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EDUCATION **IDE**  
Rajiv Gandhi University

# BAHIS303 HISTORY OF INDIA FROM 1526 - 1947 - II



## BA (HISTORY)

### 6<sup>TH</sup> SEMESTER

**Rajiv Gandhi University**  
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## About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

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# SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

## HISTORY OF INDIA FROM 1526-1947

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Syllabi	Mapping in Book
<b>Unit I- Resistance to British Rule</b>	<b>(Pages 5-18)</b>
a. Maharashtra	
b. Punjab	
c. Sindh	
d. Mysore.	
<b>Unit II- Revolt of 1857</b>	<b>(Pages 19-30)</b>
a. Causes	
b. Nature and Significance.	
<b>Unit III- Socio-Religious Movements</b>	<b>(Pages 31-63)</b>
a. Ram Mohan Roy and Brahma Samaj.	
b. Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Dayanand Saraswati.	
c. Syed Ahmed Khan and the Aligarh Movement.	
<b>Unit IV- India National Movement</b>	<b>(Pages 64-92)</b>
a. Emergence of Nationalism.	
b. Predecessors of the Congress and Formation of the Congress.	
c. Early Nationalists: Programmes and Policies and Extremists.	
<b>Unit V- India National Movement</b>	<b>(Pages 93-124)</b>
d. Non-Cooperation	
e. Civil Disobedience	
f. Quit India Movement	
g. India's Independence.	

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# INTRODUCTION

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Babur (AD1526–30), who founded the Mughal Empire in India, was the descendant of Timur as well as Ghenghiz Khan. Ousted by his cousins, he came to India and defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the last Lodi Sultan, in AD1526 at the First Battle of Panipat. There was a short break (AD1540–1555) in Mughal rule when Babur's son Humayun was dethroned from Delhi by an Afghan ruler, Sher Shah. Babur's grandson, Akbar, consolidated political power and extended his empire over virtually the whole of North India and parts of the south. Akbar was followed by three illustrious Mughal emperors, namely Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

In western India, Shivaji succeeded in forging the Marathas into an efficient military machine and instilled in them a sense of national identity. They adopted guerrilla tactics to beat the Mughals and engaged them in many conquests that eventually drained their economic resources.

The period between 1707 and 1947 is extremely crucial in the history of India. The advent of the Europeans for the purpose of trading later led to the invasion of the British in India who ruled over India for a long time. During the reign of the British, India was exploited for its economic resources to a great extent. However, their rule also led to various reforms in the social, educational, commercial and judicial spheres in India. The World War I and World War II played an important role in arousing the spirit of nationalism among people. Various freedom fighters fought for the Independence of the country in their own way. Finally, India became independent on 15th August 1947 and became a Republic on 26th January 1950 when the Constitution of India was enforced.

This book, *History of India from 1526-1947*, comprises five units. The book is written strictly in SIM (Self Instructional Material) format for Distance Learning. Each unit starts with an Introduction and Unit Objectives. Then, the detailed content is presented, along with figures and tables, in an understandable and organized manner. Each unit has Check Your Progress questions at regular intervals to test the readers' understanding of the topics covered. A Summary along with a list of Key Terms and a set of Questions and Exercises is provided at the end of each unit for effective recapitulation. Each unit also has a list of books for Further Reading.

## NOTES

# UNIT I

## RESISTANCE TO BRITISH RULE

NOTES

### Structure

Introduction  
Unit Objectives  
Resistance to British Rule  
Maharashtra  
Punjab  
Sindh  
Mysore  
Summary  
Key Terms  
Answers to 'Check Your Progress'  
Questions and Exercises  
Further Reading

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## INTRODUCTION

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The 18th century in India was an important period of transition and remains the subject of continuing debate among scholars of late medieval and modern Indian history. The two main debates on the 18th century are the nature of transition from a centralized Mughal polity to the emergence of regional confederations, and the nature of the transformation brought about by the increasing role of the English East India Company in the economic, commercial, and financial life of the subcontinent. We see the rise of a new economic order, and decentralization of political power which went hand-in-hand with a broader localization process.

As you learnt, the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 laid bare a patchwork of several sovereignties, a network of fragmented and layered forms of regional political powers that had been partly masked and managed by the practices of Mughal state and sovereignty. The 18th century was marked by the emergence of regional polities, the so-called successor states like Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad, although they were politically and financially independent from Mughal state, but always used the Mughal symbols and titles for legitimacy and political stability. It is generally viewed that the East India Company's expansion in India took place due to a power vacuum left after Aurangzeb's death. In the debates of continuity and change, historians have presented enduring socio-economic structures such as financial institutions and information networks that emphasize the utility of Indian agents or collaborators in facilitating early company rule.

In this unit, you will get acquainted with the advent of British rule in India, as well as resistance to it.

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## UNIT OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the struggle of Maharashtra, Punjab, Sindh and Mysore against the British rule

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## RESISTANCE TO BRITISH RULE: MAHARASHTRA, PUNJAB, SINDH AND MYSORE

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The advent of British Rule was opposed by the rulers of the following states:

- **Maharashtra**

The tale of the struggle of Marathas under the British rule will be described in the following sections.

### Maratha Confederacy

The word 'Confederacy' is derived from Anglo-French word '*Confederate cie*', which means a league or union, whether of states or the individuals. After the death of Shivaji in 1680, there was no great leader among the Marathas who could unite them. Sahu, the grandson of Shivaji, was under Mughal custody (between 1689 and 1707), which made him weak, passive and dependent on others. The emergence of Peshwa as the 'de facto' ruler is directly linked with the weak character of Sahu. When Balaji Vishwanath served as Peshwa (1713–1720), he made the king a puppet in his hands and his own post hereditary.

However, the Maratha Confederacy really began in the Peshwaship of Baji Rao I (1720–1740), son of Balaji Vishwanath, when the Maratha Empire expanded in the North and South India. The Peshwa put large areas under the control of his following subordinates:

- Gwalior under Ramoji Scindia
- Baroda under Damaji Gaekwad
- Indore under Malhar Rao Holkar
- Nagpur under Raghujji Bhonsle

Peshwa's seat was at Poone and Sahu was relegated to being only a nominal king. The confederacy was strictly controlled by the two Peshwas:

- Baji Rao I (1720–1740)
- Balaji Baji Rao (1740–1761)

The defeat of the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat by the Afghan army of Ahmad Shah Abdali made the post of the Peshwa very weak. He was now dependent on Phadnis and the other Maratha chiefs.

The origin of the Maratha confederacy may be traced to the revival of the *jagir* or *saranjam* system by Rajaram. However, it was only in the time of Baji Rao I that the system made a base for itself. In this process, Sahu issued letters of authority to his various Maratha sardars for collecting *Chauth* and *Sardeslunukhi* from various parts of

#### Check Your Progress

9. What was the consequence of abolishing the *dastak* system?
10. Mention any one social reform that was implemented under Hastings.
11. What were the charges levelled against Warren Hastings that resulted in his impeachment?
12. What was the Cornwallis code?

India. These letters of authority were called 'saranjam'. The holders of these *saranjams* were called *saranjamdars*. They merely recognized the Maratha Peshwas as their nominal head after the death of Sahu. In this way arose the Maratha confederacy, consisting of very important Maratha jagirdars. Some of them were as follows:

- Raghujji Bhonsle of Berar
- Gaekwad of Baroda
- Holkar of Indore
- Scindia of Gwalior
- The Peshwa of Poona

### **The First Anglo-Maratha War (1775–1782)**

The first Anglo-Maratha War started when Raghunath Rao, after killing Peshwa Narayan Rao, claimed the post of Peshwa. But the widow of Narayan Rao gave birth to Madhav Rao Narayan. The Maratha Sardars, led by Nana Phadnis, accepted the minor Madhav Rao Narayan as Peshwa and rejected Raghunath Rao, who in search of a friend concluded a treaty with the English at Surat on March 7, 1775. This treaty led to the first war among the British and the Marathas.

### **Causes of the First Anglo-Maratha war**

The causes of the first Anglo-Maratha war were as follows:

- Friendship with Ragunath Rao
- Defeat of British by the Marathas at Talegoan (1776)
- March of the British army under Goddard from Calcutta to Ahmedabad through central India (which itself was a great military feat in those days) and the brilliant victories on the way (1779–1780)
- Stalemate and deadlock for two years (1781–1782)

### **Results**

The results of the first Anglo-Maratha war were as follows:

- Treaty of Salbai (1782) by which the status quo was maintained, and gave the British twenty years of peace with the Marathas.
- It also enabled the British to exert pressure on Mysore with the help of the Marathas in recovering their territories from Haider Ali.

### **Treaty of Surat: Provisions**

The provisions of the Treaty of Surat were as follows:

- The English agreed to assist Raghunath Rao with a force of 2,500 men.
- Raghunath Rao agreed to give Salsette and Bassein to the English and as security deposited six lakhs.
- The Marathas would not raid in Bengal and Karnataka.
- Some areas of Surat and Bharuch would be given to the English.
- If Raghunath Rao decided to enter into a pact with Poone, the English would be involved.





The Calcutta Council became more powerful by the Regulating Act, 1773, than by the Government of Bombay and Madras. The Council condemned the activities of Bombay Government as ‘dangerous’, ‘unauthorized’ and ‘unjust’ and rejected the Treaty of Surat. It sent Lieutenant on to Poone who concluded the Treaty of Purandhar on March 1, 1776.

### **Treaty of Purandhar: Provisions**

The provisions of the Treaty of Purandhar were as follows:

- The English and the Marathas would maintain peace.
- The English East India Company would retain Salsette.
- Raghunath Rao would go to Gujarat, and Poone would give him `2,500 per month as pension.

This time, the treaty was not acceptable to the Bombay Government, and Poone was also not showing any interest in its implementation. In the mean-time American War of Independence started (1776–1781). In this war the French supported the Americans against the English. French, who were old rivals of English East India Company, came closer to the Poone Darbar. The Court of Director of English East India Company was worried with the new political development, so it rejected the Treaty of Purandhar. The Government of Bombay was more than happy and the Calcutta Council, obviously, felt insulted. The Bombay Government renewed its ties with Raghunath Rao (The Treaty of Surat) and a British troop was sent to Surat (November 1778) but the British troop was defeated and the Bombay Government was forced to sign Treaty of Wadgaon (1779) with Poone Durbar.

### **Treaty of Wadgaon: Provisions**

The provisions of the Treaty of Purandhar were as follows:

- The Bombay Government would return all the territories, which it occupied after 1773, to the Marathas.
- The Bombay Government would stop the English army coming from Bengal.
- Scindia would get some income from Bharuch.

Once again the treaty created a rift between the Calcutta Government and the Bombay Government. Warren Hastings, the Governor General (1773–1785), rejected the Convention of Wadgaon. An army, led by Godard, came from Bengal and captured Ahmedabad (February, 1780) and Bassein (December, 1780). But the English army was defeated at Poone (April, 1781). Another British army led by Captain Popham came from Calcutta and won Gwalior (August 3, 1780), Scindia was also defeated at Sipri (February 16, 1781) and agreed to work as a mediator between the English and the Poone Darbar resulting into the Treaty of Salbai (May 17, 1782).

### **Treaty of Salbai: Provisions**

The provisions of the Treaty of Salbai were as follows:

- The British would support Raghunath Rao, but he would get pension from Poone, the headquarters of Peshwa.
- Salsette and Elephanta were given to the English.
- Scindia got the land to the west of Yamuna.
- The Marathas and the English agreed to return the rest of the areas to each other.

The Treaty of Salbai established the status quo. It benefited the company because they got peace from Marathas for the next twenty years. They could focus their energy and resources against their bitterest enemy in India, which was Mysore.

### **The Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-1806)**

The internal conflict of the Maratha Confederacy brought them once again on the verge of war. The Peshwa, Baji Rao II, after killing Bithuji Holkar, the brother of Jaswant Rao Holkar, fled from Poone. Holkar installed Vinayak Rao as Peshwa at Poone. Baji Rao came to Bassein and signed a treaty with the English on December 31, 1802. The Company, which was always in search of such situation, made Peshwa virtually a puppet.

#### **Treaty of Bassein: Provisions**

The provisions of the Treaty of Bassein were as follows:

- The English would help Peshwa with 600 troops and artillery.
- Peshwa agreed to cede, to the Company, territories yielding an income of 26 lakhs rupees. Territories included Gujarat, South of Tapti, territories between Tapti and Narbada and some territories near Tungabhadra.
- Peshwa promised that he would not keep any European in his army other than the English.
- Peshwa would give up his claim over Surat.
- Peshwa would not have any foreign relationship with other states without the English approval.
- Peshwa would settle all its disputes, if any, with Nizam of Hyderabad and Gaekwad of Baroda with Company's mediation.

The Peshwa, with the help of Arthur Wellesley, entered Poone on May 13, 1803 and captured it. However, the Treaty of Bassein was perceived as a great insult by the other Maratha chiefs. Daulat Rao Scindia and Raghujji Bhonsle joined hands together against the British. Instead of bringing peace, this was the treaty which brought war. The war started in August 1803 from both North and South of the Maratha Kingdom. The Northern Command was led by General Lake and Southern Command by Arthur Wellesley. The British started fighting in Gujarat, Bundelkhand and in Orissa. The strategy was to engage all the Maratha chiefs at different places, and not allow them to unite. On September 23, 1803, Arthur Wellesley defeated a joint army of Scindia and Bhonsle at Assaye, near Aurangabad. Gwalior fell on December 15, 1803. In the North, General Lake captured Aligarh in August, Delhi in September and Agra in October 1803. Scindia was defeated again at Laswari (November 1803) and lost south of Chambal river. The English also captured Cuttack and succeeded in Gujarat and Bundelkhand.

This humiliating defeat forced Bhonsle and Scindia to conclude similar kind of treaty, as signed by the Peshwa. On December 17, 1803, Bhonsle at Dergaon, and on December 30, 1803, Scindia at Surajarjan Gaon signed the 'Peace Treaty'. Bhonsle gave Cuttack, Balasore, and Western part of Wardha River to the British. Scindia gave Jaipur, Jodhpur, North of Gohad, Ahmednagar, Bhaduch, Ajanta and all their territory between Ganga and Yamuna. Both agreed that in resolving their outstanding issues with Nizam and Peshwa, they would seek English 'help'. They agreed that they would not allow any enemy of English to stay in their territory, that they would keep a British Resident in their capital and they would accept the Treaty of Bassein. Holkar, so far aloof from the war, started fighting in April 1804. After defeating Colonel Monson in the

passes of Mukund Dara near Kota, he advanced towards Delhi and made an unsuccessful attempt to seize Delhi. He was defeated at Deeg on November 13, 1804 and at Farrukhabad on November 17, 1804. Finally, he too concluded a treaty with the British on January 7, 1806 at Rajpurghat. He agreed to give up his claims to places north of the river Chambal, Bundhelkhand and Peshwa's territory. He promised not to entertain any European, other than English, in his kingdom. In return, the British promised not to interfere in the southern territory of river Chambal.

### **Treaties signed by the Maratha chiefs and the Company**

- **Treaty of Surat (1775):** Signed by Raghunath Rao, wherein he promised to hand over Bassein and Salsette and a few islands near Bombay to the British
- **Treaty of Purandhar (1776):** Signed by Madhav Rao II; the Company got a huge war indemnity and retained Salsette
- **Treaty of Salbai (1782):** Signed by Mahadji Scindia, whereby the British influence in Indian politics and mutual conflicts increased amongst the Marathas
- **Treaty of Bassein (1802):** Signed between Bajji Rao II; The treaty gave effective control of not only Maratha but also Deccan regions to the Company
- **Treaty of Deogaon (1803):** By Bhonsle, assured British supremacy over the Maratha kingdom
- **Treaty of Surji-Arjangaon (1803):** By Daulat Rao Scindia; assured the British supremacy over the Maratha kingdom

### **The Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818)**

The third Anglo-Maratha war was partly related with the British imperialistic design in India and partly with the nature of Maratha state. In 1813, the Charter Act was passed, which ended the monopoly of English East India Company. All the English Companies, now, were allowed to sell their products in India and purchase raw material from India. The British capitalists were in search of a greater market. Annexation of Indian territories meant a big market for British goods in India and cheap raw materials for British industries. English cotton mills were heavily dependent on Indian cotton and Deccan region was famous for cotton produce. The policy of 'non-interference', with Indian States, was no longer relevant.

The Company was in search of an excuse to wage war against the Marathas. The issue of Pindaris provided an opportunity. The Pindaris, who consisted of many castes and classes, were attached to the Maratha armies. They worked like mercenaries, mostly under the Maratha chiefs. But once the Maratha chief became weak and failed to employ them regularly, they started plundering different territories, including those territories which were under the control of the Company or its allies. The Company accused the Maratha for giving them shelter and encouragement.

Lord Hastings, the Governor-General (1813–1823), made a plan to surround the Pindaris in Malwa by a large army and to prevent the Marathas from assisting them. By the end of 1817 and early 1818, the Pindaris were hunted across the Chambal. Thousands of them were killed. Their leaders, Amir Khan and Karim Khan, surrendered while the most dangerous, Chitu, fled into the jungles of Asirgarh. The direct conflict between the English and the Marathas, however, started when Gangadhar Shastri, the ambassador of Gaekwad, was killed by Tryanbakji, the Prime Minister of Peshwa. The English Resident, Elphinston told Peshwa to hand over Trayanbakji, but he escaped. Colonel

Smith besieged Poone and forced the Peshwa to sign the Poone Pact (June 13, 1817). The Maratha confederacy was dissolved and Peshwa's leadership was brought to an end. The fort of Ahmednagar, Bundelkhand and a vast territory of Malwa was ceded to the Company. Peshwa agreed to keep English troops at Poone and his family under British custody till Triyanbankji was arrested or surrendered.

The Pune Pact was, once again, humiliating for the Marathas. The Peshwa too was unhappy. He started thinking of revenge so he burnt the British Residency and started war against the English. He was defeated at Kirki in November 1817. In the same month Appaji, the Bhonsle chief, was also defeated at Sitabaldi. In the Battle of Mahidpur (December, 1817), Holkar was defeated and was compelled to sign a treaty at Mandsor (January, 1818). He had to cede Khandesh and the vast territory across the river Narmada.

The Peshwa continued the war but he was defeated again at Koregaon (January, 1818) and finally at Ashti (February, 1818), he surrendered. A small part of his territory was given to the descendent of Shivaji, based at Satara, whereas a large part of his territory was annexed including Pune. The post of Peshwa was abandoned and Baji Rao was sent to Bithur (near Kanpur). An annual pension was fixed for him. With this defeat the British supremacy in Maratha kingdom was already established and the hopeful successor of Mughals lost all hopes.

### **Causes of the Third Anglo-Maratha war**

The causes of the third Anglo-Maratha war were as follows:

- Resentment of the Marathas against the loss of their freedom to the British
- Rigid control exercised by the British residents on the Marathas chiefs

### **Results of the Third Anglo-Maratha war**

The results of the third Anglo-Maratha war were as follows:

- Dethronement of the Peshwa (he was pensioned off and sent to Bithur near Kanpur) and the annexation of all his territories by the British (the creation of the Bombay Presidency)
  - Creation of the kingdom of Satara out of Peshwa's lands to satisfy Maratha pride
- Thus, after this war the Maratha chiefs too existed at the mercy of the British.

## **Punjab**

Ranjit Singh was the king of Punjab during the 18th century. The first regular contact between Ranjit Singh and the British seems to have been made in 1800, when India was threatened by an invasion of Zaman Shah, the Afghan ruler who had been invited by Tipu Sultan, a bitter enemy of the British. As a precautionary measure, the British sent Munshi Yusuf Ali to the court of Ranjit Singh with rich presents to win the Maharaja over to the British side. Soon, however, he learnt that the danger of Zaman Shah's invasion receded and Yusuf Ali was recalled.

The second contact was made in 1805, when the Maratha chief Holkar entered Punjab for help from Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh had gone to conquer Multan and Jhang but came to Amritsar on learning about Holkar's arrival. He called a meeting of a Sarbat Khalsa to decide about the policy to be followed towards Holkar. Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Bhag Singh of Jind advised Ranjit Singh not to come in conflict with the British by

helping Holkar. As a result, Ranjit Singh refused to help Holkar against the British. General Lake and Maharaja Ranjit Singh concluded an agreement in January, 1806.

As the danger of French invasion on India became remote, the English adopted a stern policy towards Ranjit Singh. He was given a note by the Governor-General Metcalfe which contained some soft-worded warnings against his aggressive policy. Ranjit Singh was asked to restore all the places he had taken possession of since 1806 to the former possessors which will confine his army right to the bank of the Sutlej. Ranjit Singh was not prepared to accept the demand. However, he withdrew his troops from Ambala and Saniwal but continued to retain Faridkot. Ranjit Singh fortified the fort of Govindgarh. But in the last stage, Ranjit Singh changed his mind and agreed to sign the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809.

One of the effects of the treaty of Amritsar was that the British Government was able to take the cis-Sutlej states under its protection. Ranjit Singh's advance in the East was checked, but he was given a Carte Blanche so far as the region to the west of the Sutlej was concerned.

The death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in June 1839 was followed by political instability and rapid changes of government in the Punjab. Selfish and corrupt leaders came to the front. Ultimately, power fell into the hands of the brave and patriotic, but utterly undisciplined army. This led the British to look greedily across the Sutlej upon the land of the five rivers even though they had signed a treaty in 1809.

### **The First Anglo-Sikh War (1845–1846)**

The First Anglo-Sikh War was fought at Mudki on December 18, 1845. The Sikhs were defeated. The English again won the battle at Ferozepur on December 21. The Sikhs, under Ranjit Singh Majithia, however, defeated the English at Buddwal on January 21, 1846. However, the Sikhs were again defeated at Aliwal on January 28. The decisive battle was fought at Sobraon on February 10, 1846 and the Sikhs were routed. The English then crossed the Sutlej on February 13 and captured the capital of Lahore on February 20. As the Sikhs were absolutely beaten, many people advised Lord Hardinge to annex the Empire, but he did not accept this.

The war came to an end by the treaty of Lahore which was signed on 9th March, 1846. This treaty left the Sikhs with no capacity for resisting the English. Another treaty was made with the Sikhs on 16th December, 1846. This treaty is known as the 'Second Treaty of Lahore' or the 'Treaty of Bhairowal'.

### **The Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848–1849)**

The Sikhs considered their defeat in the first Sikh War as a great humiliation. They had been accustomed to victories during the time of Ranjit Singh and this defeat gave a rude shock to their mentality. The Sikhs wanted to restore the fallen fortunes of their kingdom and the Second Anglo-Sikh War was fought between them in 1848–1849.

Lord Gough, the British Commander-in-Chief, reached Lahore with the grand army of the Punjab on 13th November. On 22 November, the rebels were defeated in a battle at Ramnagar. Another indecisive action was fought at Sadullapur on 3rd December.

### **The Third Anglo-Sikh War (1849)**

The third battle was fought on 13 January 1849 at Chelianwala. On 21 February, Lord Gough met the Sikhs in another battle at Derajat. The Sikhs were utterly routed, surrendered themselves at Rawalpindi, and thus, the game came to an end.

The complete defeat of the Sikhs sealed the fate of their kingdom. Lord Dalhousie, on his own responsibility, annexed Punjab on 29 March, 1849. The annexation of Punjab extended the British territories in India up to the natural frontiers of India towards the north-west. Besides, after the destruction of the power of the Sikhs, there remained no active power which could pose a threat to the security of the English in India.

### Sindh

During the Governor-Generalship of Bentinck, Sindh was divided into small states. These states were ruled by Amirs. The reason behind the division of Sindh was that Amirs were suspicious of Maharaja Ranjit Singh due to his growing powers. Bentinck, in order to take advantage of their suspicion, sent Colonel Pottenger for convincing the Amirs of Sindh to sign a commercial treaty with them.

When Amirs did not agree with his proposal, Pottenger forced them to sign the treaty in 1832. As a result of this treaty, the English could trade in Sindh. However, the Amirs did not allow the English merchants to live in Sindh on permanent basis.

After this treaty, Bentinck made efforts to establish friendly relations with Ranjit Singh. In spite of the fact that the English did not like Ranjit Singh's power yet Bentinck wanted to establish friendship with him so that he could take his help in case of Rajputs' invasion in the British frontier. For this purpose, he sent Robert Burnes to Lahore.

Though, Robert Burnes was successful in establishing friendship with Ranjit Singh yet Bentinck wanted to meet Ranjit Singh personally. He went to meet Ranjit Singh in 1831 and assured him that the English are also interested in Sindh as he is.

### Mysore

You already learnt about the situation in the Mysore Kingdom in the 18th century. After the Fourth Mysore War, the British took control of the kingdom and became the paramount power in India.

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## SUMMARY

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- Compagnie des Indes was the first French company to establish trading relations with India.
- Louis XIV, the then king of France, granted authority for this company in 1664.
- The Company named 'The Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading in the East Indies' was granted a royal charter by Queen Elizabeth.
- From 1746 to 1763, English East India Company and French East India Company fought with each other in India. These wars are known as Carnatic wars.
- The First Carnatic War was directly linked to the events in Europe. The English and French were fighting on the issue of Austria's succession (1740–48).
- In 1717, the Mughal emperor issued a *farman* by which it granted special benefits to the English East India Company, namely, exemption of taxes on goods imported and exported from Bengal.
- To punish the highhandedness of the Company, Siraj-ud-Daulah retaliated by striking Calcutta on 16 June 1756 and bringing it under his sway by 20 June 1756.
- According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, an eminent historian, 23 June 1757, marked the end of the medieval period in India and the beginning of the modern period.

## NOTES

- In Bengal's history, the Treaty of Allahabad (1765) is extremely significant as it ushered in a new administrative mechanism, which laid down the foundation of the British administrative system in India.
- The Battle of Buxar (1764) was fought between the forces under the command of the British East India Company led by Hector Munro, and the combined armies of Mir Qasim, the Nawab of Bengal; Shuja-ud-Daula the Nawab of Awadh; and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II.
- Working as an administrative clerk in the East India Company, Warren Hastings reached Calcutta in 1750. He gradually climbed up the ladder and was appointed as the the President of Kasimbazar, by Governor of Bengal in 1772.
- Charles Cornwallis was sent to India by the Court of Directors in the year 1786. He was entrusted the responsibility of executing the policy of peace given in Pitt's India Act and to restructure the administrative system in India.
- The youngest Governor General of British India was Lord Dalhousie.
- The word 'Confederacy' is derived from Anglo-French word '*Confederate cie*', which means a league or union, whether of states or the individuals.
- As a result of the Third Anglo-Maratha War, the Peshwa was dethroned and all his territories were annexed by the British.

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### KEY TERMS

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- **Farmaan:** *Farman* was a royal order bearing the seal of the emperor during the Mughal period of Indian history.
- **Nawab:** Nawab is an honorific title ratified and bestowed by the reigning Mughal emperor to semi-autonomous Muslim rulers of princely states in South Asia.
- **Subedar:** *Subedar* is a historical rank in the Nepal Army, Indian Army and Pakistan Army, ranking below British commissioned officers and above non-commissioned officers.
- **Dual government:** The dual government of Bengal was a double system of administration, which was introduced by Robert Clive. The British East India Company obtained the actual power; whereas the responsibility and charge of administration was entrusted to the Nawab of Bengal.

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### ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. Compagnie des Indes was the first French company to establish trading relations with India.
2. In 1674, Pondicherry became the Dutch capital.
3. Jahangir declined the request of James I to let Captain William Hawkins establish trade in India because the merchants of Portugal and Surat strongly opposed the establishment of the English merchant in India.
4. In 1691, Ibrahim Khan, who was the successor of Shaista Khan, issued a *farmaan* in the favour of the English. According to this *farmaan*, the English were given permission to carry out duty free trade but they were asked to pay `3,000 annually.



5. The outcome of the Dual government was that it had badly affected the administration. There was hardly any discipline and order and commerce suffered heavy losses.
6. The Battle of Buxar (1764) was fought between the forces under the command of the British East India Company led by Hector Munro, and the combined armies of Mir Qasim, the Nawab of Bengal; Shuja-ud-Daula the Nawab of Awadh; and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II.
7. The Battle of Buxar established British control over Bengal. Buxar revealed the political and military shortfalls of the Indian rulers and the decadence of the Mughal Empire.
8. The consequences of the Battle of Buxar are as follows:
  - English supremacy was accepted by Shah Alam.
  - Militarily Buxar was very significant for the English.
9. The consequence of abolishing the *dastak* system was that Company servants had no option, but to pay duties for their personal goods, which reduced corruption and augmented the Company's revenues.
10. Warren Hastings, to encourage Islamic studies, founded the Calcutta Madrassa in 1781 which was the first educational institution founded by the British government.
11. Warren Hastings was impeached for seven years from 1788–1795 on the charges of having accepted bribes, the Rohilla war, Nand Kumar's murder as well as the case of Chet Singh.
12. The Cornwallis Code was created in 1793 for the purpose of guiding those servants of the East India Company who were working in the judicial department.
13. The word 'Confederacy' is derived from Anglo-French word '*Confederate cie*', which means a league or union, whether of states or the individuals.
14. The areas of Northern and Southern India that came under control of the Marathas, during the leadership of Baji Rao I were as follows:
  - Gwalior under Ramoji Scindia
  - Baroda under Damaji Gaekwad
  - Indore under Malhar Rao Holkar
  - Nagpur under Raghujji Bhonsle
15. Ranjit Singh agreed to sign the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809.

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## QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Which was the first French company that succeeded in establishing permanent trade relations in India?
2. When did the Third Carnatic War begin?
3. What were the reasons that encouraged the British to come to India?
4. What were the features of the Dual government?

## NOTES

5. What were the causes that led to the Battle of Buxar?
6. What were the political repercussions of the Battle of Buxar?
7. What was the premise of the judicial reforms implemented by Warren Hastings?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. How did the French established factories in India?
2. Give a detailed account of the British-French rivalry.
3. Give a detailed explanation of the Battle of Buxar, its political implications and consequences.
4. Describe the Battle of Plassey and its consequences.
5. Comment on the term: 'puppet nawabs' of Bengal with reference to the Treaty of Allahabad.
6. Highlight the importance of the Cornwallis Code with reference to reforms that were implemented in the judicial system.
7. Discuss the terms and conditions of the Doctrine of Lapse implemented by Lord Dalhousie.

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# UNIT II REVOLT OF 1857

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## Structure

Introduction  
Unit Objectives  
Revolt of 1857:  
Causes  
Nature and  
Significance  
Summary  
Key Terms  
Answers to 'Check your Progress'  
Questions and Exercises  
Further Reading

## NOTES

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## INTRODUCTION

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For a century from 1757 to 1857 the record of the East India company in India had been of ever increasing conquests and sordid economic exploitations which adversely affected the interests of all sections of people of India-sepoys, zamindars, peasants, traders, pundits and artisans, soldiers. The lava of discontent had long been accumulating which ultimately erupted into a great revolt in 1857, a revolt that by its outburst shook the empire to its foundations and threatened to uproot it. Thousands of peasants, artisans and soldiers fought heroically for over a year which created havoc in the heartland of British imperialism.

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## UNIT OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify the issues that led to the Revolt of 1857
- Discuss the nature of the revolt
- Discuss the significance of the revolt

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## REVOLT OF 1857: CAUSES, NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE

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In 1857, the British completed hundred years of stay in India since the Battle of Plassey. During this time the Indian rulers were unhappy for the loss of former glory and the peasants were discontent at having been reduced to serfs. The traditional craftsmen and artisans were robbed of their livelihoods. And now the colonial powers had all control over trade, commerce, and industries. This was leading to a steady outflow of India's wealth. This period saw a lot of aggressiveness from the British government in consolidating the princely states and strengthening the power of the Colonial rulers.

Dalhousie was responsible for the rising discontent among native states. Lord Canning, who succeeded him shortly before the revolt, could read the writing on the wall and said grimly, 'we must not forget that in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, at first no bigger than a man's hand, but which, growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst and overwhelm us with ruin'.

### Causes of the Revolt of 1857

The following are the causes of the Revolt of 1857.

#### Check Your Progress

1. When was *Atmiya Sabha* formed and by whom?
2. Who founded the Brahma Samaj?



## 1. Political Causes

One of the main causes of the Revolt was the Doctrine of Lapse. The arbitrary ways in which adopted sons were not allowed to succeed led to much resentment. The states which were affected were Satara (1848), Jaitpur, Sambhalpur (1849), Baghat (1850), Udepur (1852) Jhansi (1853) and Nagpur (1854). The annexation that caused the most controversy was that of Awadh in 1856. Even though the Nawab of Awadh, Wajid Ali Shah was loyal to the British he was accused of mis-governance. The company's soldiers were now upset as they were loyal to the Nawab and the annexation of Awadh meant that the soldiers and their relatives would have to pay higher taxes. A new land revenue act was introduced and this meant higher taxes for the landowners. The Zamindars also were against their lands being confiscated. The company also stopped the annual pension of Nana Sahib, the adopted son of last Peshwa Baji Rao II. He proved to be a deadly enemy of the British.

There was unemployment also because the people who did not know English lost their jobs since now Persian and Urdu were no longer acceptable in government jobs. These people were called Ashrafs and held posts in the judicial and revenue department and they joined the revolt as they wanted to get back their jobs and prestige.

## 2. Military Causes

The soldiers or sepoy of the British Army revolted mainly because the cartridges used in the guns were coated with grease made from cow and pig fat. Soldiers who belonged to the upper caste among Hindus protested for the cow fat and the Muslims for the pig fat. Earlier also many sepoy had shown resentment over having to cross the sea to go to Burma as that was considered against some Hindu ritual. They were also unhappy with the pay structure as some high ranking Hindu soldier would get less than a low ranking English soldier. There were bleak chances of getting promoted also. Many spend all their service life in the same post. Then there were rumours of sepoy being forcibly converted to Christianity.

## 3. Religious Causes

The large number of conversion being made by Christian missionaries were also cause of concern for the majority of Hindus and Muslims. There were news of humiliation by British on Hinduism and Islam. The efforts of some reformists were also seen as conspiracy against Hindu religion and interference in the internal matters of Hindus. Then a law was enacted in 1850, which also enabled those who converted into Christianity to inherit ancestral property. This was really opposed by the majority.

## 4. Administrative and Economic Causes

The complete monopoly of the British on trade and commerce of the country also led to a lot of resentment. The native trade, handicraft, and other livelihoods were being destroyed by the monopoly of the British traders. The revenue system was also breaking the back bone of the local economy. With the annexation of Indian states consumers for local Indian goods and industry was not patronized and British goods were promoted and this led to large scale unemployment. And all these people also joined the revolt.

## Nature of the Revolt

The real nature and cause of the revolt is debatable. Each historian has his own interpretation. The most well known and acceptable one being the story of Mangal

Pandey, a sepoy of 34th native infantry of Bengal Army. When he fired at a Sergeant Major at Barrackpore on March 29, 1857 (Bengal), he did not realize that he was creating history. He was later executed but this led to wide spread revolts in Meerut where soldiers killed English officers and started marching towards Delhi.

Many historians like Ear Stanley, T.R Homes. Forest, Innes and Sir John Lawrence stated the greased cartridges as the cause of the mutiny and called it a barbaric act. Some like Sir James Outram and W. Taylor described it as a conspiracy by Hindus and Muslims. Some called it a national revolt.'

Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan, described it as a resentment for not having political organization in his book *Asbab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind* (causes of the revolt of India). V.D. Savarkar in his book *War of Indian Independence* called it the first war of independence. Even though the revolt began in the army it soon spread to other areas as well. Some historians were of the view that this sowed the seeds of the cry for independence. Yet, there are the following contrarian views:

### Events of the Revolt

From Meerut the Sepoys marched to Delhi and declared Bahadur Shah Zafar as the Emperor of India. Then they attacked Daryaganj near Chandni Chowk area. Here large number of English lived. Soon Delhi was a battle ground. In Delhi the leaders failed to lead well and soon the battle in Delhi was losing ground. Figure 4.1 depicts the centres of the revolt of 1857.

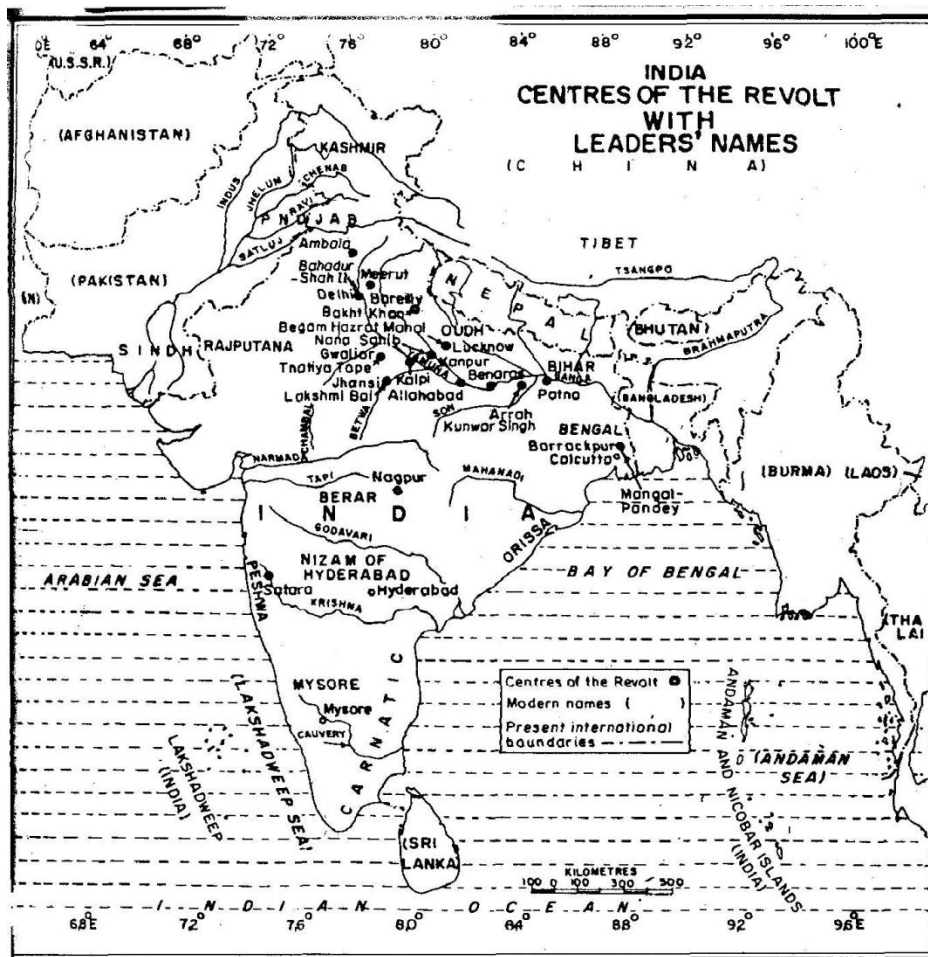


Fig. 4.1 Centres of the Revolt of 1857

## NOTES

The revolt spread to different parts of the country after the outbreak in Delhi. Kanpur, Bareilly, Lucknow, Allahabad, Banaras, Faizabad, Jhansi, Jagdishpur (Arrah), Danapur and Patna were raging. In Lucknow, the revolt was led by Begum Hazrat Mahal who declared Birjis Qadar, her son, as the Nawab of Awadh. The British Resident Henry Lawrence was killed. Sir Colin Campbell tried to save the Europeans with the help of the Gorkha regiment.

From Kanpur, Nana Saheb with the support of Tatya Tope led the movement. Sir Hugh Wheeler, the commander of garrison surrendered on June 27, 1857. When Sir Campbell captured Kanpur, Tantia Tope escaped and joined Rani Laxmibai.

Rani Laxmibai, the ruler of Jhansi was a victim of the Doctrine of Lapse and revolted since her adopted son was not allowed to ascend to the throne and her state was being annexed by the British. She was declared ruler of Jhansi by the soldiers. Tatya Tope and Rani Jhansi together attacked Gwalior.

The Indian soldiers were with them but the ruler of Gwalior, Scindia, was loyal to the British. He escaped to Agra. Gwalior fell in June 1858. Rani died fighting on June 17, 1858. Tope was arrested and executed. At Jagdishpur (Bihar) Kunwar Singh led the revolt and defeated the British forces near Arrah.

At Bareilly, Khan Bahadur Khan led the revolt and in Faizabad, it was led by Maulvi Ahmadullah and in Patna by Maulvi Pir Ali. They were also part of the Wahabi movement and were against British so they joined the revolt.

### **Suppression of the Revolt**

#### **1. Delhi**

It was recaptured by General John Nicholson in September, 1857. However, he later died of his wounds. Lt. Hodson killed the Mughal Emperor's sons and a grandson. Bahadurshah was later sent to Burma on exile.

#### **2. Kanpur**

Sir Hugh Wheeler fought against Nana's forces. Many Englishmen, women and children were killed. Major General Havelock on 17th July defeated Nana and recaptured Kanpur after a tough battle. Many Indian were killed by Brigadier General Neill. After this Sir Colin Campbell he became the new commander in chief of the Indian Army in August 1857.

#### **3. Lucknow**

Death of Sir Henry Lawrence on 2nd July 1857; arrival of Havelock, Outram and Neill with reinforcements (25th September) and death of Neill; relief of the besieged British by Sir Colin Campbell on 17th November, death of Havelock in December 1857, and its occupation by Tope; its final reoccupation by Campbell on 21st March, 1858.

#### **4. Jhansi and Gwalior**

Jhansi's recaptured by Sir Hugh Rose on 4th April, 1858 and the escape of Rani Laxmibai; capture of Gwalior (whose soldiers revolted and drove out their ruler, Scindia) by Rani, death of Rani on 17th June, 1858 and recapture of Gwalior by Rose on 20th June.



## 5. Bareilly

Recaptured by Campbell on 5th May 1858.

## 6. Arrah

Suppression of the Bihar movement under Kunwar Singh by William Taylor and Vincent Eyre temporarily in August, 1857; escape of Kunwar to Awadh and his return to Bihar in April, 1858, to fight his last battle (he died on 9th May).

## 7. Banaras and Allahabad

Recaptured by Neill in June 1857.

## 8. Central India

The whole of central India and Bundelkhand was brought under British control by Sir Hugh Rose in the first half of 1858. But Tope, after losing Gwalior, escaped to Central India and carried on guerrilla war for 10 months. Finally, he was betrayed by Man Singh (a feudatory of Scindia) and was executed by the British on 18th April 1859. Nana Saheb, Begum of Awadh and Khan Bahadur escaped to Nepal in December 1858 and died there. Bakht Khan went to Awadh after the fall of Delhi, and died fighting the British on 13th May, 1859. Maulavi Ahmadullah was treacherously murdered by Raja of Puwain in June 1858.

### Causes of the Failure of the Revolt

The main reasons why the revolt failed were as follows:

1. The revolt was not a national event and hence failed to leave an impact. The revolt had no effect on the southern states of India. The sepoys of Madras were loyal to the British. Sepoys of Punjab, Sindh, Rajputana and east Bengal did not join the mutiny and the Gorkhas were loyal allies of the British.
2. The British had very talented officers to lead the counter attack, some of them being Nicholson, Outram, Edwards etc.
3. Only the rulers who had lost their throne and state joined the revolt. Many remained loyal. Sir Dinkar Rao of Gwalior and Salar Jung of Nizam did not support the rebellion in fact they suppressed it. The British remained grateful to the Nizams for a long time for this.
4. The battle was lopsided towards the British as they had more resources.
5. Lack of leadership and proper strategies led to the failure of the revolt. There was no proper coordination. Bahadur Shah Zafar was a coward and was concerned about his own safety. He proved to be the weakest link. There was no faith in him.
6. There was no larger vision or goal for the revolt. It was led by feudal lords who did not have any game plan but to secure their own selfish interests. They hardly had anything new to challenge the mighty British rule.
7. Since the survival of the Zamindars and moneylenders depended on the British economy, they did not support the revolt.

## NOTES

8. The educated middle class was not part of the revolt. The number of such people was small and they had not much say. And many of them were for British rule as they saw it as a means for the country's modernization.

### Impact of the Revolt

The base of the company's hold on India was shaken by the Revolt of 1857. Thereafter a stronger mechanism and administrative policy was placed in order to strengthen the British rule in India. The reactionary and vested interests were well protected and encouraged and became pillars of British rule in India. Since then the British adopted the divide and rule policy to weaken the back bone of India. Key positions in civil and military administration were now in the control of the British.

The various effects of the Revolt of 1857 may be summarized as follows:

- The revolt of 1857 marked the end of British imperialism. A new policy was passed by the Queen of England which announced that the Indian States would no longer be annexed. The Nizam, Rajput, Maratha and Sikh Chiefs were applauded for their loyalty and rewarded by certificates and *Sanad*.
- The number of Europeans in the Army was increased from 40,000 to 65,000 and that of Indian soldiers was reduced to 1.4 lakhs from 2.38 lakhs. The ratio of Indian to English soldiers in the Bengal army was made 1:2 and in Madras to 1:3.
- After the Revolt of 1857, the British pursued the policy of divide and rule.
- The Doctrine of Lapse was withdrawn.
- In August 1858, the British Parliament passed an Act, which put an end to the rule of the Company. The control of the British government in India was transferred to the British Crown. A 15-member council of India headed by Secretary of State for India was formed. The Secretary of State was made responsible for the Government of India.
- The British Governor-General of India was now also given the title of Viceroy, who was also the representative of the Monarch.
- Total expense of the suppression of the Revolt was borne by Indians.
- The Revolt of 1857 led to the rapid growth of nationalism among the literate Indians. The formation of various political associations, such as the East India Association (1866), Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (1867), Indian League (1875), Indian Association (1876), Madras Mahajan Sabha (1884) and Bombay Presidency Association (1885), and finally the Indian National Congress (1885) was the result of growing national consciousness.
- The Revolt of 1857 saw for the first time unity among Hindus and Muslims. So in that sense it was a historic movement.

### Government of India Act, 1858

The presence of the British in India can be divided into two phases. One phase was between 1772 and 1858, during which the East India Company traded with help from British army and the second phase was from 1858 to 1947, when the British Crown ruled.

Till the revolt the Charter Act of 1853 allowed the East India Company to rule India. After the Revolt of 1857 the British Empire ended the company's rule and proclaimed

India to be part of the British crown. The East India Company was held responsible for the revolt. Even though the company tried to show how it had been of great service to the Empire, the Empire did not pay heed.

The British Empire was convinced that rule of the company had to go and hence, Lord Palmerston, the British Prime Minister, introduced the Bill for Better Government of India, in February 1858. In an addressing to the House of Commons, he said, ‘the principle of our political system is that all administrative functions should be accompanied by ministerial responsibility to parliament but in this case the chief function in the government of India are committed to a body not responsible to parliament, not appointed by the crown, but elected by persons who have no more connection with India than consists in the simple possession of so much India Stock’.

After pointing out the drawbacks of the company and showing how this was leading to more confusion convinced the crown of its defects and the Parliament passed the Bill for a Better Government of India on August 1858.

### Provisions

1. The rule of the East India Company was stopped by the Government of India Act of 1858 and the British parliament became responsible for all matters regarding India. A Viceroy was appointed as the representative of British Empire in India. Army and land erstwhile held by the company became part of the British Crown.
2. A council of 15 members was formed and the powers of the Court Director and the Board of Control were handed over to the Secretary of State for India. The task of administration and control was invested in the Secretary of State. He was also allowed to sit in the parliament.

Out of the 15 members of the council the British crown appointed 8 and the Court Directors appointed 7. It was mandatory that at least 9 members of the council must have served in India for not less than three years and they must not have been away from India for more than ten years at the time of their appointment. The members got £1200 per annum from India’s exchequer.

3. The secretary of the state had powers to take decisions in the following areas and also the following duties like:
  - (i) He had the power of veto against the decision of council.
  - (ii) He had also the power of casting vote.
  - (iii) He had to honour the decision of council in the matters of revenue, appointments, purchase, mortgage and sale of properties of the Government of India.
  - (iv) He was permitted to write secretly to the Viceroy without informing the council.
  - (v) He had the power to make new rules for Indian Civil Services in which now Indians were allowed.
4. The British Crown had the power to appoint the Viceroy and Governor-General and governors of Bombay and Madras Presidencies. And the Viceroy had the power to appoint the Lieutenant Governor with the permission of the British Government.
5. It was the task of the secretary of state to make reports on Revenue, Law, Railways and Construction before the House of Commons, the lower house of British Parliament. The permission of the Parliament was needed to use the

## NOTES

revenue for military expeditions outside India. The secretary of state was answerable to the British Parliament and the parliament had the right to remove him.

Lord Canning announced Queen Victoria's proclamation on 1st November 1858, at Allahabad. This proclamation used the term Viceroy for the first time. The proclamation also assured that no more annexation would be done of states, no one would be converted to Christianity and proper qualifications were laid out for employment to the government jobs. It was assured that laws enacted would take into account Indian traditions and culture. The ownership of properties and succession would be protected. The peasants were also promised rights on proper payment of taxes.

## SUMMARY

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- In 1857, the British completed hundred years of stay in India since the war of Plassey. During this time the Indian rulers were unhappy for the loss of former glory and the peasants were discontent at having been reduced to serfs.
- The revolt of 1857 marked the end of British imperialism. A new policy was passed by the Queen of England which announced that the Indian States would no longer be annexed.

## KEY TERMS

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- **Sati:** *Sati* is the practice among some Hindu communities by which a recently widowed woman either voluntarily or by use of force or coercion commits suicide as a result of her husband's death. The best known form of sati is when a woman burns to death on her husband's funeral pyre.
- **Polytheism:** Polytheism is the worship of or belief in multiple deities, which are usually assembled into a pantheon of gods and goddesses, along with their own religions and rituals.
- **Macrocosm:** Macrocosm refers to the whole of a complex structure, especially the world or the universe, contrasted with a small or representative part of it.
- **Microcosm:** Microcosm is a community, place, or situation regarded as encapsulating in miniature the characteristics of something much larger.
- **Vedanta:** Vedanta is a Hindu philosophy based on the doctrine of the Upanishads, especially in its monistic form.
- **Brahmo Samaj:** Brahmo Samaj is a Hindu reform movement. It is the societal component of Brahmoism, a monotheistic reformist movement of the Hindu religion that appeared during the Bengal Renaissance.
- **Vedas:** The Vedas are a large body of knowledge texts originating in the ancient Indian subcontinent. Composed in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism.

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## ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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### NOTES

1. One of the main causes of the Revolt was the Doctrine of Lapse.
2. The soldiers or sepoy of the British Army revolted mainly because the cartridges used in the guns were coated with grease made from cow and pig fat. Soldiers who belonged to the upper caste among Hindus protested for the cow fat and the Muslims for the pig fat.
3. The vision of the Aligarh Movement was to create an administrative elite class that would govern in cooperation with the British, rather than focus its attention on the Ulama.

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## QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Why Doctrines of Lapse was introducing in India?
2. Write a short note on the Subsidiary Alliance.
3. Why revolt of 1857 called as Sepoy Mutiny?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the causes and significance of Revolt of 1857.
2. Explain the nature of the Revolt of 1857.
3. Discuss the role played by Sir Syed in the education of the Muslim community in India.

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# UNIT III SOCIO-RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

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NOTES

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Renaissance in India was highlighted by the quest for knowledge and development of science and arts. Leading reformists of that time had eagerly and enthusiastically taken up this task. Ram Mohan Roy had founded the Brahma Samaj. He had pioneered movements for socio-religious reforms among Hindus. His influence on politics, social life, education and religion alike, was very strong. The Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati on almost the same lines as the Brahma Samaj. The Ramakrishna Mission was set up by Swami Vivekananda on 1 May 1897. The motto of this mission was to assist in welfare services. He was a promoter of Yoga and the *Vedanta* philosophy in India as well as the West. The Prarthana Samaj (prayer society in Sanskrit) was a movement to bring about reforms among Hindus, in terms of religion and social beliefs, in Maharashtra.

The Theosophical Society is a global organization, with universal brotherhood as its main goal. The base of this organization was awareness of life and its many forms. It was set up for the betterment of humanity. In the latter part of 1882, this society shifted to Adyar in Chennai. The society has a commendable library of rare oriental manuscripts written on palm leaves and parchments. These manuscripts are very valuable in terms of ancestry and archaeology.

Reform movements for Indian Muslims began in the second half of the 19th century. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was the most prominent intellectual among Muslims, who strived hard to develop and educate Muslims. If the forerunner of regeneration among the Hindus was Ram Mohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan can be accredited with the same title among Muslims of India. He founded the Translation Society which translated Western knowledge into Urdu. This society was later renamed as the Scientific Society. However, his greatest accomplishment was the setting up of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, at Aligarh. This college grew into a global centre of study.

The unit will also discuss the Revolt of 1857, its causes as well as its impact.

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## UNIT OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the life of Raja Ram Mohan Roy including his early life and social, political and religious career
- Identify the issues that led to the Revolt of 1857
- Recognize Vivekananda as a philosopher of modern India
- Assess the founding principles of the Ramakrishna Mission
- Summarize the theories of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan
- Discuss the Aligarh Reform Movement

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## RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY

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Roy was born in Radhanagore, Bengal, into the Rarhi Brahmin caste. His family background displayed religious diversity; his father Ramkanto Roy was a Vaishnavite, while his mother Tarinidevi was from a Shaivite family. This was unusual for Vaishnavites did not commonly marry Shaivites at that time. Thus, one parent wanted him to be a scholar, a *sastrin*, while the other wanted him to have a career dedicated to the *laukik*, which was secular public administration.

### Political and Religious Career of Roy

Ram Mohan Roy's impact on modern Indian history concerned a revival of the ethics and principles of the Vedanta school of philosophy as found in the Upanishads. He preached about the unity of God, made early translations of Vedic scriptures into English, co-founded the Calcutta Unitarian Society, founded the Brahmo Samaj, and campaigned against *sati*. He sought to integrate Western culture with features of his own country's traditions. He established schools to modernize a system of education in India.

During these overlapping periods, Ram Mohan Roy acted as a political agitator and agent, whilst being employed by the East India Company and simultaneously pursuing his vocation as a *Pandit*.

In 1792, the British Baptist shoemaker William Carey published his missionary tract 'An Enquiry of the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of Heathens'. In the following year, William Carey landed in India to settle. His objective was to translate, publish and distribute the Bible in Indian languages and propagate Christianity to the Indian peoples. He realized the mobile (i.e., service classes) Brahmins and *Pandits* were most able to help him in this endeavour, and he began gathering them. He learned the Buddhist and Jain religious works as a means to improve his argument in the promotion of Christianity in the cultural context. In 1795, Carey made contact with a Sanskrit scholar, the tantric Hariharananda Vidyavagish, who later introduced him to Ram Mohan Roy as Roy wished to learn English.

Between 1796 and 1797 the trio of Carey, Vidyavagish and Roy fabricated a spurious religious work known as the *Maha Nirvana Tantra* (or *Book of the Great Liberation*) and attempted to portray it as an ancient religious text on The One True God, which was actually the Holy Spirit of Christianity masquerading as Brahma. The document's judicial sections were used in the law courts of the English Settlement in Bengal as Hindu Law for adjudicating upon property disputes of the *zamindari*. However,



British magistrates and collectors began to suspect it as a forgery; its usage, as well as the reliance on *pandits* as sources of Hindu Law, was quickly deprecated. Vidyavagish had a brief falling out with Carey and separated from the group, but maintained ties to Ram Mohan Roy. The *Maha Nirvana Tantra*'s significance for Brahmoism lay in the wealth that Rammohan Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore accumulated by its judicial use, and not due to any religious wisdom within.

From 1803 till 1815, Ram Mohan served the East India Company's 'Writing Service', commencing as private clerk or '*munshi*' to Thomas Woodforde, Registrar of the Appellate Court at Murshidabad. Woodforde's distant nephew, also a Magistrate, later made a living off the spurious *Maha Nirvana Tantra* under the pseudonym Arthur Avalon. In 1815, Raja Ram Mohan Roy formed *Atmiya Sabha* and spent many years at Rangpur and elsewhere with Digby, where he renewed his contacts with Hariharananda. William Carey had, by this time, settled at Serampore and the trio renewed their association with one another. William Carey was also aligned with the English Company, then headquartered at Fort William, and his religious and political ambitions were increasingly intertwined.

The East India Company was taking money from India at a rate of three million pounds a year in 1838. Ram Mohan Roy estimated how much money was being driven out of India and where it was headed towards. He predicted that around half of the total revenue collected in India was sent out to England, leaving India to fill taxes with the remaining money.

At the turn of the 19th century, the Muslims, although considerably decreased after the battles of Plassey and Buxar, still posed a political threat to the Company. Ram Mohan was now chosen by Carey to be the agitator amongst them.

Under Carey's secret tutelage in the next two decades, Ram Mohan launched his attack against the bastions of Hinduism of Bengal, namely his own Kulin Brahmin priestly clan (then in control of the many temples of Bengal) and their priestly excesses. The social and theological issues Carey chose for Ram Mohan were calculated to weaken the hold of the dominant Kulin class. He focussed especially on their younger disinherited sons forced into service who constituted the mobile gentry or '*bhadralok*' of Bengal, from the Mughal *zamindari* system and wanted to align them to their new overlords of the Company. The Kulin excesses targeted included child marriage and dowry. In fact, Carey tried to convert Roy to Christianity and appointed a religious priest to try to convert Roy, although the priest later accepted Hinduism.

### **Socio-Religious Reforms by Raja Ram Mohan Roy**

In 1830, Ram Mohan Roy travelled to the United Kingdom from the Khejuri Port, which was then the sea port of Bengal and is currently in East Midnapore, West Bengal. At the time, Roy was an ambassador of the Mughal emperor Akbar II, who conferred on him the title of Raja to convince the British government to provide for the welfare of India and to ensure that the Lord Bentick's regulation banning the practice of *sati* was not overturned. Roy also visited France.

Roy demanded property inheritance rights for women and, in 1828, Roy set up the Brahmo Sabha, which was a movement by reformist Bengalis formed to fight against social evils.

Roy's political background influenced his social and religious reforms of Hinduism. He wrote: 'The present system of Hindoos is not well calculated to promote their political

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interests. . . . It is necessary that some change should take place in their religion, at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort.’

Ram Mohan Roy’s experience working with the British government taught him that Hindu traditions were often not respected or thought as credible by Western standards; this affected his religious reforms. He wanted to legitimize Hindu traditions to his European acquaintances by proving that ‘superstitious practices which deform the Hindoo religion have nothing to do with the pure spirit of its dictates. The ‘superstitious practices’ Ram Mohan Roy objected against included *sati*, caste rigidity, polygamy and child marriage. These practices were often the reasons British officials claimed moral superiority over the Indian nation. Ram Mohan Roy’s ideas of religion sought to create a fair and just society by implementing humanitarian practices similar to Christian ideals and thus legitimize Hinduism in the modern world.

Roy died at Stapleton, which was then a village to the northeast of Bristol on 27 September 1833.

### **Raja Ram Mohan Roy: The Educationist**

Roy believed education to be imperative for social reform. In 1817, in collaboration with David Hare, he set up the Hindu College at Calcutta. In 1822, Roy founded the Anglo-Hindu school, followed four years later by the Vedanta College, where he insisted that his teachings of monotheistic doctrines be incorporated with ‘modern, western curriculum’; Vedanta College offered courses as a synthesis of Western and Indian learning. In 1830, he helped Alexander Duff in establishing the General Assembly’s institution, by providing him the venue vacated by Brahma Sabha and getting the first batch of students. Roy supported the induction of western learning into Indian education. He advocated the study of English, science, western medicine and technology. He spent his own money on a college to promote these studies.

Roy published magazines in English, Hindi, Persian, and Bengali. He published the *Brahmonical Magazine* in English in 1821. One notable magazine of his was the *Sambad Kaumudi*, published in 1821. In 1822, Ram Mohan published *Mirat-ul-Akbar* in the Persian language.

The *Brahmonical Magazine* ceased to exist after the publication of few issues. But *Sambad Kaumudi*, a news weekly, covered topics such as freedom of press, induction of Indians into high ranks of service and separation of the executive and judiciary. *Sambad Kaumudi* became bi-weekly in January 1830 and continued for thirty-three years.

He published the newspaper to register his protest against the introduction of Press Ordinance of 1823. The ordinance stated that a license from the Governor General in council would be mandatory to publish any newspaper. When the English Company censored the press, Ram Mohan composed two memorials against this in 1829 and 1830 respectively.

### **Tomb of Raja Ram Mohan Roy**

The tomb was built by Dwarkanath Tagore in 1843, ten years after Ram Mohan Roy’s death in Bristol on 27 Sep 1833. The tomb is located in the Arnos Vale Cemetery on the outskirts of Bristol. In 1845, Dwarkanath Tagore arranged for Ram Mohan’s remains to be removed and returned to India through Roy’s nephew, who had accompanied Dwarkanath to Britain for this purpose. Ram Mohan’s relics were cremated by his family near Kolkata on February 28, 1846.

In September 2006, representatives from the Indian High Commission came to Bristol to mark the anniversary of Ram Mohan Roy's death. During the ceremony Hindu, Muslim and Sikh women sang prayers of thanks in Sanskrit.

Following this visit, the Mayor of Kolkata, Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya, who was amongst the representatives from the Indian High Commission, decided to raise funds to restore the tomb.

In June 2007, businessman Aditya Poddar donated £50,000 towards the restoration of Ram Mohan's memorial after being approached by the Mayor of Kolkata for funding.

### **Legacy of Raja Ram Mohan Roy**

Ram Mohan Roy was a major shaper of modern India. Consciously influenced by Christianity and by the social agenda of many missionaries, he was convinced that India's culture and religious tradition was rational and of profound spiritual value. Nehru describes Roy as a 'new type' of thinker 'combining in himself the old learning and the new.' 'Deeply versed,' wrote Nehru, 'in Indian thought and philosophy, a scholar of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, he was a product of the mixed Hindu-Muslim culture' of that part of India. Nehru cites Oxford's second Boden Professor of Sanskrit, Sir Monier Williams, on Roy as the world's first scholar of the science of Comparative Religion. While he remained rooted in Hinduism, Roy admired much of what he saw in Islam, Christianity and in the other religions which he studied, and believed that the same fundamental truths were the basis of all these religions. He held that the first principle of all religions is the 'Absolute Originator.' Against the criticism that it contained very little lasting worth, he set out to retrieve from India's heritage what could withstand the scrutiny of a rational mind. He went further than others in what he was prepared to abandon, which for him included the Vedas. For other reformers, such as Dayananda Saraswati, the Vedas contained all religious truth as well as ancient scientific knowledge, and were not to be thrown away. The organization he founded, the Brahmo Samaj, was a pioneer of social reform, an important promoter of education and of India's autonomy and eventual independence. Its basic ideals, including gender-equality and its rejection of class-based privilege, have become part of the social framework of Indian society, at least in theory.

The marriage of girls five or six years old, burning the wife with her dead husband whether she is willing or not, meaningless observance of festivals and worshipping for show, the worship of several gods and ranking gods as high and low, these were the practices that Ram Mohan was sick of. He had a high regard for Hinduism, but he felt that the Hindus had yet to understand their religion correctly. Ram Mohan felt that there should be equality between men and women and that people should give up superstitious beliefs. Many of Ram Mohan's friends accepted his line of thinking. An association of such close friends was formed. It was called '*Atmiya Sabha*' (The Society of Friends). Religious discussions took place there. The members had to give up idol-worship. They had to spread the Society's views on religion among the people. Many scholars opposed Ram Mohan. Ram Mohan wrote articles in reply to these objections. The people read them and understood what was said in the sacred books.

### **Personalities and Events Closely Associated with Raja Ram Mohan Roy**

The following people were closely related with Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

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### Dwarkanath Tagore (1794–1846)

Dwarkanath Tagore was one of the first Indian industrialists and entrepreneurs. He was the founder of the Jorasanko branch of the Tagore family, and is notable for making substantial contributions to the Bengal Renaissance.

Dwarkanath Tagore was the second son of Rammoni Thakur (employed in the Calcutta Police) and his wife Menaka.

His early education and upbringing was within the family house (Thakur Bari), but at age ten in 1804 he was admitted to Sherbourne's school on the Chitpur Road and become one of Mr Sherbourne's favourite pupils.

On 12 December 1807, Ramlochan died leaving all his property to Dwarkanath who was then a minor. Dwarkanath left school in 1810 at the age of sixteen and apprenticed himself under a renowned barrister at Calcutta (now Kolkata), Robert Cutlar Fergusson and shuttled between Calcutta and his estates at Behrampore and Cuttack.

On 7 February 1811 Dwarkanath was married to Digambaridevi (then nine years' old). Dwarkanath's family fortune took a decided turn for the better once she entered his house, also bearing him one daughter and five sons before her death in January 1839.

'As a *zamindar* Dwarkanath was mercilessly efficient and businesslike, but not generous'. Dwarkanath looked upon his investment in land as investment in any other business or enterprise and claimed what he deemed a fair return. In later years Dwarkanath would appoint European managers for his estates at Sahajadpur and Behrampore. He knew that the *ryots* were more amenable to the disciplinary control of British managers than their Bengali counterparts. In time Dwarkanath would convert his estates to integrated commercial-industrial complexes with indigo, silk and sugar factories. In the cut-throat world of *zamindari* politics Dwarkanath took no nonsense and gave no quarter to either Europeans or natives. His knowledge of the tenancy laws stood him in good stead. Unlike his good friend Ram Mohan Roy who pleaded for the rights of the poor *ryots*, Dwarkanath's sympathies were more one sided and tilted towards his own class.

Tagore was a western-educated Bengali brahmin and an acknowledged civic leader of Kolkata who played a pioneering role in setting up a string of commercial ventures—banking, insurance and shipping companies—in partnership with British traders. In 1828, he became the first Indian bank director. In 1829, he founded Union Bank in Calcutta. He helped found the first Anglo-Indian Managing Agency (industrial organizations that ran jute mills, coal mines, tea plantations, etc.) Carr, Tagore and Company. Even earlier, Rustomjee Cowasjee, a Parsi in Calcutta, had formed an interracial firm but in the early nineteenth century, Parsis were classified as a Near Eastern community as opposed to South Asian. Tagore's company managed huge *zamindari* estates spread across today's West Bengal and Orissa states in India, and in Bangladesh, besides holding large stakes in new enterprises that were tapping the rich coal seams of Bengal, running tug services between Calcutta and the mouth of the river Hooghly and transporting Chinese tea crop to the plains of Upper Assam. This company was one of the Indian private companies engaged in the opium trade with China. Opium was produced in India and was sold in China. Tagore founded the first Indian coal mine in Runigunj. Very large schooners were engaged in shipments. This made Dwarkanath extremely rich.

A restless soul, with a firm conviction that his racial identity was not a barrier between him and other Britons as long as he remained loyal to the British Sovereign,

Tagore was well-received by Queen Victoria and many other British and European notables during his two trips to the West in the 1840s; he died in London after a brief illness. Historiographers have often been flummoxed by his inability, despite a great desire, to be honoured by the Queen with a baronetcy (his grandson, Rabindranath, received the honour but returned it following British atrocities at the Jallianwala Bagh in the Punjab, 1919).

It is widely held in Bengal that he did go entirely bankrupt by the end of his life and left only a small fraction of his earlier stature and wealth to his descendants.

Some scholars have been puzzled by the paucity of documents concerning Dwarkanath in the Tagore family collections spread over many generations. There are scanty references to him in the records of Debendranath Tagore, his eldest son who founded the Brahmo religion. There is absolutely no mention of Dwarkanath (except in a personal letter) in the monumental body of writings by his grandson Rabindranath. The established academic view is that Dwarkanath's concept of equating the colonizer with the colonized was found galling by his countrymen in the context of the nationalist awakening in Bengal and India, in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The first Indian entrepreneur who thought globally thus remains an oddity in the country's socio-cultural history.

Dwarkanath Tagore died 'at the peak of his fortune' on the evening of Saturday 1 August 1846 at the St. George's Hotel in London.

In 1822, Dwarkanath, while carrying on his private ventures, carried out additional services for the British East India Company as *Shestidar* to Trevor Plowden Collector for the twenty four *Parganas*. Although the pay was meagre at under ` 500 per year, the prestige and avenues for additional income was considerable and gave Dwarkanath an intimate insight into the functioning of the government. However, by June 1834 he had had enough of government service and resigned to launch his spectacular career as a full time entrepreneur.

Dwarkanath Tagore was of the firm conviction that at those times 'the happiness of India is best secured by her connection with England'. Dwarkanath was no doubt a loyalist, and a sincere one at that, but he was by no means a flatterer. Servility was as far from his character as was lack of generosity from his nature. He was also firm in defending the interest and sentiments of his people against European prejudices. With this in view he established an Association for Landholders (later known as the Landholder's Society) on 21 March 1838. The association was overtly a self-serving political association, founded on a large and liberal basis, to admit landholders of all descriptions, Englishmen, Hindus, Muslims and Christian. It was the first political association in India to air the grievances of the people or a section of them that were outspoken in a fair and unbiased manner. From this grew the British India Association, the precursor to the Indian National Congress.

### **William Adam (1796–1881)**

William Adam, born in Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland, began his ministry as a Baptist missionary in India. His labours in India made him into a linguist, a biblical scholar, and a Unitarian. Thereafter for years, Adam tried to elicit support for his work as a Unitarian missionary, first in India and later in the United States and Canada. His career illustrates the meagre support for and the difficulties of Unitarian missionary endeavours of the nineteenth century.

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As a young man, Adam was deeply influenced by the famous Scottish churchman Thomas Chalmers. Chalmers interested Adam in India and got him to join the Baptist Missionary Society. The Society sent him for his education to the Baptist College in Bristol and to the University of Glasgow. Adam set out in September, 1817, for William Carey's Baptist mission station in Serampore, India, north of Calcutta. He reached his destination in six months, in March, 1818.

After mastering the classical Sanskrit and Bengali languages, Adam joined a group of men who were revising the Bengali translation of the New Testament. The group included Ram Mohan Roy. Roy convinced Adam that the meaning of the Greek preposition *dia* required that Jn 1:3, a verse of the prologue to John's Gospel, be translated as the Bengali equivalent of the English words, 'All things were made through the Word. . .' not 'by the Word'. Translators of New Testament Greek in later generations would come to agree, but in 1821 the view of nature of Christ, supported by this translation and espoused by Adam and Ram Mohan, was rejected by orthodox Christians as the Arian heresy (named for the fourth century CE dissident, Arius). For this reason colleagues nicknamed him 'the second fallen Adam'.

Adam soon resigned his position as a Baptist missionary and, along with Ram Mohan and a few other Indian and European friends, formed the Calcutta Unitarian Society. Adam sent ardent appeals to British and American Unitarians for financial support. Support was both slow in coming and quite inadequate when it came. Nevertheless, the Calcutta Unitarian Society remained fitfully active and viable for seven years. However in 1828, its Hindu supporters finally chose to create a new Unitarian form of Hinduism, Brahmo Samaj, leaving behind Unitarian Christianity.

Adam was the first international Unitarian of modern times. His convert's enthusiasm was much damped by the lukewarm response of both British and American Unitarians to his requests for their support of his work as a Unitarian missionary in India. Ultimately, he was disappointed in the Unitarian movement as a whole

At the time Adam regretted that Ram Mohan Roy and his Hindu friends chose a Unitarian Hindu faith in preference to Unitarian Christianity. Yet without Adam's dedicated initiative and drive, the reformed Unitarian Hindu movement, the Brahmo Samaj, might never have come into being. The distinguished leaders of the Brahmo Samaj nurtured and propagated what became, in effect, a 'school of thought', which flowered into the famous Bengal Renaissance, a great burst of modern, yet distinctively Indian political theory, idealism and poetry. The Brahmo Samaj, first established in part by an ill-supported and mostly forgotten Unitarian missionary, immensely influenced the intellectual and political culture of all India.

### ***Sambad Kaumudi***

*Sambad Kaumudi* was a Bengali weekly newspaper published from Kolkata in the first half of the 19th century by Ram Mohan Roy. It was a noted pro-Reformist publication that actively campaigned for the abolition of *sati*.

In the prospectus for the *Sambad Kaumudi*, published in English and Bengali in November 1821, Ram Mohan appealed to his countrymen to lend him 'the support and patronage of all who feel themselves interested in the moral and intellectual improvement of our countrymen'. In the same prospectus, he further stated that religious, moral and political matters, domestic occurrence, foreign as well as local intelligence including original communications on various hitherto unpublished interesting local topics, etc. would be published in the *Sambad Kaumudi* every Tuesday.

Although Ram Mohan Roy was the owner, *Sambad Kaumudi* was actually published in the name of Bhabani Charan Bandhopadhyay. The latter soon found Ram Mohan's ideas too radical and parted company to start a rival newspaper called *Samachar Chandrika*, which became the mouthpiece for orthodox Hinduism. According to a different source, *Kaumudi* was started by Tarachand Dutta and Bhabani Charan Bandhopadhyay. The first issue of *Sambad Kaumudi* appeared on 4 December, 1821. It contained an 'Appeal to the Bengali Public' in which it proclaimed that the primary object of its publication was to promote the 'public good'. On 20 December, 1821, the *Calcutta Journal* brought out an editorial, commenting on the publication of this 'new Bengali newspaper edited by a learned Hindoo'. It also reproduced the prospectus and the 'Appeal to the Bengali Public'. In the appeal, Ram Mohan Roy said:

'It is our intention hereafter to give further currency to the Articles inserted in this paper, by translating the most interesting parts in the different languages of the East, particularly Persian and Hindoostanee; but all this will entail considerable expense, the accomplishment of it will, of course, depend upon the encouragement which we may be able to obtain. The foregoing being an outline of what we are desirous of performing, our countrymen will readily conclude that although the paper in question be conducted by us, and may consequently be considered our property, yet virtually it is the 'paper of the public' since in it they can at all times have inserted, anything that tends to the public good ...'

Though Bhabani Charan Bandyopadhyay was nominally in charge of this weekly till the publication of its thirteenth issue, Ram Mohan was its promoter, and for all practical purposes, also its editor. After Bhabani Charan Bandyopadhyay, Harihar Dutta was the editor for some time, followed by Gobinda Chandra Kongar. Due to lack of sufficient patronage *Kaumudi* had to stop publication in October 1822. In April 1823 a license was granted under the new Press Regulation to Gobinda Chandra Kongar to publish and Ananda Gopal Mukherji to edit the newspaper.

*Sambad Kaumudi* regularly ran editorials against *sati*, denouncing it as barbaric and un-Hindu. It was the main vehicle of Ram Mohan Roy's campaign against *sati*. The editorial in the *Calcutta Journal* on 14 February 1823 observed, 'The paper which was considered so fraught with danger and likely to explode over all India like a spark thrown into a barrel of gunpowder, has long since fallen to the ground for want of support; chiefly we understand because it offended the native community by opposing some of three customs, and particularly the burning of Hindoo widows, etc.' Governor-General Bentinck, largely (though not exclusively) instigated by Ram Mohan Roy, responded to the growing public outcry by outlawing *sati* in 1829.

The government viewed the newspaper with an eye of suspicion. The officials believed that the newspaper was inspired by the *Calcutta Journal* and patronized by its owner James Silk Buckingham. The Asiatic Journal, the unofficial organ of the East India Company published from London took Buckingham to task for encouraging and patronizing an Indian newspaper like the *Sambad Kaumudi* which, it thought, could serve no other purpose than to promote Indian disaffection against British rule.

The press in India as perceived today had its origin in Bengal in the late 18th century as a vehicle for promoting missions – James Augustus Hicky's *Gazette* or *Calcutta General Advertiser* set out on a mission to expose the corrupt practices of the British officers of the East India company for which he faced punishment and died a pauper. The Christian missionaries of Serampore set up a printing press and started three publications for the propagation of Christianity. Raja Ram Mohan Roy brought out

*Mirat-ul-Akhbar* and later *Jam-i-Jahan Numa* which dealt with social and administrative evils and critically examined British policies both in India and in Ireland. He emphasized social reforms within the country especially the abolition of *sati*.

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### 4.2.1 Brahma Samaj

The Brahma Samaj is the societal component of the Brahma religion which is mainly practiced today as the Adi Dharm, after its eclipse in Bengal, consequent to the exit of the Tattwabodini Sabha from its ranks in 1859. It was one of the most influential religious movements responsible for the making of modern India. It was conceived at Kolkata in 1830 by Dwarkanath Tagore and Ram Mohan Roy as a reformation of the prevailing Brahminism of the time (specifically Kulin practices) and began the Bengal Renaissance in the 19th century, pioneering all religious, social and educational advancement of the Hindu community. From the Brahma Samaj springs Brahmoism, the most recent of India's faiths recognized by law as a distinct religion in Bangladesh, reflecting its non-syncretic 'foundation of Ram Mohun Roy's reformed spiritual Hinduism (contained in the 1830 Banian deed) and inclusion of root Hebraic – Islamic creed and practice.' After the publication of Hemendranath Tagore's *Brahmo Anusthan* (code of practice) in 1860 which formally divorced Brahmoism from Hinduism, the first Brahma Samaj was founded in 1861 at Lahore by Pandit Nobin Chandra Roy.

#### Doctrine of the Brahma Samaj

The following doctrines, as noted in the renaissance of Hinduism, are common to all varieties and offshoots of the Brahma Samaj:

- Brahma Samajists have no faith in any scripture as an authority.
- Brahma Samajists have no faith in *Avatars*.
- Brahma Samajists denounce polytheism and idol-worship.
- Brahma Samajists are against caste restrictions.
- Brahma Samajists make faith in the doctrines of *karma* and rebirth optional.

#### Principles of Brahma Samaj

The following principles are accepted by the vast majority of Brahmos today:

- **On God:** There is always Infinite Singularity – immanent and transcendent Singular Author and Preserver of Existence. He who is manifest everywhere and in everything, in fire and in water, in the smallest plant to the mightiest oak.
- **On Being:** Being is created from Singularity. Being is renewed to Singularity. Being exists to be one (again) with Loving Singularity.
- **On Intelligent Existence:** Righteous actions alone rule Existence against Chaos. Knowledge of pure conscience (light within) is the One (Supreme) ruler of Existence with no symbol or intermediary.
- **On Love:** Respect all creations and beings but never venerate (worship) them for only Singularity can be adored.

#### Divisions of the Brahma Samaj

After the death of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, serious differences regarding creed, rituals and the attitude of the Brahmos to the social problems of the day, had arisen between



Debendranath Tagore and Keshub Chandra Sen (who joined the Samaj in 1857). Tagore and Sen possessed radically different temperaments. As a result, in 1866, the Brahmo Samaj soon split up into two groups—the old conservatives rallying round Debendranath and the young reformists led by the Keshub Chandra. The two rival bodies—the **Adi Brahmo Samaj** (led by Debendranath) and the **Brahmo Samaj of India** (inspired and led by Keshub Chandra)—came into existence. The Brahmo Samaj of India started to carry out its spiritual and social reforms and achieved remarkable success within a short span of time. The Samaj now adopted a much more radical and comprehensive scheme of social reform. It placed much greater stress on female emancipation, female education and a total abolition all caste distinctions. Its two important achievements were the formation of the Indian Reform Association in 1870 and the enactment of the Indian Marriage Act of 1872. The latter authenticated inter-caste marriages. The blend of *bhakti* (intense devotional fervour) and Brahmoism rendered it more soothing, emotional and attractive to the common people.

Despite the vibrant progress of the Brahmo movement under Keshub, the Samaj underwent a second schism on May, 1878 when a group of Keshub Chandra Sen's followers deserted him to establish the **Sadharan Brahmo Samaj**. The founders of this new outfit demanded the introduction of a democratic constitution in the church, which was not conceded by Keshub Chandra and his followers. The two other factors responsible for division in the ranks of the Brahmo Samaj of India were Keshub's doctrine of *adesha* (Divine Command) and the marriage of Keshub's daughter with the prince of Cooch Bihar allegedly in violation of the provision of the Indian Marriage Act of 1872. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, led by the veteran Derozian Shib Chandra Dev, consisted of some of the most talented youth of the time, such as Sivnath Shastri, Ananda Mohan Bose and Dwarkanath Ganguli. They were all great supporters of democracy and promptly framed a full-fledged democratic constitution based on universal adult franchise, for their new organization. A number of them took active part in the activities of the Indian League (1878), the Indian Association (1878) and the nascent Indian National Congress.

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## RENAISSANCE II: RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA

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Swami Vivekananda was born in Calcutta (now Kolkata) on 12 January 1863, in a traditional Kayastha family, and was given the name Narendranath Dutta. Since his childhood, Narendranath had varied interests and a wide range of scholarship in philosophy, religion, history, the social sciences, arts, literature, and other subjects. He evinced much interest in the Hindu scriptures like the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata and the Puranas. Even when young, he questioned the validity of superstitious customs and discrimination based on caste and refused to accept anything without rational proof and pragmatic test.

Narendranath's family moved to Raipur in 1877 for two years. Since there were no good schools there, Narendranath spent time with his father discussing spiritual matters. For the first time the question of existence of god came to his mind. The family returned to Calcutta in 1879, but it is believed that these two years were the turning point in his life.

### Joining the Brahma Samaj

Narendranath started his education at home. He later joined the Metropolitan Institution of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in 1871 and subsequently the General Assembly's Institution. During these years, he studied the history of European nations as well as Western logic and philosophy, including the writings of David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, and Charles Darwin. Narendra was fascinated with the evolutionism of Herbert Spencer and even translated Spencer's book on education into Bengali. Alongside his study of Western philosophers, Narendra was thoroughly acquainted with Sanskrit scriptures and many Bengali works.

Narendranath's initial beliefs were shaped by Brahma concepts, which include belief in a formless god and deprecation of idol. Not satisfied with his knowledge of philosophy, he wondered if god and religion could be made a part of one's growing experiences and internalized. Narendra went about asking prominent residents of contemporary Calcutta whether they had come 'face to face with god' but could not get satisfactory answers.

His first introduction to Ramakrishna occurred in a literature class in General Assembly's Institution, when Principal Reverend W. Hastie told his students that if they wanted to know the real meaning of trance, they should go to Ramakrishna. This prompted Narendranath to visit Ramakrishna.

#### Check Your Progress

3. Which was the main political cause of the Revolt of 1857?
4. Why did the soldiers or sepoys of the British Army revolt?

## Ramakrishna's Influence on Vivekananda

Vivekananda writes on his first interaction with Ramakrishna thus,

'The magic touch of the Master that day immediately brought a wonderful change over my mind. I was astounded to find that really there was nothing in the universe but God! ... Everything I saw appeared to be Brahman. ... I realized that I must have had a glimpse of the *Advaita* state. Then it struck me that the words of the scriptures were not false. Thenceforth I could not deny the conclusions of the *Advaita* philosophy.'

Narendranath's meeting with Ramakrishna in November 1881 proved to be a turning point in his life. About this meeting, Narendranath said:

[ Ramakrishna ] looked just like an ordinary man, with nothing remarkable about him. He used the most simple language and I thought "Can this man be a great teacher?". I crept near to him and asked him the question which I had been asking others all my life: "Do you believe in God, Sir?" "Yes", he replied. "Can you prove it, Sir?" "Yes". "How?" "Because I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intense sense." That impressed me at once. [...] I began to go to that man, day after day, and I actually saw that religion could be given. One touch, one glance, can change a whole life."

Even though Narendra did not accept Ramakrishna as his guru initially and revolted against his ideas, he was attracted by his personality and visited him frequently. As a member of the Brahmo Samaj, he revolted against idol worship and polytheism, and Ramakrishna's worship of Kali. He even rejected the *Advaitist Vedantism* of identity with absolute as blasphemy and madness.

Though at first Narendra could not accept Ramakrishna and his visions, he could not ignore him either. It had always been in Narendra's nature to test something thoroughly before accept it. He tested Ramakrishna, who never asked Narendra to abandon reason, and faced all of Narendra's arguments and examinations with patience. Five years under Ramakrishna transformed Narendra from a restless, puzzled, impatient youth to a mature man who was ready to renounce everything for the sake of god-realization. In time, Narendra accepted Ramakrishna as guru, completely surrendering himself as a disciple.

During the last days of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and some of the other disciples received the ochre monastic robes from Ramakrishna, which formed the first monastic order of Ramakrishna. Vivekananda was taught that service to men was the most effective worship of God. Ramakrishna asked Vivekananda to take care of other monastic disciples and in turn asked them to look upon Vivekananda as their leader.

### Foundation of the Ramakrishna Math

After the death of their master, the monastic disciples led by Vivekananda formed a fellowship at a half-ruined house at Baranagar near the river Ganges. This became the first building of the Ramakrishna Math, or the monastery of the disciples who constituted the first monastic order of Sri Ramakrishna.

Narendra and other members of the Math often spent their time in meditation, discussing about different philosophies and teachings of spiritual teachers including Ramakrishna, Adi Shankara, Ramanuja, and Jesus Christ. In the early part of 1887, Narendra and eight other disciples took formal monastic vows. Narendra took the name of Swami Bibidishananda. Later he was coronated with the name *Vivekananda* by Ajit Singh, the Maharaja of Khetri.

In January 1899, the Math was shifted to Belur, its current home.

## NOTES

*Self-Instructional*

## NOTES

### A Wandering Preacher

In 1888, Vivekananda left the monastery as a *Parivrājaka*—the Hindu religious life of a wandering monk. His sole possessions were a *kamandalu* (water pot), staff, and his two favourite books—*Bhagavad Gita* and *The Imitation of Christ*. Narendranath travelled the length and breadth of India for five years, visiting important centres of learning, acquainting himself with the diverse religious traditions and different patterns of social life. Moved by the suffering and poverty of the masses, he resolved to uplift the nation. Living mainly on *bhiksha* or alms, Narendranath travelled mostly on foot and railway tickets bought by his admirers whom he met during the travels.

During his travel in the Himalayas, he reportedly had a vision of the macrocosm and microcosm, which seems to reflect in the *Jnana Yoga* lectures he gave later in the West. At the end of January 1891, the Swami journeyed to Jaipur, where he studied Panini's *Ashtadhyayi* with a Sanskrit scholar.

Continuing his travels, he visited Ahmedabad and Porbander, where he stayed for almost nine months, in spite of his vow as a wandering monk, to perfect his philosophical and Sanskrit studies with learned *pandits*; he worked with a court *pandit* who translated the *Vedas*.

In 1892, Vivekananda travelled to southern India and reached Kanyakumari on the Christmas Eve of 1892. At Kanyakumari, the Swami reportedly meditated on the 'last bit of Indian rock', famously known later as the Vivekananda Rock Memorial, for three days. Here he had the 'Vision of one India', also commonly called the 'Kanyakumari resolve of 1892'. He wrote:

At Cape Camorin sitting in Mother Kumari's temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock—I hit upon a plan: We are so many sanyasis wandering about, and teaching the people metaphysics—it is all madness. Did not our *Gurudeva* use to say, 'An empty stomach is no good for religion?' We as a nation have lost our individuality and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to raise the masses.

### Parliament of World's Religions

It was in early 1892 that Vivekananda heard of the Parliament of the World's Religions and was urged by his followers to attend it. His disciples collected funds for the voyage to America and Vivekananda left for Chicago on 31 May 1893.

On arriving, the Swami learnt that no one without credentials from a *bona fide* organization would be accepted as a delegate. When Professor John Henry Wright of Harvard University learnt that he did not have the credentials to speak at the Parliament, Wright is quoted as having said, 'To ask for your credentials is like asking the sun to state its right to shine in the heavens.' Wright addressed a letter to the chairman in charge of delegates writing, 'Here is a man who is more learned than all of our learned professors put together.'

Representing India and Hinduism, Vivekananda began his speech with, 'Sisters and brothers of America!'. To these words he got a standing ovation from a crowd of seven thousand. He greeted the youngest of the nations in the name of 'the most ancient order of monks in the world, the Vedic order of *sannyasins*, a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance.' And he quoted two passages in this relation, from the *Bhagavad Gita*— 'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which

men take, through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee!’ and ‘Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths that in the end lead to Me.’ Despite being a short speech, it voiced the spirit of the Parliament and its sense of universality.

Vivekananda attracted widespread attention in the press. The American newspapers reported him as ‘the greatest figure in the parliament of religions’ and ‘the most popular and influential man in the parliament’. All his speeches at the Parliament had one common theme—Universality—and stressed on religious tolerance.

After the Parliament of Religions, Vivekananda spent nearly two whole years lecturing in various parts of the United States. ‘I do not come’, said Swamiji, ‘to convert you to a new belief. I want you to keep your own belief; I want to make the Methodist a better Methodist; the Presbyterian a better Presbyterian. . . . I want to teach you to live the truth, to reveal the light within your own soul.’ He later founded the Vedanta Society of New York.

He travelled to England twice where he met Miss Margaret Noble, an Irish lady who later became Sister Nivedita. He also interacted with Max Müller, a renowned Indologist at Oxford University who wrote Ramakrishna’s first biography in the West.

From the West, he also set his Indian work in motion. He advised his followers and brother monks to launch a campaign of social service. ‘Go from door to door amongst the poor and lower classes. . . and teach them religion. Also, let them have oral lessons on geography and such other subjects. No good will come of sitting idle and. . . saying ‘Ramakrishna, O Lord!’—unless you can do some good to the poor.’

In 1895, the periodical called *Brahmavadin* was started in Madras, with the money supplied by Vivekananda, for the purpose of teaching the Vedanta.

### **Founding of Ramakrishna Mission**

On 1 May 1897, Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission—the organ for social service. The ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission are based on *Karma Yoga*. This was the beginning of an organized social and religious movement to help the masses through educational, cultural, medical and relief work.

Two other monasteries were founded by Vivekananda—one at Mayavati on the Himalayas, near Almora called the *Advaita Ashrama* and another at Madras. Two journals were also started, *Prabuddha Bharata* in English and *Udbhodan* in Bengali.

### **Vivekananda’s Teachings and Principles**

Swami Vivekananda believed that the essence of Hinduism was best expressed in the Vedanta philosophy, based on the interpretation of Adi Shankara. He summarized the principles of Vedanta as follows:

- Each soul is potentially divine.
- The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal.
- Do this either by work, or worship, or mental discipline, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.
- This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.

## NOTES

- He maintained, ‘So long as even a single dog in my country is without food my whole religion is to feed it and serve it, anything excluding that is nonreligious.’

According to Vivekananda, an important teaching he received from Ramakrishna was that ‘Jiva is Shiva (each individual is Divinity itself).’ This became his mantra, and he coined the concept of *daridra narayana seva*, or the service of god in and through (poor) human beings. He concluded that the distinctions between men fade into nothingness in the light of the oneness that the devotee experiences in Moksha. What arises then is compassion for those who remain unaware of this oneness and a determination to help them.

Swami Vivekananda belonged to the branch of Vedanta that held that no one can be truly free until all of us are. Even the desire for personal salvation has to be given up, and only tireless work for the salvation of others is the true mark of the enlightened person. He founded the Ramakrishna Math and Mission on the principle of ‘Atmano Mokshartham Jagat-hitaya cha’ (for one’s own salvation and for the welfare of the World).

Vivekananda advised his followers to be holy, unselfish and to have faith (*shraddha*). He encouraged the practice of *Brahmacharya* (celibacy) and attributed his physical and mental strengths and eloquence to this.

### Vivekananda and Science

In his book *Raja Yoga*, Vivekananda explores traditional views on the supernatural and the belief that the practice of Raja Yoga can confer psychic powers such as reading another’s thoughts, controlling the forces of nature, live without breathing, and levitation. Vivekananda advocated testing an idea thoroughly before making your decision of accepting or denying it:

It is not the sign of a candid and scientific mind to throw overboard anything without proper investigation. Surface scientists, unable to explain various extraordinary mental phenomena, strive to ignore their very existence.

He further says in the introduction of the book that one should take up the practice and verify these things for oneself, and that there should not be blind belief. In his paper read at the World Parliament of Religions, Chicago (1893), Vivekananda also hinted about the final goal of physics:

Science is nothing but the finding of unity. As soon as science would reach perfect unity, it would stop from further progress, because it would reach the goal...Physics would stop when it would be able to fulfill its services in discovering one energy of which all others are but manifestations.

All science is bound to come to this conclusion in the long run. Manifestation, and not creation, is the word of science today, and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his bosom for ages is going to be taught in more forcible language, and with further light from the latest conclusions of science.

The great electrical engineer Nikola Tesla, after listening to Vivekananda's speech on Sankhya philosophy, was much interested in its cosmogony and its rational theories of the *Kalpas* (cycles), *Prana* and *Akasha*. His notion based on the Vedanta led him to think that matter is a manifestation of energy.

### Last Years of his Life

Vivekananda again left for the West in June 1899, and founded the Vedanta societies at San Francisco and New York. He also founded *Shanti Ashrama* (peace retreat) at

California. Later, he attended the Congress of Religions, in Paris in 1900. The Paris addresses are memorable for the scholarly penetration evinced by Vivekananda related to worship of *Linga* and authenticity of the *Gita*. However, tours, hectic lecturing engagements, private discussions and correspondence had taken their toll on Vivekananda's health. He passed away on 4 July 1902.

### **Vivekananda: A Source of Inspiration**

Several leaders of 20th-century India and philosophers have acknowledged Vivekananda's influence. He is widely considered to have inspired India's freedom struggle movement. His writings inspired a whole generation of freedom fighters including Subhash Chandra Bose, Aurobindo Ghose and Bagha Jatin.

At the Belur Math, Mahatma Gandhi was heard to say that his whole life was an effort to bring into actions the ideas of Vivekananda. Many years after Vivekananda's death, Rabindranath Tagore, a Nobel Poet Laureate told Romain Rolland, 'If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him everything is positive and nothing negative.'

Vivekananda left a vast body of philosophical works. He observed that the billions of people on the earth could be classified into four basic types—those who were in constant activity (the *worker*); those who were driven by their inner urge to achieve something in life (the *lover*); those who tended to analyse the working of their minds (the *mystic*); and those who weighed everything with reason (the *philosopher*). His books (compiled from lectures given around the world) on the four Yogas (Karma Yoga for the worker, Bhakti Yoga for the lover, Raja Yoga for the mystic, and Jnana Yoga for the philosopher) are very influential and are still seen as fundamental texts for anyone interested in the Hindu practice of Yoga.

### **Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati**

Dayanand Saraswati was born on 12 February in 1824, in the town of Tankara, near Morvi (Morbi) in the Kathiawar region (since India's independence in 1947 Rajkot district) of the princely state of Gujarat, into an affluent and devout Saryupareen Brahmin family. His parents were Karshanji Lalji Tiwari and his wife Yashodabai. Since he was born under *Mul Nakshatra*, he was named 'Mulshankar', and led a comfortable early life, studying Sanskrit, the Vedas and other religious texts to prepare himself for a future as a Hindu priest. A number of incidents in his early childhood resulted in Dayanand's questioning the traditional beliefs of Hinduism and inquiring about god. While still a young child, his family went to a temple for overnight prayers on the night of *Maha Shivratri*. He stayed up the entire night while his family slept, waiting for Lord Shiva to appear to accept the offerings made to his idol. Instead, Dayanand saw a mouse eating the offerings. He was utterly surprised and wondered how a god who cannot protect his own offerings would protect humanity. He argued with his father that they should not be worshipping such a helpless god.

The deaths of his younger sister and his uncle from cholera caused Dayanand to ponder the meaning of life and death and he started asking questions which worried his parents. He was to be married in his early teens, as was common in the 19th century India, but he decided marriage was not for him and in 1846 left home. Dayananda was disillusioned with classical Hinduism and became a wandering mendicant. He learned Panini's grammar to read Sanskrit texts, and understood from them that God can be found. After wandering in search of God for over two decades, he found Swami Virajananda near Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, who became his guru. Swami Virajananda

told him to throw away all his books, as he wished Dayananda to start from a clean slate and learn directly from the Vedas, the oldest and most foundational scriptures of Hinduism. Dayananda stayed under Swami Virjananda's tutelage for two and a half years. After finishing his education, Virjananda asked him to spread the knowledge of the Vedas in society as his *gurudakshina*, or fees for the knowledge he had acquired from his teacher.



Fig. 4.2 Dayanand Saraswati

### Mission of Saraswati's Life

Dayananda's mission was to teach humankind about universal brotherhood through nobility as spelt out in the Vedas. His first step was to take up the difficult task of reforming Hinduism with dedication despite repeated attempts on his life. He travelled the country challenging religious scholars and priests to discussions and won repeatedly on the strength of his arguments based on his knowledge of Sanskrit and Vedas. He believed that Hinduism had been corrupted by its divergence from the founding principles of the Vedas and that Hindus had been misled by the priests making rituals and prayers more elaborate and exaggerated. Hindu priests discouraged the common man from reading Vedic scriptures and encouraged rituals, such as bathing in the Ganges River and feeding of priests on anniversaries, which Dayananda pronounced as superstitions or self-serving practices. By encouraging the nation to reject such superstitious notions, his aim was to educate the nation to 'Go back to the Vedas'. While he wanted the people to follow the Vedic life, he also exhorted the nation to accept social reforms like the abolition of untouchability, *sati*, and dowry, education of women, *swadeshi* and importance of cows for national prosperity as well as the adoption of Hindi as the national language. Through his teachings, preachings, sermons and writings, he inspired the nation to aspire to *Swarajya* (self governance), nationalism, and spiritualism. He advocated for equal rights and respect for women and for the complete education of a girl child.

Swami Dayananda critically, logically and scientifically analysed all faiths, i.e., Islam and Christianity as well as other Indian faiths like Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. In addition, he denounced idolatry in Hinduism, as can be seen in his book *Satyartha Prakash*. He was against what he considered to be the corruption of the pure faith in his own country. Unlike many other reform movements within Hinduism, the Arya Samaj's appeal was addressed not only to the educated few in India, but to the world as a whole as evidenced in the sixth principle of the Arya Samaj. In fact, his teachings professed universalism for all living beings and not for any particular sect, faith, community or nation.



Arya Samaj allows and encourages conversion to Hinduism. Dayananda's concept of dharma is stated in the 'Beliefs and Disbeliefs' section of *Satyartha Prakash*. He said:

I accept as Dharma whatever is in full conformity with impartial justice, truthfulness and the like; that which is not opposed to the teachings of God as embodied in the Vedas. Whatever is not free from partiality and is unjust, partaking of untruth and the like, and opposed to the teachings of God as embodied in the Vedas—that I hold as adharma

He also said:

He, who after careful thinking, is ever ready to accept truth and reject falsehood; who counts the happiness of others as he does that of his own self, him I call just.

Dayananda's Vedic message was to emphasize respect and reverence for other human beings, supported by the Vedic notion of the divine nature of the individual – divine because the body was the temple where the human essence (soul or 'atma') had the possibility to interface with the creator (*Paramatma*). In the ten principles of the Arya Samaj, he enshrined the idea that 'All actions should be performed with the prime objective of benefiting mankind', as opposed to following dogmatic rituals or revering idols and symbols. In his own life, he interpreted *moksha* to be a lower calling (due to its benefit to one individual) than the calling to emancipate others.

Dayananda's 'back to the Vedas' message influenced many thinkers and philosophers the world over. Taking the cue from him, Sri Aurobindo decided to look for hidden psychological meanings in the Vedas.

Dayananda Saraswati wrote more than sixty works in all, including a fourteen volume explanation of the six Vedangas, an incomplete commentary on the *Ashtadhyayi* (Panini's grammar), several small tracts on ethics and morality, Vedic rituals and sacraments and on criticism of rival doctrines (such as Advaita Vedanta, Islam and Christianity). Some of his major works are *Satyarth Prakash*, *Sanskarvidhi*, *RigvedadiBhashyaBhumika*, *Rigved Bhashyam* (upto 7/61/2) and *Yajurved Bhashyam*. The Paropakarini Sabha located in the Indian city of Ajmer was founded by the Swami himself to publish and preach his works and Vedic texts.

In 1883, Dayananda was invited by the Maharaja of Jodhpur to stay at his palace. The Maharaja was eager to become his disciple and learn his teachings. One day Dayananda went to the Maharaja's rest room and saw him with a dance girl named Nanhi Jan. Dayananda boldly asked the Maharaja to forsake the girl and all unethical acts and follow dharma like a true Aryan. Dayananda's suggestion offended the dance girl and she decided to take revenge. She bribed Dayananda's cook to poison him. At bedtime, the cook brought him a glass of milk containing poison and powdered glass. Dayananda drank the milk and went to sleep only to wake up later with a burning sensation. He immediately realized that he had been poisoned and attempted to purge his digestive system of the poisonous substance, but it was too late. The poison had already entered his bloodstream. Dayananda was bedridden and suffered excruciating pain. Many doctors came to treat him but all was in vain. His entire body was covered with large bleeding sores. On seeing Dayananda's suffering, the cook was overcome with unbearable guilt and remorse. He confessed his crime to Dayananda. On his deathbed, Dayananda forgave him and gave him a bag of money and told him to flee the kingdom lest he be found out and executed by the Maharaja's men.

## NOTES

A man of spirit has passed away from India. Pandit Dayananda Saraswati is gone, the irrepressible, energetic reformer, whose mighty voice and passionate eloquence for the last few years raised thousands of people in India from lethargic, indifference and stupor into active patriotism is no more.

—Col Henry Steel Olcott

Swami Dayananda Saraswati is certainly one of the most powerful personalities who has shaped modern India and is responsible for its moral regeneration and religious revival.

—Subhash Chandra Bose

### Vedic Schools

Between 1869 and 1873, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, a native of Gujarat, made his first attempt at reform in his native India. This attempt took the form of the establishment of 'Vedic Schools' which put an emphasis on Vedic values, culture and religion to its students. The first was established at Farrukhabad in 1869, with fifty students. This initial success led to the founding of four additional schools in rapid succession at Mirzapur (1870), Kasganj (1870), Chhalesar (1870) and Varanasi (1873).

The Vedic Schools represented the first practical application of Swami Dayanand's vision of religious and social reform. They enjoyed a mixed reception. On the one hand, students were not allowed to perform traditional idol worship (*murtipuja* in Hindi) at the school, and were instead expected to perform *sandhya* (a form of meditative prayer using mantras from the Vedas) and participate in *agnihotra* twice daily. Disciplinary action was swift and not infrequently severe. On the other hand, all meals, lodging, clothing and books were given to the students free of charge, and the study of Sanskrit was opened to non-Brahmins. The most noteworthy feature of the schools was that only those texts which accepted the authority of the Vedas were to be taught. This was critical for the spiritual and social regeneration of Vedic culture in India.

The Vedic Schools soon ran into difficulties. Swami Dayanand had trouble finding qualified teachers who agreed with his views on religious reform, and there existed a paucity of textbooks which he considered suitable for instruction in Vedic culture. Funding was sporadic, attendance fluctuated considerably, and tangible results in the way of noteworthy student achievement were not forthcoming.

Consequentially, some of the schools were forced to close shortly after opening. As early as 1874, it had become clear to Swami Dayanand that, without a wide and solid base of support among the public, setting up schools with the goal of imparting a Vedic education would prove to be an impossible task. He, therefore, decided to invest the greater part of his resources in the formulation and propagation of his ideology of reform. Deprived of the full attention of Swami Dayanand, the Vedic School system collapsed and the last of the schools (Farrukhabad) was closed down in 1876 due to Muslim takeover.

### Setting up of the Arya Samaj

While travelling (1872–73), Swami Dayanand came to know of several of the pro-Western Indian intellectuals of the age, including Nobin Chandra Roy, Rajnarayan Basu, Debendra Nath Tagore and Hemendranath Tagore, all of whom were actively involved in the Brahmo Samaj. This reform organization, founded in 1828, held many views similar to those of Swami Dayanand in matters both religious (e.g., a belief in monotheism and the eternity of the soul) and society (e.g., the need to abolish the hereditary caste or

varna system and uplift the masses through education). Debendranath Tagore had written a book entitled *Brahmo Dharma*, which serves as a manual of religion and ethics to the members of that society, and Swami Dayanand had read it while in Calcutta.

## NOTES

From June to September 1874, Swami Dayanand dictated a comprehensive series of lectures to his scribe, Pundit Bhimsen Sharma, which dealt with his views and beliefs regarding a wide range of subjects including God, the Vedas, Dharma, the soul, science, philosophy, childrearing, education, government and the possible future of both India and the world. The resulting manuscript was published under the title *Satyarth Prakash* or *The Light of Meaning of Truth* in 1875 at Varanasi. This voluminous work would prove to play a central role in the establishment and later growth of the organization which would come to be known as the Arya Samaj.

On an invitation from Hargovind Das Dvarkadas, the secretary of the local Prarthana Samaj, Swami Dayanand travelled to Rajkot, Gujarat, arriving on 31 December 1874. Instead of delivering his standard programme of lectures, he allowed members of the audience to choose the topics they would like to have him discourse upon. A total of eight topics were chosen, and Swami Dayanand delivered impromptu lectures on all of them to the satisfaction of all present. Gifts were bestowed upon the Swami as tokens of gratitude for his masterly orations, and it was announced that the Rajkot Prarthana Samaj was henceforth dissolved and was ready to be reorganized as a new Samaj under the auspices of Swami Dayanand. The Swami, after much deliberation, chose the name 'Arya Samaj' or 'Society of Nobles'. Swami Dayanand drafted a list of twenty-eight rules and regulations for the Rajkot Arya Samaj, which he later had printed for distribution.

Swami Dayanand reached Bombay on 29 January 1875, and immediately the appeal to establish an Arya Samaj there was renewed. A membership drive was initiated which would circumvent the need for discussions. Within a short time, a hundred individuals enrolled themselves as prospective members. While the membership drive was underway, Swami Dayanand held a now famous discourse with the congregation at Mumbai. Someone in the audience asked the Swami, 'Should we set up a new Samaj?' Dayanand responded:

If you are able to achieve something for the good of mankind by a Samaj, then establish a Samaj; I will not stand in your way. But if you do not organize it properly, there will be a lot of trouble in the future. As for me, I will only instruct you in the same way as I teach others, and this much you should keep clearly in mind: my beliefs are not unique, and I am not omniscient. Therefore, if in the future any error of mine should be discovered after rational examination, then set it right. If you do not act in this way, then this Samaj too will later on become just a sect. That is the way by which so many sectarian divisions have become prevalent in India: by making the guru's word the touchstone of truth and thus fostering deep-seated prejudices which make the people religion-blind, cause quarrels and destroy all right knowledge. That is the way India arrived at her sorry contemporary state, and that is the way this Samaj too would grow to be just another sect. This is my firm opinion: even if there be many different sectarian beliefs prevalent in India, if only they all acknowledge the Vedas, then all those small rivers will reunite in the ocean of Vedic wisdom, and the unity of *dharma* will come about. From that unity of *dharma* there will result social and economic reform, arts and crafts and other human endeavours will improve as desired, and man's life will find fulfilment: because, by the power of that *dharma* all values will become accessible to him, economic values as well as psychological ones, and also the supreme value of *moksha*.

On 10 April, 1875, the Bombay Arya Samaj was officially established. The membership amounted to a hundred persons, including Swami Dayanand. The members appealed to the Swami that he should serve as either the President or the Guru of the Samaj, but he gracefully declined, and instead requested that he be listed as a regular member.

### Principles of Arya Samaj

*Aum* was considered by the Arya Samaj to be the highest and most proper name of God. On 24 June 1877, the second major Arya Samaj was established at Lahore. However, the original list of twenty-eight rules and regulations drafted by Dayanand for the Rajkot Arya Samaj and used for the Bombay Arya Samaj were deemed to be too unwieldy. Therefore, it was proposed that the principles should be reduced and simplified, while the bylaws should be removed to a separate document. Everyone present, including Swami Dayanand, agreed, and the Ten Principles of the Arya Samaj, as they are known around the world today, came into existence.

These principles are as follows:

1. God is the efficient cause of all true knowledge and all that is known through knowledge.
2. God is existent, intelligent and blissful. He is formless, omniscient, just, merciful, unborn, endless, unchangeable, beginning-less, unequalled, the support of all, the master of all, omnipresent, immanent, un-aging, immortal, fearless, eternal and holy, and the maker of all. He alone is worthy of being worshiped.
3. The Vedas are the scriptures of all true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of all Arya Samajists to read them, teach them, recite them and to hear them being read.
4. One should always be ready to accept truth and to renounce untruth.
5. All acts should be performed in accordance with Dharma, that is, after deliberating what is right and wrong.
6. The prime object of the Arya Samaj is to do good to the world, that is, to promote physical, spiritual and social good of everyone.
7. Our conduct towards all should be guided by love, righteousness and justice.
8. We should dispel *Avidya* (ignorance) and promote *Vidya* (knowledge).
9. No one should be content with promoting his/her good only; on the contrary, one should look for his/her good in promoting the good of all.
10. One should regard oneself under restriction to follow the rules of society calculated to promote the well being of all, while in following the rules of individual welfare all should be free.

All subsequently established branches of the Arya Samaj have been founded upon the ten principles. However, each new branch of the Samaj has a degree of freedom in determining the exact by-laws under which it shall operate. Everyone who wishes to become a member of the Society must agree to uphold these principles in their entirety. However, nothing beyond these ten principles has any binding force on any member of the Arya Samaj. For this reason, the early Samaj proved to be attractive to individuals belonging to various religious communities, and enjoyed a notable degree of converts from segments of the Hindu, Sikh, Christian and Muslim populations of Indian society.

The Arya Samaj performed simple weddings of girls from poor backgrounds. It also propagated inter-caste marriages to put an end to casteism.

Drawing what are seen to be the logical conclusions from these principles, the Arya Samaj also unequivocally condemns practices such as polytheism, idolatry, animal sacrifice, ancestor worship, pilgrimage, priest craft, the belief in Avatars or incarnations of God, the hereditary caste system, untouchability and child marriage on the grounds that all these lack Vedic sanction.

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## SYED AHMED KHAN

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Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, commonly known as Sir Syed, was born on 17 of October 1817. He was a social activist and Muslim philosopher in India in the 19th century. Born into the Muslim nobility, Sir Syed was bestowed with the title of Javad-ud- Daulah by Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar II in 1842.

During the Indian Revolution of 1857, he was accused of being loyal to the British. Subsequent to the Indian rebellion, he wrote *Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind*, a daring critique of the policies of British, which he blamed was the reasons for the rebellion. He was a strong believer that the future of Muslims was at risk because of their conventional mind-set. As a result of this, he started encouraging the western style of scientific education by launching modern schools and journals, e.g., the establishment of the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College (Aligarh Muslim University) in 1875. This university was established on the sole objective of advancing social and economic development of Indian Muslims.

### Early Life and Works

He was born in Delhi, which was then the capital of the Mughal Empire and became an educator, politician, an Islamic reformer and modernist. He and his family had migrated first to Iran from Saudi Arabia and then to Afghanistan, at the time of Akbar.

His elder brother initiated the city's first printing press in the Urdu language, along with a journal called the *Sayyad-ul-Akbar*. He pursued with his studies of medicine for many years but could not complete them because of financial constraints that occurred after his father's death. He rejected employment in the Mughal court and accepted the editorship of his brother's journal.

### Career

Social reforms within the Muslim society was started by Abdul Latif, who started the Mohammedan Literary Society in Bengal. Sir Syed founded the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College. He fought against ignorance, superstitions and evil customs prevailed in Muslim society and believed that they would not progress unless they acquired western education and science. Realizing the political decline of the Mughals, he got enrolled into the British East India Company's civil services where he was appointed as *Serestadar* in the court of law at Agra. He was promoted as a Munshi in 1840 and in 1858, was appointed to a high-ranking position in the courts of Muradabad.

### Causes of the Indian Revolt

While working in the courts of the East India Company, Sir Syed obtained some close information pertaining to colonial politics which he accumulated and shared as the root

## NOTES

### Check Your Progress

5. When was Swami Vivekananda born?
6. When did Vivekananda found the Ramakrishna Mission?
7. When was Dayanand Saraswati born?

cause of Indian revolution in his renowned booklet, *Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind*, in 1859. He rejected the contribution of Muslim elites in the conspiracy, who feared the diminishing influence of the Muslims. On the contrary, he suggested the British Government to appoint Muslims in the administration to assist the government.

### Scholarly works

Sir Syed's career as an author began at the age of 23, while he was working as a jurist. He wrote around 6000 pages in Urdu. His contribution came out in a series of publication in Urdu on religious subjects. In 1842, his work brought him the recognition of a great scholar on religious and cultural subjects. His writings helped in creating cordial relations between the British and the Muslim community.

Syed Ahmad throughout his life, spared time for literary and scholarly pursuits, which had wide range and scope that included—history, politics, archaeology, journalism, literature, religion and science. Some of his works are as follows:

### Legal Works

1. Act No. 10 (Stamp Act) 1862
2. Act No. 14 (Limitation) 1859-1864
3. Act No. 16 (Regarding registration documents) – Allyson, 1864
4. Act No. 18 (Worked for Women Rights) Act 1866

### Religious Works

1. *Ahkam Tu'am Ahl-Kitab, Kanpur* – 1868
2. *Al-Du'a Wa'l Istajaba, Agra* – 1892
3. *Al-Nazar Fi Ba'z Masa'il Imam Al-Ghazzali, Agra*
4. *Izalat ul-chain as Zi'al Qarnain, Agra* – 1889
5. *Zila al-Qulub ba Zikr al-Mahbub Delhi*, 1843
6. *Khulq al-Insan ala ma fi al-Quran, Agra*, 1892
7. *Kimiya-i-Sa'dat, 2 fasl*, 1883
8. *Mazumm ba nisbat tanazzul ulum-i-diniya wa Arabiya wa falsafa-i-Yunaniya, Agra*, 1857
9. *Namiqa fi Bayan Mas'ala Tasawwur al-Shaikh, Aligarh*, 1883
10. *Rah-i-Sunnat dar rad-i-bid'at, Aligarh*, 1883
11. *Risala Ibtal-i-Ghulami, Agra*, 1893
12. *Fisala ho wal Mojud*, 1880
13. *Risala Tahqiq Lafzi-i-Nassara*, 1860
14. *Tabyin-ul-Kalam fi Tafsir-al-turat-wa'l Injil ala Mullat-al-Islam* (The Mohomedan Commentary on the holy Bible)
15. *Tafsir-ul-Qura'n*  
Vol. I Aligarh, 1880  
Vol. II Aligarh, 1882, Agra – 1903  
Vol. III Aligarh, 1885

Vol. IV Aligarh, 1888

Vol. V Aligarh, 1892

Vol. VI Aligarh, 1895

Vol. VII Aligarh, 1904

16. *Tafsir al-Jinn Wa'l Jan ala ma fi al-Qur'an*, Rahmani Press, Lahore, 1893, Agra, 1891
17. *Tafsir-a-Samawat*, Agra
18. *Tahir fi Usul al-Tafsir*, Agra, 1892
19. *Tarjama Fawa'id al-afkar fi amal al-farjar*, Delhi 1846
20. *Tarqim fi qisa ashab al-kahf wal-Raqim*, Agra, 1889
21. *Tasfiyad al'Aquid* (being the correspondent between Syed Ahmed Khan and Maulana Muhammad Qasim of Deoband)
22. *Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind* (Reasons for the Indian Revolt of 1857) 1875

### Historical Works

1. *A'in-e-Akbari* (Edition with Illustration), Delhi
2. *Asar-us-Sanadid* (i) Syed-ul-Akhbar, 1847, (II) Mata-i-Sultani, 1852
3. *Description des monument de Delhi in 1852*, D'a Pre Le Texte Hindostani De Saiyid Ahmad Khan (tr. By Garcin De Rassy), Paris, 1861
4. *Jam-i-jum*, Akbarabad, 1940
5. *Silsilat-ul-Muluk*, Ashraf ul Mataba', Delhi, 1852
6. *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* (Edition), Asiatic society, Calcutta, 1862
7. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (edition Aligarh, 1864)

### Biographical Works

1. *Al-Khutbat al-Ahmadiya fi'l Arab wa'l Sirat al-Muhammadiya*: Aligarh, 1900, English translation, London – 1869-70
2. *Sirat-i-Faridiya*, Agra, 1896
3. *Tuhfa-i-Hasan*, Aligarh, 1883

### Political Works

1. *Asbab-i-Bhagwat-i-Hind*, Urdu 1858 and English edition, Banaras
2. *Lecture Indian National Congress Madras Par*, Kanpur, 1887
3. *Lectures on the Act XVI of 1864*, delivered on the 4th Dec, 1864 for the Scientific Society, Aligarh, 1864
4. *Musalmanon ki qismat ka faisla* (taqarir-e-Syed Ahmad Khan wa Syed Mehdi Ali Khan etc.) Agra, 1894
5. *On Hunter's: Our Indian Mussulmans'* London 1872
6. *Present State of Indian Politics* (Consisting of lectures and Speeches) Allahabad, 1888
7. *Sarkashi Zilla Binjor*, Agra 1858

## Lectures

1. Itimas be khidmat Sakinan-i-Hindustan dar bad tarraqi ta'lim ahl-i-Hind, Ghazipore, 1863
2. Lecture dar bab targhib wa tahris talim itfal-i-Musalmanan, in 1895, Agra 1896
3. Lecture Madrasaat ul-Ulum Aligarh Key Tarikhi halat aur jaded Waqi'at Par, Agra, 1889
4. Lecture Ijlas Dahum Muhammadan Educational conference, Agra, 1896
5. Lecture Muta'liq Ijlas Yazdahum Muhammadan Educational Conference, Agra, 1896
6. Majmu'a Resolution Hayd Dah sala (Resolution passed by the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Educational conference from 1886 to 1895) ed. By Sir Syed Ahmad, Agra 1896
7. Report Salana (Annual Report of the Boarding House of Madrasat-ul-Ulum 1879-1880)

## Political Career

In 1878, Sir Syed was nominated for the Viceroy's Legislative Council, and in the same year, he laid the foundation of the Muhammadan Association to promote political cooperation within Muslims across the country. Later, in the year 1883, he instituted the Muhammadan Civil Service Fund Association to promote and facilitate the entrance of Muslim graduates in the Indian Civil Services.

## All India Muslim League (AIML)

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan supported the organization of All India Muslim League and his educational propositions and political activism motivated elite Muslims to help AIML. The foundation of All India Muhammadan Educational Conference was originally laid in 1886 to promote western education, science and literature, in particular amongst Muslims in India.

## Legacy

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the most powerful Muslim politician in India and was a renowned mentor of 19th and 20th century entrepreneurs and politicians of the Muslim community. He spent the last 20 years of his life in Aligarh. He was also nominated for the membership of the Civil Service Commission in 1887, by Lord Dufferin and awarded with LL.D Honoris Causa from Edinburgh University.

The Aligarh Muslim University was one amongst the most recognized universities. Pakistan also honoured him by establishing Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology in Karachi, a leading technical institute in the country. Sir Syed Government Girls College in Karachi was also named in his honour. Sir Syed died on 27th March 1898, and was buried besides Sir Syed Masjid, inside the campus of the University.

### 4.5.1 The Aligarh Movement

The Aligarh Movement was a prominent Muslim socio-religious movement in India and was led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was born into a prestigious family of Delhi and spent his childhood in and out of the Mughal court. He studied Arabic and Persian according to the older pattern and also studied the work of Shah



Wali Ullah. Though he did not receive any religious education, he demonstrated a personality more akin to a courtier or government official than to an Ulama. He believed that the future of Islam rested with the fortunes of Muslims, particularly those residing in northern India. He started to attract others with his writings and soon founded a variety of public forums for spreading his ideas. He soon emerged as a prominent leader of the Muslim community.

The Aligarh Movement was actually an educational movement with a view to purify Islam and it marked a sharp break with previous attempts to purify Islam and return it to its past glory. The vision of the movement was to create an administrative elite class that would govern in cooperation with the British, rather than focus its attention on the Ulama. Through the 1850s, Syed Ahmed Khan began developing a strong passion for education. While pursuing studies of different subjects including European jurisprudence, Sir Syed began to realize the advantages of Western-style education, which was offered at newly established colleges across India.

Despite being a devout Muslim, Sir Syed criticized the influence of traditional dogma and religious orthodoxy, which had made most Indian Muslims suspicious of British influences. He became increasingly concerned for the future of Muslim communities. As a scion of Mughal nobility, Sir Syed had been reared in the finest traditions of Muslim elite culture and was aware of the steady decline of Muslim political power across India. The animosity between the British and Muslims before and after the rebellion (Independence War) of 1857 threatened to marginalize Muslim communities across India for many generations. He intensified his work to promote cooperation with British authorities, promoting loyalty to the empire amongst Indian Muslims. Committed to working for the upliftment of Muslims, Sir Syed founded a modern *madrassa* in Muradabad in 1859; this was one of the first religious schools to impart scientific education.

The Aligarh Movement was successful in spreading western education among Muslims without weakening their commitment to Islam. The second task it undertook was to introduce social reforms in the Muslim society. The Aligarh Movement strived to evolve the Muslim community as a distinct social and cultural community, on the lines of modernism. The Aligarh Movement was based on the interpretation of the *Quran*. It tried to blend Islam and the modern liberal culture. Inspired by the Aligarh Movement, several progressive movements came up in Bombay, Punjab, Hyderabad and other places.

### **Aligarh Reform Movement—Sir Syed Ahmad Khan**

One of the prominent socio-religious movements within Islam in India has been the Aligarh movement, led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was of the belief that the future of Islam was in hands of the Muslims, especially those who were residents of northern parts of India. Through the myriad of his writings, he made followers and formed variety of public forums to spread his ideas. He argued that the dilemma of Muslims in the country was due to the education that also disseminated elements of English knowledge within the Islamic context. To counter such an education, he advocated the idea of opening those educational institutions which would impart 'proper' education to the Muslims. Thus, in June 1875, he established the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh. The college contributed significantly to the education of the Muslim elite, and soon, its significance grew. At the same time, he became a prominent leader of the Muslim community.

One of the main objectives of founding the college was to prepare Muslims to serve the Qu'an and also give the society educated, honest, public-spirited leaders who

can confidently work with the British government and also protect the interests of the Muslim community. With an educational perspective, the Aligarh movement also sought to purify Islam. It made a significant break from similar movements in the past which sought to purify the religion and bring it to its past glory. The Aligarh movement also sought to create an 'administrative elite class' which could govern people along with the colonizers than focusing its attention on the ulama.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan started to propagate education through the 1850s among the Muslims. He pursued studies of different subjects, including European jurisprudence and realized along the way the advantages of education of Western style which colleges across the country had started offering by that time. Even though he was a devout Muslim, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was critical of the influence of traditional dogma and religious orthodoxy, which made Indian Muslims wary and suspicious of British influences. He was deeply worried for the welfare of the Muslim community and, as scion of Mughal nobility who had been reared in the finest traditions of Muslim elite culture, he could anticipate the decline of Muslim political power across the country.

He was aware that the British and Muslims shared historical animosity, which had been heightened after the uprising of 1857. It, thus threatened to further deteriorate their relationship and marginalize the Muslims for many generations to come. Thus, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan sought to promote cooperation with the British authorities and promoted loyalty amongst Indian Muslims to the empire. He was also committed to uplift of downtrodden Muslims and thus founded a modern madrasa in Muradabad in 1859 which became one of the first religious schools to impart scientific education.

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## SUMMARY

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- Roy was born in Radhanagore, Bengal, into the Rarhi Brahmin caste. His family background displayed religious diversity; his father Ramkanto Roy was a Vaishnavite, while his mother Tarinidevi was from a Shaivite family.
- Ram Mohan Roy's impact on modern Indian history concerned a revival of the ethics and principles of the Vedanta school of philosophy as found in the Upanishads.
- Ram Mohan Roy's experience working with the British government taught him that Hindu traditions were often not respected or thought as credible by Western standards; this affected his religious reforms.
- Ram Mohan Roy was a major shaper of modern India. Consciously influenced by Christianity and by the social agenda of many missionaries, he was convinced that India's culture and religious tradition was rational and of profound spiritual value.
- The Brahma Samaj is the societal component of the Brahma religion which is mainly practiced today as the Adi Dharm, after its eclipse in Bengal, consequent to the exit of the Tattwabodini Sabha from its ranks in 1859.

- Swami Vivekananda was born in Calcutta (now Kolkata) on 12 January 1863, in a traditional Kayastha family, and was given the name Narendranath Dutta.
- During the last days of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and some of the other disciples received the ochre monastic robes from Ramakrishna, which formed the first monastic order of Ramakrishna.
- In 1888, Vivekananda left the monastery as a *Parivrâjaka*—the Hindu religious life of a wandering monk. His sole possessions were a *kamandalu* (water pot), staff, and his two favourite books—*Bhagavad Gita* and *The Imitation of Christ*.
- On 1 May 1897 Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission—the organ for social service. The ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission are based on *Karma Yoga*.
- Dayanand Saraswati was born on 12 February in 1824, in the town of Tankara, near Morvi (Morbi) in the Kathiawar region (since India’s independence in 1947 Rajkot district) of the princely state of Gujarat, into an affluent and devout Saryupareen Brahmin family.
- Dayananda’s mission was to teach humankind about universal brotherhood through nobility as spelt out in the Vedas.
- Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, commonly known as Sir Syed, was born on 17 of October 1817. He was a social activist and Muslim philosopher in India in the 19th century.
- The Aligarh Movement was a prominent Muslim socio-religious movement in India and was led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

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## KEY TERMS

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- **Sati:** *Sati* is the practice among some Hindu communities by which a recently widowed woman either voluntarily or by use of force or coercion commits suicide as a result of her husband’s death. The best known form of sati is when a woman burns to death on her husband’s funeral pyre.
- **Polytheism:** Polytheism is the worship of or belief in multiple deities, which are usually assembled into a pantheon of gods and goddesses, along with their own religions and rituals.
- **Macrocosm:** Macrocosm refers to the whole of a complex structure, especially the world or the universe, contrasted with a small or representative part of it.
- **Microcosm:** Microcosm is a community, place, or situation regarded as encapsulating in miniature the characteristics of something much larger.
- **Vedanta:** Vedanta is a Hindu philosophy based on the doctrine of the Upanishads, especially in its monistic form.
- **Brahmo Samaj:** Brahmo Samaj is a Hindu reform movement. It is the societal component of Brahmoism, a monotheistic reformist movement of the Hindu religion that appeared during the Bengal Renaissance.
- **Vedas:** The Vedas are a large body of knowledge texts originating in the ancient Indian subcontinent. Composed in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism.

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## ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

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### NOTES

4. In 1815, Raja Ram Mohan Roy formed the *Atmiya Sabha*.
5. The Brahmo Samaj was founded by Dwarkanath Tagore and Ram Mohan Roy.
6. The soldiers or sepoy of the British Army revolted mainly because the cartridges used in the guns were coated with grease made from cow and pig fat. Soldiers who belonged to the upper caste among Hindus protested for the cow fat and the Muslims for the pig fat.
7. Swami Vivekananda was born in Calcutta (now Kolkata) on 12 January 1863, in a traditional Kayastha family, and was given the name Narendranath Dutta.
8. On 1 May 1897, Vivekananda founded Ramakrishna Mission—the organ for social service.
9. Dayanand Saraswati was born on 12 February in 1824.
10. Syed Ahmed Khan was a social activist and Muslim philosopher in India in the 19th century.
11. The vision of the Aligarh Movement was to create an administrative elite class that would govern in cooperation with the British, rather than focus its attention on the Ulama.

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## QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

4. Write a note on the aims and objectives of the Brahmo Samaj.
5. List a few socio-religious reforms propagated by Ram Mohan Roy.
6. What was Ram Mohan Roy’s influence on Indian society?
7. How did Vivekananda present Hinduism to the Western world?
8. What are the contributions of Swami Dayanand Saraswati as a social reformer?
9. List the legal literary works of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.
10. What was Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s contribution in the Aligarh Reform Movement?

### Long-Answer Questions

4. Discuss Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s political and religious career.
5. Discuss Dayanand Saraswati’s early life.
6. Discuss the role played by Sir Syed in the education of the Muslim community in India.

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## FURTHER READING

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## NOTES



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# UNIT IV INDIA NATIONAL MOVEMENT-I

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## NOTES

### Structure

Introduction  
 Unit Objectives  
 Emergence of Nationalism  
 Predecessors of the Congress and Formation of the Congress  
 Early Nationalists: Programmes and Policies  
 Extremists  
 Summary  
 Key Terms  
 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'  
 Questions and Exercises  
 Further Reading

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## INTRODUCTION

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In this unit you will learn about the emergence of nationalism in India, as well as the Indian Freedom Movement. The earlier reformers understood that colonization was the root cause to India's poverty and economic backwardness. The destruction of the rural and local self-sufficient economy and modern trade practices and setting up of factories on an all-India scale had increasingly made India's economic life a single whole and interlinked the economic fate of people living in different parts of the country. Furthermore, the introduction of the railways, telegraph and unified postal systems had brought the different parts of the country together and promoted mutual contact among the people, especially among the leaders. As a result of the spread of modern western education and thought during the 19th century, a large number of Indians imbibed a modern rational, secular, democratic and nationalist political outlook. The spread and popularity of the English language helped nationalist leaders of different linguistic regions to communicate with each other.

This unit focuses on the predecessors of the Indian National Congress, the foundation of the Indian National Congress and the programmes and policies of early nationalists. It then discusses the Indian Freedom Movement under the leadership of Gandhi, all the way to Indian Independence.

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## UNIT OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the emergence of nationalism
- Describe the foundation of Indian National Congress
- Explain the programmes and policies of the early nationalists

## NOTES

- Describe the Non-Cooperative Movement
- Identify the importance of the Quit India Movement
- Explain the emergence of communal politics in India
- Assess the role of Indian National Army in India's freedom struggle
- Discuss the events that led to India's partition into two nations

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## EMERGENCE OF NATIONALISM

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In India, during the 18th century, there were clashes, crises, calamities and problems between various groups of people. Uncertainties in the political scenario created hindrances in the evolution of Indian culture. The British made use of this scenario to fulfill their vested interests and deeply influence the lifestyle and culture of India. The manner in which India responded to this strategy of the British is the highlight of the contemporary history of India of the 19th century.

There was evolution from the Medieval Age to the Modern Age. Indians were exposed to new thought and ideas, owing to their encounter with the western forces. Hence, it is not surprising that a significant social and cultural evolution swept throughout the country. Indians were awakened from their lethargic sleep by the Renaissance of the 19th century and were filled with a desire to break away from the bonds that enslaved them. Bipan Chandra quotes, 'Thoughtful Indians began to look for the strength and weakness of their society and for ways and means of removing the weaknesses. While a large number of Indians refused to come to terms with the West and still put their faith in traditional Indian ideas and institutions, others gradually came to hold the elements of modern western thought that had to be imbedded for the regeneration of their society. They were impressed in particular by modern science and doctrines of reason and humanism. While differing on the nature and extent of reforms, nearly all 19th century intellectuals shared the conviction that social and religious reforms were urgently needed.'

The impact of British rule on the economic conditions and society of India was a factor that primarily contributed to the socio-cultural evolution of the 19th century. The imperialism of the British united the people of India politically and administratively. A uniform legal system and methods of communication were launched by the British rulers. The structure of the traditional economy fell apart when the British took over the country. In terms of economy and lifestyle, many Indians were interconnected. The economic exploitation by the colonial power played a significant role in igniting the spirit of nationalism. The growth of nationalism was motivated by the centralization of British rule in India. A new middle class emerged as a result of the influence of the West and its policies. This middle class operated like a creative minority group and directed its efforts to destroy all traditions. Thus, it helped in the rise of an enlightened India, which was filled with patriotism and rationalism. This dominant middle class seriously examined Indian society and tried their best to remove all ills from it. The revolution in India was also supported by the advent of Christian missionaries since the beginning of the 19th century. These Christian missionaries promoted literacy in many parts of India and a large amount of development work was taken up by them. Their faith was an attraction to some sections of the people of India.

The missionaries worked to condemn Hinduism through their functioning and satire. This ignited strong fundamental and rational responses. On one hand, those who



were traditional and old-fashioned were stubborn in their opposition towards Christianity and on the other; the liberals carried on with their introspection and worked to remove the social ills from their own religion.

Social and cultural enlightenment was also stimulated by the popularity and growth of western education. K.M. Panikar emphasized that English, introduced as a language, promoted a feeling of unity throughout the country, in the absence of which India would have been divided into as many parts as there are languages in India. According to Naoroji, 'The introduction of English education with its great, noble, elevating and civilizing literature and advanced science will forever remain a monument of good work done in India.' A.R. Desai quotes, 'the study of the English language unfolded the treasures of the democratic and nationalistic thought crystallized in precious scientific works.'

Young men, who had received their education in English, were critical about every Hindu tradition and custom. They even resorted to the use of intoxicating drinks to exhibit a feeling of modernism. However, they were rational in their examination of every aspect of life. This was instrumental in ushering in modernization. The British government zealously established many types of reforms such as removal of caste inequalities and prejudice towards women in Indian society. It caused the forces of development within India to become active. Media, news tabloids and literary works also played important roles in the spread of nationalism. The vivacious culture of India also supported the emergence and progress of Renaissance. India responded positively to this historical crisis.

When the influence of the West impacted India, the people were happy to accept the positive aspects of the western culture and got used to the changing situation. Hence, it can be concluded that many forces together resulted in a new evolution that led to the Renaissance in Indian way of thinking. This spirit of the Renaissance that was based on logical thoughts, led to development of a desire to reform.

The socio-cultural revolution of the 19th century played an important role in the Renaissance, in the history and culture of India. It modernized the history of India by ushering a flood of new ideas in an era of revolution within society, politics, economy, religion and culture. Socio-cultural evolution also transformed the definition of religion. Religious beliefs were scrutinized rationally. This rationalism brought about reforms with in Hinduism and worked to eliminate vices from it. It strengthened religion and prepared it to face the challenges of time. The essence of reformed religious thought comprised tolerance, universal brotherhood, adjustment and introspection. Social lifestyle was also subjected to revolutionary changes. A large number of medieval customs were discarded by the society itself. There was absolutely no support for social superstitions. A campaign was led by socio-cultural reformers against caste system, child marriage, female infanticide and several other social ills. A foundation was laid which established a base to uplift the downtrodden, fought for the cause of equality and campaigned for the freedom of women from social slavery. The socio-cultural awakening caused revival of a profound liking for India's glorious past. The people were filled with pride and ceased to remain lethargic and inactive. The spread of western education worked as a stimulus to give rise to a creative way of thinking and stirred ideals to inspire works of literary and artistic nature.

The politics of 19th century India was also impacted by socio-cultural awakening. Strong patriotic feelings were invoked in the minds of the Indian youths by the philosophies of learned saints and intellectuals. This played a significant role in the growth of nationalism and struggle for freedom. N.S. Bose fittingly says, 'The growth of political consciousness leading to the beginning of the national movement for independence was one of the

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striking trends of the Indian awakening. The remarkable transformation in the life and thought of the people, a new era of social, religious and educational reforms ushered in by great men of the age naturally accelerated the growth of Indian nationhood.' It was indeed true that the socio-cultural awakening of 19th century ignited a revolution in India and was a significant landmark in the birth of modern age.

### **Emergence of the Middle Class**

Before the advent of the process of colonization of India through both political and armed means, the question of capitalism did not really rise. Though there were traders in India, there was no 'bourgeoisie' or 'middle class', as a distinct unit of society. It has been argued by many historians that the empire and the conditions of colonial rule helped in the creation of a capitalist society and was the agent of change in society.

While studying this phenomenon, it must be understood that the concept of the middle class actually arose due to certain conditions in European history. There were many constituents of this so-called middle class which included:

- Artists and others engaged in the performing arts
- Intellectuals, novelists, writers and
- Industrial bourgeoisie (those engaged in trade and manufacture)

While this term was not used by many Europeans for the local population, Viceroy Dufferin saw them as, 'certain number of leading natives who were well-meaning, intelligent and patriotic.'

This was a tacit agreement that there were a number of people, perhaps a minority, who were present. However, many did not ascribe to this thought and as late as 1893, Aurobindo Ghosh, an Indian freedom fighter and philosopher, described this group as the 'new middle class' which comprised traders, graduates, officials, doctors, barristers and journalists. Aurobindo Ghosh was of the view that they were not representatives of India in totality. However, this term has since gained wide acceptance while referring to such a class of people based on professional academics and intellect. In India, the term 'middle class' is applied to various groups that have varying scope of social standing and experience. It is a class neither in just the economic nor Marxist sense of the term. It comes with gender, caste and religious dimensions. This class also has a stamp of education which is colonial and western. To top it all, this group aspires to take on the leadership of India. It has displayed a 'cultural entrepreneurship' that has enabled it to define a culture which others would like to emulate to become socially mobile in the upward direction. While this concept of the middle class can be seen in the light of the advancement caused by colonial rule, can one assume that such a group existed for hundreds of years prior to British rule in India? This question becomes important when we consider the recent historiographical developments that investigate India's potential indigenous modernity prior to the coming of colonialism.

Chris Bayly, a British historian, has said that:

The group of people comprising Hindustani-writing literati, Indo-Islamic notables, religious leaders, and officers of the state participated in public debates about rights, duties and good kingship. This group of elect people, who were also joined by common people from time to time as participants in common public discussions, can be considered as constituting a public sphere in precolonial India. They also represented the 'opinion of the locality' to the authorities.

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Now the question arises as to whether there was any continuity between the 'group of people described by Bayly' in India before the colonial period and the 'middle class' of the colonial period. Intuition tells us that any such continuity should not be present. During the colonial period, there was a huge disconnect between the logic of the Indian society and the logic of the ruling state. The patronage given to this class by the traditional ruling elite disintegrated. This included the disuse of the traditional Indian languages like Persian and Urdu which were slowly replaced by English. The education system was changed. There was a shift from the earlier perception of the so-called middle class and a realignment with the new thought processes.

The essays of Dipesh Chakrabarty, Tanika Sarkar and Partha Chatterjee more or less seem to display a commonality of perspective. Based on this perspective, the middle class appears to be formed of educated elite, a group between the colonial rulers and the semi-literate or illiterate rural majority.

According to this perspective:

- The social universe of the colonial India was or may be viewed as a split of a private/spiritual and a public/material domain.
- Indians had no participation or equality as far as the public domain was concerned.
- Indians moved to the private domain to stress the sovereignty of the rising concept of nation.
- Indians defied all interference by the colonial power in their private domain.
- Indians professed that the Indian culture was superior to the western culture. They used this validity and uniqueness as the foundation for Indian nationalism
- The women of India have the task of acting as custodians of Indian culture.

According to B.B Misra, an Indian historian, the term middle class mainly refers to civil servants, salaried executives, proprietors of modern trading firms and merchants and such where the criteria are income and income source.

Jawaharlal Nehru said that the middle class had no capacity to perform either manual or technical work. They had been uprooted from their original culture, remained conservative socially, and were modern only in outlook, that too superficially. As can be noted from above, it seems quite possible that in a loosely defined manner, there was a presence of components of the middle class in India and as such the semblance of or the roots of a capitalist society.

One feature of commercial capitalism which needs to be looked at is the effect of monetization affecting India. This was connected with commercialization of both agrarian and urban economy, and the development of markets through distortion caused by trade and increasing European intervention in Indian markets. This affected both trade and manufacture. This was impacted because of the colonial occupation creating political monopoly and control over the taxation system to systematically benefit first the East India Company and then the British government directly. This helped to destroy competition and drive prices downwards in an increasingly competitive world caused by the effects of the Industrial revolution. The corollary was that until the mid-nineteenth century, India's integration into a colonial empire was marked by a broad-based process of under development of which deindustrialization was merely a part, and included the process of relative demonetization.

## Role of Literature and Press

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The Indian Press had an important role to play in developing nationalism among the citizens of the country. Indian nationalists used the press as a powerful media to spread the message of nationalism. They also used the press to diffuse the spirit of patriotism and political ideas. The press was highly successful in mobilizing public opinion and promoting nationalism. Vernacular came to the rescue and newspapers and dailies such as *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, *Samachar Darpan* was instrumental in stimulating the growth of nationalism. The dailies blatantly exposed the fallacies of the foreign rule. In the words of B.B. Majumdar, 'Western education and the Indian press were the two of the most important agencies destined to infuse into the people of India the spirit of national unity and to inspire them to achieve independence without bloodshed.' Indian literature produced during this time was highly nationalistic and was thus responsible for creating a sense of national consciousness. The works of prominent Indian writers such as Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya and Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali, Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar in Marathi, Subramanyam Bharati in Tamil and others were instrumental in instilling a spirit of nationalism in the minds of the common people.

### Economic Nationalism

Economic history of India is a late discipline. It started with critiques of imperialism and colonialism in the second half of the 19th century. In the 1850s, Karl Marx wrote a series of articles on the economic impact of colonialism. He further developed his critiques in *Capital* in the 1860s. Among the Indian writers, Mahadev Govind Ranade published his essays on economy less as a critique of colonialism than as a blueprint for development of the Indian economy. The most scathing attack on colonialism was Dadabhai Naoroji's *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* in which he argues that India's poverty was mainly due to the drain of wealth by the British government through tribute and home charges. R. C. Dutt, the first Indian ICS, published his *Economic History of British India*. Other economists like GB Joshi and Prithwis Chandra Ray, more or less on these lines, wrote the history of Indian economy in the British period.

A new dimension to the study of Indian economy opened up at the international level in the Comintern. M. N. Ray as the sole Indian representative in the Comintern contributed to the economic policy discussion in the organization, the value of which was recognized even by Lenin. A number of Soviet scholars joined a discussion on the impact of colonialism on India and the prospect of economic growth of India. A great debate raged on the role of the Indian bourgeoisie. These discussions governed the Communist movement in India even after the dissolution of the Comintern in 1945. After Independence, a professional discipline of economic history developed.

One of the earliest western writers Morris D Morris centered his argument of underdevelopment of independent India on her social structure. He was criticized by BR Tomlinson who accused Morris of a kind of circular logic and over simplification as if 'Indian industrial growth was retarded because she faces the distressing paradox, the high cost of being poor; while the most easily identifiable factor that restricted industry was shortage of capital. Irfan Habib questioned Morris's failure to address issues like de-industrialization in the 19th century or 'deleterious effects of currency manipulation by British interests'.

Indian scholars, thereafter, started working on industrial history, labour history, agrarian history, capital market and class contradiction. Habib is the foremost historian writing extensively on agrarian India. A K Bagchi worked on Private Investment in

India. Deindustrialization under British rule was a major focus of economic historians. Morris D Morris, Dipesh Chakrabaty and Ranajit Dasgupta contributed immensely to labour history. The stage of economic development encompassing agriculture and industry are the major point of contention among Indian economists.

In the 1970s, Ranajit Guha set up a new school of historiography with his study of East India Company's role in India, namely the subaltern school. Gradually economists started probing tribal economy, environment and women's questions suggesting that the colonial period displayed a disjuncture from the pre-colonial period. Researches in the 1990s made a shift from looking at the colonial policies, such as, revenue to agro-ecological conditions, market conditions and socio-cultural factors to determine the agrarian relations and divisions within the peasantry. Though studies on the larger administrative policies continued, focus was shifted towards select problematic areas like irrigation (M. Mufakharul), jute economy of Bengal (Omkar Goswami), rural credit market (Shahi Amin) and agrarian relations in Bengal (Sugata Bose). Some historians, however, took a revisionist position in respect to the question of de-industrialization. A leading voice in this category is that of Tirthankar Roy.

### **Nationalism and Economic History**

M. G. Ranade is considered the pioneer of Indian nationalist economics. A teacher of economics, Ranade wrote mostly on poverty. He considered it a legacy of the pre-colonial India and said the heightened awareness towards this endemic was a product of the British rule. Poverty, he said, was a by-product of India's overdependence on agriculture. He, however, made no extravagant claim for the past nor did he put the blame for all ills entirely on foreign rule. He pointed out that traditionally the economy of the country did not represent a balanced growth. Agriculture was not supported by industries or the manufactures or distributors of the products, a collective interplay of all sections of the economy. Also, the fact that machine-made imported goods were cheaper than the domestic handicraft products was a cause of economic decline. Ranade was of the opinion that even if the Government of India had not helped the process in any way, British merchants and manufacturers would eventually have asserted their predominance in the Indian market. But what led to a rapid disintegration of the domestic economy was the government's support of British interest. Ranade's approach has been termed as a balanced growth argument. Basing his argument on the lines of German economist Friedrich List, Ranade defines economic development as the full and all-round development of the productive powers of society. In his initial writings, he often highlighted the government's failure to correct the imbalances in the economy through its policies. He argued that the government was more focused on exporting raw materials and improving channels of communication while ignoring its own industrial needs. 'This dependency has come to be regarded as a plantation, growing raw produce to be shipped by British agents in British ships, to be worked into fabrics by British skill and capital, and to be re-exported to the dependency by British merchants to their corresponding British firms in India and elsewhere.'

Again borrowing from List, Ranade talks of stages of growth, typically an economy should pass through. He applies these conditions to the Indian situation to gradually move from an agricultural and handicraft economy to agriculture along with manufacture and commerce. It was Ranade's understanding of economic development as a historical process that inspired his vision of India's industrialization. He wanted India to be industrialised, but was aware that it would not be an easy task. Ranade was one among the modern historians who advocated the government's assistance with labour migration

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as a means of economic development. He believed migration would relieve the pressure of population on the land. However, due to the immense dependency on land, even a low rate of population growth would have an adverse impact on the economy. Hence, he advocated emigration as he believed it would not only lessen the pressure on land, but indirectly benefit the economy.

Interestingly, though Ranade wanted more government support in industrializing India, he did not favour tariff protection. He argued the state could only support the industrial moves, but the maximum effort should come from organized private support. From this we cannot conclude that Ranade was an enthusiast of laissez-faire or socialism. He was aware of the obstacle Indian would face in becoming an industrial country. Ranade's approach to economic policy was guided by an over-riding objective: the development of productive capacity.

Contemporary historians as well as others enthusiastically received Ranade's push for industrial development, however, they did not support his idea of capitalist development in agriculture. GV Joshi, a follower of Ranade, favoured small peasant farming, which was to be maintained by vigorous tenancy legislation, cheap credit, and a low land tax. Such a policy required just the kind of continuing, long-run, legal and financial government intervention in agricultural activity which Ranade had criticised. He was highly critical of the investments in railways and wrote the same capital could have been used elsewhere. In fact, railway investment was seen as a substitute for investment in industry.

**R. C. Dutt**

A contemporary of Ranade, Dutt, too, was concerned with poverty. He held the British policies responsible for recurring famines, low productivity and decay of domestic industry in India. He admitted that shortage of rainfall led to famines, but blamed the government for lack of resources to the peasants. He took a different route from that of Ranade and claimed the emergence of industry not only destroyed the domestic cottage industry, but also led to a decline in agricultural productivity and increased the pressure on land. Oppressive taxation policies and insensitive administrative policies have aggravated the degradable situation of the peasants. According to him, the low standard of living of people was due to the high density of population, low agricultural prices, the land tenure system and the agrarian structure. Dutt wrote, 'While British political economists professed the principles of free trade from the latter end of the 18th century, the British nation declined to adopt them till they had crushed the manufacturing power of India. In India the manufacturing power of the people was stamped out by protection against her industries, and then free trade was forced on her so as to prevent a revival.' He said Indians paid 40 per cent more tax than the taxpayers of Great Britain and Ireland.

To check poverty, Dutt suggested two steps. The first was to revive the cottage industry to remove unemployment and underemployment outside cities. He also wanted the government to extend the irrigation facilities to decrease dependency on monsoon. Second, he wanted the government to be economical in its expenditure and lower the rate of interest on public debt. Dutt's aim was to curb the flow of wealth outside India.

Dutt's book, *Economic History of India*, is considered to be the most important historical work by a nationalist historian. It gives an authoritative and important account of socio-economic conditions of the masses under the colonial rulers. Like Ranade, he believed that political and economic policies were complementary to each other.

## Bipan Chandra

Bipan Chandra has presented his view that the capitalist nature of the Indian economy was acquired by the British and their ways of the capitalist economy. Although, there was distinction between the rich and the poor even before the coming of the British, money was not the most powerful commodity in the society. So, although there were numerous aspects that were of fascinating interest during the British rule of India, Bipan Chandra points out that the liberation movement, that was of course the most fascinating feature of the British period, and the change of the economic structure of the Indian society were the two most intriguing aspects during those times.

Bipan Chandra feels that the change of economic structure experienced by India during the British reign was a part of the change that was experienced worldwide under the European occupation of various colonies. He was of the opinion that the history of capitalism shows that it was not an independent move of any colony and that capitalism has always affected nations in a cluster. Bipan observed that although the Indian nation was deemed to be a democratic nation after independence, it was not a complete democratic structure as pure democracy is not possible under a capitalist environment. The methods of production and trade went through drastic changes after the British colonization.

Bipan Chandra also points out that the agrarianism and its rise was also something that happened during the British period. This was because of the fact that although the feudal structure still existed even during the times of the Mughals, the exploitation of the farmers was not so drastic. The British came to India with a frame of mind that was capitalistic to its core and they wanted to turn the traditional agricultural system in India into a capitalist agricultural system.

### Influence of Marx

In the 1940s and 1950s, economists had lost interest in studying Indian economic history, and the focus had shifted to political history. However, Marxists ideas gave a new spur to the research, and we see new interpretations after Independence. In the 1950s, N K Sinha wrote three volumes on economic history of Bengal. Sumit Sarkar interpreted this change in historical sensibilities as something that has emerged from the ‘conjuncture of the 1950s and 1960s, marked by a strong and apparently growing Left presence in Indian political and intellectual life... It was not mainstream British or American historiography, not even writings on South Asian themes, but a journal like *Past and Present*, the ‘transition debate’, and the work of historians like Hill, Hobsbawm and Thompson . . . that appeared most stimulating to Indian scholars exploring new ways of looking at history.’

As said earlier, Marxists ideologies opened up a whole new dimension of history writing, including economic history. Historians and economists now dealt with those aspects which were never discussed earlier. Issues such as demography, domestic trade, banking and currency were researched. In fact, Marxists ideologies influenced study of ancient and medieval history. According to Sarkar, studies on economic history saw major advancement. Agriculture, industrialization, and de-industrialization were some of the topics of discussion under the Marxist purview. Amiya Bagchi’s study of manufacturing employment in 19th century Bihar may be the most important modern study of de-industrialization and sparked a renewed discussion and debate which drew participants from India as well as around the world. His main thesis of his work on *Private Investment of India* was that ‘before the First World it was the governmental policy of free trade,

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and after the war it was the general depression in the capitalist system combined with the halting and piecemeal policy of tariff protection adopted by the Government of India, that limited the rate of investment in modern industry.' With this argument, Bagchi questioned all the thinkers who had debated that lack of development and slow growth of India was due to a shortage of capital and entrepreneurship.

**Trithankar Roy**

A professor at the London School of Economics, Roy based his arguments on continuity from colonial to post-colonial period. According to him, focusing at colonialism as the driver of India's economic history fails to capture the strings of continuity arising from the economic structure and social conditions. To him, the production process arising out of imperial demands led to economic growth based on labour-intensive production and natural resources. He saw the drawback in the dearth of public and private investments, lack of literacy, social inequalities and high population growth. Roy believes Independence did not bring a departure to these conditions, which, in fact, continued till 1990s. India shut itself from participating in the global economy and missed the economic boom the world economies experienced. After liberalization when India opened its gates to the world activities, the manufacturers were the most to benefit, who were intensive in semi-skilled labour. This he terms as 'welcome reversion to the colonial pattern of growth'.

Giving statistical proof, Roy shows that agriculture remained the mainstay of India's economy even after 50 years of Independence and a major contributor to the GDP (Gross Domestic Product). He further argued there was no significant change in the workforce today compared to that a century ago. He argues that 'India was more open economy in the colonial period relative both to the 18th century and to the first 40 years of its Independence. International flows of income and capital were also relatively larger in the colonial period than before or after'.

He further argued that 'money supply in colonial India was mainly influenced by the balance of payments. The primary objective of monetary policy was to stabilize the exchange rate. Stabilization of prices and outputs was meant to happen automatically. However, when Indian interests and Britain's interests came in conflict, stabilization in Britain's external account was usually in the minds of those who decided Indian affairs'.

For Roy, development and underdevelopment were not two sides of the same coin rather Britain and India in the 19th century were two different coins, influenced by global factors and by mutual interaction, but also by their differences. He argued that it would not be correct to think that the two countries would have taken the development path the same way, albeit for colonialism in India. He thought it was implausible.

In *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Volume II, introduction, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya has raised doubts on whether Roy's theory of reordering of craft and production in the 20th century and perhaps a revival can be extrapolated into the colonial period in general. Though Roy has given several cases studies of leather, brass carpet making and so on, Bhattacharya says the 'changing organization of production and increasing subordination of the craftsmen fail to get sufficient attention' in his essays.

**Indian Economy in the Mid-18th Century**

The period between the 18th century and the middle of the 20th century saw the economy of India subjugated to the needs of the British Empire and the various pockets of European



influence scattered along the coastline of India. Along with agricultural resources, luxury trade became an important part of the economy. This was in close comparison with the Marxist statements of the capitalist elites using the poor, where the poor barely met their ends and the affluent class had much more than they needed.

The early 18th century (the period from 1707 onwards) saw a decline of the Mughal Empire. The decline became rapid under the rule of Farrukhsiyar who ruled between 1713 and 1719. It was during his reign in 1717 that the British were allowed to trade in Bengal without any duties. This period saw the rise of the Maratha Empire. Besides the Marathas, the large territories under various Nawabs were almost totally independent only giving titular homage to the Mughal emperor. Despite the decline of the Mughal Empire, the tax administration was almost intact. It is said that in 1750, the Indian economy was almost as big as that of the Chinese economy which was by then the largest economy in the world. This happened after Robert Clive's victory over the Nawab of Bengal in the Battle of Plassey. The battle established the Company rule in Bengal which expanded over much of India for the next hundred years. This allowed the British East India Company the right to collect taxes or *diwani*. This was followed by the Battle of Buxar in 1764 which further strengthened the Company's influence over a larger area in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. The growth steadily continued after the victories in the Anglo-Mysore wars between 1766 and 1799; and the Anglo-Maratha wars between 1772 and 1818. Victories in these wars gave the East India Company virtual control over most India south of the Sutlej. The British followed a two pronged policy of expansion. The first comprised outright annexation of Indian states. The second form of expansion was through the form of alliances with princely states. This enabled the British to extend their influence and increase their revenue without the burden of a direct cost of administering the areas or the political cost of subjugating entire local populations.

Under this policy, the East India Company began tax administration over an empire spread over 250 million acres. It is reported that the annual revenue was of the order of £111 million by 1800. Most of this revenue was diverted to assist the British Crown during the Napoleonic wars.

### **Economic impact of British imperialism**

Whether the British rule had a great impact on the Indian economy has been bitterly debated by historians and even civil servants and parliamentarians. British politician Edmund Burke was one of the first to claim that Warren Hastings of the East India Company was responsible for the 'ruination' of the Indian economy and society.

Among the Indian historians this has been a common theme. The 18th century British rule laid the groundwork for the destruction of the traditional Indian economy. Such was the effect of inordinately high taxes that it depleted the food stocks of the peasants and resulted in the famine of 1770, which wiped out more than one third of the population of Bengal.

Dadabhai Naoroji was one of the first to propound the 'economic drain theory'. This theory essentially laid the ground for how the British rule and policies were structured in a manner so that there was a systematic drain of wealth from India to the coffers of the British.

P. J. Marshall, another British historian has taken a contrary view. His point of view is that the British generally continued with the same model of tax collection. His contention is that the British relied on the regional rulers and hence if there was a

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breakdown of the economy, it was more to do with the inherent inability of the local rulers to maintain prosperity.

### Rural and Urban Economy—The Transition

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It can be said that India in the 18th century saw two phases—one which was ending and the other that was about to begin in the mid-18th century. The East India Company was a trading entity which transformed into a power centre by the end of the century through wars and consolidating areas under its control. This transition brought in a change in the nature of the Indian economy. The Indian economy primarily catered to domestic demand and was more of a rural nature. The arrival of the European power changed this nature and production began on large-scale, mainly for export. It was still the cottage industry that fed to the domestic demand.

Modern industry (or large-scale industry) involved use of machinery, regulation and factories subject to some form of modern managerial practices. By contrast, in traditional industrial firms, machinery, size, regulation and hierarchical management played no significant role. Both traditional and modern industry shared one feature: intensive use of labour and/or locally available raw materials.

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## PREDECESSORS OF THE CONGRESS AND FORMATION OF THE CONGRESS

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Although unique to the modern world, the growth of nationalism as a phenomenon can be traced to the Middle Ages. By the Middle Ages, nation states had begun to be formed with definite boundaries. These nation states had a definite political system and a uniform law for the people inhabiting the state. People lived under the same political, social and economic system and shared common aspirations. The middle class had a significant role to play in the formation of the nation-states. In European countries like Italy and Germany, nationalism as a political ideologue emerged only in the 19th century. The French Revolution of 1789 ingrained the idea of nationalism and nation state. Since the 19th century, whenever there has been a call for a new sovereign state, violence has made its appearance. Two forces were always at work—nationalism and democracy. India as a nation was no exception to this rule. The mid-19th century saw the growth of nationalism in India. Colonial rule, destruction of the old social and political order, rise of a new social class—all contributed to the development of nationalism in India. The religious and social movements also contributed to the growth of nationalism.

During this period, reform movements were largely being swayed by two important intellectual principles—rationalism and religious universalism. A rational secular outlook was replacing blind faith that had crept into tradition and custom. Universalism was not purely philosophy. It affected political and social outlook till religious particularism took root in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The main objectives of this movement were liberal ideas, national unity, and progress. These could be achieved by removing the backward elements in traditional culture as well as the repressive elements in colonial culture and ideology. Jettisoning casteism and idolatry had to be done alongside an emphasis on reviving the vernacular languages. The plan included restoring the indigenous education system by restoring the ancient arts and medicine and reconstructing traditional Indian knowledge. The socio-religious movements were an essential part of the growing nationalist consciousness. At this point it was important to make Indians feel proud of

#### Check Your Progress

1. What primarily contributed to the socio-cultural evolution of the 19th century?
2. What promoted the growth of nationalism in India?
3. In the Indian context, what do you understand by the term 'middle class'?
4. Name two daily newspapers that helped in promoting nationalism in India.

being Indian, i.e., proud of their culture and heritage. This movement succeeded in doing that. The colonial cultural hegemonization process was stopped in its tracks.

Renaissance in India has been a great causal factor in the rise of modern Indian nationalism. It may also be regarded as an attempt on the part of scores of cultural factors to revive and reassert them: a sort of defensive mechanism against the impact of an alien political power in the country. A new humanist and cosmopolitan interpretation began to prevail upon the old belief. A radical trend emerged with representatives like Anantaranga Pillai, Abu Talib, Henry Vivian Derozio, and Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

There were a number of causes for the emergence of Indian nationalism. Some of these causes are as follows:

- (i) **British imperialism:** It facilitated in uniting Indians as during the British rule, the whole country came under one sovereign power. Before the arrival of the British, South India was separated from the rest of the country except for short intervals.
- (ii) **Role of transport and communication:** The advancement in the field of transportation and communication helped in accelerating the pace of the movement as leaders of the country were able to reach out to all Indians. The leaders were able to meet one another frequently and spread their ideas to parts of the country.
- (iii) **Administrative unification of India:** During the British rule, the administrative system was highly centralized. The British used modern administrative system to unify the whole country administratively. After the chaotic condition in the 18th century, due to waging of wars by European companies, the British rulers made efforts to establish peace and unified the country through their administrative system.
- (iv) **Influence of India's past:** Many European scholars such as Max Muller, Monier Williams, Roth, and Sassoon conducted historical researches on ancient Indian history. According to them, India had a glorious past and had a rich cultural heritage. These scholars appreciated the Vedas and Upanishads to a great extent. They also said that Indo-Aryans are from the same ethnic group to which Europeans belong. These studies and researches boosted the morale of Indians and instilled the spirit of nationalism and patriotism in them.
- (v) **Modern western thought and education:** Sir Charles E. Trevelyan, T.B. Macaulay and Lord William Bentick introduced English as a medium of instruction in the education system of the country. The introduction of English language was aimed at filling some clerical posts at the administrative level. However, it exposed the Indians to liberal and radical European thought. The outlook of European writers aroused the spirit of nationalism in Indians. Indians also learnt the ideals of secularism and democracy from these writers. Thus, English language became an important cause of Indian nationalism.
- (vi) **Impact of socio-religious reform movements:** Some of the prominent social and religious reformers of this period were Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Debendra Nath Tagore, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, and Vivekanand. These reformers influenced common people to a great extent.

When reformers learnt about western philosophy, ideals and science, they started examining the social practices, customs and beliefs of India in the light of western knowledge. These ideas gave rise to various social and religious reform movements

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like the Brahma Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Theosophical Society, Ramakrishna Mission and many other movements for the reformation of Muslim, Sikh and Parsi societies.

These movements were aimed at reformation and re-organization of society. Therefore, these movements promoted the ideas of equality, liberalism and enlightenment, and attacked idol worship, superstitions, caste system, untouchability and hereditary priesthood. In this way, reform movements also helped in developing the spirit of nationalism and patriotism.

- (vii) **Influence of contemporary European movements:** Contemporary strong currents of nationalist ideas, which pervaded the whole of Europe and South America also stimulated Indian nationalism. The American Revolution of 1776 infused strong aspirations for liberation and nationalism. In Europe, the national liberation movements of Greece and Italy in general and of Ireland in particular encouraged Indians to fight for their independence. Indians were also greatly inspired by the French Revolution, We find Surendranath Banerji delivering lectures on Joseph Mazzini and the 'Young Italy' Movement organized by him. Lajpat Rai often referred to the campaigns of Garibaldi and the activities of Carbonaris in his speeches and writings.
- (viii) **Racialism:** Indians were discriminated and were considered inferior. They were not allowed to share train compartment with the British. They were humiliated by the British. The law and police system of the British was partial towards Englishmen. Whenever, an English person was involved in a dispute with an Indian, the court used to favour the White. Indians were not allowed to enter a number of public places. Thus, the contempt of the British towards Indians made them come together to fight against the British.
- (ix) **Economic exploitation:** The British destroyed the local self-sufficient economy of India and introduced modern trade and industry. Indians realized that they have been exploited by the British. Under British rule, the economic system of India was made in such a way that it befitted the Englishmen.

The interest and welfare of Indians was not kept in mind. The value of Indian rupee in terms of English pound was kept less to promote import from England and discourage export from India. Indian agriculture was encouraged to produce raw materials for the industries of England. This factor made Indians dependent on England for finished goods. Later free trade policy was introduced to help the British industrialists in exporting goods to India without any hassles. All these factors led to increase in public debt.

The extravagant civil and military administration, the denial of high posts to Indians, the ever-mounting 'Home Charges', and the continuous drain of wealth from India resulted in stagnation of Indian economy. Periodical famines became a common feature of Indian economic life. During the second half of the 19th century, 24 famines occurred in various parts of India taking an estimated toll of 28 million lives. What is worse is that even during the famine times, export of food grains from India continued. The acknowledged high priest of the 'Drain theory' was Dadabhai Naoroji. Indian nationalists like Romesh Chandra Dutt, G.K. Gokhale, Justice Ranade, K.T. Telang, etc., developed the 'theory of increasing poverty in India' and attributed it to Britain's anti-India economic policies. This

developed a hatred for foreign rule and love for Swadeshi goods and Swadeshi rule. The spirit of nationalism received a powerful stimulus in the process.

- (x) **Ilbert Bill controversy:** Lord Ripon made an attempt to address the problems of Indians, but Ilbert Bill controversy enraged the Europeans. The objective of this Bill was to bring Indian judges on the same level as that of the European judges in Bengal Presidency. According to this Bill, Europeans could be tried by Indian judges. This Bill enraged all the Europeans and all of them stood against this Bill. Later, the Bill was modified which defeated its original objective. Though this Bill could not favour Indians, yet it made them realize that organized agitation can help them.
- (xi) **Lord Lytton's policies:** The following short-sighted acts and policies of Lord Lytton acted like catalyst and accelerated the nationalist movement:
- (a) To ensure that Indians are not able to share their opinion on a mass scale, Lytton passed Vernacular Press Act in 1878. This Act put a lot of restrictions on the Press. All Indians condemned this Act.
  - (b) Lord Lytton organized the grand Delhi Darbar in 1877. At this time, South India was facing a severe famine. Many people condemned this indifference of Lord Lytton. To show this contempt, one of the journalists of Calcutta remarked 'Nero was fiddling while Rome was burning.'
  - (c) Indians criticized Lytton a lot for the money he spent on the second Afghan War. This money was taken from the Indian treasury.
  - (d) Before the rule of Lytton, the maximum age limit for Indian Civil Service (ICS) Examination was 21 years. He lowered this age limit to 19 years with the help of a regulation that was passed in 1876. This age limit made it almost impossible for Indians to sit for this examination.
  - (e) Lytton passed one more Act in 1878 named the Arms Act. According to this Act, Europeans were given permission to keep arms, however, Indians could not keep arms without a licence. This Act clearly showed his policy of racial discrimination and his contempt towards Indians.
  - (f) In order to help the British manufacturers, Lytton removed the import duty on cotton manufactures.

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### Formation of Political Associations (up to 1885)

The British domination gave rise to some forces, which ultimately challenged British imperialism. For instance, the British forced English as medium of instruction in the education system of India, this went against the British as Indians came across the ideas of nationalism, political rights and democracy. These ideas resulted in a number of political associations, which were not known to Indians like then.

Many political associations were formed after 1836. In 1866, Dadabhai Naoroji organized the East-India Association in London. The objective of this association was to influence British 'to promote Indian welfare'. After some time, he opened its branches in various cities of India.

### Political associations in Bengal

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first Indian leader to start socio-political reform movements in India. He was greatly influenced by Western ideas. He supported a number of popular

movements all over the world. In 1821, when constitutional government was established in Spain, Ram Mohan Roy celebrated the event in Calcutta.

Rammohan Roy demanded liberty of the Press, appointment of Indians in civil courts and other higher posts, codification of law, etc. The task of organizing political associations was left to the associates of Rammohan Roy.

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- (i) **Bangabhasha Prakasika Sabha:** The first such association called 'Bangabhasha Prakasika Sabha' was formed in 1836. The association discussed various topics related to the policy and administration of the Government. It also sought redressal by sending petitions to the government.
- (ii) **Zamindari Association:** Formed in July 1837, it was more popularly known as the Landholders' Society. It was founded with an objective to safeguard the interests of the landlords in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. Although limited in its objectives, the Landholders' Society marks the beginning of an organized political activity. It used the methods of constitutional agitation for the redressal of grievances. The Landholders' Society of Calcutta cooperated with the British India Society, which was founded by Mr. Adams in London in the year 1839. The association functioned till 1844.
- (iii) **Bengal British India Society:** This society was formed in April 1843. The objective of this society was the 'collection and dissemination of information relating to the actual condition of the people of British India...and to employ such other means of peaceful and lawful character as may appear calculated to secure the welfare, extend the just rights, and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects.' This organization merged with Zamindari Association in 1851 and formed the British Indian Association.
- (iv) **British Indian Association:** Due to the failure of the Landholder's Society and the Bengal British India Society, the two associations were merged on 29 October 1851 to form a new British Indian Association. This association was dominated by members of the landed aristocracy and the primary objective of this association was to safeguard the interests of this class. However, the association followed a liberal approach and when the time came for the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company, it sent a petition to the Parliament in 1852. In this petition, it appealed for the establishment of a separate legislature of a popular character, separation of judicial from executive functions, reduction in the salaries of higher officers, abolition of salt duty, abkari and stamp duties. The appeals of the association were partially met and the Charter Act of 1853 provided for the addition of six members to the Governor-General's Council for legislative purposes. The British Indian Association continued its existence as a political body till 20th century even though it was over-shadowed by Indian National Congress.
- (v) **India League:** Babu Sisir Kumar Ghose founded this association in September 1875. The objective of this association was 'stimulating the sense of nationalism amongst the people'. This association also aimed at promoting political education.
- (vi) **Indian Association:** Within a year, the India League was superseded by the Indian Association. It was founded by Ananda Mohan Bose and Surendranath Banerjee on 26 July 1876. The Indian Association hoped to attract not only 'the middle classes' but also the masses, and therefore, it kept its annual subscription at ` 5 as opposed to the subscription of ` 50 p.a.

fixed by the British Indian Association. Soon, the Indian Association became 'the centre of the leading representatives of the educated community of Bengal.' The Indian Association merged with the National Congress in December 1886.

Lytton's unpopular measures whipped up political activity in India. A regulation of 1876 reduced the maximum age for appearing in the ICS Examination from 21 to 19 years. Since the examination was held only in London, young Indians had to face innumerable difficulties. The Indian Association took up this problem and organized an all-India agitation against it, which was popularly known as the Indian Civil Service Agitation.

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### Political associations in Bombay

- (i) **Bombay Association:** Bombay Association was founded on the lines of the British India Association of Calcutta on 26 August 1852. The Bombay Association sent a petition to the British Parliament urging the formation of new legislative councils which should have Indian representative as well. The Association condemned the policy of exclusion of Indians from higher services, and lavish expenditure on sinecure posts given to Europeans. This association did not survive for long.
- (ii) **Bombay Presidency Association:** Policies of Lytton and Ilbert Bill controversy caused political turmoil in Bombay. This led to the formation of Bombay Presidency Association in the year 1885. It was formed by the popularly called brothers-in-law: Mehta, Telang and Tyabji, representing the three chief communities of Bombay town.
- (iii) **Poona Sarvajanik Sabha:** This was established at Poona by Justice Ranade and others in the 1870s, with the objective to serve as a bridge between the government and the people. The Bombay Presidency Association and the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha worked in close collaboration.

### Political associations in Madras

- (i) **Madras Native Association:** This was set up as a branch of British Indian Association, Calcutta on 26 February 1852. The Madras Native Association also sent petition to the Parliament on the eve of the passing of the Charter Act of 1853. It made demands similar to that of the British Indian Association and the Bombay Association. However, the Madras Native Association was not popular.
- (ii) **Madras Mahajana Sabha:** This was formed by M. Vijayraghavachari, G. Subramanya Iyer, Ananda Charlu, Rangayya Naidu and others on 16 May 1884. It was aimed at coordinating the activities of local associations and providing a focus for the non-official intelligence spreading through the Presidency. It held two popular conferences: one was from 29th December to 31st December 1884, and second on 1st and 2nd January 1885. It demanded expansion of legislative councils, representation of Indians in legislative councils, separation of judicial from revenue functions, etc.

From the 1920s onwards till the last stages of the freedom struggle, Congress adopted Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's policy of non-violence and civil resistance. The period was also marked by Muhammad Ali Jinnah's constitutional struggle for the rights of minorities in India. Somehow left out of the mainstream freedom struggle, legendary figures like Subhas Chandra Bose later found it feasible to adopt a militant

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approach to attain freedom. Others like Swami Sahajanand Saraswati wanted both political and economic freedom for India's peasants and toiling masses. Poets like Rabindranath Tagore used literature, poetry and speech as mechanisms for political awareness. During the Second World War, campaigns such as the Quit India movement (led by 'Mahatma' Gandhi) and the Indian National Army (INA) movement (led by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose) immensely jolted the roots of the colonial tree in India and eventually resulted in the withdrawal of the British. Ultimately, these movements culminated in the Indian Independence Act 1947, which created the independent dominions of India and Pakistan. India remained a Dominion of the Crown till 26 January 1950, when the Constitution of India came into force, establishing the Republic of India. On the other hand, Pakistan remained a dominion till 1956.

### **Formation of the Indian National Congress**

The Indian National Congress was formed due to the efforts of a number of people. The presence of number of political associations across the country, and spread of the ideals of patriotism and nationalism prepared the foundation of the Indian National Congress. It was formed in the year 1885 but its origin is not known. According to Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya, its origin is 'shrouded in mystery'. However, many people believe that A.O. Hume laid its foundation under Lord Dufferin. He formed the Indian National Congress to 'provide a 'safety-valve' to the anticipated or actual discontentment of the Indian intelligentsia and to form a quasi-constitutional party similar to Her Majesty's Opposition in England.' According to W.C. Banerjee, the First Congress President, the Indian National Congress was formed by Lord Dufferin, Viceroy of India. He also believed that Lord Dufferin formed it because he wanted a political organization which can understand the 'real wishes' of the people so that the British government could prevent political outbursts in the country.

On 1 March 1883, in an open letter, Hume had appealed to the students of Calcutta University to set up an organization in India. He officially clarified that his objective was 'to form a constitutional method to prevent the spread of dissatisfaction caused by western ideas, education, inventions, and machines and it was essential to take measures for the security and continuity of the British Government'. Some scholars believe that Ripon advised Hume to form an organization of educated Indians. Recently, some scholars analysed Dufferin's correspondence to Hume as well as the activities of the early nationalists, they concluded that the theory of 'safety valve' is a myth.

The Indian National Congress was founded on 28 December 1885 at Sir Tej Pal Sanskrit Vidyalaya, Bombay. It will not be correct to say that it was a sudden event rather it was as Bipan Chandra states, 'the culmination of a process of political awakening that had its beginnings in the 1860s and 1870s and took a major leap forward in the late 1870s and early 1880s'. Also, a lot of attempts were made by Indian Nationalists for the formation of a political organization on all-India scale. For instance, two National Conferences were organized by Indian Association.

A.O. Hume succeeded in forming an All India Party, which was attended by 72 delegates. Most of the Indian leaders could not attend this session as a National Conference was going on in Calcutta at the same time. The objectives of both these organizations were same. The Indian National Conference was later merged into the National Congress. It would be wrong to believe that he laid the foundation of the Indian National Congress single-handedly as many people were involved in its formation. Most of the leaders were able to accept Hume because they felt that he would not be biased



towards any region or caste. It is because he did not belong to any of these groups and he had a sincere love for India.

Some of the members of the Indian National Congress were Pherozeshah Mehta, W.C. Banerji, Anandamohan Bose, Badruddin Tyabji, Surendranath Banerji, and Romesh Chandra Dutt. This association was different from others as none of the earlier associations had complete independence as their agenda. The Congress made some demands, which can be divided into three categories: political, administrative and economic.

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### (i) Political demands

- Greater power to the Supreme Council and local Legislative Council
- Discussion on budget to be held by the council
- Representation of the council through local bodies like Universities and Chambers of Commerce
- Creation of Legislative Assembly in Punjab, Awadh (NWP) and North-West Frontier Province (NWFP)

### (ii) Economic demands

The Congress sessions, between 1855 and 1905, regularly passed resolutions for:

- Reduction in land revenue
- Establishment of agricultural banks
- Reduction in home charge and military expenditure
- Ending unfair tariffs and excise duties
- Enquiring the causes behind India's poverty and famines
- Providing more funds for technical education
- Development of Indian industries
- Better treatment for Indian coolies in foreign countries
- Change in forest laws so that tribal can use forest

### (iii) Administrative demands

- ICS examination in India as well as England
- Increase Indian volunteer force
- Understanding of Indian needs on the part of administration
- Separation of Judiciary from Executive power and extension of trial by jury
- Higher posts in the army for Indians

## Objectives of the Congress

The primary objective of the Congress was to make people feel that they belong to a single nation—India. The diversity in India in terms of caste, creed, religion, tradition, language made this a difficult task. However, it was not impossible. Many important people like Pherozshah Mehta, Dadabhai Naoroji, K.T. Telang and Dinshaw Wacha, attended the first session of the Indian National Congress. The objectives of the Congress laid down by W.C. Banerjee, the President of the first session of the Indian National Congress, are as follows:

- Promoting personal intimacy and friendship among people who are working for the cause of the country
- Eradicating prejudices related to race, creed and provinces through friendly interaction

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- Consolidating the sentiments of national unity
- Maintaining authoritative record of the educated Indians' views on the prominent issues of the day
- Determining methods by which native politicians can work towards public interest during the next twelve months
- Training and organizing public opinion
- Formulating and presenting popular demands before the government through petitions

The Congress was supported by people of all religions. W.C. Banerjee, the first President of the Indian National Congress, was an Indian Christian. The second President was Dadabhai Naoroji, who was a Parsee. The third President was Badruddin Tayabji who was a Muslim. The fourth and fifth Presidents were George Yule and William Baderburn who were Britishers.

### Early Nationalists: Programmes and Policies

We have already seen that some of the educated Indians were playing major roles in cultivating a sense of nationalism. Some of the early nationalist, also known as the moderates, were the ones who set up the Indian national Congress. Here are some of the prominent names:

- 1. Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912):** He was of Scottish descent. He joined the Bengal Civil Service in 1849 and made a lot of efforts to remove the social maladies of the country. His superiors did not favour him, thus, he had to retire in 1882. He took initiative to form the Indian National Congress in 1885. In 1889, he helped in setting up the British Committee of the Congress in London as well. This committee started its journal named 'India'.
- 2. Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917):** He was known as 'the Grand Old Man of India'. He was associated with the Indian National Congress right from its inception and became its president thrice: in 1886, 1893 and 1906. He was the first Indian to become a Member of the House of Commons on the Liberal Party's ticket. During his stay in England, from 1855 to 1869, he educated British public on Indian affairs through the London Indian Association and the East India Association. A book by Naoroji *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* was published in 1901. This book had statistics to prove that the drain of wealth from India to Great Britain was the cause of growing poverty in India.
- 3. Pherozeshah Mehta (1845-1915):** He was born in a middle class Parsi family of Bombay. He was one of the founders of the Bombay Presidency Association and the Indian National Congress. He was also a pioneer of the Swadeshi and founded the famous Bombay Chronicle in 1913.
- 4. Surendranath Banerjea (1848-1925):** He was an eminent leader who passed the ICS examination in 1871 and started his career as an Assistant Magistrate at Sylhet. A controversy with the government led him to leave the job. He was the founder of the Indian Association in 1876. In 1883, he convened a National Conference which was the precursor of the Indian National Congress. He presided over the Congress sessions twice. He was elected the first President of the Indian National Liberal Federation in 1918 and in 1921, he became a minister in Bengal.

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5. **Badruddin Tyabji (1844-1906):** He was the first Indian barrister at Bombay High Court and was nominated to Bombay Legislative Council in 1882. He was one of the founders of the Bombay Presidency Association and the Indian National Congress. He was the President at the third Congress session in Madras in 1887. He helped Muslims in the causes of educational advancement and social reforms as the Secretary and then as the President of the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay. He strongly pleaded for the education of women.
6. **Womesh Chander Banerjee (1844-1906):** He represented the Calcutta University in the Bengal Legislative Council. He was the first Congress President at Bombay in 1885. He left India in 1902 to settle in England to practise before the Privy Council. He financed the British Committee of the Congress in London and its journal 'India'.
7. **Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946):** He was born and educated at Allahabad. He started his career as a lawyer and as an able Parliamentarian. He was a member of the Provincial and Central Legislatures for several terms. He promoted the use of indigenous products and helped in organizing the Indian Industrial Conference and the UP Industrial Association at Allahabad in 1907. In 1926, he organized his own Nationalist Party. He also established the Banaras Hindu University and for several years served as its Vice-Chancellor.
8. **Tej Bahadur Sapru (1872-1949):** He was a conscientious and successful lawyer who specialized in constitutional law. He helped Mrs Besant to build up the Central Hindu College at Banaras and to establish the Banaras Hindu University in collaboration with Malaviya. He entered politics during the Home Rule movement and associated in drafting Nehru Committee Report of 1928. He participated in the Round Table conferences as well.
9. **Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915):** He was a follower of Mahadev Govind Ranade who was popularly known as the Socrates of Maharashtra. He joined the Deccan Educational Society founded by Ranade. He edited the quarterly journal of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha. He played a great part, officially and unofficially, in the formulation of the Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909. His principles attracted Gandhiji, who became Gokhale's pupil. In 1905, he laid the foundation of the 'Servants of India Society' for the training of national missionaries and to promote, by constitutional means, the true interests of the Indian people.
10. **Kashinath Trimbak Telang (1850-1893):** He was a co-founder of the Bombay Presidency Association. He was one of the leading men who founded the Congress and became its first 'hardworking secretary'. He was active in the sphere of social reforms and was the President of the National Social Conference. He rose to the position of a High Court Judge.
11. **Rashbehari Ghose (1845-1921):** After obtaining the Law degree, he enrolled himself as an advocate at the Calcutta High Court. He became a member of the Bengal Legislative Council in 1889. He was the Chairman, Reception Committee of the Congress, in its Calcutta session in 1906. He was also the President-elect for the Surat session of the Congress in 1907. He was deputed by the Congress to proceed with its delegation to England and forward its point of view before the British Government.

Since its inception in 1885 till the time India won its Independence in 1947, the Congress was the largest and most prominent Indian political organization. In its initial stages, the Indian National Congress was a political unit, however, in due course of time

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it supported the cause of social reform and human development. The Indian National Congress is said to have also provided impetus to the spirit of nationalism. In its early stages, there was unity in the Indian National Congress and it was marked by the learning of democratic methods and techniques. The leaders of the INC believed that the British government was responsive to their needs and were willing to make changes accordingly. However, over a period of time, the Indian masses became disillusioned with the concept of nationalism. They suddenly became aware that their petitions not as fruitful as expected and that the British subtly avoided taking any action. Even in the phase of dissatisfaction, there were some Congress leaders who believed in the methods of the British government and came to be known as moderates. Since these moderate leaders failed to produce desired results, a new stream of leaders came up who were known as the extremists. These extremists disagreed with the traditional methods of moderates that were limited to writing petitions and conducting agitations to get themselves heard. The extremists were not satisfied with a dominion status and demanded complete independence from the British government.

### Moderate

Due to the low-level of political awareness, the achievements of moderate nationalists were not immense. However, by 1907, the moderates were pushed to the background with the emergence of an extremist class in the Congress. The failure to produce any results for the welfare of the people resulted in the creation of an extremist group and the division of Congress into two factions. Leaders of moderate phase mainly came from Bombay, Bengal and Madras. For example, Badruddin Tayabji, Dada Bhai Naoroji, Pherozshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, K.T. Telang and Govind Ranade were from Bombay. Wumesh Chander Banerji, Anand Mohan Bose. Surendra Nath Banerji and Ramesh Chandra Dutta were from Bengal. Similarly, Subamanya Ayer, Anand Charlu, and Raghavacharya were from Madras. Very few leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya and Pundit D. P. Dhar came from north India. These moderate leaders treated British rule as a blessing. They sincerely believed that the British rule would make India a developed democratic and liberal country. They had the illusion that the British would introduce modern institutions and remove superstitious belief. They saw England as a source of inspiration and treated English as their political, guru. Many of these nationalist leaders had anglicized life style. All they wanted and expected from the British was a 'reform package' for Indians.

The moderates believed in peaceful methods to get their demands across. They believed in writing petitions and peaceful protests. Though the Moderates failed to make the same impact as the extremists, they petitioned a number of reforms during this time.

- 1. Constitutional reforms:** The Moderates demanded the expansion and reform of the existing Legislative Councils from 1885 to 1892. They demanded the introduction of the system of direct elections and an increase in the number of members and powers of the Legislative Councils. It is true that their agitation forced the Government to pass the Indian Councils Act of 1892 but the moderates were not satisfied with what was given to the people of India. No wonder, they declared the Act of 1892 as a 'hoax.' They demanded a large share for the Indians in the Legislative Councils. By the beginning of the 20th century, the Moderates put forward the claim for Swarajya or self-government within the British Empire on the model of the other self-governing colonies like Australia and Canada. This demand was made from the Congress platform by Gokhale in 1905 and by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1906.

**2. Demand for economic reforms:** The Congress opposed the British attempt to develop in India the basic characteristics of a colonial economy, namely, the transformation of India into a supplier of raw materials, a market for British manufactures and a field of investment for foreign capital. Moderates took note of all the three forms of contemporary colonial economic exploitation, namely through trade, industry and finance. They organized a powerful all-India agitation against the abandonment of tariff-duties on imports and against the imposition of cotton excise duties. The moderates carried on agitation for the reduction of heavy land revenue payments. They urged the government to provide cheap credit to the peasantry through agricultural banks and to make available irrigation facilities on a large scale. They asked for improvement in the conditions of work of the plantation labourers. They demanded a radical change in the existing pattern of taxation and expenditure which put a heavy burden on the poor while leaving the rich, especially the foreigners, with a very light load. They demanded the abolition of salt tax which hit the poor and lower middle classes hard. The moderates complained of India's growing poverty and economic backwardness and put the blame on the politics of the British Government. They blamed the government for the destruction of the indigenous industries like the traditional handicrafts industries in the country. They demanded the rapid development of the modern industries which would help in the removal of India's poverty. They wanted the government to give tariff protection to the Indian industries. They advocated the use of Swadeshi goods and the boycott of British goods. They demanded that the economic drain of India by England must stop. Most of them opposed the large scale investment of foreign capital in the Indian railways, plantations and industries on the ground that it would lead to the suppression of Indian capitalists and the further strengthening of the British hold on India's economy and polity.

**3. Administrative and miscellaneous reforms:** Moderates criticized the individual administrative measures and worked hard to reform the administrative system which was ridden with corruption, inefficiency and oppression. They demanded the Indianization of the higher grades of the administrative services; the demand was put forward on economic, political and moral grounds. Economically, the high salaries paid to the European put a heavy burden on Indian finance, and contributed to the economic drain. Indians of similar qualifications could be employed on lower salaries. Europeans sent a large part of their salaries back to England and also got their pensions in England. That added to the drain of wealth from India. Politically, the European civil servant ignored the needs of the Indians and favoured the European capitalists at the cost of their Indian counterparts. It was hoped that the Indianization of the services would make the administration more responsive to Indian needs. Morally, the existing system dwarfed the Indian character reducing the tallest Indian to permanent inferiority in his own country. Moderates demanded the separation of the judiciary from the executive so that the people might get some protection from the arbitrary acts of police and bureaucracy. They were opposed to the policy of disarming the people of India by the government. They opposed the aggressive foreign policy against India's neighbours and protested against the policy of the annexation of Burma, the attack upon Afghanistan and the suppression of the tribal people in North-Western India. They wanted the government to spend more money on the spread of education

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in the country. They also took up the cause of the Indians who had been compelled by poverty to migrate to the British colonies in search of employment. In many of these foreign lands they were subjected to severe oppression and racial discrimination.

- 4. Defense of Civil Rights:** They opposed the restrictions imposed by the government on the modern civil rights, namely the freedom of speech and the press. Almost from the beginning of the 19th century, politically conscious Indians had been attracted to modern civil rights especially the freedom of the press. As early as 1824, Raja Ram Mohan Roy had protested against a regulation restricting the freedom of the press. In the period from 1870 to 1918, the main political task was that of politicization of nationalist ideology. The press was the chief instrument for carrying out this task. Indian newspapers began to find their feet in 1870's. The Vernacular Press Act of 1878, directed only against Indian language newspapers, was conceived in great secrecy and passed at a single sitting of the Imperial Legislative Council. The act provided for the confiscation of the printing press, paper and other materials of a newspaper if the government believed that it was publishing seditious material and had flouted an official warning. Indian nationalist opinion firmly opposed the Act. Various public bodies and the press also campaigned against the Act. Consequently, it was repealed in 1881 by Lord Ripon. Surendranath Banerjee was the first Indian to go to jail in performance of his duty as a journalist. However, the man who is most frequently associated with the struggle for the freedom of press during the nationalist movement was Bal Gangadhar Tilak. In 1897, B. G. Tilak and many other leaders were arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for condemning the government through their speeches and writings. The Nattu brothers of Poona were deported without trial. The entire country protested against this attack on the liberties of the people. The arrest of Tilak marked the beginning of new phase of the nationalist movement.

### Failure of the Moderates

The basic weakness of the moderates lay their narrow social base. Their movement did not have wide appeal. In fact; the leaders lacked political faith in the masses. The area of their influence was limited to the urban community. As they did not have the support of the masses, they declared that the time was not ripe for throwing out a challenge to the foreign rulers. That was likely to invite mature repression. However, it must not be presumed that moderate leaders fought for their narrow interests. Their programmes and policies championed the cause of all sections of the Indian people and represented nation-wide interests against colonial exploitation.

Critically evaluating the work of the Moderates, it appears that they did not achieve much success. Very few of the reforms advocated by them were carried out. The foreign rulers treated them with contempt. The moderates failed to acquire any roots among the common people and even those who joined the Congress with high hopes were feeling more and more disillusioned. The politics of the moderates was described as 'halting and half-hearted.' Their methods were described as those of mendicancy or beggary through prayers and petitions.

Moderates failed to keep pace with the yearnings and aspirations of the people. They did not realize that the political and economic interests of the Indians and the

British clashed and consequently the British people could not be expected to give up their rights and privileges in India without a fight. Moreover, it was during this period that a movement started among the Muslims to keep away from the Congress and that ultimately resulted in the establishment of Pakistan. In spite of their best efforts, the moderates were not able to win over the Muslims.

The social composition of Congress remained, by and large the same till 1905. A. O. Hume tried his best to bring Muslims and peasants into the Congress fold, but with little success. The Muslim elite, especially from Aligarh, felt that they would lose from the elected councils and that the Hindus would dominate (Hindus were in majority in most places). The Muslim elite also opposed competitive examinations for the recruitment into civil services, as it was based on modern English education and the Muslims were far behind the Hindus in this field. They feared Hindu domination in the civil services too. All these factors kept Muslims away from the Congress; neither did the Congress give a serious look into inducting Muslims. This was a big mistake, as they realized in later years.

Thus, it is clear that the Congress was not only concerned with the issues of zamindars, capitalist and English educated professionals, but it also showed concern for almost all the sections of the society. The objectives of the Congress were never the reason for calling it ‘moderate’, rather its methods and style of functioning. The early Congress leaders believed in the constitutional method of struggle, i.e., through petitions, speeches and articles. One important reason for this was the social composition of early Congress leaders. They came from successful professional background (most of them were lawyers, journalists and academicians) and their personal life-style was anglicised. Perhaps, the first lesson they learned from the British was how to write applications and give petitions. Moreover, politics, for most of them, remained a part-time affair.

### **Extremists**

The closing decade of the 19th century and early years of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of a new and younger group within the Indian National Congress, which was sharply critical of the ideology and methods of the old leadership. These ‘angry young men’ advocated the adoption of Swaraj as the goal of the Congress, which was to be achieved by more self-reliant and independent methods. The new group came to be called the extremists in contrast to the older one which began to be referred to as the moderates.

The militant form of nationalism was first found in the teachings and preaching of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was inspired by the *Bhagavad Gita* and visualized a united India. Swami Vivekananda, who was called the prophet of nationalism by Bipin Chandra Pal, added spiritual dimension to the idea of nationalism. He inspired the youth of his time, more than anyone else. The root of extremism lies in two important factors—the policies of colonial rule, and the failure of moderate leaders to attract younger generation and common people.

### **Factors that Led to the Rise of Extremism**

Following are the factors led to the rise of extremists:

- Enlightenment of the true nature of British rule
- Civil Services examinations was disallowed

## **NOTES**

## NOTES

- Partition of Bengal
- The Indian Council Act, 1892, failed to introduce an elective element in India and provided for selection of some members
- Adoption of the Tariff and Cotton Duties Act of 1894 and 1896 by the Indians
- Curbing freedom of press (1904) and controlling universities through Indian University Act (1904)
- Defeat of Russia (1904-05) by Japan inspired the educated youth
- Circulation of Vernacular newspaper went up from 2,99,000 in 1885 to 8,17,000 in 1905. Some of the popular journals like *Kesari* (Marathi) and *Bangabhasi* (Bengali) opposed the moderate Congress
- The famine of Maharashtra in 1896

**Objectives and Methods of Extremists**

The new turn in Indian politics found expression in two forms—the formation of the extremist group within the Congress and the growth of terrorism or revolutionary movement in the country at large. Four prominent Congress leaders—Lokamanya Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and Lala Lajpat Rai, defined the creed of the new group, gave articulate form to its aspirations and guided its operations. One of the earliest leaders who criticized the moderate politics systematically, in a series of articles titled ‘New Lamps for Old’ was Aurobindo Ghose. He did not like the constitutional method of struggle based on English model and attacked the soft attitude of the Congress. He told them not to take inspiration from England but to take inspiration from French Revolution (1789-99). He also suggested bringing the proletariat (working) class in the national movement. The emerging leaders in the Congress, like Bipin Chandra Pal, Ashwini Kumar Dutta, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, were not happy with the ‘prayers’ and ‘petitions’ methods. They were in favour of self-reliance, constructive work, mass contact through *melas*, public meetings, use of mother tongue in education and political works. They argued that ‘good government is no substitute for self-government’. The issue of Swadeshi Movement widened the gap between the moderates and the extremists. The extremists wanted to spread the movement in the entire country and complete non-cooperation with the government. Lajpat Rai and Tilak were more aggressive in their ideas and plans.

Lajpat Rai thundered ‘no national is worthy of any political status if it cannot distinguish between begging rights and claiming them’. He further argued that ‘sovereignty rests with the people; the state exists for them and rules in their name’. But the true founder of militant nationalism was Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He criticized the moderates in his unique style— ‘we will not achieve any success in our labours if we croak once a year like a frog’. He was quick to set the political goal of India, i.e., ‘Swaraj’ or self-government instead of reform in administration. He showed greater confidence and ability when he declared ‘Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it’. He was a pioneer in many ways. He used religious symbols and festivals, like Ganesh festival since 1894, to mobilize people and he made patriotic-cum-historical cult through Shivaji festival since 1896 to inspire the youth. He even carried out the no-revenue campaign in 1896–97, during severe famine in Maharashtra. He called upon the government to take those measures of relief, which were provided under law in the Famine Relief Code. Through his paper, *Kesari*, he made an appeal to the people to refuse to pay taxes. He wrote angrily, ‘Can you not be bold even in the grip



of death'. He also started Boycott Movement on the issue of countervailing Cotton Excise Duty Act of 1896. It should be clearly understood that the extremists' demand for Swaraj was a demand for 'complete freedom from foreign control and full independence to manage national affairs without any foreign restraints'. The Swaraj of the moderate leaders was merely a demand for colonial self-government within the Empire. The methods employed by the two groups (moderates and extremists) were different in their tempo and approach. The extremists had no faith in the benevolence of the British public or parliament, nor were they convinced of the efficacy of merely holding conferences. The extremists also affirmed their faith in passive resistance, mass agitation and strong will to suffer or make self-sacrifices. The new leadership sought to create a passionate love for liberty, accompanied by a spirit of sacrifice and a readiness to suffer for the cause of the country. They strove to root out from the people's mind the omnipotence of the ruler, and instead give them self-reliance and confidence in their own strength. They had deep faith in the strength of the masses and they planned to achieve Swaraj through mass action. They, therefore, pressed for political work among the masses and for direct political action by the masses. The extremists advocated boycott of the foreign goods, use of *swadeshi* goods, national education and passive resistance.

## SUMMARY

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- In India, during the 18th century, there were clashes, crises, calamities and problems between various groups of people.
- There was evolution from the Medieval Age to the Modern Age. Indians were exposed to new thought and ideas, owing to their encounter with the western forces.
- The impact of British rule on the economic conditions and society of India was a factor that primarily contributed to the socio-cultural evolution of the 19th century.
- The Indian Press had an important role to play in developing nationalism among the citizens of the country. Indian nationalists used the press as a powerful media to spread the message of nationalism.
- M. G. Ranade is considered the pioneer of Indian nationalist economics. A teacher of economics, Ranade wrote mostly on poverty.

## NOTES

### Check Your Progress

8. When was the interim government of India formed?
9. Which body formulated proposals for the formation of a government that would lead to an independent India?
10. How many representatives did the constituent assembly consist of?
11. Who was the home minister at the time of the Mountbatten Plan?
12. When was the Mountbatten Plan announced in the British Parliament?

## NOTES

- A contemporary of Ranade, Dutt, too, was concerned with poverty. He held the British policies responsible for recurring famines, low productivity and decay of domestic industry in India.
- Bipan Chandra has presented his view that the capitalist nature of the Indian economy was acquired by the British and their ways of the capitalist economy.
- In 1857, the British completed hundred years of stay in India since the war of Plassey. During this time the Indian rulers were unhappy for the loss of former glory and the peasants were discontent at having been reduced to serfs.
- The Indian National Congress was formed due to the efforts of a number of people. Presence of number of political associations across the country, and spread of the ideals of patriotism and nationalism prepared the foundation of the Indian National Congress.
- The primary objective of the Congress was to make people feel that they belong to a single nation—India.
- The militant form of nationalism was first found in the teachings and preaching of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Swami Dayananda Saraswati.
- When the British government decided to partition Bengal, it led to intense agitation against the government, and the most significant pan-India agitation against the British was the Non-Cooperation Movement that lasted from 1919 to 1922.
- This movement was started by Mahatma Gandhi to further the cause of Indian nationalism.
- Soon after he was given the responsibility of the Civil Disobedience Movement, Gandhi wrote a letter to Viceroy Irwin seeking the abolishment of salt tax, reduction of military expenditure and the release of political prisoners.
- For the cause of immediate independence, the Quit India Movement was launched by Gandhi. It was another form of the civil disobedience movement.
- The foundation of Indian National Congress in 1885 was an attempt to narrow the Hindu-Muslim divide and place the genuine grievances of all the communities in the country before the British.
- The last two years of British rule were marked by tortuous negotiations between the British, the Congress and Muslim League politicians.

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## KEY TERMS

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- **Resolution:** It refers to a formal expression of opinion or intention agreed on by a legislative body, committee, or other formal meeting, typically after taking a vote.
- **Fascism:** It is a political ideology characterised by an authoritarian and nationalistic right-wing system of government and social organization.
- **Two-nation theory:** It is the ideology that the primary identity of Muslims on the Indian subcontinent is their religion, rather than their language or ethnicity, and therefore Indian Hindus and Muslims are two distinct nationalities, regardless of ethnic or other commonalities.

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## ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

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1. The impact of British rule on the economic conditions and society of India was a factor that primarily contributed to the socio-cultural evolution of the 19th century.
2. The growth of nationalism was motivated by the centralization of British rule in India.
3. In India, the term ‘middle class’ is applied to various groups that have varying scope of social standing and experience.
4. *Amrit Bazar Patrika* and *Samachar Darpan*.
5. The Indian National Congress was founded on 28 December 1885 at Sir Tej Pal Sanskrit Vidyalaya, Bombay.
6. W.C. Banerjee was the first president of the Indian National Congress.
7. Swaraj means self-government.

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## QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. What triggered the intellectual movement in India?
2. List the main constituents of the middle class in 19th century India.
3. Who were the eminent personalities linked to the nationalist movement through their writings?
4. What was Bipan Chandra’s view on economic nationalism?
5. List the political demands of the Congress in its early years.
6. What were the economic demands of the Congress?
7. What were the programmes and policies of the early nationalists?
8. What were the two roots from which extremism stemmed?
9. Write a short note on the objectives of extremist

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the intellectual movement in India in the 19th century.
2. Discuss the emergence of the middle class in India.
3. Explain the role of literature and press in Indian nationalism.
4. What do you understand by economic nationalism? Discuss in detail.
5. Discuss the foundation of Indian National Congress.

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## FURTHER READING

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- Byres, T.J., Harbhans Mukhia. 1985. *Feudalism and Non-European Societies*. New Delhi: Routledge Publishers.
- S. Cromwell, Crawford. 1987. *Ram Mohan Roy: Social, Political and Religious Reform in 19th Century India*. US: Paragon House.
- Habib, Irfan. 2001. *Economic History of Medieval India: A Survey*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors.

# UNIT 5 INDIA NATIONAL MOVEMENT-II

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NOTES

## Structure

Introduction  
Unit Objectives  
Mass Movements:  
Non-Cooperation  
Civil Disobedience  
Quit India  
India's Independence  
Summary  
Key Terms  
Answers to 'Check Your Progress'  
Questions and Exercises  
Further Reading

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## INTRODUCTION

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In this unit you will learn about the emergence of nationalism in India, as well as the Indian Freedom Movement. The earlier reformers understood that colonization was the root cause to India's poverty and economic backwardness. The destruction of the rural and local self-sufficient economy and modern trade practices and setting up of factories on an all-India scale had increasingly made India's economic life a single whole and interlinked the economic fate of people living in different parts of the country. Furthermore, the introduction of the railways, telegraph and unified postal systems had brought the different parts of the country together and promoted mutual contact among the people, especially among the leaders. As a result of the spread of modern western education and thought during the 19th century, a large number of Indians imbibed a modern rational, secular, democratic and nationalist political outlook. The spread and popularity of the English language helped nationalist leaders of different linguistic regions to communicate with each other.

This unit focuses on the predecessors of the Indian National Congress, the foundation of the Indian National Congress and the programmes and policies of early nationalists. It then discusses the Indian Freedom Movement under the leadership of Gandhi, all the way to Indian Independence.

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## UNIT OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the Non-Cooperative Movement
- Identify the importance of the Quit India Movement
- Explain the emergence of communal politics in India

- Assess the role of Indian National Army in India's freedom struggle
- Discuss the events that led to India's partition into two nations

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## MASS MOVEMENTS: NON-COOPERATION, CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, QUIT INDIA AND INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE

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Let us study the mass movements which led to the independence of India from the British Rule.

### Non-Cooperation

When the British government decided to partition Bengal, it led to intense agitation against the government, and the most significant pan-India agitation against the British was the Non-Cooperation Movement that lasted from 1919 to 1922. This movement was started by Mahatma Gandhi to further the cause of Indian nationalism. Under his guidance and leadership, the Indian National Congress adapted the policy of passive resistance against British rule. The launch of the Non-Cooperation Movement was set against the backdrop of the Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, which increased the bitter resentment people had towards the British rule, the imposition of martial law in Punjab and the Montagu Chelmsford Report (1919) with its ill-considered scheme of diarchy. The British government passed the report with the intention to gradually introduce self-governing institutions in India. However, not only did these reforms frustrate the Indian hope of self-governance, the British were also very critical of the policies of this reform.

Discontent against the British increased with the appointment of the Hunter Commission to report the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. The Hunter Commission did not take any disciplinary action against General Dyer and rather favoured this act of violence as an attempt to subdue a protest. This report infuriated the Indian leaders and made present conditions ripe for another protest.

At this point, a large number of educated Muslim leaders emerged, who had their own issues with the British government. The Muslims were discontent with the British

#### Check Your Progress

5. When and where was the Indian National Congress founded?
6. Who was the first president of the Indian National Congress?
7. What does 'Swaraj' mean?

## NOTES

regarding the insensitive treatment of Turkey in World War I as they regarded the Caliph of Turkey as their spiritual leader. The Muslims had been assured that the Caliph would be treated leniently after the defeat of Turkey and its allies in World War I. However, the post-war treaty ruthlessly curtailed the powers of the Caliph, and the Indian Muslims started the Khilafat movement. Gandhi found the time was ripe to align with this movement and bring the Hindus and Muslims together. His skill at the political game ensured he won over the Muslims.

On the initiatives taken by the Ali brothers, Mohammad and Shaukat, the first call for non-cooperation came from the All India Khilafat Conference in Delhi on 22-23 November 1919. At a Khilafat Conference held in Allahabad, a four stage non-cooperation programme was announced. This non-cooperation programme included the boycott of the following:

- (i) Titles
- (ii) Civil services
- (iii) Police and Army
- (iv) Payment of taxes

The Non-Cooperation Movement was officially launched on 1 August 1920, after the notice given by Gandhi to the Viceroy expired. In this notice, Gandhi had demanded the right recognized 'from time immemorial of the subject to refuse to assist a ruler who misrules'. At its session held in Kolkata in 1920, the India National Congress decided the aims and charter of the movement, which were similar to those of the Khilafat Conference of Allahabad. These resolutions were endorsed at the session of the Congress held at Nagpur in December 1920. In addition, other resolutions for the betterment of the party organization were also drawn up. Membership to the party was opened to all adult men and women based on the payment of 4 annas as subscription fees.

The movement enjoyed massive popular appeal, and in the first month scores of students left government schools and colleges and joined national institutions that had started all over the country. This boycott was particularly successful in Bengal under the leadership of Chitta Ranjan Das and Subhas Chandra Bose. Punjab also supported this educational boycott and Lala Lajpat Rai played a monumental role there. Other states where educational boycott were seen include Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa and Assam. Legal boycott was not as successful as educational boycott. However, many leading lawyers including C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, M.R. Jayakar, Asif Ali, C Rajagopalachari and S Kitchlu left their flourishing legal practice and joined the cause of independence. Their sacrifice proved inspirational for people. Khadi was given importance as it was an indigenous handspun product and charkas were also distributed. This led to the boycott of foreign goods. Advertisements in nationalist newspapers were given, inviting people to participate in burning of foreign goods. These nationalist efforts led to the decline in cloth exports to a great extent. This was the first time that picketing of liquor shops took place.

The Muslim support to the nationalist cause was also one of the main features of the Nationalist Movement. In the July of 1921, Muhammad Ali appealed to all Muslims in the British army that they should consider it morally wrong to be a part of the British army and, therefore, should discontinue their services. Due to this propaganda against the British, Muhammad Ali was arrested. After he was arrested, this call was taken up by Gandhi and the Congress who issued a manifesto to all Indians to sever all ties with the British Indian army.

**NOTES**

Another dramatic event to unfold was the visit of the Prince of Wales in November 1921. The day of the Prince's visit was observed as a day of a pan-India *hartal*. He was greeted with empty streets and downed shutters wherever he went. However, due to the strong anti-British feelings, a riot occurred between the people dispersing from Gandhi's meeting and the people who had joined the procession of welcoming the Prince. In order to reduce this tension, Gandhi had to go on a four day fast.

These measures made the volunteers of the Non-Cooperation Movement bold and urged by the successful defiance of the government, they became increasingly aggressive.

There were some indirect effects of the Non-Cooperation Movement as well, such as follows:

- In the United Provinces, one could not differentiate between a Non-Cooperation Movement meeting and a peasant meeting.
- In Kerala, the movement helped to provoke Muslim tenants against their landlords.
- In Assam, tea plantation labourers went on strike.
- In Punjab, the Akali movement became a part of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

The Non-Cooperation Movement also ensured that the women nationalists organized their efforts under the Mahila Karma Samaj. The movement was so popular that the government put into action Sections 108 and 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Various volunteers' groups were declared illegal and scores of people were arrested from all over the country. Only Gandhi was spared. Various attempts were made to negotiate with these volunteers, but the conditions offered were so rigorous that it would lead to sacrifice of the Khilafat leaders. Gandhi was under tremendous pressure from the rank and file of the Congress to start the mass civil disobedience.

The Chauri Chaura incident, in which a mob burned alive twenty-five policemen and one inspector, made Gandhi suspend the Non-Cooperation Movement. But the movement still managed to achieve several positives, including the following:

- Provide a platform for the unification of all religious communities so that a joint force could fight against the foreign rule
- Provide the required impetus and mass support for future agitations and movements
- Provide a sense of courage, direction and confidence to masses and fill them with self-respect and esteem.
- Provide a sense of representation to the Muslim community in the nationalist movement

The limitations of the Non-Cooperation Movement were that the movement failed to secure the objective of Khilafat and rectify the wrongs suffered by the masses in Punjab. Also, *swaraj* was not achieved within the year as was promised.

### **Civil Disobedience**

Soon after he was given the responsibility of the Civil Disobedience Movement, Gandhi wrote a letter to Viceroy Irwin seeking the abolishment of the salt tax, reduction of military expenditure and the release of political prisoners. However, Lord Irwin chose to not respond to this letter. This formed the crux for the outbreak of the Civil Disobedience





## NOTES

Movement against the British by Gandhi. On 12 March, 1930, Gandhi started a march from Sabarmati ashram to the sea at Dandi accompanied by 72 followers. People cheered the marchers and joined them along the way. As Gandhi walked past them, villagers spun yarn on charkhas as a mark of their solidarity to the movement. On April 6, after Gandhi reached the sea at Dandi, he picked up some salt from the seaside as a mark of breaking the Salt Law. Gandhi had decided to break the law as he believed that salt was a basic necessity of people and salt tax was against the interest of the poor. Inspired by Gandhi, people began manufacturing salt all over the country.

From Madras to Maharashtra, from Bengal and Assam to Karachi, volunteers were recruited on a large-scale for the movement through careful planning and it soon spread like fire. Supporters launched a massive demonstration at Peshawar in the farthest north. This area had been in news due to activism by leaders like Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and the Khudai Khidmatgars. The British were wary of the movement and arrested leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru on April 14. Madras, Calcutta and Karachi erupted in protest against the arrest of Nehru. The colonial government was taken by surprise with the reaction of the masses as it had not anticipated such widespread support to the movement. Insecure, it decided to arrest Gandhi in May 1930, but the decision only added much fuel to the fire that the movement had stirred. The most important feature of the Civil Disobedience Movement was the support it received from the youth of the country, especially students and women. Women led groups attacked liquor shops as well as those that sold foreign goods. The government went all out to stop the people and issued orders curbing the civil liberties of citizens. It also decided to ban civil disobedience organizations in the provinces.

In June 1930, the Congress Working Committee was banned and its president, Motilal Nehru, was arrested. By August, even the local Congress committees were banned. All these issues became part of the Civil Disobedience Movement. It was then that the Simon Commission published its report, a time when the government had become a symbol of repression and the national movement was at its peak.

As against expectations, the Simon Report made no mention of giving dominion status to India. With this, many nationalist leaders turned outright against the British. It was followed by the Viceroy's invitation to the leaders to a Round Table Conference to discuss the issue of dominion status. Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru were taken to Gandhi to discuss the offer made by the British. But no breakthrough could be made between the government and the Congress leaders. It was in London in November 1930 that the First Round Table Conference was held between the Indian leaders and the British. However, leaders of the Congress abstained from the meeting. The absence of the leaders of the Congress meant that there would be no negotiations between the Indians and the British. The next conference was scheduled a year later. On 25 January, 1931, the government released Gandhi. Without imposing any conditions, all other members of the Congress Working Committee were also released. However, the Congress leaders were asked to discuss the Viceroy's offer to participate in the next Round Table Conference. After several rounds of discussions, Gandhi was given the responsibility of negotiating with the Viceroy. Discussions between Gandhi and Lord Irwin went on for a fortnight. On March 5, 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was finally signed. The terms of this Pact were as follows:

- Immediate release of all people arrested for non-violent protests.
- Fines not collected from people to be remitted
- Confiscated land not yet sold off to be returned to peasants

- Government employees who had resigned were to be treated leniently
- Right to make salt to villages along the coast
- Grant of right to peaceful and non-aggressive picketing

The Congress decided to withdraw the Civil Disobedience Movement after the pact was signed. It also confirmed its participation in the next Round Table Conference. However, as per the judgment of many nationalist leaders, this pact was only a temporary truce, even though another section of leaders believed this settlement unnecessary. Due to this difference of opinion, activists launched numerous radical activities in the form of revolutionary secret societies.

In its Karachi session in March 1931, the Congress once again gave the call for *purna swaraj*. However, the party also supported the pact between Irwin and Gandhi. At Karachi, the Congress started preparing the framework of India's Constitution even though the Pact made no mention of giving independence to India. Resolutions related to the Fundamental Rights and National Economic policy were approved at the session. These resolutions were landmark in the history of the nationalist movement for it was for the first time that issues of civil liberties such as free speech, free press and freedom of association were spoken about for the Indian masses. Other provisions included in this resolution pertained to neutrality in religious matters, equality before law, universal adult franchise, free and compulsory primary education and many others.

For the Second Round Table Conference in August 1931, Gandhi travelled to London. Willington, meanwhile, replaced Lord Irwin. However, the discussions at this Round Table did not go in the favour of India. The new viceroy refused to meet Gandhi after he returned from London in December 1931. The British government refused to recognize the Congress as representatives of the people of India. Moreover, the government went back to its repressive ways by arresting Jawaharlal Nehru and also Abdul Ghaffar Khan who was leading the *Khudai Khidmatgars'* Movement in the North-West Frontier Province.

Circumstances were thus raised where the Congress had to re-launch the Civil Disobedience Movement, especially after the new viceroy refused to meet Gandhi for any further negotiation. In January 1932, Gandhi was arrested and the government once again curtailed people's civil liberties. The government followed this by giving itself the right to appropriate properties and detain people. With such powers, the government put all prominent leaders of the Congress behind bars. With this, the masses broke out in mass demonstrations to protest against the government's actions; liquor shops were picketed as well as foreign goods' shops. However, the government only reacted with more force. Large number of people was jailed, Congress was banned and the police occupied Gandhian ashrams. Demonstrators were beaten up, those who refused to pay taxes were jailed and their properties seized. Yet, the movement continued for two years. The movement was withdrawn by Gandhi in April 1934 and his call was obeyed by the people of the country.

## **Quit India**

For the cause of immediate independence, the Quit India Movement was launched by Gandhi. It was another form of the civil disobedience movement. With the launch of this movement, Gandhi hoped that the British government would call upon the Indian leaders and negotiate for independence. The Quit India Movement was thus started in August 1942.

## **NOTES**

## NOTES

- There was anger and hostility towards meaningless war especially when thousands of wounded soldiers returned from Burmese war.
- Prices of food grains were rising up. There was a 60-point rise in prices of food grains in eastern UP between April and August 1942. There was also shortage of rice and salt.
- The majority of British, American and Australian soldiers stationed in India ill-treated Indians; many of them even raped Indian women.
- The boats of common men, in Bengal and Assam, were seized and destroyed due to the fear of Japanese attack in Bengal and Assam. Gandhi said in Harijan of 3 May 1942, 'To deprive people in East Bengal of boats is like cutting off vital limbs.'
- During the crisis of food grains, the Indian market was left in the hands of black marketers, and profiteers which affected the poor most, especially in eastern India.

The war made some traders and capitalist rich but a large section of Banias and Marwaris suffered losses in Malaya and Burma from mid-1942 onwards. The capitalist element in the Congress Working Committee took notice of it.

- The success story of Japanese in South-East Asian countries demystified the superiority of Europeans especially English.

The mid 1942 was a period marked with utter chaos. The Indians were losing their patience with the British attitude. Gandhi urged the British, 'This orderly disciplined anarchy should go, and if as a result there is complete lawlessness I would risk it.' During mid-July that year, the Congress leaders met at Wardha to discuss the next course of action. Finally, on 8 August 1942, Quit India Resolution was passed by the Bombay session of the AICC. The leaders then decided to have a peaceful protest on a large scale involving all parts of the country. During his famous Do or Die speech, Gandhi declared, 'Let every Indian consider himself to be a free man. Mere jail going would not do.' Interestingly, Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai and Rajagopalachari opposed Quit India Resolution. Though, Nehru, as always, fell in line and moved the Quit India Resolution, which had the following conditions:

- Immediate end to British rule in India. The British were told clearly to 'Quit India.'
- India's commitment to defend itself against all types of Fascism and Imperialism.

Apart from formal resolutions, Gandhi, in an informal way at Gowalia Tank Ground addressed the various sections of society:

- To the students—If ready for sacrifice and confident, leave studies.
- To the peasants—If zamindars are pro-government, do not pay rent.
- To the soldiers—Do not open fire on fellow countrymen.
- To the Government servants—Do not resign but oppose the Government from within.
- To the Princes—Support the masses and accept sovereignty of your people.
- To the people of Princely states—Support the ruler only if he is anti-government and declare your state to be a part of the Indian nation.

In response to the Quit India movement, the British Government wasted no time and arrested most of the Congress leaders, including Gandhi. The British were only asked to Quit India and no other demands were made as such.

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These sudden arrests of Gandhi and other prominent leaders produced a spontaneous reaction among the people. This angered the people who tried to attack the British government in every way possible. In the absence of their leaders, people became their own leaders and took their own decisions which were usually limited to looting and destroying government property. The government responded by firing at these protestors and was only able to suppress the movement through large scale killings and arrests. As per official figures the number of people arrested was well over 91,000. Though the British were able to suppress this movement, it was only a matter of time that they had to actually 'quit' India. The British were beginning to realize that they could not hold on to India for long.

Till now, the British had ruled India with the help of a unique support system which they had built in India over a period of time. The national movement was successful in eroding this support system through a series of protests and struggles. It can be said that without the support of various different classes such as the peasants, workers, middle class, police, and army the British rule could not survive in India. The British finally understood their situation and began to make preparations for a gradual and peaceful withdrawal from India. During 1944-45, the British released all the Congress leaders and initiated a process of negotiation in order to transfer power to Indian Congress. India finally became free in August 1947. Achieving an independent status was a matter of pride and joy for the Indians as they had won the war against British Imperialism. However, this could not be considered a complete victory because with independence came the partition of India which was accompanied by communal violence. Therefore, the year 1947 is marked as an important phase in Indian history as Indian achieved independence but at the cost of Partition.

After the fall of Cripps' Mission, the Indian National Congress became stringent in its condition and passed a resolution in July 1942 demanding complete independence from British government; failing which the resolution proposed a massive civil disobedience against the government. However, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, a prominent Congress leader, along with several local and regional level leaders, organized the Quit India Movement. Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad reluctantly joined Gandhi's decision to back the proposal. On the other hand several outstanding leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr Rajendra Prasad and Dr Anugrah Narayan Sinha along with socialists like Asoka Mehta and Jayaprakash Narayan openly supported the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Allama Mashriqi (head of Khaksar Tehrik) was also invited to join the Quit India Movement, but he was critical about the outcome of the movement and creation of Pakistan; and therefore, did not agree with the resolution. On 28 July, 1942 Mashriqi wrote to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mahatma Gandhi, Rajagopalachari, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramiyya and Sambamurty (former Speaker of the Madras Assembly) stating his reasons for not joining the Quit India Movement. In a telegram, which was later published in press, Mashriqi said, 'My honest opinion is that Civil Disobedience Movement is a little premature. The Congress should first concede open-heartedly and with handshake to Muslim League the theoretical Pakistan, and thereafter all parties unitedly make demand of Quit India. If the British refuse, start total disobedience...' Despite several leaders opposing the resolution, on 8 August 1942, Quit India resolution was passed at the Bombay session of All India Congress Committee (AICC). At the session held at Gowalia Tank, Bombay, Gandhi urged the Indians to participate in the Quit India Movement through non-violent

civil disobedience and act as an independent nation. His call found massive support amongst Indians.

### **Opposition to Quit India**

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Where the Quit India Movement had the support of the masses, the movement was opposed by several political parties. Parties like Hindu Mahasabha and Communist Party of India opposed the movement and did not rally with the Congress. The Communist Party of India though against the movement, was in alliance with the Soviet Union and in support of the war, despite industrial workers and unions supporting the movement. This led to a ban on the party by the British government. The movement also found opposition from various princely states who feared the loss of their estates in an independent India; and therefore, they funded the opposition. Several Muslim leaders were also opposed to Quit India Movement and Muhammad Ali Jinnah's plea found an audience among large number of Muslims who responded by enlisting in British army. The league gained support in provincial legislatures and as the Congress resigned, it took control of Sindh, Bengal and Northwest Frontier. The nationalists, however, had little international support. Though United States was supporting the Indian freedom movement theoretically, it was also an ally of Britain. When Churchill threatened to resign if forced, U.S. slyly supported him but continued its pretense to strengthen public support for war. This move annoyed both Indians and British.

#### **Local activism**

Where on one hand the Quit India Movement was facing opposition at the national level, at the same time the movement was successful at the regional level where at several places locals rebelled against the British. In Satara, Talcher, Tamluk and Contai subdivisions of Midnapore local people were establishing their own parallel governments which, however, were discontinued on the personal request of Gandhi in 1944. In Ballia, the easternmost district of Uttar Pradesh, local populace broke a jail and released the arrested Congress leaders and established their independent rule. It was weeks before Britishers could re-establish themselves in the district. In western Gujarat, Saurashtra the tradition of 'baharvatiya' (i.e., going outside the law), supported the activities of the Quit India Movement in the region.

#### **Suppression of the Movement**

The Quit India Movement was primarily designed to keep the Congress party united. This further alarmed the British, who were already wary of Japanese army advancing on India-Burma border. In order to control the agitations, the British imprisoned Gandhi along with prominent members of Party's Working Committee (national leadership). Due to the arrest of major leaders of Congress, Aruna Asaf Ali, young and relatively unknown till then, presided at the AICC session on August 9 and hoisted the flag. Later the Congress party was banned, which only strengthened mass sympathy for the cause and despite the lack of leadership, demonstrations and protests of large scale were carried out all over the country.

However, not all of these demonstrations were peaceful, at various places bombs exploded, government buildings were set on fire, electricity and communication lines were severed. To these demonstrations, Britishers responded by making mass arrests.

Over 100,000 people were arrested and were fined. Soldiers were also ordered to flog the demonstrators and shoot if required. Several hundred people were killed in

the shootings. This forced many leaders to go underground but they continued their struggle by broadcasting over radio and distributing pamphlets.

Looking at the situation, British even set-aside a ship to take Gandhi and other eminent leaders of South Africa or Yemen, but decided against it as they were wary about revolt getting further intensified. The Congress was cut-off from the rest of the world for over three years.

Gandhi lost his wife Kasturba Gandhi and his personal secretary Mahadev Desai within a very short span. Despite such personal losses and an indisposed health, Gandhi went on a 21-day fast and maintained his resolve to continuous resistance.

Although the British released Gandhi on account of his health in 1944, Gandhi kept up the resistance, demanding the release of the Congress leadership.

By early 1944, India was mostly peaceful again, while the Congress leadership was still incarcerated. A sense that the movement had failed depressed many nationalists, while Jinnah and the Muslim League, as well as Congress opponents like the Communists sought to gain political mileage, criticizing Gandhi and the Congress Party.

### **India's Independence**

The foundation of Indian National Congress in 1885 was an attempt to narrow the Hindu-Muslim divide and place the genuine grievances of all the communities in the country before the British. However, the projection of the Congress as a representative body of the Hindus by leaders like Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan, Ameer Ali and others, thwarted the first genuine attempt in the country for Hindu-Muslim unity. The poor participation of Muslims in the Congress proves this. 'Of the seventy-two delegates attending the first session of the Congress only two were Muslims'. Muslim leaders opposed the Congress tooth and nail on the plea that Muslims' participation in it would create an unfavourable reaction among the rulers against their community.

Gradually, Muslim orthodoxy came to the forefront and their religious identity became more important than anything else. Slogans such as 'Islam is in danger' continuously challenged the political awakening in Indian society which in turn affected their status. They started viewing the Congress as a challenge to their supremacy. In 1900, when Lieutenant Governor A. MacDonnell adopted Hindi, written in Devanagari script, as the official language of the United Province, the Muslims opposed it. No such aggressive resistance was made when the British replaced Persian with English in late thirties of the nineteenth century. Sir Sayed Ahmed died in 1898, but his followers in defence of Urdu language launched agitation against the decision of the representative of British power in the United Province.

### **Formation of All India Muslim League**

On 1st October 1906, under the leadership of Aga Khan, a 35-member delegation assembled at Simla to present a proposal to Lord Minto. The proposal appealed for a proportionate representation of the Muslims in government jobs, appointment of Muslim candidates in the administrative services, judiciary and others. This assembly of the Muslims came to be known as the Simla Deputation. Though the Simla Deputation did not yield positive results, it worked as a catalyst for the formation of the All-India Muslim League.

Under the strong leadership of the Aligharians, the movement for a separate Muslim organization created a political awakening among the Muslims. The ideology of

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exclusivism sowed the seeds of communalism, which gradually led to the formation of the All India Muslim League (AIML). AIML, was established in 1906 in Dhaka under the leadership of Nawab Sallimullah. A 56 member provisional committee was constituted. Prominent Muslim leaders from different parts of the country joined the Muslim League. Few Congress leaders like Ali Imam, Hasan Imam, Mazharul Haque (barristers from Bihar) and Hami Ali Khan (barrister from Lucknow) were included in the committee. Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Viqar-ul-Mulk were jointly made the secretaries. After Mohsin-ul-Mulk's death in 1907, Viqar-ul-Mulk took charge of the league. The Muslim League held its first session in Lahore in December 1907 with Adamjee Peerbhoy as its president.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, a prominent Congress leader, though in favour of the Muslim League, did not join it until 1913. He even successfully contested against the League candidate for electing the Viceroy's Legislative Council. However, within Congress itself, he tried to bargain for one-third reservation for his community. The formation of AIML was a major landmark in the history of modern India. The first ever political party exclusively for Muslims, had the following objectives:

- (i) To promote feelings of loyalty among the Muslims for the British government and remove any misconceptions
- (ii) To increase the political rights and interests of the Muslims in India and to respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the government
- (iii) To prevent the rise among the Muslims of India of any feeling of hostility towards other communities without prejudice to the afore-mentioned objects of the League

Initially, the AIML was an organization of urbanized elite Muslims that went on to become the sole representative body of Indian Muslims with the support of the British government. In order to face the challenges of the modern political system, the League successfully achieved a separate electorate within three years of its establishment. The electorate was a considerable achievement for the party and the Lucknow Pact of 1916 gave a separate identity to the Muslims; another landmark in the separatist movement launched by the AIML.

### **Hindu Mahasabha**

Founded in 1915 by Madan Mohan Malviya, the Hindu Mahasabha's sole motive was to bring together local Hindu movements rooted in north Indian public life. It was partly modelled on the Congress. The Hindu Mahasabha emphasized on social and religious network among Hindus, untouchables and the spread of Hindi. The organization was instrumental in protecting Hindu interests. However, due to differences of opinions, in 1925, a group under the leadership of K Hedgewar broke away from the Hindu Mahasabha and established the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha (RSS). The RSS adopted a more militant stand.

The organization was actively involved in Bengal. It sought to remove untouchability and the purification of 'polluted' people with the help of the Congress. The involvement of the organization in these matters gained prominence in the 1930s, the aftermath of Macdonald's Communal Award.

During the late 1930s, the Hindu Mahasabha supported other Hindu organizations to organize campaigns in favour of a Hindu society. However, the initiation of bringing lower castes into the mainstream Hindu society resulted in communal clashes, which took the form of communal riots. Instances of riots were reported from locations like Dhaka, Khulna, Jessore, Noakhali (now in Bangladesh) and Burdwan.



Interestingly, the 1940s also witnessed a political discord between the Congress and the Mahasabha. The Bengal Congress selected major Hindu candidates and won over the Sabha with a majority. The Congress leaders tried to prove that they represented Hindu interests better than anyone else. The great Calcutta riots, followed by the Muslim League's Direct Action Day helped in reviving the hopes of the Mahasabha.

Shyamaprasad Mukherjee went on to become the Sabha's spokesperson. Under his influence, Bengali Hindus started considering the idea of creating a new Hindu state of West Bengal. The Hindu Mahasabha, became more interested in setting up Hindu volunteer corps in order to safeguard Hindu interests. They also supported the idea of supplying ammunitions to Hindu militant organizations. The Sabha was successful in mobilizing some Bengali Hindus in supporting Hindu nationalism. Scholars like Raj Sekhar Basu believe that the Hindu Mahasabha was responsible for the partition of Bengal in 1947.

### **Subhash Chandra Bose and the INA**

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was the founder of the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army). The aim of this army was to end the British rule in India.

He was born on 23 January 1897 in Cuttack, Orissa. His father was a lawyer and his mother was a religious woman. He was patriotic right from his childhood. When he was in the Presidency College, Calcutta, Professor Oaten made some anti-India comments. This angered Bose and he assaulted his Professor. He was expelled from the College for this act.

He was a brilliant student in school as well as college. In 1911, he topped the matriculation examination of Calcutta province. He completed his graduation in Philosophy with a first class. In 1919, he was sent to England by his father to appear in the Indian Civil Services Examination. He stood fourth in the examination. After the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, he left his Civil Services apprenticeship and came back to India in 1921.

On returning to India, he joined the Indian National Congress. Mahatma Gandhi instructed him to work under Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. Later, Das became his 'political guru'. In 1928, Mahatma Gandhi proposed a resolution in which he demanded the British to grant dominion status to India within two years. He also mentioned in the resolution that if the British failed to fulfil this demand within two years, the Congress would call upon all Indians to fight for Purna Swaraj. The time period given by Gandhi to the British was opposed by Bose and Nehru. Later, he reduced the time period to one year. Nehru voted for the new resolution, but Bose refused to vote for this resolution.

Bose was arrested during the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930. After the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, he was released from jail. He opposed the Pact and the withdrawal of the Movement. He was again arrested under the infamous Bengal Regulation. Due to an illness, he was released from jail after a year. He was expelled from India and was sent to Europe. He made efforts to open some centres in Europe to promote political-cultural contacts between the two countries. After some time, he entered India and was again arrested for a year for defying the ban. In 1937, when the Congress came to power in seven states, he was released from jail.

In 1938, he became president of the Haripura Congress Session. In the same year, he established a planning committee. After the end of his term, he became president of the Tripuri Congress session. During the Second World War, he proposed a resolution in which he demanded the British to end their rule in India within six months. He also mentioned in the resolution that if the British failed to do so, there would be a revolt in the

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country. This resolution was opposed by a number of members of the Congress. After this, he resigned from the post of President and formed the Forward Bloc.

After this, he started a mass movement in India. He was put under house arrest in Calcutta for the same. In 1941, he escaped from India and reached Germany via Afghanistan. He took help from Germany and Japan to fight against the British. He used the medium of Radio Berlin and his broadcasts aroused enthusiasm among Indians.

In 1943, he went to Singapore and formed the Azad Hind Fauj. Most of the soldiers of this army were prisoners of war from the British Indian Army. This army went to India with an aim to fight the British. On its way to India, it liberated Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In 1944, the headquarters of this army was shifted to Rangoon. On 18 March 1944, the army crossed Burma border and reached India. However, Japan and Germany were defeated in the Second World War and thus the army could not fulfil its objective.

According to some sources, Bose died during an air crash over Taipei, Taiwan (Formosa) on August 18, 1945. However, there was no evidence to prove this claim. Thus, his death still remains a mystery for some.

### **Indian National Army**

The Indian National Army (INA) was founded by Subhash Chandra Bose in 1942. They sided with the Axis Powers during the Second World War (1939–1945) with a motive to overthrow the colonial powers from the Indian soil. The INA was also termed as the ‘Azad Hind Fauj’.

Japanese forces defeated the British in 1941 at Malaya. This incident inspired the Indian populace residing in Southeast Asia. The Indians came together and organized a number of associations based out of South East Asia. Pritam Singh was a leader of such an organization. He, along with Japanese officer, Major Fujihara, requested Mohan Singh to constitute an Indian Army comprising the captured Indian soldiers. Though initially reluctant, Mohan Singh yielded and Fujihara handed over around 40,000 Indian soldiers who had surrendered to him. This paved the way towards the formation of the INA.

The revolutionary activist Rash Behari Bose, then residing in Japan, arranged an association named Free Indians living in Japan. A conference was held in Bangkok on 15 June 1942, where it was decided that a National Indian Army would be constituted. A five-member working committee was formed and Rash Behari Bose was made its president. The formation of the INA was formally declared.

In the meantime, Subhash Bose left Calcutta on 17 January 1941 and arrived in Germany after traveling through Afghanistan. In Berlin, he organized an India government in exile and extended support to Germany. He began to broadcast his aims and objectives over Radio Berlin and made contact with Japan. Bose, also came in touch with Adolf Hitler, who extended his help to the former. This aroused tremendous enthusiasm in India. Indians in Germany gave him the title of ‘Netaji’ and the slogan of ‘Jai-Hind’ was initiated here during this time.

Bose arrived in Tokyo in June 1943, and was cordially received by Hideki Tojo, the Japanese Prime Minister (1941–44). Japan extended their help to India. A huge crowd gathered at Singapore to receive Bose when he arrived there on 2 July 1943. On 4 July, Rash Behari Bose resigned and Bose was appointed the president of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia. On August 25, Bose took the leadership of the INA. On 21 October 1943, Bose declared the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and on the 23rd declared war on Britain and America.

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With the INA headquarters now shifted to Rangoon, Bose and his brigade arrived in Rangoon in 1944. In the meantime, it was decided that the Indian detachment would not be smaller than a battalion, its commander would be an Indian, the war would continue under the Joint plan of Action and Indians would fight as a separate unit on selected spots. It was also decided that battles would occur at the Kaladan valley of Arakan and Kalam and Haka centre of Chin hills to the east of Lusai hills.

The Subhash Brigade was divided into three battalions. The first contingent advanced across both the banks of Kaladan and captured Paletoa and Doletmai. The battalion captured Maudak, a British border out-post at a distance of 64 kilometres from Doletmai a few days after. The supply of arms and ammunition fell short. Many soldiers left and only a few were left under the command of Surajmal.

In the meantime, the other two battalions took the responsibility of Haka-Kalan borderline. At the fall of Imphal at Manipur, it was decided that INA would take position at Kohima, Nagaland so that it could enter Bengal after crossing Brahmaputra. Gandhi and Azad Brigades also advanced towards Imphal. On the 21 March, the Japanese Prime Minister (PM) announced that the Indian territories freed from the British would be brought under the administration of a provisional independent government formed under Netaji. In spite of various hazards and shortage of food and ammunitions, the INA advanced up to 241 kilometres inside India.

A few days after the declaration of the Japanese PM, the Americans and the British joined and took steps to invade Japan. So, Japan had to withdraw its support from India. Consequently, the INA also had to retreat and was forced to surrender when the allied powers recaptured Burma.

A number of INA officers were captured and severely punished by the British officials, including Capt. Shah Nawaz, Capt. Rashid and others. However, the British were forced to set them free when the general Indian public were outraged by the treatment meted out to them. The cause of India's independence was much advanced by the INA.

### **Significance of the Indian National Army**

The INA and its impact on India's freedom struggle has been a subject of great discussion and analysis for historians. Though in terms of military strength, the INA has been considered insignificant. This may be due to the following reasons:

- (i) Small numerical strength
- (ii) Lack of heavy weapons
- (iii) Dependence on Japanese logistics and planning
- (iv) Lack of independent planning

Though the INA had several disadvantages, Shah Nawaz, in his personal memoirs, refers to the INA as a very potent and motivated force. The historian Peter Ward Fay, on the other hand, argues that the INA was less influential in terms of its military capability, but its special services group did play a significant role in halting the British First Arakan Offensive in Burma. This was during the INA leader Mohan Singh's command.

The propaganda threat of the INA along with the paucity of concrete intelligence on the unit during the British surrender of Singapore made it a potential threat to the war plans of the Allied Powers in Southeast Asia. This also threatened to wipe out loyalty of Indian troops in the British Indian Army. This fact was not only significant, but was successful as is evident from the failure of Britain's First Arakan Offensive, as well as

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the campaign of the British intelligence to label INA soldiers as JIFFS (derived from Japanese-Indian Fifth Column) as well as the attempt to boost morale and preserve the loyalty of Indian soldiers in the British Army in order to defend Manipur. This also included the news ban on Subhash Chandra Bose and the INA, which was not lifted until four days after the fall of Rangoon two years later.

In 1944, at the time of the Japanese U-GO offensive on Manipur, the INA played not only a crucial but successful role in diversifying their attacks in Arakan as well as the in the Manipur basin during their conflict with Mutaguchi's 15th Army. The INA had enough military calibre, which was evident in the battles of Arakan, Manipur, Imphal, and also during the withdrawal through Manipur and Burma. Their efforts during the Burma Campaign are notable, especially during the Battle of Irrawaddy and Meiktila. In Meiktila, they wholeheartedly supported the Japanese by tying down the British troops.

On the other hand, Fay also refers to several published accounts of war veterans which mention the INA and its role. One such published account is that of William Slim who deems the INA troops to be incapable and untrustworthy. Fay further goes on to describe the inconsistencies and conflicts amongst the different accounts which show that British intelligence propaganda and institutional bias may have played a significant role in the opinions of war veterans. It is also imperative to point out at this time that the INA suffered desertion on numerous occasions. Though there were many incidents of desertion during substantial battles such as Manipur or the subsequent retreat through Burma, however, these incidents of desertion were minimal and quite small in number. According to Fay, significant desertions occurred during the Battle at Irrawaddy and later on at Popa. It was noticed that during the fall of Rangoon, approximately six thousand troops manned the city to maintain order until the allied troops entered the city. Nevertheless, the INA was not considered strong enough to beat the British Indian Army militarily. Moreover, the INA was aware of this weakness and formulated a new strategy in order to avoid set-piece battles, garnering local and popular support with the Indians in the British Indian Army. There are also some references that the INA tried to instigate a revolt within the British Indian Army to overthrow the British Raj. The Forward Bloc during this time went underground in India and is said to have been crushed even before the offensives opened in the Burma-Manipur region, as a result depriving the army of any organized internal support.

The role of the INA is more evident during the times of the INA trials, as it attracted more attention than instead of their role as an army. The decision to hold public trials alone became a rallying point for the Independence Movement in 1945. The fervour attached to the INA trials was so immense that the efforts to release INA prisoners and suspend the trials become more important than India's freedom struggle. Reports in newspapers which spoke of executions of INA troops added fuel to the already volatile situation. During this time, the opposition to the trials of INA troops for treason became a major public and political campaign and the first trial itself witnessed violence and riots on such a large scale that some historians describe it to be sensational. This period also saw a campaign that defied communal barriers. This period is marked by violent confrontations which broke out between the masses and the police. Many rallies took place all over India in support of the INA. Not only did the public support the INA, the soldiers of the British Indian Army also supported the INA. The spread of pro-INA emotions made the British Government very uneasy who observed with increasing disquiet the spread of pro-INA sympathies in India. Simultaneously, the general strike ratings of the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) deteriorated into a mutiny, incorporating ships and shore

establishments of RIN throughout India. In February 1946, it was noticed that this phenomena of the RIN spread from Karachi to Bombay and from Vizag to Calcutta. To show their support, many soldiers began to ignore orders from British superiors. Massive support was also seen at Madras and Pune, where the British garrisons faced revolts among the ranks of the British Indian Army. This was followed by similar revolts at Jabalpur and Bombay. The British made numerous efforts to suppress these revolts, even making use of bayonets. This went on for two weeks after which a large number of people were arrested and tried in courts. Many soldiers were dismissed and some were even subjected to court martial. Fay also refers to Auchinleck's letter to senior British officers in which he explained the repercussions of the INA trials. He went on to say that '...practically all are sure that any attempt to enforce the sentence would have led to chaos in the country at large, and probably to mutiny and dissension in the Army, culminating in its dissolution.'

Many historians have observed that the consequences of the INA trials brought a decisive shift in the British policy towards India. Many describe the INA trials as 'the edge of a volcano' and the period being marked with 'patriotic fury,' which was beyond any communal barriers. The major concern for the British was the immense public support for the INA by the soldiers of the British Indian Army. Not only the support of Indian soldiers but the restoration of Dutch and French rule in Vietnam and Indonesia also added fuel to the growing resentment amongst the forces. The situation had become so volatile that the British feared another Quit India movement, especially given the Congress rhetoric preceding the elections. The British also realized that the soldiers of the British Indian Army could not be used to suppress the revolt as it had during 1942. The British saw the growth of political and nationalistic consciousness among Indians which resulted from the INA. Many historians refer to Auchinleck's assessment of the situation to suggest that all this shortened the British tenure by a good 15-20 years. The political influence and effect of the INA trials was huge and spread all over India during 1948, much to the chagrin of the British government. The then prime minister of Britain, Clement Attlee reflecting on the factors that guided the British decision to relinquish the British Raj in India is said to have mentioned the INA and its effects on the British Indian Army. He also mentioned Subhash Chandra Bose and his activities to be a major cause in the growing nationalistic attitude amongst Indians. The INA had a far-reaching effect on the Indians who came under a fresh wave of revolutionary upsurge on hearing stories of their remarkable courage and sacrifices. The INA episode was a lesson to the British Government who finally realized that they no longer enjoyed the loyalty of the Indian army as patriotism towards their country was far greater than service of a foreign power.

### **Interim Government and Constituent Assembly**

After the end of the Second World War, and the large scale protest that followed the INA trials, it became clear to the British that it was not possible for them to hold on to India. Thus, the interim government of India was formed on 2nd September 1946 from the newly elected constituent assembly of India that had the task of assisting the transition of India and Pakistan from British rule to independence.

After the Second World War ended, all the prisoners who participated in Quit India Movement were released. A Cabinet Mission in 1946 formulated proposals for the formation of a government that would lead to an independent India. The elections related to constituent assembly were not directly done, instead members were elected from each provincial assemblies. The Indian National Congress won some 69 per cent seats

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where majority elected were Hindus. Muslims retained those seats which were allocated to them.

### **Viceroy's executive council**

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The Viceroy's executive council became the executive branch of the interim government. With the powers of prime minister bestowed on the vice-president of the council, it was transformed. It was a position headed by the Congress leader Jawaharlal Nehru. The senior Congress leader Vallabhbhai Patel held the second most powerful position in the council, heading the department of home affairs, information and broadcasting. Asaf Ali, a Muslim leader of the Congress, was the head for the department of railways and transport. Jagjivan Ram, a scheduled caste leader, headed the department of Labour and Rajendra Prasad headed Food and Agriculture. Liaquat Ali Khan, member of the League, headed the department of Finance.

### **Nature of the assembly**

The constituent assembly consisting of indirectly elected representatives was set up for drafting a constitution for India. The constituent assembly took three years to draft the constitution and acted as the first parliament of India. The members of the assembly were not elected on the basis of adult franchise and Muslim and Sikhs were given special representation as 'minorities'. The assembly met for the first time in New Delhi on 9th December 1946 and the last session of assembly was held on 26 November 1947. The total number of sittings of the constituent assembly was 166.

### **Background and election**

The constituent assembly was held when India was under British Rule and negotiations were made between the leaders and members in the cabinet mission of 1946. The constituent assembly consisted of 217 representatives, inclusive of 15 women.

In June 1947, when the Partition of India seemed inevitable, delegations from the various provinces of Sindh, East Bengal, Baluchistan, west Punjab withdrew in order to form the constituent assembly of Pakistan for which the meeting was held in Karachi.

### **Constitution and elections**

The assembly began its first session with 207 members attending on 9th December 1946. The assembly approved the draft constitution on 26th November 1949. On 26th January 1950, the constitution took effect in India and India was proclaimed as a Republic. The constituent assembly became the provisional parliament of India which continued till the first elections took place in 1952.

### **Organization**

On 9 December, 1946 Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha was made the pro-term chairman of the constituent assembly. After that Dr. Rajendra Prasad became the president of constituent assembly. Sir Benegal Narasingh Rau was the one to prepare the original draft of the constitution. B.R. Ambedkar later became the chairman of the drafting committee of the constitution.

The Assembly's work was organized into five stages, such as follows:

- A report was asked to be presented by the committee on basic issues

- B.N. Rau, prepared an initial draft, on the basis of these committees as well as the research made by him into the constitutions of other countries
- B.R. Ambedkar presented a detailed draft of the constitution that was published for public discussion and comments and later became the chairman of the drafting committee
- The constitution that was drafted was then discussed and amendments were made as per requirement before enactment
- Lastly, the constitution was adopted. A committee called the Congress assembly party played a critical role in its adoption

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### **Mountbatten Plan**

Louis Mountbatten arrived as the last Viceroy of India in February 1947 and immediately announced that the British would leave India no later than 1948. By that time, Britain had already given in to the League demand and decided on partitioning India. Mountbatten then set about convincing Congress leaders of the necessity of partition. He made use of two opposite lines of reasoning. On the one hand, he declared that ‘the truncated Pakistan, if conceded now, was bound to come back later’; on the other hand, he promised that if India’s two unwilling wings were lopped off, a strong and united Centre would be the result. This second argument appealed to Home Minister Sardar Patel, who was already taking into consideration the internal security of the country.

Mountbatten overcame Jawaharlal Nehru’s objection by an appeal to his democratic instinct. No community, Mountbatten argued, should be forced to join a nation against its will. Now, it was time to speak with Gandhi. In a last desperate effort, Gandhi suggested making Jinnah the head of the government of an undivided India. The Muslim leader could select the entire ministry himself. But after their sad experiences in the interim government, Patel and Nehru were unwilling to expose themselves to Jinnah’s caprices. Finally, even Gandhi relented. The British Prime Minister Attlee announced the plan in the British House of Commons on 3 June 1947.

The government’s plan, also known as the Mountbatten Plan or the June 3rd Plan, dealt with the method by which power would be transferred from British to Indian hands, in particular, the methods by which Muslim-majority provinces would choose whether they would remain in India or opt for the ‘new entity’ that is Pakistan. In Sind and Baluchistan, a straightforward decision would be made by the provincial legislatures. The legislatures of Bengal and Punjab would have to make two choices; first, whether the majority was for joining Pakistan, and, if so, whether the provinces should be partitioned into Muslim and non-Muslim areas. Special arrangements were made to determine the popular will in the North-West Frontier Provinces and in the Muslim majority district of Sylhet in Assam. Boundary commissions would be set up if partition was desired.

The Indian constituent assembly would continue to function, but a separate assembly would be convened for areas that chose to become parts of Pakistan. The provincial choices went as expected. Baluchistan, Sind and the North-West Frontier opted for Pakistan. Punjab and Bengal decided for double partition—the provinces would leave India, but their Hindu-majority areas would remain part of India. Sylhet would join the eastern wing of Pakistan. Boundary commissions were set up to delineate frontier between Muslim and non-Muslim areas of Punjab and Bengal under Sir Cyril Radcliffe.

Not only land, but the financial and material assets of India also needed to be divided. Each of the new nations had to have its own civil services and armed forces.

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Lord Mountbatten showed considerable ‘expedition and dispatch’ in bringing about a solution to these and other problems before the deadline expired.

The Indian Independence Act of 1947 gave a legal effect to the Mountbatten plan. The Bill was introduced in the British Parliament on 4 July 1947. It was passed quickly and without amendment, and on 18 July 1947, it received assent of the British monarch. India had won her freedom but the price had been its partition.

At midnight of 15 August 1947, as the clock struck 12, India became free. Nehru proclaimed it to be the nation with his famous ‘Tryst with Destiny’ speech. On the morning of 15 August 1947, Lord Mountbatten was sworn in as Governor-General of independent India and he in turn swore in Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Prime Minister of a free India. The dawn of 15 August 1947 revealed the dual reality of independence and partition. Millions of refugees, forced to leave the lands of their forefathers, were pouring into the two new states. The symbol of this tragedy at the moment of national triumph was the forlorn figure of Gandhi—the man who had given the message of non-violence, truth, love and courage to the Indian people. In the midst of national rejoicing, he was touring the violence torn land of Bengal, trying to bring comfort to people who were even then paying the price of freedom through senseless communal slaughter. You will learn more about the events leading to the partition of India in the subsequent section.

### **Partition of India and Indian Independence Act**

With the commencement of Second World War, many changes were taking place in the colonies of the imperialist powers. The unique feature during this time was decolonization and India was the prime example of the same. Decolonization can be defined as a political process sometimes involving violence, in the form of revolution or a war of independence, leading to freedom from colonial rule. Although in India, the process of decolonization was mostly based on non-violence, which was preached by the unanimously chosen leader of the nationalist movement, Mahatma Gandhi. Despite numerous efforts by the British government, they slowly lost control of India. Owing to the post-war chaos, many European colonies, including India, took advantage to assert their freedom. Similarly, in India, Gandhi started a peaceful resistance against the British government to get freedom for India, which was successful. This mission was not accomplished overnight and there were major developments during this time which eventually led to the Independence of India on 15 August 1947.

### **Impact of the Second World War on India**

As stated earlier, in 1939, the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, made an announcement that India was at war. This was done without consulting the Indian assembly. The Government Act of India called for the Viceroy to consult the Executive Committee prior to any decision-making, related to defence or external affairs. This was not done. The move of the Viceroy caused a deterioration in the relations between the Congress and the Muslim League.

### **The League and the War**

The war on Germany had complete support from the Muslim League. In 1940, Jinnah’s speech referred to an independent Muslim state for the first time, this was an important historical event which was later named the Lahore Declaration. The name ‘Pakistan’ was used during his speech. At the time of the war, the power of the League increased with its number of members crossing 2 million.



## Congress and the War

Gandhi exerted pressure on the British government to negotiate with Hitler. This policy was, however, not supported by a large number of Congress members. More importantly, Nehru, who had at that time come back from Europe, was of the belief that India should support Britain in its stand against the fascists. However, the idea that India should independently decide on this issue was also supported by him. Nehru was fully supported by the Congress and the announcement that India was at war with Germany was rejected. As a mark of protest, resignations were given by all Congress state governments. In 1940, a condition was put forward by the Congress, according to which India would only support the war if a national government was established. This demand was rejected by the Viceroy. This led to the start of a campaign of civil disobedience, led by the Congress, known as the Quit India movement. During this campaign, 1700 members of the Congress were arrested. Since many members of the Congress were arrested between 1940 and 1945, its position became very weak. At the same time, the British government began to support the Muslim League, which had become more powerful and influential.

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### Second World War—Impact on British policy in India

More than 30,000 British soldiers were sent to India, for restoring law and order after the Quit India movement began. Thousands of people died as a result of this. A large number of prominent members of the Congress were also placed under arrest and in prisons by the British. Among them, Gandhi was also imprisoned till 1944. The British released Nehru then arrested him again and kept him in prison till 1945. The Congress was declared as illegal by the British Government and all its finances were seized. There was no effective existence of the Congress between 1942 and 1944.

### Indian opposition to British rule during the War

At the time of the Second World War, Subhash Chandra Bose opposed the British. He was a former member of the Congress who was also against Gandhi's strategy of non-violence. He established the 'Forward Bloc', which believed in the practice of militancy to achieve independence. As war began in 1939, Bose affirmed support to the Axis powers (Germany, Italy and Japan).

The British arrested him, but he escaped from prison and went to Nazi Germany. From there he was sent to Singapore by the Germans. In Singapore, he began recruiting Indian prisoners of war as members of the Indian National Army. Later, the membership increased to 20,000 volunteers. This went at war with Japan, to prevent it from invading India from Burma. Bose later established the Provisional Government of free India in 1943. In 1945, Bose died in a plane crash. After his death, support for the Indian National Army in India declined. When the war ended, its leaders were arrested and put on trial for subversive activities. They were then sent to a penal colony. When protests came from the Congress, the British government changed their sentence and dismissed them from the army. Nevertheless, a large number of the Indians who had fought the war against the Japanese returned with new ideas for an independent nation. These ideas served the nationalist movements that began in parts of South-East Asia.

### Political effects of the Second World War in India

The existence of the Congress almost ended at the time of the war because it rejected British proposals in the form of the Cripps' mission. On the other hand, the number of members of the Muslim League increased and reached the 2 million mark. This was due

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to Jinnah's cynical policy of supporting the British government during the war. The League's popularity grew in the provincial elections of 1945, when it won 90 per cent of Muslim seats against its 5 per cent win in the 1937 elections. The Congress could not afford to ignore the League any more. After consolidating its position, the League was on the same level as that of the Congress in any negotiation with the British. The League and other Indian groups expected that the British would leave India after the war. However, as this did not happen, the middle classes and the army declined to support the British.

### **Factors Leading to Independence and Partition of India**

The result of so many political events was that many great political leaders jointly tried to pave a final way for the attainment of India's independence.

#### **August Offer, 1940**

During the Second World War, a change of government took place in Britain in May 1940 and Winston Churchill became the Prime Minister (1940–1945). The fall of France temporarily softened the attitude of the Congress. Britain was in immediate danger of Nazi occupation. On 1 June 1940, Gandhi wrote, 'We do not seek our independence out of British ruin'. As the war was taking a menacing turn from the allies' point of view, the Congress offered to cooperate in the war effort, if at least a provisional national government was constituted at the Centre and the right of India to complete independence was acknowledged by Great Britain.

The government's response came as a statement from the Viceroy, on 8 August 1940. This was known as the August Offer. It referred to the need to consult representatives of 'several communities' and it was made clear that the British would not transfer responsibilities 'to any system of government' whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. This in effect was an approval of one of Jinnah's central demands since the outbreak of the war. From the British point of view, Jinnah was the sole spokesman for India's Muslims, despite the fact that the Congress contained many prominent Muslim leaders.

Meanwhile, the British government stated that it would welcome the efforts of representative Indians themselves to reach a basis of friendly agreement. They hoped that immediate effect would be given to the enlargement of the Central Executive Council by nominating additional Indian members and to the establishment of a War Advisory Council. The War Advisory Council was believed to comprise representatives of British India and the Indian states.

The August Offer shocked nationalists, and Gandhi at last, sanctioned civil disobedience, but of a peculiarly limited and deliberately ineffective kind. The Congress started its individual satyagraha. The first man to court arrest was Vinobha Bhave, the Bhoodan leader. He was followed by Jawaharlal Nehru, who in November, was sentenced to four years of rigorous imprisonment. Others, such as Vallabhbhai Patel and Maulana Azad also participated in this satyagraha. Nearly 20,000 Congressmen courted arrest during the 1940–1941. However, the movement petered out by the autumn of 1941.

It was decided that if the government did not arrest a satyagrahi, he or she would not only repeat the performance, but would also move into the villages and start a trek towards Delhi. This marked the beginning of a movement that came to be known as the Delhi Chalo movement.

The aims clearly were not to cause any serious embarrassment to the British, but merely to register the presence of the Congress and hostility to a war being waged without consulting Indians. This was also meant to give Linlithgow no opportunity for a major crackdown. At the same time, this movement was also intended to give the British Government further opportunity to peacefully accept the Indian demands.

### **Cripps Proposal**

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbour in December 1941, it was evident that India would be the next target of the Japanese forces. In April 1942, Britain sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India. He came with an offer for all provinces for complete Dominion status with the right to leave the Empire and Commonwealth after the war. It was also recommended by Cripps that any province that did not wish to join India could turn into an independent state.

As the war approached India (Singapore fell on 15 February 1942, Rangoon on 8 March and the Andaman islands on 23 March), the British at last felt obliged to make some gestures to win over India's public opinion. The American President Roosevelt raised the topic of Indian political reforms in his talks with Churchill in Washington, in December 1941. On 2 January, Indian liberal leaders like Sapru and Jayakar appealed for immediate dominion status and expansion of the Viceroy's Executive into a national government.

In February, the Chinese leader Chiang Kai-Shek, during his visit to India, publicly expressed sympathy for India's aspirations for freedom. All this provided an opening for relatively pro-India groups, particularly the British Labour party members of the War Cabinet like Cripps and Attlee. These groups persuaded the War Cabinet in the first week of March 1942 to agree to a draft declaration that promised post-war dominion status with the right of secession. A constitution-making body was elected by provincial legislatures, with individual provinces being given the right not to join it and with the states being invited to appoint representatives.

The Cripps' proposal also had a clause that invited immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of Indians in the national council on urgent issues. However, this clause also insisted that the British, during the war, would have to retain the control and direction of the defence to India. The declaration was not published immediately, but Cripps went to India on March 23 to negotiate on its basis with Indian leaders.

Negotiations between Cripps and the Congress leaders broke down. The Congress objected to the provision for dominion status instead of complete independence, the representation of the princely states in the constituent assembly not by the people of the states, but by the nominees of the rulers, and above all, by the provision for the partition of India.

The British Government also refused to accept the demand for immediate transfer of effective power to Indians and a real share in the responsibility for India's defence of India. Gandhi urged the Congress Working Committee to reject the post-dated proposal. The reason for the failure was that Cripps was asked not to go beyond the draft declaration. Moreover, Churchill, the Secretary of State (Amery), the Viceroy (Linlithgow) and the Commander-in-Chief (Wavell), did not want Cripps to succeed and constantly sabotaged his efforts to accommodate Indian opinion.

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## Cripps' Mission and the Quit India Movement

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The Cripps proposal was rejected by Nehru and the Congress, who instead demanded a complete cabinet government in which Indians had complete power of decision-making in India. The concept of independence of provinces as states was against the aim of the Congress to create a strong and united India with central governance. These demands were rejected by the British Government. This followed the Congress's decision to support Gandhi's non-violent 'Quit India' campaign. This campaign was declared in August 1942.

Independence with immediate effect was Gandhi's demand and this demand was supported by a threat of a movement of mass non-violence (satyagraha). His demand was that the British move out of India, with the exception of the troops that were fighting against Japan. Indian cities began to witness peaceful demonstrations. Later, these demonstrations mostly turned violent. This movement also blocked supplies for the British forces.

The following were the reasons for the start of the Quit India movement:

- There was anger and hostility towards meaningless war, especially when thousands of wounded soldiers returned from the Burmese war.
- Prices of food grains were rising, with almost a 60-point rise in eastern UP between April and August 1942. There was also a shortage of rice and salt.
- The majority of British, American and Australian soldiers stationed in India ill-treated Indians; many of them even raped Indian women.
- The boats of common men, in Bengal and Assam were seized and destroyed, due to the fear of Japanese attack in Bengal and Assam. Gandhi wrote in *Harijan*, 'To deprive people in East Bengal of boats is like cutting off vital limbs' (3 May 1942).
- During the crisis of food grains, Indian markets were controlled by black marketers and profiteers. This affected the poor most, especially in eastern India.
- The war made some traders and capitalist wealthy, but a large section of Banias and Marwaris started suffering losses in Malaya and Burma, from mid-1942 onwards. The capitalist element in the Congress Working Committee took notice of it.
- The success story of Japanese in South-East Asian countries demystified the superiority of Europeans, especially the British.

In mid-1942, the condition in India was that of chaos. Even Gandhi, who was generally patient, was becoming impatient and in a different and militant mood. He urged the British, 'This orderly disciplined anarchy should go and if as a result there is complete lawlessness, I would risk it.' Congress leaders met at Wardha in mid-July to discuss the course of action and on 8 August 1942, the Quit India resolution was passed by the Bombay session of the AICC (All India Congress Committee). The leaders made an enthusiastic call for mass struggle on non-violent lines, on the widest possible scale. In his famous 'do or die' speech, Gandhi declared, 'let every Indian consider himself to be a free man. Mere jail going would not do.' Interestingly, Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai and Rajgopalachari opposed the Quit India resolution. Though Nehru, as always, fell in line and moved the Quit India resolution, which had the following conditions:

- Immediate end to British rule in India. The British were clearly told, ‘Quit India’.
- India is committed to defend itself against all types of Fascism and Imperialism.
- A provisional government of India after British withdrawal.

Apart from formal resolutions, Gandhi, in an informal way at Gowalia Tank Ground (Bombay), addressed various sections of society:

- To the students: Be ready for sacrifice and be confident and leave studies
- To the peasants: If zamindars are pro-government, do not pay rent
- To the soldiers: Do not open fire on fellow countrymen
- To government servants: Do not resign but oppose the government from within
- To princes: Support the masses and accept sovereignty of your people
- To the people of princely states: Support the ruler only if he is anti- government and declare your state to be a part of the Indian nation

The government took no time in taking a decision and arrested most of the Congress leaders on 9 August 1942, including Gandhi. The sudden crackdown of the British gave rise to spontaneous reaction among the people.

The arrest of Gandhi and Congress leaders further angered the people who intensified their protest by attacking symbols of British administration. In absence of any leadership, the protests turned violent. There was widespread destruction of government properties and agitators took to looting. The government retaliated mercilessly and hundreds of people were killed in police firing. The protest was finally suppressed through mass arrest and killings. According to official figures, the number of people arrested by the end of 1943 was well over 91,000. Despite the success in suppressing the movement, the British government became aware they could not hold on to their colonial possession for long. So far, they could sustain because of the support system they had built in the 19th century. The national movement had eroded this support base, which came from the peasants, workers, middle class, the rich, the police and the army among others.

With the realization of their defeat, the British gradually began to withdraw. From 1945 onwards, the Congress leaders were released one by one. The government also initiated a process of peaceful negotiation and transfer of power to the Indians. India achieved freedom on 15 August 1947 followed by a bitter partition. The partition was accompanied by large scale communal violence.

### **Demand for Pakistan**

Communal politics took a new turn in India in the late 1930s, which was marked by the propagation of the ‘two-nation theory’. This theory stated that India consisted of two separate nations, on the basis of religion: Hindus and Muslims. The ‘two-nation theory’ had no basis in Indian history. After the arrival of Islam in India in around 1000 AD, Hindus and Muslims lived together largely in harmony. This is evident from the huge popularity of Muslim Sufi saints in medieval India, whose shrines are visited even to this day by Hindus and Muslims alike. During medieval times, a common culture was shared by both Hindus and Muslims. This Hindu-Muslim syncretic culture (known as the ganga-jamuni tehzeeb) had resulted in a new flowering of art, architecture, music, and so on, in Indian society. Both Hindus and Muslims had also fought jointly against the British during the Revolt of 1857. Hindus and Muslims together were equally repressed by the British

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during the national struggle for independence. However, the British colonialists had sowed the seed of communal discord in the early 1900s in an effort to defang Indian nationalism. The designs of the British began to have grave consequences for the Indian people by the 1940s.

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In 1940, Pakistan was demanded as an independent state at the Lahore session of the Muslim League. The basis of this demand was the two-nation theory. Many Muslims in India did not support this demand at that time.

The League was supported by the British government to demand an independent state for Muslims. The withdrawal of the Congress from provincial governments as a result of the Quit India movement was termed by the Muslim League as 'Deliverance Day'. The Congress had withdrawn to protest against the British reaction to the demand for independence. The Muslim League celebrated the 'Deliverance Day'. Due to the vacuum created by the arrest of all Congress leaders by the British, the League was able to take advantage and disseminate their ideas unchallenged. The League, supported by the British, began to aggressively propagate the idea of Pakistan among the Muslim masses, a demand that slowly started gaining popularity.

### **Gandhi-Jinnah talks**

After the Congress leaders were released in 1944, Gandhi decided to start talks with Jinnah to reach some sort of resolution between the Congress and the League. The Gandhi-Jinnah talks were very important with regard to the political issues of India and the Pakistan Movement. The talks between the two leaders started in response to the appeal of the general public for a settlement of Hindu-Muslim differences. The talks began on 9 September 1944 in Bombay, and continued up to 27 September 1944 when Jinnah announced their termination and their failure to reach an agreement.

### **C.R. Formula (1944)**

C. Rajagopalachari realized the necessity of a settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League for the attainment of independence. In 1944, he came up with a formula, called the C. R. Formula. Its main contents were as follows:

- After the war, a commission shall be appointed to demarcate the boundaries of Muslim-dominated districts in the north-west and east of India.
- The people of these districts shall decide, by plebiscite, the issue of separation from India.
- The Muslim League should agree to the provisional interim government, formed by the Congress for the transitional period.
- In the event of separation, a mutual agreement shall be entered into by the two governments for combined defence, commerce, communication and other essential sectors.

### **Desai-Liaqat Pact (1945)**

Talks between Bhulabhai Desai and Liaqat Ali Khan, leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League respectively, were meant to find a way out of the 1942–45 political impasses. After Desai's declaration at Peshawar on 22 April 1945, Liaqat Ali published the gist of the agreement. According to the agreement, the Congress and the League would form the interim government at the Centre on the following lines:

- Nomination of equal number of persons by both in the central executive

- Representation of the minorities, in particular of the scheduled castes and the Sikh

The pact was never formally endorsed either by the Congress or by the League.

### Wavell Plan and Simla Conference (1945)

After the failure of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks, Wavell, who succeeded Lord Linlithgow as the Viceroy of India, was convinced that the initiative should come from the government. On 14 June 1945, new proposals were announced to introduce further constitutional changes in India ‘within the framework of the 1935 Government of India Act’. A conference was to be held at Simla starting on 25 June 1945, wherein representatives of both the political parties would participate. The proposals were conciliatory to some extent, but unsatisfactory and provocative in one respect. The Viceroy’s executive council was to be wholly Indian, except for the Viceroy himself and the British Commander-in-Chief.

The Viceroy’s special powers would not officially lapse, but an assurance was available that they would not be used ‘unreasonably’. The divisive characteristics were also discussed at the conference. It was proposed that there would be equal proportions of both the communities—Hindus and Muslims—in the Council. This meant that the Muslim League’s demand for parity on a communal basis had been endorsed for the first time in an official declaration of British policy. A concrete outcome to the Wavell Plan was the summoning of the Simla Conference. The Simla Conference began on a note of optimism. Gandhi felt that Wavell’s plan was sincere and would lead to independence. Jinnah, however, ‘flatly refused to cooperate’, as Wavell later reported. The Muslim League leader was determined to undermine the conference unless it agreed to his terms.

These included the demand that Muslims not belonging to the League could not be appointed to the executive council. Congress President Abul Kalam Azad was firmly opposed to any such arrangement. He thought that the Congress would be betraying its Muslim members if it accepted Jinnah’s demand. Wavell would not proceed without obtaining Jinnah’s cooperation. When it was withheld, the Viceroy announced the failure of the conference.

Jinnah had, in effect, been given the power to veto over all negotiations, and he would use or threaten to use this weapon again and again in the months to come. From this point onward, the communal question dominated the struggle for freedom. Indeed, the attainment of freedom was already certain; the conflict now was between those who struggled to achieve a united and secular Indian state, and those whose rigid sectarianism stood in the way of this accomplishment.

The League decided that 16 August 1946 would be observed as ‘Direct Action Day’ throughout the country for the purpose of winning a separate Muslim state. In this tense situation, the Viceroy’s decision to invite the Congress to form the interim government at the Centre added fuel to the fire. In Calcutta, on 16 August 1946, the League organized public demonstrations and strikes, resulting in clashes and rioting all over the city. The mob fury continued for four consecutive days, after which normalcy was gradually restored. The Bengal government led by the League leader, H.S. Suhrawardy, had declared 16 August a public holiday, which made things worse. Nor did it call the army until the situation became completely out of control.

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**Attlee's announcement****NOTES**

It was obvious that something drastic had to be done to break the deadlock. The initiative was taken by British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, who on 20 February 1947, announced in the British Parliament that the government's 'definite intention was to transfer power' into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948. This historic declaration caught everyone by surprise. It was declared that the British would be pulling out of the country little more than a year hence. The Indian people would have to settle their differences before then.

Attlee, on 20 February 1947, announced that the British would withdraw from India by 30 June 1948, and that Lord Mountbatten would replace Wavell. British powers and obligations vis-à-vis the princely states would lapse with the transfer of power, but these would not be transferred to any successor government in British India. Partition of the country was implicit in the provision that if the constituent assembly were not fully representative then power would be transferred to more than one Central government. It was hoped that fixing a deadline would shock both parties to come to an agreement. The Muslim League launched civil disobedience in Punjab, which led to the fall of Punjab Chief Minister, Malik Khizar Hayat Khan's ministry.

Jinnah saw victory in sight and made a desperate attempt to secure control over the provinces with Muslim majority. Riots broke out in wild frenzy in Calcutta, Assam, Punjab and North-West Frontier Province. The new Viceroy reached India on 22 March 1947. He had come with instructions to work for a united India; but meetings with leaders of different parties and communities soon convinced him that partition was inevitable. Few people desired the country's dismemberment. Gandhi declared that India would be divided 'over my dead body'. Abul Kalam Azad was vehemently opposed to the creation of Pakistan. But Jinnah was adamant: Muslims must have their own state.

**Indian Independence Act**

This Act declared that the British power over the Indian states would lapse on 15 August 1947. The states were allowed to join either India or Pakistan. Before that date, most of the states had signed the Instrument of Accession by which they agreed to accede to India. But there were some states which thought that in the changed situation, they were entitled to declare their independence.

**Independence and partition**

The last two years of British rule were marked by tortuous negotiations between the British, the Congress and Muslim League politicians. These were increasingly accompanied by communal violence, culminating in freedom accompanied by partition and sporadic, localized but often extremely militant and united mass action—the INA release movement and the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) mutiny in 1945–1946, the Tebhaga uprising in Bengal, Punnapra vayalar in Travancore and the Telengana peasant armed revolt in Hyderabad.

In addition, there were numerous agitations, strikes and demonstrations all over the country. The mass pressure, thus generated, helped in bringing about the decisive shift in the British policy. Another important development was the change in the total objective situation worldwide as well as in India. Germany had been destroyed and Japan had surrendered after Hiroshima bombing in August 1945. Socially radical regimes with communist leadership or participation were emerging throughout Eastern Europe



and seemed on the point of doing so even in France and Italy. The Chinese revolution was forging ahead, and a tremendous anti-imperialist wave was sweeping through South-East Asia with Vietnam and Indonesia resisting efforts to restore French and Dutch colonial rule. With a war weary army and people and a ravaged economy, Britain would have had to retreat; the victory of the Labour Party in the elections in Britain further quickened the process somewhat.

### **Partition**

The partition was to be effected in the following manner. If the members of legislative assemblies of Bengal and Punjab were to decide in favour of partition by a simple majority, a boundary commission, set up by the viceroy, would demarcate the appropriate boundaries. Sind and Baluchistan would decide which constituent assembly to join. In the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), there was to be a referendum to ascertain whether it would join Pakistan or not. The Muslim-majority district of Sylhet was also to decide by referendum whether it would join East Bengal or would remain in Assam. The British Parliament would undertake legislation to transfer power before the end of 1947 to one or two successor authorities on a Dominion status basis. This was to be done without any prejudice to the final decision of the constituent assembly on whether to stay in the Commonwealth or not.

The Muslim League accepted the plan within a week and so did the Congress. The Congress had no alternative, according to Abul Kalam Azad, but to accept the plan. It was important to arrest the drift towards anarchy and chaos. The lesser evil had to be chosen. Partition was better than murder of hapless citizens. Gandhi, who had till now steadfastly opposed the division of India, also supported the resolution.

The task was enormous, but time was running out. Punjab and Bengal were divided by two boundary commissions with Sir Cyril Radcliffe as the chairman of both. East Bengal, West Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan opted for Pakistan while West Bengal and East Punjab opted for India. Sylhet threw its lot with Pakistan. In the NWFP, Abdul Gaffar Khan and the Red Shirts demanded an independent Pakhtoonistan. This was found to be unacceptable. The Red Shirts did not participate in the plebiscite, which went in favour of joining Pakistan.

## SUMMARY

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- When the British government decided to partition Bengal, it led to intense agitation against the government, and the most significant pan-India agitation against the British was the Non-Cooperation Movement that lasted from 1919 to 1922.
- This movement was started by Mahatma Gandhi to further the cause of Indian nationalism.
- Soon after he was given the responsibility of the Civil Disobedience Movement, Gandhi wrote a letter to Viceroy Irwin seeking the abolishment of salt tax, reduction of military expenditure and the release of political prisoners.
- For the cause of immediate independence, the Quit India Movement was launched by Gandhi. It was another form of the civil disobedience movement.
- The foundation of Indian National Congress in 1885 was an attempt to narrow the Hindu-Muslim divide and place the genuine grievances of all the communities in the country before the British.
- The last two years of British rule were marked by tortuous negotiations between the British, the Congress and Muslim League politicians.

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## KEY TERMS

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- **Resolution:** It refers to a formal expression of opinion or intention agreed on by a legislative body, committee, or other formal meeting, typically after taking a vote.
- **Fascism:** It is a political ideology characterised by an authoritarian and nationalistic right-wing system of government and social organization.
- **Two-nation theory:** It is the ideology that the primary identity of Muslims on the Indian subcontinent is their religion, rather than their language or ethnicity, and therefore Indian Hindus and Muslims are two distinct nationalities, regardless of ethnic or other commonalities.
- **Indian National Army:** The Indian National Army was an armed force formed by Indian nationalists in 1942 in South-East Asia during Second World. Its aim was to secure Indian independence from British rule, for which it allied with—and was supported by—Imperial Japan in the latter's campaign in South-East Asia.

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## ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

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1. Swaraj means self-government.
2. The interim government of India was formed on 2nd September 1946.
3. The Cabinet Mission 1946 formulated proposals for the formation of a government that would lead to an independent India.
4. The constituent assembly consisted of 217 representatives, inclusive of 15 women.
5. The home minister at the time of the Mountbatten Plan was Sardar Patel.
6. The British PM Attlee announced the plan in the House of Commons on 3 June 1947.

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## QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the objectives of extremists.
2. What was the central idea of the Non-Cooperation Movement?
3. What were the reasons for the outbreak of the Quit India Movement?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Identify the significance of the Indian National Army, especially the role it played in India's freedom movement.
2. Examine the events that led to India's partition into India and Pakistan in 1947.
3. Analyse the importance of the Quit India Movement. Why was it suppressed?

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## FURTHER READING

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- Byres, T.J., Harbhans Mukhia. 1985. *Feudalism and Non-European Societies*. New Delhi: Routledge Publishers.
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