young men and tried them in the Kakori Conspiracy Case. Ashfaqulla Khan, Ramprasad Bismil, Ràshan Singh and Rajendra Lahiri were hanged, four others were sent to the Andamans for life and seventeen others were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Chandrashekhar Azad remained at large.

11.2. HSRA and its Activities

The Kakori case was a major setback to the revolutionaries of northern India but it was not a fatal blow. Younger men such as Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Shiv Varma and Jaidev Kapur in U.P.,- Bhagat Singh, Bhagwati Charan Vohra and Sukhdev in Punjab set out to reorganize the HRA under the overall leadership of Chandrashekhar Azad. Simultaneously, they were being influenced by socialist ideas. **Finally, nearly all the major young revolutionaries of northern India met at Ferozeshah Kotla Ground at Delhi on 9 and 10 September 1928, created a new collective leadership, adopted socialism as their official goal and changed the name of the party to the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (Army)(HSRA).**

Even though, the HSRA and its leadership was rapidly moving away from individual heroic action and assassination and towards mass politics, Lala Lajpat Rai's death, as the result of a brutal lathi-charge when he was leading an anti-Simon Commission demonstration at Lahore on 30 October 1928, led them once again to take to individual assassination. The death of this great Punjabi leader, popularly known as Sher-e-Punjab, was seen by the romantic youthful leadership of the HSRA as a direct challenge. And so, on 17 December 1928, Bhagat Singh, Azad and Rajguru assassinated, at Lahore, Saunders, a police official involved in the lathi charge of Lab Lajpat Rai.

The HSRA leadership now decided to let the people know about its changed objectives and the need for a revolution by the masses. Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt were asked to throw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly on 8 April 1929 against the passage of the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill which would reduce the civil liberties of citizens in general and workers in particular. The aim was not to kill, for the bombs were relatively harmless, but, as the leaflet they threw into the Assembly hail proclaimed, 'to make the deaf hear'. **The objective was to get arrested and to use the trial court as a forum for propaganda so that people would become familiar with their movement and ideology. Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt were tried in the Assembly Bomb Case. Later, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru and tens of other revolutionaries were tried in a series of famous conspiracy cases.** Their fearless and defiant attitude in the courts — every day they entered the court-room shouting slogans 'Inquilab Zindabad,' 'Down, Down with Imperialism,' 'Long Live the Proletariat' and singing songs such as 'Sarfaroshi ki tamanna ab hamare dil mei hai' (our heart is filled with the desire for martyrdom) and 'Mera rang de basanti chola' (dye my clothes in saffron colour - the colour of courage and sacrifice) — was reported in newspapers; unsurprisingly this won them the support and sympathy of people all over the country including those who had complete faith in non-violence. Bhagat Singh became a household name in the land.

The country was also stirred by the prolonged hunger strike the revolutionary under-trials undertook as a protest against the horrible conditions in jails. They demanded that they be treated not as criminals but as political prisoners. The entire nation rallied behind the hunger-strikers. On 13 September, the 64th day of the epic fast, Jatin Das, a frail young man with an iron will, died. Thousands came to pay him homage at every station passed by the train carrying his body from Lahore to Calcutta.

A large number of revolutionaries were convicted in the **Lahore Conspiracy Case** and other similar cases and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment; many of them were sent to the Andamans. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were sentenced to be hanged. The sentence was carried out on 23 March 1931.

11.3. Revolutionary Terrorism in Bengal

In Bengal, too, the revolutionary terrorists started reorganizing and developing their underground activities. At the same time, many of them continued to work in the Congress

organization. This enabled them to gain access to the vast Congress masses; on the other hand, they provided the Congress with an organizational base in small towns and the countryside. They cooperated with C.R. Das in his Swarajist work. After his death the Congress leadership in Bengal got divided into two wings, one led by Subhas Chandra Bose and the other by J.M. Sengupta. The Yugantar group joined forces with the first and Anushilan with the second.

Among the several 'actions' of the reorganized groups was the attempt to assassinate Charles Tegart, the hated Police Commissioner of Calcutta, by Gopinath Saha in January 1924. By an error, another Englishman named Day was killed. The Government came down on the people with a heavy hand. A large number of people, suspected of being terrorists, or their supporters, were arrested under a newly promulgated ordinance. These included Subhas Chandra Bose and many other Congressmen. Saha was hanged despite massive popular protest. The revolutionary activity suffered a severe setback. Another reason for stagnation in revolutionary terrorist activity lay in the incessant factional and personal quarrels within the terrorist groups, especially where Yugantar and Anushilan rivalry was concerned. But very soon younger revolutionaries began to organize themselves in new groups, developing fraternal relations with the active elements of both the Anushilan and Yugantar parties. Among the new Revolt Groups, the most active and famous was the Chittagong group led by Surya Sen.

11.4. Surya Sen and Chittagong Armoury raid

Surya Sen had actively participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement and had become a teacher in a national school in Chittagong, which led to his being popularly known as Master da. Arrested and imprisoned for two years, from 1926 to 1928, for revolutionary activity, he continued to work in the Congress. He and his group were closely associated with the Congress work in Chittagong. In 1929, Surya Sen was the Secretary and five of his associates were members of the Chittagong District Congress Committee. Surya Sen, a brilliant and inspiring organizer, was an unpretentious, soft-spoken and transparently sincere person. Possessed of immense personal courage, he was deeply humane in his approach. Surya Sen soon gathered around himself a large band of revolutionary youth including Anant Singh, Ganesh Ghosh and Lokenath Baul. They decided to organize a rebellion, on however small a scale, to demonstrate that it was possible to challenge the armed might of the British Empire in India. Their action plan was to include occupation of the two main armouries in Chittagong and the seizing of their arms with which a large band of revolutionaries could be formed into an armed detachment; the destruction of the telephone and telegraph systems of the city; and the dislocation of the railway communication system between Chittagong and the rest of Bengal. The action was carefully planned and was put into execution on the night of 18 April 1930. But as it was not possible for the band of revolutionaries to put up a fight in the town against the army which was expected. They, therefore, left Chittagong town before dawn and marched towards the Chittagong hill ranges, looking for a safe place. It was on the Jalalabad hill that several thousand troops surrounded them on the afternoon of 22 April. After a fierce fight in which over eighty British troops and twelve revolutionaries died, Surya Sen decided to disperse into the neighbouring villages; there they formed into small groups and conducted raids on Government, personnel and property. Despite several repressive measures and combing operations by the authorities, the villagers, most of them Muslims, gave food and shelter to the revolutionary outlaws and enabled them to survive for three years. Surya Sen was finally arrested on 16 February 1933, tried and hanged on 12 January 1934. Many of his co-fighters were caught and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

The Chittagong Armoury Raid had an immense impact on the people of Bengal. It 'fired the imagination of revolutionary-minded youth' and 'recruits poured into the various terrorist groups in a steady stream.' The year 1930 witnessed a major revival of revolutionary activity, and its momentum carried over to 1931 and 1932. There were numerous instances of death-

defying heroism. In Midnapore district alone, three British magistrates were assassinated. Attempts were made on the lives of two Governors; two Inspector-Generals of Police were killed. During this three-year period, twenty-two officials and twenty non-officials were killed. The official reaction to the armoury raid and the revival of revolutionary terrorist activity was initially one of panic and then of brutal reprisals. The Government armed itself with twenty repressive acts and let loose the police on all nationalists. In Chittagong, it burnt several villages, imposed punitive fine on many others and in general established a reign of terror. In 1933, it arrested and sentenced Jawaharlal Nehru to a two-year term in jail for sedition. He had in a speech in Calcutta condemned imperialism, praised the heroism of revolutionary youth (even while criticizing the policy of terrorism as futile and out-of-date) and condemned police repression.

11.5. Participation of Women

A remarkable aspect of this new phase of the terrorist movement in Bengal was the large-scale participation of young women under Surya Sen's leadership, they provided shelter, acted as messengers and custodians of arms, and fought, guns in hand. Pritilata Waddadar died while conducting a raid, while Kalpana Joshi (Dutt) was arrested and tried along with Surya Sen and given a life sentence. In December 1931, two school girls of Comilla, Santi Ghosh and Suniti Chowdhury, shot dead the District Magistrate. In February 1932, Bina Das fired point blank at the Governor while receiving her degree at the convocation.

11.6. Nature of Revolutionary Terrorism

Compared to the old revolutionary terrorists, as also Bhagat Singh and his comrades, the Chittagong rebels made an important advance. Instead of an individual's act of heroism or the assassination of an individual, theirs was a group action aimed at the organs of the colonial state. But the objective still was to set an example before the youth, and to demoralize the bureaucracy. As Kalpana Joshi (Dutt) has put it, the plan was that when, after the Chittagong rebellion, the Government would bring in troops to take back Chittagong they (the terrorists) would die fighting — thus creating a legend and setting an example before their countrymen to emulate.

The Bengal revolutionaries of the 1920s and 1930s had shed some of their earlier Hindu religiosity — they no longer took religious oaths and vows. Some of the groups also no longer excluded Muslims — the Chittagong IRA cadre included many Muslims like Sattar, Mir Ahmad, Fakir Ahmad Mian, Tunu Mian and got massive support from Muslim villagers around Chittagong. But they still retained elements of social conservatism, nor did they evolve broader socio-economic goals. In particular, those revolutionary terrorists, who worked in the Swaraj party, failed to support the cause of Muslim peasantry against the zamindars.

11.7. Contribution of Bhagat Singh

A real breakthrough in terms of revolutionary ideology and the goals of revolution and the forms of revolutionary struggle was made by Bhagat Singh and his comrades. Rethinking had, of course, started on both counts in the HRA itself. Its manifesto had declared in 1925 that it stood for 'abolition of all systems which make the exploitation of man by man possible'.

Bhagat Singh, born in 1907 and a nephew of the famous revolutionary Ajit Singh, was a giant of an intellectual. A voracious reader, he was one of the most well-read of political leaders of the time. Bhagat Singh had, before his arrest in 1929, abandoned his belief in terrorism and individual heroic action. He had turned to Marxism and had come to believe that popular broad-based mass movements alone could lead to a successful revolution. Bismil also supported broad based movement. That is why Bhagat Singh helped establish the **Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha** in 1926 (becoming its founding Secretary), as the open wing of the

revolutionaries. The Sabha was to carry out open political work among the youth, peasants and workers. It was to open branches in the villages. Under its auspices, Bhagat Singh used to deliver political lectures with the help of magic lantern slides. Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev also organized the Lahore Students Union for open, legal work among the students. Thus, Bhagat Singh and his comrades made a major advance in broadening the scope and definition of revolution. Revolution was no longer equated with mere militancy or violence. Its first objective was national liberation — the overthrow of imperialism. But it must go beyond and work for a new socialist social order; it must bend exploitation of man by man.

The draft of the famous statement of revolutionary position, **Philosophy of the Bomb**, was written by Bhagwati Charan Vohra at the instance of Azad and after a full discussion with him and Yashpal, defined revolution as independence, social, political and economic' aimed at establishing 'a new order of society in which political and economic exploitation will be an impossibility'.

Bhagat Singh was a great innovator in two areas of politics. Being fully and consciously secular, he understood, more clearly than many of his contemporaries, the danger that communalism posed to the nation and the national movement. He often told his audience that communalism was as big an enemy as colonialism. In April 1928, at the conference of youth where Naujawan Bharat Sabha was reorganized, Bhagat Singh and his comrades openly opposed the suggestion that youth belonging to religious-communal organizations should be permitted to become members of the Sabha. Religion was one's private concern and communalism was an enemy to be fought, argued Bhagat Singh.

Earlier in 1927, condemning communal killings as barbaric, he had pointed out that communal killers did not kill a person because he was guilty of any particular act but simply because that person happened to be a Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. But, wrote Bhagat Singh, a new group of youth was coming forward who did not recognize any differences based on religion and saw a person first as a human being and then as an Indian. Bhagat Singh revered Lajpat Rai as a leader. But he would not spare even Lajpat Rai, when, during the last years of his life, Lajpat Rai turned to communal politics. He then launched a political-ideological campaign against him through a symbolic pamphlet without using any harsh word against respected Lala ji.

Significantly, two of the six rules of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, drafted by Bhagat Singh, were: 'To have nothing to do with communal bodies or other parties which disseminate communal ideas' and 'to create the spirit of general toleration among the public considering religion as a matter of personal belief of man and to act upon the same fully.' Bhagat Singh also saw the importance of freeing the people from the mental bondage of religion and superstition. A few weeks before his death, he wrote the article 'Why I am an Atheist' in which he subjected religion and religious philosophy to a scathing critique.

11.8. Decline of Revolutionary Terrorism and their Limitations

Government action gradually decimated the revolutionary terrorist ranks. With the death of Chandrashekhar Azad in a shooting encounter a public park at Allahabad in February 1931, the revolutionary terrorist movement virtually came to an end in Punjab, U.P. and Bihar. Surya Sen's martyrdom marked an end to the prolonged saga of revolutionary terrorism in Bengal. A process of rethinking in jails and in the Andamans began large number of the revolutionaries turned to Marxism and the idea of a socialist revolution by the masses. They joined the Communist Party, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, and other Left parties. Many others joined the Gandhian wing of the Congress.

The politics of the revolutionary terrorists had severe limitations — above all theirs was not the politics of a mass movement; they failed to politically activate the masses or move them into political actions; they could not even establish contact with the masses.

But it was true that they made an abiding contribution to the national freedom movement. Their deep patriotism, courage and determination, and sense of sacrifice stirred the Indian people. They helped spread nationalist consciousness in the land; and in northern India the spread of socialist consciousness owed a lot to them.

12. The Left Movements

A powerful left-wing group developed in India in the late 1920s and 1930s contributing to the radicalization of the national movement. The goal of political independence acquired a clearer and sharper social and economic content. The stream of national struggle for independence and the stream of the struggle for social and economic emancipation of the suppressed and the exploited began to come together. Socialist ideas acquired roots in the Indian soil; and socialism became the accepted creed of Indian youth whose urges came to be symbolized by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. Gradually there emerged two powerful parties of the Left, the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Congress Socialist Party (CSP).

12.1. Factors Responsible for its Growth

Impact of the Russian Revolution was a big reason behind it. Another lesson was driven home - if the common people — the workers and peasants and the intelligentsia — could unite and overthrow the mighty Czarist empire then the Indian people battling against British imperialism could also do so. Socialist doctrines, especially Marxism, the guiding theory of the Bolshevik Party, acquired a sudden attraction, especially for the people of Asia. Socialist ideas now began to spread rapidly especially because many young persons who had participated actively in the Non-Cooperation Movement were unhappy with its outcome and were dissatisfied with Gandhian policies and ideas as well as the alternative Swarajist programme. Several socialist and communist groups came into existence all over the country.

In Bombay, S.A. Dange published a pamphlet Gandhi and Lenin and started the first socialist weekly, The Socialist; in Bengal, Muzaffar Ahmed brought out Navayug; in Punjab, Ghulam Hussain and others published Inquilab; and in Madras, M. Singaravelu founded the Labour-Kisan Gazette.

Student and youth associations were organized all over the country from 1927 onwards. Hundreds of youth conferences were organized all over the country during 1928 and 1929 with speakers advocating radical solutions for the political, economic and social ills from which the country was suffering. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose toured the country attacking imperialism, capitalism, and landlordism and preaching the ideology of socialism. The revolutionary terrorists led by Chandrasekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh also turned to socialism.

Trade union and peasant movements grew rapidly throughout the 1920s. Socialist ideas became even more popular during the 1930s as the world was engulfed by the great economic depression. Unemployment soared all over the capitalist world. The world depression brought the capitalist system into disrepute and drew attention towards Marxism and socialism. Within the Congress the left-wing tendency found reflection in the election of Jawaharlal Nehru as president for 1936 and 1937 and of Subhas Bose for 1938 and 1939 and in the formation of the Congress Socialist Party.

12.2. Nehru's Contribution

It was above all Jawaharlal Nehru who imparted a socialist vision to the national movement and who became the symbol of socialism and socialist ideas in India after 1929. The notion that freedom could not be defined only in political terms but must have a socio-economic content began increasingly to be associated with his name.

Nehru became the president of the historic Lahore Congress of 1929 at a youthful forty. In his books (Autobiography and Glimpses of World History), articles and speeches, Nehru propagated the ideas of socialism and declared that political freedom would become meaningful only if it led to the economic emancipation of the masses; it had to, therefore, be followed by the establishment of a socialist society, Nehru thus moulded a whole generation of young nationalists and helped them accept a socialist orientation.

Nehru developed an interest in economic questions when he came in touch with the peasant movement in eastern U.P. in 1920-21. In 1927, he attended the international Congress against Colonial Oppression and imperialism, held at Brussels, and came into contact with communists and anti-colonial fighters from all over the world. In 1928, Jawaharlal joined hands with Subhas to organize the Independence for India League to fight for complete independence and 'a socialist revision of the economic structure of society.' At the Lahore session of the Congress in 1929, Nehru proclaimed: 'I am a socialist and a republican'. India, he said, would have to adopt a full 'socialist programme' if she was 'to end her poverty and inequality.' It was also not possible for the Congress to hold the balance between capital and labour and landlord and tenant, for the existing balance was 'terribly weighted' in favour of the capitalists and landlords.

Nehru's commitment to socialism found a clearer and sharper expression during 1933-36. He put his commitment to socialism in clear, unequivocal and passionate words in his presidential address to the Lucknow Congress in April 1936: 'I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems lies in socialism, and when I use this word I do so not in a vague humanitarian way but in the scientific, economic sense'. During these years, Nehru also emphasized the role of class analysis and class struggle.

Nehru developed a complex relationship with Gandhiji during this period. He criticized Gandhiji for refusing to recognize the conflict of classes, for preaching harmony among the exploiters and the exploited, and for putting forward the theories of trusteeship by, and conversion of, the capitalists and landlords. At the same time, he fully appreciated the radical role that Gandhiji had played and was playing in Indian society. Thus Nehru, did not favour the creation of an organization independent of or separate from the Congress or making a break with Gandhiji and the right-wing of the Congress. The task was to influence and transform the Congress as a whole in a socialist direction. And this could be best achieved by working under its banner and bringing its workers and peasants to play a greater role in its organization. And in no case, he felt, should the Left become a mere sect apart from the mainstream of the national movement.

Attracted by the Soviet Union and its revolutionary commitment, a large number of Indian revolutionaries and exiles abroad made their way there. The most well-known and the tallest of them was M.N. Roy, who along with Lenin, helped evolve the Communist International's policy towards the colonies. Seven such Indians, headed by Roy, met at Tashkent in October 1920 and set up a Communist Party of India. Independently of this effort, a number of left-wing and communist groups and organizations had begun to come into existence in India after 1920. Most of these groups came together at Kanpur in December 1925 and founded an all-India organization under the name the Communist Party of India (CPI).

The main form of political work by the early Communists was to organize peasants' and workers' parties and work through them. The first such organization was the Labour-Swaraj Party of the Indian National Congress organized by Muzaffar Ahmed, Qazi Nazrul Islam, Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, and others in Bengal in November 1925. In late 1926, a Congress Labour Party was formed in Bombay and a Kirti-Kisan Party in Punjab. A Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan had been functioning in Madras since 1923. By 1928 all of these provincial organizations had been renamed the Workers' and Peasants' Party (WPP) and knit into an All India party, whose units were also set up in Rajasthan, UP and Delhi. All Communists were members of this party. The basic objective of the WPPs was to work within the Congress to give

it a more radical orientation and make it 'the party of the people' and independently organize workers and peasants in class organizations, to enable first the achievement of complete independence and ultimately of socialism. The WPPs grew rapidly and within a short period the communist influence in the Congress began to grow rapidly, especially in Bombay. Moreover, Jawaharlal Nehru and other radical Congressmen welcomed the WPPs' efforts to radicalize the Congress. Along with Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose, the youth leagues and other Left forces, the WPPs played an important role in creating a strong left-wing within the Congress and in giving the Indian national movement a leftward direction. The WPPs also made rapid progress on the trade union front and played a decisive role in the resurgence of working class struggles during 1927-29 as also in enabling Communists to gain a strong position in the working class.

12.3. Government Response and Further Course of Left Movement

The rapid growth of communist and WPP influence over the national movement was, however, checked and virtually wiped out during 1929 and after by two developments. One was the severe repression to which Communists were subjected by the Government. Already in 1922-24, Communists trying to enter India from the Soviet Union had been tried in a series of conspiracy cases at Peshawar and sentenced to long periods of imprisonment. In 1924, the Government had tried to cripple the nascent communist movement by trying S.A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed, Nalini Gupa and Shaikat Usmani in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case. All four were sentenced to four years of imprisonment.

By 1929, the Government was deeply worried about the rapidly growing communist influence in the national and trade union movements. It decided to strike hard. In a sudden swoop, in March 1929, it arrested thirty-two radical political and trade union activists, including three British Communists — Philip Spratt, Ben Bradley and Lester Hutchinson — who had come to India to help organize the trade union movement. The basic aim of the Government was to behead the trade union movement and to isolate the Communists from the national movement. The thirty-two accused were put up for trial at Meerut. The Meerut Conspiracy Case was soon to become a cause celebre. The defence of the prisoners was to be taken up by many nationalists including Jawaharlal Nehru, M.A. Ansari and M.C. Chagla. Gandhiji visited the Meerut prisoners in jail to show his solidarity with them and to seek their cooperation in the coming struggle. Speeches of defence made in the court by the prisoners were carried by all the nationalist newspapers thus familiarizing lakhs of people for the first time with communist ideas. The Government design to isolate the Communists from the mainstream of the national movement not only miscarried but had the very opposite consequence. It did, however, succeed in one respect. The growing working class movement was deprived of its leadership. At this early stage, it was not easy to replace it with a new leadership. As if the Government blow was not enough, the Communists inflicted a more deadly blow on themselves by taking a sudden lurch towards what is described in leftist terminology as sectarian politics or 'leftist deviation'. Guided by the resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, the Communists broke their connection with the National Congress and declared it to be a class party of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the Congress and the bourgeoisie it supposedly represented were declared to have become supporters of imperialism.

Congress plans to organize a mass movement around the slogan of Poorna Swaraj were seen as sham efforts to gain influence over the masses by bourgeois leaders who were working for a compromise with British imperialism. Congress left leaders, such as Nehru and Bose, were described as 'agents of the bourgeoisie within the national movement who were out to 'bamboozle the mass of workers' and keep the masses under bourgeois influence. The Communists were now out to 'expose' all talk of non-violent struggle and advance the slogan of armed struggle against imperialism, in 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was described as a proof of the Congress betrayal of nationalism.

Finally, the Workers' and Peasants' Party was also dissolved on the ground that it was unadvisable to form a two-class (workers' and peasants') party for it was likely to fall prey to petty bourgeois influences. The Communists were to concentrate, instead, on the formation of an 'illegal, independent and centralized' communist party. The result of this sudden shift in the Communists' political position was their isolation from the national movement at the very moment when it was gearing up for its greatest mass struggle and conditions were ripe for massive growth in the influence of the Left over it. Further, the Communists split into several splinter groups. The Government took further advantage of this situation and, in 1934, declared the CPI illegal.

The Communist movement was, however, saved from disaster because, on the one hand, many of the Communists refused to stand apart from the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and participated actively in it, and, on the other hand, socialist and communist ideas continued to spread in the country. Consequently, many young persons who participated in the CDM or in Revolutionary Terrorist organizations were attracted by socialism, Marxism and the Soviet Union, and joined the CPI after 1934.

The situation underwent a radical change in 1935 when the Communist Party was reorganized under the leadership of P.C. Joshi. Faced with the threat of fascism, the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, meeting at Moscow in August 1935, radically changed its earlier position and advocated the formation of a united front with socialists and other anti-fascists in the capitalist Countries and with bourgeois-led nationalist movements in colonial countries. The Communist Party now began to call upon its members to join the Congress and enroll the masses under their influence to the Congress. In 1938, it went further and accepted that the Congress was 'the central mass political organization of the Indian people ranged against imperialism'. At the same time, the party remained committed to the objective of bringing the national movement under the hegemony of the working class, that is, the Communist Party. Communists now worked hard inside the Congress. Many occupied official positions inside the Congress district and provincial committees; nearly twenty were members of the All-India Congress Committee. During 1936-42, they built up powerful peasant movements in Kerala, Andhra, Bengal and Punjab. What is more important, they once again recovered their popular image of being the most militant of anti-imperialists. The move towards the formation of a socialist party was made in the jails during 1930-31 and 1932-34 by a group of young Congressmen who were disenchanted with Gandhian strategy and leadership and attracted by socialist ideology. Many of them were active in the youth movement of the late 1920s. In the jails they studied and discussed Marxian and other socialist ideas. Attracted by Marxism, communism and Soviet Union, they did not find themselves in agreement with the prevalent political line of the CPI. Many of them were groping towards an alternative. Ultimately they came together and formed the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) at Bombay in October 1934 under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev and Minoo Masani. From the beginning, all the Congress socialists were agreed upon four basic propositions:

1. that the primary struggle in India was the national struggle for freedom and that nationalism was a necessary stage on the way to socialism;
2. that socialists must work inside the National Congress because it was the primary body leading the national struggle;
3. that they must give the Congress and the national movement a socialist direction;
4. and that to achieve this objective they must organize the workers and peasants in their class organizations, wage struggles for their economic demands and make them the social base of the national struggle.

The notion of alternate Left leadership of the Congress and the national movement came up for realization twice at Tripuri in 1939 and at Ramgarh in 1940. But when it came to splitting the

Congress on a Left-Right basis and giving the Congress an executive left-wing leadership, the CSP (as also the CPI) shied away. Its leadership (as also CPI's) realized that such an effort would not only weaken the national movement but isolate the Left from the mainstream, that the Indian people could be mobilized into a movement only under Gandhiji's leadership and that, in fact, there was at the time no alternative to Gandhiji's leadership. However, unlike Jawaharlal Nehru, the leadership of the CSP, as also of other Left groups and parties, was not able to fully theorize or internalize this understanding and so it went back again and again to the notion of alternative leadership.

The CSP was, however, firmly well-grounded in the reality of the Indian situation. Therefore, it never carried its opposition to the existing leadership of the Congress to breaking point. Whenever it came to the crunch, it gave up its theoretical position and adopted a realistic approach close to that of Jawaharlal Nehru's. This earned it the condemnation of the other left-wing groups and parties — for example, in 1939, they were chastised for their refusal to support Subhas Bose in his confrontation with Gandhiji and the Right wing of the Congress.

From the beginning the CSP leaders were divided into three broad ideological currents: the Marxian, the Fabian and the current influenced by Gandhiji. This would not have been a major weakness — in fact it might have been a source of strength — for a broad socialist party which was a movement. But the CSP was already a part, and a cadre-based party at that, within a movement that was the National Congress. Moreover, the Marxism of the 1930s was incapable of accepting as legitimate such diversity of political currents on the Left. The result was a confusion which plagued the CSP till the very end. The party's basic ideological differences were papered over for a long time because of the personal bonds of friendship and a sense of comradeship among most of the founding leaders of the party, the acceptance of Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan as its senior leaders, and its commitment to nationalism and socialism.

Despite the ideological diversity among the leaders, the CSP as a whole accepted a basic identification of socialism with Marxism. Jayaprakash Narayan, for example, observed in his book 'Why Socialism?' that 'today more than ever before it is possible to say that there is only one type, one theory of Socialism — Marxism.' Gradually, however as Gandhiji's politics began to be more positively evaluated, large doses of Gandhian and liberal democratic thought were to become basic elements of the CSP leadership's thinking.

Several other groups and currents developed on the Left in the 1930s. M.N. Roy came back to India in 1930 and organized a strong group of Royists who underwent several political and ideological transformations over the years. Subhas Bose and his left-wing followers founded the Forward Bloc in 1939 after Bose was compelled to resign from the Presidentship of the Congress. The Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, and various Trotskyist groups also functioned during the 1930s. There were also certain prestigious left-wing individuals, such as Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, Professor N.G. Ranga, and Indulal Yagnik, who worked outside the framework of any organized left-wing party.

The CPI, the CSP and Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Bose and other Left groups and leaders all shared a common political programme which enabled them, despite ideological and organizational differences, to work together after 1935 and make socialism a strong current in Indian politics.

12.4. Limitations and Drawbacks

Despite the fact that the Left cadres were among the most courageous, militant and sacrificing of freedom fighters, the Left failed in the basic task it had taken upon itself— to establish the hegemony of socialist ideas and parties over the national movement. It also failed to make good

the promise it held out in the 1930s. This is, in fact, a major enigma for the historian. Several explanations for this complex phenomenon suggest themselves. The Left invariably fought the dominant Congress leadership on wrong issues and, when it came to the crunch, was either forced to trail behind that leadership or was isolated from the national movement. Unlike the Congress right-wing, the Left failed to show ideological and tactical flexibility. It sought to oppose the right-wing with simplistic formulae and radical rhetoric. It fought the right-wing on slippery and wrong grounds. It chose to fight not on questions of ideology but on methods of struggle and on tactics. For example, its most serious charge against the Congress right-wing was that it wanted to compromise with imperialism, that it was frightened of mass struggle, that its anti-imperialism was not wholehearted because of bourgeois influence over it. The Left also failed to make a deep study of Indian reality. With the exception of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Left saw the dominant Congress leadership as bourgeois its policy of negotiations as working towards a compromise with imperialism any resort to constitutional work as a step towards the 'abandonment of the struggle for independence'. It took recourse to a simplistic model of analysing Indian social classes and their political behaviour. It saw all efforts to guide the national movement in a disciplined manner as imposing restrictions on the movement. It constantly counterposed armed struggle to non-violence as a superior form and method of struggle, rather than concentrating on the nature of mass involvement and mobilization and ideology. It was convinced that the masses were ever ready for struggles in any form if only the leaders were willing to initiate them. It constantly overestimated its support among the people. Above all, the Left failed to grasp the Gandhian strategy of struggle. A major weakness of the Left was the failure of the different Left parties, groups and individuals to work unitedly except for short periods. All efforts at forging a united front of left-wing elements ended in frustration. Their doctrinal disputes and differences were too many and too passionately held and the temperamental differences among the leaders overpowering.

Nehru and Bose could not work together for long and bickered publicly in 1939. Nehru and the Socialists could not coordinate their politics. Bose and Socialists drifted apart after 1939. CSP and the Communists made herculean efforts to work together from 1935 to 1940. The CSP opened its doors to Communists and Royists in 1935 so that the illegal Communist Party could have legal avenues for political work. But the Socialists and Communists soon drifted apart and became sworn enemies. The inevitable result was a long-term schism between the Socialists who suffered from an anti-Communist phobia and Communists who saw every Socialist leader as a potential bourgeois or (after 1947) American agent.

12.5. Achievements

The Left did succeed in making a basic impact on Indian society and politics. The organization of workers and peasants, discussed elsewhere, was one of its greatest achievements. Equally important was its impact on the Congress.

Organizationally, the Left was able to command influence over nearly one-third of the votes in the All-India Congress Committee on important issues. Nehru and Bose were elected Congress presidents from 1936 to 1939. Nehru was able to nominate three prominent Socialists, Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan and Achyut Patwardhan, to his Working Committee. In 1939, Subhas Bose, as a candidate of the Left, was able to defeat Pattabhi Sitaramayya in the presidential election by a majority of 1580 to 1377. Politically and ideologically, the Congress as a whole was given a strong Left orientation. As Nehru put it, Indian nationalism had been powerfully pushed 'towards vital social changes, and today it hovers, somewhat undecided, on the brink of a new social ideology.' The Congress, including its right-wing, accepted that the poverty and misery of the Indian people was the result not only of colonial domination but also of the internal socio-economic structure of Indian society which had, therefore, to be drastically transformed.

The impact of the Left on the national movement was reflected in the resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy passed by the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931, the resolutions on economic policy passed at the Faizpur session in 1936, the Election Manifesto of the Congress in 1936, the setting up of a National Planning Committee in 1938, and the increasing shift of Gandhiji towards radical positions on economic and class issues. The foundation of the All-India Students' Federation and the Progressive Writers' Association and the convening of the first All-India States' People's Conference in 1936 were some of the other major achievements of the Left. The Left was also very active in the All-India Women's Conference. Above all, two major parties of the Left, the Communist Party and the Congress Socialist Party, had been formed, and were being built up.

13. All parties Conference and Nehru Report

As an answer to Lord Birkenhead's challenge, an All Parties Conference met in February 1928 and appointed a subcommittee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru to draft a constitution. This was the first major attempt by the Indians to draft a constitutional framework for the country. The committee included Tej Bahadur Sapru, Subhash Bose, M.S. Aney, Mangal Singh, Ali Imam, Shuab Qureshi and G.R. Pradhan as its members. The report was finalised by August 1928.

The recommendations of the Nehru Committee were unanimous except in one respect—while the majority favoured the “dominion status” as the basis of the Constitution, a section of it wanted “complete independence” as the basis, with the majority section giving the latter section liberty of action.

13.1. Main Recommendations

The Nehru Report confined itself to British India, as it envisaged the future link-up of British India with the princely states on a federal basis. For the dominion it recommended:

1. Dominion status on lines of self-governing dominions as the form of government desired by Indians (much to the chagrin of younger, militant section—Nehru being prominent among them).
2. Rejection of separate electorates which had been the basis of constitutional reforms so far; instead, a demand for joint electorates with reservation of seats for Muslims at the centre and in provinces where they were in minority (and not in those where Muslims were in majority, such as Punjab and Bengal) in proportion to the Muslim population there with right to contest additional seats.
3. Linguistic provinces.
4. Nineteen fundamental rights including equal rights for women, right to form unions, and universal adult suffrage.
5. Responsible government at the centre and in provinces.
 - a. The Indian Parliament at the centre to consist of a 500- member House of Representatives elected on the basis of adult suffrage, a 200-member Senate to be elected by provincial councils; the House of Representatives to have a tenure of 5 years and the Senate, one of 7 years; the central government to be headed by a governor-general, appointed by the British Government but paid out of Indian revenues, who would act on the advice of the central executive council responsible to the Parliament.
 - b. Provincial councils to have 5 year tenure, headed by a governor acting on the advice of the provincial executive council.
6. Full protection to cultural and religious interests of Muslims.
7. Complete dissociation of state from religion.

13.2. The Muslim and Hindu Communal Responses

Though the process of drafting a constitutional framework was begun enthusiastically and unitedly by political leaders, communal differences crept in and the Nehru Report got involved in controversies over the issue of communal representation.

Earlier, in December 1927, a large number of Muslim leaders had met at Delhi at the Muslim League session and evolved four proposals for Muslim demands to be incorporated in the draft constitution. These proposals, which were accepted by the Madras session of the Congress (December 1927), came to be known as the 'Delhi Proposals'. These were:

1. Joint electorates in place of separate electorates with reserved seats for Muslims;
2. One-third representation to Muslims in Central Legislative Assembly;
3. Representation to Muslims in Punjab and Bengal in proportion to their population;
4. Formation of three new Muslim majority provinces— Sindh, Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province.

However, the Hindu Mahasabha was vehemently opposed to the proposals for creating new Muslim-majority provinces and reservation of seats for Muslims majorities in Punjab and Bengal (which would ensure Muslim control over legislatures in both). It also demanded a strictly unitary structure.

This attitude of the Hindu Mahasabha complicated matters. In the course of the deliberations of the All Parties Conference, the Muslim League dissociated itself and stuck to its demand for reservation of seats for Muslims, especially in the Central Legislature and in Muslim majority provinces.

Thus, Motilal Nehru and other leaders drafting the report found themselves in a dilemma: if the demands of the Muslim communal opinion were accepted, the Hindu communalists would withdraw their support, if the latter were satisfied, the Muslim leaders would get estranged. The concessions made in the Nehru Report to Hindu communalists included the following:

1. Joint electorates proposed everywhere but reservation for Muslims only where in minority;
2. Sindh to be detached from Bombay only after dominion status was granted and subject to weightage to Hindu minority in Sindh;
3. Political structure proposed was broadly unitary, as residual powers rested with the Centre.

13.3. Amendments Proposed by Jinnah

At the All Parties Conference held at Calcutta in December 1928 to consider the Nehru Report, Jinnah, on behalf of the Muslim League, proposed three amendments to the report:

1. One-third representation to Muslims in the Central Legislature
2. Reservation to Muslims in Bengal and Punjab legislatures proportionate to their population, till adult suffrage was established
3. Residual powers to provinces.

These demands not being accommodated, Jinnah went back to the Shafi faction of the Muslim League and in March 1929 gave fourteen points which were to become the basis of all future propaganda of the Muslim League.

13.4. Jinnah's Fourteen Demands

1. Federal Constitution with residual powers to provinces.
2. Provincial autonomy.

3. No constitutional amendment by the centre without the concurrence of the states constituting the Indian federation.
4. All legislatures and elected bodies to have adequate representation of Muslims in every province without reducing a majority of Muslims in a province to a minority or equality.
5. Adequate representation to Muslims in the services and in self-governing bodies.
6. One-third Muslim representation in the Central Legislature.
7. In any cabinet at the centre or in the provinces, one-third to be Muslims.
8. Separate electorates.
9. No bill or resolution in any legislature to be passed if three-fourths of a minority community considers such a bill or resolution to be against their interests.
10. Any territorial redistribution not to affect the Muslim majority in Punjab, Bengal and NWFP.
11. Separation of Sindh from Bombay.
12. Constitutional reforms in the NWFP and Baluchistan.
13. Full religious freedom to all communities.
14. Protection of Muslim rights in religion, culture, education, and language.

Not only were the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikh communalists were unhappy about the Nehru Report, but the younger section of the Congress led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose was also angered.

The younger section regarded the idea of dominion status in the report as a step backward and the developments at the All Parties Conference strengthened their criticism of the dominion status idea. Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose rejected the Congress' modified goal and jointly set up the Independence for India League.

14. Run-up to Civil Disobedience Movement, Dandi March, Salt Satyagraha

14.1. Calcutta Session of Congress 1928

When the Nehru Report came before the annual session of the Congress in Calcutta in December 1928, the left lashed it out on the fact that it did not want the complete Independence and wanted only a dominion status.

Meanwhile in April 1928, the "Independence of India League" was formed with Jawahar Lal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose as Secretaries and S. Srinivasa Iyengar as President. The Congress session at Calcutta marked an almost split among the leaders who wanted dominion and leaders who wanted complete Independence. Ultimately it was resolved that if the British parliament accepts the Nehru report by 31 December 1929, Congress would adopt the report as it is. If the report is not accepted by the British parliament, Congress would insist in Complete Independence and would organize a nonviolent 'non-cooperation' movement. The one year deadline passed and no positive reply came from the Government. This was followed by Lahore Session of Congress which was presided by Jawahar Lal Nehru.

14.2. Political Activity During 1929

Gandhi travelled incessantly during 1929 preparing people for direct political action- telling the youth to prepare for the fiery ordeal, helping to organize constructive work in villages and redressing specific grievances (on lines of Bardoli agitation of 1928).

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) organized a Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee to propagate an aggressive programme of foreign cloth boycott and public burning of foreign cloth. Gandhi initiated the campaign in March 1929 in Calcutta and was arrested. This was followed by bonfires of foreign clothes all over country.

Other developments which kept the political temperature high during 1929 included the Meerut Conspiracy Case (March), bomb explosion in central legislative assembly by Bhagat Singh and B K Dutt (April) and the coming to power of the labour government led by Ramsay MacDonald in England in May.

14.3. Irwin's Statement (October 31, 1929)

"It is implicit in the 1917 declaration (Montagu's statement) that the natural issue of India's progress, as contemplated there, is the attainment of dominion status." He also promised a Round Table Conference when the Simon Commission submitted its report.

14.4. Delhi Manifesto

On November 2nd 1929 conference of prominent national leaders issued a "Delhi Manifesto" which demanded

1. That the purpose of the round table conference should be to formulate a scheme for implementation of the dominion status and the basic principle of dominion status should be immediately accepted.
2. That the congress should have majority representation at the conference.
3. Amnesty and a general policy of conciliation.

Viceroy Irwin rejected these demands on Dec 23rd 1929. The stage of confrontation was to begin now.

14.5. Lahore Congress and Purna Swaraj

Jawahrlal Nehru, who had done more than anyone else to popularize the concept of Purna swaraj, was nominated the President for the Lahore session of Congress mainly due to Gandhi's backing. Nehru was chosen.

- Because of oppositeness of the occasion (congress' acceptance of complete independence as its goal) and
- To acknowledge the upsurge of the youth that has made the anti-Simon campaign a huge success.

Nehru declared in his presidential address, "we have now an open conspiracy to free this country from foreign rule and you, comrades, and all our countrymen and country women are invited to join it." Further explaining that liberation did not mean only throwing off the foreign yoke, he said: "I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican, and am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern king of industry, who have greater power of the lives and fortune of men than even the kings of old, and whose methods are as predatory as those of the old feudal aristocracy." Spelling out the methods of struggle, he said, "Any great movement for liberation today must necessarily be a mass movement, and mass movement must essentially be peaceful, except in times of organized revolt..."

The following major decision were taken at the Lahore session-

1. The RTC to be boycotted;
2. Complete independence declared as the aim of the congress;
3. CWC authorized to launch a programme of civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes and all members of legislatures asked to resign their seats;
4. January 26, 1930 fixed as the first Independence Day to be celebrated everywhere.

December 31, 1929 at midnight on the banks of river Ravi, the newly adopted tricolor flag of freedom was hoisted amidst slogans of Inquilab Zindabad. January 26, 1930 public meetings were organized all over the country in villages and towns and the independence pledge was

read out in local languages and the national flag was hoisted. This pledge made the following points:

- It is the inalienable right of Indians to have freedom.
- The British government in India has not only deprived of freedom and exploited us, but has also ruined us economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. India must therefore sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or 'complete independence'.
- We are being economically ruined by high revenue, destruction of village industries with no substitution made, while customs, currency and exchange rates are manipulated to our disadvantage.
- No real political powers are given - rights of free association are denied to us and all administrative talent in us is killed.
- Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings.
- Spiritually, compulsory disarmament has made us unmanly.
- We hold it a crime against man and God to submit any longer to British rule.
- We will prepare for complete independence by withdrawing, as far as possible all voluntary association from the British government and will prepare for civil disobedience through non-payment of taxes. By this an end of this inhuman rule is assured.
- We will carry out the congress instructions for purpose of establishing Purna Swaraj.

15. Civil Disobedience Movement

To carry forward the mandate of Lahore congress Gandhiji placed Eleven Point Ultimatum to Irwin (31 Jan 1930) for administrative reforms and stated that if Lord Irwin accepted them there would be no need for agitation.

15.1. 11-Point Ultimatum

15.1.1. Issue of General Interest

1. Reduce expenditure on Army & civil services by 50 percent.
2. Introduce total prohibition.
3. Carry out reforms in Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D)
4. Change Arms Act allowing popular control of issue of licenses
5. Release political prisoners
6. Accept Postal Reservation Bill

15.1.2. Specific Bourgeois Demands

7. Reduce rupee-sterling exchange ratio
8. Introduce textile protection
9. Reserve coastal shipping for Indians.

15.1.3. Specific Peasant Demands

10. Reduce land revenue
11. Abolish salt tax

With no positive response forthcoming from the government on these demands, the Congress Working Committee invested Gandhiji with full powers to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) at a time and place of his choice. By February-end, Gandhi had decided to make salt the central formula for the CDM.

Salt was chosen as the central formula because Gandhiji believed "There is no other article like salt, outside water, by taxing which the Government can reach the starving millions, the sick, the maimed and the utterly helpless...it is the most inhuman poll tax the ingenuity of man can devise."

Apart from this salt in a flash linked the ideal of Swaraj with a most concrete and universal grievances of rural poor without any socially divisive implications like no-rent campaign. Salt afforded a paltry but psychologically important income like khadi for the poor through self-help. Salt offered to the urban adherents the opportunity of a symbolic identification with mass suffering.

15.2. Dandi March

Gandhiji informed the Viceroy about his plan of action on 2nd march 1930 that he along with a band of seventy eight members of Sabarmati Ashram was to march from his headquarters in Ahmedabad through the villages of Gujarat for 385 kms. On reaching the coast at Dandi, the salt law was to be violated by collecting salt from the beach.

Even before the proposed march began, thousands thronged to the ashram. Gandhi gave the following directions for future actions.

1. Wherever possible civil disobedience of the salt law should be started.
2. Foreign liquor and cloth shops can be picketed.
3. We can refuse to pay taxes if we have the requisite strength.
4. Lawyers can give up practices.
5. Public can boycott law courts by referring from litigation.
6. Government servant can resign from their posts.
7. All these should be subject to one condition- truth and non-violence as means to attain Swaraj should be faithfully adhered to.
8. Local leaders should be obeyed after his arrest.

It began on 12 March 1930; Gandhiji with some of his followers left the Sabarmati Ashram at Ahmedabad and made their way towards Dandi, a village on the west coast of India. After travelling for twenty-five days and covering a distance of three hundred and eighty-five kms, the group reached Dandi on 6 April 1930. Here, Gandhiji protested against the Salt Law (salt was a monopoly of the government and no one was allowed to make salt) by making salt himself and throwing up a challenge to the British government. The Dandi March signified the start of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

15.3. Spread of Civil Disobedience

The movement spread and salt laws were challenged in other parts of the country. Salt became the symbol of people's defiance of the government. In Tamil Nadu, C Rajagopalchari led a similar march from Trichinopoly to Vedaranyam. In Gujarat, Sarojini Naidu protested in front of the salt depots. In Malabar, K. Kellapan led a march from Calicut to Poyannur. In Assam, satyagrahis walked from Sylhet to Noakhali (Bengal) to make salt. In Andhra, a number of sibirams (camps) came up in different districts as headquarters of salt satyagraha. Lakhs of people including a large number of women participated actively in these protests.

The Civil Disobedience Movement carried forward the unfinished work of the Non-Cooperation Movement. Practically the whole country became involved in it. Hartals put life at a standstill. There were large-scale boycotts of schools, colleges, and offices. Foreign goods were burnt in bonfires. People stopped paying taxes. In the North-West Frontier Province, the movement was led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as 'Frontier Gandhi'. For a few days, British control over Peshawar and Sholapur ended. People faced the batons and bullets of the police with supreme courage. No one retaliated or said anything to the police. As reports and photographs of this extraordinary protest began to appear in newspapers across the world, there was a growing tide of support for India's freedom struggle. Though movement was started with the Dandi March by breaking salt law but as Salt production had geographical limitations so in other parts of the country the movement included picketing of liquor shops

and auctions, no revenue campaign in Bardoli, forest Satyagrahas, large scale resignation of rural officials, refusal of chaukidari tax, Prabhat Pheris - singing of national songs, vanar sena, manjari senas, magic lantern shows and Patrikas - distribution of illegal pamphlets (secretly).

Nehru's arrest in April 1930 for defiance of the salt-law evoked huge demonstrations in Madras, Calcutta and Karachi. Gandhi's arrest came on May 4, 1930 when he had announced that he would lead a raid on Dharsana salt works on the west coast. Gandhi's arrest was followed by massive protests in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Sholapur, where the response was fiercest. After Gandhi's arrest, the CWC sanctioned -

1. Non-payment of revenue in Ryotwari areas
2. No-chowkidara tax campaign in zamindari areas
3. Violation of forest laws in the central provinces.

15.4. Other forms of Upsurges

Different areas in the country showed different forms of protests -

In Chittagong, Surya Sen's Chittagong Revolt Group carried out a raid on two armories and declared the establishment of a provisional government. In Peshawar, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan's educational and social reform works among the pathans had politicized them. Gaffar Khan also called Badshah Khan and Frontier Gandhi, had started the first Pushto political monthly 'Pukhtoon' and had organized a volunteer brigade "Khudai Khidmatgars" popularly known as the 'Red shirts', who were pledged to the freedom struggle and non-violence.

On April 23, 1930, the arrest of congress leaders in the NWFP led to mass demonstration in Peshawar which was virtually in the hands of the crowds for more than a week till order was restored on May 4. This was followed by a reign of terror and martial law. It was here that a section of Garhwal Rifles soldiers refused to fire on an unarmed crowd. This upsurge in a province with 92 percent Muslim population left the British Government nervous.

Fiercest response to Gandhi's arrest was in Sholapur, an industrial town of southern Maharashtra. Textile workers went on strike from May 7 and along with other residents burnt liquor shops and other symbols of government authority such as railways stations, police stations, municipal buildings, law court, etc. The activist established a virtual parallel government which could only be dislodged with martial law after May 16.

In Dharsana on May 21, 1930, Sarojini Naidu, Imam Sahib and Manilal (Gandhi's son) took up the unfinished task of leading a raid on Dharsana Salt Works. The unarmed and peaceful crowd was met with a brutal lathicharge which left 2 dead and 320 injured. This new form of salt satyagraha was eagerly adopted by people in Wadala (Bombay), Karnataka (Sanikatta Salt Works), Andhra, Midnapore, Balasore, Puri and Cuttack.

In Bihar a campaign was organized for refusal to pay chowkidara tax and a call was given for resignation of chowkidars and influential members of chowkidars. This campaign was particularly successful in Monghyr, Saran and Bhagalpur. The government retaliated with beatings, torture and confiscation of property. In Bengal anti-chowkidara tax and anti-union-board tax campaign here was met with repression and confiscation of property.

In Gujarat, the impact was felt in Anand, Borsad and Nadiad areas in Kheda district, Bardoli in Surat district and Jambusar in Bharuch district. A determined no-tax movement was organized here which included refusal to pay land revenue. Villagers crossed the border into neighboring princely states (such as Baroda) with their families and belongings and camped in the open for months to evade police repression. The police retaliated by destroying their property and confiscating their land.

In Maharashtra, Karnataka, Central provinces there was defiance of forest laws such as grazing and timber restrictions and public sale of illegally acquired forest produce. A powerful agitation was organized in Assam against the infamous 'Cunningham circular' which forced parents, guardians and students to furnish, assurance of good behavior. In United Province a no-revenue campaign was organized; a call was given to zamindars to refuse to pay revenue to the Government. Under a no-rent campaign, a call was given to tenants against zamindars. Since most of the zamindars were loyalists, the campaign became virtually a no-rent campaign. The activity picked up speed in October 1930, especially in Agra and Rai Bareilly.

Manipur and Nagaland took part a brave part on the movement. At the young age of thirteen, Gaidiniliu of Nagaland raised the banner of revolt against foreign rule. She was captured in 1932 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

15.5. Impact of Agitation

1. Imports of foreign cloth and other items fell.
2. Government income from liquor, excise and land revenue fell.
3. Elections to legislative Assembly were largely boycotted.

15.6. Extent of Mass Participation

Several sections of the population participated in the movements.

15.6.1. Women

Gandhi had specially asked women to play a leading part in the movement. Soon, they became a familiar sight, picketing outside liquor shops, opium dens and shops selling foreign cloth. For Indian women, the movement was the most liberating experience and can truly be said to have marked their entry into the public sphere.

15.6.2. Students

Along with women, students and youth played the most prominent part in boycott of foreign cloth and liquor.

15.6.3. Muslim

The Muslim participation was nowhere near the 1920-22 level because of appeals by Muslim leaders to Muslim masses to stay away from the movement and because of active government encouragement to communal dimension. Still, some areas such as the NWFP saw overwhelming participation. Middle class Muslim Participation was quite significant in Senhatta, Tripura, Gaibandha, Bagura and Noakhali. In Dacca, Muslim leaders, shopkeepers, lower class people and upper class women were active. The Muslim weaving community in Bihar, Delhi and Lucknow were also effectively mobilized.

15.6.4. Merchants and Petty Traders

They were very enthusiastic. Traders' associations and commercial bodies were active in implementing the boycott, especially in Tamil Nadu and Punjab.

15.6.5. Tribal

Tribals were active participants in Central Provinces, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

15.6.6. Workers

The workers participated in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Sholapur, etc.

15.6.7. Peasants

Peasants were active in UP, Bihar and Gujarat.

15.7. Government Response- Efforts for the Truce

The government's attitude throughout 1930 was ambivalent; it was puzzled and perplexed between the use of force or not to use it- if force was applied, the Congress cried 'repression' and if little was done they cried 'victory' and either way the hegemony of government was eroded. Even Gandhi's arrest came after much vacillation. But once the repression began, the ordinance banning civil liberties were freely used, including gagging of the press. Provincial governments were given freedom to ban civil disobedience organizations. The CWC was, however, not declared illegal till June. Lathicharge and firing on unarmed crowds left several killed and wounded, while 90000 satyagrahis including Gandhiji and other Congress leaders were imprisoned.

The government's repression and publication of Simon Commission Report, which contained no mention of dominion status and which was in other ways also a regressive document, further upset even moderate political opinion.

In July 1930 the viceroy suggested a round table conference (RTC) and reiterated the goal of dominion status. He also accepted the suggestion that Tej Bahadur Sapru and M.R. Jayakar be allowed to explore the possibility of peace between the congress and the government. In August 1930 Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru were taken to Yeravada Jail to meet Gandhi and discuss the possibility of a settlement. The Nehrus and Gandhi unequivocally reiterated the demands of:

1. Right of succession from Britain;
2. Complete national government with control over defence and finance; and
3. An independent tribunal to settle Britain's financial claim;

Talk broke down at this point.

16. First Round Table Conference

The Round Table Conference was opened officially by Lord Irwin on November 12, 1930 at London and chaired by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald. The three British political parties were represented by sixteen delegates. There were fifty-seven political leaders from British India and sixteen delegates from the princely states. In total 89 delegates from India attended the Conference. However, the Indian National Congress, along with Indian business leaders, kept away from the conference. Many of them were in jail for their participation in Civil Disobedience Movement.

16.1. Participants

Main British Representatives:

Labor: Ramsay Macdonald, Lord Sankey, Wedgwood Benn, Arthur Henderson, J. H. Thomas.

Conservative: Earl Peel, Marquess of Zetland, Samuel Hoare, Oliver Stanley

Liberal: Marquess of Reading, Marquess of Lothian, Robert Hamilton, Isaac Foot

Indian States' Representatives: Maharaja of Alwar, Maharaja of Baroda, Nawab of Bhopal, Maharaja of Bikaner, Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Maharaja of Nawanagar, Maharaja of Patiala, Maharaja of Rewa, Chief Sahib of Sangli, Sir Prabhashankar Pattani (Bhavnagar), Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Khan (Gwalior)

British-Indian Representatives:

Muslims: Aga Khan III (leader of British-Indian delegation), Maulana Mohammad Ali, Muhammad Shafi, **Muhammad Ali Jinnah**, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, A. K. Fazlul Huq,

Hafiz Hidayat Hussain, Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, Raja Sher Muhammad Khan of Domeli, A. H. Ghuznavi

Hindus: B. S. Moonje, M. R. Jayakar, Diwan Bahadur Raja Narendra Nath

Liberals: J. N. Basu, Tej Bahadur Sapru, C. Y. Chintamani, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad

Justice Party: Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, Bhaskarrao Vithojirao Jadhav, Sir A. P. Patro

Depressed Classes: B. R. Ambedkar, Rettamalai Srinivasan

Sikhs: Sardar Ujjal Singh, Sardar Sampuran Singh

Parsis: Phiroze Sethna, Cowasji Jehangir, Homi Mody

Indian Christians: A. T. Pannirselvam

Women: Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz, Radhabai Subbarayan

Landlords: Maharaja Kameshwar Singh of Darbhanga (Bengal), Muhammad Ahmad Said Khan Chhatari (United Provinces), Raja of Parlekhamundi (Orissa), Provash Chandra Mitter

Labour: N. M. Joshi, B. Shiva Rao

Sindh: Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah

Other Provinces: Chandradhar Barua (Assam), Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum (NWFP), S. B. Tambe (Central Provinces)

Government of India: Narendra Nath Law, Bhupendra Nath Mitra, C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, M. Ramachandra Rao.

The idea of an All-India Federation was moved to the centre of discussion. All the groups attending the conference supported this concept. **The responsibility of the executive to the legislature was discussed, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar demanded a separate electorate for the so-called Untouchables.**

Most of the congress leaders were absent because they were either in Jails or followed the decision of Congress to boycott the conference. So, without congress, the entire exercise turned out to be fruitless. It was difficult for progress to be made in the absence of Congress (Indian National Congress) but some advances were made. **The princes declared they would join future federation of India as long as their rights were recognized and the British agreed that representative government should be introduced on provincial level.**

After the failure of the First Round Conference, many leaders mainly the pro-British members of Indian Liberal Party such as Tej Bahadur Sapru, C. Y. Chintamani and Srinivasa Sastri appealed Gandhi to talk with the Viceroy. The talks between Gandhi and Irwin were arranged. Many congress leaders were released to make a favorable environment.

17. Gandhi Irwin Pact

The First Round Table Conference could not get any fruitful result. Main reason was the absence of Congress. The Government now started to convince Congress to participate in the Second Round Table Conference in 1931. Therefore, the Government released all Congress leaders from prison on 25th January, 1931. Finally, Gandhiji was convinced to negotiate with the Viceroy Lord Irwin. So Gandhiji and Lord Irwin met on 19th February, 1931 and after discussion for fifteen days, they signed an agreement on 5th March, 1931 known as "Gandhi-Irwin Pact."

This pact included the following matters:

- a) All political prisoners not convicted for violence, to be immediately released.
- b) Return of confiscated lands not yet sold to Third Parties by the Government and remission of all fines not yet collected.
- c) Confederation of right to make salt for consumption to villages along the Sea coast.
- d) Right to peaceful and non-aggressive picketing.
- e) Remission of all fines not yet collected.
- f) Withdrawal of emergency ordinances.

All these demands of Congress were accepted by the Government. But two demands were refused to accept:

- i. A demand for a public inquiry into police excesses.
- ii. Commutation of death sentences of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru.

On the other hand, Congress on its part agreed to:

- i. Participate in the Second Round Table Conference,
- ii. Discontinue the Civil Disobedience Movement.

This 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact, also known as the 'Delhi Pact', was endorsed by the Congress in its Karachi Session on 29th March, 1931. It also reiterated the goal of 'Poorna Swaraj'.

18. Evaluation of CDM

Gandhi's decision to suspend the civil disobedience movement as agreed under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was not a retreat, because:

1. Mass movement is necessarily short-lived.
2. Capacity of masses to make sacrifices, unlike that of the activist, is limited; and
3. There were signs of exhaustion after September 1930, especially among shopkeepers and merchants, who had participated so enthusiastically.

No doubt, youth were disappointed - they had participated enthusiastically and wanted the world to end with a bang and not with a whimper. Peasants of Gujarat were disappointed because their lands were not restored immediately. But vast masses of people were jubilant that the government had to regard their movement as significant and treat their leaders as equal, and sign a pact with him. The political prisoners when released from jails were given a hero's welcome.

18.1. Compared to Non-Cooperation Movement

The stated objective this time was complete independence and not just remedying two specific wrongs and a vaguely-worded Swaraj. Moreover the methods involved violation of law from the very beginning and not just non-cooperation with foreign rule. There was a decline in forms of protests involving the intelligentsia, such as lawyers giving up practice, students giving up school to join national schools and colleges. Muslim participation was nowhere near the Non-cooperation Movement level. No major labor upsurge coincided with the movement. But massive participation of peasants and business groups compensated for decline of other features. The number of those imprisoned was about three times more this time. At overall level Congress was organizationally stronger as well.

19. Karachi Congress Session

In March 1931, a special session of the Congress was held at Karachi to endorse the Gandhi-Irwin or Delhi Pact. Six days before the session (which was held on March 29) Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru had been executed. Throughout Gandhi's route to Karachi, he was greeted with

black flag demonstrations by the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, in protest against his failure to secure commutation of the death sentence for Bhagat and his comrades.

Congress Resolutions at Karachi:

1. While disapproving of and dissociating itself from political violence, the Congress admired the “bravery” and “sacrifice” of the three martyrs.
2. The Delhi Pact was endorsed.
3. The goal of Purna Swaraj was reiterated.
4. Two resolutions were adopted—one on Fundamental Rights and the other on National Economic Programme— which made the session particularly memorable.

The resolution on Fundamental Rights guaranteed:

1. Free speech and free press
2. Right to form associations
3. Right to assemble
4. Universal adult franchise
5. Equal legal rights irrespective of caste, creed and sex
6. Neutrality of state in religious matters
7. Free and compulsory primary education
8. Protection to culture, language, script of minorities and linguistic groups

The resolution on National Economic Programme included:

1. Substantial reduction in rent and revenue
2. Exemption from rent for uneconomic holdings
3. Relief from agricultural indebtedness
4. Control of usury
5. Better conditions of work including a living wage, limited hours of work and protection of women workers
6. Right to workers and peasants to form unions
7. State ownership and control of key industries, mines and means of transport

This was the first time the Congress spelt out what Swaraj would mean for the masses—“in order to end exploitation of masses, political freedom must include economic freedom of starving millions.” The Karachi Resolution was to remain, in essence, the basic political and economic programme of the Congress in later years.

20. Second RTC and Second Civil Disobedience Movement

The second RTC, while the congress had agreed under the Delhi pact, was held in London in December 1931. Not much was expected from the conference because of the following reason -

1. The right wing in Britain led by Churchill strongly objected by British government negotiating with the congress on an equal basis. They, instead, demanded a strong government in India. The labour prime minister Ramsay MacDonald headed a conservative dominated cabinet with a weak and reactionary secretary of state, Samuel Hoare.
2. An overwhelming majority of RTC delegates were conservative, loyalist, reactionary and communal, men who had been used by the colonial government to assert that the congress did not represent all Indians vis-à-vis imperialism, and to neutralize Gandhi and his efforts.
3. The session soon got deadlocked on the question of the minorities. Separate electorates were being demanded by the Muslims, depressed classes, Christians and Anglo-Indian. All these came together in a “minorities pact”. Gandhi fought desperately against this concerted move to make all constitutional progress conditional on the solving of this issue.

4. Princes were also not as enthusiastic about a federation, especially after the possibility of the formation of a congress government at the Centre had receded after the suspension of Civil Disobedience Movement.

The session ended with Mc Donald's announcement of:

- two Muslim majority provinces-NWFP and Sindh;
- the setting up of Indian consultative committee;
- three expert committees-finance, franchise and states; and
- the prospect of a unilateral British communal award if Indians failed to agree

The government failed to concede the basic Indian demand of freedom. Gandhi returned to India on December 28, 1931. On December 29, the CWC decided to resume the Civil Disobedience Movement.

21. During Truce Period (March- December 1931)

Some activity during this period kept alive the spirit of defiance. In the united provinces, the congress had been leading a movement for rent reduction and against summary evictions. In the NWFP, severe repression had been unleashed against the Khudai Khidmatgars and the peasant led by them who were agitating against the brutal methods of tax collection by the government. In Bengal, draconian ordinances and mass detentions had been used in the name of fighting terrorism. In September 1931, there was a firing incident on political prisoners in Hijli jail.

21.1. Changed Government Attitude

The higher British officials had drawn their own lessons from the Delhi pact which had raised the political prestige of the congress and the political morale of the people and had undermined British prestige. They were now determined to reverse this trend.

There were three main consideration of British policy:

1. Gandhi would not be permitted to build up the tempo for a mass movement again.
2. Goodwill of the congress was not required, but the confidence of those who supported the British against the congress-government functionaries, loyalty, and etc.- was very essential.
3. The national movement would not be allowed to consolidate itself in rural areas.

After the CWC had decided to resume the civil disobedience movement, the new viceroy Willingdon refused a meeting with Gandhi on December 31. On January 4, 1932, Gandhi was arrested.

21.2. Government Action

A series of repressive ordinances were issued which ushered in virtual martial law, though under civilian control, or a 'civil martial law'. Congress organizations at all levels were banned; arrests were confiscated; Gandhi ashrams were occupied. Repression was particularly harsh on women. Press was gagged and nationalist literature banned.

21.3. Popular Response

People responded with anger. Though unprepared, the response was massive. In the first four months alone, about 80000 Satyagrahis, mostly urban and rural poor, were jailed. Other forms of protest included picketing of shops selling liquor and foreign cloths, illegal gatherings, non-violent hoisting of national flag, non-payment of Chowkidara tax, salt Satyagraha, forest law violations and installations of a secret radio transmitter near Bombay. This phase of the movement could not be sustained for long because

1. Gandhi and other leaders had no time to build up the tempo; and
2. The masses were not prepared.

Finally in April 1934, Gandhi decided to withdraw the civil disobedience movement. Though people had been cowed down by superior force, they had not lost political faith in the congress- they had won freedom in their hearts.

22. Communal Award and Poona Pact

The communal award was announced by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay Mac-Donald, in August 1932. This was yet another expression of British policy of divide and rule. The Muslims, Sikhs, Christians had already been recognized as minorities. The communal award declared the depressed classes also to be minorities and entitled them to separate electorates.

22.1. Congress Stand

Though opposed to separate electorates, the congress was not on favor of changing the communal award without the consent of the minorities. Thus, while strongly disagreeing with the communal award, the congress decided neither to accept it nor to reject it. The effort to separate the depressed classes from the rest of the Hindus by treating them as separate political entities was vehemently opposed by all the nationalists.

22.2. Gandhi's response

Gandhi saw the communal award as an attack in Indian unity and nationalism. He thought it was harmful to both Hinduism and to depressed classes since it provided no answer to the depressed classes were treated as separate classes. Once the depressed classes were treated as a separate political entity, he argued, the question of abolishing untouchability would get undermined, while separate electorate would ensure that the untouchables remained untouchables in perpetuity. He said that what was required was not protection of the so-called interests of the depressed classes but root and branch eradication of untouchability.

Gandhi demanded that the depressed classes be elected through joint and if possible a wider electorate through universal franchise, while expressing no objection to the demand for a larger number of reserved seats. And to press for his demands, he went on an indefinite fast on September 20, 1932. Now leaders of various persuasions, including B. R. Ambedkar, M.C. Rajah and Madan Mohan Malaviya got together to hammer out a compromise contained in the Poona pact.

Poona Pact signed by B R Ambedkar on behalf of the depressed classes in September 1932, the pact abandoned separate electorates for the depressed classes. But the seats reserved for the depressed classes were increased from 71 to 147 in provincial legislatures and 18 per cent of the total in the central legislature. The Poona pact was accepted by the government as an amendment to the communal award.

23. Gandhi's Harijan Campaign

Determined to undo the divisive intentions of the government's divide and rule policy, Gandhi gave up all his other pre-occupations and launched a whirl wide campaign against untouchability- first from jail and after his release in August 1933 from the outsider. While in jail, he had set up the all India anti-untouchability league in September 1932 and had started the weekly Harijan in January 1933. After his release, he shifted to the Satyagraha ashram in Wardha as he vowed in 1930 not to return to Sabarmati ashram unless Swaraj was won.

Starting from Wardha, he conducted a Harijan tour of the country in the period from November 1933 to July 1934, covering 20000km, collecting money for his newly set up Harijan Sevak

Sangh, and propagating removal of untouchability in all its forms. He urged political workers to go to villages and work for social, economic, political and cultural upliftment of Harijans. He undertook two fasts- on May 8 and August 16, 1934- to convince his followers of the seriousness of his effort and the importance of the issue. These fasts created consternation in nationalist ranks throwing many into an emotional crisis.

Throughout his campaign, Gandhi was attacked by orthodox and reactionary elements. These elements disrupted his meeting, held black flag demonstration against him and accused him of attacking Hinduism. They also offered support to the government against the congress and the Civil Disobedience Movement. The government obliged them by defeating the temple entry bill in august 1934. Orthodox Hindu opinion in Bengal was against the acceptance of permanent caste Hindu minority status by the Poona Pact.

24. Third Round Table Conference

The third and last session assembled on November 17, 1932. Only forty-six delegates attended since most of the main political figures of India were not present. **The Labour Party from Britain and the Indian National Congress refused to attend.**

Participants

Indian States' Representatives: Akbar Hydari (Dewan of Hyderabad), Mirza Ismail (Dewan of Mysore), V. T. Krishnamachari (Dewan of Baroda), Wajahat Hussain (Jammu and Kashmir), Sir Sukhdeo Prasad (Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur), J. A. Surve (Kolhapur), Raja Oudh Narain Bisarya (Bhopal), Manubhai Mehta (Bikaner), Nawab Liaqat Hayat Khan (Patiala)

British-Indian Representatives: Aga Khan III, B. R. Ambedkar (Depressed Classes), Ramakrishna Ranga Rao of Bobbili, Sir Hubert Carr (Europeans), Nanak Chand Pandit, A. H. Ghuznavi, Henry Gidney (Anglo-Indians), Hafiz Hidayat Hussain, Muhammad Iqbal, M. R. Jayakar, Cowasji Jehangir, N. M. Joshi (Labour), Narasimha Chintaman Kelkar, Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz (Women), A. P. Patro, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, Sir Shadi Lal, Tara Singh Malhotra, Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan.

From September 1931 until March 1933, under the supervision of the Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, the proposed reforms took the form reflected in the Government of India Act 1935.

25. Government of India Act, 1935

The government of India act was passed by the British parliament in August 1935. The main provisions of the Act were as follows:

It provided for an All India federation comprising of British Indian Provinces, all Chief Commissioner's Provinces and Indian States. The federation's formation was conditional on the fulfillment of two conditions

1. States with allotment of 52 seats in the proposed Council of states should agree to join federation;
2. Aggregate population of states in the above category should be 50 percent of the total population of all Indian states

The proposed Federation never came up because conditions were never fulfilled. The Central Government was carried on up to 1946, as per the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1919.

The Act provided for Dyarchy at the Centre. The British Government, in the person of the Secretary of State for India, through the Governor-General of India – Viceroy of India, would continue to control India's financial obligations, defence, foreign affairs and the British Indian Army and would make the key appointments to the Reserve Bank of India (exchange rates) and Railway Board and the Act stipulated that no finance bill could be placed in the Central Legislature without the consent of the Governor General.

At federal level executive the Governor-general was the pivot of the entire constitutional structure. Subjects were divided into transferred and reserved subjects. The reserved subjects were to be administered by the Governor-General on the advice of executive councilors who were not responsible to central legislature, while transferred subjects were to be administered by Governor-general on the advice of the ministers who were responsible to the federal legislature. The Governor-General could act in his individual judgment in discharging his special responsibilities for the security and tranquility of India.

At federal level legislature it provided for a bicameral legislature. The upper house (Council of States) of the legislature was made to be a permanent body with one-third of the members retiring every three years but the lower house (federal assembly) was to have a term of five years.

- The Upper House of the Federal Legislature, the Council of State, would consist of 260 members: 156 (60%) elected from the British India and 104 (40%) nominated by the rulers of the princely states.
- The Lower House, the Federal Assembly, would consist of 375 members: 250 (67%) elected by the Legislative Assemblies of the British Indian provinces; 125 (33%) nominated by the rulers of the princely states.

Oddly enough, election to council of states was direct and that to federal assembly, indirect. The three lists for the purpose of legislation were to be federal, provincial and concurrent. The system of religion based and class based electorates was further extended. The funding for the British responsibilities and foreign obligations (e.g. loan repayments, pensions), at least 80 percent of the federal expenditures, would be non-votable and be taken off the top before any claims could be considered for (for example) social or economic development programs. The Viceroy, under the supervision of the Secretary of State for India, was provided with overriding and certifying powers that could, theoretically, have allowed him to rule autocratically. He could restore cuts in grants, certify bills rejected by the legislature, issue ordinances and exercise his veto.

At the provincial level, autonomy was sought to be provided by the Act replacing Dyarchy. The provinces would henceforth derive their legal authority directly from the British Crown and were freed from the superintendence, direction of the Secretary of states and governor-general. They were given independent financial powers and could borrow money on their own security. The Governor of the province was to exercise directly on behalf of the crown. The Governor had special powers regarding minorities, rights of civil servants; law and order, British business interests, partially excluded areas, princely states, etc.

Members of provincial legislature were to be directly elected, so were answerable and were removable by the adverse vote in the legislature. Separate electorates based on Communal Award were to be made operational. Franchise was extended and women got the right on the same basis as men. They could legislate on subjects in provincial and concurrent lists. But 40 percent of the budget was still not votable. The governor could refuse assent to a bill, promulgate ordinances and enact governor's Acts. Beside these changes, a federal court was established at the centre and the Reserve Bank of India was established.

25.1. Evaluation of the Act

Numerous safeguards and special responsibilities of the governor-general worked as brakes in proper functioning of the Act. As Jawaharlal Nehru commented: "We are provided with a car, all brakes and no engines."

In provinces, the governor still had extensive powers. The act enfranchised 114 percent of British Indian population. Moreover the extension of the system of communal electorates and representation of various interests promoted separatist tendencies which culminated in Partition of India. As the right of amendment in constitution was reserved with the British parliament this rigid constitution provided no possibility of internal growth.

25.2. British Motives behind the Act

As suppression could only be a short term tactic. In long run the British strategy was to weaken the movement and integrate large segment of the movement into colonial, constitutional and administrative structure. They were of the opinion that reforms would revive political standing of constitutionalist liberals and moderates who had lost public support during Civil Disobedience movement. Repression earlier and reforms now would convince a large section of Congressmen of ineffectiveness of an extra-legal struggle. Once congressmen tasted power, they would be reluctant to go back to politics of sacrifice. Moreover reforms can be used to create dissensions within Congress- right wing to be placated through constitutional concession and radical leftists to be crushed through police measures. Provincial autonomy would create powerful provincial leaders who would gradually become autonomous centers of political power, Congress would thus be provincialized and central leadership would get weakened. They wanted to win Muslim support by conceding most of Jinnah's Fourteen Points; their approach was to convince the Princes to join the Federation by giving the Princes favorable conditions such as:

Each Prince would select his state's representative in the Federal Legislature. There would be no pressure for Princes to democratize their administrations or allow elections for state representatives in the Federal Legislature. The Princes would enjoy heavy in federal legislature that is 40 percent in upper house and 33 percent in lower house.

25.3. Nationalists' Response to GOI Act, 1935

The act was condemned nearly by all sections and unanimously rejected by the Congress. The Congress demanded, instead, convening of a constituent assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise to frame a constitution of Independent India.

26. Provincial Election and Formation of Popular Ministries in Provinces 1937

In early 1937, elections to provincial assemblies were announced and once again debate on the future strategy to be adopted, began. Everyone agreed that the 1935 Act was to be opposed root and branch but it was not clear how it was to be done in a period when a mass movement was not yet possible. There was full agreement that congress should fight these elections on the basis of a detailed political and economic programme, thus deepening the anti-imperialist consciousness of the people. But what to do after elections was not yet clear. If the Congress got majority in a province, was it to agree to form a government?

There were sharp differences over these questions among the nationalists which were manifested in the form of ideological divide along the left and right lines. Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Congress socialists and communists were opposed to office acceptance and thereby in the working of the 1935 Act because they argued that it would negate the rejection

of the Act by nationalists. It would be like assuming the responsibility without power. Also, it would take away the revolutionary character of the movement as constitutional work would sidetrack the main issue of freedom, economic and social justice, and removal of poverty.

As a counter-strategy, the leftist proposed entry into the councils with an aim to create deadlocks, thus making the working of the Act impossible (older Swarajists strategy). And, as a long term strategy, they advocated an increased reliance on workers and peasants, integration of their class organizations into the congress, thus imparting a socialist direction to the Congress and preparing for the resumption of a mass movement.

The proponents of office acceptance argued that they were equally committed the 1935 Act, but work in legislature was to be only a short-term tactic since option of a mass movement was not available at the time, and mass struggle alone was capable of winning independence. Capture or rejection of office was not a matter of socialism but of strategy. They agreed that there was a danger of being sucked in by wrong tendencies, but the answer was to fight these tendencies and not to abandon offices. The administrative field should not be left open to pro-government reactionary forces. Despite limited powers, provincial ministries could be used to promote constructive work.

26.1. Gandhiji's Stand

He opposed offices acceptance in the CWC meetings but by the beginning of 1936, he was willing to give a trial to Congress ministries. In its session at Lucknow in early 1936 and Faizpur in late 1937, the Congress decided to fight elections and postpone the decision on office acceptance to the post-election phase. In February 1937, elections to the provincial assemblies were held. But he did not attend a single election meeting.

26.2. Congress' Performance

The Congress contested on 716 out of 1161 seats. In its manifesto it reaffirmed total rejection of the 1935 Act, and promised release of prisoners, removal of disabilities on the basis of gender and caste, radical transformation of the agrarian system, substantial reduction of rent and revenue, scaling down of rural debts, cheap credit and right to form trade union and to strike.

Congress got a majority in all provinces, except in Bengal, Assam, Punjab, Sindh and NWFP, and emerged as the largest party in Bengal, Assam and NWFP. Because of this performance, the prestige of the congress rose and Nehru reconciled to the dominant strategy of struggle truce struggle. Congress ministries were formed in Bombay, Madras, Central Province, Orissa, United Province, and Bihar and later in NWFP and Assam also. Gandhi advised Congressmen to hold these offices lightly and not tightly. The offices were to be seen as 'crown of thorns' which had been accepted to see if they quickened the pace toward the nationalist goal. Gandhi advised that these offices should be used in a way not expected or intended by the British.

There was great enthusiasm among the people; suppressed mass energy had got released. There was an increase in the prestige of the Congress as it had showed that it could not only lead people but could also use state power for their benefit. But the Congress ministries had some basic limitations: they could not, through their administration, change the basic imperialist character of the system and could not introduce a radical era.

26.2.1. Work under Congress ministries

The congress ministries did much to ease curbs on civil liberties. All emergency powers acquired by the provincial governments during 1932, through Public Safety Acts and the like, were repealed; bans on illegal political organizations such as the Hindustan Seva Dal and Youth Leagues and on political books and journals were lifted. Though the ban on the Communist

Party remained, since it was imposed by the Central Government and could only be lifted on its orders, the Communists could in effect now function freely and openly in the Congress provinces. All restrictions on the press were removed. Securities taken from newspapers and presses were refunded and pending prosecutions were withdrawn. The blacklisting of newspapers for purposes of government advertising was given up. Confiscated arms were returned and forfeited arms licenses were restored.

Of all the British functionaries, the ones the people were most afraid of, as also hated, were the police. On the advice of Gandhiji, in the Congress provinces, police powers were curbed and the reporting of public speeches and the shadowing of political workers by CID (Central Investigation Department) agents stopped.

One of the first acts of the Congress Government was to release thousands of political prisoners and detainees and to cancel internment and deportation orders on political workers. Many of the revolutionaries involved in the Kakori and other conspiracy cases were released. But problems remained in U.P. and Bihar where several revolutionaries convicted of crimes involving violence remained in jails. Most of these prisoners had earlier been sent to Kala Pani (Cellular Jail in Andamans) from where they had been transferred to their respective provinces after they had gone on a prolonged hunger strike during July 1937. In February 1938, there were fifteen such prisoners in U.P. and twenty-three in Bihar. Their release required consent by the Governors which was refused. But the Congress Ministries were determined to release them. The Ministries of U.P. and Bihar resigned on this issue on 15 February. The problem was finally resolved through negotiations. All the prisoners in both provinces were released by the end of March.

In Bombay, the Government also took steps to restore to the original owners lands which had been confiscated by the Government as a result of the no-tax campaign during the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930. It, too, had to threaten resignation before it could persuade the Governor to agree. The pensions of officials dismissed during 1930 and 1932 for sympathizing with the movement were also restored.

There were, however, certain blemishes on the Congress ministerial record in this respect. In July 1937, Yusuf Meherally, a Socialist leader, was prosecuted by the Madras Government for making an inflammatory speech in Malabar, though he was soon let off. In October 1937, the Madras Government prosecuted S.S. Batliwala, another Congress Social leader, for making a seditious speech and sentenced him to six months' imprisonment. There was a furore in the Congress ranks led by Jawaharlal Nehru, for this action went against the well-known Congress position that nobody should be prosecuted for making a speech and least of all for a speech against colonial rule. Nehru, reportedly,

Discussed the issue with C. Rajagopalachari, the Premier of Madras and in the end Batliwala was released and went around Madras Presidency making similar speeches. The affair proved to be an exception; but it bred a certain suspicion regarding the future attitude of the Congress Right wing. Much worse was the mentality of a few of the right-wing Congress ministers. For instance, K.M. Munshi, the Home Minister of Bombay, and a light-weight within the Congress leadership, used the CID to watch the Communists and other left-wing Congressmen. The Madras Government, too, used the police to shadow radical Congressmen.

But these blemishes have, however, to be seen in the larger context of the vast expansion of civil liberties even in Bombay and Madras. Moreover, the mass of Congressmen were vigilant on this question. Led by the left-wing, they exerted intense pressure on the right-wing Congress ministers to avoid tampering with civil liberties.

The strategy of Congress agrarian legislation was worked out within certain broad parameters.

First, the Congress was committed by its election manifesto and the election campaign to a policy of agrarian reform through reform of the system of land tenures and the reduction of rent, land revenue and the burden of debt.

But the Congress could not attempt a complete overhaul of the agrarian structure by completely eliminating the zamindari system. This, for two reasons, According to the constitutional structure of the 1935 Act, the provincial Ministries did not have enough powers to do so. They also suffered from an extreme lack of financial resources, for the lion's share of India's revenues was appropriated by the Government of India. The Congress Ministries could also not touch the existing administrative structure, whose sanctity was guarded by the Viceroy's and Governor's powers. Moreover, the strategy of class adjustment also forbade it. A multi-class movement could develop only by balancing or adjusting various, mutually clashing class interests. To unite all the Indian people in their struggle against colonialism, the main enemy of the time, it was necessary to make such an adjustment. The policy had to be that of winning over or at least neutralizing as large a part of the landlord classes as possible so as to isolate the enemy and deprive him of all social support within India. This was even more necessary because, in large parts of the country, the smaller landlords were active participants in the national movement. This was recognized by most of the leaders of the time who considered Congress a national organization, and a forum of all classes. Thus to establish and maintain major function of the Congress is to maintain harmony between different classes and to further its struggle while doing so.

There was also the constraint of time. The Congress leadership knew that their Ministries would not last long and would have to quit soon as the logic of their politics was to confront imperialism and not cooperate with it. Even when the Congress had accepted office, the usual figure given for longevity of the policy was two years. The time constraint became even more apparent as war clouds gathered in Europe from 1938 onwards. The Congress Ministries had, therefore, to act rapidly and achieve as much as possible in the short time available to them.

Further, nearly all the Congress-run states (that is, U.P., Bihar, Bombay, Madras and Assam) had reactionary second chambers in the form of legislative councils, which were elected on a very narrow franchise — while the number of voters for the assemblies in these states was over 17.5 million, it was less than 70 thousand for the second chambers. These were, therefore, dominated by landlords, capitalists and moneylenders, with the Congress forming a small minority. As a majority in the lower house was not enough, in order to get any legislation passed through the second chamber, the Congress had to simultaneously pressure their upper class elements and conciliate them. Thus the Bihar Government negotiated a compromise with the zamindars on its tenancy bills while the U.P. Government conciliated the moneylender and merchant members of its upper house by going slow on debt legislation so that their support could be secured for tenancy legislation.

Finally, the agrarian structure of various parts of India had developed over the centuries and was extremely complex and complicated. There was not even enough information about its various components — land rights, for instance. The problem of debt and money lending was also integrated with peasant production and livelihood in too complex a manner to be tackled by an easy one-shot solution. Consequently, any effort at structural reform was bound to be an extremely formidable and time-consuming operation, as was to be revealed later after independence when the Congress and the Communists attempted to transform the agrarian structure in different states of the Indian union.

Within these constraints, the agrarian policy of the Congress Ministries went a long way towards promoting the interests of the peasantry. Agrarian legislation by these Ministries relating to land reforms, debt relief, forest grazing fee, arrears of rent, land tenures etc. were achievement of congress ministries. But most of these benefits went to statutory and

occupancy tenants while sub-tenants did not gain much. Agricultural labourers did not benefit as they had not been mobilized.

The Congress Ministries adopted, in general a pro-labour stance. Their basic approach was to advance workers' interests while promoting industrial peace, reducing the resort to strikes as far as possible, establishing conciliation machinery, advocating compulsory arbitration before resorting to strikes, and creating goodwill between labour and capital with the Congress and its ministers assuming the role of intermediaries, while, at the same time, striving to improve the conditions of the workers and secure wage increases. This attitude alarmed the Indian capitalist class which now felt the need to organize itself to press the 'provincial governments to hasten slowly' on such matters.'

Immediately after assuming office, the Bombay Ministry appointed a Textile Enquiry Committee which recommended, among other improvements, the increase of wages amounting to a crore of rupees. Despite mill owners protesting against the recommendations, they were implemented. In November 1938, the Governments passed the Industrial Disputes Act which was based on the philosophy of 'class collaboration and not class conflict,' as the Premier B.G. Kher put it. The emphasis in the Act was on conciliation, arbitration and negotiations in place of direct action. The Act was also designed to prevent lightning strikes and lockouts. The Act empowered the Government to refer an industrial dispute to the Court of Industrial Arbitration. No strike or lock-out could occur for an interim period of four months during which the Court would give its award. The Act was strongly opposed by Left Congressmen, including Communists and Congress Socialists, for restricting the freedom to strike and for laying down a new complicated procedure for registration of trade unions, which, they said, would encourage unions promoted by employers in Madras, too, the Government promoted the policy of 'internal settlement' of labour disputes through government sponsored conciliation and arbitration proceedings. In U.P., Kanpur was the seat of serious labour unrest as the workers expected active support from the popularly elected Government. A major strike occurred in May 1938. The Government set up a Labour Enquiry Committee, headed by Rajendra Prasad. The Committee's recommendations included an increase in workers' wages with a minimum wage of Rs. 15 per month, formation of an arbitration board, recruitment of labour for all mills by an independent board, maternity benefits to women workers, and recognition of the Left-dominated Mazdur Sabha by the employers. But the employers, who had refused to cooperate with the Committee, rejected the report. They did, however, in the end, because of a great deal of pressure from the Government, adopt its principal recommendations. A similar Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee headed by Rajendra Prasad was set up in 1938. It too recommended the strengthening of trade union rights, an improvement in labour conditions, and compulsory conciliation and arbitration to be tried before a strike was declared.

The Congress Governments undertook certain other measures of social reform and welfare. Prohibition was introduced in selected areas in different states. Measures for the advancement of untouchables or Harijans (children of God), as Gandhiji called them, including the passing of laws enabled Harijans to enter temples and to get free access to public office, public sources of water such as wells and ponds, roads, means of transport, hospitals, educational and other similar institutions maintained out of public funds, and restaurants and hotels. Moreover, no court or public authority was to recognize any custom or usage which imposed any civil disability on Harijans. The number of scholarships and freeships for Harijan students was increased. Efforts were made to increase the number of Harijans in police and other government services.

The Congress Ministries paid a lot of attention to primary, technical and higher education and public health and sanitation. Education for girls and Harijans was expanded. In particular, the Ministries introduced basic education with an emphasis on manual and productive work. Mass

literacy campaigns among adults were organized. Support and subsidies were given to khadi, spinning and village industries. Schemes of prison reforms were taken up. The Congress Governments removed impediments in the path of indigenous industrial expansion and, in fact, actively attempted to promote several modern industrial ventures such as automobile manufacture. The Congress Governments also joined the effort to develop planning through the National Planning Committee appointed in 1938 by the Congress President Subhas Bose.

It was a basic aspect of the Congress strategy that in the non-mass struggle phases of the national movement, mass political activity and popular mobilization were to continue, though within the four-walls of legality, in fact, it was a part of the office-acceptance strategy that offices would be used to promote mass political activity.

26.2.2. Problems in Congress Rule

The formation of Congress Ministries and the vast extension of civil liberties unleashed popular energies everywhere. Kisan sabhas sprang up in every part of the country and there was an immense growth in trade union activity and membership. Student and youth movements revived and burgeoned. A powerful fillip was given to the state peoples' movement. Left parties were able to expand manifold. Even though it was under a Central Government ban, the Communist Party was able to bring out its weekly organ, The National Front, from Bombay.

Inevitably, many of the popular movements clashed with the Congress Governments. Even though peasant agitations usually took the form of massive demonstrations and spectacular peasant marches, in Bihar, the Kisan movement often came in frontal confrontation with the Ministry, especially when the Kisan Sabha asked the peasants not to pay rent or to forcibly occupy landlords' lands. There were also cases of physical attacks upon landlords, big and small, and the looting of crops. Kisan Sabha workers popularized Sahajanand's militant slogans: *Logan Lenge Kaise, Danda Hamara Zindabad* (How will you collect rent, long live our lathis or sticks) and *Lathi Mere Sathi* (Lathi is my companion). Consequently, there was a breach in relations between the Bihar kisan Sabha and the provincial Congress leadership.

In Bombay, the AITUC, the Communists, and the followers of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar organized a strike on 7 November 1938, in seventeen out of seventy-seven textile mills against the passage of the Industrial Disputes Act. There was some 'disorder' and large-scale stone throwing at two mills and some policemen were injured. The police opened fire, killing two and injuring over seventy. The Madras Government (as also the Provincial Congress Committee) too adopted a strong policy towards strikes, which sometimes took a violent turn. Kanpur workers struck repeatedly, sometimes acting violently and attacking the police.

But they tended to get Congress support. Congress Ministries did not know how to deal with situations where their own mass base was disaffected. They tried to play a mediatory role which was successful in U.P. and Bihar and to a certain extent in Madras, but not in Bombay. But, in general, they were not able to satisfy the Left-wing critics. Quite often they treated all militant protests, especially trade union struggles, as a law and order problem. They took recourse to Section 144 of the Criminal Code against agitating workers and arrested peasant and trade union leaders, even in Kanpur. Jawaharlal Nehru was privately unhappy with the Ministries' response to popular protest but his public stance was different. Then his answer was: 'We cannot agitate against ourselves.' He tended 'to stand up loyally for the ministers in public and protect them from petty and petulant criticism.' To put a check on the growing agitations against Congress Ministries, the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution in September 1938, condemning those, 'including a few Congressmen,' who 'have been found in the name of civil liberty to advocate murder, arson, looting and class war by violent means.'

The Left was highly critical of the Congress Governments' handling of popular protest; it accused them of trying to suppress peasants' and workers' organizations. Gandhiji too thought

that the policy of ministry formation was leading to a crisis. But his angle of vision was very different from that of the Communists. To start with, he opposed militant agitations because he felt that their overt to covert violent character threatened his basic strategy based on non-violence. At the beginning of office acceptance, as pointed out earlier, he had advised the Congress Ministries to rule without the police and the army. Later he began to argue that 'violent speech or writing does not come under the protection of civil liberty.' But even while bemoaning the militancy and violence of the popular protest agitations and justifying the use of existing legal machinery against them, Gandhiji objected to the frequent recourse to colonial laws and law and order machinery to deal with popular agitations. He wanted reliance to be placed on the political education of the masses against the use of violence. He questioned, for example, the Madras Government's resort to the Criminal Law Amendment Act, especially to its 'obnoxious clauses.' While criticizing Left-wing incitement to class violence, he constantly sought to curb Right-wing confrontation with the Left. He also defended the right of the Socialists and the Communists to preach and practise their politics in so far as they abided by Congress methods. Gandhiji was able to see the immense harm that the Congress would suffer in terms of erosion of popular support, especially of the workers and peasants, because of the repeated use of law and order machinery to deal with their agitations. This would make it difficult to organize the next wave of extra-legal mass movement against colonial rule.

The period of the Congress Ministries witnessed the emergence of serious weaknesses in the Congress. There was a great deal of factional strife and bickering both on ideological and personal bases, a good example of which was the factional squabbles within the Congress Ministry and the Assembly party in the Central provinces which led to the resignation of Dr. N.B. Khare as premier. The practice of bogus membership made its appearance and began to grow. There was a scramble for jobs and positions of personal advantage. Indiscipline among Congressmen was on the increase everywhere. Opportunists, self-seekers and careerists, drawn by the lure of associating with a party in power, began to enter the ranks of the Congress at various levels. This was easy because the Congress was an open party which anybody could join. Many Congressmen began to give way to casteism in their search for power.

Gandhiji began to feel that 'We seem to be weakening from within.' Full of despondency, Gandhiji repeatedly lashed out in the columns of Haryana against the growing misuse of office and creeping corruption in Congress ranks. Gandhiji, of course, saw that this slackening of the movement and weakening of the moral fibre of Congressmen was in part inevitable in a phase of non-mass struggle. He, therefore, advised giving up of offices and starting preparations for another phase of Satyagraha.

Jawaharlal too had been feeling for some time that the positive role of the Ministries was getting exhausted. Finally the Congress Ministries resigned in October 1939 because of the political crisis brought about by World War II. But Gandhiji welcomed the resignations for another reason — they would help cleanse the Congress of the 'rampant corruption.' The resignations produced another positive effect. They brought the Left and the Right in the Congress closer because of a common policy on the question of participation in the war.

26.2.3. Evaluation of Congress Rule

In the balance, the legislative and administrative record of the Congress Ministries was certainly positive. The old contention that Indian self-government was a necessity for any really radical attack on the social backwardness of India got confirmed.

One of the great achievements of the Congress Governments was their firm handling of the communal riots. They asked the district magistrates and police officers to take strong action to deal with a communal outbreak. The Congress leadership foiled the imperialist design of using constitutional reforms to weaken the national movement and, instead demonstrated how the

constitutional structure could be used by a movement aiming at capture of state power to further its own aims without getting co-opted. Despite certain weaknesses, the Congress emerged stronger from the period of office acceptance. Nor was the national movement diverted from its main task of fighting for self-government because of being engaged in day-to-day administration. Offices were used successfully for enhancing the national consciousness and increasing the area of nationalist influence and thus strengthening the movement's capacity to wage a mass struggle in the future.

The movement's influence was now extended to the bureaucracy, especially at the lower levels. And the morale of the ICS (Indian Civil Service), one of the pillars of the British Empire, suffered a shattering blow. Many ICS officers came to believe that the British departure from India was only a matter of time. In later years, especially during the Quit India Movement, the fear that the Congress might again assume power in the future, a prospect made real by the fact that Congress Ministries had already been in power once, helped to neutralize many otherwise hostile elements, such as landlords and even bureaucrats, and ensured that many of them at least sat on the fence. There was also no growth of provincialism or lessening of the sense of Indian unity, as the framers of the Act of 1935 and of its provision for Provincial Autonomy had hoped. The Ministries succeeded in evolving a common front before the Government of India. Despite factionalism, the Congress organization as a whole remained disciplined. Factionalism, particularly at the top, was kept within bounds with a strong hand by the central leadership. When it came to the crunch, there was also no sticking so office. Acceptance of office thus did prove to be just one phase in the freedom struggle. When an all-India political crisis occurred and the central Congress leadership wanted it, the Ministries promptly resigned. And the opportunists started leaving. As the Congress General Secretary said at the time: 'The resignations of the ministries demonstrated to all thou who had any doubts that Congress was not out for power and office but for the emancipation of the people of India from the foreign yoke.'

The Congress also avoided a split between its Left and Right wings — a split which the British were trying to actively promote since 1934. Despite strong critiques of each other by the two wings, they not only remained united but tended to come closer to each other.

Above all, the Congress gained by influencing all sections of the people. The process of the growth of Congress and nationalist hegemony in Indian society was advanced. If mass struggles destroyed one crucial element of the hegemonic ideology of British colonialism by demonstrating that British power was not invincible then the sight of Indians exercising power shattered another myth of 'Indians inability to rule' by which the British had held Indians in subjection for a long period.

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THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN 1940s

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1. Second World War and Nationalist Response

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

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

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

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

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

1.1. CWC Meeting at Wardha (September 1939)

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

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

The CWC resolution condemned Fascist aggression. It said that

- India could not be party to a war being fought for democratic freedom, while that freedom was being denied to India;

- If Britain was fighting for democracy and freedom, it should prove it by ending imperialism in its colonies and establishing full democracy in India;
- The government should declare its war aims soon and, also as to how the principles of democracy were to be applied to India.

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

1.2. Government Response

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.3. Pakistan Resolution-Lahore (March 1940)

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

2. August Offer

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Individual Satyagrahas

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

The Congress was in a confused state again after the August Offer. The radicals and leftists wanted to launch a mass Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi was ambivalent: at one stage he believed that war was against his principle of non-violence; then he promised the viceroy all support in his war efforts, and for that became a target of criticism from his own followers in the Congress. Ultimately, at the Ramgarh Congress in May 1940, he agreed to launch civil disobedience; but this would be Individual Satyagraha. The Individual Satyagraha was not to seek independence but to affirm the right of speech. The other reason of this Satyagraha was

that a mass movement may turn violent and he would not like to see the Great Britain embarrassed by such a situation. This view was conveyed to Lord Linlithgow by Gandhi when he met him on September 27, 1940. The non-violence was set as the centerpiece of Individual Satyagraha. This was done by carefully selecting the Satyagrahis.

The first **Satyagrahi** selected was **Acharya Vinoba Bhave**, who was sent to Jail when he spoke against the war. Second **Satyagrahi** was **Jawahar Lal Nehru**. Third was **Brahma Datt**, one of the inmates of the **Gandhi's Ashram**. They all were sent to jails for violating the Defense of India Act. This was followed by a lot of other people. But since it was not a mass movement, it attracted little enthusiasm and in December 1940, Gandhi suspended the movement. The campaign started again in January 1941, this time, thousands of people joined and around 20 thousand people were arrested.

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

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

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

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

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

4. Cripps Mission

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

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

Main Proposals

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

- In the meantime, defense of India would remain in British hands and the governor-general's powers would remain intact.

4.1. Differences from the Past Proposals

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

4.2. Reasons for its Failure

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

The Congress objected to -

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

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

The Muslim League objected to -

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

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

Other Reasons -

- The incapacity of Cripps to go beyond the Draft Declaration and the adoption of a rigid, "take it or leave it" attitude added to the deadlock.
- Cripps had earlier talked of "Cabinet" and "National government" but later he said that he had only meant an expansion of the executive council.
- Cripps had designed the proposals himself, but they were too radical for Prime Minister Churchill and the Viceroy, and too conservative for the Indians; no middle way was found. The Cripps did not get either the cooperation of the viceroy or the support of his prime minister.

- It is also argued that Churchill did not sincerely wish the Mission to succeed; he merely wanted to show the world- and more particularly, his allies- that something was being done to resolve the Indian Political imbroglio.

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

5. Quit India Movement

The failure of the Cripps Mission plunged the country in to despondency and anger. The fuel that fed this was supplied not only by the hypocrisy of the British Government, but also by a host of other factors. The war situation was worsening day by day. After the fall of Singapore on 15 February, Rangoon on 7 March and Andamans on 12 March, 1942, the Imperial Japanese Army advanced closer to India with the seas around India were dominated by the Japanese. Indians perceived an inability upon the part of the British to defend Indian soil breaking the myth of British invincibility-particularly on the seas. To many optimists it seemed that the end of the British Empire was imminent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.1. Parallel Government Established at Many Places

- Ballia (in August 1942 for a week) - under Gandhian Chittu Pandey. He got many Congress leaders released
- Tamluk (Midnapore from December 1942 to September 1944)- which undertook cyclone relief work, sanctioned grants to schools, supplied paddy from the rich to the poor, organized Bidyut Bahinis etc
- Satara(mid 1943 to 1945)- named "Prati Sarker", was organized under leaders like Y.B.Chavan, Nana Patil, etc. Village libraries and Nyayadan Mandals were organized, prohibition campaigns were carried on and 'Gandhi marriages' were organized.

5.2. Reaction of other Parties

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

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

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

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

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

5.3. Mass Participation

Despite of that, Mass Participation was on many levels -

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

5.4. Critical Appraisal of the Movement

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

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

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

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

But in 1942 the main problem caused by the war was what Max Harcourt has described as “a **scarcity crisis**”, resulting from mainly a shortfall in the supply of rice. Between April and August the price Index for food grains rose by sixty points in north India. This was partly because of bad

seasonal conditions and partly due to the stoppage in the supply of Burmese rice and the stringent procurement policy of the British. This Crisis resulted into Catastrophe in the form of **Bengal Famine**.

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

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

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

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

6.1. Administrative and Policy Failures

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

In December 1942 there was a shortage in Calcutta itself. Therefore government focused on getting supplies to Calcutta by trying to buy surplus stocks in the region. The quantities that District Officers were able to locate and purchase were considered too small to end the famine, so the Government introduced free trade in rice in Eastern India, hoping that traders would sell their stocks to Bengal; however this measure also failed to move large stocks to Bengal. In April and May there was a propaganda drive to convince the population that the high prices were not justified by the supply of food, the goal being that the propaganda would induce hoarders to

sell their stocks. When these propaganda drives failed, there was a drive to locate hoarded stocks. Bengal's Minister of Civil Supplies, announced that there was no shortage of rice in Bengal and introduced a policy of intimidating 'hoarders': this caused looting, extortion and corruption but did not increase the amount of food on the market. When these drives continually failed to locate large stocks, the government realized that the scale of the loss in supply was larger than they had initially believed.

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

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

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

7. Rajagopalachari's Formula

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

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

7.1. The Proposal

- The League was to endorse the Indian demand for independence and to co-operate with the Congress in formation of Provisional Interim Government for a transitional period.
- At the end of the War, a commission would be appointed to demarcate the districts having a Muslim population in absolute majority and in those areas plebiscite to be conducted on all inhabitants (including the non-Muslims) on basis of adult suffrage.
- All parties would be allowed to express their stance on the partition and their views before the plebiscite.

- In the event of separation, a mutual agreement would be entered into for safeguarding essential matters such as defence, communication and commerce and for other essential services.
- The transfer of population, if any would be absolutely on a voluntary basis.
- The terms of the binding will be applicable only in case of full transfer of power by Britain to Government of India.

7.2. Gandhi-Jinnah Talks of 1944

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

7.3. Criticism of CR Formula

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

Furthermore, the decision of Muslims to secede from India, according to the CR formula, would be taken not just by Muslims alone but by a plebiscite of the entire population even in the Muslim majority districts. This might well have diluted the enthusiasm of the people of these provinces about going their own separate way. Hence Jinnah rejected the initiative, telling his Council that it was intended to 'torpedo' the Lahore resolution; it was 'grossest travesty', a 'ridiculous proposal', 'offering a shadow and a husk – a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan, and thus trying to pass off having met out Pakistan scheme and Muslim demand'. While the formula kept most of the essential services together, Jinnah wanted a full partition and any relations would be dealt as a treaty alone.

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

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

8. Desai-Liaquat pact

While Mohandas Gandhi and the entire Congress Working Committee had been arrested during the Quit India movement, from 1942 to 1945, Desai was one of few Congress leaders free. While pressing demands for the immediate release of political prisoners, Desai began secretive talks with Liaquat Ali Khan, the second-most important leader of the Muslim League. However this assertion has been seriously challenged by other eminent people like Sir Chiman Lal

Setalwad who have stated that Gandhi had full knowledge of the ongoing negotiations. It was their intention to negotiate an agreement for a future coalition government, which would enable a united choice for Hindus and Muslims for the independent Government of India. In this deal, **Liaquat gave up the demand for a separate Muslim state in turn for parity of Muslims-to-Hindus in the council of ministers.** Conceding the League as the representative of Muslims and giving a minority community equal place with the majority Hindus, Desai attempted to construct an ideal Indian alliance that would hasten India's path for freedom while ending the Quit India struggle. While Desai was working without the knowledge of Gandhi, Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru or any other Congress leader, Khan had kept the deal a secret from his superior, Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

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

9. Wavell's Plan

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

Why the Government was keen on a solution now?

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

9.1. The Plan

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

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

- Possibilities were to be kept open for negotiations on a new constitution once the war was finally won.

9.2. Reasons for Failure

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

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

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

10. Indian National Army

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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POST WAR NATIONAL UPSURGES

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1. INA Trials

1.1. Origin and Growth

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

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

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

1.2. INA under Subhash Chandra Bose

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

1.3. First Action

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

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

1.4. INA trials

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

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

The soldiers of the INA were taken to court martial at the Red Fort of Delhi. Around ten courts-martial were held. The first among them was the joint court-martial of Colonel Prem Sahgal,

Colonel Gurubaksh Singh Dhillon and Major General Shah Nawaz Khan. All of them were charged of "Waging War against the King Emperor" as well as Murder and abetment of Murder. The defence of the INA prisoners was taken up by many senior leaders like Bhulabhai Desai, Tej Bahadur Sapru, K.N. Katju, J. Nehru and Asaf Ali.

The INA trials were landmark development because:

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

2. Three Upsurges – Winter of 1945-46

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

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

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

2.1. Pattern of Three Upsurges

All three upsurges showed a similar three-stage pattern.

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

2.2. Significance of the Three Upsurges

- Fearless action by masses
- Revolt in the armed forces
- RIN revolt was major blow to government control on armed forces

2.3. Effects of Three Upsurges

British government granted some concessions as result of these upsurges:

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

2.4. Causes of failure

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

3. General Elections 1945

3.1. Background

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

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

3.2. Importance of General Elections 1945-46

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

3.3. Results

Congress' Performance:

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

Muslim League's Performance:

- It got 86.6% of the Muslim votes.
- It captured the 30 reserved seats in the Central Assembly.
- In the provincial elections, it got a majority in Bengal and Sindh.
- Unlike in 1937, now the League clearly established itself as the dominant party among Muslims.

Punjab:

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

3.3.1. Significant Feature of Elections

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

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

4. The Cabinet Mission

Cabinet Mission was composed of three Cabinet Ministers of England.

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

4.1. Objectives

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

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

4.2. Major recommendations

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

- ii. Section B: Punjab, Sindh, NWFP, Baluchistan
- iii. Section C: Assam and Bengal

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

4.3. Reactions to the Cabinet Mission Plan

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

5. Communal Holocaust and Interim Government

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

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

5.1. Interim Government

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

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

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

5.2. Working of interim government

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

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

Finally Muslim League demanded the dissolution of constituent assembly.

6. Attlee's Statement

British Prime Minister Clement Attlee outlined following points:

- A deadline of 30 June 1948 for transfer of power even if Indian politicians had not agreed by the time on the constitution.
- British would transfer the power to provincial governments or some form of central government or other if constituent assembly was not fully representative. Thus it had clear hint of balkanization of India into numerous states.
- British powers and obligations with respect to princely states would lapse with transfer of power.
- Mountbatten would replace Wavell as viceroy.

6.1. Government's motive behind Attlee's statement

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

6.2. Reactions to Attlee's statement

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

7. Growth of Communalism

There are basically three broad stages of communalism in India

1. Communal Nationalism

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

2. Liberal Communalism

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

3. Extreme Communalism

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

7.1. Characteristics of Communalism

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

7.2. Reasons-for Growth of Communalism

1. Socio-economic reasons

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

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

2. British policy of divide and rule

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

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

3. Communalism in history writing

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

4. Side-effects of socio-religious reform movements

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

5. Side-effects of militant nationalism

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

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

6. Communal reaction by majority community

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

8. Mountbatten Plan

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

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

The main contents of the plan were

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

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

8.1. Dickie Bird Plan

Mountbatten prepared a "Dickie Bird Plan" earlier to June plan. The main proposal of this plan was that provinces should become first independent successor states rather than an Indian Union or the two dominions of India & Pakistan. As per this plan all the provinces were proposed to be declared Independent. The states later would decide whether to join constituent assembly or not. Nehru rejected the plan right away and told him that this plan would invite Balkanization of India and would provoke conflict and violence.

Consequently, this plan was cancelled.

8.2. The reactions of Gandhi and Azad on Mountbatten Plan

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

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

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

9. India Independence Act

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

9.1. Main Provisions

The Act's most important provisions were:

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

10. Why Congress accepted partition?

- The partition ruled out balkanization of India which had even greater danger to Indian unity.
- The Congress was not consistent on the Partition.
 - In 1942, the Congress Working Committee criticized the secessionist idea.

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

11. Last Years' UPSC Mains GS Questions

1. What was Mountbatten Plan? Discuss the reactions of Gandhi and Azad to the Plan.
2. The INA trial did more harms than good to British government.
3. Trace the origin of political mutiny of RIN and its impact on political situation in India.
4. Trace the salient sequence of events in the popular revolt that took place in February 1946 in the then 'Royal Indian Navy' and bring out its significance in the freedom struggle. Do you agree with the view that the sailors who took part in this revolt were some of the unsung heroes of the freedom struggle?
5. What was the cabinet mission plan? How was the grouping clause fundamental to it? What was its impact on the attitude of the congress and league?
6. What were the proposals of cabinet mission? Analyse the reactions of the congress and the league to the proposals.
7. Review the "dickie bird plan".
8. When and why did the revolt of the ratings of Royal Indian Navy take place? Why did they suspend the movement? What were the attitudes of Gandhi and Patel towards the movement?
9. What were the factors which eventually led to India's partition?
10. Narrate the last phase of India's freedom movement from the beginning of 1947 to attainment of Independence.
11. Do you think that the partition of India was inevitable? Discuss the attitudes of Gandhi, Nehru and Maulana Azad towards the crucial question of the partition.
12. What were the circumstances that led to the partition of India in 1947?
13. How did communalism manifest in Indian political scene? Explain the background of the passing of the momentous Pakistan resolution.
14. Why and how did congress come to accept the partition?
15. What were the main reasons for the decision for British government to leave India after transferring power to the people of "British India" and ruler of "Indian states".

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CONTRIBUTION OF VARIOUS SECTION OF INDIAN SOCIETY

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1. Peasant Movement in India

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

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

1.1. The Initial Phase

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

1.1.1. Indigo Revolt (1859-60)

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

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

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

1.1.2. Pabna Movement (1872-76)

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

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

1.1.3. The Deccan Peasants' Uprising (1875)

The Deccan peasants uprising was directed mainly against the excesses of the Marwari and Gujarati money lenders. Social boycott of moneylenders by the peasants was later transformed into armed peasant revolt in the Poona and Ahmadnagar districts of Maharashtra. The peasants attacked the moneylender's houses, shops and burnt them down.

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

1.1.4. Punjab Peasants Discontent (1890-1900)

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

1.1.5. Champaran Satyagraha (1917)

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

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

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

1.1.6. Kaira/Kheda Satyagraha (1918)

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

1.1.7. Kisan Sabha Movement

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

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

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

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

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

1.1.8. Eka Movement

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.1.9. Moplah Rebellion (1921)

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

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

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

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

1.2. Changed Nature of Peasants Movements in 19th Century After 1857

- Peasants emerged as the main force in agrarian movements, fighting directly for their own demands.
- The demands were centered almost wholly on economic issues.
- The movements were directed against the immediate enemies of the peasant- foreign planters and indigenous zamindars and moneylenders.
- The struggle were directed towards specific and limited objectives and redressal of particular grievances.
- Colonialism was not the target of these movements.
- It was not the objective of these movements to end the system of subordination or exploitation of the peasants.
- Territorial reach was limited.
- There was no continuity of struggle or long-term organization.
- The peasants developed a strong awareness of their legal rights and asserted them in and outside the courts.

1.2.1. Weaknesses

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

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

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

1.4. The Second Phase: Emergence of Class Conscious Organisations

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

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

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

In this period notable movements were:

1.4.1. Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)

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

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

1.4.2. The All India Kisan Congress/Sabha

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

1.4.3. Under Congress Ministries

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

1.4.4. Peasant Activity in Provinces

Bihar:

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

Andhra:

This region had already witnessed a decline in the prestige of zamindar after their defeat by Congressmen in elections. Anti-zamindar movements were going on in some places. Many provincial ryot associations were active. N. G. Ranga had set up, in 1933, the India Peasants' Institute. After 1936, the congress socialist started organizing the peasants. At many places, the summer schools of economics and politics were held and addressed by leaders like P.C.Joshi, Ajoy Ghosh and R.D Bhardwaj.

Kerala:

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

Punjab:

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

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

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

1.4.5. During the Second World War

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

1.4.6. Tebhaga Movement

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

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

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

1.4.7. Telangana movement

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

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

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

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

The Telangana movement had many positive achievement to its credit:

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

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

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

2. Working Class Movement against British Rule in India

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

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

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

The presence of colonialism in India gave a distinctive touch to the Indian working class movement. The Indian working class had to face two basic antagonistic forces—an imperialist political rule and economic exploitation at the hands of both foreign and native capitalist classes. Under the circumstances, inevitably, the Indian working class movement became intertwined with the political struggle for national emancipation.

2.1. Earlier Efforts

The early nationalists, especially the Moderates:

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

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

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

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

2.2. During Swadeshi Upsurge

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

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

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

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

2.3. During and after The First World War

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

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

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

2.4. The AITUC

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

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

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

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

2.5. The Trade Union Act, 1926

The Act:

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

2.6. Late 1920s

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

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

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

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

2.7. Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929)

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

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

2.8. Under Congress Ministries

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

2.9. During and after the Second World War

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

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

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

3. Indian Capitalist and Indian National Movement

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

3.1. Growth of Indian Capitalist Class

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.2. Their Ideology and Strategy and Attitude Towards National Movement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Further, however opposed the capitalist class may have been at a point of time to mass civil disobedience, it never supported the colonial Government in repressing it. In fact, the capitalists throughout pressurized the Government to stop repression, remove the ban on the Congress and the press, release political prisoners and stop arbitrary rule with ordinances as a first step to any settlement, even when the Congress was at the pitch of its non-constitutional mass phase. The fear of Congress militancy or radicalization did not push the capitalists (especially after the late 1920s) to either supporting imperialism in repressing it or even openly condemning or dissociating themselves from the Congress.

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

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

3.3. Criticism of Indian Capitalist and reality

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

These formulations do not reflect the reality for several reasons.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In fact, it was precisely the increasing radicalization of the Congress in the Left direction in the 1930s, with the growing influence of Nehru, and the Socialists and Communists within the

Congress, which spurred the capitalists into becoming more active in the political field. The fear of radicalization of the national movement, however, did not push the capitalists into the 'lap of imperialism,' as predicted by contemporary radicals and as actually happened in some other colonial and semi-colonial countries. Instead, the Indian capitalists evolved a subtle, many sided strategy to contain, the Left, no part of which involved a sell-out to imperialism or imperial interests.

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

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

4. Role of Women in National Movement

Women in Indian freedom struggle have significantly contributed almost at par with their male counterparts in fighting the British yoke. The initiative, bravery, guts and headship that the women have showed in the freedom movements for the country's independence from colonial rule have given them widespread name, fame and significance in the Indian society. During the uprising of 1857, women of the ruling class came together along with the men to fulfill their ambition for an independent India. Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar and the famous Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, Matangini Hazra, Sarojini Naidu had become iconic figures in the Indian political arena.

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

4.1. Role of Women in Independence Movement

Women joined men to protest against the British rulers by boycotting foreign goods and resolving to buy only those goods produced in the territory of Bengal. Mrs. Nonibala Devi joined the new Jugantar Party which was dedicated to aggressive movement in the early 20th century. Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1915 and took up the demand for self-rule and later for Purna Swaraj through non-violent methods. His call to join the Satyagraha Movement witnessed women getting involved in all his programmes. Rani Gaidiniliu integrated

the movement in North-East with the Indian freedom movement under Gandhiji. Some of the women who played a very active role in the Swadeshi Movement were Sarojini Naidu, Urmila Devi, Durgabai Deshmukh, S. Ambujammal, Basanti Devi, and Krishnabai Ram.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rani Lakshmbai was one of the leading warriors of India's First freedom struggle who laid an outstanding influence on the succeeding women freedom fighters. She used to go into the

battlefield dressed as a man. Holding the reins of her horse in her mouth she used the sword with both hands. She fought valiantly and although beaten she refused to surrender and fell as a warrior should, fighting the enemy to the last. Her remarkable courage inspired many men and women in India to rise against the alien rule. She was a symbol of bravery, patriotism, self-respect, perseverance, generosity and resistance to British rule. She fought till her last breath for the noble cause of India's independence.

4.1.2. Begum Hazrat Mahal (1820—1879)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She is also known as child leader as in 1928, eight-year-old Usha participated in a protest march against the Simon Commission and shouted her first words of protest against the British Raj: "Simon Go Back." As a child, she did not comprehend the significance of her actions except that she was participating in a movement to free her country under the leadership of Gandhi. She and many other children participated in morning protests against the British Raj and picketing in front of liquor shops. During the Quit India Movement, Usha quickly became a leader. She moved from New Delhi to Mumbai, where she hoisted the tricolor on August 9, 1942 at Gawalia Tank Ground.

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

Kasturba Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's wife worked with him for many years. She was a leader of Women's Satyagraha for which she was imprisoned. She helped her husband in the cause of Indigo workers in Champaran, Bihar and the No Tax Campaign in Kaira, Gujarat. She was arrested twice for picketing liquor and foreign cloth shops, and in 1939 for participating in the Rajkot Satyagraha. She many times took her husband's place when he was under arrest. Kasturba suffered from chronic bronchitis. Stress from the Quit India Movement's arrests and

ashram life caused her to fall ill. After contracting pneumonia, she died from a severe heart attack on February 22, 1944 while she was in prison along with Mahatma Gandhi.

4.1.9. Kamala Nehru (1899–1936)

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

5. The Lower Caste Movements in Modern India

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

5.1. The Changing Scenario

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

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

5.2. Reactions against Brahminical Domination

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

5.2.1. Dravidian Movement

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

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

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

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

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

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

A consequence of the DMK was the decline in the domination of Brahmins in Tamil Nadu, a new sense of release and freedom among the lower castes. However, later on as DMK tried to

capture power, it gradually abandoned its reformist zeal and even the demand for creation of a separate Dravidian Nadu and acquired a character of one of the mainstream political parties with a rational support base.

5.2.2. SNDP (Sri Narayan Dharma Pratipalan Movement)

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

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

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

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

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

5.2.3. Jyotirao Phule and the Satya Sodhak Samaj

In western India Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (1827-1890) struggled for the lower caste. Jyotiba was born at Poona in Mali caste (who supplies flowers and garlands). Some incidents of Brahminical arrogance changed the outlook of Jyotiba. Once Jyotiba was scolded and insulted by a Brahman for his audacity in joining a Brahman marriage procession. The Brahmins also opposed Jyotiba in running a school for the lower castes and women. The Brahminical pressure compelled Jyotiba to close the school; under upper caste pressure Govindrao turned Jyotiba and his wife from leaving his family house.

Jyotiba believed that the Brahman under the pretext of religion tyrannized over other castes and turned them into their slaves. Jyotiba was ever critical of the Indian National Congress Leaders for their neglect of the interest on the weaker sections. He maintained that the

Congress could not be called truly national unless it showed general interest in the welfare of the lower and backward castes.

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

5.2.4. Mahar Movement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.3. Ambedkar's Dynamic Role

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. Middle Class Movements

6.1. Development of Middle Class

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

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

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

6.2. Form of Middle Class Movements

Middle class movements are primarily analyzed in terms of the issues that they raise such as social reform movements, the nationalist movement, and human right movements and so on. These movements are called mass movements as the issues are not class specific not affecting mainly the middle class. The issues are posed as societal problems. The leaders of such movements who belong to the middle class mobilize other classes for support.

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

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

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

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

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

6.3. Participation in Freedom Struggle

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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