

# Department of Distance and Continuing Education University of Delhi



**B. A. (Hons.) Political Science**

**Semester-I**

**Course Credits - 4**

**Discipline Specific Core Course (DSC-3)**

**COLONIALISM AND NATIONALISM IN INDIA**

As per the UGCF - 2022 and National Education Policy 2020

<b>S.NO.</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>WRITERS</b>
<b>Unit 1</b>	A. Main perspectives on colonialism: Liberalism, Marxism, Post-colonialism	Shakti Pradayani
	B. Approaches to the study of nationalism in India: Nationalist, Imperialist, Marxist, and Subaltern	Shakti Pradayani
<b>Unit 2</b>	A. Constitutional developments and the colonial state	In Process
	B. Colonial ideology of civilizing mission: Utilitarian and Missionaries	Shakti Pradayani
	C. Impact on agriculture, land relations, industry and ecology	Shakti Pradayani
<b>Unit 3</b>	A. The 1857 war of Independence	Jeeta Misra Shakti Pradayani
	B. Major social and religious movements	Gurpreet Kaur
	C. Education and the rise of the new middle class	Monkia Batham
<b>Unit 4</b>	A. Nationalist Politics and Expansion of its Social Base Phases of the Nationalist Movement: Liberal constitutionalist, Swadeshi and the Radicals, Formation of the Muslim League	Revised by Shakti Pradayani
	B. Gandhi and mass mobilization: Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience, and Quit India Movements	Vaishali Mann
	C. Revolutionaries, Socialists and Communists	Latika Vishnoi
	D. Communalism in Indian Politics	In Process
	E. The two-nation theory, negotiations over partition	In Process
<b>Unit 5</b>	<b>A. Social Movements : Peasants, Tribals,</b>	In Process
	<b>B. Workers, Women Movements</b>	Monika Batham
	<b>C. Anti-caste movements</b>	Khem Chand

**Unit 1. Colonialism and Nationalism:**

- Main perspectives on colonialism: Liberalism, Marxism, Postcolonialism
- Approaches to the study of nationalism in India: Nationalist, Imperialist, Marxist, and Subaltern

**Unit 2. Colonial Rule in India and its impact:**

- Constitutional developments and the colonial state
- Colonial ideology of civilizing mission: Utilitarians and Missionaries
- Impact on agriculture, land relations, industry and ecology

**Unit 3. Reform and Resistance:**

- The 1857 war of Independence
- Major social and religious movements
- Education and the rise of the new middle class

**Unit 4. Nationalist Politics and Expansion of its Social Base**

- Phases of the Nationalist Movement: Liberal constitutionalist, Swadeshi and the Radicals, Formation of the Muslim League

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- Gandhi and mass mobilisation: Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience, and Quit India Movements
  - Revolutionaries, Socialists and Communists
  - Communalism in Indian Politics
  - The two-nation theory, negotiations over partition

**Unit 5. Social Movements**

Peasants, Tribals, Workers, Women and anti-caste movements



### **Unit 1.**

#### **Colonialism and Nationalism**

Lesson 1• Main perspectives on colonialism: Liberalism, Marxism, Postcolonialism

Lesson 2• Approaches to the study of nationalism in India: Nationalist, Imperialist, Marxist, and Subaltern

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### LESSON 1

#### Main perspectives on colonialism

Dr.ShaktiPradayani Rout

Asst.Professor

School of Open Learning

University of Delhi

### STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Learning Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Liberalism
- 1.4 Marxism
- 1.5 Postcolonialism
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.8 Answers to In-text Questions
- 1.9 Self-Assessment Questions
- 1.10 References
- 1.11 Suggested Readings

### 1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The students would be able to understand the meaning of colonialism and nationalism as concept. Its various perspectives and approaches .

### 1.2 INTRODUCTION

**Colonialism** is a way of domination or subordination where one country establishes an administrative hold over another country. Let us try to find the meaning of colonialism. A



colony is as the Oxford English Dictionary defines it a country or area under the full and partial control of another country typically a distant one and occupied by settlers from that country. The Collins English Dictionary also seems to support the exploitative aspect of colonialism by defining colonialism as “the policy of acquiring and maintaining colonies, especially for exploitation.” The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy adopts a historical approach and “uses the term colonialism to describe the process of European settlement and political control over the rest of the world, including Americas, Australia, and parts of Africa and Asia.” There is not a very clear difference between colonialism and imperialism. In the present scenario, we can look into colonialism from an Indian historical perspective where India was been colonialized for more than 200 years. The British can be said to have exploited the political weakness of the Mughal state, and, tried to bring change the traditional society and economy by incorporating various administrative majors.

Let us find the difference between Colonialism and imperialism. So, colonialism is a bit different than imperialism. Imperialism is driven by the ideology of the superiority of center with the assertion and expansion of state power across the globe. Colonialism is normally a pragmatic state of activity at the periphery or colonies.

Let us discuss various aspects of imperialis forms of imperialism. Imperialism generally related to the activities of some dominant nations in the world. Sometime its related to Pax Britannica and now may be its called as neo imperialism propagated by America. Somehow it is arelationship of effective domination or political and economic control over other nations across globe. Imperialism can be propagated by direct and indirect intervation of imperialist powers like Portugal, Fance and Britain .The significant forms of imperialism can be identified in the history during sixteenth and seventeenth century European states.

Lenin had applied the Marxist interpretation of imperialism, which he said “ is the higest stage of capitalism”. The combined contribution of Rosa Luxemburg, Hilferding and Nekolai Bhukharin have made their own contribution to Marxist theory of imperialism. This approach is later been enriched by Paul Baran, Paul Swezzey and HarryMagdoff.



Harry Magdoff in *The Age of Imperialism* (1969) traced the pattern of new imperialism and a new period in world capitalism. He distinguished between the old and new imperialism. To him new imperialism marks a new period in the United States of America, Germany, France and Japan to challenge England. The power of monopoly capitalism has shifted to small, integrated industrial and financial firms-the multinationals (MNCs), which have become especially predominant since the Second World War. He examined patterns of US aid and trade and looked at the foundation of ever expanding US empire (Chilcote: 261), (Quoted from Jena, Shakti P, Political Development in Hungary, 1990-2006: Unpublished)

### Consequences of Colonialism:

Colonialism had both positive and negative effects on Indian growth and development. According to Rupert Emerson, a few salient features of colonialism can be drawn and put forward as a conclusion:

1. Colonialism imposes alien and authoritarian regimes on subordinate societies. The regimes trained a few of their subjects in bureaucratic management and required passive submission.
2. It had a major purpose to exploit colonies economically. Colonies were used as sources and suppliers of raw materials and markets of the finished good.
3. In course of time, the core that is the UK became economically powerful and developed, and India as a periphery remained underdeveloped.
4. The authoritative attitude of the British Raj stimulated national liberation movements in India. However, colonialism remained a historical agent of change and transformation as well as spread liberal educational ideologies (Vermani:33).

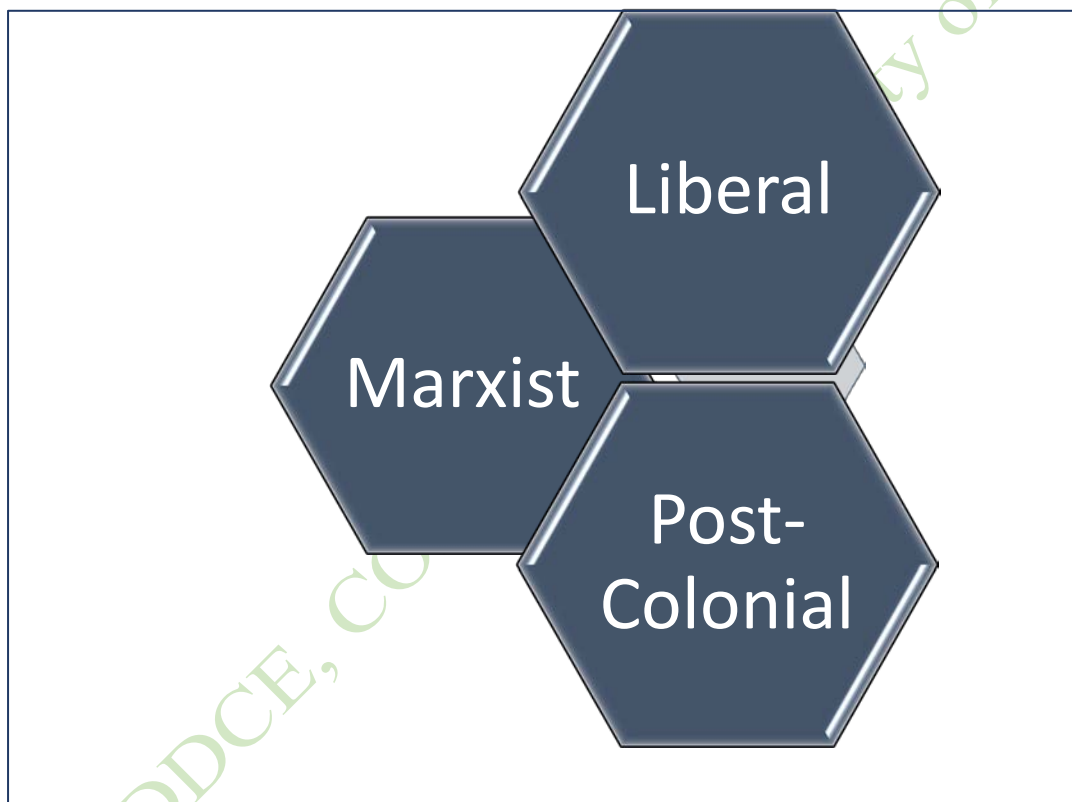
**Nationalism** can be said to be the expression of collective identity by a group of people living in a certain geographical territory who socially, culturally and economically, and politically identify themselves as one nation to be governed as such and by themselves. Nationalism emphasizes the collective identity were to be a nation a group of people must be autonomous politically, united significantly and substantially, and express a single national culture to a large extent. However, some nationalists have argued individualism can be an important part of that culture in some nations and thus be central to that nation's national identity. In the modern world national flags (like the tri-color in India), national anthems, and



other symbols of national identity are very often regarded as sacred as if they were religious rather than political symbols. The psychological aspect of feeling; unity and in also depicts the idea of nationalism within us.

There are mainly three perspectives to understanding Colonialism and Nationalism in India

- Liberalism
- Marxism
- Postcolonialism



**Fig 1.1:** Perspectives to understanding Colonialism in India

### 1.3 LIBERAL

What do liberals say about Colonialism in India?





The liberal perspective generally accepts that colonialism is a normal phase of economic and political relationships which is rational. It brings changes in colonies which perhaps promote freedom, life, and liberty and protect individual rights in colonies. Many of the world's political systems are based on the values and concepts evident in liberalism.

### **1.3.1 Liberals see it as part of Capitalist expansion**

Colonialism came into world history as part of the global political-economic world order, that has been taking shape since the sixteenth century. Colonial power like Britain, France, and Italy tried to search markets for their finished good after industrialization in their respective states. As soon as the industrial revolution in Britain went to peak, India is been considered a big market for finished goods and a supplier of raw materials like cotton, indigo, coffee, and sugarcane. So, liberals see the colonial expansion of the British in India as part of Capitalist expansion.

### **1.3.2 It is been seen as a totality and a unified structure of the world system**

India's economy and society were completely and intricately integrated into the global capitalist system during colonialism, which was carried out for roughly 200 years in a subordinate or passive position. It should be noted that the colonial economy and society's dependence or subservience was the most important or determining factor, "not mere linkage or integration with world capitalism or the world market." However, the Marxists like A.R. Desai and R.P. Dutt had critical of the British administrative intervention in the Indian state. They said that with all its limitations the British rule played a positive and progressive role in respect of the rural life of India, as it elevated it to the status of national agriculture and linked it up with national agriculture and linked it up with the national and even world market.

### **1.3.3 Drain of wealth is the natural phenomenon of colonialism which comes along with natural foreign and foreign domination of colonies**

Economic drain is the natural phenomenon of East India company's administrative and economic policies. The colonial power utilized the Indian revenue, infrastructures, and natural resources to strengthen the British administrative system. Even though the company



had profited from oppressive land policies, unequal bullion trade, and acquisition of rare objects like diamonds and exporting them to Britain remain the priority of British rule in India. Dada Bhai Naroji mentioned this in his book *Poverty and Un British rule in India*. Students are requested to read this book. As it is been mentioned by Naroj and Gandhi that British rule was squarely responsible for the total ruination of the rural life of India, leading to the mass popularisation of the peasantry, handloom, and other handicraft industries.

In his book *Raj to Swaraj*, Pradhan elaborately wrote about these phenomena. He wrote that the malfunctioning of British rule lead to rural indebtedness, fragmentation of landholdings, the emergence of middlemen or sahuikars or money lenders, landless laborers, and absentee landlords in the forms of Zamindars (Pradhan: 36).

### 1.4 MARXIST

Let us examine, what Marxists say about Colonialism in India.

The Marxist look at colonialism as the contradiction and conflict that developed between the interests of the Indian people and the British rulers and see that as the principal reason for the development of nationalism but they also recognize the inner contradictions and conflict of interests between the various economic classes. They highlight and bring out the difference in the interests of the Indian rich elite and the poorer classes and integrate that into their analysis of the development of Indian nationalism and the resistance to colonialism. They argue the Indian national movement was a movement of the bourgeois. Indeed while agreeing with the nationalist analysis that the British rule resulted in mass poverty because of the exploitative destruction of the rural economy of agriculture and handicrafts they also see it as having caused some good as it also caused a structural transformation of the Indian society by destroying the feudal systems and modes of production and replaced that by a capitalist machine led mode of production.

As Bipin Chandra says: the Capitalist state is the instrument for enforcing the rule and domination of one class over another, and the colonial state is the organized power of the



metropolitan ruling class for dominating the entire colonial society( essay on Colonialism: 13). To Marxists the colonial state is a bourgeoisie state.

**1.4.1** To Marxists colonialism is a phase when is been completely integrated to world capitalist system in a subordinate and subservient position. Subordination means that the fundamental aspects of the colony's economy and society are not determined by its own needs or the needs and interests of its dominant social classes but by the needs and interest of its dominant social classes but by the needs and interests of the metropolitan economy and its capitalist class.( Bipin Chandra:Essays on Colonialism: 10)

**1.4.2** The next feature of colonialism is encompassed by the twin notions of unequal exchange (Aghiri Emmanuel) and internal disarticulation of the colonial economy and articulation of its different disarticulated parts, through the world market and imperialist hegemony, with the metropolitan economy (S. Amin and Hamza Alavi). For example, during British colonial period agriculture does not directly related to the colony's industrial sector; rather articulated to the world capitalist market and is linked to metropolitan market which buys its product like cotton, indigo, tea and coffee etc. The colony in that way experienced a "disarticulated generalized commodity production". Thus, colonies are specialized by production of raw materials and metropolies is concerned of manufactured goods. Marxist look at colonies as a supplier of raw materials and metropolis or colonizers as specializing in manufactured goods, high technology, and finished goods. The role of railways was to take care of subserving the interest of British trade and needs of British industry.

**1.4.3** Substantial part of the surplus generated in the colonies is being utilized in the imperialist center. Another important feature is the drain of wealth or unilateral transfer of social surplus went to metropolies through unreciprocated exports. Thus we can conclude that Marxist look at colonial intervention by British government deformed economic and extended reproduction and long run lead to underdeveloped and dependent model of economy at colonies or peripheries like India.



### 1.5 Post Colonialism

Let us examine, what Postcolonialist says about Colonialism in India.

Postcolonialism is the critical academic study of the cultural, political, and economic legacies of colonialism and imperialism. With an emphasis on the effects of human control and exploitation of colonized people and their territories, A critical theory analysis of the history, culture, literature, and rhetoric of (mostly European) imperial power is what it is particularly. The postcolonial ideas mainly questioned the generalized understanding that colonial powers are superior in their culture and tradition. Ultimately they wanted to destroy the main parts of native tradition and culture. Furthermore, they wanted to continuously reform the existing traditional pattern of life in colonies. The post-colonialist in the real sense oppose the change offered by British power and other colonial powers. Some of the eminent postcolnial theorists are Edward Said, Frantz Fannon , Gayatri Spivak Chakravorty.

The ultimate goal of postcolonialism is to finish the enduring effects of colonial cultures. It vehemently opposes the western countries that had described all the ex-colonial countries under a uniform umbrella label such as the ‘ third world’ or ‘global south. However, post-colonialism demonstrated a culture of heterogeneity. It can be summarized that colonialism has an uneven impact in different places and on different cultures and places. Postcolonialism recognizes that there is still resistance to the west among various nations. This resistance is practiced by many including subalterns, marginalized groups, and other least powerful strata. Thus, the main objective of postcolonialist theories is to clear the space for multiple voices. The main objective of postcolonial writings is ‘to speak their voices’.

Many writers like Frantz Fanon from Martinique or M. K. Gandhi from India had contributed to Post Colonialism. Anti Colonial thinkers emphasized what they called ‘ subaltern perspectives. The perspective talks about the tales of ordinary people and their cultural impact on them. However, by colonial rule, all cultures have become increasingly mixed and hybridized. Anti-colonial thinkers had always insisted that decolonization had to begin by changing mentality. How we can also summarize that the impact of colonial rule still exists.



Let us look at its impact on the international scenario, post-colonialism is concerned with disparities in global power and wealth accumulation. For example, global inequality, poverty, and underdevelopment have historical traces in unbritish rule taking place in India. However, post-colonialism owes a significant debt to Edward Said for his work on developing Orientalism. Said was been influenced by the writing of anti-colonial and nationalist thinkers such as Frantz Fanon (1967) and Albert Memmi (1991), whose works discuss the power of ‘others’.

Fanon explains that the ‘black man is made to believe in his inferiority to the ‘white colonialized through psychological aspects of colonialization, such as impositions, the colonized came to believe they are culturally inferior to others. The internalization made it easier for colonizers to justify and maintain their rule in colonies.

### 1.6 SUMMARY

To sum up, we can conclude that both colonialism and the emergence of nationalism in India have been drastic outcomes on Indian history. There are three perspectives to look at it; Liberalism, Marxism, and Postcolonialism. All these perspectives have their way of looking at colonialism in India. So, students are required to take multiple peasppectives to understand better about colonialism and its impact on Socio-economic and political aspects of colonialism.

### 1.7 GLOSSARY

**Colonialism:**the practice by which a powerful country controls another country or countries, in order to become richer

**Nationalism:**a political and idepological system in where a rich and powerful country controls other countries (colonies) which are not as rich and powerful

Postcolonialism



### 1.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Critically analyse the Marxist and Post colonial perspectives to understand Indian colonialism.

### 1.9 REFERENCES

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## **LESSON 2**

### **Approaches to the study of nationalism in India: Nationalist, Imperialist, Marxist, and Subaltern**

Dr. Shakti Pradayani Rout

Asst.Professor

School of Open Learning

Delhi University

## **STRUCTURE**

- 2.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction :Approches to Study Nationalism
- 2.3 Nationalist Approach
- 2.4 Imperialist Approach
- 2.5 The Colonial Approach
- 2.6 Marxist Approach
- 2.7 Summary
- 2.8 Glossary
- 2.9 Self-Assessment Questions
- 2.10 References

## **2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The aim is to engage with theoretical explanations of colonialism and nationalism in India.

At the end of the lesson, the student would

### **2.2 INTRODUCTION**

Let us discuss what you understand by nationalism.





Nationalism can be said to be the expression of a collective identity by a group of people living in a certain geographical territory who socially, culturally, economically, and politically identify themselves to one nation possibly governed by a government. Nationalism emphasizes the collective identity where to be a nation a group of people must be autonomous politically, united significantly and substantially, and express a single national culture. However, some nationalists have argued individualism can be an important part of that culture in some nations and thus be central to that nation's national identity. In the modern world national flags (like the tri-colour in India), national anthems, and other symbols of national identity are very often regarded as sacred as if they were religious rather than political symbols.

Historically before the emergence of nationalism in India, people were generally loyal to a city or to a particular king, ruler, or leader rather than to their nation. Indeed they often had no notions of belonging to a nation. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica nationalism in a true sense developed with the late-18th century American Revolution and French Revolution. Let us find out who coined the word , nationalism? Anyway, the term nationalism it is believed was coined by Johann Gottfried Herder (who used the word *nationalismus*) during the late 1770s. Thus it is impossible to pinpoint where and when nationalism emerged but its development can be said to have happened alongside the emergence of the modern westphalian state . The notion of rule by the people by popular will that were the underlying themes of the French Revolution and later the American Revolution in the late 18th century.

Thus like other social phenomenon nationalism also evolved historically. Along with the emergence of social and historical conditions communities came up in various parts of the world. They often came up through tribal, slave and feudal phases of social existence. Nations came into being at a certain stage of social, economic and cultural development. It was distinguished by certain specific characteristics such as:

- (a) an organic whole of the members of the nation living in a distinct territory
- (b) a single economy
- (c) a consciousness of a common economic existence





- (d) a common language and
- (e) naturally a common culture which evolved.

And this process developed from sixteenth century onwards as a part of the development of human history. Generally speaking development of nationalism in various countries was a prolonged historical process. It is in the development of historical conditions that nation states developed and development of nationalism in different countries was determined by its social and cultural history – its political, economic and social structures. The character of its various classes also assumed importance often played the role of the vanguard in the struggle for a national social existence. Therefore every nation was born and forged in unique way.

### 2.3 Nationalist Approach

The history of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century India is primarily the history of formation of a nation and the struggle against British Colonial rule. Indian nationalism is a historical phenomenon which happened in modern history. Nationalism in India evolved during the British colonial period as a result of various subjective and objective factors and forces, which developed within the Indian society under the conditions of British rule and has impacted across the world.

Pre-British India was unique, differently structured and traditionally set under various princely states which sharply differed from the pre-capitalist medieval societies of Europe. It was a vast country inhabited by huge population speaking many languages with different religions. Socially it was dominated by a population which was Hindu in character, but there was no homogeneity. This extreme social, and religious division of the Hindus in particular and the Indians in general presents a peculiar background to the growth of Indian nationalism. It was under the conditions of political subjection that the British introduced for their own purposes certain changes which introduced new social forces which radically changed the economic structure of Indian society. It established in particular:

- (a) a centralised state (with a modern civil service, centralised administration, a judiciary based on English common law substantially. new land ownership laws, the zamindari system etc.)



- (b) modern education including in western sciences (with the establishment of universities and colleges)
- (c) modern means of transport and communication (postal system, railways, roads etc.)
- (d) the modern printing press
- (e) mechanised machine based industries

Thus, British Raj has tried to brought changes to all social forces and tried to exploit the Indian society for the benefit of the British Crown. Revolting against all such exploitative character of British rule Indian nationalism has raise its voice and tried to manifest into a new nation.

It has been argued by some scholars that the development of a nationalist consciousness happened as part of a historical process triggered by the national movement which to begin with was anti-colonial but later was deeply national. Professor Bipan Chandra (and others) have in this context commented: 'The national movement also played a pivotal role in the historical process through which the Indian people got formed into a nation or a people. National leaders from Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjea and Tilak to Gandhiji and Nehru accepted that India was not yet a fully structured nation but a nation-in-the-making and that one of the major objectives and functions of the movement was to promote the growing unity of the Indian people through a common struggle against colonialism. In other words, the national movement was seen both as a product of the process of the nation-in-the-making and as an active agent of the process. This process of the nation-in-the making was never counter-posed to the diverse regional, linguistic and ethnic identities in India. On the contrary, the emergence of a national identity and the flowering of other narrower identities were seen as processes deriving strength from each other'. (Bipan Chandra:23)

On the very concept of nationalism in general (and not merely the development of nationalism in India) some of the nationalist approaches have been quite novel and different from each other. For example, J Anthony Smith has argued that there is a 'core doctrine of nationalism' which includes and fuses three ideals: (a) collective self determination of the people, (b) the expression of the national character and individuality and (c) the vertical division of the world into unique nations each contributing its special genius to the common fund of humanity.



Looking at the cultural aspects, Plamenatz has said nationalism is a cultural phenomenon which takes a political form by the acceptance of a common set of standards by which the state of development of a particular national culture is measured.

Thus, to the nationalist approach it can be assumed that homogeneity between people in a group leads to the birth of a nation. As Gellner has said: 'it is not the case that nationalism imposes homogeneity, it is rather that a homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism'. The objective inescapable imperative that Gellner refers to is the cultural homogeneity that he argued is the as an essential concomitant of the industrial society that evolves from the growth of industrial capitalism. Gellner also argued, nationalism though it may define and identify itself in the name of a folk culture or original culture of a particular people it may actually be just an imposition of a high culture on society.

Anderson in his study of nationalism has found usually a historically political community always existed before the cultural systems of a religious community and the development of the dynastic realm. He had identified that the printing press and the spread of Christianity particularly Protestantism had played a substantive role in the emergence of nationalism. He has argued what made the new communities possible was interaction between system of production and productive relations (capitalism), technology of communication (print) and the fatality of human linguistic diversity by which he meant the tendency of diverse linguistic groups of not staying together as one nation. He argued three distinct models of nationalism appeared: 'creole nationalism' where the vertical identities were transformed to the horizontal identities because economic interests of certain classes clashed and the ideological criticism of imperialism strengthen the spread of that identity, 'linguistic nationalism' of kind that was seen in Europe and 'official nationalism' typically of the type seen in Russia where there was imposition of cultural homogeneity from the top, through state action. Russian 'Slavic nationalism' is been created on the basis of linguistic homogeneity. You can see the resurgent Russian Slavic culture across the Eurasian space till now.



### 2.4 Imperialist Approach

In many ways India had never been a nation until the British had come and ruled us for centuries. In a land as vast and inhabited by a population as large and as varied as India's, the process of the growth of Indian nationalism has been very complex and interesting. The Indian population spoke many languages, followed many religions and sects (within a religion) and the population of the most populous faith, Hindus, was divided along caste lines. With the existing diversity, Indian nationalism simply been strengthened by the anti-colonial spirit.

Thus many thinkers, particularly many British historians, have taken the view that Indian could not have seen the development of nationalism and become one united nation unless the British had come and established (as they did) a colony by uniting the nation into one administrative whole. So, students its always important to think now, " could India have developed to a greater extent if colonial rule had not intervened?". Some how we can conclude that the nationalism in India has involved in the back ground to eradicate the exploitative characterstic of British administration.

Let us discuss about the various definition of nationalism and try to find out how and why India wasn't readily regarded as a nation by various eminent histories. It si been said that India is a state but "nation in Making". The thinkers British historian E.H. Carr termed nationalism as the term nation has been used to denote a human group with the following characteristics:

- (a) The idea of a common government whether as a reality in the present or past or as an aspiration of the future.
- (b) A certain size and closeness of contact between all its individual members.
- (c) A more or less defined territory.
- (d) Certain characteristics (of which the most frequent is language) clearly distinguishing the nation from other nations and non-national groups.
- (e) Certain interests common to the individual members.



(f) A certain degree of common feeling or will, associated with a picture of the nation in the minds of the individual members' ( E.H.Carr (1939), NATIONALISM, quoted in R.P. Dutt:21)

It is evident from the above definition, that India could hardly have been called a nation by them when they arrived. In fact the early British imperialists before any sort of national fervour had made a beginning were convinced that India wasn't a nation.

In fact, it is evident that the Britishers found it difficult to mentally cope with the idea of a national India even as late as the 1930s when the Simon Commission's Report was published. Even as late as the 1930s the British were holding on to their belief that India was somehow being held and governed by them and without them would break into pieces. But in reality that nationalist conception among the masses had set in.

British scholars like L.F. Rushbrook Williams whom R.P. Dutt has described as one of the 'modern imperialist apologists' had tried to suggest that it was the civilised British reign itself and its modernising and influence that contributed to the creation of a national consciousness. They have suggested that Indian educated by the British in the democratic liberal ways of English history and its gradual acquisition of popular liberties impressed British trained and educated Indians who then as the next step demanded or started wishing for the same standards for themselves and for the Indian people.

In the words of R.P. Dutta, the democratic evolution of the modern age, which developed in many lands, including England as one of its earliest homes, is not the peculiar patent of England. Nor is it correct that it requires the alien domination of a country in order to implant the seeds of democratic revolution. The American Declaration of Independence, and still more the great French Revolution with its gospel of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, far more than the already ageing English parliamentary-monarchical compromise, were the great inspirers of the democratic movement of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 have performed a corresponding role as the signal and starting point of the awakening of the peoples, and especially of the awakening consciousness of the subject peoples of Asia and all the colonial countries to the claim of



national freedom since colonial rule. The Indian awakening has developed in unison with these world currents can be demonstrated from the stages of its growth.

The idea of Indian nationalism has evolved when Raja Ram Mohan Roy, while going to England in 1830, has enthusiastically supported for the principles of the French Revolution. The idea has also been strengthened by creation of The Indian National Congress (INC). INC was originally instituted under official inspiration as an intended instrument of safety valve between the rising movement of the people and safeguard British rule in India.

### **2.5 The Colonial Approach**

The colonial approach mainly supported and believed in the benevolent attitude of British administration. They wished to emphasize the benevolent effect of the British rule and many of them genuinely believed what they said. The colonial approach was theorised for the first time by Bruce T. McCully, an American scholar, in 1940. The liberal academic structure to this approach was developed by Reginald Coupland and after 1947 by Percival Spear who argued the British proved their benevolent intentions by ultimately agreeing to grant India independence which they could have easily refused and held on. A new group of neo-traditionalist historians who are referred to as the Cambridge School with prominent thinkers being Anil Seal, John Gallagher, Judith Brown and others have also argued along essentially adopting the colonial approach when they have argued that India was not even a 'nation-in-making' but a conglomeration of castes, religious and ethnic communities and linguistic groups of masses.

They have argued the national movement was basically a forum for the various divisions to compete for favours and to strengthen their own positions and pursue their narrow communities. The basic contradiction between the interests of the Indian people and the British rulers that led to the rise of the Indian national movement is denied by them. They also vehemently deny or refuse to accept that the economic, social, cultural and political development of India required the overthrow of colonialism. They do not agree that India was in the process of unfolding into a nation and insist India was just a conglomeration of castes and communities. The nationalism that was expressed was merely a cover for political





organisations who were formed basically along caste and community lines and were competing with each for favours and gains from the state. Anil Seal of the Imperialist writes: 'What from a distance appear as their political strivings were often, on close examination, their efforts to conserve or improve the position of their own prescriptive groups'. ( Anil Seal:342)

The colonial approach ignores the effects of war, inflation, disease, drought, depression etc as causative factors in the rise of Indian nationalism not to mention spiritual and other reasons and the kinship of religious culture that existed between peoples from different regions who spoke different languages but shared similar religious beliefs. The school of analysis that adopts the colonial approach has argued the Indian national movement was a cover for the struggle for power between various sections of the Indian elite, and between them and the foreign elite.

### 2.6 Marxist Approach

The Marxist approach can be said to have been pioneered by R. Palme Dutt and later by A.R. Desai but many others have contributed. The Marxist approach recognises the contradiction and conflict that developed between the interests of the Indian people and the British rulers . They have seen that as the principal reason for the development of nationalism but they also recognise the inner contradictions and conflict of interests between the various economic classes. They highlight and bring out the difference in the interests of the Indian rich elite and the poorer classes and integrate that into that into their analysis of the development of Indian nationalism and the resistance to colonialism. They argued that the Indian national movement of India was a movement of the bourgeoisie class .

Indeed while agreeing with the nationalist analysis that the British rule resulted in mass poverty because of the exploitative destruction of the rural economy of agriculture and handicrafts they also see it as having caused some good as it also caused a structural transformation of the Indian society by destroying the feudal systems and modes of production and replaced that by a capitalist machine led mode of production. Thus the feudal caste and class hierarchies of the villages were weakened, and new classes emerged in Indian



society particularly as people migrated to the cities to work in factories. Also a new state structure was created based on a new administrative and judicial system of the English.

### 2.6.1

In the words of Prof. Irfan Habib has put it thus that the unification of the country on an economic plane by the construction of railways and the introduction of the telegraph in the latter half of the nineteenth century, undertaken for its own benefit by the colonial regime, and the centralisation of the administration which the new modes of communications and transport made possible, played their part in making Indians view India as a prospective single political entity. The modernization of education (undertaken in a large part by indigenous effort) and the rise of the press disseminated the ideas of India's nationhood and the need for constitutional reform. A substantive basis for India's nationhood was laid when nationalists like Dadabhai Naoroji (*Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, 1901) and R.C. Dutt (*Economic History of India*, 2 vols., 1901 and 1903) raised the issues of poverty of the Indian people and the burden of colonial exploitation, which was felt in equal manner throughout India. We see, then, that three complex processes enmeshed to bring about the emergence of India as a nation: the preceding notion of India as a country, the influx of modern political ideas, and the struggle against colonialism. The last was decisive: the creation of the Indian nation can well be said to be one major achievement of the national movement.' (Irfan Habib, 'The nation that is India'. *The little Magazine*, Vol I/I: issue 2)

The imperialist exploitation of India for instance and the role of the British finance-capital (business groups like Andrew Yule and Jardine Skinner), of the profits made by the British ruling class and the common misery of the people as a consequence of that exploitation and the struggles that that misery inevitably led to among the masses irrespective of religious or racial divisions and the ruthless suppression of those struggles by the British administration all combined and added up and piled up over the years to cause the birth and growth of a national consciousness among the Indian people. During the British colonial rule, first under East Indian Company and subsequently under the British government from 1858 onwards, the Indian people entered into a period of severe repression and exploitation. There were a number of peasant rebellions, which was prominent in the history of eighteenth-century India. There were of course a large number of famines, diseases and death during this period.





### 2.6.2

As R. Palme. Dutt himself summarises the rise of Indian nationalism in his words. According to him, the Indian National Movement arose from social conditions, from the conditions of imperialism and its system of exploitation, and from the social and economic forces generated within Indian society under the conditions of that exploitation; the rise of the Indian bourgeoisie and its growing competition against the domination of the British bourgeoisie were inevitable, whatever the system of education also strengthened the bourgeoisie ,clearks or Babus.(R. Palme Dutt: 303)

The Marxist approach sees the natural uprising of the poor in reaction to British exploitation having been usurped by the elite bourgeois leadership that develop particularly in the Congress. The Marxist approach has been criticised for having ignored the mass aspects of the national movement and the emotive religious and cultural aspects and reactions. Professor Bipan Chandra (and others) for instance have commented: 'They see the bourgeoisie as playing the dominant role in the movement - they tend to equate or conflate the national leadership with the bourgeoisie or capitalist class. They also interpret the class character of the movement in terms of its forms of struggle (i.e., in its non-violent character) and in the fact that it made strategic retreats and compromises'. (Bipan Chandra: 22)

### 2.7 Subaltern Approach

The subaltern approach or school is the most recent and was mainly developed by historian Ranjit and Ramachandra Guha, who had been deeply influenced by the writings of Gramsci, a Neo Marxist an Italian thinker. Subsequently others like Partho Chatterjee and Sumit Sarkar also did notable work following this approach. The Subaltern Studies Collective, founded in 1982, was begun with the goal of establishing a new critique of both colonialist and nationalist perspectives in the historiography of colonized countries. They focused on the course of 'subaltern history' or the history of ordinary people by studying peasant revolts, popular insurgencies etc to the complex processes of domination and subordination in a variety of the changing institutions and practices of evolving modernity. They examined institutions such as colonial law and colonial prisons, popular notions of kinship and disease,



the position of women in colonial society, popular memories of anti-colonial and sectarian violence etc.

The subaltern approach seeks to study the development of history and the evolution of Indian nationalism from the viewpoint of subordinate masses like poor peasants, tribals, women, untouchables and other non-elite powerless dispossessed sections of Indian society. They argued Indian society had always been divided into the elite and the subaltern. There had always existed a fundamental contradiction between the interests of these two groups. They argued history had always been studied and recorded or written for posterity from the point of view of the elite dominant classes and groups. They also argued there was no real conflict of interest between the Indian elite (or the elite of Indian origin like zamindars and industrialists) and the British elite (whether business or bureaucratic) and the Indian National Congress was only a cover under which the real battle for power was being fought by the competing elite groups. It was actually the subaltern groups who were the real victims of colonial rule and many of the Indian elite actually gained. The subaltern groups reacted by launching various small relatively unknown and un-celebrated revolts all over the country whereas it was only the role of the Indian National Congress and elitist movements like that were assumed to have been the main constituents of the national movement. They argued there was a great need to study and analyse the role and contribution of these political and social rebellions and eruptions.

The subaltern school rested their analytical structure on some Gramscian concepts:

- (a) that the state is a combination of official coercion plus elite hegemony and
- (b) there is a struggle for power for this hegemony or domination and for assuming the moral and intellectual leadership of the new evolving nation which
- (c) would be in the nature of a kind of 'passive revolution' of the owners of capital and productive resources. For in situations where the emerging bourgeois does not have the social conditions to establish complete hegemony over the new nation, it resorts to passive revolution by attempting a 'molecular transformation' of the old dominant classes into partners in a new historical bloc and only partially appropriate the popular masses, in order to first create a state as a necessary precondition for the establishment of capitalism as a dominant mode of production. Since frontal attack on the state is not possible hence they resort to a struggle for positions, ideological political positioning etc.



### 2.7.1

The subaltern thinkers like Partho Chatterjee have argued in the context of the Indian national movement the new powerful native Indian classes that emerged tried to assert their intellectual moral leadership over a modernizing Indian nation and stake its claim to power in opposition to the British colonial masters. That is the analytical approach followed by the subaltern thinkers in understanding the Indian national movement and the growth of nationalism in India. As Ranjit Guha puts it: "The domain of politics was 'structurally split'—not unified, homogenous, as elite interpretations of nationalism and nation-state had made it out to be....What is clearly left out in this un-historical [elitist] historiography is the politics of the people. For parallel to the domain of elite politics there existed throughout the colonial period another domain of Indian politics in which the principle actors were not the dominant groups of the indigenous society or the colonial authorities but the subaltern classes and groups constituting the mass of the labouring populations and intermediate strata in town and country - that is, the people. This was an autonomous domain, for it neither originated from the elite politics nor did its existence depend on the latter. (Source: Guha, Ranjit., *Subaltern Studies I*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982, p4)

The subaltern thinkers argue recognizing the structural split between elite and subaltern is fundamental to the study of colonial history, politics and culture in India. The subalterns also reject the 'spurious claims' by Indian elite readings of nationalism as people's consent to a rule of their 'own' bourgeoisie in the anti-colonial movements led by the Indian nationalist elite. They provide empirical evidence to claim "how on one occasion after another and in region after region the initiative of such campaigns passed from elite leaderships to the mass of subaltern participants., who defied high command and headquarters to make these struggles their own by framing them in codes specific to traditions of popular resistance and phrasing them in idioms derived from the communitarian experience of working and living together". (Source; Ibid.)

### 2.8 Summary

Indian nationalism had evolved and been strengthened by the notion of British administrative exploitation. It took 200 years to consolidate the idea of nationalism in India. The national understanding can be seen through various perspective as we have discussed above. Each



perspective had given separate but integrated view that nationalism had been forced all Indian citizens to dream about India that is Bharat today. Thus , it is not at all a overnight evolution. It is been deepen by the contribution of reformers, nationalist, writers ,sublaterns and many who lost their precious lives to the national independence movements.

### 2.9 Glossary

**Nationalism:** Nationalism is an ideology that emphasizes loyalty, devotion, or allegiance towards own nation and holds that some amount of obligation is also demanded.

**Subaltern:** "Subaltern", meaning "of inferior rank", is a term adopted by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those working-class people in the Soviet Union who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include peasants, workers and other groups denied access to hegemonic power. Gramsci was interested in the historiography of the subaltern 'classes'.

### 2.10 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Distinguish between the various approaches to the study of colonialism and nationalism.
2. What is nationalism? Write a short essay on nationalism and discuss various approaches to it.
3. Give a brief outline of colonialism and nationalism in the context of India.

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**Unit 2.**

**Colonial Rule in India and its impact:**

Lesson 3• Constitutional developments and the colonial state (Not Recived)

Lesson 4• Colonial ideology of civilizing mission: Utilitarians and Missionaries

Lesson 5• Impact on agriculture, land relations, industry and ecology

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## **LESSON 4**

### **Colonial ideology of civilizing mission: Utilitarian and Missionaries**

Dr. Shakti Pradayani Rout  
Asst. Professor  
School Of Open Learning  
University of Delhi

## **STRUCTURE**

- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Colonial Ideology: Civilizing Mission
  - 4.3.1 Utilitarian
  - 4.3.2 Missionary
  - 4.3.3 Difference between Utilitarian and Missionary
- 4.4 Understanding Orientalism
- 4.5 Critique of Colonial ideology of Civilising Mission
  - 4.5.1 Mission of Civilization and Rise of National Reform and Revival
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Glossary
- 4.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 4.9 References
- 4.10 Suggested Readings

## **4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After completion of this lesson student would understand the reasons and objectives of English colonial rule in India. Thus, in the end student would get to know various angles of intellectual foundations of British administration in India.



### 4.2 INTRODUCTION

After reading the chapter on approaches and perspectives of colonialism and nationalism in India you may have learned that what is colonialism and how colonialism is being used to subordinate Indian people. The purpose and mission of British colonialism can be better understood by analysing the major purpose and intention of British Raj.



Objective of Colonial Ideology ( Author's self Analysis)

### 4.3 COLONIAL IDEOLOGY

After the conquest of Ireland in Sixteenth century, the English gradually emerged as the biggest and strong empire of the world. It had self incurred its duty to “civilize the backward people” and tried to spread the idea from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The acquiring the new territories and spreading of imperial mission brought new grandeur and glories which can





be summarized as “ the sun never set in British Empire”. The foundation for ‘imperial’ attitude was been instilled in the British administrative outlook and they have established a Britishness which can be said as superior in quality.

The civilising mission, a political justification for colonialism and military intervention that had objectives to modernise and Westernize indigenous peoples, particularly during the period from the 15th to the 20th century. In the late-15th to the middle of the 20th century, the phrase was most frequently employed to support French colonialism as a tenet of European civilization. French Algeria, French West Africa, French Indo-China, Portuguese Angola and Portuguese Guinea, Portuguese Mozambique, and Portuguese Timor, among other possessions, were colonially exploited under the guise of a “civilising mission,” which served as a cultural rationale. The colonial activities of the British, Germans, and Americans were also often justified as part of a civilising mission. It was linked to the Russification and the Russian invasion of Central Asia inside the Russian Empire. Western European colonial powers asserted that they had a duty to spread Western civilization to what they saw as the barbaric and primitive civilizations of the East since they were Christian states.

This ideology of civilizing mission provided the justification of reforming the social, cultural and facilities of colonies. During pre independent era British Raj tried to interfere many of the religious practices and wanted to reform them. For example British Raj had tried to bring Sharada Act to increase the marriageable age of girls; wanted to eradicate the Sati as a practice etc. During the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the British government tried to reform the culture and society to more liberal form which is being argued by Metcalf as ‘evangelicals’. Metcalf along with civilizing mission the recruited evangelicals who came from Britain as free traders, law reformers, educationists and utilitarian theorist also tried to penetrate the socio-cultural aspects of the then India and tried many time to convert them in to Christianity.

They had a mission that India is in stagnant condition, so, reform is needed to liberate Indians from the religious trap which is full of superstition and societal illusions. The missionaries argued that rather than bringing legislative changes, teaching Western ethics and values can bring substantive change in a consistent manner.

In the beginning of the imperial and colonial rule the government of East India Company functioned very apathetic way and recognized the authority of the decaying Mughal



emperors. Lord Clive himself had recommended a system of 'double government' as a matter of expediency under which the criminal justice system would be left in the hands of nawabi officials, while civil and fiscal matters would be controlled by the company (Bandyopadhyay: 66). The policy of non-interference were basically very pragmatic in the context that the company needed to avoid civil disobedience and smooth understanding of new acquired territory, culture, fundamental intricacies of the society.

### 4.3.1 Missionaries

English missionaries came to India to teach Indian population about the western ethics and values which remain the foundational stone of Christianity reforms in a more consistent manner. The idea of British missionaries was to help Indians to improve and strengthen religious outlook. During that time Indian tradition and culture were full of with superstition and prejudice.

The missionaries started a mission against Indian underdevelopment and brought a mission to change the very nature of 'Hindustan'. The chief exponent of the changes came from Charles Grant who was located at Srirampur near Calcutta. The principal problem of India, he argued in 1792, was religious idea which perpetuate ignorance and superstition. His ideas been legitimated by the then British parliament by the Charter Act of 1813, which allowed Christian missionaries to enter into India without restriction.

### 4.3.2 Utilitarians

Utilitarianism is an ethical theory based on the moral philosophy of pleasure and pain. The pleasure is been calculated by felicific calculus. The felicific calculus says that an action which produces greater pleasure to greater number of people to be considered as right action and pain need to be avoided. It is one of the liberal ideology of English administration during 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the basis of this the whole English administration is been reformed. The propagators of this philosophy are Bentham, James Mill, Lord William Bentick, Lord Dalhousie and J. S Mill. James Mill also served as an administrator in British India.

James Mill also wrote a book "History of British India" which was published in 1817 and tried to strengthen Indian British administration by bringing new reforms. In his book he denied all the glorious claim of India in the field of culture, religion and tradition. In the



same time he suggested needed change and strengthen societal norms on the basis of scientific precision. James Mill was highly influenced by Scottish Enlightenment tradition where true measure of civilizational value can be seen on the basis of scientific temper.

### 4.3.3 Difference between Utilitarian and liberals

Majorly utilitarian were influenced by liberal notion of bringing reforms in Indian society. They wanted to assimilate India as a colony to British empire but there was a difference of outlook in both in the early phase of colonialism. In the beginning the Orientalist viewed Indian culture as

Utilitarians differed from liberals majorly on the introduction of English language in education and administration. During early 18<sup>th</sup> century India debated between Orientalist and Anglicist on the nature of education to be introduced in India. For example: the liberal Lord Macaulay in his famous Education Minute of 1835 strongly recommended English education. But in the same time utilitarian Mill favoured vernacular education which was suitable for Indian needs.

Lord Bentick who was ardent follower of Mill who had tried to abolish sati and child infanticide through legislation. He justified his legislation on the ground of western education and scientific understanding. The spread of modern western British education is undoubtedly another of the great phenomenon that went a long way in ultimately forging a national consciousness. Initially the British government had organised a huge state machinery to run India and a large number of educated people were needed to staff the huge government organisation and such a large number of people could not be sourced from England. So it became necessary to start schools and colleges in India, which would turn out large numbers of usable graduates who could be used to fill the sub-ordinate posts after filling the top posts with the British. Also there was a school of thought among the British, which believed that the British liberal culture of democracy and rule of law was the best in the world and favoured its introduction in India. Britishers introduced a liberal education system during colonial phase. They also believed that with the introduction of this education and culture worldwide gradually social and political unification of the world could be achieved. Consequently many Britishers like Macaulay were infused with a missionary zeal to spread British education in India. Apart from the need of British imperialism for educated people to



run it's shop and the missionary zeal of some of it's statesmen like Macaulay, the third important factor that played a major role was the enthusiastic adoption by some Indians themselves like Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Raja Ram Mohan Roy became the pioneer of progressive modern education in India and hailed the English education as the key to the treasures of scientific and democratic thought of the modern west. He declared that the perpetuation of the traditional systems of education would only perpetuate the old superstitions and regressive lines of social authority. Thus, some of the British India administrator wanted some reforms in Indian society and others wanted to just do business and make profits.

### **4.4 What do you understand by Orientalism? It means 'European idea of Orient'**

Orientalism is type of domination, a persuasion to change and reform the Orient ( the east) for improvement. Some how orientalism is a cultural and political fact where Western authority tries to reform Asian societies according to the norms of the Western society. Edward Said's landmark text Orientalism brought the debate on the cultural imperialism into account.

Orientalism in practice in its early phase could be seen in the policies of the Company's government under Warren Hastings. The fundamental principle of this tradition was that the conquered people were to be ruled by their own laws (Bandyopadhyay: 68) In the initial phase Orientalism had given respect for the ancient Indian traditions. But later on this policy was been abandoned and legitimized the more Anglicisation of the administration. The policy of domination was called as "oriental despotism".

The idea of despotism was something which distinguished the Oriental state from its European counterparts. From the beginning European wanted to free Indian society from the despotism activities of the Rajas, the zamindars, the local remnants of the Mughal states. Through various new policies British administration wanted to reform such traditions. For example- to bring change the land relationship it had introduced systems like Permanent settlement act. Lord Cornwallis who introduced Permanent settlement with the hope that the rule of law and private property rights would liberate individual from the shackle of customs



and traditions of zamindari system (ibid: 69). In this way British intervention had tried to modernized and commercialized the land right.

**ACTIVITY :** Try to find out the difference between Occident (rational and superior) and Orient (aberrant and inferior) in world Politics. Why the terms like first, second, third world are being used to define developed, underdeveloped and developing nations are being used in political writings. What is the best term to define Indian development today? How India would show case Indian uniqueness to the world?

### 4.5 Critique of Colonial ideology of Civilising Mission

Many scholars, argued that the colonial ideology of civilizing mission did not work very well in India. In India, colonial control could not function properly and had not have any moral ground of justifications . There are many reasons of it , let us discuss two must important reasons . First, there weren't enough financial rewards for liberal education in India, and second, educated Indians used this knowledge to question colonial rule itself.As a result, this civilizing mission did not result in colonial power gaining hegemony.To gain control over colonial society, they had to use force and establish a military like Indian National Congressny Subhas Chandra Bose.

#### 4.5.1 Mission of Civilization and Rise of National Reform and Revival

Through Indian modernist and nationalist ideologies, the colonial ideology of civilizing mission also paved the way for social reform in India.Indian indigenous social reform and Hindu revivalism emerged in response to utilitarian and missionary perspectives on reform.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Rabindra Nath Tagore, two modernist social reformers, provided an extensive and more in-depth critique of Indian society through the lenses of contemporary ideals like liberty, equality, justice, and rationality.Tagore argued in 1893 about the public's rise in India during this time.Social reform became a major nationalist agenda at that time



because of this. These modern Indian nationalists demonstrated their undying faith in the Enlightenment's utilitarian justification of the civilizing mission. Social reformers and patriot buckled down for bringing social changes. Indian nationalists opposed child marriage, the dowry system, caste taboos, sati, and kulin polygamy, among other unjust social systems in India.

Hindu revivalism among Indian nationalists was born out of missionary, a colonial ideology of civilizing mission. Hindu revivalists began the process of reform in Hindu Colonial Ideology of Civilising Mission Utilitarian and Communitarian perspective Institute of Lifelong Learning, University of Delhi religion from within, in opposition to the missionary's primary goal of bringing about reform through religious conversion. Hindu revivalists attempted to define India specifically in terms of Hindu religion, myths, and history, despite the existence of various strands and contradictory tendencies.

Revivalists like Ramakrishna Paramhans, Vivekananda, and later Bal Gangadhar Tilak advocated for religious reform to protect Hindus from missionaries' assault. As a result, we now understand how the Civilizing mission helped the colonists achieve their goal of dominating the Indian population they had colonized.

But at the end, we also realized how this process helped nationalists in India become reformers and counter reformers. We understood how Indian nationalism emerged in India as a result of colonial ideology.

### 4.6 SUMMARY

Let us conclude and summarize that colonialism denote a set of unequal relationship between colonial power and the colonies. British colonial power came into India with a vision and mission to rule and reform. The mission was to civilize the non European and traditional societies. In the same time they are also tried to do some amount of trading with us. But the way colonial power had segregated the world has an impact still exist, in the mind of the people. The superiority and subordinate relationship evolved during that time has not completely disappeared from Indian mind set.





### 4.7 GLOSSARY

**Orientalism:** Orientalism is type of domination, a persuasion to change and reform the Orient ( the east) for improvement.

**Utilitarianism:** Utilitarianism is a normative ethical principle based on consequentialism. Jeremy Bentham propounded this theory which was being followed by James Mill and J.S. Mill. According to his thesis the world is ruled by two important aspects of pleasure and pain. The main objective of human being is to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. The most popular principle is called greatest happiness of greatest number.

**Civilizing Mission:** Civilising mission, is a political justification for colonialism and military intervention that had objectives to modernise and Westernize indigenous peoples, particularly during the period from the 15th to the 20th century.

**Evangelical:** It is related to a Christian church belief where they have the mission to convert, non Christian people to Christianity all over the world.

### 4.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What do we understand by imperial or colonial ideology? How it was being used to colonialize India.
2. Briefly discuss the utilitarian and missionaries perspective of civilizing mission.
3. Write an essay on the colonial mission to orient non European people.

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### LESSON 5

#### Impact on Agriculture, Land Relations, Industry and Ecology

Dr. Shakti Pradayani Rout

Asst.Professor

School of Open Learning

### STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Learning Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Agriculture and Change in Land Relations Section 1
  - 5.3.1 Permanent Settlement Act
  - 5.3.2 Ryotwari Settlement
  - 5.3.3 Mahalwari Settlement
- 5.3.4 Consequences of the British land revenue systems
- 5.4 Industry
  - 5.4.1 Decline of Indian Handicrafts
  - 5.4.2 Decline of Village Artisans
  - 5.4.3 Impact of British Industrialization on Indian Market
- 5.5 Ecology
- 5.6 Summary
- 5.7 Glossary
- 5.8 Self-Assesement Questions
- 5.9 References
- 5.10 Suggested Readings

### 5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

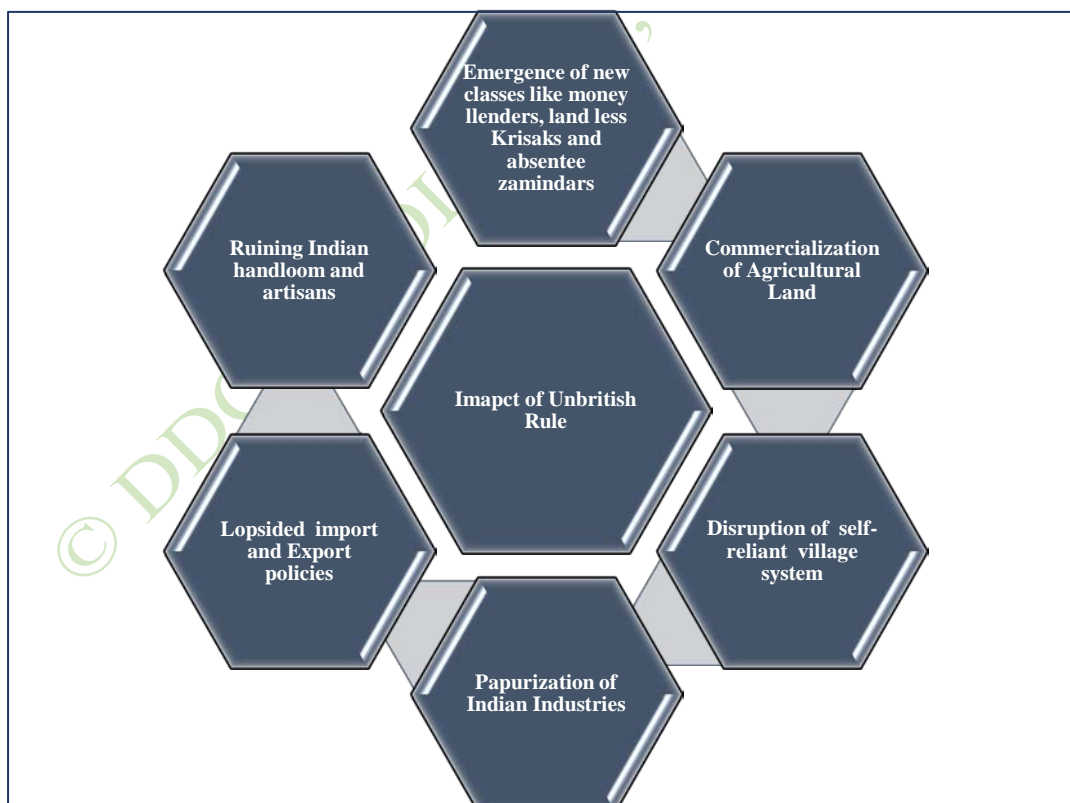
After completeing this lesson the learner would become familiar with the state of Indian economy during colonial time. The lesson would discuss on agriculture , land relations,



industry and ecology of India during British Raj and the new changes brought to it by the administration.

### 5.2 INTRODUCTION

Before the arrival of British authority, India had a self-sufficient economy. It was regulated by traditional or conventional style by the decrees of Raja and implemented by Zamindari system. Although most people made their living via agriculture, the nation's economy was characterised by a variety of manufacturing industries. India was renowned for its handicraft industries in the production of metal, precious stone, and textiles made of cotton and silk, among other things. Based on the good reputation of the premium materials used and the high levels of craftsmanship evident in all imports from India, these products enjoyed a global market.



Impact of British rule on Indian Industries (*self Analysis*)



### 5.3 Agriculture and Change in Land Relations

During British colonial rule, the economy of India remained primarily agrarian. Almost 85% of the people lived predominantly in villages and relied on agriculture for their livelihood. Even though a major portion of the population works in agriculture, still the sector remained static and frequently experienced drought. Agricultural productivity decreased, because of traditional style of land holding and methods which are old in nature

This stagnation in the agricultural sector was mostly brought on by the numerous land settlement methods that the colonial authority imposed. Particularly, under the zamindari system, which was put in place in the former Bengal Presidency, which had entitled Zamindars to collect revenue on behalf of the colonial authority. Both colonial authority and zamindars did nothing to improve the condition of the state of agriculture and farmers.

All the zamindars had to collect taxes from villages and to provide fixed payment to the government of the East India Company. The East India Company also created a group of landlords out of the military petty chiefs from the past by taking over their military, political and administrative powers and converting their earlier 'tributes' into revenue of their government. Some persons who had aided them militarily or otherwise were gifted land and made landlords. Later when the British found that it was economically disadvantageous to have fixed permanent revenue from the landlords, the new land settlements were introduced on a temporary basis. While the landlords created under the temporary land settlements were given proprietary rights over land, the revenue they had to pay to the government could be subsequently revised.

Permanent Zamindari Settlements prevailed in Bengal, Bihar and sections of North Madras and in total covered about 20 per cent of the British Indian territory. The Temporary Zamindari Settlements covered the major portion of the United provinces, certain zones of Bengal and Bombay, the Central Provinces, and the Punjab and constituted about 30 per cent of the British Indian territory. In 1820, Sir Thomas Munro introduced the Ryotwari system in



Madras, where he was Governor because he felt that the landlord system was alien to Indian tradition. Time to time British administration brought various reforms in land revenue system.

### ACTIVITY

What were the various forms of revenue settlement adopted by the British in India? Where did they implement them and to what effect? How far do you think those settlements have a bearing on the current agricultural scenario in India? (In your attempt to find answers to these questions, you may refer to Ramesh Chandra Dutt's Economic History of India, which comes in three volumes. Students are also suggested to read DadabhaiNaraji's book Poverty and Un-British Rule. In this book author had highlighted how British economic policies extracted wealth from India to finance Britain's administration. The theory is popularly known as 'Drain of Wealth'.

#### 5.3.1 Permanent Settlement Act:

There was extreme suffering and social unrest among the cultivators as a result of the zamindars' exploitation of them. The British administration did nothing to alleviate it. The low agricultural production was also persisting by low levels of technology, a lack of irrigational infrastructure, and a minor usage of fertilisers. It was brought in 1793 by the Company administration headed by Charles, Earl Cornwallis. The Cornwallis Code, a wider body of legislation, brought many changes in the land owning rights and other administrative changes. The East India Company divided land relation system into three sections under this: revenue, judicial, and commercial. Zamindars, native Indians who were considered to be landowners, were assigned in charge of collecting taxes. This divide had given rise to an Indian landed class that backed by British rule.



### **5.3.2 Ryotwari Settlement:**

This system of land revenue was instituted in the late 18th century by Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras in 1820. This was practised in the Madras and Bombay areas, as well as Assam and Coorg provinces. The taxes were directly collected by the government from the peasants, Zamindar as intermediaries are being abolished. In this system, the peasants or cultivators were regarded as the owners of the land. They had ownership rights, could sell, mortgage or gift the land. The rates were high and unlike the Permanent System, they were open to being increased. If they failed to pay the taxes, they were evicted by the government. Ryot means peasant cultivators. Here there were no middlemen as in the Zamindari system. But, since high taxes had to be paid only in cash (no option of paying in kind as before the British) the problem of moneylenders came into the show. They further burdened the peasants with heavy interests.

### **5.3.3 Mahalwari Settlement:**

The Mahalwari system was introduced by Holt Mackenzie in 1822 and it was reviewed under Lord William Bentinck in 1833. Like Ryotwari system it was another system of land revenue system introduced in North-West Frontier, Agra, Central Province, Gangetic Valley, Punjab, etc. This had elements of both the Zamindari and the Ryotwari systems. This system divided the land into Mahals. Sometimes, a Mahal was constituted by one or more villages. The tax was assessed on the Mahal. All the cultivators had a joint responsibility for payment of rent. Each individual farmer gave his share. The ownership rights were with the peasants. Revenue was collected by the village headman or village leaders. It introduced the concept of average rents for different soil classes. The state share of the revenue was 66% of the rental value. The settlement was agreed upon for 30 years. This system was called the Modified Zamindari system because the village headman virtually became a Zamindar.



### 5.3.4 Consequences of the British land revenue systems

After the intervention of British administration the land became a commodity. Earlier there was no private ownership of land in rural India. Even kings and cultivators did not consider land as his 'private property'. There was existing 'Jajmani System' which was working on the basis of barter exchange inside a self-reliant village system. During Mughal period the land revenue system was introduced and distorted. The revenue system was been further depleted due to exploitative nature of the British administration. Due to the very high taxes, farmers resorted to growing cash crops instead of food crops. This led to food insecurity and even famines. Taxes on agricultural produce were moderate during pre-British times. The British made it very high. Insistence on cash payment of revenue led to more indebtedness among farmers. Moneylenders became landowners in due course. Bonded labour arose because loans were given to farmers/labourers who could not pay it back. When India achieved freedom from colonial rule, 7% of the villagers (Zamindars/landowners) owned 75% of the agricultural land. Even with all these changes, the peasants of India were constantly struggling with starvation and exploitation by Zamindars.

Let us finally discuss on British administrative impact on agriculture, industry and ecology. We can conclude that commercialization of agriculture was brought by British involvement only. Though various intervention British brought many changes to old and traditional system of zamindari system. The commercialization led by Britisher forced Indian peasants to shift from agro-based crops to cash crops like tea, coffee, Indigo and cotton. In that way India became the raw material supplier to Manchester cotton industry.

However, all these changes had hardly intensified the precarious condition of peasants who had hardly any right over the land. There were some long term consequences of land settlement-

- Rural indebtedness
- Fragmentation of Land holdings



- Emergence of new classes in respect of rural India viz, money lenders, landless labourers, absentee landlords in the forms of zamindars

Many Indian historians blame British administration that it had disrupted the million – old village systems; destroyed social and economic fabric. Some Marxist historians like A.R Desai and R.P Dutta linked the changes in Indian agriculture to the world market. They looked into the matter as the capitalist core as Britain and India as periphery, supplying raw materials. On the other hand, Gandhi looked into the agricultural change from criticizing modernity and industrialization.

The most important change which affected the agricultural sector though was the change in the system of collection of land revenue. Before the British when the village ownership of land was recognised, the village was taken as the unit of assessment and the village community through the headman or the panchayat paid the state or the intermediary a specific proportion of the annual agricultural produce as revenue. This proportion may have varied under different kings or dispensations, but it was, excepting in rare cases, the village which was the unit of assessment and the payer of revenue. The British of course destroyed this system and made the individual holders of land the unit of assessment and responsible for paying revenue. Even more debilitating than this change was the new method of calculating revenue. Villagers had previously always paid a specific portion of their annual produce as revenue and hence it varied from year to year depending on the quantum of the crop. But the British introduced a system of fixed money payments, assessed on the size of the land, which was regularly due in cash irrespective of the annual production of the individual landholder.

This new system of calculating land revenue and taxes had severe consequences. Previously the possession of land had never been under threat because of failure of the crop etc or any other reason. If during any year the harvest failed, the land revenue for that year used to be zero since the revenue was always a proportion of the actual realized harvest and so there were no consequences for non-payment on the village, which was the joint or communal owner of the village land. But under the new system introduced by the British since the landlord or peasant proprietor had to meet the fixed annual payment irrespective of





the failure of the crop, be often had no alternative but to go in for the mortgage and sale of land. A.R Desai comments on these changes as follows:

‘When a land holder could not pay the land revenue due to the state out of the returns of his harvest or his resources, he was constrained to mortgage or sell his land. Thus, insecurity of possession and ownership of land - a phenomenon unknown to the pre-British agrarian society- came into existence. The new land system disastrously affected the communal character of the village, its self-sufficient economy and communal social life. Under the new land system, the village was no longer the owner of land hence no longer also the superintendent of agriculture. The individual landholder was directly connected with the centralised state to which he owed his proprietary right over land and had directly to pay the land revenue. Further, all land disputes were now settled, not by village panchayats, but by the courts established by the centralised state. This undermined the prestige of the panchayats, now shorn of power. Thus, the new system not only deprived the village of its agricultural-economic functions but also led to the loss of its judicial functions. It also broke the bonds which organically tied the village peasant to the village collective. The organs of the centralised state took over almost all essential functions relating to the village life which were previously performed by the self-governing village organisation ..... Since the fulfilment of village needs was the objective of the village production and produce, both industrial and agricultural, in pre- British India, this objective determined the character of this produce and production. It was on this basis that the unity of the village agricultural and industry was possible and built and their balance maintained.’ (Old Material of SOL:34)

One of the problems of the new system was; that now the farmer and the village population was not producing anymore for self consumption but for the market to sell produce and raise cash to pay revenue and to free himself from the clutches of the money lender into whose hands he had progressively fallen into because in bad years during crop failure or lack of rain there was no alternative but to borrow from the moneylender to pay off taxes. So naturally this led to a certain commercialisation of agriculture and new crops like cotton, jute, wheat, sugarcane and oil seeds began to be cultivated much of which could be sold because they were needed as raw materials for the industries of England. A.R. Desai says that from ‘the standpoint of the growth of a single national Indian or world economy, this was a step forward in spite of the annihilation of self-sufficient village communities and



economic misery consequent on this destruction through the capitalist transformation of the Indian economy. It contributed towards building the material foundation, namely, the economic welding together of India and of India with the world, for the national consolidation of the Indian people and the international economic unification of the world'. He further comments on the change as follows:

'...It is true that the capitalist transformation of the village economy was brought about by the destruction of village co-operation but its historical progressive role lies in the fact that it broke the self-sufficiency of the village economic life and made the village economy a part of the unified national economy. It was a historically necessary step towards integrating the Indian people economically. It simultaneously broke the physical, social and cultural isolation of the village people by creating the possibility of large scale social exchange through the establishment of such means of mass transport as railways and automobiles (ibid: 34).

### 5.4 INDUSTRY

During British era, both urban industries and village artisans were in underdeveloped state.

#### 5.4.1 Decline of Indian Handicrafts

Another tragic economic consequence of the rise of British rule was the decline of town handicrafts which happened due to the disappearance of the native Indian royal courts who were their chief patrons, the establishment of an alien foreign rule who were not-interested in their prosperity and of course the competition of a more highly developed form of industry which British industry was. The British forced free trade on India and imposed heavy duties on Indian manufactured goods in England lead to a lopsided trading outcome. India started the export of raw products from India for processing in England rather than setting up industries in India. Thus, it also lessn the idea of self reliant model of industries. Transit and customs duties were imposed to stop flow of Indian industrial goods and British industries were given 'special privileges'. In some cases Indian artisans were compelled to divulge their trade secrets. The beginning of railways meant that raw materials could be



transported from any part of India to the ports for shipping to England and manufactured goods from England could be transported to all parts of India. Exhibitions of English goods were held all over the country to promote their adoption. Also the new educated class of Indians, mostly urban professionals took to adopting western goods which further dashed hopes of survival of the town handicrafts because it meant that the royal courts and upper class of earlier times was not replaced by the new bourgeois.

Tragic as it was, the destruction of town handicrafts, also had another effect. The destruction of the pre-capitalist urban handicrafts and the village artisan industry of India brought about by the forces of modern industries and trade had the effect of helping in the transformation of India into a single economic whole. A.R. Desai comments:

‘It objectively unified the entire people – and not a section – within the web of a system of exchange relations. It thus contributed to the building of the material basis for the growth of a common and joint economic existence for the Indian people, for the economic integration of the Indian people into a nation’. (ibid)

### 5.4.2 Decline of Village Artisans

The artisans who left their village and became city workers, became members of the working class which, transcending all local and provincial limitations, began to organise on national front. The ex-artisans developed wider consciousness of being members of the Indian working class. They developed a national outlook also. This is how the middle class emerged in cities.

Even those sections of the ruined artisans, who bought land and became peasants or who, due to lack of means, became land labourers, developed a different and wider consciousness. Under the new conditions created by the transformation of Indian agriculture, they were not members of an economically self-sufficient village community but formed economically, classes which were integral parts of the Indian nation. Now living under the same system of land laws, the interests of all peasants or land labourers throughout India became more or less identical. The recognition of this stimulated a wider break class and national consciousness among them and prompted them in course of time, to build up or join such organisations as the All India Kisan Sabha and others’. ( ibid:39)



### 5.4.3 Impact of British Industrialization on Indian Market

Modern manufacturing industry had started developing in India from early years of the nineteenth century but by the end of that century Indian industrialist had made a place for themselves particularly in cotton and jute textiles. Very soon Indian industry began to realise how the absence of a level playing field meant that British owned groups always had an advantage. They obviously began to resent this. And a community of interest developed between these economic interests. Many Indian nationalist economists and politicians declared that the substantial British domination of India banking that was one of the most important obstacles to a rapid industrial development of India. Financing for Indian owned industry was almost impossible compared to British owned industry and the British controlled banks and government policies were primarily designed from the point of view of British economic interests. The Indian nationalist economists and Indian industrial interests later proposed the 'Bombay Plan' to suggest a change of character of the nature of industrial development. Notwithstanding the insufficient and unbalanced development of industries, industrialization played an almost revolutionary role in the life of the Indian people. A.R. Desai comments it led to the consolidation of the unified national economy. This consolidation happened as a consequence of the introduction of capitalist economic forms in agriculture by the British government, penetration of India by the commercial forces of the world and spread of modern transport during the British rule. He comments that industrialisation made 'the Indian economy more unified, cohesive and organic.....raised the tone of the economic life of India brought into existence modern cities which became the centres of modern culture and increasing democratic social life and from which all progressive movements, social, political and cultural, emanated'. (Source: Ibid. p.124)

He further comments as follows:

© The progressive social and political groups in India realized the advantages, direct and indirect, of industrialization. Though they differed in their views regarding the social organisation of industrial and other economic forces and resources whether on the laissez faire principle of private enterprise and unlimited individual competition or on a planned national basis, capitalist or socialist, they all stood for rapid all-sided expansion of industries. While sharply divided on many issues, they put up a united demand for it. They jointly



struggled for the removal of the various handicaps on industrial development. The demand for industrialization thus became a national demand.'

Along with industrialization and almost as a part of it there was a rapid growth in the modern means of transport, which it has to be said aided in the growth of national sentiment. Railways and buses made it possible to spread progressive social and scientific ideas among the people and modern means of transport helped spread scientific and progressive literature (books, magazines, papers) which could not have been quickly distributed throughout the country otherwise. Also Railways in particular helped in dissolving orthodox social habits regarding food, physical contact, and others. Both Brahmins and untouchables travelled in the railway compartment if they had paid the same fair (ibid:39). Consequently impact on Indian industries are very all encompassing and vivid, can be concluded that brought many changes based on human equality and liberal attitude.

### 5.5 ECOLOGY

As we are discussing about the colonial structure and various changes that took place during British time.

Ecology is the study of organisms and how they interact with the environment around them. An ecologist studies the relationship between living things and their habitats. In this chapter we are studying ecological concern those took place during British colonial time in India. There were many forest acts and procedures passed which empowered Government to utilize for industrial, agricultural, mining and conserving purpose. The period between 17<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> century when most of the nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America are associated with exploitation of natural resources like forest and farm lands. In 1865 the first Indian Forest Act was passed. It came into effect on 1 May 1865. The Act empowered the Government to declare any land covered with trees as Government forests and to issue rules for conserving them. This also led to commercialization of forests and forest products and created middlemanship of Sahukars or money lenders.



With the Europeans coming to India almost all the traditional relationships patterns and utilization of resources were been changed. Firstly, with commercialization of agricultural product and forest products, the expectation of forest dwellers are been changed. Th forest people tried to commercializ the forest products. As Gadgil and Guha says, ‘the proportion of population engaaged in subsistence gathering and the production of food declined; that of people engaged in manufacturing , transporting or using resources as commodities increased’ (Gadgil &Guha : 115).

Along with it the long standing co-operation between neighbour created during subsistent hunting and food gathering time , became less and less important. Some how we can conclude that

Some scholars says that the Indian Forest Act of 1927, which was in operation till 1980, was extremely explotative in character.

### 5.6 SUMMARY

Ecology: Ecology is the study of organisms and how they interact with the environment around them. An ecologist studies the relationship between living things and their habitats. In this chaper we are studing ecological cercern those took place during British colonial time in India.

### 5.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Explain the status of India’s agriculture during British time.
2. Give a comprehensive explanation of India’s indusdy and trade relationship during British era.
3. India’s argricultural sector was stagnant during British period, explain.

### 5.9 REFERENCES



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**Unit 3. Reform and Resistance:**

Lesson 6• The 1857 war of Independence

Lesson 7• Major social and religious movements

Lesson 8• Education and the rise of the new middle class

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## **LESSON 6**

### **The Revolt of 1857**

Dr. Jeeta Misra (Associate  
Professor, SVC, DU &

Dr. Shakti Pradayani Rout (Asst.  
Professor), School of Open Learning  
University of Delhi

## **STRUCTURE**

- 6.1 Learning Objectives
- 6.2 Introduction
- 6.3 Major Causes of the Revolt 1857
  - 6.3.1 Structure of British Indian Army during 18<sup>th</sup> Century
  - 6.3.2 Caste and Religion Sanctity
  - 6.3.3 Rumor Related to Enfield Rifles
  - 6.3.4 Discontent to Service Conditions
- 6.4 Partial Success of the Revolt
- 6.5 Major Consequences of the Revolt
- 6.6 Summary
- 6.7 Glossary
- 6.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 6.9 References
- 6.10 Suggested Readings



### 6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

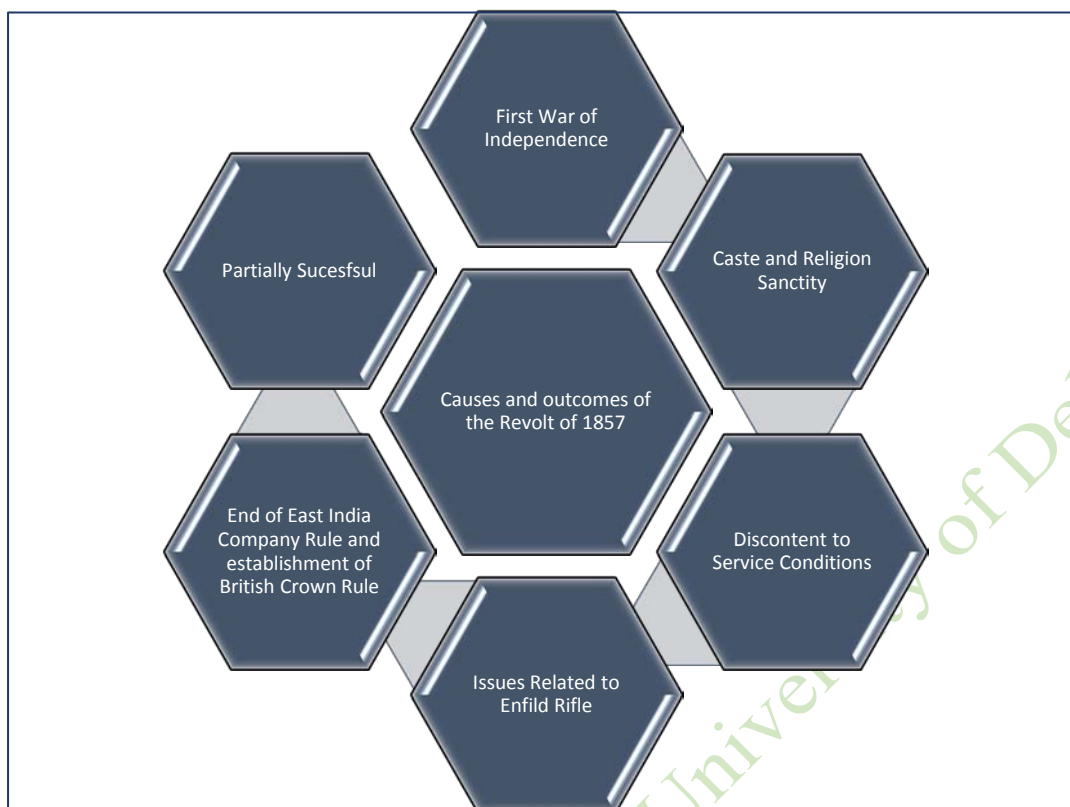
After completing this lesson student will be familiar with the socio-religious and economic circumstances in which had created social base of the revolt of 1857 broke out. The lesson also gives the idea about the consequences of the revolt. It is important to study the revolt of 1857 because it was in many ways the first major organised nationwide political rejection of the British rule. Thus in many ways helpful in creating the spirit for the nationalism.

### 6.2 INTRODUCTION

The Indian Rebellion of 1857 began as a mutiny of sepoys of the British East India Company's army on 10 May 1857 in Meerut, UP. This erupted into other mutinies and civilian rebellions nationwide but mainly confined to the northern and central India. The major battles being fought in the towns of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and the Delhi region. The rebellion almost succeeded and alarmed and scared the British so much that they decided to end the rule of the East India Company and introduce direct rule from London.

The revolt is also referred to variously as the Uprising of 1857, the Sepoy Rebellion or the Sepoy Mutiny, India's First War of Independence, the Great Rebellion, the Indian Mutiny but most usually as the Revolt of 1857. Regions other than in northern and central India, the Bengal province, the Bombay Presidency, and the Madras Presidency had remained largely calm. In Punjab, the Sikh princes backed the Company by providing both soldiers and support. The large princely states, Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore, and Kashmir, as well as the states of Rajputana did not join the rebellion. In some regions, such as Oudh, the rebellion became not just a revolt of soldiers but a general rebellion by the civil population as well. Although not intending to do so at first, but later, many leaders such as the Rani of Jhansi, who became famous and laid down their lives in most cases, joined the revolt which took on a general character of a nationalist movement in India.

The rebellion led to the dissolution of the East India Company in 1858, and forced the British to reorganize the army and the administrative system in India. India was thereafter directly governed by the Crown from London.



Source: Analysis of Readings

### 6.3 Major Causes of 1857 Revolt

Professor Bipan Chandra has called the revolt of 1857 the first major challenge to the British rule and has described its beginning in dramatic terms:

‘It was the morning of 11 May 1857. The city of Delhi had not yet woken up when a band of sepoys from Meerut, who had defied and killed the European officers the previous day, crossed the Jamuna, set the toll bridge on fire and marched to the Red Fort. They entered the Red Fort through the Raj Ghat gate, followed by an excited crowd, to appeal to Bahadur Shah II, the Moghul Emperor – a pensioner of the British East India Company, who possessed nothing but the name of the mighty Mughals – to become their leader, thus, give legitimacy to their cause. Babadur Shah vacillated as he neither sure of the intentions of the sepoys nor of his own ability to play an effective role. He was however persuaded, if not coerced, to give in and was proclaimed the Shahenshah-e-Hindustan. The sepoys, then, set



out to capture and control the imperial city of Delhi. Simon Fraser, the Political Agent and several other Englishmen were killed; the public offices were either occupied or destroyed. The Revolt of 1857, an unsuccessful but heroic effort to eliminate foreign rule, had begun. The capture of Delhi and the proclamation of Babadur Shah as the Emperor of Hindustan gave a positive political meaning to the Revolt and provided a rallying point for the rebels by recalling the past glory of the imperial city. Almost half the Company's strength of 2,32,224 opted out of their loyalty to their regimental colours and overcame the ideology of the army, meticulously constructed over a period of time through training and discipline'. (Source: Bipan Chandra, India's Struggle for Independence, p. 31)

**6.3.1 Structure of British Indian Army during 18<sup>th</sup> Century :** The sepoy in the company's forces were a combination of Muslim and Hindu soldiers and at the time of the rebellion of 1857, there were over 200,000 Indians in the army compared to about 40,000 British. The forces were divided into three presidency armies: the Bombay; the Madras; and the Bengal. The Bengal Army was composed of higher castes, such as "Rajputs and Brahmins", mostly from the Avadh (or Oudh as the British called it) and regions in Bihar.

The enlistment of lower castes in 1855 was restricted and unknown. But the Madras Army and Bombay Army were drawn from all castes and did not have a bias for upper-caste men. The domination of higher castes in the Bengal Army has been seen as a significant factor in why the mutiny unfolded. It is interesting as to why in Bengal Army the preference for upper caste men from Oudh and Bihar areas came to be. In 1772, when Warren Hastings was appointed the first Governor-General of the Company's Indian territories, he carried out a rapid expansion of the Company's army. But the soldiers, or sepoys, from Bengal had fought against the Company in the Battle of Plassey and so became suspect in the eyes of the British and it was decided it would not be safe to have recruits from Bengal. Hastings therefore moved towards the west from the high-caste rural Rajput and Brahmins of Oudh and Bihar.



### ACTIVITY

Visit nearby museum and try to recollect various regional and local leaders or activities related to national movements.

#### 6.3.2 Caste and Religion Sanctity:

The sepoys in the company's forces were a combination of Muslim and Hindu soldiers and at the time of the rebellion of 1857, there were over 200,000 Indians in the army compared to about 40,000 British. The forces were divided into three presidency armies: the Bombay; the Madras; and the Bengal. The Bengal Army was composed of higher castes, such as "Rajputs and Brahmins", mostly from the Avadh (or Oudh as the British called it) and regions in Bihar.

The enlistment of lower castes in 1855 was unknown. The Madras Army and Bombay Army were drawn from all castes and did not have a bias for upper-caste men in recruitment. The domination of higher castes in the Bengal Army has been seen as a significant factor in why the mutiny unfolded. It is interesting as to why in Bengal Army the preference for upper caste men from Oudh and Bihar areas came to be. In 1772, when Warren Hastings was appointed the first Governor-General of the Company's Indian territories, he carried out a rapid expansion of the Company's army. But the soldiers, or sepoys, from Bengal had fought against the Company in the Battle of Plassey and so became suspect in the eyes of the British and it was decided it would not be safe to have recruits from Bengal. Hastings therefore moved towards the west from the high-caste rural Rajput and Brahmins of Oudh and Bihar, a practice that continued for the next 75 years.

The British were not totally unmindful of the religious and caste sensitivities of the recruits. In fact, respect was shown for religious rituals and the soldiers dined in separate areas and could live according to their rules of their caste or religion. The overseas service involving crossing the seas was not asked for. But gradually there emerged a conflict between what was demanded, and the living conditions offered and what the sepoys could accept. As Professor Bipan Chandra explains: 'It is certainly true that the conditions of service in the



Company's army and cantonments increasingly came into conflict with the religious beliefs and prejudices of the sepoys, who were predominantly drawn from the upper caste Hindus of the North-western Provinces and Oudh.

Initially, the administration sought to accommodate the sepoy's demands: facilities were provided to them to live according to the dictates of their caste and religion. But, with the extension of the Army's operation not only to various parts of India, but also to countries outside, it was not possible to do so anymore. Moreover, caste distinctions and segregation within a regiment were not conducive to the cohesiveness of a fighting unit. To begin with, the administration thought of an easy way out: discourage the recruitment of Brahmins; this apparently failed and, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the upper castes predominated in the Bengal Army and were unhappy over doing duties overseas. The unhappiness of the sepoys first surfaced in 1824 when the 47th Regiment at Barrackpur was ordered to go to Burma. For the religious Hindu, crossing the sea means of lossing of the sanctity of caste. The sepoys, therefore, refused to comply with the order. The regiment was disbanded and those who led the opposition were hanged. The religious sensibilities of the sepoys who participated in the Afghan War were more seriously affected. During the arduous and disastrous campaigns, the fleeing sepoys were forced to eat and drink whatever came their way. When they returned to India, those at home correctly sensed that they could not have observed caste stipulations and therefore, were hesitant to welcome them back into the biradari (caste fraternity). Sitaram who had gone to Afghanistan found himself an outcaste not only in his village, but even in his own barracks. The prestige of being in the pay of the Company was not enough to hold his position in society; religion and caste proved to be more powerful'. (Source: *ibid.* pp. 33-34)

### 6.3.3 Rumor Related to Enflied Rifles:

There were rumours that the government had secret designs to convert Hindu and Muslim sepoys to Christianity which got credence from the fact that missionaries were allowed to address and preach inside cantonments and they openly criticised the religions of the sepoys like Hinduism and Islam. In the 1830s, Christian evangelists such as William Carey and William Wilberforce had successfully campaigned for the passage of social reform





legislation such as the abolition of Sati and allowing the remarriage of Hindu widows this must have added to the suspicions. There were rumours that the company administration had mixed bone dust with wheat flour or atta and that was being fed to vegetarian sepoys. The introduction of Enfield rifles caused the ultimate provocation. The cartridges of the new rifle had to be bitten off before loading and the grease was reportedly made of beef and pig fat. The army administration had done nothing to deny and ally such rumours, this confirmed the sepoy's suspicion about a conspiracy to destroy their religion and caste allegiance to convert into Christianity.

### 6.3.4 Discontent to Service Conditions

Not just religious sensitivity violations, but there was also discontent with service terms. Changes in the terms may have created resentment. The soldiers were not only expected to serve in less familiar regions (such as in Burma in the Anglo-Burmese Wars in 1856), but also were not paid any extra "foreign service" remuneration any more that had previously been paid. Another financial grievance stemmed from the General Service Act, which denied retired sepoys a pension. At first it was thought this would only apply to new recruits, but it was suspected that it would also apply to those already in service. In addition, the Bengal army was paid less than the Madras and Bombay armies, which compounded the fears over pensions. A major cause of resentment that arose ten months prior to the outbreak of the revolt was the General Service Enlistment Act of 25 July 1856. As noted above, men of the Bengal Army had been exempted from overseas service.

Specifically they were enlisted only for service in territories to which they could march. This was seen by the Governor-General Lord Dalhousie as an anomaly, since all sepoys of the Madras and Bombay Armies (plus six "General Service" battalions of the Bengal Army) had accepted an obligation to serve overseas if required. As a result the burden of providing contingents for active service in Burma (readily accessible only by sea) and China had fallen disproportionately on the two smaller Presidency Armies. The Act required only new recruits to the Bengal Army to accept a commitment for general (that is overseas) service. However serving high caste sepoys were fearful that it would be eventually extended to them, as well as preventing sons following fathers into an Army with a strong tradition of family service. There were also grievances over the issue of promotions, based on seniority (length of service). This, as well as the increasing number of European officers in the



battalions, made promotion a slow progress and many Indian officers did not reach commissioned rank until they were too old to be effective.

### 6.4 Partial Success of the Revolt

Let us discuss various reasons why the revolt was partially impactful to the then British administration.

(a) there was no united voice of India politically, culturally, or on ethnic terms and there were many regions which are not been connected,

(b) even Indian soldiers across the country were not all united in revolt

(c) many of the local rulers fought amongst each other, rather than uniting against the British,

(d) many rebel Sepoy regiments disbanded and went home rather than fight,

(e) not all of the rebels accepted the leadership of the last Moghul emperor even though it was mainly symbolic and Bahadur Shah Zafar had no real control over the mutineers,

(f) the revolt was largely in north and central India while the south and west remained untouched and in fact the Rajput kingdoms of Rajasthan supported the British with men, arms and materials,

(g) indeed it is suggested many of revolts occurred in areas not under British rule, and against native rulers, often for local reasons,

(h) the revolt was fractured in the lines of religious, ethnic and region.

One major long term benefit of the revolt in terms of the growth of Indian nationalism was the common cause that Hindus and Muslims made against the outsiders, the British. This was quite significant historically. Also even though all of India did not participate this was the first major pan-India movement. As we know that Bengal and Punjab remained peaceful; the entire South India remained unaffected (Bandyopadhyay: 172). Also it was not just the soldiers or sepoys but a cross section of Indian society from farmers to feudal lords made common cause across class and caste barriers. The sepoys did not seek to revive small



kingdoms in their regions, instead they repeatedly proclaimed a “country-wide rule” of the Moghuls and vowed to drive out the British from “India”, as they knew it then. The declared objective of driving out “foreigners” from not only one’s own area but from their conception of the entirety of “India”, it is suggested signified a real nationalist sentiment; given foundation of Indian nationalism in the mind of Indian middle class and all other populations.

### 6.5 Major Consequences of the Revolt

The most important consequence of the revolt of 1857 was the **end of the rule of the British East India Company**. In August, by the Government of India Act 1858, the company was formally dissolved and its ruling powers over India were **transferred to the British Crown**. A new British government department, the India Office, was created to handle the governance of India, and its head, the Secretary of State for India, was entrusted with formulating Indian policy. **The Governor-General of India was renamed or given a new title called Viceroy of India**, and was made in charge of implemented the policies devised by the India Office in London. The British colonial administration embarked on a program of reform, trying to integrate Indian higher castes and rulers into the government and abolishing attempts at Westernization.

Another major consequence was **the reorganisation of the army**. The Bengal army dominated the Indian army before the mutiny in 1857 and a direct result of the revolt of 1857 was the reduction in the size of the Bengali contingent in the army. Of the 67,000 Hindus in the Bengal Army in 1842, 28,000 were identified as Rajputs and 25,000 as Brahmins, a category that included Bhumihaar Brahmins. The Brahmin presence in the Bengal Army was reduced in the late nineteenth century because of the British believed they had inspired the start of the revolt and had led the mutineers in 1857.

The British instead started recruiting more soldiers from the Punjab. The old Bengal Army almost completely vanished. These troops were replaced by new units recruited from castes hitherto not recruited by the British and from the so-called “Martial Races”, such as the Sikhs and the Gurkhas who now became the main stay of the British army. Some of the



old rules within the arm organisation, which estranged sepoys from their officers were rectified and the post-1857 units were mainly organised on the “irregular” system. Before the rebellion each Bengal Native Infantry regiment had 26 British officers, who held every position of authority down to the second-in-command of each company but in the new. In irregular units, there were only six or seven officers, who associated themselves far more closely with their soldiers and while more trust and responsibility were given to the Indian officers. The British increased the ratio of British to Indian soldiers within India. Sepoy artillery was abolished also, leaving all artillery (except some small detachments of mountain guns) in British hands. The post 1857 changes formed the basis of the military organisation until the early 20th century.

### 6.6 SUMMARY

- V.D Savarkar call this as Indian War of Independence. The war fought for ‘Swadharma and Swaraj’.
- Metcalf says, that it was more than a sepoy mutiny, but something less than a national revolt. The revolt was not spread to Southern part of India.
- The Hindu and Muslims are equally affected and therefore, Hindu-Muslim unity was all along maintained during the revolt.
- However, It had ended the rule of the East India Company and directly been ruled by British administration at London.
- Britishers became careful about trusting Indian People in the army. It had given foundation of Indian nationalism in the mind of Indian middle class populations.

### 6.7 GLOSSARY

**Mutiny:** An act of a group of people, especially sailors or soldiers, refusing to obey the person who is in command



**Rebellion:** An occasion when some of the people in a country try to change the government, using violence

**Revolt:** To protest in a group, often violently, against the person or people in power

**Doctrine of Lapse:** This law derecognize the adopted sons of the deceased princes as legal heir and their kingdoms were supposed to be annexed by British administration (Lord Dalhousie. )

### 6.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the various suggested socio-economic resentments that inspired the revolt of 1857.
2. What were the major consequences of the 1857 mutiny? Can it be called as first war of independence.

### 6.9 REFERENCES

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## **LESSON -7**

### **MAJOR SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTS IN INDIA**

Dr. Gurdeep Kaur  
Assistant Professor (Political Science)  
Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce  
(University of Delhi)

#### **Structure of the Lesson**

##### **7.1 Learning Objectives**

##### **7.2 Introduction**

##### **7.3 Defining and understanding social and religious reform movement**

7.3.1 The social and religious reform movements: Variant of Social Movement.

7.3.2 The Conditions in the 18th and 19th century that set the stage for emergence of social and Religious Reform Movements.

##### **7.4. Various Social- Religious Reform Movements**

7.4.1 Brahmo Samaj

7.4.2 Prarthana Samaj

7.4.3 SatyaShodhak Samaj

7.4.4 Young Bengal Movement

7.4.5 Arya Samaj

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##### **7.5 Summary**

**7.6 Glossary**

**7.7 Assessment Questions**

**7.8 References**

**7.9 Suggested Readings**

##### **7.1 Learning Objectives**

After the completion of the chapter the students will be able to

- Understand and define the concept of social and religious movements.
- Explain various factors that led to the growth of social and religious movements across India.
- List the objective and principles of various different social religious movements
- Identify the key personalities and their significant contributions vis-a-vis their respective various movements.



- Explain the success and limitations of the various movements in India

### 7.2 Introduction

No society remains static forever, besides the material development, the changes in the perception and approach of people towards religion, culture, society and politics also bring about many changes in societies for instance, the 14th, 15th and 16th century is known for renaissance in Europe especially in northern Italy. India's history too is replete with instances of uprising and movements in order to bring about a desired change. Nineteenth century proved to be a turning point in the history of modern India. It was a period of great awakening, challenging many existing socio-cultural and religious practices that were largely responsible for divisive and exploitative social political order in the country in those times. This period witnessed the growth of many movements attempting to introduce many reforms in the socio-cultural practices, education and political domain in order that the Indian society functions on the principles of liberty, equality, justice, fraternity and that no individual faces discrimination on irrational basis. These movements are termed as modern religious and secular movements which are the manifestation of Indian renaissance which ushered a new era in the history of Indian thinking.

India in the 19th century witnessed a series of reform movements that were oriented toward a reforming of Indian society along the modern line. The birth and growth of social and religious reform movements in different parts of India played an important role in enlightening the people and inculcating the spirit of critical enquiry in matters related to faith and religion in order to liberate the countrymen from rudimentary and conservative practices that were being blindly followed. These movements also played a key role towards uniting Indians that were divided in caste/ class/ gender/ religion and other grounds. These movements based on principles of rationality and scientific temper were a precursor to the growing nationalism. Many eminent personalities like Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Ishwarchand Vidyasagar, Swami Vivekananda and others spread the idea of universal brotherhood, co existence, Oneness of God, gender equality, peace, unity, tolerance, freedom of expression etc to establish a cohesive, harmonious society and promoted importance of education. With such initiatives Indian people became conscious of their social, political and other rights. The reform movements had an instrumental role in fostering patriotic fervor among the Indians apart from addressing issues like sati system, child marriage, forced widowhood, purdah system, supremacy of Brahmins, untouchability. This chapter will shed light on the various movements that emerged during the 19th century and will enable the students to acquire in depth understanding about the various movements.





### 7.3 Defining and understanding social and religious reform movement

Before the readers are familiarized with different social and religious movements, it is important that basic understanding about movements and their importance is understood. In common parlance movement refers to mobility which brings about displacement of an object i.e. change in position or location. The word movement is used in various contexts, it may also be understood as an act of mobilizing people for bringing about the desired change/ resisting a change. A movement can hence be defined as a collective and an organized action on mass scale to tackle some widespread problem of social, political, economic, religious or cultural in nature that has been in existence in the society for a long time and there is a shared concern for addressing the root cause of the problem and to bring about the needed change. A movement begins in a certain localized social set up and gradually it gets established and spreads far and wide depending on various factors like the purpose and objective, involvement of people, supporting factors etc. Social and religious reform movements fall in the ambit of social movements meaning that social movements is a broader category within which various movements like peasants movements, women movements, tribal movements, religious movements and others fall. According to **Herbert Blumer** "The social movement can be considered a collective effort to establish a new system of life". In the words of **Arnold M. Rose** "The social movement refers to an informal organization of a large number of individuals with a social goal, a collective effort of many individuals to modify or transfer dominant culture packages to institutions or specific classes in society." According to **Gusfield** "social movements are socially shared demand for change in some aspect of social order".

#### 7.3.1 The social and religious reform movements: Variant of Social Movement.

The social and religious reform movements are an important variant of social movement in the sense that they are initiated to bring about the needed changes in the social and religious domains. Religion and social aspects are intricately intertwined as almost every social custom and institution in India derive sustenance from religious injunctions and sanctions. It henceforth was understood by every Indian social reformer that the religious reform must precede social reforms. The reform movements therefore, besides addressing issues of social inequality and injustices, aimed to establish a modified social order by introducing modified values and practices in social institutions including religion as well.



According to the **Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary**, the word 'reform' refers to 'making changes (in something, especially an institution or practice) in order to improve'. **Merriam Webster Dictionary** defines it as 'improvement by removing or correcting faults, problems, etc'. Social reform movement refers to mobilizing the society and the resources to bring about a change in the social order, practices or institutions that have become partially or completely redundant and are a reason for the deterioration of quality of life in any given society. According to Sociologist **Prof M. S. Gore** social reform 'involves a deliberate effort to bring about a change in social attitudes, culturally defined role expectations and actual patterns of behavior of people in a desired direction through processes of persuasion and public education'. Abolition of Sati, promoting women education, advocating women rights, abolition of caste system, abolition of untouchability, are some of the key areas of a social and religious reform movement in India.

These movements can be broadly categorized as:

1. Reformist movements (Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj)
2. Revivalists movements (Arya Samaj)

A fair understanding about different social and religious movements cannot be acquired without the knowledge of the socio- religious and cultural milieu of 18th and 19th century India which happened to be the reason/ factors for the emergence of various movements.

### 7.3.2 The Conditions in 18th and 19th century that set the stage for emergence of social and Religious Reform Movements

**Rigid casteism** was one of the major social evils during the 18th century. According to Hindu religion, caste is determined by birth. In hierarchical social organization, Brahmins enjoyed supremacy while the shudras, the lowest in the hierarchy, were exploited and marginalized. Rigid caste division proved to be unhealthy, unfair and immoral. All privileges including the right of education was denied to the shudras that further compounded their challenges and threatened their survival.

**Gender inequality and discrimination against women:** Discrimination and ill treatment of women during the 19th century was a very common practice. Besides denial of opportunities of education and presence in public domain, women were victims of many social and cultural malpractices like child marriage, purdah system, sati system, dowry system, devdasi tradition, dowry system etc which relegated women to inferior position and made them subjects of exploitation, humiliation and enslavement.

**Backwardness and stagnation:** Around 1800 India was in a very bad condition. The Muslim rulers established their political control in India from 1200 AD till the advent of the Britishers in 1800 AD. This period is known as the dark period of Indian history that did not see the development and growth of rational, scientific and progressive ideas. Indian



civilization and culture had been at its lowest level for over a hundred years from about the middle of the eighteenth century.

**Development of sense of pride for India's ancient culture:** During the 19th century many European and Indian scholars showed interest in studying India's ancient history, religions, philosophies and literature etc and spreading awareness about the same. The renewed interest instilled a sense of pride about Indian civilisation among the masses that encouraged the social reformers to address the rudimentary practices.

**Exposure to western education and ideas :** During the 19th century many Indian intellectuals and reformers had an exposure to western education and liberal ideas through their formal education from English and Missionary institutions which encouraged them to mobilize the people for progressive reforms. Moreover, the rising tide of nationalism and democracy also found expression in movements to reform and democratize the social institutions and religious outlook of the Indian people.

In addition to the above many other factors like growing connectivity, the legislation, increased role of Christian missionaries etc played an important role in emergence and growth of social religious reform movements.

### 7.4 Various Social- Religious Reform Movements

Let us discuss various streams of socio-religious movements taken place during nationalist movements

#### 7.4.1 Brahmo Samaj

Ram Mohan Roy has played a pioneering role in initiating progressive and radical social reforms in the then Indian society by opposing idolatry social practices like sati system, polygamy, rigid caste divide among other social malpractices which earned him the title of "Father of Indian Renaissance". Social order and practices of those times were seen and evaluated by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in light of principles of rationality, religious universalism and scientific thinking. Through his early philosophical works "**Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin**" in 1805 and the organization- **Atmiya Sabha (Society of Friends)** in 1815, he began his journey as a social reformer. In his scholarly and philosophical work **Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin** he rejected the idea that religion was solely a matter of faith and that it cannot be subjected to scrutiny in light of reason, social comfort and acceptance. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's in-depth knowledge of Eastern philosophy and exposure to Western liberal and reasoned approach encouraged him to awaken countrymen for establishing society on principles of justice, equality and for development of all.



Raja Ram Mohan Roy's birth in a well-to-do Brahmin family in Bengal, facilitated his intellectual and academic growth. Besides being well versed in Sanskrit, he learnt English, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian in addition to French and Latin. His scholarly works in Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian and English are a testimony of his command over different languages. His knowledge and wisdom inspired him to bring about progressive reforms and enlighten people to give up hollow, irrational and rudimentary practices that were largely responsible for the degeneration of the society. As a reformist ideologue having a critical bent of mind he made an indepth study of various religions including **Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism.**

As an ardent champion of human dignity, human rights and civil liberties, he opposed the restrictions on the freedom of press and through his efforts, Charles Metcalfe in 1835 liberated the press in India. And the liberal press policy resulted in the rapid growth of newspapers that proved to be a significant step towards the spread of nationalistic sentiments among Indians. Raja Ram Mohan Roy himself edited two newspapers namely, Sambaed Kumauni and MiratuI Akbar in Bengali and Persian respectively.

Ram Mohan Roy was a liberal social reformer who knew that without education, people will lack the readiness to change the social order and practices, so to encourage Indians develop scientific temper and reasoned approach, he strongly advocated for the introduction of English education in the country. With his efforts the Hindu College, the City College, Vedanta College, and English Schools were established in Calcutta that offered courses both in Indian classical philosophy and Western social and physical sciences. His initiatives and role gave a new turn to India's educational system.

Ram Mohan Roy's ideas on the subject of internationalism reflected his personality of a true humanist favoring international co-existence and harmony. He stressed that all nations big or small, rich or poor must be placed on an equal footing and that people irrespective of their nationality must come together for shared global prosperity and growth. He stood for cooperation of thought, activity and brotherhood among nations.

Raja Rammohan Roy was a strong advocate of monotheism. He opposed polytheism and in 1803 Roy published his famous tract called Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin (a gift of monotheists), laid the common foundation of a universal religion in the doctrine of the unity of Godhead and also translated the Vedas and the Upanishads into Bengali to prove his conviction that ancient Hindu texts support monotheism. Through Brahmo samaj and other initiatives attempts were made to propagate the idea of a **universal religion based on the principle of one supreme God.**

In August 1828, Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Brahma Sabha that was later renamed as 'Brahmo samaj' (The society of God). Brahmo means "one who worships Brahman", and



Samaj means "community of men". Brahmo samaj refers to the community of men who worship Brahman (a vedicsanskrit word for the ultimate reality, referring to the single binding unity behind diversity in all that exists in the universe.)

The main objective of Brahmo Samaj was the worship and adoration of the eternal, unsearchable, Immutable God and it sought to unite the various communities irrespective of their religion and make them realize that they are all the children of One God. The membership of the Samaj was open to all, irrespective of religion, caste or creed, to realize the core ideal of the movement. It was the first modern Hindu reform movement that can also be understood as a deliberate intellectual revolt led by a small influential group of Westernized Indians against the rudimentary and orthodox rituals and practices. The movement paved the way for the Indian Renaissance as the country witnessed many such other movements in the ensuing years almost on similar lines. The prominent leaders **Raja Ram Mohan Roy Dwarkanath Tagore Maharishi Debendranath Tagore Keshub Chandra Sen Raja Ram Mohan Roy Dwarkanath Tagore Maharishi Debendranath Tagore Keshub Chandra Sen** of Brahmo Samaj inspired many other personalities to pull out Indians from darkness of ignorance, illiteracy, superstitions etc.

### Brahmo Samaj

- a. Denounced the practice of idol worship, sacrifice and supremacy of Brahmins. Raja Ram Mohan Roy spearheaded the cause of purifying the Hindu religion especially with regard to social impurities that had crept in with the passage of time. The movement mobilized people to not blindly follow rituals as was interpreted and dictated to them by the priestly class and instead must become learned and educated to understand and interpret religion based on their own intellect and wisdom.
- b. Discarded faith in divine avatars or the incarnation of God. Raja Ram Mohan Roy strongly held that all the principal ancient texts of the Hindus preached monotheism or worship of one God and urged for the return to the original principles of vedantism. In order to promote his radical thoughts, Raja Ram Mohan Roy besides translating vedas and the Upanishads in Bengali, wrote pamphlets and tracts in defense of monotheism.
- c. Condemned rigid caste system which not only led to exploitation of the lowest in the hierarchy but also disunited Indians to fight against colonialism. The movement promoted the idea of establishing a casteless society with a dual objective of protecting humanism and bringing together the Indians for the cause of the country's freedom from foreign rule.
- d. Emphasized on humanitarian values of benevolence, kindness and on strengthening the bonds of union between all men irrespective of social and religious background. The movement promoted the idea of brotherhood and co-existence by making arrangements for its members to assemble and pray together irrespective of socio





religious description. It encouraged its members to extend help to the needy with monetary and other assistance.

- e. Forbade condemning or criticizing any religion. The purpose of the movement was to encourage people to develop the capacity of rational inquiry to the practices and rituals that were established in the name of religion and not condemn any religion or faith.
- f. Attacked the age-old social taboos and raised concern over the plight of women and the less privileged section of the society who were victimized and ill treated in the name of conservative, inhuman and repressive socio -religious customs. To promote the idea of gender equality and to address restrictions and prejudices against women that had their roots in religion, the movement advocated for multi pronged measures that included legislation against sati system, encouraging inter caste marriage and widow remarriage and also pushed for educating the women folk to become confident and self-reliant. Bamabodhini Patrika was also started by Brahmo Samaj activists to spread awareness on some of the pressing women issues of those times and provide a forum for women to pen their thoughts and experiences for sensitizing the society.
- g. Rejecting the idea of sacrifice, offerings, idol worship, the movement encouraged the practice of prayers, meditation and scripture reading and accorded equal respect to all religions. It was a cosmopolitan movement among the educated class of people which guided the orthodox Hindus to work for the revival of their religion.

### Evaluation

The role of the Brahmo Samaj as 'the first intellectual movement' is undeniable as it laid the foundation for the spread of rational thoughts and liberal ideas of justice, equality, democracy and civil rights etc. Its liberal approach to social and religious questions was applauded by the Europeans and Indians alike. Its educational and social reform activities instilled confidence among the less privileged including women and played an important role in stimulating national consciousness among Indians. However, the movement was not able to mobilize masses as the participation in the movement remained confined to the intellectuals and educationally enlightened Bengalis. The movement faced opposition from the orthodox Hindus led by Raja Radhakant Deb who organized the Dharma Sabha 1830 which firmly opposed the the propaganda of Brahmo Samaj and stood for the preservation of status-quo in matters of religion and faith, including the practice of sati. Further, the early death of Ram Mohan Roy in 1833 left the Brahmo Samaj without the guiding and binding force following which the dissensions and differences between those leading the movement became apparent causing decline of the movement



### 7.4.2 Prarthana Samaj

Inspired by the works and ideology of Brahmo samaj, a Maharashtrian social reformer and physician by profession sought to enlighten the people to address the issues of social disorder, discrimination and exploitation in the society. The precursor to the Prarthana Samaj was the Paramahansa Sabha, a society that was formed in 1849 and functioned secretly to avoid confrontation with the people of orthodox and conservative mindset. Under the auspices of the Paramhansa Sabha, notable social reformers like Jyotiba Phule and orientalist R.G. Bhandarkar took the cause of spreading awareness about the ill effects of blind ritualism, superstitions and inhuman religious customs. After a few years of working the Paramahansa Sabha became non-functional and soon the agenda and purpose of it was taken forward by the Prarthana samaj (Prayer society) established in 1867 under the leadership of Dr. Atmaram Pandurang.

Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, a physician by profession and a passionate social reformer belonged to a reputable, educated family of Maharashtra and was a close associate of many reformers. including **Keshab Chandra Sen**, who was a prominent Brahmo samaj leader and deeply engaged in bringing radical reforms to infuse a new lease of life in the stratified and unprogressive Hindu society. Immensely influenced by the Western liberal values and also the Indian religious and spiritual tradition, Dr. Atmaram Pandurang along with few other like minded people like **Jagannath Shanker Sethi**, **Balshastri Jambhekar**, **Vishnu Shartri Bapat**, and **Krishna Shastri Chiplunkar** started **Prarthana samaj as a theistic organization that reconciled both the Western and Eastern philosophy in theory and practice**. As supporters of a liberal faith, their approach towards all religions was eclectic, however, the Indian religious and devotional literature, especially that of the Bhakti School of thought in Maharashtra, was the foundational basis of the ideology and principles of Prarthana samaj. It happened to be a major modern socio-religious reform movement to come up in Western India that took forward the spirit and activities of Brahmo samaj yet maintained its distinct identity of a Hindu organization. Unlike Brahmo samaj, Prarthana samaj was less iconoclastic and heretical as the radical elements of the Brahmo movement were skilfully discouraged by the two chief ideologues of the Prarthana Samaj namely, M. G. Ranade and R. G. Bhandarkar. Prarthana samaj was thus not seen as a sect outside the Hindu fold. They sought to bring reforms through persuasion - by appealing to the conscience and sense of justice of its followers and not by completely disassociating the movement from its roots. The Prarthana Samajists propagated the idea that God can be realized only by serving fellow men and not through rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices, offerings etc which happen to be meaningless and hollow without the practice of civic virtues.





### The Principal doctrines of Prarthana Samaj

1. The faith in God and the essentiality of worshipping One Supreme God with all devotion and spirituality was central to the socio-religious philosophy of the movement. The word prarthana means prayer and the members of the samaj were encouraged to pray to God to be blessed with wisdom, intelligence and morality. The mission of the samaj in the words of Justice Ranade was to **“humanize, equalize and spiritualize”**.
2. Prarthana samajists held no faith in incarnations and revelations and denounced idol worship. Instead, M. G. Ranade, the guiding force of the movement stressed that the true mode of divine adoration is through meditation, contemplation, singing devotional poems and that worshipping different deities works as a divisive force in the Hindu society.
3. Prarthana samaj did not see religion in isolation from humanity and therefore, stressed that salvation can be best achieved through benevolence, kindness, tolerance, honesty and affection for one and all irrespective of the socio economic differences. The most fundamental principle of Prarthana samaj was the ‘Fatherland of God and brotherhood of man’ and by adhering to this all social disparities and inequalities can be bridged.
4. It opposed the irrational religious rituals, idol worship, and customs and did not acknowledge any book as the infallible word of God, but accepted those ideas in the scriptures which stood the test of reason.
5. The faith in God and the essentiality of worshipping God with all devotion and spirituality was central to the socio-religious philosophy of the movement. The word prarthana means prayer and the members of the samaj were encouraged to pray to God to be blessed with wisdom, intelligence and morality. The mission of the samaj in the words of Justice Ranade was to **“humanize, equalize and spiritualize”**.
6. The movement championed the cause of complete eradication of caste and untouchability and promoted the idea of equality and social justice.

### Initiatives undertaken by the movement:

- Promoted the cause of education to both boys and girls. Opened schools including night schools for imparting education.
- Opened Asylums and Orphanages at various religious centers like Pandharpur, Dehu and Alandi.



- Worked for the upliftment of women, raised voice against child marriage, purdah and dowry system, promoted the cause of education among women, widow re-marriage and raising the marriageable age for both boys and girls
- Sought to spiritually awaken people and encouraged people to inculcate the habit of rightful conduct and ethical behavior through its weekly periodical, Subodha Patrika.
- Mobilized people to extend services to the untouchables and poor of the society by organizing Sunday services and Sunday schools etc.

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### Evaluation

Prarthana samaj and the personalities leading the movement like M. G. Ranade, R. G. Bhandarkar, G. K. Gokhale, Talang and N. G. Chandavarkar were men of intellect and wisdom with a very clear vision to focus on social reforms and did not radically oppose the Hindu religion. Ideologically, both Brahmo samaj and Prarthana samaj were similar as they professed worship of One God and denounced the need of intermediaries to connect with God but Prarthana samaj was less eclectic and advocated modernisation gradually without the detachment from the cultural roots which gained it more popularity. The Prarthana Samaj entered into the field of social reform through its most effective depressed classes Mission of India, founded in 1906 which came to run 30 educational institutions by 1913. Inspired by the activities of Prarthana Samaj, a similar movement was led by the Telugu reformer Veerasalingam Pantulu from Mysore Presidency.

### 7.4.3 Satya Shodhak Samaj

Unlike Brahmo samaj and Prarthana samaj, that were the movements led by the elite class, Satya shodhak samaj was the movement of the so called backward segment of the society (Malis, Telis, Kunbis, Saris, and Dhangars). It was the movement of the depressed classes against Brahmin supremacy, the movement under the leadership of Jyotirao Govindrao Phule who was also known as Jyotirao Phule, mobilized the low caste people to educate themselves and oppose the unjust and cruel practices that denied them the opportunities to live with respect and dignity. Satya Shodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers' Society) was founded in 1873 with a core objective of arousing self respect among the less privileged and toiling masses.

Jyotirao Phule was born in a remote village of Satara district of Maharashtra, in a family of fruits, flowers and vegetable growers (mali). Due to the family profession of growing and



supplying flowers added suffix 'phule' to his name. Being born in a low caste community, as per the customs of those times he was denied education from schools that predominantly served the upper castes. Despite all challenges he successfully completed his early education from a missionary school where students from all communities were admitted, followed by completing secondary education from a Scottish Mission High School, Pune.

Since childhood he grew up facing and observing discrimination and exploitation, the upliftment of low caste thus became the mission of Jyotirao Phule after the completion of his secondary education in 1847. He drew inspiration from the egalitarian philosophy of Buddha and Kabir and was equally influenced by the Western liberal democracies of the West and by the ideology of the French revolution too. English education taught him the need and importance of concepts like human dignity and human rights. As an avid reader, he enjoyed reading biographies of Shivaji and George Washington which infused feelings of heroism and patriotism in him. Another important book that made a long lasting impact on Jyotirao Phule was Thomas Paine's work "Rights of Man" which guided him in his mission to promote humanitarian values of equality and freedom.

The hardships in life made Jyotirao Phule determined to take forward his mission passionately, of emancipating the low castes, women, children, orphans and destitutes. He devoted his life for the cause of the needy which earned him a lot of respect and honor. People affectionately addressed him as Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule as he is popularly known was the first person in modern India to launch a movement for the liberation of caste-oppressed toilers and women irrespective of their caste. He founded the satyashodhak samaj on the foundational pillars of rationalism and self emancipation. Satya shodhak samaj encouraged its members to search for truth all by themselves and not accept and follow what was being dictated to them by the so-called learned class. The purpose of the society was principally to encourage the low caste people towards English education that would facilitate altering the caste and gender hierarchy. Besides being a leader and organizer of the underprivileged class movement, Phule was a writer, poet and a philosopher in his own right with several books and articles to his credit. He emerged as a radical social reformer and an activist who dared to speak, write and mobilize masses against those who were responsible for perpetuation of human rights abuse, which made him a dauntless hero of the downtrodden. He brought into practice the principles and human values that he preached and professed. Encouraging his wife to learn reading and writing is an evidence to Jyotiba Phule's open liberal outlook and of bringing principles to practice.



The Objectives of the movement was to:

1. Liberate non Brahmins from the exploitation of the Brahmin/ priestly class. Satya Shodhak Samaj worked to undermine the social and religious sanction for priesthood by conducting rituals and ceremonies without Brahmins. Its attack on the caste system rested on the foundational ideas of both Western rationalism as well as indigenous sources of social revolt like the Bhakti cults.
2. Denounce vedas as sacrosanct. The movement propagated the idea that no religious text or scripture is infallible so must be scrutinized in light of reason and rationality. Jyoti Rao Phule was of the view that blind acceptance to customs and traditions is a reason behind absolute authority enjoyed by the Brahmins and denial of human rights to the less privileged.
3. Reject the chaturvarna system- caste based social order that divided society in four varnas - Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Jyoti Rao Phule strongly advocated for overthrowing hierarchical social order in which those at the lower stratum were ill treated. He encouraged his associates to muster courage to question prejudice and hatred meted out to them and not be silent victims. Jyoti Raophule believed that unquestioned acceptance of rituals and traditions has legitimized exploitation.
4. Establish a new social system based on freedom, equality, brotherhood, human dignity, economic justice and fairness. In order to spread the message and purpose of the satyashodhak samaj, Jyotirao Phule started **Din Bandhu**, a weekly journal with the help of **Narayan Meghaji Lokhande**, who was his close associate and a trade union leader. The weekly journal helped the members articulate their views on human rights and social justice and also provided a platform to the exploited class to express their concern and plight.
5. Initiate campaigns to remove the economic and social handicaps that breed blind faith among women, shudras and ati-shudras. It raised its voice against social slavery and demanded social justice. It was the voice of suppressed people in India.

### Activities Undertaken

- Promoted education among women and girls. The first ever girls' school in the country was opened in 1848 by Jyotiba Phule. .
- Spread awareness among people about social evils.
- Opened facilities for women who were exploited and victimized.



- Promoted education among the shudras/atishudras and mobilized them for their self amelioration.
- Activism for agrarian reforms was among the activities of the samaj. Satya shodhak samaj played an important role spreading awareness on the need for soil conservation, building embankments, usage of technology for agriculture and allied activities so as to improve the social and economic conditions of the peasantry.
- Encouraged people to hold marriage ceremonies that were simple, inexpensive and made the Brahmin Priest's services redundant. Jyotiba Phule wrote "**Sarvajanik Satya Dharma**" in which he described a simple marriage ceremony, enabling all to participate and understand the procedure without any ambiguity unlike the Vedic marriage ceremony that could be conducted by a Brahmin only.
- Spread awareness among the toiling peasants to oppose the heavy tax imposed on them.
- Jyotiba Phule with his in-depth knowledge of the rural economy and the agriculture sector, offered solutions to problems associated with the agriculture sector to both the government and people alike so that agriculture could be a profitable enterprise.
- Promoted the idea of universal religion based on principles of liberty and equality. His **Sarvajanik Satya Dharma** put emphasis on truth seeking without the aid of any Guru or text. Satyashodhak samaj offered a critique to Hinduism but didn't reject the idea of Dharma/religion. The samaj offered a secular outlook in matters of faith and religion and strongly condemned the practice of the colonial government of giving grants to temples from the taxes collected from poor people

The movement successfully worked to realize its mission of serving the poor, low caste and women; spreading awareness among them for infusing the sense of self respect and identity so that the supremacy of the Brahmins could be challenged. Both Jyotiba Phule and his wife Savitri Phule were the guiding spirit and force of the movement who made extraordinary efforts for the ordinary people. Unlike the pioneers of Brahmo samaj and Prarthana samaj, he offered a radical critique of Indian social order and Hinduism. Mahatma Phule led the movement for the cause of downtrodden and the neglected masses and openly condemned the Brahmins, the upper caste, the colonial government for their excesses and took necessary steps to empower the less privileged. To connect to the local and uneducated masses, the movement relied on folklore, street plays, folk dramas to communicate their ideas. The Satyashodhak Samaj was the first institution to launch a social movement by common people and it was the shrill voice of dissent of the long-suppressed Indians. The Satya Shodhak Samaj was criticized for its inclination towards British, Christianity and



Mahatma Phule's interpretation of history, it henceforth lacked the support of major intellectuals. The Satya Shodhakites were moved to social action by their hearts.

### 7.4.4 Young Bengal Movement

Among the galaxy of stalwarts who are credited to have awakened the people of India from slumber of ignorance, blind faith, superstitions and irrationality shines bright the name of Henry Vivian Derozio who initiated the Young Bengal Movement to liberate the society from the social ills. Derozio was born in 1809 in a Portuguese – Indian family of Calcutta. He completed his schooling from the “Dharmatala Academy” run by Henry Drummond, a Scottish poet, free thinker, and a rationalist. Derozio studied English Literature, History and Philosophy under Mr. Drummond which polished his personality to a great extent to become a distinguished teacher and social reformer later in his life. Following the footsteps of his teacher, Derozio grew up as a man of free and open ideas and was deeply inclined to work for the intellectual and moral progress of the then Indian society, which was lifeless and stagnant.

In 1828, Derozio was appointed at Hindu College, Calcutta to teach English and History. Soon, he was able to influence young minds with his wisdom, sharp intellect, academic genius and reasoned approach. He enlightened the young students to the philosophy and thoughts of great liberal thinkers like Jeremy Bentham, John Locke, David Hume, of his own mentor, Henry Drummond and many others. Gradually students developed the curiosity to know, understand, interpret and judge life in the light of new thought and consciousness. Derozio's students became actively engaged in various activities and influenced by the concepts of equality, liberty, justice, fraternity and others, formed “Academic Association”- a debating society that served as a platform to freely debate on many pertinent issues like child marriage, casteism, untouchability, idol worship etc.

Derozio did not stick to teaching the prescribed curriculum of the subject that he taught but as a true teacher, guide, mentor and philosopher taught his students a new way of life and encouraged them to chart their own destiny without fear, compulsion and threat of any kind. He facilitated open discussions, aggressive debates, free expression of opinions and instilled in his students, a deep quest for knowledge and truth. Derozio combined in him the qualities of a great teacher, gifted poet, daring journalist, leader, humanist and a rebel who cultivated in his students the sense of justice, patriotism and philanthropy. Endorsing the spirit of renaissance, the youth became enlightened and crossed the barriers of the religion, caste, language, time and space that was gifted to them by birth and started looking upon the human race as one big family. His students liberated themselves from the shackles of customs and tradition that had kept their ancestors enslaved for generations and declared all practices obsolete that failed to stand the test of reason and scientific inquiry.





Apart from the students at the Hindu College young people across Bengal also got fascinated by Derozio's charismatic personality and well reasoned ideas so they were irresistibly drawn to the activities of the Academic Association. With such developments, the academic association evolved as the Young Bengal movement. It can be rightly stated that the intellectual awakening among the students of the Hindu College paved the way for a movement of social change across Bengal that popularly came to be known as the Young Bengal movement and those drawn to the movement came to be known as Derozians.

Alarmed by the activities of Derozio and cautious of the numerical increase of Derozians, Hindu orthodoxy forced Derozio to resign from the Hindu College on 25th of April, 1831 on charges of radicalizing the youth. After resignation Derozio continued his life's mission by starting a daily newspaper, the 'East Indian'. He preached through this paper to make reason the sole guide in life, to have the courage of conviction, practicing what they believed to be right. And he left his ideas as a legacy to his students who, distinguished as 'Young Bengal' and played a prominent role in the Renaissance of Bengal.

### Activities undertaken under the Young Bengal Movement

1. The Young Bengal movement played an important role in spreading awareness among the Indians on matters pertaining to social and economic justice.
2. The movement carried public agitation on issues related to freedom of press, better treatment for Indian workers in British colonies abroad, trial by jury, protection of the ryots from oppressive zamindars.
3. It raised demand for the appointment of Indians at high pay positions in government offices.
4. It articulated views on education of women; equality of all, caste, class and gender discrimination through writing in journals like Parthenon, Hesperus, Jnanannesan, Enquirer, Hindu Pioneer, Quill and the Bengal Spectator.
5. It drew attention to the plight of indentured Indian laborers in British colonies abroad and demanded for provision of better work environment for them and for their human rights.

### Evaluation

The Derozians, however, failed to have a long term impact. Derozio was removed from the Hindu College in 1831 because of his radicalism. 'Derozians' represented a radical stream within the reform movement and ignored the cultural traditions of Indian society. The prevailing social conditions of those times were not ripe enough for the adoption of radical ideas. Further, support from any other social group or class was absent. The Derozians lacked any real connection with the masses; for instance, they failed to take up the peasants' cause. Derozians were labeled as misguided youth. In fact their radicalism was





bookish in character. But, despite their limitations, the Derozians carried forward Roy's tradition of spreading awareness among the people on various issues .

### 7.4.5 Arya Samaj

The key figure associated with the founding of the Arya Samaj was Swami Dayanand Saraswati. Brahmo samaj and Prarthana samaj were an outcome of the exposure of their respective founders to the Western ideas and thoughts. while Arya samaj derived its inspiration from India's ancient scriptures, philosophy and religion, especially those of Vedic Age. Arya Samaj was founded on 10th of April 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati who was an ardent champion of Vedic Hinduism. The literal meaning of Arya Samaj is “Society of Nobles” that gave position of eminence to the Aryans and the doctrinal basis of the society held Vedas as the source of ultimate knowledge. It can be understood as a Hindu revivalist movement that made a considerable influence in North India. Unlike the universalistic outlook of Raja Rammohun Roy, Swami Dayanand was extremely critical of other religions especially Islam and Christianity, so besides taking initiatives towards social and religious reforms, the movement aimed to help Muslim and Christian converts to return to their parent faith.

#### Philosophical basis of the Arya Samaj

- 1) God is the fundamental source of all true knowledge. God is all truth- immortal, creator of the universe. God alone is worthy of worship. Arya samaj also holds that God has no physical form and with this thought, opposes the idea of reincarnation and denounces idol worship.
- 2) The Vedas are the books of true knowledge and the knowledge contained therein cannot be challenged.
- 4) A true Aryan is one who is always ready to accept truth and renounce untruth.
- 5) All actions must be performed after analyzing right and wrong
- 6) The principle aim of this Samaj is to promote the world's well being( material, spiritual and social).
- 7) All persons should be treated with love and justice.
- 8) Ignorance should be dispelled and knowledge increased.
- 9) Everybody should consider his own good along with others.
- 10) Social well being of mankind should be placed above the individual's well being.



### Contributions of Arya Samaj

The Arya samaj has been instrumental in addressing the socio economic inequities and discrimination existing in the society. It has a distinguished role towards establishing an inclusive social order by undertaking efforts in multifarious domains:

1. It played a key role in the National awakening. Swami Dayanand Saraswati was a self learned scholar of Vedic studies and unlike other reformers he did not appreciate Western education or the Western philosophy. Arya Samaj sought to revive the lost glory of Hinduism and the Aryan traditions and disseminated among the people that British rule has ruined India economically, socially and culturally. Arya samaj played an important role in arousing the patriotic fervor among the Indians by boldly speaking against British rule. Many of the prominent freedom fighters like Dadabhai Naoroji, Ram Prasad Bismil, Lala Lajpat Rai , Swami Shardhanand to name a few were Arya Samajists.
2. It promoted the study of Vedas: Emphasizing that Vedas are the source of all knowledge and wisdom and that the true Aryan must study vedas, Arya samaj took efforts to reintroduce the ancient Gurukul system of education where Aryan type of education was imparted and pupils were taught to live controlled and simple life on principles of truth, chastity and obedience. The most known was the Gurukul at Kangri, Haridwar and thereafter several other Gurukuls for Vedic research scholars were also established.
3. Women emancipation was given special attention by Arya samaj. Arya samaj strongly believes in equal treatment and enjoyment of rights by all. As a measure to improve the status of women who were victims of evil practices like child marriage, dowry, purdah system, sati system and had no presence in public domain, Arya Samaj advocated for making education accessible for women folk too and established a number of educational institutions for girls. In 1886, Kanya Mahavidyalaya was opened by Lala Dev Raj in Jullundur. Today across India there are numerous DAV schools & colleges that are imparting education to boys and girls alike.
4. Arya Samaj conducted a fiery crusade against many social ills. In times when Arya samaj came into existence people blindly followed customs and rituals that were dictated to them by the Brahmins. Social evils like untouchability, child marriage, purdah system etc proved to be very inhuman. Arya samaj aggressively attacked the supremacy of Brahmins, condemned the rituals and practices that had no foundation in vedas. Arya Samaj was successful in rallying public opinion on such issues. It condemned untouchability and stressed that an individual is great or inferior not by birth but by his deeds, the idea of inter-caste marriages was promoted by Arya Samajists to address untouchability ; it was successful in fixing the minimum marriageable age at sixteen for girls and at twenty-five for boys on the principle of the Vedas; Arya Samajists denounced forced widow-hood and encouraged widow



- remarriage; they also strongly condemned the practice of sati system and mobilized the society to bring about progressive reforms
5. Arya Samaj performed a pioneering role in reviving Hinduism. The goal of Arya samaj was to revive Vedic Hinduism and to bring back the Muslim and christian converts to their original faith and the samaj being a vedic church received considerable success in bringing back thousands of converted Hindus and Muslims to the fold of Hinduism by launching the Shuddhi /proselytization ceremony.
  6. Arya Samajists worked tirelessly for the orphans, poor, women and destitutes by taking many measures. Arya Samaj opened its first orphanage in Ferozepur, Punjab followed by a chain of orphanages all over the country. Arya Samaj also opened homes for the widows and destitute women to accommodate and to train them in some vocational skills so that they can become self-reliant and productive members of the society. Arya Samajists also made arrangements for the marriage of poor girls and widow women. Many old age homes known by the name Vanprastha Ashram and homes for destitute were also established by Arya samaj.
  7. Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj gave impetus to the idea of swadeshi. Swami Dayanand Saraswati didn't favor foreign rule in any form and in any domain. People of the country were made aware of the drainage of India's wealth that was happening under British rule so they were encouraged to buy home made products and help local industry become self reliant.

### Evaluation

The Arya Samajists played a progressive role in furthering the cause of social reform in North India. Although the Vedas were venerated as infallible, the reforms advocated, however, were the product of modern rational thinking. Arya samaj worked zealously for emancipation of women and for social justice by facilitating education for girls and women; it denounced untouchability and caste rigidities. It indeed played an important role in progressive developments and national awakening in the country but its popularity was confined among orthodox Hindus. Due to the negative attitude that it held towards Islam, led Muslims to mobilise on a corresponding communal basis. In the course of defending and promoting Hinduism, Arya Samaj became an obstacle to the growth of Indian nationalism by contributing, though unconsciously to the creation of a hostile religio - communal atmosphere.



### 7.4.6 Ramakrishna Mission

Ramakrishna Mission came into existence in the year 1888 by Swami Vivekananda's efforts in order to spread the philosophy of his Guru Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who passed away on 16th of August 1886. The mission functioned on the foundational principles of Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a mystic saint who strongly believed in selfless devotion to God and complete absorption in Him for experiencing spiritual ecstasy by following one's own way of devotion. According to Sri Paramahansa Ramakrishna **“whichever path one follows with sincerity and full devotion to reach God, that sincerity and Devotion will surely pave the way to ultimately connect with God”**. Sri Paramahansa Ramakrishna's philosophy resting on truth in religion and spirituality encouraged his young disciples to

- ❖ Engage in selfless devotion to God.
- ❖ Serve mankind in order to serve God
- ❖ Live life of simplicity, free of passions, desires, hatred and pride.
- ❖ Love and respect all;
- ❖ Adhere to the fact that Reality is One and only One. It is eternal, real, infinite, unchangeable and absolutely perfect.

Among his many young disciples was Narendranath Dutta who later came to be known as Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda after the death of his Guru Ramakrishna played an important role in spreading the Vedanta philosophy which stressed that God alone is true and rest everything is untrue. The foundation of Ramakrishna mission was laid to bring into practice the teachings and spread the philosophy of Sri Paramahansa Ramakrishna.

The theology of the mission emphasized on the following:

1. Reality is One and only One which is eternal, real and absolutely perfect. And this reality is present in every individual being meaning that God is within each human. Therefore each individual soul is part and parcel of the One Universal Soul. Based on Vedantic philosophy the mission sought to spiritually uplift the society.
2. Denouncing the life of renunciation, the mission promoted the principle of dedicating life in service of mankind. The fundamental precept of the mission **“Atmano Mokshartham Jagat Hitaya Cha”** which promoted the idea that salvation can be attained by serving mankind selflessly and unconditionally.
3. The foundational principle of ‘As many faiths, as many paths’ promoted universal tolerance and believed that different religious faiths were different paths to reach the goal of liberation. The mission neither recognized the superiority of a particular religion, nor did it prescribe the necessity of shastras (religious texts) and anushthana (rites and rituals).



The mission henceforth, was engaged in selfless service of the people, sought to reawaken the spirit of India. It undertook various welfare, humanitarian activities and mobilized the people to develop solidarity and oneness of the spirit by the eradication of social evils, superstitions and caste-arrogance. The mission was instrumental in bringing progressive transformation in the society by addressing pertinent areas:

1. Swami Vivekananda and the mission held high for the rights of women. Women upliftment was central in all the educational and philanthropic activities undertaken by the mission.
2. The mission established educational, technical and vocational training institutions for the capacity building of the youth.
3. It worked towards carrying out relief work at the time of natural disaster/calamity such as famine, earthquake, flood, epidemics, pandemics, etc., and other natural calamities.
4. It opened hospitals, dispensaries for the ill and sick people.
5. It engaged in various kinds of philanthropic activities like providing food and shelter to the needy, opening orphanages and old age homes,
6. It took measures to bring about religious reforms and bind people in bonds of understanding and brother-hood stressing that all religions teach mutual respect, co-existence and tolerance.



7. It encouraged people of the country to feel pride in India's cultural history and work for the revival of the lost glory, oppose feudal and colonial oppression, overthrow caste rigidities and gender divide. And that people of the country must come together for nation -building.

### **Evaluation**

Ramakrishna mission with its emphasis on service towards other fellow beings for temporal and spiritual satisfaction. It thus continues to play an important role by working for poor, less privileged, destitutes, women, orphans, victims of violence, war and disasters by providing educational and medical facilities; relief and rehabilitation works; youth and women welfare programmes; promoting cultural and spiritual growth; care facilities for orphans, old and abandoned adults, recreational facilities etc. With its branches world wide, Ramakrishna Mission till date has provided relief and rehabilitation to hundreds of people in India, Burma, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, in times of disasters and calamities.

#### **7.4.7 Theosophical Society**

The term theosophical is derived from 'Theosophy' which means divine wisdom. The origins of the Theosophical movement was rooted in the socio-religious dissent within the western civilisation that utilized the Oriental religions and their values for legitimizing the condemnation of contemporary life in Europe and America. It was founded by two westerners, Madame H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott in New York in 1875, sharing belief in spirit and occultism with seventeen other people. Olcott and Blavatsky both agreed in 1878 to abandon New York for India, which was perceived to be one of the key centers of theological knowledge. The Indian Theosophical Society was founded in 1886 with its headquarters in Adyar near Madras.





The roots of the movement lay in the inquisitiveness of the westerners who were curious to explore the mysteries of the universe and also to understand the unique relationship between universe, humanity and the divine. The Theosophists were greatly influenced by Hinduism, adopted a modified concept of rebirth and spiritual progress fused with the Hindu idea of karma. Hindu terms and concepts were added to the western spiritualists' tradition. With such developments the theosophists glorified India's religious, spiritual and philosophical traditions. The Theosophical movement worked for attainment of three goals: The society rested on the following principles:

1. Universal brotherhood without distinction on socio economic grounds.
2. Believed in theory of transmigration of soul and theory of Karma. It strongly advocated for the belief in philosophy of the Upanishads and Samkhya, Yoga, and Vedanta School of thoughts.
3. Promoted the idea of respecting all religions and emphasized on the study of comparative religion and philosophy to draw the best out of all religions. The society worked for the revival of religions like Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism.
4. Obedience to the law of evolution; the development of spiritual powers of a human being through meditation, thought control, love and service and it sought to develop the divine powers latent in man
5. The hidden mysteries of the universe and the bonds that unite the universe, humanity, and the divine need to be explored and understood.

#### **Activities undertaken:**

1. Opposed to conversions and believed in the transmigration of soul and occult mysticism.





2. Worked for revival of Hinduism and sought to infuse a sense of self-respect, a pride in the past, a belief in the future and as an inevitable result, played an important role towards nation-building.
3. Worked to promote philosophy of assimilation by condemning the practice of untouchability and rigid caste divide. The society to improve upon the life and living of marginalized sections by taking up many initiatives like
4. Promoted the universal principles of ancient Indian religions and philosophies
5. Opened educational institutions and set up various educational societies to propagate modern education. Annie Besant laid the foundation of the Central Hindu College in Benaras which was integration of Hindu religion and western science
6. Raised voice against social problems like child marriage, illiteracy and alcoholism
7. Advocated upliftment of women and worked for empowering women

### Evaluation

The Theosophical society played an important role in revising the glory and richness of Indian history, culture and religion and instilled a sense of pride among Indians for the same. It worked to ameliorate the conditions of poor, downtrodden and women by taking important initiatives. It fostered harmony, peace and coexistence among all and encouraged people to develop tolerance and acceptance towards all. Despite its achievements, the spread of theosophical society and its ideals were limited to upper class communities oriented to western liberal values.

### 7.5 Summary



The detailed explanation to the various social-religious reform movements bring us to prudently summarize the key findings of the lesson. It is found that the discriminatory and exploitative tendencies that manifested itself in the form of untouchability, gender inequality, Brahminism, denial of freedom to marginalized etc combined with other factors led to the emergence of social and religious movements that can be



broadly categorised as **Reform movements** like Brahmo samaj, Prarthana samaj and **Revivalist movements** like Arya Samaj. Both the set of movements sought to introduce social and religious reforms but differed in terms of the degree to which it relied on tradition or on reason and conscience. These movements focussed on some common challenges that were distorting the social fabric of the Indian society and irrespective of the place of origin these movements, these addressed many social malpractices, redundant customs and tradition, promoted women education, widow remarriage, opposed polygamy, child marriage, purdah etc in addition to enhancing solidarity and unity among Indians to fight against oppressive foreign rule. The social and religious reform movements can be credited to have awakened the Indians, facilitated their empowerment, infused among the Indians a spirit of rational and critical inquiry to the happenings around and provided platforms to those who could lead from the front for the needed social and economic changes. The movements were instrumental in liberating the less privileged from slavery and exploitation, instilling in them the sense of self respect and dignity, emboldening their spirit through many capacity building endeavors. All in all, the movements looked for social unity and strived towards liberty, equality and fraternity.

### 7.6 Glossary

**Monotheism** : Belief in one God

**Rationalism** : The practice of giving opinion based on reason and logic



**Emancipation**: The fact or process of being set free from legal, social, or political restrictions.

**Polygamy**: The practice or custom of having more than one wife or husband at the same time.

**Liberal**: Open and free minded



**Sati system:** practice that was once prevalent in India whereby a widow threw herself on to her husband's funeral pyre.

### 7.7 Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the backdrop against which the social and religious reform movements took place?
2. Discuss the contribution of Brahmo samaj in context of social- religious reforms undertaken.
3. Compare and contrast Prarthana Samaj and Arya Samaj. How were these movements significant in awakening the masses against social ills?
4. Who were Derozians? What role did they play as social reformers?
5. Discuss the contributions of Satyashodhak samaj.
6. What is the main philosophy of Ramakrishna mission?

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## **LESSON 8**

### **EDUCATION AND THE RISE OF THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS**

Dr. Monika Batham (PhD)

Content Writer, SOL, DU

#### **STRUCTURE**

- 8.1 Learning Objectives
- 8.2 Introduction: Modern Education Development in India
  - 8.2.1 Purpose for developing education institutions in India
  - 8.2.2 Individual's Efforts
  - 8.2.3 Charter Act of 1813
  - 8.2.4 Thomas Macaulay Commission
  - 8.2.5 Wood's Despatch, 1854
    - 8.2.5.1 Main characteristics of Wood's Despatch
    - 8.2.5.2 After effects of Wood's Despatch
  - 8.2.6 Hunter Education Commission(1882-83)
    - 8.2.6.1 Main recommendations of the Hunter Commission
    - 8.2.6.2 After effects of Hunter Commission
  - 8.2.7 Indian Universities Act, 1904
  - 8.2.8 Government Resolution on Education Policy, 1913
  - 8.2.9 Saddler University Commission (1917-19)
    - 8.2.9.1 Recommendations of Saddler Commission
    - 8.2.9.2 Impacts of Saddler Commission
  - 8.2.10. Wardha Scheme of Basic Education 1937
    - 8.2.10.1. Features of Wardha Scheme of Education
  - 8.2.11 Sergeant Plan of Education, 1944
    - 8.2.11.1 Major recommendations
- 8.3 Summary



### 4.4. Introduction: Emergence of middle-class in Europe

#### 8.4.1 Emergence of Indian Middle-class

#### 8.4.2 Role of Indian Middle-class in Indian History

#### 8.4.3 Political Influences

### 8.5 Summary

### 8.6 Glossary

### 8.7 Self-Assessment Questions

### 8.8 References

## 8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In chapter you are going to learn about the motive of British Colonialism in depth. How Britishers used Western Education to replace our traditional system of education and establish English as a common language to get jobs in the British system. This change is not as simple as it sounds. This created a whole new class known as Middle-class in India. Let's explore more about these issues in depth.

### 8.2 Introduction: Modern Education Development in India

#### 8.2.1 Purpose for Developing Education Institutions in India

1. **For loyal workers from natives-** East India Company which is a foreign company needs obedient workers at group C and D level. They can't recruit their own Britishers at lower jobs which requires patience and at lower wages. But they need to understand Indian society, culture for their own benefit. This requires proper British training in their own language and system.
2. **Christian Missionaries-** Through the Charter Act of 1813, The British incorporated the principle of encouraging learning among Indians and promoting knowledge of modern sciences in the country. The subtle target of these missionaries is to spread Christianity under British Rule.
3. **Indian reformers** like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati and many more see British education as a rescue of Indian society from backwardness. They want to



develop India in their true sense because they have seen the world. They were far behind in our approach to modernity.

Before Britishers or East India Company Madrasa or Gurukul. Initial sixty years of East India Company they haven't done anything for education in India but after realizing that they can get loyal and trained workers from educating Indians they started promoting modern education in India.

They need education for administration and for customary laws/ to know society better for making laws and controlling Indians.

### 8.2.2 Individual's Efforts

Under the company rule, first step taken by three individuals mainly

1. Governor General **Warren Hastings**, he established one Madrasa in Calcutta (1781) for the study of Muslims laws and related subjects.
2. **Jonathan Duncan**- He established a Sanskrit college, at Benaras (Varanasi) 1791 for study of Hindu laws and philosophy.
3. **William Carry** (Baptist Missionary, minister, translator, social reformer and cultural anthropologist who founded the Serampore College and University, Bengal Schools. He first began with schools for impoverished children where they were taught reading, writing, accounting and Christianity.

These individual efforts too aligned with Company policies to know locals in a better way, to train them in their own favors. So that they can rule India in a better way and spread Christianity in the Company occupied areas.

### 8.2.3 Charter Act of 1813

At British government level or at central level the first law which was passed was *Charter Act of 1813*. To allow Christian Missionaries to spread Western Education and Christianity. According to this act one lakh Rs was sanctioned. But this money didn't reach India why? Because at policy level Britishers were not clear about the medium of instruction i.e., vernacular or English and what kind of education should be given to students-





traditional (orientalist) or modern (Anglicist). But it has initiated the process of modernization of education by Britishers.

### **Orientalist**

According to them, western sciences and literature should be taught to prepare students to take up jobs. But emphasis should be given to the traditional/ indigenous Indian learning which is passed on generation by generation.

### **Anglicist**

They believed that British government should be exclusively for Modern education system which can produce loyal servants to them.

From the above table it was clear that there is a divide between Anglicist and Orientalist. Even Anglicists were further divided over the medium of instruction among Indians. One group was for English language while the other group was for vernacular languages (regional languages).

### **8.2.4. Thomas Macaulay Commission**

In 1835, Lord William Bentick made it clear that education would be provided in English medium. He appointed *Thomas Macaulay Commission* for education. Based on this commission Macaulay minutes were released where they clearly criticized outragedly Indian regional languages and Indian education system. English should be the medium of education in India. Education is available for a few upper and middleclasses. After getting the education these classes have the moral responsibility to teach masses. It's also known as '*downward filtration theory*'. In this commission it didn't discuss girls' education. After 1835, Parsi/ Farsi language was eliminated from school books and it remained prevalent as court language. The commission wished to create a class of Indian who were Indians in colour and blood but English in taste and affiliation.

**James Thompson** -Lieutenant Governor of North West Provinces (1843-53) has evolved a scheme for Village education through the medium of vernacular languages. His main purpose was to train personnel for the newly set up Revenue and Public Works Department.



### 8.2.5. Wood's Despatch, 1854 (Magna Carta of English Education in India)

Charles Wood was the President of the Board of Control of East India Company. In 1854 he sent a dispatch to Lord Dalhousie, the then Governor General of India, to regularize the education system in India. It asked the Government of India to assume responsibility for education of the masses, thus denying the '*Downward Filtration theory*' at least on paper. According to this, in villages at the primary level vernacular languages and at high school level use anglo-vernacular medium and that English should be the medium for college-level education and affiliating universities (in the presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras). Which is still practiced in rural or interior India.

#### 8.2.5.1 Main characteristics of Wood's Despatch

- It laid stress on the education of women on all levels.
- Vernacular languages were to be used at Primary level i.e, village. At least one government school will be opened in every district.
- Importance of the English language became evident. Now English will be the medium of instruction for higher studies.
- Hierarchy in education was systemized – Primary at bottom, High schools at middle level and affiliated colleges at district levels and Universities in the presidency towns.
- Promoting Teacher's training at all levels will be the part of education.
- Secular education will be an approach for imparting the education.
- In private colleges the Grant-in-aid came to promote education.

#### 8.2.5.2 After effects of Wood's Despatch

- The Bethune school founded by J. E. D. Bethune at Calcutta in 1849 for women's education.
- The Department of education were set up in all provinces.
- The universities were set up in 1857 at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta.
- Agriculture Institute at Pusa (Bihar) and an Engineering Institute at Roorkee were started.
- India witnessed rapid westernization of education.



- Private Indian educators appeared.

### 8.2.6. Hunter Education Commission (1882-83)

To review the progress of education in British India since the Woods' Despatch, in 1882 the government appointed a commission under the leadership of Sir William Hunter was appointed by Lord Ripon, the then viceroy of India. Its main objectives were to consider different aspects of education in India, specifically primary education and to enquire about the execution of Woods Despatch.

#### 8.2.6.1 Main recommendations of the Hunter Commission

- State's special care should be given to extend and improve primary education in the country. Vernacular languages should be the medium of instruction in primary education.
- The district and municipal boards will be taking control of primary education, under the Local Self Government Act. For this the funds were separated for the rural and urban areas for future misunderstanding.
- Secondary education should have two separate divisions- Literary which will lead up to university and vocational courses will be for commercial careers, which again diversified into different branches.
- It discouraged Missionary schools and Indian participation in the private school system was solicited by British rule.
- Women's education should be promoted because the opportunities for women have been really inadequate, especially in rural India.

#### 8.2.6.2 After effects of Hunter Commission

Although these changes do bring some positivity in the system, it is restricted to primary education only. Traditional style of the Indian learning system completely collapsed because of lack of funding and enrollment. Whereas the government schools were overburdened, with less experience in teaching. The initial phase has its own systematic problems like Vernacular vs English medium debate, lack of teachers and resources etc.



There was an overall decline in the quality. **Raleigh Commission** was set up in 1902 to see the prospects of Higher education specially the university system in India. To suggest some measures for improvement in their constitution and working.

### 8.2.7. Indian Universities Act 1904

Based on the Raleigh Commission recommendations the Indian Universities Act was passed in 1904. According to this act

- Now Universities have given a pivotal role in education to study and research.
- Number of fellows becomes a political decision because they are nominated by the government and their working hours in office are reduced.
- The governing bodies of the universities were to be reconstituted and the size of the Senates was reduced. The number of Senate could be minimum 50 and maximum 100. Each of them would hold office for 6 years.
- For better education and research, a grant of 5 lakh per annum for 5 years was also accepted. This was the beginning of the University Grant Commission which later became a permanent feature of the Indian education system for higher education.
- For the Universities in three presidencies i.e., Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, the elected fellows were to be 50 and for rest of the universities, 15 numbers are fixed.
- Affiliation of private colleges is made stricter, since education in India for the British Government has its own political agenda, they want to discourage any kind of freedom which includes freedom of thoughts.
- Gopal Krishna Gokhale called this move a 'retrograde measure'.

In 1906, the state of Baroda introduced compulsory primary education throughout its territories. Which provoked the Indian National Congress to demand compulsory primary education in the whole of British India. As a result of that 1913 Resolution on Education Policy came.



### **8.2.8. Government Resolution on Education Policy, 1913**

- Although the government refused to take up the responsibility of compulsory education but accepted to remove illiteracy while making a policy for it.
- It urged the Provincial government to take the early steps to provide elementary education.
- For this purpose, private players were encouraged.
- It was decided that a university was to be established in each province and teaching activities of universities were to be encouraged.

### **8.2.9. Saddler University Commission (1917-19)**

To study and report on the problems of Calcutta university, Saddler university commission after its chairman Michael Saddler was set in 1917. The commission included Indian Members too namely Sir Ashutosh Mukherji and Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad. But its recommendations were applicable more or less to other universities also.

#### **8.2.9.1 Recommendations of Saddler Commission**

1. The school course should last 12 years. Students should enter university after an intermediate stage (rather than matriculation) for a three-year degree program. This was done to: prepare students for the university stage; relieve universities of a large number of below-university-standard students; and provide collegiate education to those who do not intend to attend university.
2. For administrative purposes and to control, a separate secondary and intermediate education board should be made.
3. University regulations should not be so rigidly framed.
4. A university should function as a centralized unit, with unitary residential-teaching autonomous bodies.
5. The area of Female education should be broadened that means it is applied to scientific and technological education too, and
6. Teacher training, including that for professional and vocational colleges, should all be prioritized for quality education.



### **8.2.9.2. Impact of Saddler Commission**

1. Seven new universities were established: Mysore, Patna, Benaras, Aligarh, Dacca, Lucknow, and Osmania between 1916-1921.
2. Earlier teaching had been the responsibility of degree colleges, and there was no provision for post-graduate education. But now things have changed in favour of students.
3. The Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras universities were responsible for providing affiliation, conducting examinations, and conferring degrees.
4. The number of teaching and residential universities has increased.
5. Academic activities in universities and colleges increased. The study of various Indian languages began. Higher education and research facilities were also built.
6. In universities, the position of the professor was created.
7. Education departments were established at Calcutta and Dacca universities.
8. The internal university administration has improved.
9. The Academic Council was established to oversee curriculum development, examination, and research.
10. All teaching staff in Calcutta must be organized so that Calcutta University can fully transform into a teaching university.
11. More universities must be established, and older universities must be re-envisioned as residential and teaching institutions. Colleges must establish new centers in order to gradually expand into universities.
12. All universities must be free of all excessive official controls, and government meddling in academic matters must be stopped.
13. To improve university administration, the Syndicate and Senate must be replaced by the Court and Executive Council.
14. To become the administrative head of the university, a full-time salaried vice-chancellor must be appointed.
15. Teaching and teaching work must be linked with research, which must be organized into different departments.
16. It is necessary to establish study boards, facilities boards, and statutory bodies.



While the Hunter Commission had reported on problems of secondary education and the University Commission of 1902 mainly on the different aspects of university education, the Saddler commission reviewed the entire field from school education to university education.

### 8.2.10. Wardha Scheme of Basic Education, 1937

During the 1937 elections, INC candidates in their manifestos projected free and compulsory education. INC post-election win, they decided to take forward Gandhi's Education Scheme, therefore in this context 'All India National Educational Conference' was held at Wardha on 22-23 October 1937, with three basic resolutions passed –

1. Free and compulsory education: 7-14 age.
2. Mother tongue will be the medium of instruction
3. Education will be centered around manual or productive work, not just for Degree and examination.

Based on these recommendations, a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain was formed. This committee submitted a report named "The Wardha Scheme of Basic Education" first extensive National Basic Education Scheme in March 1938.

#### 8.2.10.1. Features of Wardha Scheme of Education

- Free and compulsory education for 7 years.
- Craft centered education
- Self-supporting element
- Education should in mother tongue
- Education should be based on non-violence

### 8.2.11. Sergeant Plan of Education, 1944

After the World War II the Central Advisory Board of Education prepared a comprehensive report on educational development known as Sergeant Report in 1944.

#### 8.2.11.1 Major recommendations

1. It talks about pre-primary education for 3-6 years age group for free, universal.
2. Compulsory elementary education for 6-11 years age group (Junior Basic)





3. High school education for 11-17 years age group (Senior Basic) for selected students and
4. A university course for 3 years after higher secondary education
5. The high schools should be of two main types (a) academic, and (b) technical. Degree course should be for three years for selected students.
6. To provide adequate technical, commercial and arts education among students.
7. Abolition of inter-mediate courses.
8. Liquidation of adult illiteracy in 20 years.
9. Major focus on teachers training, physical education, education for the physically and mentally handicapped students too.

### 8.3. Summary

Although the education system evolved during British times and we are growing till now but despite of many policies for women education few women benefitted. No real efforts are taken place to spread of education. Its all in the documents. Neglect of mass education, even though its available still its an expensive affair. Modern education system withered away Indian traditional education system. Real purpose of these provisions was to ensure a supply of cheap educated Indians to manage the British administration. And to project the British as saviours of India thus create loyalty for the British Government. Modern education used as a tool to strengthen British political authority. Although, the downward filtration theory did not percolate education downwards to the masses, but it did create inferiority among masses by popularizing English at upper levels (the language of elites). But we can't deny the fact that modern ideas spread substantially, to the disadvantage of the rulers.

### 8.4. Introduction: Emergence of Middle-Class in Europe

In world history we witness the emergence of the middle-class with the induction of the industrial revolution. Industrial revolution changed the mode of production from hand made products to machine made products, before the industrial revolution there was dominance of feudal lords, but the industrial revolution promoted trade and commerce which led to the emergence of middle class. It was composed of industrialists, businessmen, professionals like doctors, lawyers etc. They were educated and wanted a social structure



based on merit rather than by birth. They were influenced by the liberals' values which were talking about liberty, equality and justice. The industrialists were part of the middle-class, but with the growth of trade and commerce, they reaped the huge profit and came to be known as capitalist.

### 8.4.1. Emergence of Indian Middle Class

In India the middle class was the product of the English education System brought by the British in 1935. The middle class of India were well educated and well aware of the western values such as Democracy, Liberty and Equality. They were mainly Government servants, in British India, lawyers, doctors, small traders and teachers etc. Middle-class played the most significant role in Indian Nationalism by awakening the consciousness of Indians in a proper and presentable way. Their role was most important in the Indian freedom struggle since most of them joined the Indian National Congress. Furthermost our freedom fighters belonged to this group.

Middle class in India was the product of two things altogether,

#### 1. Colonial economy:

During colonialism, the overall economy shifted from a traditional one to a more industrial type of economy. The Indian economy has seen a drastic transformation in the economy. Sustainability of the economy is challenged by large scale industrialization. At that time manufactured goods were imported from the United Kingdom. The British introduced an economy based on money and mechanical production and destroyed the indigenous enterprises and traditional panchayat system. With the introduction of education, physical and occupational mobility in a static society, which created class structure in the society, which ultimately leads to class differences in Indian society.

Famous D L Seth (Sociologist) believes that Britishers introduced new land settlements based on private property and profit. The landlords were imposed under



the British land revenue system which was the main pillar of strength for Britishers. As a consequence, the landlords were cut off from the villagers. These landlords remained detached from both agricultural productivity and responsibility towards the villagers.

### **2. Indian Renaissance period and Social & educational policy of Britishers**

Modern educational systems with English as the medium of instructions, generated physical and occupational mobility of particular Indians. This is the time where Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and all; working hard with the British government to improve women's condition and to revive Vedic culture, this period is also known as Indian Renaissance period. It has brought a structural change in India because those who were kind to know English are able to do occupational mobility to get certain types of employment. Therefore, the income level of this English-speaking group has improved and it has nothing to do with any caste or strata. The English education gave birth to a class who would support the colonial masters and were socially and psychologically distant from the majority Indians who did not understand English.

Therefore, the two class were made

- the landlords (by permanent land settlement) and
- intellectuals (by English education) formed the New Middle-Class who were absolutely alienated from culture and tradition of the masses.

No one is sure about the role that the middle-class could play in the modernization of India but this modernization is from a western perspective it's not truly Indian. The exposure of western education and value made middle-class members more aware individuals. But this class is far from the tradition which made the middle-class poor in terms of collective orientation as well as cut it off from the majority of the Indian population who lived by tradition.

During this period individualism came to its peak but society as a whole is not working together. Its rootlessness made it a 'counterfeit class' and therefore its handiwork in



the social domains of education, culture and politics as well as economy was bound to be fake in quality.

### **8.4.2. Role of Indian middle-class in Indian History**

- Initially, it contributed to the consolidation of British rule.
- It led a successful nationalist struggle against that British regime.
- It launched a socialist struggle within the country.
- It brought about partition of the country and became the main force behind planned social change in the post independent India.

The British became the main agent of modernization in India through the new middle-class. The changes generated by the middle-class which are introduced in Indian society are basically promoted by the East India Company. Indian intellectuals got exposure to be modern West only through the English language. English became the new elite's deep fascination. The middle class, with all its characteristic contradictions, wanted to modernize Indian society, obviously following the western or more specifically, the Victorian English model of development. It was heavily influenced by the western liberal notions of progress and equality. The values cherished in England- materialistic and secular values as against Indian spiritualism, individualism as against traditional Indian collectivistic orientation. Another interesting feature of this class is that most of the social reforms are coming from this middle class. Although we can't deny their good intentions behind all these reforms, they definitely lacked an adequate understanding about the collectivistic life of Indian people which they wanted to change.

#### **Middle class as agent of change had faced three major constraints-**

1. The fact that economic and political power belonged to foreigners,
2. The inflexibility and flexibility of traditions
3. Contradiction in their middle-class character.

Therefore, the whole idea of middle-class progress lies in a materialistic sense but it should be balanced in terms of unity, harmony and welfare of the society which is part Indian tradition. The overall outlook of Indian nationalist who belong to the middle class, they were



radical in politics but equally conservative and revivalist in social thought and practice. The middle-class family structure still remained feudal and patriarchal in nature. Although there are evident changes occurring in family structure, status of women, village economy, caste system etc., but at a much slower pace than what the middle-class youth thought should be in the political domain.

### 8.4.3. Political influences

In Europe the middle classes emerged as a result of economic and technological change; After industrialisation they were engaged in trade and industry. Whereas in India, they emerged more in consequence of changes in the system of law and public administration than in economic development, and they mainly belonged to the learned profession".

Education is the need of the hour; a number of educated individuals were required to staff administrative institutions like servicing sectors such as the press and postal departments and Indian Railways. It was not possible to get all of them from Britain. Therefore, the British opened schools and colleges in different parts of India, particularly in big cities like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

Those educated in these institutions were to not only work for the British but they were to also think like them. This intention of creating a native middle-class that would become the carrier of Western culture in India was expressed quite openly by Lord Macaulay in 1935. As the economy began to change in response to the new administrative policies of the colonial rulers, many of the merchants moved to newly emerging towns and cities and became independent traders. The growing economic activity gave a boost to trade and mercantile activity and some of the local traders accumulated enough savings and began to invest into the modern industry. The swadeshi movement started by the nationalist leadership gave a boost to the native industry. Apart from giving employment to the labour force, this industry also employed white-collared skilled workers. Thus, along with those employed in administrative positions by the colonial rulers, the white-collared employees of the industrial sector were also a part of the newly emerging middle classes in India.



### 8.5. Summary

The revolt of 1857 shook Britishers, they have realized that since this revolt basically started with Sepoy mutiny. They realized that even though these sepoys wore British army uniforms but from within they were still Indian who were peasant, native to India. From that movement Britishers worked hard to systematically, the administration was taken away from the company and transferred to the crown.

The development of the middle-class in India is different from the west. In the nineteenth century, under the patronage of colonial rule the English educated middle-classes began to emerge. Initially they were loyal to the British government but soon realized the real motive of their, they played an important role in India's struggle for independence from colonial rule.

### 8.6. Glossary

**Vernacular:** The language spoken in a particular area or by a particular group of people, especially one that is not the official or written language or in other words regional languages.

### 8.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the main features and impact of Wood's Despatch?
2. What are the recommendations of Hunter Commission?
3. Why was the Sadler Commission formed? Discuss its main features.
4. Discuss, the role of Indian middle-class in shaping the freedom struggle.
5. How Indian middle-class is different from western middle-class?

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**Unit 4. Nationalist Politics and Expansion of its Social Base**

Lesson 9: Phases of the Nationalist Movement: Liberal constitutionalist, Swadeshi and the Radicals, Formation of the Muslim League

Lesson 10 : Gandhi and mass mobilisation: Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience, and Quit India Movements

Lesson 11: Revolutionaries, Socialists and Communists

Lesson 12: Communalism in Indian Politics

Lesson 13: The two-nation theory, negotiations over partition

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## LESSON 9

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### *Nationalist Politics and Expansion of its Social Base*

### *Phases of the Nationalist Movement: Liberal constitutionalist, Swadeshi and the Radicals, Formation of the Muslim League*

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Shakti Pradayani Rout

Asst. Professor

School of Open Learning

University of Delhi

## STRUCTURE

- 9.1 Learning Objectives
- 9.2 Introduction: Nationalist Politics and Expansion of its Social Base
- 9.3 Phases of the Nationalist Movement
  - 9.3.1 Emergence of Indian National Congress (INC)
  - 9.3.2 Congress representing Indian Aspiration
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- 9.5 Swadeshi and the Radicals
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  - 9.5.2 Extremists Vs. Moderates



- 9.6 Formation of the Muslim League
- 9.7 Summary
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- 9.10 References

### 9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson the student would be will be familiar with:

- The phases and different streams of the of the Nationalist movement
- The partition of Bengal
- The emergence of Economic Nationalism
- The Culture. Community and Identity aspects of the nationalist movement

### 9.2 INTRODUCTION

The lesson would discuss about various streams of Nationalist movement , especially Moderates and extremist way of working during partition of Bengal in the year 1905. During this phase both Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League were been cerated.During this timeall the streams of Congress were apiring for Purna Swaraj. Let us discuss how nationalist ideas were propagated and Indian national movement was been taken shape. In the first phase we will discuss about the emergence of Nationalist movement.

### 9.3 PHASES OF NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

#### 9.3.1 Emergence of Indian National Congress (INC)

The impact of colonialism gradually over time in the latter half of the 1800s caused a nationalist impact and leaders and groups began to emerge who started thinking in terms of an Indian nation self-ruled by the Indian people themselves, at least partly.



The Indian National Congress which historian R.P. Dutt describes as the ‘premier organisation and ‘the leading organisation of the Indian National Movement’ was started in 1885. There was some disagreement among historians as to the circumstances surrounding the birth of the Congress with an earlier generation of historians like R.P. Dutt believing that the British had actively encouraged the birth of the Congress almost as a secret conspiracy to create a vent for Indian angst and resentment and to elicit the views of Indians but the modern generation of Indian historians like Bipan Chandra researched the subject in the fifties and sixties after the independence of India and came to the conclusion that the Indians who were at the foundation of the Congress were not exactly innocent victims of a quite British plan of enlightened British officers but wise men who wished to play along with any British encouragement if there was any to ultimately achieve their own ends. As Bipan Chandra and others put it if the English liberals had hoped to use the Congress as a ‘safety valve’ then the Congress leaders hoped to use the opportunity provided to use them as ‘lightning conductors’ and ultimately ‘it was the Congress leaders whose hopes were fulfilled’. (Source: Bipan Chandra and others, *India’s Struggle for Independence*, Penguin Books, 1989, New Delhi, p. 81)

R.P. Dutt introduces the birth of the Congress with the following chronological account:

‘The origins of Indian Nationalism are commonly traced to the foundation of the National Congress in 1885, in fact, however, the precursor of the movement can be traced through the preceding half century. Reference has already been made to the reform movement which found expression in the Brahmo Samaj established in 1828. In 1843 was founded the British India Society in Bengal, which sought to “secure the welfare, extend the just rights and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects”. In 1851 this was merged into the British Indian Association, which in the following year “they cannot but feel that they have not profited by their connection with Great Britain to the extent which they had a right to expect”, setting forth grievances with regard to the revenue system, the discouragement of manufacturers, education and the question of admission to the higher administrative services, and demanding a Legislative Council “possessing a popular character so as in some respects to represent the sentiments of the people.” These earlier associations were still mainly linked up with the landowning interests; and indeed the merger



by which the British Indian Association was formed, included the Bengal Landholders Society. In 1875 the Indian Association, founded by Surendranath Banerjea, was the first organisation representative of the educated middle class in opposition to the domination of the big landowners. Branches, both of the more reactionary British Indian Association and of the more progressive Indian association, were founded in various parts of India. In 1883 the Indian Association of Calcutta called the first all-India National Conference, which was attended by representatives from Bengal, Madras, Bombay and the United provinces. The National Conference of 1883 was held under the presidency of Ananda Mohan Bose who later became President of the National Congress in 1898; in his opening address he declared the Conference to be the first stage to a National Parliament. Thus the conception of an Indian National Congress had already been formed and was maturing from the initiative and activity of the Indian representatives themselves when the Government intervened to take a hand. The Government did not found a movement which had no previous existence or basis. The Government stepped in to take charge of a movement which was in any case coming into existence and whose development it foresaw was inevitable.' (Palme Dutt :310-311)

### 9.3.2 Congress representing Indian Aspiration

So by 28th of December, 1885 when the Congress met for the first time, there was a clear realisation in the intelligentsia nationwide that there were common objectives for which the people of India needed to struggle for. Even as colonial administrators and ideologues argued that India could never be a free and united nation because India was merely a conglomeration of different races and castes and creeds, Indian leaders like Surendranath Banerjea and Tilak kept countering by saying that India was a 'nation in the making'. The Congress leaders were convinced that objective historical forces were bringing the Indian people together and the main objective at that stage of the national struggle at that time was to promote national unity and nationalism. So that became the main objective of the Congress. To create national unity or what we seek to do by giving out calls nowadays for 'national integration' or 'unity in diversity' was the main theme of the exertion of the founding leaders. The aims and objectives of the Congress laid down by the first president W.C. Bonnerji was the 'fuller development and consolidation of' the sentiments of national unity. The Indu Prakash, a prominent Bombay newspaper wrote of the first congress session as marking the 'beginning of a new life it will greatly help in creating a national feeling and



binding together distant people by common sympathies, and common ends'. (Bipan Chandra :75)

To balance regional aspirations and promote unity, even at that early stage it was decided that the Congress session would be rotated among different parts of the country and the president would belong to a region other than where the session of the Congress was being held. To promote communal harmony and prevent any potential discord or cause for disunity a rule was passed that no resolution was to be passed which had an overwhelming majority of Hindu or Muslim delegates objecting to it.

The Congress also decided very early that to be a national organisation it must confine itself to causes which were common to people all over the country in their dealings with the British. Hence agitation on social reform issues, it was decided, had to be kept away from! Dadabhai Naoroji had maintained that they must meet 'as a political body to represent to our rulers our political aspirations'.

### 9.4 LIBERAL CONSTITUTIONALIST

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**Political action of the early leaders consisted of organising popular participation, mobilisation and agitations and also of course not only making repeated representations and appeals to the British governments and legislatures but also directly to the British people in whose good sense there was much faith in sections of the Indian leadership.** Also Indians were not familiar with the democratic notion that politics and political opinion is not the sole preserve of the upper strata of society and it was important for the whole of the people to form a political opinion for it to carry democratic weight. Among the first and important objectives of the Congress was to organise the arousal of this consciousness and then train and consolidate the public opinion. It was felt by the leaders of



the movement at the time that as a first step the educated classes should be politicised and united from all regions of the country and thereafter the process could be extended to other sections. W.C. Bonnerji had declared as the first Congress President that the one of the major congress objectives was the 'eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or provincial intimacy 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'.

The Congress, even though conceived as a movement rather than as a party, was at first, not inclined towards mass demonstrations and protest marches etc. The principal tools of **political action continued to be petitions, prayers and memorials**. Later leaders who were not as moderate and hence came to be describes by historians as extremists were extremely critical of these methods but the fact remains that in a situation of relatively zero sense of political nationalism and unity, the moderate phase did play an important role. Some moderate leaders even saw the initial phase as such. When Gokhale had expressed disappointment with the two line reply that the government had sent to a carefully and laboriously prepared memorial by the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, Justice Ranade had told him: 'You don't realise 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'. The preaching and adoption of the methods of political democracy being amongst the main aims from the beginning the Congress was organised like a parliament with issues being decided thorough debate and discussion and occasionally through the vote.

### 9.5 SWADESHI AND RADICALS

At the turn of the century and in the decades immediately before and after, important changes took place in the character of the national movement In brief the era of the moderates gradually gave way to the era of the extremists.





**It was a combination of factors that resulted in hardening of views leading up to the beginning of an extremist approach.** On the one hand was the total failure of the old guard moderates to achieve much in terms of concessions and rights won from the British and a very hostile attitude that they (the British) adopted towards Indian leaders and on the other hand was the coming forward of a much larger class of Indians, particularly young people, who were growing very impatient and disappointed with their lot. They were upset with both their economic lot and the total lack of advancement of political rights and freedoms under the Congress leadership of the moderates. For the first time there was a class of educated unemployed. Also the economic misery of the peasants and workers had continued to increase all throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and by the turn of the century it was worse than at any time before, with famines being a regular affair in the countryside and near slavery like conditions of workers in plantations and factories and mines, even in those owned by Indians. In such dire circumstances the role of religious revivalists also became important who reminded Hindus in particular of their glorious past of the Vedas and Upanishads and inspired them to bold action and the spirit of sacrifice of the sort they had not contemplated before.

Interestingly some moderate leaders had almost foreseen the arrival of extremism. D.E. Wacha for instance had written to Dadabhai Naoroji in a letter dated 12th of January, 1905 that: 'The very discontent and impatience it (the congress) has evoked against itself as slow and non- progressive among the rising generation are among its best results or fruits. It is its own evolution and progress (the task is) to evolve the required revolution – whether it would be peaceful or violent. The character of the revolution will depend upon the wisdom or un-wisdom of the British Government and action of the British people.' (Bipan Chandra:75)

The British government had grown increasingly wary of the motives of the Congress over the years and by the beginning of the twentieth century was definitely quite hostile to anything it proposed. So the moderates were clearly failing. Gokhale, almost the chief ideologue of the moderates, expressed their frustration when he complained in his last years that, "the bureaucracy was growing frankly selfish and openly hostile to National aspirations. It was not so in the past". (*Official History of the Indian National Congress:151, OLD Material, SOL*) There was a constant attempt to pass draconian legislations and firmly deal with the ever restless Congress leaders by arrests and deportations. There was even an



attempt made to undermine the movement by separating Muslims and encouraging them to see the Congress as a Hindu organisation. Ultimately this effort was to bear tremendous fruits for the British because first Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and later M.A. Jinnah broke away from the Congress effort and ultimately caused the partition of India at the time of independence.

However, the immediate cause or trigger of the rise of the extremists was the decision of the British to partition Bengal, which gave a huge boost to the Swadeshi Movement and made it a nationwide mainstream mass movement. This was a dramatic development which really changed the course of the freedom struggle. Bipan Chandra and others comment on the rise of the movement and cite the evidence for it as follows:

‘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. India nationalism was gaining in strength and partition expected to weaken what was perceived as the nerve centre of Indian nationalism at the time. The attempt, 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, the whole of India....The centre of successful intrigue,’ and ‘divide the Bengali speaking population.’ Risley, the Home Secretary to the Government of India, was more blunt. He said on 6 December 1904: ‘Bengal united. is power, Bengal divided, will pull several different ways. That is what the Congress leaders feel; their apprehensions are perfectly correct and they form one of the great merits of the scheme... in this scheme one of our main objects is to split up and thereby weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule.’ (Bipan Chandra: 124-125)

Lord Hardings even admitted later that “the desire to aim a blow at the Bengalis overcame all other considerations” when the decision to partition Bengal was taken.

When faced with the huge public outrage and fury over the decision, the reaction of Lord Curzon was firm and despotic. He wrote to the Secretary of State saying: ‘If we are weak enough to yield to their clamour now, we shall not be able to dismember or reduce Bengal again; and you will be cementing and solidifying a force already formidable, and



certain to be a source of increasing trouble in the future'. (Source: *ibid.*) The most sinister aspect of the move though was the attempt at communalising the situation and dividing Hindus and Muslims to prop up Muslim communalists as a counter to the Congress and the National Movement. Curzon was blunt in his wooing of Muslims. In a speech at Dacca he told Bengali Muslims that partition would enable them to have Dacca as the capital of a new Muslim majority province and which would 'invest the Mohammedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have never enjoyed since the days of the old Mussulman Viceroys and Kings' and the Muslims would get a 'better deal' and would be freed of the 'pernicious influence of Calcutta'. (*ibid*:125)

The public outrage and spontaneous protest against it was unprecedented. In the first two months following the announcement 500 meetings were held in Eastern Bengal alone. Fifty thousand pamphlets authored by leaders like Surendranath Banerjea were distributed and the nationalist vernacular press launched a sustained attack in its daily publications. Vast protest meetings were held in the town halls particularly in Calcutta and petitions were sent to the secretary of state. Of the petitions sixty nine memoranda were sent from the Dacca division alone and some were signed by as many 70000 people. a huge number given the level of politicisation of those times. Leaders like Surendranath Banerjea, even though he was moderate toured the country asking people to boycott Manchester cloth and Liverpool salt. On September 1st, 1905 the government announced that partition would take effect from 16th of October. Immediately protest meetings were held all over Bengal the very next day. Many of these meetings drew crowds of ten to twelve thousand, a very large number for those days, which rattled the British administration. The success of the movement can be gauged 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 actual day of partition was declared a day of mourning in Bengal and 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 the morning and then paraded the streets singing Vande Mataram which almost became like the anthem of the movement. People tied rachis on each other's band as a symbol of the unity of the two halves of Bengal. Later in the day Ananda Mohan Bose and Surendranath Banerjea addressed two huge mass meetings, which drew crowds of 50000 to 70000 people. This was the biggest meeting ever held under



the nationalist banner ever anywhere before. Within a few hours of the meeting Rs.50000 was raised for the movement.

Up to this time, notwithstanding the strong Hindu cultural undercurrent in term symbolisms anyway that had come to the fore in the movement and the constant efforts to divide the people along Hindu-Muslim lines by the British, there was some level of unity which was to be destroyed later. For instance, while describing the success of the movement against the partition of Bengal, Abdul Rasul, the President of the Barisal Congress ID April 1906 said: 'What we could not have accomplished in 50 or 100 years, the great disaster, the partition of Bengal, has done for us in six months. Its fruits have been the great national movement known as the Swadeshi Movement'. ( *ibid.*:127 )

The leaders running the show were mostly the moderate Congress leaders only who were professionals and liberals from professions like law, journalism and academics. It is interesting to note that this was the time when moderate techniques had full sway. The people and their leaders were content to adopt methods like petitions, memoranda, speeches, public meetings and press campaigns. No violent or even mildly confrontationist in a violent sense was contemplated at all. In fact this was possibly why even zamindars and rich merchants who had hitherto kept away from supporting the congress joined and offered support to the cause. Also of course for the first time perhaps women came out in the struggle as well. But the real moving force behind the movement for the first time were students who formed the bulwark of the anti-partition and Swadeshi campaigns.

The leaders had hoped that with their political action sufficient force of public opinion would be created in Indian and England to force the government to relent and reverse the partition of Bengal. Needless to say no such thing happened. This was to prove to be a major disappointment, which among other reasons, one may safely assume caused the eventual subconscious shift in public consciousness towards a more extremist approach.

Even though the Swadeshi Movement was started with a resolution in the Town Hall of Calcutta on 7th of August, 1905 in a meeting called to protest the partition decision, the anti- partition movement and the Swadeshi movement were the work of the entire national leadership and the whole of the national movement against British rule got energised a



saconsequence. Gokhale presiding over the Benaras Congress, referred to the partition as a 'cruel wrong' and "a complete illustration of the worst features of the present system of bureaucratic rule, its utter contempt for public opinion, its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feeling of the people...Its cool preference of service interests to those of the governed'. (*Bipan Chandra, Amalendu Prasad, Barun Dey:83*)

The idea of Swadeshi had not been new though by this time. Gopal Rao Deshmukh, G.V. Joshi and M.G. Ranade of Maharashtra and Rajnarain Bose, Nabagopal Mitra and the Tagore Family of Bengal had been votaries of Swadeshi for long. As early as 1870 Bholanath Chandra had recommended boycott of British goods to bring pressure on the British public. Tilak had run a constant boycott campaign. So he worked very hard in making the Swadeshi Movement a success in Poona and Bombay. Allt Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai spread the message of boycott in Punjab and other parts of India and Syed Haider Raza led the movement in Delhi. Chidambaram Pillai led the movement in the Madras Presidency where B.C. Pal also carried out a fiery lecture tour. The boycott message also spread to Kangra, Jammu, Multan and Haridwar. The Swadeshi Movement in many ways created the stature or identities of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, B.C. Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai in the combined famous christening of '**Lal-Bal-Pal**' that became so famous. It had been realised by the end of the first decade of the new century that Swadeshi and boycott should be complementary and one can't succeed without the other. This though did for the first time bring out in the open the differences in approach and beliefs of the Moderates and the Extremists. The moderates were not opposed to the idea of adopting 'Swadeshi' but they were against the idea of adopting boycott of English goods as a political weapon. They felt this would harm the movement because they still saw the English people and Parliament as reasonable quarters in whose sense of reason and fair play a successful appeal could be made. Also many of the moderates were not fighting for complete independence but for some sort of self-rule or self-governing system that they agreed to call 'Swarajya'.

Here lay a major difference between the moderates and the extremists and also the major reason why extremists progressively began to appeal more to the masses than the moderates. The moderates all through had taken a public position that was ultimately accepting of British rule in a sense and merely sought some form of partial self-government



at best like in Australia or Canada. There is a belief among historians that this approach was basically strategic and was adopted merely because the moderates realised that they were in no position to take on the might of the British Empire. While that may have been true of some of the leaders if not all, it is nevertheless instructive to peruse some of the public declarations of the early nationalist or moderates which made it easy for the extremist later to attack them or their pro-western orientation and consequent unfitness for running the national movement. Ananda Mohan Bose for instance, the President of the 1998 Congress had declared in that meeting that “the educated classes are the friends and not the foes of England—her natural and necessary allies in the great work that lies before her”. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, later to be the chief of the moderate camp in the power struggle against the extremists had declared in 1890: “I have no fears but that British statesmen will ultimately respond to the Call”. Surendranath Banerjea, another moderate stalwart, had proclaimed that the ideal of Congressmen was to “work with unwavering loyalty to the British connection – for the object was not the suppression of British rule in India, but the broadening of its basis, the liberalising of its spirit the ennobling of its character and placing it on the unchangeable foundation of a nation’s affections”(R.P. Dutt:322)

Even as the moderate leaders took such positions the economic lot of the people particularly of farmers and workers continued to worsen. Even educated people began to find it difficult to be economically successfully. Along with that emerged particularly in Bengal and Maharashtra a sort of cultural revivalism based on Hinduism that hadn’t been seen before. Bankimchandra’s hymn **Vande Mataram** in Bengal helped revive the cult of the Mother Goddess and the culture of violent physical revolution to overthrow enemies that went along with it. In Maharashtra, Tilak played the most important role, successfully giving a nationalist edge to the movement based on Hindu culture. Also the institution of celebrating Ganesh Puja, which was started at about this time played a very important role in consolidating this process.

The Ramakrishna Movement and Swami Vivekananda in particular with his rousing and blood stirring speeches roused the whole of India. He declared: ‘If there is a sin in the world, it is weakness; avoid all weakness, weakness is sin, weakness is death... And here is the test of truth... anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject as poison, there is no life in it, it cannot be true’. Vivekanand was a genuine social





reformer thought who boldly declared that religion was not for empty bellies and asked first of all for India to be freed of the ancient sources of weaknesses emanating from the caste system and the practice of priest craft and of extreme poverty and deprivation. He asked “When, O Lord, shall our land be free from the eternal dwelling upon the past?” His speeches at the World Parliament of Religions created a huge impact and gave a sudden sense of immense pride and confidence in the intellectual and philosophical legacy of ancient Hind texts particularly the *Upanisads* that Swami referred to as the ‘Vedanta’. He boldly declared that it had been the mission of India and Indian culture throughout history to pursue the highest spiritual and philosophical goals as opposed to the materialism of the west from which also emanated their need for colonial expansion. Later Swami Dayanand’s work with the Arya Samaj put down the roots of the same message in the north.

A major benefit of this ,cultural revivalism was that Indian felt the need for full self-reliance in economic activity. Indians therefore started chemical factories and soap factories and even a team ship company was started so that dependence on British companies could be avoided. The hare capital of the Tata Steel Company was easily subscribed to by Indians and the company could tart operation eventually.

### 9.5.1 DEMAND FOR PURNA SWARAJ

**B.G. Tilak was the most important leader of the extremists. Other important leaders were B.C. Pal and Arubindo Ghosh from Bengal. Lala Lajpat Rai also supported the extremists when the difference between the moderates and extremists came out in the open.** The extremists asked for three important changes from that of the moderates: **first, they wanted the people of India to arise and demand full and complete freedom or Purna Swaraj as opposed to some sort of self-governing system won by appealing to the benevolence and sense of fair play of the British parliament and people.** They believed that full freedom should be snatched from the British by the Indian people rising together as one and in doing so no suffering or sacrifice should be too much for the Indian people. Therefore they were quite willing to boycott foreign goods in the adoption of swadeshi even if by doing that they hurt the interests of common businessman and worker of Britain as opposed to the British Indian Government and thereby create ill will. **Secondly they totally repudiated the notion that Indian needed the 'benevolent guidance and**





**assistance of Britain and the British system of advanced education and technical and scientific capabilities for rapid development.** They believed that because they were the sons and daughters of an ancient and possibly superior culture they were good enough to bring about all the development that the people of India needed. They therefore wanted complete independence and immediately. **Thirdly, unlike the moderates who were ever wary of the power of the British Empire to quell any attempt by Indians to seek freedom at once by use of their superior military and administrative strengths, the extremists had a fanatical and almost mythological belief in the power of the Indian masses to prevail and win freedom through mass action.**

Apart from the Swadeshi and the boycott of foreign goods to which the moderates had agreed with the greatest of reluctance and only for a temporary period, the extremists extended the tool of boycott to government schools and colleges, courts, titles government services. They also took to the organisation of massive strikes to make operation of the British government impossible. They declared that their aim was to 'make the administration under present conditions impossible by an organised 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'. They took control of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal after 1905 and launched into a fierce campaign of boycott and resistance. Initially they were intending only to oppose by the power of peaceful resistance but some like Aurobindo Ghosh had kept open the option of resorting to violence if all else failed and the British resorted to ruthless suppression as he feared they would. **Aurobindo Ghosh also chose to describe the Indian nation as a mother goddess, the first time this was done, and declared that participation in the struggle was worship. Later during the revolutionary terrorist phase taking purifying dips in the Ganges and praying in Kali temples before launching attacks became the norm for the terrorists.** Initially though they imagined that perfectly peacefully when everybody from the *chowkidar* to the constable, the deputy and the munsif and the clerk to the sepoy and the soldiers of the armed forces all unitedly and together resigned from their functions, British rule would find it difficult to operate for even half a second.

**The boycott of foreign goods was the technique of resistance of the extremists that met with the greatest success.** Apart from boycott of foreign goods, even picketing of shops selling foreign goods became commonplace in even remote towns and villages.



Women refused to wear bangles that were not Indian and washermen refused to wash foreign clothes and in some places even priests refused to accept offerings that contained foreign sugar.

Unlike at any time before mass protests, processions and public meetings now became important tools to make the depth of Swadeshi nationalist sentiment obvious because for the first time masses really were participating. Corps of volunteers or *samitis* was another tool that was developed by the extremists with great effect. The Swadeshi Bandhab Samiti set up by Ashwani Kumar Dutt, a school teacher, in Barisal in eastern Bengal attracted great attention because it had 159 branches that covered the remotest corners of the district and Dutt was able to generate mass following that distinguished itself by the fact that while he, the leader, was Hindu, most of his followers were the Muslim peasantry of the region. The *samitis* took the message of Swadeshi to the villages through lectures and songs with the help of magic lanterns and gave physical and moral training to their members. They also did social work during famines and epidemics, organised schools, and trained people in Swadeshi crafts and ran arbitration courts so that people can solve their disputes without turning to the British legal system.

The Ganapati and Shivaji Festivals made popular by Tilak in Maharashtra became a powerful tool to spread the message and were also adopted in Bengal where *jatras* (village drama shows) were extensively used to transmit political ideas at the village level where people got exposed to modern political ideas (of representative democracy) for the first time. Tilak's role cannot be over emphasised. He devoted his entire life to the freedom movement. He was a graduate of the Bombay University and started many newspapers and journals. He used his talent for journalism to mould public opinion in favour of the political aims and objectives of the national struggle.

Along with G.G. Agarkar he founded the English newspaper *Maratha* and another in Marathi called the *Kesari*. Significantly Tilak was the first one to advise peasants in Maharashtra to not pay the exploitative and totally destructive land revenues when their crops failed owing to drought or famine or pestilence. When Viceroy Elgin imposed an excise duty on Indian mill-made cloth to aid British imports, he launched a campaign for the boycott of English cloth. The British got very alarmed with Tilak and arrested him in 1897. He was charged with spreading hatred and disaffection against the Government which led to



the killing of British Plague Officers, Rand and Ayerst. His defence was bold and unflinching and he roared like a lion in court, which was reported by the nationalist press on a day to day basis. He refused to apologise for having spread disaffection and accepted the 18 months of rigorous imprisonment that was laid down for him with pride. His bold example and sacrifice had a huge impact on the nation and the whole nation was filled with a surge of nationalist emotion.

Marxist historians like R.P. Dutt have taken a less than lionising view of the stance and activities of the extremists. He comments as follows on the rise and growth of the extremists: “The starting point of the opposition leadership, as against the Old Guard, was undoubtedly the desire to make a break with compromising policies of conciliation with imperialism, and to enter on a path of decisive and uncompromising struggle against imperialism. To this extent they were a radical and potentially revolutionary force. But this desire was still a subjective desire on their part. There was no basis yet of the mass movement to make such a decisive struggle possible. Their appeal reached to the discontented lower middle class and to the hearts of the literate youth, especially to the poorer students and the new growing army of unemployed or poorly paid intellectuals, whose situation was becoming increasingly desperate in the opening years of the twentieth century, as it became manifest that there was no avenue or fulfilment for them under imperialist conditions, and who were little inclined to be patient with the slow and comfortable doctrines of gradual advance preached by the solidly established upper class leaders. Such elements can provide, in periods of social transition and the impending break-up of an old order, very considerable dynamic forces of unrest and potential revolutionary energy; but they are by the nature of their situation incapable of realising their aspirations, until they find their role in relationship to the mass movement, and can only seek satisfaction either in exalted verbal protest, or in anarchist individualist and ultimately politically ineffective forms of action.



### 9.5.2 MODERATES Vs. EXTRIMIST

By 1908 the extremist phase in the national movement, for all its impact, had begun to fail. The British were quite alarmed by the violent revolutionary potential of the movement that was developing and decided to finish it off by a following two-pronged strategy. One, by cruelly and ruthlessly curbing the extremists and the other by accentuating and encouraging the difference between the moderates and the extremists. They decided to pretend to take measures, which will create the impression that the moderates were achieving success in their goals, so that the extremist's approach would get discredited and people would feel wary of following them. The repressive measures that were introduced were bans and controls on meetings, rallies and processions and the press. Students who participated in the Swadeshi movement were expelled from schools and colleges, debarred from applying for government service (the principal economic attraction in seeking an education it may be imagined) and also fined. School students were arrested merely for singing national songs. There were 550 political cases filed before the courts in Bengal alone. Also of course the police took to violently and brutally beating up participants like never before.

In 1907 and 1908 nine major leaders of the movement in Bengal including Ashwani Kumar Dutt and Krishna Kumar Mitra were deported. Tilak was given a six years imprisonment and in Punjab, Ajit Singh and Lajpat Rai were also deported. In Madras Chidambaram Pillai and in Andhra Harisarvottam Rao were arrested. B.C. Pal retired from active politics in view of this advancing age and in the face of the severe police repression. Aurobindo Ghosh had a spiritual transformation and decided that he wanted to spend the rest of his life like a Sanyasi in search of the higher truths of Upanishadic Hinduism. He went away to Pondichery and founded an ashram there.

Apart from this sudden exit of so many of the extremist voices the constant squabbling within the Congress with the moderates and their gradual separation leading to a split in 1907 had left the movement considerably weakened. The bitterness between the two sides, moderates and extremists, can be gauged from the following that H.A. Wadia, a leader close the moderate stalwart Sir Pherozshah Mehta wrote in an article after referring to the extremists as the 'worst enemies of our cause':



‘The union of these men (the extremists) with the Congress is the union of a diseased limb to a healthy body, and the only remedy is surgical severance, if the Congress is to be saved from death by blood poisoning’. (Source: Bipan Chandra and others, ‘India’s Struggle for Independence’, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1989, p. 139)

This severance happened in the Surat Congress session in December of 1907. Before the session there had been a rumour that the moderates would try to scuttle the four Calcutta Resolutions of the earlier congress in Calcutta in 1906 in which the Moderates under Dadabhai Naoroji had somewhat compromised with the Extremists and agreed to many revolutionary demands. The resolutions had accepted for the first time the idea of a Swaraj, support for the boycott of foreign goods which the moderates were very uncomfortable about, support for Swadeshi or indigenous industries and a campaign of National Education. **So Swaraj, Boycott, Swadeshi and National Education had become the four cardinal points of the Congress programme.** Also apart from the rumour there had been mass meetings held in Surat over three days prior to the session in which much ridicule and venom had been heaped on the Moderates, which had deeply hurt their senior leaders. When the session started the Extremists wanted a guarantee on the four resolutions that they would be passed and to force the Moderates to do so they opposed the duly elected President for the year, Rash Behari Ghosh who was a Moderate. As soon as the session started because there were people on both sides who had come prepared for confrontation, there was a chaos and people were fighting each other by shouting at each other and throwing blows and chairs. Somebody in crowd threw a shoe at the dias, where Pherozshah Mehta and Surendranath Banerjea was sitting and the shoe hit Sir Pherozshah. As soon as this happened the police came and cleared the hall and the Congress Session was over. When the news spread of the breakdown of the congress there was gloom all over the country among nationalists but the British were triumphant. Lord Minto wrote to Lord Morley that the ‘Congress collapse’ at Surat was ‘a great triumph for us’. Bipan Chandra and others comment on the opposing positions that the Extremists and the Moderates took as follows:

‘Both sides had it wrong – from the nationalist point of view as well as their own factional point of view. The Moderates did not see that the colonial state was negotiating with them not because of their inherent political strength but because of the fear of the Extremists. The Extremists did not see that the Moderates were their natural outer defence



line (in terms of civil liberties and so on) and that they did not possess the required strength to face the colonial state's juggernaut. Neither saw that in a vast country like India run by a powerful imperialist nation only a broad based united movement had any chance of successes. (*ibid* :139)

### 9.6 FORMATION OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

A racial divide was created when Bengal was partitioned. Under the direction of Aga Khan, the Nawab of Dhaka, and Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, the Muslim League was formed on December 30, 1906, with the goal of protecting the rights of Indian Muslims. At first, the British gave it a lot of support, but when it adopted the idea of self-rule, they stopped supporting it. The League's Amritsar session in 1908, which was presided over by Sir Syed Ali Imam and called for a separate Muslim electorate, was granted by his Morley-Minto Reform in 1909. To spread his anti-league views, Maulana Muhammad Ali started the English journal "Comrade" and the Urdu journal "Hamdard". Additionally, he started "Al-Hilal", which was a platform for his nationalist beliefs.

There are many factors which contributed to the creation of the Muslim League. The party had a separatist plan and philosophy which was sometime adhering to British rule. For instance, there was a separate electorate and caste politics played out between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Muslims were certainly feeling excluded from Indian mainstream activities in Bengal. During the 1857 revolt in the battle of Plassey, Britishers had overthrown the Mughal empire. Most of the historians and radical nationalists glorified India's one side of our composite culture. They praised were biased because Shivaji, Rana Pratap etc were praised but they remained silent on Akbar, Sher Shah Suri, Allauddin Khalji, Tipu Sultan etc.

The main objective of the creation of the Muslim League was to promote loyalty of Indian Muslims towards the British government. To protect the political and other rights of the Indian Muslims and to place their needs and aspirations before the Government. To overcome the feeling of hostility among Muslims towards other communities.





### 9.7 SUMMARY

Hence, India's struggle for independence can be traced back in the 18<sup>th</sup> century development of partition of Bengal and the development that took place after creation of Hindu Revivalist activities and creation of Muslim League. The communal color of parties to consolidate the complete freedom has been established during this time.

### 9.8 GLOSSARY

**Moderates:** They believed in the British sense of justice and fair play. Moderates believed in the efficacy of peaceful agitation and always went in favor of constitutional means for appeal and petition.

**Extremists:** They were radical in their approach. Demands of extremists were aggressive in their demand and protest. They believed in self-reliance as a weapon against domination and demanded Purna Swaraj. They were guided by four cardinal principles of Swarajya, Swadeshi, Boycott of foreign goods and National education to make Indians self-aware of their national identity.

### 9.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What were the various phases of the nationalist movement? Discuss.
2. Examine how extremists are different than moderates to pursue their objective of Purna Swaraj.

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## **LESSON 16**



### ANTI CASTE MOVEMENT

Khem Chand

Research Fellow/ Content Writer

University of Delhi

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### 16.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help students and scholars to understand what caste was, and how Brahmanism and their rites dominated the depressed class society.

- Anti-caste movement provided awareness to the people of Dalit and backward caste society for their individual rights.
- Students will learn, what social and religion Impact was in anti-caste movement in India;
- The self-respect movement bring the changes in southern India;
- Dr. Ambedkar united the people of Dalit society and fought for their rights.



### 16.2 INTRODUCTION

The word cast in English is derived from the Portuguese word. Which means species, birth or distinction. In this sense, caste-system is a system based on racial or birth-based distinction. As will be clear later, the Indian caste system cannot be understood on this basis. For most people, even scholars, “Hinduism” has been a taken – for granted concept Hindus are the people of India. Hinduism is their religion. Beginning with the Reg Veda to the philosophers and even contemporary political leaders, “it has been seen as a unique phenomenon of spirituality linked to a practical life; and with a solid geographical base in a diversified subcontinent. Although its stability has been broken from time to time by invasions, conquests and disturbances, it has nevertheless maintained a fair continuity. It has given birth to rampant and unjustifiable social inequalities but has also spawned the protests against these. Its greatest virtue has been its elasticity, its pluralism, its lack of dogma. Hinduism, it is said, has no ‘orthodoxy’ (though it may have an ‘orthopraxy’). With a core in the religious traditions going to the Vedas and Upanishads, it has brought forth other sister / child religions – Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism- all born out of the same fertile continue of traditions, all part of India Hinduism’s contributions to the world. The caste system, as we know it today, is about three thousand years old, its roots going back to the Rig- Veda, the earliest of meant color, the Aryans, who were light- skinned, distinguishing themselves from the indigenous *dasyus* who were dark-skinned and otherwise physically different. To begin with, there were only three divisions among the Aryans, the Brahmins who were priests and scholars occupying the highest positions, followed by the Kshatriyas who were warriors and rulers, and finally the Vaish, who were people looking after cattle. While the three varnas did form a hierarchy, the system was open, more like classes than castes. it is important to remember that in the hymns of the Rig -Veda there is little trace of the rigid restrictions typically of cast, change of occupations or compensability (Majumdar et al. 1965:33). However, towards the end of the Rig-Vedas (1500-900 BC), The system seems to have congealed into four castes, with the Shudras being the fourth. Their duty was to serve the other three Varnas.

#### Varnas system in Indian society

The caste system is a powerful tool of social discriminations. “It runs deep in the mind of Indians and its application in the day-to-day life. In India, caste discrimination is traditionally rooted in the Hindu caste system. Supported by the philosophical trends, caste system constructs the moral, social and legal foundations of Hindu society. Dalits are outcastes or the people who fall outside the fourfold caste system consisting as the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Dalit are also mentioning other non-Aryan groups besides the *Chandala*, namely, *Ayogava*, *Paulksha* and *Nishada*. But for the Nishada, the other were looked down upon. The four varnas and the Nishada were collectively referred to in the later



Vedas as the 'Panchajanya' (five people). the Vedas also mention some occupation such as the blacksmith, leather-worker, barber, physician, goldsmith, merchant and chariot-builder but we do know of these occupations were comprised in any of the four orders, nor can we say each of them constituted a separate class. We know for certain that the status of the *Rathakara* the chariot-builder was high enough to preclude his being classified with the Shudras. The precise manner in which untouchability developed from the four Vedic varnas is not clear though there is no doubt that such a development was inextricably linked with elaboration of notions of spiritual purity and impurity, and their becoming pervasive in the of the twice-born caste, in their daily life, in life cycle ceremonies, calendrical festivals, and lastly and lethally, in inter-caste relations. With regard to the part played by purity-impurity ideas in inter-caste relations, The original Vedic system called varnashrama was legitimate and virtuous. It had divided society into four natural groups depending on individual characteristics and dispositions, which was prescribed in Shastras as the four varnas. Over a period, the four-fold varna system become a deviation into many hundreds and thousands of other varnas, castes or jatis most of such jatis are the people of a particular geographical or linguistic region. Thus, each member within a varna, would often act accordingly and marry within the similar varna. However, Kshatriyas, were often excluded from such nuances. 'The original caste or varna system existed all over India and has been considered by many sociologists and social anthropologists as pan Indian phenomenon. Since the castes and caste system existing today originated from the earlier varna system or caste system in the broader sense, it also developed and spread throughout India though there does not exist uniformity, neither in their local names nor in their ranks in the local caste- hierarchy. Ghurye views, 'The caste system gave rise to hierarchical gradation and social discriminations regarding privileges, marriage, social inter-course, choice of occupation, etc.

### 16.3 Caste During Colonial Time

#### 16.3.1 Development of Caste in British Era

Colonial rule disengaged caste system from its pre-colonial political context, but gave it a new lease of life by redefining and revitalizing it within its new structure of knowledge, institutions and policies. First of all, during its non-interventionist phase, it created opportunities, which were "in theory caste-free", land become a marketable commodity; equality before law become an established principle of judicial administration; educational institutions and public employment were thrown open to talent, irrespective of caste and creed. Yet the very principle of non-intervention helped maintain the pre-existing social order and reinforced the position of the privileged groups. Only the higher castes with previous literature traditions and surplus resources, could go for English education and new professions and could take advantage of the new judicial system. Moreover, in matters of personal law, the Hindu were governed by the dharmashastra, which upheld the privileges of caste order. As the orientalist scholars, immersed in classical textual studies, discovered in



the caste system the most essential forms of Hindu social organizations, more and more information was collected through official ethnographic surveys, which gave further currency to the notions of caste hierarchy. Furthermore, the foremost of such colonial ethnographers, Herbert Risley, following Alfred Lyall and the French racial theorist Paul Topinard, now provided a racial dimension to the concept of caste, arguing that the fair skinned higher castes represented the invading Aryan autochthons of the land.

The racial stereotype and the scriptural view of caste were gradually given enumerated shape, and above all an official legitimacy, through the described as the “single master exercise of tabulations” of the entire colonial subject’s society. When Risley became the census commissioner in 1901, he proposed not only to enumerate all castes, but also determine and record their locations in the hierarchy of caste. To the Indian public this appeared to be an official attempt to freeze the hierarchy, which had been constantly, though imperceptibly, changing over time. This redefined caste now became what Nicholas Dirks has called the Indian colonial form of civil society”. Voluntary, caste associations emerged as new phenomenon in Indian public life, engaging in census-based caste movements, making petitions to census commissioners in support of their claims for higher ritual ranks in the official classifications scheme. Ironically, caste thus became a legitimate site for defining social identities within a more institutionalized and apparently secularized public space. First of all, there were signs of “westernization”. Because of improved communications, there was greater horizontal solidarity among the caste members, who formed regional caste associations. There was also a growing realization of the significations of the new sources of status, i.e., education, jobs and political representation and awareness that those new sinews of power monopolized by the Brahman and the upper caste. This led to organized demands for more special privileges and reservations from the colonial state. This involved conflict and contestations, particularly when the education of Dalit groups was concerned, as the colonial bureaucracy, despite the much-publicized policy of supporting dalit education, often showed ambivalence in the face of caste Hindu oppositions. It required the dalit groups to protest like the Mahar students in Dapoli in Maharashtra sitting on the verandah of the local municipal school to actually induce the colonial civil servants to take measures to ensure their educational rights. In this particular case, however, they were ultimately allowed to sit in a class room but at a distance from the caste Hindu students. These efforts at “westernizations” were not therefore just attempts at imaging themselves in the light of their colonial masters, but to claim their legitimate rights to education and other opportunities from a reluctant state bureaucracy. On the other hand, these upwardly mobile groups also engaged in cultural movement, which noted sociologist M.N. Srinivas (1966) has called the process of “Sanskritization”, as status was still being defined and expressed in the language of caste which enjoyed both official legitimacy and social currency the upwardly mobile groups sought to legitimize their new status by emulating the cultural and ritual practices of the upper castes. This was one of the reasons why customs like sati, prohibitions of widow remarriage, child marriage the performance of which was graded as



hallmarks of high caste status were in the nineteenth century being more widely practiced by the upwardly mobile lower peasants' groups. Ironically, what this behavior signified was an endorsement of the caste system, and seeking a positional readjustment within the exiting ritual hierarchy. However, not all castes at all times followed this same behavioral trajectory.

### 16.3.1 Social and Cultural Movement in Maharashtra

#### 3.2 Mahatma Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890)

Jyotiba Phule was born on 11, April 1827 in Pune in a backward Mali caste of Maharashtra. Jyotiba's father's name was Govindrao and mother's name was Vimala Bai. Jyotiba Phule's mother died at the age of one. Father Govindrao went ahead and kept a widow named Sugana Bai, whom he considered to be his estranged sister, to take care of the child. The name of Savata Mali comes in the saint tradition of Maharashtra. He was a contemporary of Namdev. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was born in the caste of Savata Mali. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was the forerunner of the social revolution of modern Maharashtra, the first great man to raise his voice against the traditional social order, the first to challenge the religious dictatorship that had been going on for thousands of years. Mahatma Phule, through revolutionary reformism, provided that concrete work which was not there in other reformist efforts of that time. Mahatma Phule used to talk of an egalitarian and just and based society.

**Role of SatyashodhakSamaj:** SatyashodhakSamaj was established on 24, September 1873. at Junaganj, Pune under the chairmanship of Jyotiba. Every member of it took a pledge. Satyashodhak society had three conditions. One, there is no need for any middleman between the devotee and the Lord. To destroy the religious slavery imposed by middlemen, to free the ignorant people from that slavery due to superstition. Second, to free the peasants from the clutches of moneylenders and landlords. Third, to provide education to men and women of all castes. This movement did an important job of awakening the identity of Shudra-Atishudras and women. The objective of SatyashodhakSamaj was to combat the religious and social injustices done by Brahmins and scriptures on women and Shudra-Atisudra. It was not possible for Jyotiba to do all this alone, so through this organization he wanted to continue his struggle. Jyotiba became the first president and treasurer of 'SatyashodhakSamaj' and Shri Narayanrao Govindrao Kadalak became the secretary. SatyashodhakSamaj had become a Maharashtra wide movement due to its principles and programs. It had deep consequences on the social life of Maharashtra. People of all caste religions were members of SatyashodhakSamaj. It continued to grow as a monotheistic sect completely free from the spirit of caste discrimination, untouchability. SatyashodhakSamaj took the initiative to destroy the brokerage of Brahmins from all religious rituals.

#### Objectives of SatyashodhakSamaj

- To free people from mental and religious slavery of brahminical scriptures.
- Stop the exploitation by the priests.
- To promote education.





- To educate women.
- Eradicate untouchability by saving the untouchables.
- To be sympathetic towards the oppressed children and the blind.
- Adoption of truthfulness and integrity.

The priestly class also made every effort to stop the proceedings of the SatyashodhakSamaj. Jyotiba rightly made SatyashodhakSamaj the voice of the suppressed people. The SatyashodhakSamaj was not against the Brahmins, it was against the brahminical practice of cheating in the name of religion. Thus, Jyotiba Phule struggled throughout his life for the emancipation of Shudras and women, for this along with his creations, he also adopted practical work-style and got success in it. It is proved from the texts and writings composed by Jyotiba that Jyotiba Phule was the biggest advocate of Dalit and women society.

### 16.3.3 Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922)

Pandita Ramabai Dongre was born on 23, April 1858 in an upper-class Brahmin family of Malheranji village in South Kanara district of Karnataka. His father was Anant Shastri Dongre and mother was Lakshmi Bai Dongre. Pandita Ramabai was born in a high Brahmin family but she fought an effective fight against the divisive and unequal nature of Hindu society. He raised wide-ranging issues related to the orthodox and oppressive methods of Brahminical domination from the society. These conservative and oppressive issue rules made women of Shudra Varna a victim of exploitation.

**Hindu caste system and pandita ramabai:** It is true that whatever was written in the scriptures was not written with the opinion of all the people of the society and no advice was taken from the Shudras and women while writing the scriptures. In this way, different kinds of one-sided social bonds were imposed on Shudras and women, which were illegal and inhuman. For example, the caste system came into existence only due to the Chaturvarna system of Hinduism. Pandita Ramabai was well aware of this. He always identified 'India' with 'Hinduism'. The 'Aryan model' also states that women were completely ignored and made completely dependent on men.

**Domination of high caste:** Pandita Ramabai was very upset with the discrimination done by the upper castes in Hinduism and she had also made up her mind to break casteism and the high and low system of Hinduism. Whereas Ramabai did this path by adopting the path of equality apart from caste-division and hating the hierarchy of Hindu religion. He said that I had lost faith in the religion of the forefathers, so I am marrying a person belonging to Shudra caste and other linguist - Bengali speaking person. Not only this, he did this marriage according to the provisions of the Civil Marriage Act 1872 and not according to the traditions of Hindu religion. There was a lot of opposition to this marriage and that couple was also caste-excommunicated.





Pandit Ramabai's approach was humanistic, so he had hated the caste division and caste traditions of Hindu society, in which one caste is high, the other is subordinate, one is touchable and the other is untouchable. He also believed that this practice has been going on for thousands of years because of this. Because Hindu society not only wanted to give freedom to certain classes, but also wanted to keep them as slaves. In those few classes, both women and untouchables had the same condition and destiny.

### 16.4 Non-Brahman Movement

#### 16.4 Non-Brahman Movement

##### 16.4.1 Self Respect Movement in South India

“Self-Respect movement, under the leadership of E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker, “Periyar”. Once an enthusiastic campaigner for the non-cooperation programme, he left the congress in 1925, believing that it was neither able nor willing to offer “substantive” citizenship to the non-brahmans. He was incensed by Gandhi’s pro-brahman and pro-varnashrama dharma utterances during his tour of Madras in 1927 and constructed a trenchant critique of Aryanism, Brahmanism and Hinduism, which he thought created multiple structure of subjection for Sudras, Adi- Dravidas (untouchables) and women. So, before self-rule what was needed was self-respect, and its ideology was predicated upon a sense of pride in though not an uncritical valorization of the Dravidian antiquity and Tamil culture and language. Indeed, Ramaswamy had reservations about privileging Tamil, as this could alienate the other non-Tamil speaking Dravidians of south India. Yet, Tamil language remained at the center of the movement, sometimes creating tensions between ‘Tamil’ and ‘Dravidians’ identities. The movement, however, was clearer in identifying its oppositional other, as it mounted scathing attacks on the Sanskrit language and literature, being the cultural symbols of Aryan colonization’s of the south. The story of the Ramayana was inverted to make Ravana an ideal Dravidian and Rama an evil Aryan. Unlike Justice Party, this ideology was more inclusive in its appeal. What is significant, the Self-Respect movement also drew its inspirations from and gave more currency to the earlier writings of the Adi- Dravida intellectuals like IyothetheThass and M. Masilamani. Both were publishing since the first decade of the twentieth century numerous articles against the caste system, Brahman dominations and Indian nationalism. During the 1930s, as the Congress gradually become more powerful, the non-Brahman movement became more radical and populist in its appeal, with more emphasis on the boycott of Brahman priests, more and more incidents of public burning of Manusmriti and attempts to forcibly enter temples which denied access to low caste people.

Eugene Irschick (1969) has shown how the non-Brahman movement in Madras gradually took the shape of an articulate Tamil regional separatism, particularly when in 1937 the congress government under C. Rajagopalachari proposed to introduce Hindi as a compulsory



school subject in the province. There were huge demonstrations in the city of Madras, Identifying Hindi as an evil force trying to destroy Tamil language and its speakers, and with this the Tamil language movement spread from elite circles into masses. This political campaign slowly propelled into a demand for a separate land or “DravidaNad” In August 1944, the Justice Party, of which Ramaswamy was now the president, changed its name into Darvidakazhagam (DK), with its primary objectives supposedly being the realization of a separate non-Brahman or Dravidian land. But in its essence, E.V. Ramaswamy’s concept of nations, as M.S.S Pandian has recently claimed, was “not constrained by the rigid territoriality of the nations-space”. He visualized “equal and free citizenship for the oppressed in the anticipatory mode”. i.e., in a relentless struggle, and for him “Dravidian” was “an inclusive trope” for all the oppressed people living across the territorial and linguistic boundaries. In other words, the social equality movement nurtured a millennial hope of a society that would be free of caste dominations, untouchability or gender discriminations.

### 16.4.2 Justice party and Non-Brahman Movement

In 1916, a political organization 'South Indian Liberation Association' was established. Its main objective was to oppose the economic and political power of the Brahmin community and the social upliftment of the non-Brahmins. This organization later became the 'Justice Party'. To gain the support of the masses, it propagated the ideology of equality among non-Brahmin castes. But this unity of leftists and caste opponents was eclipsed from the very beginning. The antiquarians present within the non-Brahmin movement protested. And in 1933 when Periyar was arrested and sent to jail. So, it became clear that the pressure of the British Government is falling against this solidarity. Ramaswamy broke the backbone of Brahmanism by forming the Justice Party. The main task of this Justice Party was to stop the exploitation arising out of Brahminism, to protect the rights of Dalits. But later this Justice Party became a political party.

The non- Brahman movement in Maharashtra, as Gail Omvedt (1976) has shown, developed at the turn of the century two parallel tendencies. One was conservative, led by richer non-brahman, who respond their faith in the British government for their salvations, and after the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919, organized a separate and loyalist political party, the Non-Brahman Associations, which hoped to prosper under the benevolent paternal rule of the British. But the movement also had radical trend, represented by the SatyashodhakSamaj, which developed a “class content” by articulating the social dichotomy between the “Bahujan Samaj” or the majority community or the masses, and the “Shetji-bhatji”. The merchants and brahmans. Although opposed initially to the Brahman -dominated congress nationalism, by the 1930s the non-brahman movement in Maharashtra was gradually drawn into the Gandhian congress. The power of nationalism, the growing willingness of the congress to accommodate non-brahman aspirations, the leadership of the young Poona based non-brahman leader KesavraoJedhe and his alliance with N.V. Gadgil, representing a new brand



of younger Brahman congress leadership in Maharashtra, brought about this significant shift. In 1938 at Vidarbha, the non-brahman movement of the Bombay Presidency formally decided to merge into congress, providing it with a broad mass base.

If in western India the non-brahman movement was associated with the Kunbis and the Maratha identity, in Madras Presidency it was associated with the Vellalas and a Dravidian identity. It arose in a late nineteenth century context where the brahman constituting less than three percent of the populations monopolized 42 percent of government jobs. Advanced in their English education, they valorised Sanskrit as the language of a classical past, and showed a public disdain for Tamil, the language of the ordinary people. This motivated the Vellala elite to uphold their Dravidian identity. For some time, the Christians missionaries like Rev Robert Caldwell and G.E. Pope were talking about the antiquity of Dravidian culture. Tamil language, they argued, did not owe its origin to Sanskrit, which had been brought to the south by the colonizing Aryans brahmans, while the Vellalas and other non-brahman could be described as Sudras, as this was a status imposed on them by the brahman colonists trying to thrust on them their idolatrous religion. The non-brahman elite appropriated some of these ideas and began to talk about their Tamil language, literature and culture as an “empowering discourse” and to assert that caste system was not indigenous to Tamil language. This culture movement to construct a non-brahman identity which began like its western Indian counterpart with an inversion of the Aryan theory of Indian civilizations always had as its central theme an emotional devotion to Tamil language, which could bring disparate groups of people into a “devotional community” on the political front the movement followed a familiar trajectory that began with publication of a ‘Non-Brahman Manifesto’ and the formations of the Justice Party in 1916, as a formal political party of thee non-brahman. It opposed the congress as a brahman dominated organizations, and claimed separate communal representation for the non-brahmans had been granted to the Muslims in the Morley Minto reforms. This demand, supported by the colonial bureaucracy, was granted in the Montague Chelmsford reform of 1919, as it allowed twenty-eight reserved seats to the non-brahman in the Madras Legislative Council. Opposed to the congress and to its programme of non-cooperation, the justice party had no qualm in contesting the elections in 1920, which the congress had given a call for boycott. As a result, the council boycott movement had no chance of success in Madras, where the Justice Party won 63 of the 98 elected seats, and eventually came to form a government under the new reforms.

### 16.4.3 E.V. Ramaswamy ‘Periyar’ (1879-1973)

Periyar E.V. RamaswamiNayakar was a prominent and influential Dravidian of the Dalit movement. He had made a deep study of the Brahmanical system. When he understood that this system was responsible for keeping more than half of the Hindu population of the country in a condition worse than the animals, then they gathered against it with full force. By uniting the entire South India Dalit society, he attacked Brahmanism by counting. This boosted the morale of the backward castes and they stood up for their rights. Erode Venkata



Nayakar Ramaswamy was born on 17 September 1879 in the city of Erode, Tamil Nadu. His father's name was Venkata Naykar and mother's name was ChintataiAmmal.E.V. Ramaswamy was a Tamil nationalist, politician and social activist. His fans used to address him with respect as 'Periyar'. He started the 'Atmasamana' movement or 'Dravidian movement'. He formed the Justice Party, which later became 'DravidaKazhagam'. He continued to oppose orthodox Hindutva throughout his life and compulsory teaching of Hindi. He did lifelong work for the exploited section of the South Indian society. While attacking brahminism and brahmins, he demanded a separate nation 'Dravida Nadu'. Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy emphasized on issues like rationalism, self-equality and women's rights and strongly opposed the caste system. He also fought for the rights of South Indian non-Tamil people and opposed the domination of North Indians. His works brought a lot of change in Tamil society and caste discrimination also reduced to a great extent.

### **Periyar's Socio-Political Journey.**

Periyar was a prominent politician and social reformer of Tamil Nadu of the twentieth century. Periyar formed the Justice Party on the principle of opposition to orthodox Hindutva. After returning from Banaras, Ramaswami started an open movement against the upper castes. He had united the Dalit society in South India. The backward castes had understood that the injustice being done to them is the result of the conspiracy of the brahmins. More than three-fourth of the country's resources were owned by the upper castes and more than one-fourth of the population did not have even one-fourth of the resources. From above, they were hit by forced labor, humiliation, debt and interest. Gold was becoming more and more rich, the downtrodden were becoming more and more poor and resourceless. Due to lack of education, a separate hell was being prepared for their next generations as well. Ramaswamy could not tolerate such a great injustice. His transparent vision saw everything clearly. Ramaswamy would roam from village to village and collect Dalits. Telling them how Brahmins have conspired with them. They have no right to education, no right to worship in temples, no right to fill water from wells and stepwells. Even by touching their shadow, gold considers itself impure. It's all a trick of gold. They want to keep more than half of the country's population as their slave. Therefore, Periyar openly attacked Brahmanism.

To inculcate a sense of respect among the downtrodden, oppressed and victims of Indian society, the work of Socrates and the creator of India's destiny will always remain a pillar of fame in the history of the world. Periyar was not an individual but an institution in himself. Anna Durai considered Socrates Periyar of the modern era as an era. Anna Durai said, "Periyar has done the work of two hundred years in twenty years". Periyar fought throughout his life with the problems of caste inequality and exploited society. Periyar deeply influenced Indian philosophy, politics and social life.

### **16.5 Dalit Protests in India during British Era**



### 16.5.1 Dalit Protests in India during British Era

Dalit protests in India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries followed somewhat different -but not entirely dissimilar trajectories. As the Christian missionaries started working among the Dalits and the colonial government sponsored special institutions for the spread of education among them, not only was a small educated elite group created among these classes, but in general a new consciousness was visible among the masses as well. However, it should be emphasized here the colonial bureaucracy, as we have noted earlier, often vacillated in implementing the professed public policies on Dalit education and it required the Dalit groups to protest and assert themselves to get their rights to education protected. Similarly, the Christian missionaries were not always the aggressive agents of improvement among the Dalits, as they too often succumbed to the pressures of an intolerant traditional society and an ambivalent bureaucracy. It is often believed that one way of protesting against the caste system was conversion to Christianity, as Dalits took recourse to this method in large numbers in some parts of south India.

Without denying the distinctiveness of each movement, we may discuss here some of the shared features of these Dalit protests. What some of these organized groups (not all) tried first of all, was to appropriate collectively some visible symbols of high ritual status, such as wearing of sacred thread, participation in ritual ceremonies such as community pujas, and entering temples from where they were historically barred by the Hindu priests. A number of organized temple entry movements took place in the early twentieth century, the most important of them being the Vaikom Satyagraha in 1924-25 and the Guruvayur Satyagraha in 1931-33 in Malabar, the Munshiganj Kali temple Satyagraha in Bengal in 1929 and the Kalaram temple Satyagraha in Nasik in western India in 1930-35. Apart from such religious rights, the organized Dalit groups also demanded social rights from high caste Hindus, and when denied, they took recourse to various forms of direct action. For example, when the higher castes resisted the Nadar women's attempt to cover their breasts like high caste women, this resulted in rioting in Travancore in 1859. The issue remained an irritant in the relationship between the Ezhavas and Nairs and again led to disturbances in 1905 in Quilon. In Bengal, when the high caste Kayasthas refused to attend the funeral ceremony of a Namasudra in 1872, the latter for six months refused to work in their land in a vast tract covering four eastern districts. In Maharashtra, the celebrated Mahar leader, Dr. Ambedkar organized in 1927 a massive satyagraha with ten to fifteen thousand Dalits to claim the rights to use water from a public tank in Mahad under the control of the local Municipality.

#### 16.5.1 Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar (1891-1956)

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was born on April 14, 1891 in Mau (Madhya Pradesh). Dr. Ambedkar was the last (fourteenth) child of Ramji Sakpal and Bhimabai. Ramji Sakpal's other sons were Balram and Anandrao and daughters were Manjula and Tulsi. All the rest of the children died due to deprivation and diseases. Dr. Ambedkar's ancestors had been serving in the army of 'East India Company' for a long time. Ramji Sakpal was working as a Subedar





in the army and he also worked as a headmaster in the army school for a period of 14 years. Realizing the importance of education, he paid special attention to the education of his children. Ramji Sakpal was unsuccessful in his initial efforts, but after a lot of effort, Anandrao and Bhimrao got admission in an army school itself. Both the brothers had to go through the bitter experiences of untouchability in school. He had to sit separately from all the students. The upper caste teachers and students used to keep a distance from them and did not even allow them to touch anything. When he felt thirsty, water was given to him by a third person. The reason was clear. He belonged to the 'Mahar' caste, which was considered untouchable. India has an ancient history of caste system which has been present in the society for thousands of years in its cruelest and inhuman form.

### **Untouchability and Social Inequality: Ambedkar**

At Columbia University, Dr. Ambedkar submitted his doctoral dissertation in June 1916 on the topic 'National Dividend for India: A Historic and Analytic Study', which was later published under the title 'The Development of the Provincial Economy in British India'. At the end of this discourse, he threw light on social oppression and social injustice and emphasized that how can a country progress without political power? After finishing higher education in America, in June, 1916, he had taken admission in 'London School of Economics and Political Science' and 'Grey's Inn' for barrister. But after a year of education in London, he had to go through a new crisis. According to the contract, Maharaja Sayajirao of Baroda did not increase his scholarship, nor did he allow him to study in Britain. Little did they know this man was going to be a great man, the Messiah of humanity.

### **Participation in Dalit Caste Conference**

In November 1917, two sessions of Dalit castes were held in Bombay. Through a resolution in a conference, it was demanded that the government should protect the interests of the untouchables and for this, according to the proportion of their population, the Dalit castes should be given the right to elect their representatives in the Legislative Assemblies. In a resolution the convention supported the Congress-League agreement. So that the disqualifications that were imposed on the Dalit castes in the name of customs and religion can be removed and for this the upper caste Hindus can be influenced. On March 23 and 24, 1918, under the chairmanship of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda, All India Depressed Classes Conference was organized in Bombay in which prominent leaders participated. The main objective of this conference was to call for the eradication of untouchability spread in the country. Tilak even went so far as to say that he would not accept God as the authority if the stigma of untouchability was not removed. But this type of anti-untouchability campaign carried out by the upper caste Hindus was like an antelope in the eyes of Dr. Ambedkar.



### Path of Struggle: Direct Action (Mahad Talab Satyagraha)

The period of 1926-27 is very important in the history of the Dalit movement. It was the path of direct action or struggle. In the Bombay Legislative Council, S.K. Bole, through a resolution, demanded the use of public water sources, wells, government-built dharamshalas, government schools, courts, offices and dispensaries for the untouchables. According to the government order dated 11th September, 1923, the said proposal was implemented. Yet the local bodies and municipal boards disobeyed this order and deprived the Dalits of civil rights. As a result, at the end of the conference, with the inspiration of Dr. Ambedkar, about 10,000 delegates went towards Chavadar Talab to drink water in the direction of exercising their fundamental right. At that time mischievous elements spread a rumor that Dalits had entered Vireshwar temple. On this the mischievous upper caste Hindus organized and broke into the pandal of the conference and thrashed the representatives. The representatives saved their lives by entering the homes of Muslim people. Dr. Ambedkar had to take refuge in the police station for his life. In the history of Dalit movement, another struggle chapter has thus been added for fundamental rights. Now the issue of social boycott of Dalits in the upper castes started. They started being evicted from agricultural land. They were attacked in their villages. Dr. Ambedkar asked his followers to fight fiercely. Go to public places. Fill and drink water from wells and ponds and do not waste time to enter the temple. It was a call to do and die or direct action. According to a thinker on this, 'The rich Hindu used to fight with the British for power. Untouchables, Dalits used to fight with superstitious-hardcore-Hinduism for human rights.'

This movement of Dalits lasted for a long time. Again, on December 25, 1927, a conference of satyagrahis was called in Mahad. A Muslim citizen granted permission to hold a convention in his place. Local businessmen boycotted this conference. Even food and drink had to be arranged from outside. Dr. Ambedkar went to Bombay with 200 Satyagrahis. 3000 satyagrahis were fully prepared. The District Magistrate appealed to Dr. Ambedkar to postpone the proposed Satyagraha. Ambedkar said that the root cause of all evils and inequality is the caste system. He said that equality means equal opportunity and transforming the hidden qualities in the person into power. He insisted that Hindu society should be fully formed on two principles, recognition of equality and boycott of caste system.

### 16.5.2 Mahatma Gandhi's Idea (1869- 1948 )

Gandhi for the first time had made untouchability an issue of public concern and the 1920 Non-Cooperation resolutions mentioned the removal of untouchability as a necessary precondition for attaining swaraj. But his subsequent campaign for the welfare of the Hari Jans after withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement, could neither arouse much caste Hindu interest in the reformist agenda nor could satisfy the Dalits. He condemned untouchability as distortion, but until the 1940s upheld Varnashrama dharma or caste system as an ideal non-competitive economic system of social division of labor as opposed to the class system of the West. This theory could not satisfy the socially ambitious group among the untouchables as it





denied them the chances of achieving social mobility. For the eradication of untouchability too, Gandhi took essentially a religious approach: temple entry movement of “Bhangi”, the self-sacrificing domestic sweeper, were these answers to the problems. This campaign significantly undermined the moral and religious basis of untouchability, but, as Bhikhu Parekh has argued, failed to deal with its “economic and political roots”. It dignified the untouchables, but failed to empower them. The Dalit leaders argued that if they were given proper share of economic and political power, the gates of temples would automatically open for them. The Gandhian approach, in other words, failed to satisfy Dalit leaders like Ambedkar who preferred a political solution through guaranteed access to education, employment and political representations. Ambedkar (1945) later charged Gandhi and Congress for obfuscating the real issue and the demand for a separate political identity for the Dalits became a sticky point in the relationship between the Dalit political groups and the Congress.

The differences persisted when the Communal Award in September 1932 recognized the right to separate electorate for the untouchables now called the Schedule Castes and Gandhi embarked on his fast unto death to get it revoked. Ambedkar now had little choice but to succumb to the moral pressure to save Mahatma’s life and accepted a compromise, known as the Poona Pact, which provided for 151 reserved seats for the Schedule Castes in joint electorate. For the time being, it seemed as if all conflicts had been resolved. There was a nationwide interest in temple entry movement and Gandhi’s Harijan campaign. Even, there was cooperation between Gandhi and Ambedkar in relation to the activities of the newly founded Harijan Sevak Sangh. The provisions of the pact were later incorporated into the Government of India Act of 1935. Although there were many critics of the pact at the time, Ravinder Kumar has argued that it represented a triumph for Gandhi who prevented a rift in India’s body politics and offered a nationalist’s solutions to the untouchability problems. But disunity reappeared very soon, as Congress and Ambedkar again began to drift apart, while Gandhi’s Harijan Sevak Sangh was involved in social issues, the other Congress leader had little interest in his mission. They needed a political front to mobilize Dalit voters to win the reserved seats in the coming election. For this purpose, they founded in March 1935 the All-India Depressed Classes League, with Jagjivan Ram a nationalist Dalit leader from Bihar, as the president. But still in the elections of 1937 the Congress won only 73 out of 151 reserved seats all over India. Subsequently, situations changed in different areas in different ways, depending on the nature of commitment the local Congress leaders had towards the Gandhian creed of eliminating untouchability. In the non-Congress provinces like Bengal, the leaders were more sensitive to electoral arithmetic and assiduously cultivated the friendship of the Dalit leaders. But in the eight provinces where the Congress formed ministries and remained in power for nearly two years, they performed in such a way that not just critics like Ambedkar were unimpressed, but even those Dalit leaders like M.C. Rajah of Madras who once sympathized with Congress, were gradually alienated.



### 16.6 SUMMARY

Anti-caste movement is a gift of medieval India. By the way, atrocities on Shudras and Atishudras are not new, it has been going on for thousands of years. Many restrictions were made against Shudras and Atishudras in religious scriptures like Manusmriti, Ramayana and Gita. And they were kept away from their rights like religion and education. It can be said that, in a way, the Varna system was created on the basis of Kama and Karma. The system of this ancient period also influenced the medieval system. The ups and downs that were seen in the society especially regarding the caste system. The way Jyotiba Phule, Pandita Ramabai, etc. hit hard on the caste system. The religious rituals made by the Brahmins were openly opposed in the society, which is how the Brahminical ideology has done injustice to the Shudras, such as not allowing religious texts to be read, ban on the temple entry, ban on education system, ban on living in the village, Restrictions on taking water from wells and ponds etc. were the rules imposed on Shudras and Atishudras. Whom it was necessary to obey the Shudras. If a Shudra went against these rules. His punishment was determined by the rules made by Brahmanism. In medieval India, many great men made people aware of casteist thinking, but the contractors of religion did not allow much change. The impression of the casteist movement in the medieval period was seen in modern India, such as Jyotiba Phule, Pandit Ramabai, Periyar, Dr. Ambedkar, and Mahatma Gandhi etc. created a consciousness among the people of Dalit society. The great men together made the Dalits recognize their existence, they put more emphasis on getting education, on entering the temple, taking water from wells and ponds, all people are equal. All Dalits should study the Vedas and Puranas of Hinduism. So that the atmosphere of equality is maintained in the society, and all the Dalits are aware of their rights.

### 16.7 GLOSSARY

**Dalit:** untouchable, also called Dalit officially in Scheduled Caste. Harijan, etc.

**Era:** a period of time in history ( that special for some reason )

**Movement:** the act or process of moving especially, change of place or position.

**Satyagraha:** a determined but nonviolent resistance to evil.

**SatyashodhakSamaj :** it kind of social reform society founded by Jyotiba Phule in Pune, Maharashtra.

### 16.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1). How did Jyotiba Phule raise the voice for education for the Dalits and Backward



- 2).How did Pandit Rambai criticize the Brahmanism and their ritual3).What was the “non-brahman movement” and its impact
- 4).How did Dr. Ambedkar criticize social inequality
- 5).What was the Idea of Mahatma Gandhi on caste

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## **Lesson 10**

### **GANDHI AND MASS MOBILIZATION: CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, NON COOPERATION AND QUIT INDIA MOVEMENTS.**

VAISHALI MANN

Content Writer, SOL, DU

#### **STRUCTURE**

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  - 2.1 IDEALS OF TRUE SATYAGRAHI
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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we are going to explore the role played by Mahatma Gandhi in three of the most important movements in Indian freedom struggle. But first let us find out about the vision of Mahatma Gandhi.

What was the Gandhian phase? Let us explore.

The third and the last phase of the national movement are regarded to be as the **GANDHIAN PHASE**. It was the era when large number of people from different sections of the society came along and the era of popular mass mobilization began. The movements lead by Mahatma Gandhi came to be known as the greatest mass struggle in the world. He was the first leader of the freedom struggle with whom the masses identified with, the most. His manner of living the life like a common man was the first and foremost reason for it. He came out as a symbol of poor India and also the nationalist India at the same time.

He said-“I shall work for India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, where there shall be no higher and lower class, where women are treated equally as men and where there is no untouchability. This is India of my dreams.”

Now, there were few causes closest to Gandhi. Let us understand what these causes were. Three causes that were closest to Gandhi's heart were – Hindu Muslim unity, fight against untouchability and to raise the standard of women in the Indian society. Now let us trace the journey of the Indian freedom struggle and the massive role played by Gandhi through the three most important movements.





Before we begin, let us understand first the background of Mahatma Gandhi and then the ground reality of the British India. Let us look into the kind of personality Mahatma Gandhi was and some of the struggles he led both in South Africa and in India.

### 2. THE RISE OF MAHATMA GANDHI

In order to understand Gandhi's struggle in India, first we need to look into his struggle in South Africa because it was his struggle in South Africa that further paved way for the similar approach that he adopted in India.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1869 at Porbandar, Gujarat, India. He completed his legal education in Britain and then went to South Africa to practice law. In South Africa, Gandhi was a force to reckon with. He fiercely revolted against the racial injustice and discrimination that was meted out to Indians in South African colonies. These Indian immigrants suffered from extreme categorization and racial behavior that was imparted to them. They were denied the right to vote. They were forced to live in congested and unhygienic places. They also had to pay tax and were not allowed to step outside after 9 PM. Gandhi tried to engage with the authorities in South Africa in order to make them well aware of the conditions of Indians. For this, he set up an organization THE NATAL INDIAN CONGRESS and started a paper called INDIAN OPINION.

It was during his struggle in South Africa he developed a technique of SATYAGRAHA based on truth and non violence. Now the next question that arises is what was meant by Satyagraha and what it was to become a true satyagrahi. Let us explore this now.

#### 2.1 Ideals of a true satyagrahi –

This we can say is one of the most important contributions of Gandhi. Gandhi was inspired by many western thinkers like Henry David Thoreau, John Ruskin and Leo Tolstoy and was equally influenced by Vaishnavism and Jainism. All of it impacted gandhian philosophy that ultimately was based on principle of non violence and truth. He urged everyone to be a true satyagrahi by heart. For him, it meant the following-





- True satyagrahi was to be truthful and peaceful and at the same time should not submit to any wrong.
- He should work according to the principles of cooperation and boycott.
- He should adopt moderate, passive methods of resistance or protest like nonpayment of taxes, declining the positions of power, instead of any violent method.
- He should have no hatred for evil doer, rather love and compassion for him in his heart. There should be a complete change of heart using the technique of non violence and peace.
- He should never bow down in front of evil.

Gandhi believed that only strong and brave could practice non violence. Violence was an attribute or quality of a weak person. He said –“the only quality I want to claim is truth and non violence.”

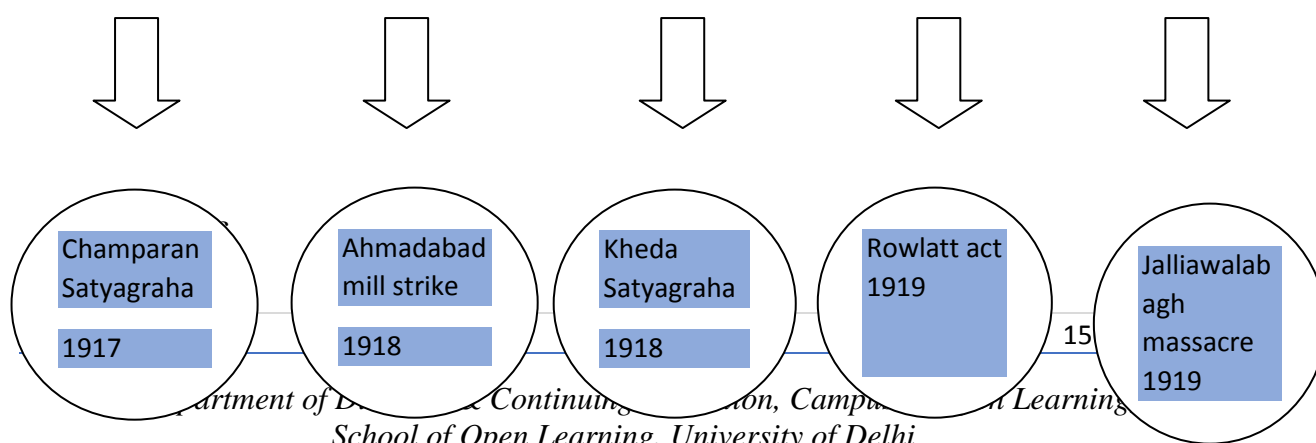
### 2.2 Return to India-

In this segment, let us understand what kind of Indian environment Gandhi was subjected to. Mahatma Gandhi returned to India in 1915. His efforts in South Africa by this time were well known all over the world but only among the educated masses. Gandhi believed in the “power of common masses” and he felt that in order to unite all Indians against the British rule, it was important to first understand the situation at ground level. He wanted, through his efforts to eliminate the gap that was created where the poor people, the common masses of India felt alienated. He wanted to connect with a common man first.

For this, he travelled extensively to all over India and talked and engaged with people.

### 2.3 Initial journey in India-

As we can see further that his initial journey in India can be divided into following five phases-





Now let us look at all of it in detail, one by one –

### 2.3.1 Champaran satyagraha 1917-

Champaran Satyagraha is regarded to be as the first civil disobedience that started in India. The peasants in Champaran who were engaged in the indigo plantation were being exploited by the British planters. The system was called TINKATHIA SYSTEM where the peasants were forced to grow indigo on 3/20<sup>th</sup> part of their total land and sell it to the planters at the price of not their choice but the prices fixed by the planters.

Gandhi reached Champaran and inquired into the conditions of peasants on the request of one of the peasants, Raj Kumar Shukla. His intervention helped vanish fear from the minds of poor peasants who stood against authority of British and European planters. As we can see that this was the first incident where Gandhi connected to the minds and hearts of the common masses.

The local leaders got motivated a lot and asked the people to join the struggle in the name of Gandhi and as a result masses joined in large numbers and the first local mass movement of Gandhi in India was successful.

### 2.3.2 Ahmedabad mill strike 1918-

This is the second movement Gandhi made himself a part of. Let us find out about this movement a bit. In this movement, Gandhi tried to resolve the dispute/fight between workers and the mill owners in Ahmedabad and here he advised the workers to demand 35% increase in the wages using the Satyagraha technique.

### 2.3.3 Kheda satyagraha 1918-

Kheda Satyagraha was regarded to be as the first non-cooperation movement. In this movement, Gandhi asked the farmers to not to pay unnecessary tax/remission to the British due to crop failure.

The British at the end decided not to charge tax and gave back all the confiscated (forcefully taken away)



property of farmers back to them. Kheda Satyagraha brought a new awakening in the minds of people and Gandhi emerged as a mass leader.

### 2.3.4 Rowlatt act and jallianwalabagh massacre 1919-

In rowlattsatyagraha Gandhi decided to take the whole nation along. Let us find out what this was. The entire movement was against few measures taken by British. We can say by analyzing this movement that it was a very important movement.

Under a committee headed by Justice S Rowlatt, it was decided to give Britishers some extra powers. They were given unnecessary overpowering authority. It demanded that all the political activists should be put behind jail for two years and should be imprisoned without a trial. There was also very strict control over the press that was established.

The entire movement resulted in a tragic episode for entire India when General Dyer opened fire on peaceful satyagrahis and killed 379 people in Amritsar, Punjab. Also Gandhi felt that in many other parts of India the movement was turning violent in its course. As a result, Gandhi called off the movement.



Let us look at the role played by Mahatma Gandhi in mobilizing the masses in three of the most crucial movements in the history of Indian freedom struggle. Let us find out the background in which all these three movements took place, let us look further into the entire course of these movements and also analyze what was the level of the mass participation in these movements.

At the end we shall also understand how these movements ended and till what degree Gandhian influence was reflected in all these three movements.

Khilafat and the non cooperation movement

Civil disobedience movement

Quit india movement

### 3 KHILAFAT AND THE NON COOPERATION MOVEMENT-

The first movement we are going to explore is the Khilafat and the non cooperation movement. Let us now find out about it. The nationalist agitation that took place against rowlatt act was successful in one important front – bringing the Hindus and Muslims together against British rule. A new educated middle class emerged during this time. It is in this backdrop that the khilafat and the non cooperation flourished.

#### 3.1 Background of the movement-

- The economic situation of the country after First World War was worrisome. The conditions were high price rise of the goods and decrease in the production of industries.



- Rowlatt act and Jalliwala massacre made people rise collectively against British rule. Now was the time when people gained this consciousness that British never wanted their good.
- The Hunter Commission that was formed after Jalliwala massacre did not punish General Dyer and this further led people to believe in the anti-Indian attitude of Britishers. The Hunter Commission was actually formed to inquire about the massacre.
- There were constitutional reforms introduced like the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 by the British which took away the right of self-government from the Indians. These reforms introduced a system of diarchy where some subjects like finance, law, order, regarded as 'reserved subjects' were under the governor and other subjects like education, public health, local self-government called as the 'transferred subjects' were to be under the ministers responsible to British legislature.

### 3.2 The Khilafat issue-

Let us now explore one of the most crucial aspects of this movement i.e. the Khilafat issue. What exactly was this issue? Let's look-

- The politically conscious Muslims in India were critical to the treatment given to the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) by Britain after First World War. Muslims all over the world regarded the Sultan of Turkey as their spiritual leader. Since Turkey sided with Germany and against British in World War 1, Britain in anger and resentment removed the Turkish Khalifa (Sultan) from the power.
- Indian Muslims demanded that Khalifa's (sultan) control should be reestablished and he should be given certain territories.
- In 1919, a Khilafat conference was organized under the leadership of Ali brothers (Shaukat Ali and Mohammad Ali), Ajmal Khan, Hasrat Mohani to force the British government to change their aggressive attitude towards Turkey in particular and towards Indians in general. This paved the way for a country-wide agitation.
- A wider call was made at the movement to boycott all the British goods.

### 3.3 Gandhi's stand –

Since Gandhi was the major force in mobilizing the masses against the British, it is very crucial to know about his stand. Let us find out this. Mahatma Gandhi viewed Khilafat as a golden opportunity to unite the Hindus and Muslims and further bring Muslims closer to the nationalist struggle. He felt that now all the sections of the people- Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians, peasants,



women, artisans, youth, tribal people and people from different region would see that British were always against Indians.

He saw it as “opportunity of uniting Hindus and Muslims as would not arise in 100 years.”

### 3.4 Spread of the movement- Let us find the movement spread

- Gandhi along with Ali brothers travelled all across the nation to motivate people to join the movement.
- Thousands of students left government schools, colleges and joined the national institutions.
- Lawyers gave up their practice including Jawaharlal Nehru, CR Das, and C Rajagopalachari.
- Foreign cloth was burnt down and British imports declined severely. There was also picketing of foreign liquor shops.
- Peasant's participation in the movement was massive where peasants turned against their landlords, traders in places like Rajasthan, Sindh, Awadh, Assam, and Maharashtra.
- Women too came forward and participated with enthusiasm and gave up Purdah and also their accessories to TILAK FUND- a fund that was collected for the movement.

### 3.5 Aftermath-

let us also explore how this important movement came to an end. However, the final blow to the movement came due to Chauri chaura incident in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh in 1922 when villagers burnt alive 22 policemen in a local police station. Another aftermath of the movement was that the khilafat issue had died completely and the alliance between Muslim league and congress faded away by this time. Gandhi felt the masses have crossed the line and he saw this as destruction of his principle of non violence. As a result, he called the movement off.



### IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

5. System of Diarchy was introduced as part of which reforms by the British. Name it along with the year.

6. Khilafat conference was organized in 1919 under the leadership of Ali brothers- True/False.

7. Name the fund where women deposited all their accessories.

8. Chauri Chaura incident took place when and at which place.

## 4. THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

This was the second movement we will explore and find out about its entire course and the events that unfolded.

After the withdrawal of the non cooperation movement, Congress and Gandhi both were not in the position to launch another mass movement. But also at the same time there were significant changes taking place in form of agitations against the British. Various peasants and landholders in Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh were frustrated due to crop failure and subsequent decline in food production.

Let us explore the movement further.

### 4.1 Background -

- In Calcutta session of congress in 1928, leaders like Nehru, Subash Chandra Bose expressed their dissatisfaction against the dominion status that was demanded by the congress. This group of leaders was called 'the swarajists'. These leaders wanted complete swaraj called the PURNA SAWARAJ or full independence from the British rule.





Gandhi feared that this would further disintegrate the movement as the consensus was developed with lot of efforts. He felt that instead of political demands like full independence it was better to stick to constructive work like non cooperation. Gandhi wanted to adopt the more gradual and piecemeal approach rather than sudden revolutionary path.

- Gandhi travelled a lot in 1929 preparing people to organize constructive work in villages i.e. boycotting foreign clothes and public burning of foreign cloth. It was further organized by congress working committee.
- Irwin's declaration, 1929- this declaration was very important. The main purpose behind the declaration by then viceroy lord Irwin was to restore the faith in the ultimate purpose of British policy. The dominion status was promised by Irwin. He also promised the round table conference.
- Delhi manifesto 1929- in Delhi manifesto there were certain demands that were put forward by the Indian leaders like majority representation for congress in the conference and release of the political prisoners.

However, these demands were completely rejected by Lord Irwin.

### 4.2 The Independence Pledge of 26<sup>th</sup> January 1930 -

This was a very important pledge. Let us see what this was. There were several public meeting organized all over the towns and villages all over India. The pledge consisted of the following points-

- Freedom was the inalienable right of the Indians.
- The British government was the reason India was pulled backward politically, economically, culturally, spiritually and now it was the ultimate right of Indians to attain complete independence.

### 4.3 Gandhi's demand –

The Lahore session of the congress, Gandhi presented following demands that included the issues of general interest, demands of the peasants and also demands of the educated elite and business class.

Let us now find out again that what exactly Gandhi's stand in this movement was.



The demands were as follow-

- Reduce the expenditure on army and civil services by 50%.
- Carry out changes in criminal investigation.
- Allow control of firearms licenses through regulation.
- Release all the political prisoners.
- Introduce textile production.
- Reserve coastal shipping for Indians.
- Reduce land revenue by 50%.
- Abolish salt tax.

#### 4.4 Dandi march 1930-

On 12<sup>th</sup> march 1930, Gandhi along with members of Sabarmati ashram marched from Ahmedabad to the coast of Dandi. This historic march marked the beginning of the civil disobedience movement. Gandhi asked the people to make salt from sea water and break the salt law as part of which the British were charging tax on people for salt. In Gujarat, around 300 villages resigned accepting Gandhi's appeal. We can see how massive appeal of mahatma Gandhi was.

#### 4.5 Spread of the movement –

We can say that how far any movement is successful or not, this we can analyze by exploring the level of participation and also not just the level but also the diversity of the participation. Let us understand how.

There were large sections of people who participated in the civil disobedience movement. These were as follow-

- Women- Gandhi requested women to be at the forefront of the movement. Women participated in the movement in huge number. They picketed liquor shops, burnt foreign cloth.
- Students- students and youth played very important role in the movement.
- Muslims- some areas like north western frontier province saw majority participation on the part of Muslims. The Muslim weaving community in Bihar, Delhi and Lucknow were at the forefront of mobilizing people.



- Merchants- traders association and commercial bodies organized boycott at many different places.
- Tribal- in Maharashtra, Karnataka, central India the tribal organized the movement.
- Peasants- were active in Bihar and Gujarat.

### 4.6 Gandhi Irwin pact 1931-

accept demands like –

It is also known as Delhi pact. Irwin finally agreed to

- Immediate release of political prisoners.
- Return of all the land forcefully taken by British.
- Right to make salt in coastal villages for personal consumption.
- Right to peaceful and non aggressive picketing.

### 4.7 Difference between civil disobedience and non cooperation-

Let us now find out in what terms both the non cooperation movement and the civil disobedience movements were different from each other.

- The objective in civil disobedience was now complete independence. And it was non cooperation in the non cooperation movement.
- It went beyond the Gandhian idea of non cooperation and now the Indians wanted complete self rule. Indians were now enlightened and very much aware.
- However there was a bit decrease in number of students and lawyers protesting but the merchants and traders protested in large number.
- The congress was now stronger than before.

### 4.8 Poona pact and the communal award 1932-

This was one of the most important aspect of this movement. What were the Poona pact and the communal award? Let us find out.



The communal award was declared by British Prime Minister Ramsay McDonald in 1932. It established separate electorate and reserved seat in favor of the depressed classes of society- Muslims, Sikhs, Anglo Indians, and other depressed classes, Marathas in Bombay. BR Ambedkar who was the leader of the backward class was in favor of separate electorates. But Gandhi and congress saw it as British policy of divide and rule i.e. to divide the Indian people among themselves and then rule them. There was a lot of debate around this issue. As a result Ramsay McDonald decided to solve this issue by introduction of what came to be known as the communal award.

What was this communal award.

Let us look at its provisions-

- In provincial legislatures, seats were to be distributed on communal basis.
- Muslims were to be favored wherever they were in minority.
- Doubling of existing seats of provincial legislatures.
- 3% reservation of seats for women.
- Double vote for depressed classes- one through separate electorate and another through general electorate.
- In province of Bombay, 7 seats to be given to Marathas.

### 4.9 Gandhi's response-

Gandhi response was that he thought that this was a clear and direct attack on the unity of India.

He believed that it is by eliminating untouchability, the depressed classes can be protected. Not by providing separate electorates. Gandhi went on an indefinite fast. As a result, BR Ambedkar had to step down and he signed the Poona pact of 1932. In this, he gave up his demand of separate electorates for depressed classes.



### 5. THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT-

let us now find about the third and the final movement in our segment i.e. the quit India movement. We can say that this movement was different from both the above mentioned movements i.e. the non cooperation movement and the civil disobedience movement in the sense that the quit India movement demanded the British to finally leave Indians on their own and let them decide their destiny. Let us explore it in depth.

#### 5.1 Background-

- The Cripps mission of 1942 was a failure. Cripps mission granted the dominion status to India but defense of India was to remain with British only. Congress objected to this partial transfer of power. And by the time, Muslim league wanted a separate state of Pakistan to be created.
- There was popular discontent among the masses due to price rise, failure of crops.

#### 5.2 The Quit India resolution-

Let us look into what this resolution was- The congress working committee in 1942 created a resolution. This resolution was created by Nehru and supported by Sardar Patel. It was accepted at a congress meeting in Bombay on 8<sup>th</sup> august 1942.

There were certain important demands that were put forward. Let's see what exactly these demands were. The demands of the resolution were as follow-

- Immediate end to British rule in India.
- Form a provisional government of India after British withdrawal



- Declare a commitment of free India to defend itself against any foreign rule.

### 5.3 Spread of the movement-

Gandhi gave certain instructions for people of different classes to follow. We can know that the importance of these instructions that were given by Gandhi lies in his strategy to mobilize the large number of people. Let us look at what these instructions were-

- He asked the lawyers to not resign but declare their obedience to congress.
- He asked the soldiers not to leave the army.
- Asked students to leave their studies.
- Asked peasants to not pay rent.
- Asked princes to support the masses.
- Asked people of princely state to support only those rulers who were anti government.
- He gave the final call to all- "DO OR DIE".

However the British were in every mood to suppress the movement. As a result, all the top congress leaders were arrested on 9<sup>th</sup> august 1942. The congress working committee and other organizations like all India congress committee and provincial congress committees were declared unconstitutional.

### 5.4 Participation-

large number of people participated in the movement students of schools, colleges; women leaders like Aruna Asif Ali, Usha Mehta all lead the movement.

Workers, peasants and even the zamindars participated. Muslims helped by giving shelter to underground activists. The communists however supported British in Second World War against Germany. The Muslim league by this time opposed the movement because they feared that if British left India they would be treated like minorities and would be oppressed by Hindus.

### 5.5 Government response-



let us understand what was the British government response. British response was severe suppression of the movement. They lathi charged people; tear gasses them and even fired upon them. It is believed that over ten thousand people were dead. Villages were fined heavily. Main storm centers of this movement were places like eastern united province, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Midnapore.

But it is to be noted that the movement itself was of great significance as it declared the ultimate goal of the complete independence by the masses. This was considered as FINAL CALL. All the three movements saw great participation by people in huge numbers. They displayed unparalleled strength and enthusiasm. Even in the face of force and brutalities used by the British in all the movements, Indians stood faced it with lot of courage. Though there times when the Gandhian principal of non violence was not followed and also the movement was suppressed due to both britishers and also due to differences tall that emerged in hearts and minds of Indian people themselves but the final goal of independence was never given up and was ultimately achieved in later years.

### IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

15. Quit India resolution was created by which two leaders?
16. Name all the five storm centers of this movement.

## 6. SUMMARY

Gandhi emerged truly as the LEADER OF THE MASSES in all these movements. The ability to inspire and motivate and take along such a diverse population of the nation was a daunting task and Mahatma Gandhi in the wide spectrum of the leaders came across one such leader who used his policy of Satyagraha and his ideal of non violence as his weapons against the British power. His persona and teaching affected every class of the Indian society. This was the reason that in all the three movement studied above we noticed participation of people belonging to wide sections of the society. His will to preach what he believed in and his ability to connect even to a person residing in the remotest village of the country is nothing short





of excellent leadership. His use of symbols like khadi, dhoti and his ideas did not seem alien to Indian people, rather they connected with it the most. Gandhi truly led the movement of the Indian nationalist struggle against a foreign rule and came out as a force or a link that succeeded in connecting all loose threads. We can easily conclude that the Gandhi was a major force behind all these movements. It was his efforts that lead to the movements acquire such a great degree of importance.

### 7. SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS-

- What were the ideals of a true satyagrahi as envisaged by Gandhi?
- Upon his return to India, what were the movements Gandhi engaged himself in, for mobilizing the masses. Explain the movements.
- Explain the background of the khilafat and non cooperation movement.
- Trace the evolution of the civil disobedience movement. State the basic points of difference between the civil disobedience movement and the non cooperation movement.
- What was the quit India movement. Analyze the movement in detail. Do you feel that Gandhi was a major force in mobilizing the masses in this movement?

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## **LESSON 11**

### **Revolutionaries, Socialists and Communists.**

Dr. Latika Bishnoi(PhD)  
Content Writer , SOL, DU

#### **STRUCTURE**

- 11.1 Learning Objectives
- 11.2 Introduction
- 11.3 The Revolutionaries
  - 11.3.1 Hindu Revivalism
  - 11.3.2 Revolutionary Extremism
  - 11.3.3 Trends of the Revolutionaries
- 11.4 The Socialists
- 11.5 The Communists
- 11.6 Summary
- 11.7 Glossary
- 11.8 Self-Assessment Questions
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#### **11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the lesson is to understand the role of the revolutionaries, socialists and the communists in the Indian National Movement. The study brings to light different ideologies that functioned during the national movement; and different organisations and leaders who played an important role in enlightening the feeling of nationalism and making it



a mobilisation of the masses. The student will know the names of the leaders and their organisations in this chapter and also how their leadership brought a new trajectory to the national movement.

### 11.2 INTRODUCTION

The scholarship on the rise of revolutionaries, socialism and communism across the world brings into light the idea of resistance in societies that were controlled by an imperial power and faced colonial subjugation. In developing societies like that of India, the idea of resistance came in the form of nationalism and national movement against the British rule that controlled India through its oriental methods. Economic deterioration, policies that intervened with the traditional society, oriental methods were all reasons that led to the rise of Indian nationalism. Most of all the idea lay in the fact that India as a nation should be indigenously ruled by the Indians. Shekhar Bandhopadhyay points out that idea of nationalism in India was a new one and a product of modernity; and it was taken in three forms: early nationalist school where the feeling of nationalism emerges from the pride in India's ancient tradition, the neo traditionalists. The Cambridge school saw nationalism in the emergence of localised movement of various local groups in competition. The Marxist school characterised the national movement within the parameters of economic development where the bourgeoisie leadership sought to direct the mobilisation for their own suitable interests. The subaltern school observed the 'blinker historiography' neglected the role of the common people in the movement.

The Indian National Movement was a mobilisation that took roots in the form of resistance in India against the British Raj. The mobilisation tried to encompass all sections of people under its umbrella. Revolutionary ideas in Indian nationalism can go back to the period of 1857 when the mutiny of the sepoys stood against the British empire on the issue of rifles, came at the backdrop of the British's state policies and arrogance of superiority of English culture. It was a loud voice of the rural society of India who fought against the subjecthood of the British and the orientalist ideology. The mutiny was severely suppressed but a few historians still refer to it as the First war of Indian independence.'

### 11.3 The Revolutionaries

Revolutionaries are generally considered people who take a stand against the state or the state's policy. The idea is to change the system or sometimes completely overthrow it.

Across the world there have been several revolutionaries that have paved way for certain changes through mostly extremist methods. Some revolutionaries challenge the system or the society's norms as well but they do not take the extremist procedure. They are mostly observed at places where the state control has been strong and mostly where the colonial system has paved way for the subjugation of the society. In India the idea the revolutionary idea pre-independence adhered to the notion of freedom from the British Empire, from poverty that had paved way into the system. The strong belief that the indigenous people belonging to the nation should rule the country and the colonial rule should uproot completely.



The Indian National Movement was largely dominated by the western educated leaders who were moderates under the Indian National Congress. Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 and its main goal was independence from the British. The methods of the Congress have kept changing now and again but initially until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it believed in working with the British. The British however looked at them with contempt. The Congress failed to mobilise the masses to a large level. It was only when the Partition of Bengal took place in 1905 that there was a rise of new ideology within the movement. The fact that India belonged to them and there were other methods needed to get self-rule as largely propagated. Bengal was considered as an important place of nationalist sentiments. It was also here and largely in North India a new set of revolutionary ideas became to emerge. Some of the sides were based on Hindu Revivalism while the others were based on Socialist and Communist principles.

### ACTIVITY

Watch the movie *Mangal Pandey: The Rising* (2005).

The movie would give an idea of the fact that why the sepoy mutiny took place in India. The issue of the rifle and the Indian community gathering to stand against the British would give an idea of the Indian discontent against an empire due to which several villages and common man faced subjugation.

#### 11.3.1 Hindu Revivalism

Revolutionary ideas have now and again also upsurged in different symbols and literature where the idea of Mother India was put forward. Religious symbols were given importance by the Hindu revivalists. Festivals like the Ganpati and Shivaji festival by Bal Gangadhar Tilak were used as places to influence the masses and make them understand the strength of their traditions and culture. Nationalism found its way in the form of symbols which were used to mobilise the masses. Hindu religious symbols like cow protection, when it came to the age of consent of marriage, language, Hindu Festivals, British interference in Hindu traditional beliefs; projected a threat to the Indian society and the revivalists believed that the Indian traditions and ancient scripts were superior to any alien western education.

Religious awakening played a pivot role in Hindu revivalism. Contempt for Western education, British interference in Indian cultures and traditions miffed the revivalists and Bal Gangadhar and V.D Savarkar led the movement in Maharashtra while Aurobindo Ghosh, Vivekanand Bankim Chandra played an important role in Bengal. Tilak was inspired by the *Bhagwad Geeta* and laid strong emphasis on the Shivaji and Ganpati festivals to influence the masses. Influenced by him the Chapekar brothers formed the Hindu Dharma Sanrakshini Sabha, responsible for assassination of a few British Officers. V.D Savarkar formed an



association called the Mitra Mela in Nasik in 1900. The society actively participated in the Ganapati and Shivaji festivals to influence the masses. The works of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Swami Vivekanand influenced several young leaders. *Bande Matram* from Chatterjee's *Anand Math* became a symbolic slogan, gave importance to motherland.

### 11.3.2 Revolutionary Extremism

Dissatisfied by Gandhi's withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement, post 1922 saw a rise of extremist ideas in India. India witnessed a rise of revolutionaries with different socialist and communist ideologies who believed that passive resistance would not help in gaining independence from the British repression. Post 1920s also saw also a change in the ideology within the Congress and a group of younger leaders emerged moving towards the socialist and communist ideas.

India's struggle for independence witnessed a rise of several resistances in root at local and higher level. It was during this time the pattern or manner of resistance that paved way for different ideologies.

Several foreign influences have had an impact on the revolutionary, socialist and communist ideology of India like the American war of independence, the Irish struggle, the Unification of Italy, the lives of Mazzini and Garibaldi, when Japan won against Russia, and mostly the October Revolution of 1917 of Russia.

The nationalist sentiments united the people altogether and put forward the idea of nation. The Partition of Bengal in 1905, which came to bifurcate the state on the basis of administration was also seen a way to divide the religious Hindu and Muslim Communities of Bengal. The partition saw a huge mobilisation and people gathering against the British to undo the policy. This was perhaps also the ground of disillusionment and further rise of revolutionary ideas.

Indian nationalism has had variegated ideologies and their struggle for independence. Socialism was one such ideology that was adopted by the younger generation who sought for a different pathway from the mainstream moderates.

The Non-Cooperation Movement launched by Gandhi was taken aback and shattered the hopes of several youth, who sought a revolutionary path. Swarajists' method for independence was considered obsolete and a new method that intensified the struggle for revolution through violent means was given importance as an alternative to the methods of the Congress.

### 11.3.3 Trends of the Revolutionaries

Two trends of revolutionary terrorism paved way among the young leaders, one in Punjab, north UP and Bihar and the other in Bengal. Their influence emerged from three places, one was the rise of working class and trade unionism after the First World War, the Bolshevik revolution that took place in Russia and the lastly on the emergence of new groups based on the communist trends and understanding of the Marxist ideologies.

Several organisations and cases lay emphasis on the fact how the Indian revolutionaries tried to bring to light the issues of the Indian masses and resort to violence as a method to gain





complete independence. Ram Prasad Bismil, Jogesh Chatterjee and Sachindranath Sanyal were among the first to bring in revolutionary mobilisation in northern India, their book was *Bandi Jiwan* was a source of inspiration for several revolutionaries. They formed the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) in Kanpur in October 1924 to strategize on revolutionary methods to overthrow the British and establish a republic of a Federal Republic of the United States of India based on adult franchise. Kakori Robbery Case of Lucknow was their first revolutionary step, but backfired when several leaders were arrested and hanged. Influenced by socialist ideas the HRA was reorganised under the leadership of Chandra Shekhar Azad by young leaders from UP- Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Shiv Varma and Jaidev Kapur ; and Punjab -Bhagat Singh, Bhagwati Charan Vohra and Sukhdev. On September 1928, the name of the HRA was changed to Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (Army).

The mechanism of the revolutionaries was to shift to mass politics instead of violent means but the death of Lala Lajpat Rai during the Anti- Simon protests in 1928 which effected the revolutionaries and December 1928, Bhagat Singh, Azad and Rajguru took to assassination of a police official Saunders at Lahore, Saunders responsible for the lathi charge of Lala Lajpat Rai.

The incident was to bring to notice the new modus operandi of the revolutionaries that laid much emphasis on a revolution by the masses. In April 1929, another incident was to take place, to throw a bomb at the Assembly. The act was to take place against the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Dispute Bill, which worked against the rights of the workers and curtailed the civil liberties of the people. The objective was to use the platform for larger propaganda by getting arrested. They were tried in the conspiracy case and hanged in March 1931, but their slogans like *Inquilab Zindabad*, *Long live the proletariat*, *down with imperialism*, *make the deaf hear* and the song *rang de basanti chola* won them nationwide sympathy while their death stirred the soul of every human struggling for freedom under the colonial power.

Several such incidents where the revolutionaries stood up against the British atrocities brought in the idea of revolution in Indian minds. Jatin Das, took to hunger strike against the British for the plight of Indians in jails, to be treated as political prisoners and not as criminals. His death paved way for another mass sympathy and stir. The Lahore Conspiracy Case further saw several revolutionaries being convicted or deported to Andaman.

In Bengal the revolutionaries worked simultaneously with the Congress, which provided them as a base. They helped C.R Das and his *Swarajist* work. His death divided the Congress in two groups – one led by Subhash Chandra Bose, the *yugantar* group and second the *Anushilan* group led by J.M Sengupta. Their revolutionaries' goal was to assassinate Charles Target, the commissioner of Calcutta. The attempt was made by Gopinath Saha in September 1934. Unfortunately another Englishman was assassinated leading to the arrest of several revolutionaries and their death that brought the downfall of the revolutionary movement. Further setback to the movement was also due to the multiple issues that led to factions among the two leading groups. Among these revolutionised groups was a group led by Surya Sen called the Chittagong group. Surya Sen's main belief was "humanism is a special virtue of the revolutionary." With a group of several other young revolutionaries, the group took to occupy two Chittagong armouries. Their target was to seize arms and destroy telegraphs and





communications and destroy the railway communication between Chittagong and rest of Bengal. In April 1930, the raid was made but unfortunately no arms were found but they did succeed in disrupting the telecommunication services and the railways. The raid was taken under the banner of Indian republican Army, Chittagong Branch. The revolutionaries then fled and Surya Sen hid for three years in nearby villages, only to be found and hanged in January 1934.

### ACTIVITY

Watch the movie *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* (2002).

The movie is a source of understanding of the life of Bhagat Singh a revolutionary who resorted to rebel against the British witnessing the Jallainwala massacre at a young age. While the Non- Cooperation movement was at its peak, the Chauri Chaura incident brought a setback to the movement because of which Gandhi withdrew the movement. Also, it was a time when Simon Commission comes to India and Lala Lajpat Rai is beaten to death. Death of such an honourable leader made youth like Bhagat Singh and his comrades take up arms. They decided to bomb the assembly, not with the intention to hurt but to make the government and people understand the atrocities of the people against the two bills that were being introduced. While imprisoned, they take up hunger strike against the atrocities of the prisoners where Jatin Das dies. The movie brings to light the sacrifices by the Indian revolutionaries while also popularising the song of *rang de basanti chola*.

#### 11.3.4 Impact of the Revolutionaries.

These incidents impacted the country largely and stirred the imagination of the youth. In 1931 and 1932 more incidents emerged. In Madras three district judges were assassinated. The government brought in several repressive acts to suppress the revolutionaries. Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested in the year 1933 for his Calcutta speech where he praised the revolutionaries and condemned imperialism.

The Chittagong group was more based on group revolutionaries than individualistic. Several revolutionaries like Kalpana Dutt (captured along with Surya Sen) and Pritilata Waddadar (died in a raid) played an important role in the revolution for freedom. Some of these revolutionaries even shed their religiosity for the revolution. Their mechanism was to follow the Russian Nihilists and the Irish terrorists.



The enlargement in the ideology of the revolutionary was made by Bhagat Singh and his comrades. Who believed in the abolition of all systems that exploited a common man, nationalisation of the railways, organise peasants and workers and formulate an armed resistance. Bhagat Singh in later years adapted to Marxist ideology and believed mass mobilisation as a means to popular revolution.

He helped establish *Punjab Nujawan Bharat sabhain* the year 1926, an organisations that helped in political work and membership for several revolutionaries. He and Ram Prasad Bismil under the banner of the HRA even dismissed the violent methods. Ram Parasad Bismil eveb appealed to the people to work with the Congress. Chandrashekhar Azad defined revolution as independence economic, political and social

### CASE STUDY

**Observe the Kakori Robbery Case in August 1925, where the HRA members Ramoprasad Bismil and Asfaqullah Khan looted the train travelling from Shahjanpir to Lucknow in the village Kakori. The belief was that the train carried money that the British intended to take. The money belonged to the people of India and it had to be taken back.**

## 11.4 The Socialists

The 1920 to 1930 period witnessed radicalisation of the national movement with the rise of socialist ideas under Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose. Gradually two political parties were formed Communist Party of India and Congress Socialist Party. The impact of the Russian revolution and the rise of the Bolsheviks in 1917 that gave the idea that if the intelligentsia and the workers united it could bring down the despotic Czarist rule. The doctrine attracted several Asian leaders. Socialist ideas influenced the younger generation leaders who were dissatisfied with the outcome of the Non-cooperation movement and wanted India to be independent fast. The idea behind was that there was a constant struggle between the Indian elite and the working class, that is the *kingsansabhas* and the trade unions.

Several youth programmes were organised across the country and Subhash Chadra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru toured the country and attacked imperialism, the feudal structures and propagated the socialist ideas. The revolutionary terrorists turned to socialism. Economic depression, World War and rise of unemployment under capitalism across the world further paved way for further socialist ideals, which the youth believed could free the workers from the misery of subjugation by the landlords and the British Raj.



Jawaharlal Nehru was the first to preach the socialist ideals in the national movement and in the idea of adapting to its ideology in 1929. He was elected the president of Lahore Congress in 1929 and believed that only through the economic emancipation of the masses that political freedom can be achieved. He pioneered the socialist orientation in the Indian youth. In 1927, he attended the Brussels conference on imperialism and colonialism and met several anti-colonial fighters and the Marxists. Same year he visited Russia where he saw the implementation of the socialist ideals. In 1928, he joined Subhash Chandra Bose to form the India league for complete freedom. In *Whither India* he wrote 'surely to the great human goal of social and economic equality, to the ending of all exploitation of nation by nation and class by class.' Further in 1933 he went on to say 'The true civic ideal is the socialist ideal, the communist ideal.' In his presidential address in Lucknow in 1936, he proclaimed his clear passion for socialism which he believed was the only solution to poverty, degradation of society and unemployment. In his own words, "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... I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation, and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism."

His ideas found a contradiction with Gandhi. He praised Gandhi for his important role in reaching to the masses and raising mass consciousness but he failed to see the class difference in the Indian society and propounded harmony among the exploiters and the exploited.

He proclaimed that he is a socialist and a republican at the Lahore session of the Congress held in 1929. Nehru's socialist ideals though had a political framework, he believed in 'nationalism and political freedom as represented by the Congress and social freedom as represented by socialism' the idea was to bring these two uphill tasks together. He did not want to be separate from the Congress but to influence the Congress in a more socialist ideal by bringing the larger masses of the peasants and the workers under its banner. He did not believe that the Left organisations should work separately from the Congress.

### 11.5 The Communists

Communist ideology of the Soviet attracted several Indian political leaders towards them. The most prominent among them was M. N Roy, who helped formulate the International Communist ideology towards the colonies along with Lenin. Seven Indians along with him met at Tashkent after the October 190 and organised a Communist Party of India. Post 1920s also saw a rise of several communist organisations in India. An all India organisation was formed in Kanpur in December 1925 under the banner of Communist Party of India with S V Ghate as its secretary. A clarion call was given to enrol under its banner and radicalise the Congress party.

Important work for the organisation was to bring together the workers and the peasants. Labour part was formed in Bengal in November 1925 led by Muzaffar Ahmed, Qazi Nazrul Islam, Hemant Kumar Sarkar. Congress labour party in Bombay and Kirti Kisan party in Punjab was formed in the year 1926. Hindustan's labour part worked in Madras since 1926. All these organisations were organised under the banner Workers' and Peasants' Party, with its base in Rajasthan, where the communists of India got together. The idea was to work



together with Congress and radicalise it in a larger mass movement, make it 'the party of the people,' bring together the subalterns, achieve freedom and implement the socialist principles. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru further played an important role in making it stronger. Trade unions saw the greatest mobilisation of the communist ideology in 1927-1929.

The communist influence however got a setback in 1929 after the repression of the British. Their effort in trying to come to India in 1922, conspiracy cases in Peshawar; and their role in the Kanpur conspiracy case made the British vigilant in striking and arresting most of the communist leaders. In 1929 several communist leaders were further arrested.

The concern of the British was to try and suppress the growing influence of trade movement among the workers; and the communist influence among the Indian masses. Almost thirty two were convicted in Meerut conspiracy case. The case led to wide publication of the communist support in newspapers. The government's strategy was to segregate the communists from the mainstream politics.

In latter period the communist themselves broke their connection with the National Congress asserting on sectarian politics, calling it the party of the elites and supportive towards imperialist power. The idea of mass mobilisation under the banner of *Poorna Swaraj* was seen as a mechanism of influencing the masses by the bourgeoisie class who worked with the British. Even leaders like Nehru and Bose were looked upon as propounders of the Congress mainstream ideology. The communist ideology was now that of armed struggle against the British imperialist policy. There was a fear of the peasants falling prey to the bourgeoisie influence of the congress leaders hence the communists moved away to form a more independent centralised communist party. There were further splits in the group, which further benefitted the British, who in 1934 declared the communist party as illegal.

The communist organisations' saving point was because of their support in the civil disobedience movement and the spread of the ideology in the nation where several young revolutionaries stood up under the influence of Marxism, Soviet Union and socialism.

In 1935, the communists under the *Dun Bradley* thesis, the communist agreed to make congress as the sole organisation for national mobilisation. Their whole ideology under the leadership of P.C Joshi was to now stand against imperialism and support the congress its struggle against the British.

In October 1934, Congress Socialist Party was formed under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev and Minoo Masani as an alternative against the present communists party but with the similar ideology and to work within the parameters of Congress. They however still believed in reorganising the peasants and the workers but within the umbrella of the Congress. The idea was to transform the Congress and still strengthen it. They believed that the congress eldership did not have the potential to influence the masses and hence there was a need of transformation to reach to the masses to make the national movement stronger. The *Meerut Thesis* of 1935 made it clear that bourgeoisie leadership of the congress needs to be replaced and there was a need for a more radical socialist leadership. The CSP ideology comprised of three principles, the Marxists, Fabian and the Gandhian influence. In latter era the party was divided into two groups, one that followed the congress and the other that bifurcated from it.



But, despite the difference the CSP identified socialism with Marxism. JP Narayan in his book depicted socialism clearly with Marxism. In 1930s several groups were further formed like the Royists by M. N Roy. Subhash Bose founded the Forward Bloc in 1939, after his compulsive resignation from the Congress.

Though the differences existed, all groups worked together after 1935 to make socialism stronger in India. Their ideology rested on bringing together the workers and the peasants, were anti-imperial in their struggle for a social transformation of the society. The left firmly fought the dominant Congress, opposed the Congress who sought support from the British and in 1947 confronted the Congress against their strategy of negotiation of transfer for power.

Several academicians observe the left groups failed to understand the Indian politics and limited itself to the criticism of the congress dominance. There was a need for the Congress to function in the manner it adopted and the communists overlooked that. Their prime focus was limited to the changes and Indian socialism. The target to radicalise the movement was restricted to its persistence on armed struggle, without understanding the fact if the masses were even ready for a struggle like that. They further failed to group different left organisations. Even Nehru and Bose could not work together after a while due to their differences. Their impact however was prominent when congress brought to light the misery of the poor to the forefront and the fact that poverty can only be eliminated if the colonial power was uprooted. The impact of communism was visible in several trade union movements and the rising working class support. The Workers and Peasants Party in Bengal, organised in 1928, supported by the middle class intelligentsia which saw its presence in the jute mill strike of the workers in 1929 and 1937 strike organised by the *bhadralok*, who were trained in Moscow. Several workers strike in Bombay by the Bombay Cotton mill workers in 1924 for bonus. All these strikes saw the communist presence to which Chadavarkar observes that these strikes were not just against the state or a certain class, their social relations, their exclusion from the mainstream. They not just worked as workers but organised community ties to network building a strong communist support among the masses. There was also a further rise of the communists after the Civil Disobedience Movement around 1933-1934 and several Congressmen were supportive. Their strong support of the labour class was clearly visible. In the Quit India Movement, the communists drew in huge support of the masses through the trade unions and AITUC, which had a membership of approximate 337, 695. The role of the communists in organising these masses into a formed struggle could not be overlooked by the Congress during the Indian National Movement.

### 11.6 SUMMARY

Conclusively, one can see that while the Indian national movement was forming its base against the British, several groups in India came under the banner of revolutionaries, socialists and Communists. Revolutionaries came under the wake of withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation movement in the year 1922. While Gandhian ideology was considered as different by the moderates and the extremists who ruled the Congress then, it was also seen





as an ideology that did not befit the Indian national movement by the revolutionaries. The Non- Cooperation as launched when the Rowlett Act and the JallianalaBhagh Massacre was seen as the highest form of British atrocity. And despite all the common masses and leaders joining hands with the Movement, the movement was taken aback due to the *Chauri Chaura* incident. The revolutionaries saw this as blow to their effort and new alternatives were taken under. While the revolutionary ideals were taken into account, several followed the principles of socialism and Marxism for a just and classless society. Importance was also given to the working class and the peasants who had long been overlooked due to economic and social differences that divided the society. It was also considered that while the congress worked for freedom, it did not take into account the issues of the subaltern classes whose woes were overlooked. The congress comprised of the educated elite who only worked on the lines of the British. The revolutionaries saw the flaw and the atrocities and took to violence to spread their message against the British. While the government struck down the revolutionaries, their message was heard loud and afar. The socialist methods resorted to the ideal of a just and equal society by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose. Freedom could not be achieved unless everyone was also economically independent. The difference in the methods also led to further diversities in the socialist cause. The communists on the other hand brought to light the Marxist Leninists ideology and believed that the new industrial policy was followed by the Congress and that the congress overlooked the subaltern working class. It is to be noted, while these organisations were completely different in their strategies, they took their roots from congress and their slow method of freedom. These methods and ideologies were taken into account to reach the common masses, but in the end it cannot also be overlooked that the Congress emerged as the larger party and despite the efforts of the left wings, it was considered that Freedom can only be achieved under one banner of the Congress. The freedom Movement saw the unification of all organisations and ideologies despite their differences in methodologies. Needless to say the socialist foundations and beliefs were so strong that even when India gained freedom in 1947 and Jawaharlal Nehru went on to become the Prime Minister of India, he adhered and made an effort to integrate the socialist principles in Indian Constitution and for a long time socialism was perhaps the main goal of the Indian Planning Commission of India.



### ACTIVITY

Watch the movie *Gandhi* (1982).

The movie is based on the life of Mahatma Gandhi. A biographical understanding and his journey of the Mahatma from South Africa to India; and how he took to several mobilisations like the Non-Cooperation movement, Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement. The movie gives an idea of his ideology of passive resistance, his struggle against the British Empire and his several imprisonments. The picture would give an understanding of the national movement that took place in India leading to the Indian independence from colonial power.

### 11.7 GLOSSARY

**AITUC:** All India Trade Union Congress.

**HRA:** Hindustan Republican Association.

**HSRA:** Hindustan Socialist Republican Association.

### 11.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the revolutionary movement in India?
2. Elaborate the Kakori Robbery Case.
3. Discuss the role of Jawaharlal Nehru in Indian Socialism?
4. What were the main beliefs of the Communists of India?

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### Lesson 15

#### WORKERS AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Dr. Monika Batham

Content Writer (SOL, DU)

#### STRUCTURE

- 15.1 Learning Objectives
- 15.2 Introduction
- 15.3 Workers Movements
  - 15.3.1 First Phase of Movements
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### 15.5 Women Movements

#### 15.5.1 Women during British period

##### 15.5.1.1 Social Reform Movements

##### 15.5.1.1.1 Liberal Reformers

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#### 15.5.2 Women and various organisations

### 15.6 Summary

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### 15.9 References

### 15.10 Suggested Readings

## 15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After finishing this chapter, you will be able to comprehend

- How's workers movements and women movements actually contributed in India's freedom struggle and a stepping stone for empowered India?
- What are the major components and objectives in these movements?

### Introduction

With the particular context of colonialism and an underdeveloped economy the Indian trade unions have emerged in the course of time. In India capitalist economy was introduced by Britishers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The initial enterprises were plantations and railways but soon they expanded their business and cotton and jute mills, mining industries, dockyard, roadways etc. After the 1857 revolt Britishers were more interested to develop more colonial capitalism. Since Indian workers don't have any training of professional work they often tend to be trapped in over exploitation at work with low wages and in some cases, they kept them as bonded labourers. Let's try to understand what development has taken place in the workers movement in this period of time.



### **Workers movement**

The modern working class arose in India in the nineteenth century. This development was due to the establishment of modern factories, railways, dockyards and construction activities relating to roads and buildings. Initially industrialisation was mainly confined to the cotton and jute industries. The first textile industry started production in 1855 in Bombay. The Cotton textile was mainly concentrated in the cotton producing region of India and Bombay, Ahmedabad, Sholapur, Nagpur and Kanpur were the main centres for the cotton textile industry. In 1914, there were 264 cotton mills employing 2,60,000 workers. 60 Jute mills alone in Bengal province with 2,00,000 employees in 1912. By 1914, the railways employed about 6,00,000 workers. The mining industry employed 1,50,000 workers and Plantations employed 7,00,000 largest workers at that time (Chandra B.: 1988: 281).

### **First Phase of Workers Movement**

Labour historians categorised the whole workers movement into distinct phases. First phase was from 1850's till 1918. During this period the earliest phase was more unorganised and ineffective. In the late nineteenth century in Madras and from the second decade of the twentieth century in Bombay some serious efforts were made by the workers for making associations that could work for their welfare and work against capitalist exploitation. Before any organised associations/ Unions few well-wishers and influential individuals like S. S. Bengalee in Bombay, Sasipada Banerjee in Bengal and Narayan Lokhandya in Maharashtra urged British authorities to legislate for improving workers conditions under Britishers. Earlier before any organised union there has been a pattern of at least two strikes or rebellions against bad administration and working conditions, poor wages, imposition of unnecessary fines and dismissal of a worker. However, these strikes are often spontaneous, sporadic, localised and short lived.

### **Second Phase of Workers Movement**

The Second Phase began from 1918-1947. After the First World War, with exchange of knowledge and literature of the world, trade unions were also constituted in modern ways. It became more organised than before. During 1920's, several political parties including



Congress and the Communists made direct contact with trade unions. They persuade and mobilise the working class to participate in the national movement.

*All India Trade Union Congress* (AITUC) was formed with Bal Gangadhar Tilak, N.M.Joshi, B.P.Wadia, Dewan Chamanlall, Lala Lajpat Rai, Joseph Baptista and many others, they became the office bearers of AITUC. Lala Lajpat Rai became the first president of the AITUC and Joseph Baptista its vice president. At international level formation of *International Labour Organisation* (ILO) in 1919 gave a strong basis to develop the same kind of dignified values for workers. The strikes and protests during this phase were much more organised, prolonged and well participated by the workers. Congress took special interest in the workers movement, why? Because of two reasons, first, they knew that workers and working class are not involved in any kind of national movement. It's the right time to include them and second, we need to launch an effective protest movement against imperialism, and we already knew that the number of working classes by 1920's has grown tremendously. Indian Congress appointed a committee to look at workers issues in the year 1936. Not only Congress the Communists became interested in the working class. Why? Because ideas float. This is the period when Communist party of the Soviet Union at world level became more influential and the formation of the Communist Party of India on 17 October 1920 at Tashkent under the leadership of M. N. Roy. They mobilise the working class through the *Workers and Peasant Parties* (WPPs). At that time WPPs were effective in organising strikes in Bombay in 1928 and in other cities of India too.

Workers were not happy and went for many strikes. In 1920 followed by 1921 where 396 strikes alone took place with 6,00,000 workers. Now not only Bombay but almost every factory including Jute mills in Calcutta, Eastern Railways, Cotton mills etc experiencing these strikes. There was a fundamental change happening in the working class, now they are aware, united and conscious about national movement. Along with that they were facing serious concerns too because of growing differences between the Moderates and the Communists. There was a bifurcation between the parent organisation and now one is called *All India Trade Union Congress* (AITUC) and the other one is the *National Trade Union Federation* (NTUF).



The AITUC is the oldest trade union federation in India. It was formed in Bombay by Lala Lajpat Rai, Joseph Baptista, N. M. Joshi, Diwan Chaman Lall and a few others, until 1945 when unions became organised on party lines, it was the primary trade union organisation in India. Since then, it has been associated with the Communist Party of India. AITUC further broke away and formed the *All India Red Trade Union* under the leadership of S. K. Deshpande and B.T. Ranadive, because of the difference of opinion among leftists. They are the radical one among Leftists. Whereas NTUF was formed by the moderate leaders of congress like N.M. Joshi, V. V. Giri, B. Shivrao and all.

After a period of high activism of trade unions in India during the 1920's, there was a marked decline in strikes and protests in the early 1930's. According to Chamanlal Revri it was a period of setback to the entire trade union movement and that was due to the Meerut Conspiracy case in which many prominent Communist leaders were arrested and another probable reason is the successive splits that took place in the Trade Union Congress earlier. 1940's decade was a remarkable period because India became independent in 1947. This phase coincided with the final phase of the Quit India Movement of 1942. After the end of World War II, the working class faced two different problems. First being the problem of large-scale retrenchments, second, the problem of decline in earnings. Which again a challenging situation because the number of strikes reached its peak in 1947 and with 1811 strikes including 1840 thousand workers (Chandra B.: 1988: 284).

### Summary

Introduction to the capitalist economy by Britishers led to the emergence of modern working-class movements in the Indian sub-continent. Various profit generating industries for Britons were introduced on Indian soil like tea and coffee plantation and manufacturing units, railways, cotton and jute mills, coal mining etc. In which lakhs of workers were recruited without dignified conditions and labour laws for decades which resulted in the rise of protests locally. But after the emergence of a few labourers concerned organisation and trade union things became organised. The worker's strength becomes so visible that the Indian Congress also appeals to workers to participate in the national freedom struggle.

### Women's Movement



### Introduction

Systematic women's movements can be traced first from a social reform movement in the 19th century during the British period. During this time women's movements in India had some extraordinary historical circumstances and social environment given momentum to social reform movements, which provoked a new thinking about various social institutions, practices and social reform legislations. The women's movements ideological and social content changed from time to time and continued into our times.

When we are talking about historical sources generally, we are referring to sources which are preserved by the elite sections of the society because other classes and tribal backgrounds had different norms. Tribal women and women from the labouring castes and classes are rarely visible as they represent those groups which did not have a literary culture and therefore did not leave behind much evidence. The economic surplus that is accumulated by a ruling class but for the hunter gatherers we see no such accumulation of wealth and resources and because of that their society was relatively egalitarian. It is the rise of sedentary settlements that we see that stratification according to accumulation as well as on the basis of work. The one who is most of the time taking care of outdoor activities and physically strong holds the power. Women on the other hand received protection and in return she became a property to men. But it's a gradual process and one should not be so casual about these comments. Let's find out what the real situation of the women's movement was in the British period of time.

### Women in British period

Initially Europeans did not change the situation of women. Like other Western powers, the primary objective of the British in the earlier days was trade. Later when they were faced with the administration of newly conquered areas, they thought it safe not only to keep the existing social structure intact but also to induce its religious pundits (Brahmins) to interpret its rules when necessary. The introduction of modern English education first started to train Indians for jobs under British administration. This created upper class elites who began to doubt the rationale of many of the existing practices in their society. The establishment and expansion of British rule also encouraged British missionaries to enter their colonies and start schools, orphanages and destitute homes especially for widows. They



stood against sati, child marriage, purdah and polygamy. The new Indian elite exposed to European liberalism of the 18th century through Western education, felt the urgency for reform of their own society. This produced tangible results in the subsequent periods.

The women's movements in the colonial period are mainly of two different concerns: (1) social reform movements and (2) nationalist movements.



### Social Reform Movement

The women's movements began as a social reform movement in Indian society (19th century). The British conquest and its rule over India brought about transformation in the Indian economy as well as in society. The new land revenue settlements, commercial agriculture and infrastructural facilities like roads, railways, postal and telegraph services etc. ushered in by the British led to a significant change in the Indian village economy. The new economic system and administrative machinery required a new type of educated personnel which resulted in the establishment of Western educational institutions imparting modern education. The Indians who were the beneficiaries of the new economic system were attracted towards this and as a result a new class of intelligentsia evolved in the Indian society. The articulate intelligentsia became the pioneers of all progressive democratic movements: social, political, economic and cultural.





The reform movements were not homogeneous. Share a common concern for rooting out the social evils, partly in response to charges of barbarity from the colonial rulers. This was a period of the hegemonic control and influence of colonial ideology. This was a time of transition, one of the emerging bourgeois society and values of new modes of thought.

The colonial intervention intruded into the areas of our culture and society and affected transformation in our social fabric. This potential threat was sensed by the Indian intellectual reformers, exposed to western ideas and values. At this juncture, the Indian intellectual reformer sensitive to the power of colonial domination and responding to Western ideas of rationalism and liberalism sought ways and means of resisting this colonial hegemony by resorting to what K. N. Panniker (Presidential address, Indian History Congress, 1975) refers to cultural defense.

This cultural defense resulted in a paradoxical situation. The reformers tried to create a new society, modern yet rooted in Indian tradition. They began a critical appraisal of Indian society in an attempt to create a new ethos devoid of all overt social aberrations like polytheism, polygamy, casteism, sati, child marriage, illiteracy etc. all of which they believed were impediments to progress of women. To the reformers, the position of Indian women, as it was in the 19th century was awfully low and hence their efforts were directed at an overall improvement in the status of women. This is considered as the first wave feminism of the west and focused on basic rights for women.

Although it did not radically challenge the existing patriarchal structure of society or question gender relation. They picked up only those issues which the British were pointing out as evidence of degeneration in Indian society. Even when women were speaking for themselves, they were speaking only the language of the men, defined by male parameters.

Women were seen as passive recipients of a more humanitarian treatment to be given by Western educated elite men. The attempt was to create a new Indian woman, truly Indian and yet sufficiently educated and tutored in 19th century values to suit the new emerging society. Thus, education for girls was not meant to equip them to be self-sufficient, independent and emancipated and train them to follow some profession but to be good housewives (Pande and Kameshwari, 1987).



Social reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Iswarachandra Vidya Sagar, Kandukuri Veeresalingam Panthulu, M. G. Ranade, Karve, Swami Vivekanantia, Swami Dayanand Saraswathi and others provided leadership to the women's movement by frankly acknowledging the degraded position of Indian women.

Within this group there were two groups of social reformers, 1) Liberal Reformers and 2) The Revivalists.

**Liberal Reformers** believed in liberal philosophy put forth their work for the cause of women. The best exponent of liberalism was *Raja Ram Mohan Roy* who was the first Indian to initiate a social reform movement and campaign for the cause of women. He believes in equality between both the genders and women is not inferior to men at any level. He drew attention towards the inhuman practice of sati. From 1818 onwards he began his active propaganda through speeches and writings against sati. The East India Company declared the sati practice illegal and a punishable offence in 1829. He also opposed other evils like early marriage, polygamy etc. He supported female education and widow and inter-caste marriage. He wanted women to have the right of inheritance and property. Roy's Brahmo Samaj played a significant role in the reform activities concerning women.

*The Brahmo Samaj*, soon after its inception became a vigorous social reform movement first in Bengal which then quickly spread to other parts of the country and added to the volume and strength of similarly aimed local reformist movements. The members of the Brahmo Samaj opposed the caste system and they concentrated greatly on improving the low conditions of women and played a very important role in the introduction of several beneficial measures.

Like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, *Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar* also helped women. He did so by propagating widow remarriage. The child marriage evil resulted in large numbers of young girls ending up as widows whose lives were miserable due to the severe restrictions imposed on them. He argued in favour of widow remarriage and published his work on "Widow Remarriage" in 1853. Both *Brahmo Samaj* and *Prarthana Samaj* made strong efforts to prove that Hindu religious traditions were not responsible for the poor condition of women in society and restore women in a dignified position.



**Revivalists Reformers** believe in a programme of the revival at the Vedic society in modern India. (Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Annie Besant)

*Dayanand Saraswathi* in 1875 established Arya Samaj. He emphasised compulsory education of both boys and girls. A series of schools for women- *Arya Kanya Patasalas* - were the first concerted effort of the Samaj to promote women's education in a systematic way. *Prarthana Samaj* founded by some Maharashtra Brahmins in 1867 had leaders like *M. G. Ranade, N. G. Chandrasarkar and R. G. Bhandarkar*. It concentrated more on sponsoring education for women.

Whether its widow remarriage movement or age at marriage were aggressively fought by these social reformers. For widow remarriage act of 1856 the efforts of Vidya Sagar, Keshub Chandra Sen and D. K. Karve cannot be forgotten. Kandukuri Veeresalingam from Madras presidency for the widow movement in south in the 1874, where he encouraged and performed 63 widow marriages and gave financial aids (houses and other benefits) to couples.

Another aspect of these social calls was *the age of girls at marriage*. Vidya Sagar and other reformers extensively advertise this issue and as a result of that the British government legislates in order to improve the condition of minor girls. The age of consent bill was passed in 1860 which made sexual intercourse with a girl of less than 10 years of age as rape. Further social reformers like Mahadev Govind Ranade, Behramji Malabari and Tej Bahadur Sapru in their attempts to raise the age of marriage cited several cases of consummation at the age of 10 or 11 which led to serious physical and psychological disturbances. Behramji, a Parsi journalist published his notes on infant marriage and enforced widowhood in 1884 suggesting certain reforms to be adopted in the educational institutions to discourage child marriage and also suggested some corrective measures to the Government. It was between 1884 and 1889 that enormous pressure was brought to bear on the government to enact law to further raise the age at marriage of the girl. At last due to the collective efforts of the reformers in 1891, the Bill known as the Age of Consent was passed, which raised the marriageable age for girls to 12 years. From 8 years to 12 years of age at marriage is a remarkable job done by these reformers.



*Female education* was extensively supported and promoted by the liberal as well as orthodox reformers. Vidya Sagar established 48 girls' schools between 1855 and 1858 while he was inspector of schools. M. G. Ranado along with his wife propagated female education and started a girls' high school in 1884. The limited enforcement and practicability of legislations like widow remarriage act of 1856 and others in a tradition bound society was recognised by D. K. Karve, who, therefore, concentrated his efforts on promoting education among widows. In 1896 Karve along with 15 of his colleagues founded the Ananth Balikashram for the education of widows, where the courses were drawn up with an idea to make the widows self-reliant. He also started Mahila Vidyalaya in 1907 and S. N. D. T. Women's University in 1916 a separate educational institution for women so as to lessen the resistance of orthodox section with regard to women's education.

Pandita Ramabai started Sharda Sadan in Bombay in 1889 to provide an ashram to destitute high caste widows. In 1912-1913 a widow's home was established by sister Subbulakshmi, another widow in Madras.

*Property rights for Hindu women* was another important aspect taken care of by these reformers (Mukharjee 1975a). The existing practice was particularly harsh on the Hindu widow. Particularly Raja Ram Mohan Roy effort can be seen for the Special Marriage Act of 1872 with its provision for divorce and succession to property to women. The married women's property act of 1874 widened the scope of stridhan (women's property) and expanded the right to own and acquire property by women.

Muslim women in India made little progress in their position both in the pre-British period or later British period. Only a small segment of the population of educated Muslim families in the 19th century and were confined to urban areas in the country. Badruddin Tyabji who graduated from Elphinstone College founded a Muslim self-help association in 1876. Later on, his female relative started a Muslim girl's school (Amina Binte Badruddin Tyabji) and a girl's orphanage (Begum Nawale Misra) and started nursing centres (Shareefa Hamid Ali).

### **Nationalist Movements**



The expansion of women's education and their admission to educational institutions had produced a sizable number of English educated middle class women by the late 19th century- and they made their presence felt in political activities. For the first time many women belonging particularly jewellery to the middle class started taking part in political activities. Till 1919, the national movement was limited to the urban upper class and it was later with Gandhi's entrance into the national movement, participation of the masses began to take place.

After the launch of the Swadeshi movement by the nationalists. Women played a remarkable job during the whole protest although there was little women leadership, but meetings were arranged and khadi spinings were taken up by women. Women contributed their precious jewellery to the national fund. In villages too women started contributing for the nation. The Arya Samaji particularly women encouraged national spirit among the people. Swarna Kumari, sister of Rabindranath Tagore and her daughter Sarala Devi were strong supporters of the Swadeshi movement. Mrs. Shyamji Krishna Varma, Ms. P. Nauroji, Ms. M. Chettopadhya, and Madam Bhikaji Rustum, K. R. Kame, were few regular names among the Indian revolutionaries based in Europe, coordinated to the activities of the revolutionaries.

In the beginning of twentieth century, M K Gandhi gave the call for non-cooperation movement. He made appeals to women to come out of seclusion (Purdah) and come along with men. He knew that the nation could not be united against the British if we kept half of its population. Though the non-cooperation movement ended in failure, it awakened the women of all sections and imparted first lessons in Satyagraha. He launched an all India Satyagraha in 1919 against the provocative enactment of the Rowlett Act. Women took out processions, propagated the use of Khadi and even courted jail. Though a few women were arrested, yet a beginning was made.

After the struggle for franchise, for the first time, Indian women exercised their vote in the elections of 1926. The franchise granted to women was very restricted. The first woman to stand for election was Kamala Devi Chattopadhaya. Madras was the first state which nominated a woman member, Dr. Muttu Lakshmi Reddy to the legislative Council.



A large number of women, including Sarojini Naidu, actively took part in the Dandi March. Women participated by breaking salt laws, forest laws taking out processions, picketing schools, colleges, legislative councils and clubs. In 1931 Sarojini Naidu attended the Second Round Table Conference as an official representative of the women of India. During the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya addressed meetings and picketed foreign cloth and liquor shops. She was incharge of the women's wing of the Hindustan Seva Dal. The inauguration of provincial autonomy under the India Act of 1935 gave women an opportunity to be elected to the state legislatures and also become administrators. In the elections of 1937, 8 women were elected from the general constituencies, 42 from the reserved constituencies and 5 were nominated to the Upper House when the ministries were formed, 10 women took office one as minister and others as deputy speakers and parliamentary secretaries.

The Quit India Movement which was launched by Gandhi in 1942 with a significant slogan "Do or Die". In the absence of lead male leaders, women carried on the movement and bore the brunt of the British wrath, The women not only led processions and held demonstrations but also organised camps in which they were given training in civil duties and first aid and were educated on democracy. Women organised political prisoners' relief funds while some women went underground and directed the movement secretly. In the Indian National Army of Subhash Chandra Bose, Rani Jhansi Regiment was created for women.

### **Women's Movement Organisations**

In 1882 Sakhi Samiti was the first women's organisation founded by Swarna Kumari Devi (sister of Rabindra Nath Tagore), but later it was converted into a craft centre for widows. Pandita Ramabai set up Arya Mahila Samaj at Poona in the same year. Gujarat Istri Mandal was set at Ahmedabad in 1908. Mahila Sewa Samaj was set up at Mysore in 1913 and at Poona in 1916. Bharat IstriMahamandal (all India Organisation) was set by Sarla Devi Chaudharani in 1901. In 1917, Annie Basant established up the Women's Indian Association in Madras. Several other organisations came up at regional level but these names were prominent.





In 1926, the first all India organisation came up with the name National Council of Women in India (NCWI). It worked under the patronage of the British, mostly to secure women's rights through social reform. At that time every district had its centre, generally headed by the Collector's wife. The NCWI never contributed as a main organisation of women but kept confined to running constructive work centres.

In 1927 at Poona the second all India organisation was set up named All India Women's Conference (AIWC). Its reach spread to all over India, under the leadership of princely states, upper middle-class women and women members of Indian congress Party, Communist Party, doctors, educationists and social workers. Their main thrust was on women's education with compelling issues like campaign against Child Marriage, Purdah system (seclusion), women legal rights (in the matter of marriage, maintenance, guardianship or in the property of their fathers and husbands) to ensure better life for women.

Prominent leaders of the AIWC included Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, Annie Basant, Anusuya Kale, Hansa Mehta, Aruna Asaf Ali, Rameshwari Nehru, Mathulaxmi Reddy, Sarala Devi Chaudhrani, Hajrah Begum, Renu Chakravorty, Perin Ramesh Chandra, Begum Hamid Ali, Begum Jahanara Shah Nawaz, Masoma Begum, Ranis of Mysore, Travancore, Baroda, Gwalior and several of others.

### **Trade Union and Women**

In the 1920s in Bombay, Madras, Kanpur and Coimbatore (main textile centres) there was a trend of women joining trade unions. Whenever trade unions united on labour issues these women participated actively in them. Some of the names were Ushatai Dange, Parvatibai Bhole, Meenakshi Sane, Maniben Kara, Shanta Bhabrat. They not only organised for the cause of trade union but also to educate them about their own problems and increase their political consciousness.

### **Peasants Struggles and Women**

The history of the women's movement was not limited to a few major organisations but they were participating in various peasants struggles. Like in the Tebhaga struggle in 1946-47, North Bengal drew in its large members of women who remained in the forefront of





the battle against landlord exploitation. The Tebhaga movement for the first time in India brought awakening to such a large section of rural women.

The Telangana movement is another remarkable struggle where women played a heroic role against the Nizam and his supporters the big landlords in 1947. It was an arm struggle and many women gave their lives. Arutla Kamala Devi, Dr. Atchuamba, Suriya Vathi, Swarajam and Jamalunissa Begum were few important leaders of this movement.

### **Armed Struggle and Women**

In early 1930's a number of young girls participated in the armed struggle whom the British called terrorists. The few best names among these are Priti Lata Waddedar, Bina Das, Kalpana Dutt, Shanti Das and Suniti Ghosh. Violence at any point cannot be justified but they risked their lives and showed rare bravery. Their actions inspired many women and evoked self-confidence among them. They proved that women were not weak. Later Kalpana Dutt joined the CPI

### **Tribal Women Resistance**

Tribal women fought bravely almost everywhere, for their rights. Rani Guidallo (leader of Zeliangupang tribe) in Manipur rebels against Britishers. The no-tax campaign led by her became very popular, experiencing the rage of the British. She kept on leading her people till her last breath.

### **Summary**

The male leadership during the Indian freedom struggle did not encourage a second line of leadership, it's the time of Quit India movement, but when women took over the leadership when the leaders were arrested it showed courage and daring but more surprising was the organisational power they showed. It's the efforts of women and their role in the freedom struggle that women got the right to vote and complete equality in the constitution of India. But there are miles to go before claiming that women achieved equality around independence.

### **Glossary**



**Trade Union:** an organisation made up of members (a membership-based organisation) and its membership must be made up mainly of workers.

**Patriarchy:** a social system that gives power and control to men rather than women

**Gender:** the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other.

**Tribe:** a group of people that have the same language and customs and that have a leader (a chief).

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### Suggested Reading

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### Sample Questions

- 1) Discuss the emergence and growth of trade unions in India.
- 2) Write the main features of working-class movements in India.
- 3) Discuss the difference between Liberal and Revivalist reformist activities?
- 4) What was the status of women in colonial period in India?
- 5) Discuss how social reform movements contribution towards the emancipation of women?



## **LESSON 16**

### **ANTI CASTE MOVEMENT**

**Khem Chand**

Research Fellow

Department of African Studies

University of Delhi

Chandkhemsingh1@gmail.com

### **STRUCTURE**

- 16.1 Learning Objectives
- 16.2 Introduction
- 16.3 Development of caste in British Era
  - 1.3.1 Social and Cultural Movement in Maharashtra
  - 1.3.2 Mahatma Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890)
  - 1.3.3 Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922)
- 16.4 Non Brahman Movement
  - 1.4.1 Self Respect Movement in South India
  - 1.4.2 Justice Party and Non Brahman Movement
  - 1.4.3 E.V. Ramaswamy 'Periyar' (1879-1973)
- 16.5 Dalit Protests in India During British Era
  - 1.5.1 Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar (1891-1956)
- 1.5.2 Mahatma Gandhi's Idea (1869-1948)
- 16.6 Summary
- 16.7 Glossary
- 16.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 16.9 References
- 16.10 Suggested Readings



### 16.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help students and scholars to understand what caste was, and how Brahmanism and their rites dominated the depressed class society.

- Anti-caste movement provided awareness to the people of Dalit and backward caste society for their individual rights.
- Students will learn, what social and religion Impact was in anti-caste movement in India;
- The self-respect movement brought the changes in southern India;
- Dr. Ambedkar united the people of Dalit society and fought for their rights.

### 16.2 INTRODUCTION

The word cast in English is derived from the Portuguese word. Which means species, birth or distinction. In this sense, caste-system is a system based on racial or birth-based distinction. As will be clear later, the Indian caste system cannot be understood on this basis. For most people, even scholars, “Hinduism” has been a taken – for granted concept. Hindus are the people of India. Hinduism is their religion. Beginning with the Rig Veda to the philosophers and even contemporary political leaders, “it has been seen as a unique phenomenon of spirituality linked to a practical life; and with a solid geographical base in a diversified subcontinent. Although its stability has been broken from time to time by invasions, conquests and disturbances, it has nevertheless maintained a fair continuity. It has given birth to rampant and unjustifiable social inequalities but has also spawned the protests against these. Its greatest virtue has been its elasticity, its pluralism, its lack of dogma. Hinduism, it is said, has no ‘orthodoxy’ (though it may have an ‘orthopraxy’). With a core in the religious traditions going to the Vedas and Upanishads, it has brought forth other sister / child religions – Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism- all born out of the same fertile continuum of traditions, all part of India Hinduism’s contributions to the world. The caste system, as we know it today, is about three thousand years old, its roots going back to the Rig- Veda, the earliest of meant color, the Aryans, who were light- skinned, distinguishing themselves from the indigenous *dasyus* who were dark-skinned and otherwise physically different. To begin with, there were only three divisions among the Aryans, the Brahmins who were priests and scholars occupying the highest positions, followed by the Kshatriyas who were warriors and rulers, and finally the Vaish, who were people looking after cattle. While the three varnas did form a hierarchy, the system was open, more like classes than castes. It is important to remember that in the hymns of the Rig -Veda there is little trace of the rigid restrictions typically of cast, change of occupations or compensability (Majumdar et al. 1965:33). However, towards the end of the Rig-Vedas (1500-900 BC), The system seems to have congealed into four castes, with the Shudras being the fourth. Their duty was to serve the other three Varnas.



### Varnas system in Indian society

The caste system is a powerful tool of social discriminations. “It runs deep in the mind of Indians and its application in the day-to-day life. In India, caste discrimination is traditionally rooted in the Hindu caste system. Supported by the philosophical trends, caste system constructs the moral, social and legal foundations of Hindu society. Dalits are outcastes or the people who fall outside the fourfold caste system consisting as the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Dalit are also mentioning other non-Aryan groups besides the *Chandala*, namely, *Ayogava*, *Paulksha* and *Nishada*. But for the Nishada, the other were looked down upon. The four varnas and the Nishada were collectively referred to in the later Vedas as the ‘Panchajanya’ (five people). the Vedas also mention some occupation such as the blacksmith, leather-worker, barber, physician, goldsmith, merchant and chariot-builder but we do know of these occupations were comprised in any of the four orders, nor can we say each of them constituted a separate class. We know for certain that the status of the *Rathakara* the chariot-builder was high enough to preclude his being classified with the Shudras. The precise manner in which untouchability developed from the four Vedic varnas is not clear though there is no doubt that such a development was inextricably linked with elaboration of notions of spiritual purity and impurity, and their becoming pervasive in the of the twice-born caste, in their daily life, in life cycle ceremonies, calendrical festivals, and lastly and lethally, in inter-caste relations. With regard to the part played by purity- impurity ideas in inter-caste relations, The original Vedic system called *varnashrama* was legitimate and virtuous. It had divided society into four natural groups depending on individual characteristics and dispositions, which was prescribed in *Shastras* as the four varnas. Over a period, the four-fold varna system become a deviation into many hundreds and thousands of other varnas, castes or jatis most of such jatis are the people of a particular geographical or linguistic region. Thus, each member within a varna, would often act accordingly and marry within the similar varna. However, Kshatriyas, were often excluded from such nuances. ‘The original caste or varna system existed all over India and has been considered by many sociologists and social anthropologists as pan Indian phenomenon. Since the castes and caste system existing today originated from the earlier varna system or caste system in the broader sense, it also developed and spread throughout India though there does not exist uniformity, neither in their local names nor in their ranks in the local caste- hierarchy. Ghurye views, ‘The caste system gave rise to hierarchical gradation and social discriminations regrading privileges, marriage, social inter-course, choice of occupation, etc.

## 16.3 MAIN BODY SECTION 1

### 16.3.1 Development of Caste in British Era

Colonial rule disengaged caste system from its pre-colonial political context, but gave it a new lease of life by redefining and revitalizing it within its new structure of knowledge, institutions and policies. First of all, during its non-interventionist phase, it created





opportunities, which were “in theory caste-free”, land become a marketable commodity; equality before law become an established principle of judicial administration; educational institutions and public employment were thrown open to talent, irrespective of caste and creed. Yet the very principle of non-intervention helped maintain the pre-existing social order and reinforced the position of the privileged groups. Only the higher castes with previous literature traditions and surplus resources, could go for English education and new professions and could take advantage of the new judicial system. Moreover, in matters of personal law, the Hindu were governed by the dharmashastra, which upheld the privileges of caste order. As the orientalist scholars, immersed in classical textual studies, discovered in the caste system the most essential forms of Hindu social organizations, more and more information was collected through official ethnographic surveys, which gave further currency to the notions of caste hierarchy. Furthermore, the foremost of such colonial ethnographers, Herbert Risley, following Alfred Lyall and the French racial theorist Paul Topinard, now provided a racial dimension to the concept of caste, arguing that the fair skinned higher castes represented the invading Aryan autochthons of the land.

The racial stereotype and the scriptural view of caste were gradually given enumerated shape, and above all an official legitimacy, through the described as the “single master exercise of tabulations” of the entire colonial subject’s society. When Risley became the census commissioner in 1901, he proposed not only to enumerate all castes, but also determine and record their locations in the hierarchy of caste. To the Indian public this appeared to be an official attempt to freeze the hierarchy, which had been constantly, though imperceptibly, changing over time. This redefined caste now became what Nicholas Dirks has called the Indian colonial form of civil society”. Voluntary, caste associations emerged as new phenomenon in Indian public life, engaging in census-based caste movements, making petitions to census commissioners in support of their claims for higher ritual ranks in the official classifications scheme. Ironically, caste thus became a legitimate site for defining social identities within a more institutionalized and apparently secularized public space. First of all, there were signs of “westernization”. Because of improved communications, there was greater horizontal solidarity among the caste members, who formed regional caste associations. There was also a growing realization of the significations of the new sources of status, i.e., education, jobs and political representation and awareness that those new sinews of power monopolized by the Brahman and the upper caste. This led to organized demands for more special privileges and reservations from the colonial state. This involved conflict and contestations, particularly when the education of Dalit groups was concerned, as the colonial bureaucracy, despite the much-publicized policy of supporting dalit education, often showed ambivalence in the face of caste Hindu oppositions. It required the dalit groups to protest like the Mahar students in Dapoli in Maharashtra sitting on the verandah of the local municipal school to actually induce the colonial the colony civil servants to take measures to ensure their educational rights. In this particular case, however, they were ultimately allowed to sit in a class room but a distance from the caste Hindu students. these





efforts at “westernizations” were not therefore just attempts at imaging them selves in the light of their colonial masters, but to claim their legitimate rights to educations and other opportunities from a reluctant state bureaucracy. On the other hand, these upwardly mobile groups also engaged in cultural movement, which noted sociologist M.N. Srinivas (1966) has called the process of “Sanskritization’s”, as status was still being defined and expressed in the language of caste which enjoyed both official legitimacy and social currency the upwardly mobile groups sought to legitimacy their new status by emulating the cultural and ritual practices of the upper castes. This was one of the reasons why customs like sati, prohibitions of widow remarriage, child marriage the performance of which was graded as hallmarks of high caste status were in the nineteenth century being more widely practiced by the upwardly mobile lower peasants’ groups. Ironically, what this behavior signified was an endorsement of the caste system, and seeking a positional readjustment within the exiting ritual hierarchy. However, not all castes at all times followed this same behavioral trajectory.

### 16.3.1 Social and Cultural Movement in Maharashtra

#### 3.2 Mahatma Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890)

Jyotiba Phule was born on 11, April 1827 in Pune in a backward Mali caste of Maharashtra. Jyotiba's father's name was Govindrao and mother's name was Vimala Bai. Jyotiba Phule's mother died at the age of one. Father Govindrao went ahead and kept a widow named Sugana Bai, whom he considered to be his estranged sister, to take care of the child. The name of Savata Mali comes in the saint tradition of Maharashtra. He was a contemporary of Namdev. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was born in the caste of Savata Mali. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was the forerunner of the social revolution of modern Maharashtra, the first great man to raise his voice against the traditional social order, the first to challenge the religious dictatorship that had been going on for thousands of years. Mahatma Phule, through revolutionary reformism, provided that concrete work which was not there in other reformist efforts of that time. Mahatma Phule used to talk of an egalitarian and just and based society.

**Role of Satyashodhak Samaj:** Satyashodhak Samaj was established on 24, September 1873. at Junaganj, Pune under the chairmanship of Jyotiba. Every member of it took a pledge. Satyashodhak society had three conditions. One, there is no need for any middleman between the devotee and the Lord. To destroy the religious slavery imposed by middlemen, to free the ignorant people from that slavery due to superstition. Second, to free the peasants from the clutches of moneylenders and landlords. Third, to provide education to men and women of all castes. This movement did an important job of awakening the identity of Shudra-Atishudras and women. The objective of Satyashodhak Samaj was to combat the religious and social injustices done by Brahmins and scriptures on women and Shudra-Atisudra. It was not possible for Jyotiba to do all this alone, so through this organization he wanted to continue his struggle. Jyotiba became the first president and treasurer of 'Satyashodhak Samaj' and Shri Narayanrao Govindrao Kadalak became the secretary. Satyashodhak Samaj had become a Maharashtra wide movement due to its principles and programs. It had deep consequences on



the social life of Maharashtra. People of all caste religions were members of SatyashodhakSamaj. It continued to grow as a monotheistic sect completely free from the spirit of caste discrimination, untouchability. SatyashodhakSamaj took the initiative to destroy the brokerage of Brahmins from all religious rituals.

### Objectives of SatyashodhakSamaj

- To free people from mental and religious slavery of brahminical scriptures.
- Stop the exploitation by the priests.
- To promote education.
- To educate women.
- Eradicate untouchability by saving the untouchables.
- To be sympathetic towards the oppressed children and the blind.
- Adoption of truthfulness and integrity.

The priestly class also made every effort to stop the proceedings of the SatyashodhakSamaj. Jyotiba rightly made SatyashodhakSamaj the voice of the suppressed people. The SatyashodhakSamaj was not against the Brahmins, it was against the brahminical practice of cheating in the name of religion. Thus, Jyotiba Phule struggled throughout his life for the emancipation of Shudras and women, for this along with his creations, he also adopted practical work-style and got success in it. It is proved from the texts and writings composed by Jyotiba that Jyotiba Phule was the biggest advocate of Dalit and women society.

### 16.3.3 Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922)

Pandita Ramabai Dongre was born on 23, April 1858 in an upper-class Brahmin family of Malheranji village in South Kanara district of Karnataka. His father was Anant Shastri Dongre and mother was Lakshmi Bai Dongre. Pandita Ramabai was born in a high Brahmin family but she fought an effective fight against the divisive and unequal nature of Hindu society. He raised wide-ranging issues related to the orthodox and oppressive methods of Brahminical domination from the society. These conservative and oppressive issue rules made women of Shudra Varna a victim of exploitation.

**Hindu caste system and pandita ramabai:** It is true that whatever was written in the scriptures was not written with the opinion of all the people of the society and no advice was taken from the Shudras and women while writing the scriptures. In this way, different kinds of one-sided social bonds were imposed on Shudras and women, which were illegal and inhuman. For example, the caste system came into existence only due to the Chaturvarna system of Hinduism. Pandita Ramabai was well aware of this. He always identified 'India' with 'Hinduism'. The 'Aryan model' also states that women were completely ignored and made completely dependent on men.



**Domination of high caste:** Pandita Ramabai was very upset with the discrimination done by the upper castes in Hinduism and she had also made up her mind to break casteism and the high and low system of Hinduism. Whereas Ramabai did this path by adopting the path of equality apart from caste-division and hating the hierarchy of Hindu religion. He said that I had lost faith in the religion of the forefathers, so I am marrying a person belonging to Shudra caste and other linguist - Bengali speaking person. Not only this, he did this marriage according to the provisions of the Civil Marriage Act 1872 and not according to the traditions of Hindu religion. There was a lot of opposition to this marriage and that couple was also caste-excommunicated.

Pandit Ramabai's approach was humanistic, so he had hated the caste division and caste traditions of Hindu society, in which one caste is high, the other is subordinate, one is touchable and the other is untouchable. He also believed that this practice has been going on for thousands of years because of this. Because Hindu society not only wanted to give freedom to certain classes, but also wanted to keep them as slaves. In those few classes, both women and untouchables had the same condition and destiny.

### 16.4 MAIN BODY SECTION 2

#### 16.4 Non-Brahman Movement

##### 16.4.1 Self Respect Movement in South India

“Self-Respect movement, under the leadership of E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker, “Periyar”. Once an enthusiastic campaigner for the non-cooperation programme, he left the congress in 1925, believing that it was neither able nor willing to offer “substantive” citizenship to the non-brahmans. He was incensed by Gandhi’s pro-brahman and pro-varnashrama dharma utterances during his tour of Madras in 1927 and constructed a trenchant critique of Aryanism, Brahmanism and Hinduism, which he thought created multiple structure of subjection for Sudras, Adi- Dravidas (untouchables) and women. So, before self-rule what was needed was self-respect, and its ideology was predicated upon a sense of pride in though not an uncritical valorization of the Dravidian antiquity and Tamil culture and language. Indeed, Ramaswamy had reservations about privileging Tamil, as this could alienate the other non-Tamil speaking Dravidians of south India. Yet, Tamil language remained at the center of the movement, sometimes creating tensions between ‘Tamil’ and ‘Dravidians’ identities. The movement, however, was clearer in identifying its oppositional other, as it mounted scathing attacks on the Sanskrit language and literature, being the cultural symbols of Aryan colonization’s of the south. The story of the Ramayana was inverted to make Ravana an ideal Dravidian and Rama an evil Aryan. Unlike Justice Party, this ideology was more inclusive in its appeal. What is significant, the Self-Respect movement also drew its inspirations from and gave more currency to the earlier writings of the Adi- Dravida intellectuals like IyothetheThass and M. Masilamani. Both were publishing since the first



decade of the twentieth century numerous articles against the caste system, Brahman dominations and Indian nationalism. During the 1930s, as the Congress gradually become more powerful, the non-Brahman movement became more radical and populist in its appeal, with more emphasis on the boycott of Brahman priests, more and more incidents of public burning of Manusmriti and attempts to forcibly enter temples which denied access to low caste people.

Eugene Irschick (1969) has shown how the non-Brahman movement in Madras gradually took the shape of an articulate Tamil regional separatism, particularly when in 1937 the congress government under C. Rajagopalachari proposed to introduce Hindi as a compulsory school subject in the province. There were huge demonstrations in the city of Madras, Identifying Hindi as an evil force trying to destroy Tamil language and tis speakers, and with this the Tamil language movement spread from elite circles into masses. This political campaign slowly propelled into a demand for a separate land or “DravidaNad” In August 1944, the Justice Party, of which Ramaswamy was now the president, changed its name into DarvidaKazhagam (DK), with its primary objectives supposedly being the realization of a separate non-Brahman or Dravidian land. But in its essence, E.V. Ramaswamy’s concept of nations, as M.S.S Pandian has recently claimed, was “not constrained by the rigid territoriality of the nations-space”. He visualized “equal and free citizenship for the oppressed in the anticipatory mode”. i.e., in a relentless struggle, and for him “Dravidian” was “an inclusive trope” for all the oppressed people living across the territorial and linguistic boundaries. In other words, the social equality movement nurtured a millennial hope of a society that would be free of caste dominations, untouchability or gender discriminations.

### 16.4.2 Justice party and Non-Brahman Movement

In 1916, a political organization 'South Indian Liberation Association' was established. Its main objective was to oppose the economic and political power of the Brahmin community and the social upliftment of the non-Brahmins. This organization later became the 'Justice Party'. To gain the support of the masses, it propagated the ideology of equality among non-Brahmin castes. But this unity of leftists and caste opponents was eclipsed from the very beginning. The antiquarians present within the non-Brahmin movement protested. And in 1933 when Periyar was arrested and sent to jail. So, it became clear that the pressure of the British Government is falling against this solidarity. Ramaswamy broke the backbone of Brahmanism by forming the Justice Party. The main task of this Justice Party was to stop the exploitation arising out of Brahminism, to protect the rights of Dalits. But later this Justice Party became a political party.

The non- Brahman movement in Maharashtra, as Gail Omvedt (1976) has shown, developed at the turn of the century two parallel tendencies. One was conservative, led by richer non-brahman, who respond their faith in the British government for their salvations, and after the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919, organized a separate and loyalist political party, the



Non-Brahman Associations, which hoped to prosper under the benevolent paternal rule of the British. But the movement also had radical trend, represented by the SatyashodhakSamaj, which developed a “class content” by articulating the social dichotomy between the “Bahujan Samaj” or the majority community or the masses, and the “Shetji-bhatji”. The merchants and brahmans. Although opposed initially to the Brahman -dominated congress nationalism, by the 1930s the non-brahman movement in Maharashtra was gradually drawn into the Gandhian congress. The power of nationalism, the growing willingness of the congress to accommodate non-brahman aspirations, the leadership of the young Poona based non-brahman leader KesavraoJedhe and his alliance with N.V. Gadgil, representing a new brand of younger Brahman congress leadership in Maharashtra, brought about this significant shift. In 1938 at Vidarbha, the non-brahman movement of the Bombay Presidency formally decided to merge into congress, providing it with a broad mass base.

If in western India the non-brahman movement was associated with the Kunbis and the Maratha identity, in Madras Presidency it was associated with the Vellalas and a Dravidian identity. It arose in a late nineteenth century context where the brahman constituting less than three percent of the populations monopolized 42 percent of government jobs. Advanced in their English education, they valorised Sanskrit as the language of a classical past, and showed a public disdain for Tamil, the language of the ordinary people. This motivated the Vellala elite to uphold their Dravidian identity. For some time, the Christians missionaries like Rev Robert Caldwell and G.E. Pope were talking about the antiquity of Dravidian culture. Tamil language, they argued, did not owe its origin to Sanskrit, which had been brought to the south by the colonizing Aryans brahmans, while the Vellalas and other non-brahman could be described as Sudras, as this was a status imposed on them by the brahman colonists trying to thrust on them their idolatrous religion. The non-brahman elite appropriated some of these ideas and began to talk about their Tamil language, literature and culture as an “empowering discourse” and to assert that caste system was not indigenous to Tamil language. This culture movement to construct a non-brahman identity which began like its western Indian counterpart with an inversion of the Aryan theory of Indian civilizations always had as its central theme an emotional devotion to Tamil language, which could bring disparate groups of people into a “devotional community” on the political front the movement followed a familiar trajectory that began with publication of a ‘Non-Brahman Manifesto’ and the formations of the Justice Party in 1916, as a formal political party of the non-brahman. It opposed the congress as a brahman dominated organizations, and claimed separate communal representation for the non-brahmans had been granted to the Muslims in the Morley Minto reforms. This demand, supported by the colonial bureaucracy, was granted in the Montague Chelmsford reform of 1919, as it allowed twenty-eight reserved seats to the non-brahman in the Madras Legislative Council. Opposed to the congress and to its programme of non-cooperation, the justice party had no qualm in contesting the elections in 1920, which the congress had given a call for boycott. As a result, the council boycott





movement had no chance of success in Madras, where the Justice Party won 63 of the 98 elected seats, and eventually came to form a government under the new reforms.

### 16.4.3 E.V. Ramaswamy 'Periyar' (1879-1973)

Periyar E.V. RamaswamiNayakar was a prominent and influential Dravidian of the Dalit movement. He had made a deep study of the Brahmanical system. When he understood that this system was responsible for keeping more than half of the Hindu population of the country in a condition worse than the animals, then they gathered against it with full force. By uniting the entire South India Dalit society, he attacked Brahmanism by counting. This boosted the morale of the backward castes and they stood up for their rights. Erode Venkata Nayakar Ramaswamy was born on 17 September 1879 in the city of Erode, Tamil Nadu. His father's name was Venkata Naykar and mother's name was ChintataiAmmal. E.V. Ramaswamy was a Tamil nationalist, politician and social activist. His fans used to address him with respect as 'Periyar'. He started the 'Atmasamana' movement or 'Dravidian movement'. He formed the Justice Party, which later became 'DravidaKazhagam'. He continued to oppose orthodox Hindutva throughout his life and compulsory teaching of Hindi. He did lifelong work for the exploited section of the South Indian society. While attacking brahminism and brahmins, he demanded a separate nation 'Dravida Nadu'. Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy emphasized on issues like rationalism, self-equality and women's rights and strongly opposed the caste system. He also fought for the rights of South Indian non-Tamil people and opposed the domination of North Indians. His works brought a lot of change in Tamil society and caste discrimination also reduced to a great extent.

### Periyar's Socio-Political Journey.

Periyar was a prominent politician and social reformer of Tamil Nadu of the twentieth century. Periyar formed the Justice Party on the principle of opposition to orthodox Hindutva. After returning from Banaras, Ramaswami started an open movement against the upper castes. He had united the Dalit society in South India. The backward castes had understood that the injustice being done to them is the result of the conspiracy of the brahmins. More than three-fourth of the country's resources were owned by the upper castes and more than one-fourth of the population did not have even one-fourth of the resources. From above, they were hit by forced labor, humiliation, debt and interest. Gold was becoming more and more rich, the downtrodden were becoming more and more poor and resourceless. Due to lack of education, a separate hell was being prepared for their next generations as well. Ramaswamy could not tolerate such a great injustice. His transparent vision saw everything clearly. Ramaswamy would roam from village to village and collect Dalits. Telling them how Brahmins have conspired with them. They have no right to education, no right to worship in temples, no right to fill water from wells and stepwells. Even by touching their shadow, gold considers itself impure. It's all a trick of gold. They want to keep more than half of the country's population as their slave. Therefore, Periyar openly attacked Brahmanism.



To inculcate a sense of respect among the downtrodden, oppressed and victims of Indian society, the work of Socrates and the creator of India's destiny will always remain a pillar of fame in the history of the world. Periyar was not an individual but an institution in himself. Anna Durai considered Socrates Periyar of the modern era as an era. Anna Durai said, "Periyar has done the work of two hundred years in twenty years". Periyar fought throughout his life with the problems of caste inequality and exploited society. Periyar deeply influenced Indian philosophy, politics and social life.

### 16.5 MAIN BODY SECTION 3

#### 16.5.1 Dalit Protests in India during British Era

Dalit protests in India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries followed somewhat different -but not entirely dissimilar trajectories. As the Christian missionaries started working among the Dalits and the colonial government sponsored special institutions for the spread of education among them, not only was a small educated elite group created among these classes, but in general a new consciousness was visible among the masses as well. However, it should be emphasized here the colonial bureaucracy, as we have noted earlier, often vacillated in implementing the professed public policies on Dalit education and it required the Dalit groups to protest and assert themselves to get their rights to education protected. Similarly, the Christian missionaries were not always the aggressive agents of improvement among the Dalit, as they too often succumbed to the pressures of an intolerant traditional society and an ambivalent bureaucracy. It is often believed that one way of protesting against the caste system was conversions to Christianity, as Dalit took recourse to this method in large numbers in some parts of south India.

Without denying the distinctiveness of each movement, we may discuss here some of the shared features of these Dalit protests. What some of these organized groups (not all) tried first of all, was to appropriate collectively some visible symbols of high ritual status, such as wearing of sacred thread, participation in ritual ceremonies such as community pujas, and entering temples from where they were historically barred by the Hindu priests. A number of organized temple entry movements took place in the early twentieth century, the most important of them being the Vaikam Satyagraha in 1924-25 and the Guruvayur Satyagraha in 1931-33 in Malabar, the Munshiganj Kali temple Satyagraha in Bengal in 1929 and the Kalaram temple Satyagraha in Nasik in western India in 1930-35. Apart from such religious rights, the organized Dalit groups also demanded social rights from high caste Hindus, and when denied, they took recourse to various forms of direct action. For example, when the higher castes resisted the Nadar women's attempt to cover their breasts like high caste women, this resulted in rioting in Travancore in 1859. The issue remained an irritant in the relationship between the Ezhavas and Nairs and again led to disturbances in 1905 in Quilon. In Bengal, when the high caste Kayasthas refused to attend the funeral ceremony of a Namasudra in 1872, the latter for six months refused to work in their land in a vast tract





covering four eastern districts. In Maharashtra, the celebrated Mahar leader, Dr. Ambedkar organized in 1927 a massive satyagraha with ten to fifteen thousand Dalits to claim the rights to use water from a public tank in Mahad under the control of the local Municipality.

### 16.5.1 Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar (1891-1956)

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was born on April 14, 1891 in Mau (Madhya Pradesh). Dr. Ambedkar was the last (fourteenth) child of Ramji Sakpal and Bhimabai. Ramji Sakpal's other sons were Balram and Anandrao and daughters were Manjula and Tulsi. All the rest of the children died due to deprivation and diseases. Dr. Ambedkar's ancestors had been serving in the army of 'East India Company' for a long time. Ramji Sakpal was working as a Subedar in the army and he also worked as a headmaster in the army school for a period of 14 years. Realizing the importance of education, he paid special attention to the education of his children. Ramji Sakpal was unsuccessful in his initial efforts, but after a lot of effort, Anandrao and Bhimrao got admission in an army school itself. Both the brothers had to go through the bitter experiences of untouchability in school. He had to sit separately from all the students. The upper caste teachers and students used to keep a distance from them and did not even allow them to touch anything. When he felt thirsty, water was given to him by a third person. The reason was clear. He belonged to the 'Mahar' caste, which was considered untouchable. India has an ancient history of caste system which has been present in the society for thousands of years in its cruelest and inhuman form.

#### Untouchability and Social Inequality: Ambedkar

At Columbia University, Dr. Ambedkar submitted his doctoral dissertation in June 1916 on the topic 'National Dividend for India: A Historic and Analytic Study', which was later published under the title 'The Development of the Provincial Economy in British India'. At the end of this discourse, he threw light on social oppression and social injustice and emphasized that how can a country progress without political power? After finishing higher education in America, in June, 1916, he had taken admission in 'London School of Economics and Political Science' and 'Grey's Inn' for barrister. But after a year of education in London, he had to go through a new crisis. According to the contract, Maharaja Sayajirao of Baroda did not increase his scholarship, nor did he allow him to study in Britain. Little did they know this man was going to be a great man, the Messiah of humanity.

#### Participation in Dalit Caste Conference

In November 1917, two sessions of Dalit castes were held in Bombay. Through a resolution in a conference, it was demanded that the government should protect the interests of the untouchables and for this, according to the proportion of their population, the Dalit castes should be given the right to elect their representatives in the Legislative Assemblies. In a resolution the convention supported the Congress-League agreement. So that the



disqualifications that were imposed on the Dalit castes in the name of customs and religion can be removed and for this the upper caste Hindus can be influenced. On March 23 and 24, 1918, under the chairmanship of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda, All India Depressed Classes Conference was organized in Bombay in which prominent leaders participated. The main objective of this conference was to call for the eradication of untouchability spread in the country. Tilak even went so far as to say that he would not accept God as the authority if the stigma of untouchability was not removed. But this type of anti-untouchability campaign carried out by the upper caste Hindus was like an antelope in the eyes of Dr. Ambedkar.

### **Path of Struggle: Direct Action (Mahad Talab Satyagraha)**

The period of 1926-27 is very important in the history of the Dalit movement. It was the path of direct action or struggle. In the Bombay Legislative Council, S.K. Bole, through a resolution, demanded the use of public water sources, wells, government-built dharamshalas, government schools, courts, offices and dispensaries for the untouchables. According to the government order dated 11th September, 1923, the said proposal was implemented. Yet the local bodies and municipal boards disobeyed this order and deprived the Dalits of civil rights. As a result, at the end of the conference, with the inspiration of Dr. Ambedkar, about 10,000 delegates went towards Chavadar Talab to drink water in the direction of exercising their fundamental right. At that time mischievous elements spread a rumor that Dalits had entered Vireshwar temple. On this the mischievous upper caste Hindus organized and broke into the pandal of the conference and thrashed the representatives. The representatives saved their lives by entering the homes of Muslim people. Dr. Ambedkar had to take refuge in the police station for his life. In the history of Dalit movement, another struggle chapter has thus been added for fundamental rights. Now the issue of social boycott of Dalits in the upper castes started. They started being evicted from agricultural land. They were attacked in their villages. Dr. Ambedkar asked his followers to fight fiercely. Go to public places Fill and drink water from wells and ponds and do not waste time to enter the temple. It was a call to do and die or direct action. According to a thinker on this, "The rich Hindu used to fight with the British for power. Untouchables, Dalits used to fight with superstitious-hardcore-Hinduism for human rights."

This movement of Dalits lasted for a long time. Again, on December 25, 1927, a conference of satyagrahis was called in Mahad. A Muslim citizen granted permission to hold a convention in his place. Local businessmen boycotted this conference. Even food and drink had to be arranged from outside. Dr. Ambedkar went to Bombay with 200 Satyagrahis. 3000 satyagrahis were fully prepared. The District Magistrate appealed to Dr. Ambedkar to postpone the proposed Satyagraha. Ambedkar said that the root cause of all evils and inequality is the caste system. He said that equality means equal opportunity and transforming the hidden qualities in the person into power. He insisted that Hindu society should be fully formed on two principles, recognition of equality and boycott of caste system.



### 16.5.2 Mahatma Gandhi's Idea (1869- 1948 )

Gandhi for the first time had made untouchability an issue of public concern and the 1920 Non-Cooperation resolutions mentioned the removal of untouchability as a necessary pre-condition for attaining swaraj. But his subsequent campaign for the welfare of the Hari Jans after withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement, could neither arouse much caste Hindu interest in the reformist agenda nor could satisfy the Dalits. He condemned untouchability as distortion, but until the 1940s upheld Varnashrama dharma or caste system as an ideal non-competitive economic system of social division of labor as opposed to the class system of the West. This theory could not satisfy the socially ambitious group among the untouchables as it denied them the chances of achieving social mobility. For the eradication of untouchability too, Gandhi took essentially a religious approach: temple entry movement of “Bhangi”, the self-sacrificing domestic sweeper, were these answers to the problems. This campaign significantly undermined the moral and religious basis of untouchability, but, as Bhikhu Parekh has argued, failed to deal with its “economic and political roots”. It dignified the untouchables, but failed to empower them. The Dalit leaders argued that if they were given proper share of economic and political power, the gates of temples would automatically open for them. The Gandhian approach, in other words, failed to satisfy Dalit leaders like Ambedkar who preferred a political solution through guaranteed access to education, employment and political representations. Ambedkar (1945) later charged Gandhi and congress for obfuscating the real issue and the demand for a separate political identity for the Dalits became a sticky point in the relationship between the Dalit political groups and the congress.

The differences persisted when the Communal Award in September 1932 recognized the right to separate electorate for the untouchables now called the Schedule Castes and Gandhi embarked on his epic fast unto death to get it revoked. Ambedkar now had little choice but to succumb to the moral pressure to save Mahatma's life and accepted a compromise, known as the Poona Pact, which provided for 151 reserved seats for the Schedule Castes in joint electorate. For the time being, it seemed as if all conflicts had been resolved. There was a nationwide interest in temple entry movement and Gandhi's Harijan campaign. Even, there was cooperation between Gandhi and Ambedkar in relation to the activities of the newly founded Harijan Sevak Sangh. The provisions of the pact were later incorporated into the Government of India Act of 1935. Although there were many critics of the pact at the time, Ravinder Kumar has argued that it represented a triumph for Gandhi who prevented a rift in India's body politics and offered a nationalist's solutions to the untouchability problems. But disunity reappeared very soon, as congress and Ambedkar again began to drift apart, while Gandhi's Harijan Sevak Sangh was involved in social issues, the other congress leader had little interest in his mission. They needed a political front to mobilize Dalit voters to win the reserved seats in the coming election. For this purpose, they founded in March 1935 the All-India Depressed Classes League, with Jagjivan Ram a nationalist Dalit leader from Bihar, as the president. But still in the elections of 1937 the congress won only 73 out of 151



reserved seats all over India. Subsequently, situations changed in different areas in different ways, depending on the nature of commitment the local Congress leaders had towards the Gandhian creed of eliminating untouchability. In the non-congress provinces like Bengal, the leaders were more sensitive to electoral arithmetic and assiduously cultivated the friendship of the Dalit leaders. But in the eight provinces where the congress formed ministries and remained in power for nearly two years, they performed in such a way that not just critics like Ambedkar were unimpressed, but even those Dalit leaders like M.C. Rajah of Madras who once sympathized with congress, were gradually alienated.

### 16.6 SUMMARY

Anti-caste movement is a gift of medieval India. By the way, atrocities on Shudras and Atishudras are not new, it has been going on for thousands of years. Many restrictions were made against Shudras and Atishudras in religious scriptures like Manusmriti, Ramayana and Gita. And they were kept away from their rights like religion and education. It can be said that, in a way, the Varna system was created on the basis of Kama and Karma. The system of this ancient period also influenced the medieval system. The ups and downs that were seen in the society especially regarding the caste system. The way Jyotiba Phule, Pandita Ramabai, etc. hit hard on the caste system. The religious rituals made by the Brahmins were openly opposed in the society, which is how the Brahminical ideology has done injustice to the Shudras, such as not allowing religious texts to be read, ban on the temple entry, ban on education system, ban on living in the village, Restrictions on taking water from wells and ponds etc. were the rules imposed on Shudras and Atishudras. Whom it was necessary to obey the Shudras. If a Shudra went against these rules. His punishment was determined by the rules made by Brahmanism. In medieval India, many great men made people aware of casteist thinking, but the contractors of religion did not allow much change. The impression of the casteist movement in the medieval period was seen in modern India, such as Jyotiba Phule, Pandit Ramabai, Periyar, Dr. Ambedkar, and Mahatma Gandhi etc. created a consciousness among the people of Dalit society. The great men together made the Dalits recognize their existence, they put more emphasis on getting education, on entering the temple, taking water from wells and ponds, all people are equal. All Dalits should study the Vedas and Puranas of Hinduism. So that the atmosphere of equality is maintained in the society, and all the Dalits are aware of their rights.

### 16.7 GLOSSARY

**Dalit:** untouchable, also called Dalit officially in Scheduled Caste. Harijan, etc.

**Era:** a period of time in history ( that special for some reason )

**Movement:** the act or process of moving especially, change of place or position.



**Satyagraha:** a determined but nonviolent resistance to evil.

**SatyashodhakSamaj :** it kind of social reform society founded by Jyotiba Phule in Pune, Maharashtra.

### 16.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1).How did Jyotiba Phule raise the voice for education for the Dalits and Backwar
- 2).How did Pandit Rambai criticize the Brahmanism and their ritual?
- 3).What was the “non-brahman movement” and its impact?
- 4).How did Dr. Ambedkar criticize social inequality?
- 5).What was the Idea of Mahatma Gandhi on caste?

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