

IDEAS ON STATE

Unit Structure

- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Mahadev Govind Ranade
 - 1.3.1 Life Sketch
 - 1.3.2 Idea of the State
 - 1.3.3 Theory of Individual Freedom
 - 1.3.4 Organic conception of the state
 - 1.3.5 Role of the Elite in Society
 - 1.3.6 Concluding remarks
- 1.4 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
 - 1.4.1 Life Sketch
 - 1.4.2 Basic precepts
 - 1.4.3 Concept of Swaraj
 - 1.4.4 Satyagraha
 - 1.4.5 Sarvodaya
 - 1.4.6 Doctrine of Trusteeship
 - 1.4.7 Vision of Classless Society
 - 1.4.8 Ideal Social Order
 - 1.4.9 Concluding remarks
- 1.5 Summary/ Conclusion
- 1.6 References

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The unit aims to make you understand the political thought of Mahadev Govind Ranade and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi about their ideas on the state. After studying this unit, you may be able to –

- Know about the Idea of the State of M.G. Ranade and his thoughts on Individual freedom.
- Understand the organic conception of the state and the role of the elite in society as per M.G. Ranade.
- Explain the concept of Swaraj, Satyagraha, and Sarvodaya given by M.K. Gandhi.
- Explicate M.K. Gandhi's vision of a classless society and ideal social order.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The state is a political entity or an institution of government. It has been formed by humans with the purpose of ensuring proper order and security in a specified territory. It works towards the welfare of its citizens. Therefore, the state as an entity has a lot of significance. Various scholars have given their valuable remarks on how a state should be. This particular chapter deals with the political thought of Mahadev Govind Ranade and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi with special reference to their ideas on the State. Let's understand their philosophy in the following section.

1.3 MAHADEV GOVIND RANADE

1.3.1 Life Sketch

M.G. Ranade was born in a Brahmin family in Nashik in Maharashtra in 1842. He was a student at Mumbai University. He received primary education at Kolhapur and higher education at Mumbai. He was a well-educated social reformer of Maharashtra and got B.A. LL.B degree. He served the British judiciary and became a Bombay High Court judge in 1893. Though he served as a judge during the British era, this did not stop him from bringing social and political reforms to society. He was associated with many socio-religious organizations which had their base in Mumbai and the Pune region of Maharashtra. He had very close relations with the PrarthanaSamaj, Pune Sarvajanik Sabha, and Indian National Congress. He was an inspiration behind the establishment of the Deccan Education Society in 1884. He wrote many books and articles to enlighten the masses. In short, he was one of the most important social reformers in India. He gave a philosophical foundation for the liberal movement in India(Vora, 1986).

1.3.2 Ideas of the State:

Ranade's basic idea of the state revolves around his critique of the Laissez-faire state. Laissez-Faire state talks about the minimum intervention of the state, especially in the economic sphere. Instead, he has advocated for the doctrine of the positive role of the state, especially in matters concerning the economy. According to him, the major problem

underlying the Indian economy was extreme poverty. Also, another issue concerning our economy was its complete reliance on agriculture. He felt that the solution to both these problems lay in Industrialisation and the field of agriculture should be commercialized. He believed that Indian Economy should follow a capitalist model of development to solve its major economic problems. He opined that in the agricultural field, the doctrine of private property could solve the issue of poverty to a great extent.

The agricultural land in India was under the control of poor peasants. Therefore, he advocated for mixed relations as far as land is concerned wherein two classes would be there – peasants would have proprietary rights whereas land ownership would be held by the capitalist farmers. He believed that property should be held by intelligent and educated masses. He contended that the average Indian does not get motivated by the spirit of free competition. Their lives are only revolving around the system of caste and family. In such a scenario, both the capital and labor get unutilized. Such a backward economy can only be progressed with the help of the capitalist model. Here, the role of the state becomes even more important to encourage such a development process.

The Indian state was extending its functions to give support to railway companies, tobacco, cotton, tea plantations, and iron and coal mines. Ranade viewed these steps as insufficient for the needs of the economy. Indian economy needed support from the state also in starting new ventures and industries. He thought that the state could extend its support in establishing new industries. In the initial years, the state can subsidize these industries or else can start such industries under the aegis of the state itself. Also, the state can encourage the formation of cooperatives to help these industries in getting loans at lower interest rates.

He said that the non-intervention of the state should be abolished in foreign trade as well. Because the industries of the Indian economy were backward in comparison to the European economy and they were not able to compete well with the British industries. Therefore, he was against free trade. According to him, Indian industries required protection from the state, especially in devising tariffs on the lines of British industries.

In this way, he has provided the way through which the Indian capitalist economic model can be implemented. He truly believed that the problems underlying the Indian economy can be solved by state-supported capitalism. Apart from this, he also suggested a positive role of the state in the upliftment of the weaker sections of society. He suggested that the tenure and the rent should be fixed to protect the tenants. Similarly, he advocated for fixing the rates of interest for loans to protect the peasants who usually take loans from money lenders. In his famous essay titled “Indian Political Economy”, he opined that the distribution of resources should be done based on the principle of equity. In short, he held the view that the state needs to protect the weaker sections of society within the framework of the capitalistic economy.

Moreover, he also sought to provide a role for the state in reforming society. He especially wanted to reform the institution of marriage and family in high-caste Hindus. Ranade believed that the state should take steps to improve the status of women and children in society. The state can act positively to eradicate the social evils from the country. However, he felt that the role of the state in bringing social reforms is limited to a certain extent. Because, if we want to bring change in society, the attitude of the people must be changed. Mere institutional changes cannot bring reforms in a real sense. People's consciences should change accordingly and then only we can achieve the aim of bringing social reforms in society (Vora, 1986).

1.3.3 Theory of Individual Freedom

Ranade's views on Individual Freedom are based on the doctrine of theism. He was influenced by A.C. Fraser's theistic philosophy. Ranade delivered a lecture on 'Indian Theism' in 1896. Here, he gave an Indian perspective to Fraser's thoughts on theism. Joseph Butler was also a strong inspiration behind Ranade's ideas on theism. Ranade was influenced by the Western philosophy of theism. But, his conception was highly rooted in the Hindu tradition.

In Ranade article on "Hindu Protestantism", he interpreted the Bhakti Movement of Maharashtra from the point of view of his conception of theism. It was a movement of religious reforms which was nothing but the theistic movement of the saints. According to him, there are three components of existence –Ego, Non-Ego, and Infinite. He argued that there should not be any kind of exaggeration of these postulates. Therefore, he rejected Mysticism, Materialism, and Idealism as these things exaggerate the three postulates of existence. There is a supernatural relationship between man and nature. Man is different from other animals. The fact that differentiates between a man and other animals is the self-consciousness of a man. This factor makes a man responsible for his actions. It is this conscience which has built a relationship between a man and God.

According to Ranade, real freedom is the freedom of conscience of an individual. People should only listen to their inner conscience and not to the authority of religious scriptures, customs, or traditions. This freedom of conscience and reason should guide individuals in their behavior and conduct. But this freedom guaranteed to individuals is not absolute. This is delegated to them. Therefore, it has to exercise with utmost responsibility. People should have a sense of duty while exercising this freedom. The conscience can play a major role here in helping an individual determine what is right or wrong. Also, Ranade believes that freedom of conscience is limited in the sense that it should not be harmful to the freedom of others in society.

Ranade criticized the caste system prevailing in society. He believed that the saints belonging to Bhakti Movement had rejected the notion that the Brahmin caste has been created by God and therefore all other castes

should worship them. He advocated for the Bhagwat dharma which is open for all people from all castes. Here, even people belonging to lower castes can become saints. In this way, Bhakti Movement has helped improve the status of lower castes people in our country. He opined that the caste system prevalent in society is the biggest blow to our social system. The caste system is discriminatory in nature and created a division in society. Instead, he suggested developing a feeling of brotherhood among people in society.

He was also a strong advocate for the equality of gender in society. He studied the status of women in society and found that during the Vedic age, women had equal status with those men. They could choose their husband, complete their studies, took an equal part in the affairs of the state. It was during the medieval age, the status of women got deteriorated. He argued that the family system should be reformed to improve the status of women in society. So, Ranade believed that to protect the liberty of all, Indian society should be transformed. We need to work on asserting social equality in society.

1.3.4 Organic conception of the state

Ranade thought that all the elements in society are interdependent on one another. Each of the elements needs to be developed for the development of society. Taking inspiration from Herbert Spencer's ideas, he held the view that Society and humans have certain similarities between them. Human body parts are connected. The development of one organ depends on the other. Similarly, progress in society is mutually related to all its aspects. Progress in one aspect cannot be achieved by neglecting the other aspects of society. For instance, individuals cannot be liberal in politics and conservative in religious aspects. Therefore, he made an emphasis on bringing both political as well as religious reforms in society. He believed that social, political, religious, and economic reforms should go hand in hand. We cannot analyze a question simply by looking at it from one single lens. Individuals may not be able to exercise their political rights unless their social background is good. Similarly, the social condition of a person plays a vital role in their economic development. Hence, all spheres should be developed simultaneously.

Even if India achieves political freedom, we won't be able to preserve it unless we achieve social progress in society. Therefore, society needs to be transformed. This transformation of society is to be achieved slowly and gradually. Social change will be achieved in a step-by-step manner and it should be slow if we want to make it real. Progress can be achieved faster by using rebellious methods. But he rejected the usage of such methods. Instead, he advocated the use of moderate means to achieve growth naturally.

Ranade was also a staunch supporter of the 'Method of Tradition' wherein the reforms would be based on age-old Hindu tradition. He argued that though Indian society is conservative in nature, it has adopted new principles gradually. He favored such a slow progression of society

without any revolutionary changes happening. Ranade suggested reforms based on Hindu tradition to make the orthodox section of society accept such reforms. Moreover, he opined that Indians were not ready for full political representation. Therefore, he wanted to have a gradual advancement toward the representative government in India.

1.3.5 Role of the Elite in Society

Ranade had a very strong opinion regarding the role of the elite in society. He viewed elites as the only capable ones to make a sure transformation of India into a liberal nation. They are a minority who possess adequate knowledge and are very influential to make an impact on almost every sphere of society. According to him, Brahmins, Baniya, zamindars, and the educated middle class are the elites in society. They possess knowledge, they are wealthy and they do take initiative if needed. He also argued that the property-holding and the intelligent class should be given political representation at the local level of governance. Because the educated class can be the leader of the country. They have taken an education equivalent to the Britishers and they have achieved the competency required to be in the administrative sphere. Therefore, seats must be reserved for the educated class in civil services.

He was aware that the masses were poor and only cared about food and employment rather than education. The majority of people availing higher education come from the upper caste i.e. the Brahmins. Therefore, he wanted the Brahmins to play an important role in the overall progress of our country. He called it a privilege for Brahmins to be able to guide the nation. Apart from Brahmins, he also included Zamindars among the elites. He advocated giving special representation to them in local politics as well as reservation of seats for them in civil services.

1.3.6 Concluding remarks

Mahadev Govind Ranade was a highly influential social reformer. He took immense efforts to eradicate certain evil social practices prevailing in society. His ideas on the State mostly revolved around his criticism of the Laizess-Faire State. He explained clearly the need for a welfare state in a developing country like India. He stressed that the State should intervene for the all-around development of its people. He was a votary of Individual freedom. He was highly appreciated by many for his revolutionary ideas. But, his marriage with a child girl was questioned by many critics.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: Use the space given below for your answer.

1) Describe the Idea of the State of the M.G. Ranade.

1.4.1 Life Sketch

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in 1869. He was conferred the title “Mahatma” by Rabindranath Tagore. He is popularly known as the Father of Nation. Gandhi studied law in England. In 1893, he went to South Africa to deal with a legal case. During that period, he witnessed widespread racial discrimination against colored people. To deal with this inhuman practice, he devised the technique of Satyagraha which means non-violent protests. The aim was to give justice to the sufferers. Nelson Mandela rightly pointed out that “*Gandhi came to South Africa as a lawyer and returned as Mahatma*”.

In 1914, Gandhi returned to India and played a vital role in the freedom struggle of India. Gandhi launched several movements against the tyranny of British rule in India. For instance, in 1920, he launched Non-Cooperation Movement, then the Civil disobedience movement in 1930, and in 1942 Quit India movement. India became an independent country in 1947. This coincided with the partition of a country that was not peaceful. Pakistan was carved out of the Indian Union. It led to severe Hindu-Muslim riots. Gandhi took a lot of effort to bring communal peace but was not successful. In 1948, he was assassinated by a Hindu fanatic.

1.4.2 Basic precepts

The two most basic tenets of Gandhian political thought are as follows:

a) End and Means

This doctrine of End and Means believes that if we wish to achieve the right ends, the means used to achieve those ends should be equally righteous. According to Mahabharata, A king can resort to dubious methods to deal with emergencies. Because here the cause is to protect the country. Even Kautilya has propounded the use of Sama, Dam, Danda, and Bhed to strengthen the state power as the cause is right. Niccolo Machiavelli has advocated that the king may use wrongful methods such as creating fear in the minds of people to achieve their unity which is again a right cause. He even suggested that politics and ethics should be separated from one another. King can resort to any means to protect the territory and ensure political stability. In the end, people will not be against him as the results would be in their interests. Here the cause i.e. the end goal is right. But means advised to achieve that goal is not righteous.

However, Mahatma Gandhi never supported the use of unjust means in any circumstance, even if the goal is noble. Gandhi opined that means should be as just as the ends. He strongly argued that to achieve the right ends only the right means should be adopted. He never agreed with the principle of “End justifies the Means”. He made a comparison between End and Means on one hand and Trees and Seeds on the other. The nature of the tree depends upon the seeds we sow. Good quality seeds will grow

good trees. Therefore, means are of utmost importance while achieving any objective. It is similar to the action and its consequences. We need to be careful of our actions for favorable consequences.

Gandhi argued that Ends and means cannot be separated from one another. Wrong means will never lead to righteousness. Gandhi always advocated for the right course of action. Therefore, he resorted to the use of Satyagraha to achieve the goal of Swaraj i.e. self-rule. His emphasis on ends and means theory is also reflected in his theory of ethics and politics. He opined that ethical behavior is a guiding principle for humans, and politics is not an exception here. Therefore, ethics and politics cannot be separated from one another. Politics has to be guided by the highest moral principles. He was inspired by the thoughts of Gopal Krishna Gokhale and advocated for the principle of ‘Spiritualization of Politics’. This means that politics cannot be considered as the ‘Power Over’ someone, rather it is the ‘Power To’ uplift the condition of people in society. In this way, Gandhi was a staunch advocate of the righteous “ends and Means” theory.

b) Truth and Non-Violence

The essence of Gandhian political thought lies in the adherence to Truth. But, discovering the truth is as difficult as finding God. He believed that God and Truth cannot be separated from each other. The devotion to God can be expressed by showing devotion to ordinary people, especially the weaker sections of society. He opined that by serving the masses, we are in a way serving God.

Non-Violence is one aspect of adherence to the Truth. Non-violence or Ahimsa means the absence of violence in one’s behavior. This is the negative perception of the term non-violence. On the positive side, it means showing love/affection towards all including those who hate us. For him, even the intent to harm others is a sin. Acquisition of materialist things beyond basic needs will constitute a form of violence as we are depriving others of their basic needs. He rightfully said that *“There is enough for everyone’s need, but not for everyone’s greed”*. Act causing environmental pollution or acts which affect public health is also a form of violence. In short, Non-violence contains all such principles of being a good citizen.

Gandhi thought that Non-violence is not everyone’s cup of tea. It’s a sign of being a strong individual. With the use of moral power and adherence to the principle of truth comes such power. By resorting to non-violent methods, the person compels the mighty opponent to bend. It’s a victory over physical force. He used this strategy against the Britishers during the struggle for India’s independence.

Gandhi’s views on Non-violence do not imply the absence of differences of opinion. It means tolerance to the views of others which is very significant for co-existence. To practice the Non-violence principle in a real sense, one must devote themselves physically as well as emotionally to this principle. It helps individuals fight against the social injustices happening in society. It also involves the absence of any kind of

exploitation of the weaker for personal motives. So, Gandhian thought on Non-Violence teaches us to live peaceful lives and be harmonious with nature. Nature will always have enough for everyone's needs; if we stop damaging it. This also promotes the spirit of co-existence in the real sense.

1.4.3 Concept of Swaraj

The term Swaraj means Self-rule or independence from the foreign rule. Swaraj does not mean only political freedom from foreign rule, but it also constitutes cultural freedom. A country should be equally free in terms of deciding upon the cultural front. Otherwise, it will not be considered a Swaraj in true terms. Swaraj believes in having confidence in one's potential in decision-making while learning from others. Gandhi thought that in Swaraj everyone will have affection towards their own country thereby helping to achieve the objective of nation-building.

Another aspect of Swaraj is Self-Government. It means that people should not be dependent on the government be it foreign or national government. Government should not regulate the daily affairs of people. This negates the idea of "Swaraj". His conception of Swaraj also focuses on strengthening democracy. Here, people will choose their representatives and will also have the power to keep a check on them to avoid any misuse of authority. If the power is getting abused, then people have a right to resist such authority under Swaraj. Here, people have the power to control the authority and not the other way.

Gandhi viewed Swaraj as not just acquiring political freedom, but also constitute self-discipline, self-control, and self-determination. He never wished for India's political freedom only. For him, the struggle to achieve India's freedom was the struggle for attaining Swaraj and self-purification. His idea of Swaraj revolves around three tenets, i.e. Self-rule, Self-government, and Self-discipline. All three would help achieve the welfare of all.

1.4.4 Satyagraha

Satyagraha means a non-violent protest against injustice. The term Satyagraha is derived from two terms – 'Satya' means the Truth and 'Agraha' means to insist. So, Satyagraha can be simply understood as adherence to the truth. This technique was devised by M.K. Gandhi when he was residing in South Africa. The objective was to give justice to the colored people who were discriminated against by the South African Government. According to him, Satyagraha was a means to secure justice. It involves personal/ self-suffering which is opposed to resistance by force. In returned to India in 1914 and used the technique of Satyagraha to fight against the brutal British rule. Apart from this, he also applied the principles of Satyagraha to eradicate the evil social practices in Indian society such as untouchability, communal hatred, and the like.

He thought that the use of violence to fight evil practices would multiply the problems. The only effective way to fight against evil is the use of the non-violent method. Therefore, Satyagraha will prove to be a significant

way to deal with injustices. This technique can be applied at both individual and the political level. At an individual level, it can lead to moral upliftment of an individual, and at political levels, it can be used to attain freedom from foreign rule as well as to secure justice for people against discrimination.

The one who resorts to the method of Satyagraha is known as the Satyagrahi. They advocate for self-suffering to have a psychological effect on the person who is doing injustice. This technique is different from Duragraha means stubborn resistance to the opponent's actions. Duragrahi always think that they are the only righteous people and never allowed their opponent to share their views. They consider the opponent as evil and negate the possibility that even the opponents can be right in some cases. On the other hand, Satyagrahi listens to the views of their opponents. They try to resolve the issue with mutually acceptable solutions and once they come to a consensus even the opponent becomes their friend. Gandhi opined that we should be against the wrong and not against the wrong-doer. This suggests a peaceful resolution of conflicts.

1.4.5 Sarvodaya

Sarvodaya is derived from two words – ‘Sarva’ means all and ‘Udaya’ means rise. In a literal sense, it means Rise of All. In simple terms, we can understand it as the upliftment of all the sections in society. Power, knowledge, and wealth are concentrated in only a few hands. Therefore, Gandhi thought to have the empowerment of all in society. He never wanted to create a rift between the haves and have-nots in society as he believed in the principle of Ends and Means.

Gandhi was inspired by John Ruskin's “Unto This Last”. This particular piece of work gives a message of ‘Upliftment of the neglected sections of society’. Gandhi was highly influenced by the ideas of Ruskin. Accordingly, he published a summary of the work of Ruskin in the Gujarati language titled ‘Sarvodaya’. The idea of Satvodayaemphasizes on ‘Welfare of All’, but it specifically focuses on the empowerment of lower sections of society. He opined that these things are to be applied not only in the personal sphere but also while taking decisions of public importance.

Critics have pointed out that it can understand that we need to be concerned about the weaker sections. But, why there is a need to think about those who are well-off? The answer to this has been given by VinobaBhave who was a staunch follower of the ideas of Gandhi. He said that Sarvodaya aims to uplift the weaker sections materially while uplifting the rich people on moral terms. In this way, the Sarvodaya concept focuses on the Material as well as spiritual well-being of all the people in society.

Being the advocate for the concept of Sarvodaya, Gandhi was against the principle of utilitarianism. Jeremy Bentham originated the concept of utilitarianism which means ‘The greatest happiness of greatest number of People’. According to this, in policy formulation, this principle of the

greatest good of the greatest number of people should be taken into consideration. However, Gandhi never agreed with this principle. He asserted that utilitarianism is very harmful to humans. Therefore, he always supported the greatest good of all. Moreover, Gandhi felt that Utilitarianism only focuses on the material well-being of people, whereas the principle of Sarvodaya also includes the Spiritual growth of all.

Sarvodaya also redefines the concept of Democracy. Commonly, democracy is understood as the rule of the majority. Gandhi viewed that here to minority gets suppressed by the majority. People lack individual freedom in such scenarios. Therefore, he stressed that the democratic government should act as per the will of the people. Individual freedom of people, and equality of opportunity to all should be strengthened to maintain democratic principles in a real sense. Gandhi also differentiated between a welfare state and a state under Sarvodaya. He observed that under the welfare state, the state provides equal services to all, and positive discrimination is observed. But, here state taxes heavily on rich people. Gandhi believed that the Sarvodaya state appeals to the rich to share their surplus wealth and this completely voluntarily. So, his conception of Sarvodaya aims to achieve the common good of all in society.

1.4.6 Doctrine of Trusteeship

Gandhi believed in simple living. He emphasized more on the use of simple technology rather than heavy industrialization. He argued that simple technology would help generate employment which was necessary at the time of independence as India just started developing. However, he thought that if we rely on heavy industrialization, it may lead to large-scale unemployment in India. Therefore, he preferred production by the masses. He was aware of the fact that such change cannot be introduced immediately. The existing system of production can be continued, but the attitude of the owners of the means of production needs to be changed. Therefore, to change their attitude, Gandhi came up with the idea of Trusteeship.

Gandhi's principle of trusteeship is mainly addressed to the rich people. Gandhi advises them to consider themselves as not the owners of their property but as trustees of it. It is based on Gandhi's principle of Aparigraha or Non-Possession. It means that people should not possess anything beyond their basic needs and Gandhi's principle of Asteys or Non-Stealing means that if the individual is possessing wealth to satisfy his greed, then it will constitute theft. However, he never believed to overthrow the entire economic system. He wanted to change the attitude of those who possess surplus wealth. He stressed that the relationship between capitalists and common people should be changed. However, critics have appreciated the thought behind the idea of trusteeship, but they pointed out the fact that it is far from reality.

1.4.7 Vision of Classless Society

Gandhi always favoured for equality of all in society. Therefore, he was a staunch supporter of a classless society. He observed that physical labour is looked down upon by people in comparison to mental labour. Therefore, he advocated for 'Bread labour' to seek to achieve equality among all. The idea of Bread Labour required everyone to do the physical labour of production in proportion to their consumption of bread. This was to promote the dignity of physical labour and to eliminate the division of labourers in society. He thought that it would help generate a sense of equality among all the people. The principle of 'bread labour' aimed to promote three things – Simple Living, Dignity of Labour, and a Sense of equality among all. Initially, Caste was used to symbolize the division of labour in society. However, this bread labour principle will not create such division among people into a high and lower caste.

Gandhi was also against discrimination among people based on Gender and faith. He advocated for equality between men and women and also people belonging to different religions. He aimed to create a classless society. For that, he wanted to change the attitude of people. He thought that fundamentally men and women are equal as their problems in essence do not differ. Their soul is one and they cannot live without each other. But, men have dominated women for ages due to which women remained marginalized in society. Slowly and steadily men have started recognizing the importance of the equal status of women in society. Also, he believed that temples, Mosques, and Churches all are equal. He made no distinction between the gods. According to him, it is all about faith. This is how he sought to achieve the goal of a classless society.

1.4.8 Ideal Social Order

Gandhi's ideal social order was 'Swaraj' which means self-government. He was a votary of Purna Swaraj means complete self-government. He was mainly concerned with the welfare of all the people. First of all, he was against the institution of the state as the state exerts its power over the people in society. Therefore, he gave the principles of an ideal social order and not the ideal state. Here, people would have individual power and there are fewer requirements for an order.

The basic principles of the ideal social order of Gandhi include:

- The social order is based on the principle of Ahimsa or non-violence.
- The dignity of all should be respected.
- The existing system of centralization of power should be discontinued. Instead, the Decentralisation of power needs to be encouraged.
- The moral and Cultural traditions of Indian society should be revived.

It is significant to note that though Gandhi was against the centralization of power, he was never against the establishment of central authority. He thought that central authority is required to keep India united and to imbibe the spirit of nationalism among people who are divided into various lines. A central authority would manage the affairs of such people

by forming the panchayats i.e. village councils. Each village would be independent in terms of legislative, executive, and judicial powers. They would not be dependent on the government for their daily affairs. Here, the state will not exert powers over the villages, but it would give strength to the villages. Each community would feel safe under such a system of social order.

There was a further expansion above the category of village. Villages were grouped to form a Taluka, Talukas were grouped to form districts, then districts into provinces and the like. Each of these units will be governed by elected representatives. They will have the autonomy to govern themselves. The central government's task was to hold them together. In this way, Gandhi believed that his vision of ideal social order was upholding democracy in its true spirit.

1.4.9 Concluding remarks

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a great Indian leader and contributed immensely to the freedom struggle of India. His philosophy has sought to achieve the common good of all in society. His vision was to transform India. The basic precepts given by Gandhi such as Non-Violence, Non-Possession, Swaraj, Satyagraha, Sarvodaya, Doctrine of Trusteeship, Ideal Social Order, etc. were highly appreciated as its objective was the empowerment of all the sections of society.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: Use the space given below for your answer.

1) Describe the Basic tenets of the philosophy of M.K. Gandhi.

1.5 SUMMARY/ CONCLUSION

To conclude, we can say that the State is an important political entity for the governance of a country. Many scholars have different views about the existence of a state and its role in the development of a country. In this particular chapter, we have understood the ideas of M.G. Ranade and M.K. Gandhi with special reference to their views on the State. Both of them have contradictory opinions as far as the State is concerned. Ranade thought that the state should intervene in society for its development whereas Gandhi did not believe in the idea of the State as an entity rather he suggested the ideal social order based on decentralization and the presence of a central authority to unite various autonomous structures. Though they had differences of opinion on the idea of the state, their philosophies have contributed immensely towards the progress of society.

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NATIONALISMS

Unit Structure

2.0 Objective

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Work of Ravindranath Tagore

2.2.1 Tagore's Nationalism

2.3 Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

2.3.1 Savarkar on Nationalism

2.3.2 Hindutva as cultural nationalism

2.4 Summary

2.5 Check your progress

2.0 OBJECTIVE

- To understand the concept of nationalism as concept of determinants of Politics
 - To learn the political aspects of Indian nationalism
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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Though some scholars hold that the father of Indian nationalism is Bal Gangadhar Tilak, it cannot be denied that artist, poet like Ravindranath Tagore also developed ideas on nationalism. Before we discuss Tagore's ideas on nationalism, we should briefly understand how nationalism took shape in Europe.

Nationalism in Europe:

Nationalism in Europe developed after the Treaty of Westphalia was signed in 1648 AD. Westphalia was a small town in Germany [Prussia then]. This treaty ended the Thirty Years War [1618-1648] and hence this treaty is also known as 'Peace Treaty'. The Treaty of Westphalia is regarded as the birth-place of modern nation-state.

Two destructive wars were the major triggers behind signing the final peace treaty at Westphalia. Those wars were the Thirty Years' War in the Holy Roman Empire and the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Dutch Republic. This war was a 17th-century religious conflict fought basically in Central Europe. It remained one of the longest and most brutal wars in human history, with more than 80 lacs people died.

The Peace treaty of Westphalia established the precedent of peace reached by diplomatic efforts and a new system of political order in Europe based upon the concept of co-existing sovereign states. Further, it created a new precedent of recognition of another state's sovereignty and right to decide its own fate rests of the foundations of international law which developed later. With this, started the decline of Holy Roman Church in all walks of life.

Nationalism in South Asia:

In case of South Asia, nationalism grew as anti-colonial movement. It is accepted by many important scholars that the Nationalism in India rose in response to the common oppressor— Britain and was used as an anti-colonial tool to unite Indians, during the national movement, which makes Nationalism in India similar to nationalism in other colonies. In other words, nationalism in India was born as a reaction to the opposition to British rule.

2.2 WORK OF RAVINDRANATH TAGORE

Ravindranath Tagore [1861-1941] was the foremost Bengali writer, poet, painter, musician, educationist of his time. He had won the Nobel Prize for literature of the collection of poem 'Gitanjali' in the year 1913. This made him the first non-European writer and the first lyricist to have won the most prestigious award. After Tagore, so far no Indian has won that award for literature.

Tagore was born in Calcutta [now Kolkata] in 1861. His father, Debendranath was a religious-minded person. And yet Debendranath had supported the Reformation movement. The family of Tagore was a well-known family that had many artists, thinkers.

If one looks at Tagore's life, one notices that he was born and lived his whole life in a colonial country. India had long been under the feudal lords and later came the British imperial occupation. The war of 1857 was an attempt to replace the White rule and revert back to traditional feudalism. Till the late 1880s, Tagore led a life of leisure, composing romantic poems and writing and staging operas.

Let us not forget that this is just one side of the picture. He would not turn his back on what was happening in India and in rest of the world. In 1881, he wrote an article called 'Chine Maraner Byabosay' [Trade of death in China]. In this article, he wrote about the evil perpetrated by the British in China by forcing China to produce and consume opium. Then came some of his poems in Naibedya [1901] which should alert us about imperialism that was devastating Africa during the Second Boer War [1889-1902]. This was perhaps the moment when he discovered the limitations of nationalism and the potential dangers of its excesses.

Though he had spent many years in Calcutta, he moved to Shantiniketan in 1901 to found an Ashram. Shantiniketan was a unique experimental school, quite different from the conventional schools.

Though he is largely known as a poet, writer and painter, one cannot ignore his other side which developed political ideas, especially nationalism. He had travelled a lot to Europe and many Asian countries like Japan, etc.

Like all sensible people, Tagore opposed imperialism and supported Indian freedom struggle. Here we must also mention the Ghadar Mutiny also known as the Ghadar Conspiracy. It was a big plan to initiate an all-India mutiny in the British Indian Army. It was to take place in February 1915 to end the British rule in India. It was largely believed then that Germans were secretly supporting this mutiny. This is why the trial is known as 'Hindu-German conspiracy'. Evidence has surfaced lately which proves that Tagore was aware of Ghadarites and he sought the support of the prime minister of Japan.

Though he was a strong nationalist, he was not a blind hater of Western culture. In fact, he insisted that we should learn good things from the Western civilization.

2.2.1 Tagore's Nationalism:

In 1908, Rabindranath Tagore wrote a letter to his A N Bose and said, 'Patriotism can't be our final spiritual leader. I will not buy glass for the piece of diamonds and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live'.

As noted above, he was a versatile genius. He got worried about the spread of aggressive nationalism which had gained popularity before and during the World War I. A collection of his speeches on nationalism was published in 1917 with the same title. This book was published amid the First World War. His views were influenced by the Indian national movement, World War I and the industrial revolution of the late 19th century and early 20th century. All these factors shaped his views on nationalism.

For Tagore, nationalism was 'the political and economic union of a people, is that aspect which a whole population assumes when organized for a mechanical purpose'. [Tagore, 1917, p. 4]. From the very first chapter of 'Nationalism', Tagore was highly critical of modern concept of nation. He argued that nationalism is a new name for greed, inhuman application of science leading to mechanization of life.

If he was critical of western nationalism, he also warned Indian nationalist not to borrow these ideas blindly and become 'xenophobic'. This is why he was critical of burning of foreign cloth, a programme initiated by the Congress popularly known as Swadeshi. In fact, he was an admirer of the West's contribution in Arts and Literature as well as ideas like liberty.

In this book, one speech shows his unconventional views on Indian Nationalism. He argued that the true spirit of nationalism lies in the broad humanistic approach rather than a limited political strategy. He tried to

lessen the importance of aggressive nationalism which had encouraged powerful nations to grab the less-powerful nations.

While developing his ideas on nationalism, he relied heavily on ancient Indian philosophy. In Indian philosophy the focus is on the world as one family. This is why he expected India to contribute to the world peace through humanity. Tagore's humanism does not recognize national boundaries. He showed how the teachings of Nanak, Kabir, etc. had enriched the minds of Indian and how these got faded over time due to rise of aggressive nationalism.

He had completely different ideas on nationalism. He felt that in addition to political freedom, the freedom of mind is equally important. He was deeply worried about the influence of the West on Indian mind. He writes 'the history has come to a stage when the moral man, the complete man, is more and more giving way, almost without knowing it, to make room for the political and the commercial man, the man of the limited purpose [Tagore, 1917, p. 8].

Tagore valued the power of the soul above all else. He said that no matter how powerful Western civilization may seem, uncritical assimilation of it, to the point of losing one's soul, is a weakening of the self. If the Western Civilization has an evil side, which he believes it does, the dangers will be great. He had said, 'Europe is supremely good in her beneficence where her face is turned to all humanity; and Europe is supremely evil in her maleficent aspect where her face is turned only upon her own interest, using all her power of greatness for ends which are against the infinite and the eternal in Man'.

He was a witness to the devastation brought in by the World War I. He was equally worried about the aggressive face of Indian nationalism. He stated that India's immediate problems were social and cultural and not political. He realized that the aggressive nationalism as was practiced before and during World War I was the real villain. This is what he meant when he noted 'so long as nations are rampant in this world, we have not the option freely to develop our higher humanity [Tagore, 1917, p.13]

Last Days of Tagore:

In the year 1940, Tagore was very ill and had gone into a coma. He never recovered. He had suffered years of chronic pain and long-term illness. Finally, he died on 7th August 1941 at the age of 80 years. Tagore took his last breath in the mansion he was brought up.

2.3 VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR [1883-1966]

The 21st century politics of India is dominated by the Hindutva discourse. V D Savarkar is often hailed as the father of Hindutva. Hence it is necessary to understand his views on Nationalism. Before that one must know of his life, his career, etc.

V D Savarkar was born on 28th May 1883 in the village of Bhagur, near Nashik, Maharashtra. He had three other siblings, Ganesh, Narayan and a sister Maina. Right from his school days, Savarkar showed political inclinations. In 1903, he and his elder brother Ganesh founded the 'Mitra Mela' which was an underground revolutionary organization which in 1906 became Abhinav Bharat Society. The main objective of the Society was the overthrow of British rule.

In 1906 V D Savarkar got a scholarship to study in UK. While in London he involved himself in the activities of bodies like the India House and the Free India Society. While in London, he wrote books like 'The Indian War of Independence' and the 'Indian Rebellion of 1857'. These books were banned by the British government.

One must also note the influence of the Italian Nationalist leader Joseph Mazzini. Savarkar translated Mazzini's biography in Marathi.

On 13th March 1910, he was arrested in London on multiple charges like procuring and distributing arms, waging war against the state and delivering seditious speeches. Though his crimes were committed both in UK and in India, he was to be tried in India. Accordingly, he was put on a commercial ship 'Morea' with a police escort for his transport to India. When the ship docked in the French Mediterranean port of Marseille, Savarkar escaped by jumping from the ship's window and then swam to the French shore. He did ask for political asylum but his request was rejected and he was handed back to UK police. He was rearrested, deported to India, tried by the court and sent to Cellular Jail, Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for a term of 50 years. Later in 1921, he was confined to house-arrest in Ratnagiri. He met important people like Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose and Dr Ambedkar during his house-arrest. In 1937 he was unconditionally released by the Bombay Governor.

During incarceration in Ratnagiri in 1922, he wrote 'Essentials of Hindutva' that was the base of his theory of Hindutva. His seminal work 'Hindutva' was published in 1923. Here he argued for a militant form of Hinduism and demanded a Hindu resistance against 'others' which included Christians, Muslims and Communists. He criticized Anglicized Hindus like Gandhiji and Nehru.

After his release from Ratnagiri in 1937, he joined the Tilakite Democratic Party. However, he could not do much for the Hindus in that party. Out of frustration, he joined the Hindu Maha Sabha [HMS] and remained its President till 1945. He tried very hard to put life into the HMS. Later he resigned and decided to lead a solitary life. He died in Mumbai on 26th February 1966.

2.3.1 Savarkar on Nationalism:

The Hindu nationalism has witnessed many ups and downs in our country. Even during the closing years of 19th century, this brand of nationalism was in discussion. In the 20th century, the Moplah Riots of 1921-22 affected Hindu nationalists like V D Savarkar. In these riots, the Moplah Muslims of the Malabar region targeted innocent Hindus, killed lakhs of them. Leaders like V D Savarkar started looking at the Muslim issues in different light which finally led to the formation of Hindutva, published in 1923.

The Communal Award of 1932 was another turning point in this regard. The Khilafat Movement and the failure of the Non-Cooperation Movement also contributed to the rise of Hindu nationalism. Like Savarkar, Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar was also upset with the mindset of Indian Muslims and established the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RRS] at Nagpur in 1925. He had blessings of V D Savarkar.

Savarkar was convinced that the support given to the spiritual values and rich heritage of India by Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru and others had in fact a bad impact on the Hindu society. These people were subduing and weakening the Hindus. Savarkar felt that these leaders' real intention is to weaken Hindu society. This is why Savarkar started emphasizing on Hindu identity, Hindu unity and solidarity. For this, he had idolized Hindu leaders from Ancient Indian History like the Guptas, the Cholas and medieval history like the Marathas. Savarkar was a great fan of Shivaji Maharaj, Rana Pratap Singh, Maharani Laxmi of Jhansi. For Savarkar, these medieval leaders were very inspiring as they led glorious fight against foreign invaders and would inspire the Hindus in modern era.

As a student of history from Hindutva perspective, Savarkar felt that the rule of Hindu Kings from the Vedic era to the end of Prithviraj Chauhan's kingdom, was the golden era of Hindus in India. For him, the time span between the Delhi Sultanate to the arrival of the British in 1757 was the dark age of Hindu society. He had criticized the British rule as equally brutal for the Hindus.

For Savarkar, to solve all the ills of modern India, Hindu unity and solidarity was extremely essential. He identified caste system/Varna system as the main hurdle in this path. He accused Gandhiji of weakening the Hindus by supporting the Varna system. He felt that Gandhiji's support to Varna system will continue to keep the Hindus divided. On the other hand, Gandhiji will continue to promote pan-Islamism. He further felt that only a true Hindu Rashtra could give the Hindus justice. This is why he argued that the Muslims and Christians either should leave India or should stay here as second-class citizens. He charged the Muslims and Christians with 'extra-territorial loyalties'.

2.3.2 Hindutva as cultural nationalism:

Savarkar was a supporter of Cultural nationalism. He sincerely felt that the identity formation was the essence of nationalism. India had received

identity from Hindu religion. This identity has evolved over a long period of time. Despite having outward differences, the Hindu society is internally bound together by cultural, religious, linguistic, social and historical affinities. These affinities were developed over a period of centuries and have moulded the Hindus into an organic nation. This homogeneity becomes important because other sections in society had divergent cultural traditions. For Savarkar, cultural, racial and religious unity are important in the formation of a nation. Savarkar had defined nation as 'nation meant a political community which had occupied a contiguous and adequate territory and developed independent national identity. This community was internally organized and was bound together by cultural and racial affinities. He further argued that Hindus have become a nation as they possess all these characteristics.

As an ideologue, Savarkar was one of the first in the 20th century who had attempted to give a definitive description of the term 'Hindu' in terms of what he called 'Hindutva' which really meant 'hinduness'. Savarkar's usage of Hindutva had no content of religion. His conception was essentially non-religious and rationalist. This is why he defined the word Hindu as 'he who considers India as both his fatherland and Holyland'. 'You, who are of the same race, have almost all same values, and were forced out of our ancestral home by force-you only have to love our common mother wholeheartedly and recognize her not only as our Fatherland [pitrubhumi] but also as our Holyland [Punyabhumi] and you will be most welcome in the Hindu fold'.

It simply means his Hindutva or Hindu was different from Hinduism. He had this distinction in mind on the basis of territorial loyalty rather than on religious practices. He also insisted on Hindu Rashtra [Hindu Polity] which should be organized to protect Hindu people and their culture. For this, the political and economic systems should be based on native thought rather than on the concepts blindly borrowed from the West.

2.4 SUMMARY

The chapter introduces Rabindranath Tagore, a prominent Bengali writer, poet, and nationalist, who played a significant role in India's nationalist movement. It discusses Tagore's views on nationalism, emphasizing his concerns about the aggressive nature of nationalism and his belief in the importance of humanity and global peace. The chapter also explores Tagore's criticism of blind nationalism and his admiration for Western contributions in arts, literature, and ideas like liberty.

In the latter part of the chapter, it introduces Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, known as the father of Hindutva, and provides a brief overview of his life. Savarkar's views on nationalism, as outlined in his work "Hindutva," are discussed, highlighting his belief in militant Hinduism and the need for Hindu resistance against other religious groups. The chapter touches upon the factors that influenced the rise of Hindu nationalism, such as the Moplah Riots, the Communal Award, and the failure of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Overall, the chapter presents different perspectives on nationalism in Europe and South Asia, highlighting the complexities and diverse ideologies associated with this concept.

2.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Analyze Rabindranath Tagore's views on nationalism in India.
2. How did the historical context and colonial rule influence the nature and goals of Nationalism in Freedom movements?
3. Evaluate Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's concept of Hindutva and its impact on Indian nationalism.
4. Discuss the factors that contributed to the rise of Hindu nationalism in the early 20th century.



RADICAL AND RATIONAL REFORM

Unit Structure

- 3.0 Objective
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1856 – 1895)
- 3.3 Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891 – 1956)
- 3.4 Conclusion
- 3.5 References

3.0 OBJECTIVE

- To understand the social reforms during pre and post independence india
- To undersrtand the work of GG agarkar and Dr Ambedkar in bring rational refroms in India.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the pursuit of social justice and the eradication of inequalities, history has witnessed the emergence of remarkable scholars whose transformative ideas continue to shape our understanding of society. This chapter delves into the lives and works of two influential visionaries, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who stood at the forefront of radical and rational reforms in India. Through their relentless pursuit of justice, these intellectual giants challenged age-old prejudices and championed the cause of marginalized communities, leaving an indelible mark on the nation's history. By exploring their groundbreaking contributions, we unravel the profound impact of their ideologies on Indian society, serving as guiding beacons for future generations.

3.2 GOPAL GANESH AGARKAR (1856 – 1895)

Gopal Ganesh Agarkar was born on 14 July, 1856 at Thembu in Satara, Maharashtra to Gopal Agarkar and Saraswati Devi. Financial decline of the family made it very difficult for Gopal Ganesh Agarkar to complete his education. He persevered however, completing his school education with the help of his uncle, from a local school in Akola. He joined Deccan College where he met Vishnushastri Chiplunkar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, both of whom deeply influenced the course of Agarkar's future life. It was Chiplunkar's influence under which Agarkar became inspired by the ideals of patriotism and service to the community through the spread of

mass education. Agarkar is known as an educationist and a rationalist reformer. He is still revered in Maharashtra for his contribution towards the spread of education among the masses and the raising consciousness regarding the need for rational social reforms. He was also a champion of the rights of women. Agarkar is further credited for his contribution towards the growth of vernacular Press and its role in the spread of social, political and intellectual consciousness among the masses.

In order to understand the ideas and activities of Agarkar, it is essential to understand the nature of the Indian society during the early nineteenth century. This was a time when the Indian subcontinent was submerged in religious superstitions and blind faith. Meaningless rituals and customs that served the exclusive interests of the priestly and higher castes dominated the lives of the masses. Hinduism had become synonymous to magic, animism and polytheism. Practices like child marriage, sati, decline in the position and autonomy of women and untouchability had spread like malignant tumours on the body of one of the most ancient doctrinal religions of the world. Added to this cultural decline was the insult and intimidation imposed by the political rule of the British. The British had initially come to India to trade but stayed on later to rule India. Unlike the Indian concept of '*raja dharma*' which entails that the king is bound to look after his subjects like he would look after his own children, the western notion of sovereignty is based on exercise of pure power and extraction of absolute obedience from the subjects. Moreover, when it came to their colonies or subject nations, the British were only interested in ensuring their own financial profit and ease of administration. They confined themselves to making such policies which would benefit themselves and simply looked down upon the ill practices in Indian society. Thus, socially, economically, culturally and politically, the whole of India was enmeshed in backwardness, poverty and underdevelopment.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the British had introduced English as the medium of instruction in public schools and colleges, so that they could succeed in creating a class of Indians 'who were Indian by birth but British by education and thinking'. Western education however, served another purpose. One quite different from what was intended by the British. It exposed Indians to European history, literature, politics, philosophy and sciences. This, in turn, would lead to the creation of a sense of rationality, scienticism and humanism amongst the western educated Indians. Social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and others would start insisting upon the need for social reforms. They would preach against the evil and inhuman customs of sati, child marriage and untouchability. By the end of the nineteenth century, we will find that the first pan-India political organization – the Indian National Congress was already formed, which shows that political consciousness was also on the rise.

In this context now let us attempt to locate the ideas and activities of Gopal Ganesh Agarkar. Agarkar emphasized upon the need for '*lok shikshan*' (mass education), '*lok jagaran*' (raising mass consciousness) and '*lok sangathan*' (mass organizations). As mentioned earlier, Agarkar

was primarily a patriot and he believed that the best way to serve the country was through the spread of education amongst the masses of people which would enable and empower them to create a better society and a stronger nation. He, along with a few of his other compatriots like Chiplunkar, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and others established the New English School on 1 January, 1880 in Pune, the Deccan Education Society on 24 October, 1884 and the Fergusson College on 2 January, 1885. He firmly believed that education could play a very vital role in removing the irrational and evil practices that had crept into Indian society. As a firm believer in the ideals of European Enlightenment himself, he was convinced that liberal and rational education of the masses was the primary foundation on which a truly free and secular country could be established. Besides institutions to spread secular and liberal education, Agarkar was convinced that not just formal but informal education too, was necessary to inculcate rational and liberal ideas in the mass mind. As Altekar writes in his book regarding Agarkar, the latter said: "Persuade, argue, cherish virtuous examples; bring up the youth in the habit of right opinion and right motive, shape your social arrangements so as to stimulate the best part of your character." It becomes clear thus that education was extremely important to Agarkar. It was not just a process through which one could collect information but one which could impact the very nature and actions of individuals and societies.

Besides mass education, he also wanted to spread the ideal of patriotism and nationalism among the masses of India. This would lead to mass consciousness or 'lok jagaran' and pave the path towards political independence and nation building. To achieve this end, he realized that a major role could be played by vernacular Press. Agarkar, along with Chiplunkar, Tilak, Vamanrao Apte, Dr. Ganesh Krishna Garde and Mahadevrao Namjoshi, started newspapers and periodicals in Marathi. The *Kesari* and *Mahratta*, started in the first week of January, 1881, were extremely important papers launched by this group. The purpose of these newspapers was to engage in secular analysis of Indian culture, books in vernacular languages and foreign political scenario. Both these papers played a very important role in shaping Maratha public opinion during their time of publication. Agarkar acted as the first editor of the *Kesari* from 1881 to 1887. Later, when differences of opinion arose between Agarkar and Tilak, the former started a separate bilingual weekly newspaper by the name '*Sudharak*' in October 1888. The English writings in the *Sudharak* were edited by Gopal Krishna Gokhale for the first few years. This newspaper was to act as the medium through which Agarkar could express his views regarding the need and nature of social reform that he considered to be essential for his country.

Agarkar was very similar to Raja Rammohan Roy in his ideas and attitudes towards social problems and their reforms. He was a great champion of social reform and believed that progressive and liberal social legislation which would help eradicate the social evils like child marriage and related social problems. Agarkar prioritized '*Suraaj*' over '*Swaraj*'. He felt that the need for social reform was so urgent that if necessary, the Indians should not hesitate to seek the help of the foreign bureaucrats and

rulers in introducing social reforms. He was of the opinion that if social enlightenment and reforms could be introduced in Indian society at the earliest, the path to political emancipation would become smoother.

It is well-known that Agarkar and Tilak were fast friends from their college life. They shared similar views regarding the need for the spread of mass education and nationalistic ideas through vernacular Press. Yet, as the years passed, their temperaments and their disagreement regarding the nature and manner of social reforms required for Indian society created a deep schism between the two. If we look at a few of the major issues of disagreement between Tilak and Agarkar, it will become easier for us to understand both these intellectual giants better.

Firstly, Tilak was firmly of the opinion that that 'swaraj' should precede '*Suraaj*', i.e., political independence should precede any social reform so that Indians themselves could freely decide the nature and pace of reforms. Agarkar on the other hand, gave more importance to '*Suraaj*', good governance or an enlightened society. He felt that a liberal and rational society could become the appropriate foundation of political independence. Secondly, Tilak had his own opinion regarding social change. He felt that each and every society has a collective spirit and conforms to a set of collective values that have been created and sustained over ages. This collective spirit helps societies to face and overcome crises, unites them and gives them a national character. Hence, it is almost sacred. Any practices that develop in a society are a result of its evolution through time. Some of these practices might be unfair or even evil but nonetheless, any effort to suddenly change such practices can only provide temporary and superficial results. If changes are to be meaningful, then slow, piecemeal, revivalist reforms should be introduced. Agarkar, on the other hand, did not believe in evolutionary reforms. He was eager to erase the evil impact of child marriage, illiteracy amongst women and the lower castes, sati and other social evils. To him, the state mechanism could and should play a pro-active role in making laws and policies that could put an immediate end to these unwanted practices. Thirdly, Tilak was deeply apprehensive about the 'interference of the foreign bureaucracy' in the social and cultural affairs of the Indians. He found it humiliating and degrading to ask the foreign rulers to intervene in social and cultural affairs when he was already in the mood to acquire swaraj from the very same foreign government, by force, if necessary. To Agarkar, the need for social reforms was so urgent that the means through which these were achieved, did not matter. He was of the opinion that if the British could do any good to India by framing such laws and policies that could bring about social upliftment, there was no harm in accepting their services. Let us clarify at this juncture that Tilak was not opposed to social reforms but he simply felt that once political independence is acquired and political rights are established, Indians themselves could initiate, slow and gradual reforms in society and cultural practices, keeping the core values of Indian philosophy and culture intact. Agarkar, was a believer in the core values of Western Enlightenment, liberalism and rationalism. He was not a revivalist. Thus, his approach to the issue of social reform was different from that of Tilak.

These differences between Tilak and Agarkar got further accentuated by a few other issues. For instance, the group that ran the *Kesari* were of the opinion that female education, though necessary, should not give in to extreme westernization. The *Sudharak* on the other hand was in favour of a more liberal approach when the question of curriculum in the Female High School in Poona arose. This school was co-educational and the same curriculum was delivered to both boys and girls. Tilak, being a conservative person, was of the opinion that finally girls would get married and have to take care of home and hearth, hence, they should be taught to read and write and only such other skills which would train them as better home-makers. Agarkar, on the contrary, was of the opinion that girls and boys should be taught the same subjects and in the same place if equality between the two sexes was to be achieved. Agarkar also saw female education as a basic and essential step towards eradication of the evil practices of child marriage and the sorry state of existence of widows. The next issue of controversy was the Age of Consent Act, 1891. This Bill was originally introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council in Calcutta and proposed to raise the age of marriage of Hindu girls from ten to twelve. While this was looked upon as necessary in impeding child marriage and was supported by the group associated with the *Sudharak*, the *Kesari* published many articles pointing out that if this Bill was passed it would enable the British government to interfere in the social and religious life of the Indians and that in turn would violate the provisions of Queen Victoria's Declaration of 1858. Once more, it should be clarified that Tilak was not a supporter of child marriage but he disliked the intervention of the foreign government in the social cultural practices of the Indians. The Bill was passed, despite the resistance of Tilak and his compatriots.

Now that we have discussed the differences in opinion and attitude towards social reform of both Agarkar and Tilak, we can better understand Agarkar's views. Agarkar was passionate about the need for eradication of social evils. He was opposed to both child marriage and late marriage and to the problems associated with these. "His attitude partly bears resemblance to Plato's ideas which are formulated in the *Republic* and the *Laws*. Plato wanted the state to make laws about marriage and other related social problems. To Agarkar the essential problem was the eradication of social evils and he did not see any harm or injury in the foreign state making laws for social and marital regulation." (Varma, V.P., p. 207)

In conclusion we can say that Agarkar should be remembered and revered as a truly rational educationist and social reformer. His conviction in his own opinion was such that he did not hesitate to stand up to his own dear friend and hugely popular political leader like Tilak. In his brief life, he remained committed to his ideals of spreading mass education as a means to raise mass consciousness and insisted on the superiority of human reason as the key to solve all social problems that afflicted his beloved motherland. He was also a true supporter of the cause of women empowerment as evident in his criticisms of child marriage, late marriage, female feoticide, dowry system, widowhood and illiteracy amongst

women. His conviction that a good society based on reason should precede political independence made him a leading social reformer. He passed away at a very young age of thirty -nine in the year 1896.

3.3 BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR (1891 – 1956)

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar needs no introduction. He has been immortalised in the history of India as a relentless rebel fighting for the social uplift of the Dalits, a critic of Brahminism, a fiery supporter of the need for legal provisions to protect the rights of the Dalits, as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent assembly, as the first Law Minister of independent India and as the leader of the downtrodden, the untouchables, to whom he gave the mantra to ‘Educate, Organize, Agitate.’ and self-help. Yet, for the sake of gaining a more holistic understanding of how Ambedkar became what he was, we shall look at the social, cultural and political context that he was situated in.

Ambedkar was born as the fourteenth child of Ramji Sakpal and Bhimabai on 14 April, 1891 in the Mhow military cantonment area of Maharashtra. Ramji Sakpal belonged to the Mahad community of Maharashtra, one of the leading untouchable communities of the region. This community, had for ages constituted the lions’ share of the British Indian forces. They were known to be one of the first untouchable castes to have come in contact with the British, to have learned the English language and become an important part of the Bombay army and the English East India Company. Bhimabai too, belonged to another untouchable community of the region, Murbadkar. Both Ramji Sakpal and Bhimabai’s families were deeply influenced by the Bhakti movement, especially by the *dohas* of Kabir. Sakpal was very well aware of the importance of education. He had acquired a diploma in education and had taught at various army schools. He retired as the principal of one the schools that he served. It becomes obvious that such a man would want the best of education for his children, especially, their brightest child, Bhimrao.

Despite the best efforts of his father, Ambedkar faced many obstacles and discriminations at school because of his caste. He was not allowed to sit with his classmates and was consigned to a corner of the room, where he had to sit on a rug that he would himself have to take to school. Teachers avoided asking questions to him for fear of polluting their caste purity and he was even forced to study Persian because the Sanskrit teacher refused to teach an untouchable. Later, Ambedkar’s family moved to Bombay, where Ambedkar finished his graduation from Elphinstone College in 1913. With the patronage of the Gaekwad of Baroda, Ambedkar went to Columbia University, New York to complete his Ph.D. in Economics. Later, with financial assistance from Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, he would again go to London to acquire a D.Sc. from the University of London and pass the Bar from Grey’s Inn. Ambedkar came back to India as one the most educated men of all times, a trained economist, a legal expert and a political leader who was focused on the need for social, economic and political reforms.

It is quite impossible to summarize the entire gamut of work written and done by Ambedkar within the limits of this module. We shall look at the reforms Ambedkar suggested in the economic, social and political spheres specifically.

Economic Reforms: We often forget that Ambedkar was a trained economist. His doctoral thesis *The Problem of the Indian Rupee its Origin and Solution* was as one of his earliest works on economics. He later wrote *The Essay on Farming and Farm-holding, Administration and Finance of the East India Company, The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India* and many other essays that focused on various aspects of Indian economy. We must understand that the reforms that Ambedkar suggested were deeply related to the social inequality and hierarchical division of Indian society. He realized that without economic equality, social equality and social justice would always remain a distant dream for India. In this regard, Ambedkar was aware that private ownership in land and industry would only perpetuate economic inequalities, which in turn, would perpetuate social inequalities. Hence, he proposed State Socialism for independent India. It was Ambedkar's idea that a financial institution like the Reserve Bank of India should be formed and he placed this idea before Hilton Young Commission which is considered to be instrumental in the establishment of the RBI in 1935. He firmly believed that land reforms were the urgent need of Indian economy. He was in favour of cooperative farming and believed that reforms were required to transfer ownership of land holdings to the tillers of the land immediately. He was also of the opinion that agriculture, basic and heavy industries should rest with the state. Similarly, Ambedkar felt that banking and insurance sectors should also be left under the ownership and control of the state and there should be no privatization in these spheres of the economy. He also laid down the guiding principles of Centre-state financial relations, later these ideas were incorporated in the Indian Constitution. According to Ambedkar, only national ownership and control over agriculture, banking, insurance and basic and heavy industries could ensure that adequate employment opportunities were generated for the teeming population of India and economic equity could be established. This alone could pave the way for social equality and a dignified existence, not just for the Dalits but for all sections of the population of India.

Social and cultural Reforms: Now we shall discuss Ambedkar's role in rousing and giving shape to the innumerable millions of Hindus who, because of their caste status, had been consigned to a sub-human state of existence. The *shudras* and *ati- shudras* were literally 'untouchable' and 'unseeable'. The purity-pollution matrix on which the Hindu caste system is based pushed away these 'Dalits' to the very margins of Hindu society and allowed them a peripheral existence to the extent that they served their masters- the high caste Hindus. To these degraded and dehumanized people Ambedkar gave the lesson of Self as Light, Self as source of Knowledge, Self as source of Strength and Self as source of Sustenance. This idea was earlier depicted in the Brihadaranyak Upanishad and also later found resonance in the Buddhist teaching: "Be your own lamp, seek no other refuge but yourself. Let Truth be your own Light". Ambedkar

thus taught the first very important lesson to the Dalits that they should not look upon caste Hindus for help nor wait for a supernatural messiah to rescue them from their sordid existence. The Dalits themselves would have to become conscious about their rights and would have to organize themselves to strive constantly to acquire a dignified existence. Ambedkar was empowering the Dalits by insisting upon self-help, on 'atma shakti' or self-reliance. The second lesson that Ambedkar inculcated in the Dalits was that education was of immense importance if the Dalits were to successfully overcome the exclusion and humiliation that had been imposed upon them since the rigidification of the caste system. Education alone could raise the social and political consciousness in the Dalits and that would enable them to fight for their rights. (Roy, 2018, pp 255-259)

Ambedkar also encouraged the various untouchable groups across different regions of India to put aside their mutual differences and to unite in their efforts towards reclaiming their human status. He founded various political parties, associations and conferences to bring all Dalits on common platforms. He was associated with the Samata Sainik Dal, Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Castes Federation. He also started and edited numerous newspapers and periodicals, writing frequently about the conditions of the Dalits and how they could achieve their demands. *Mooknayak* (1920), *Bahishkrit Bharat* (1927), and *Prabuddha Bharat* (1956) are notable in this regard. Ambedkar's seminal works include *Annihilation of Caste*, *Who are the Shudras*, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, *Castes in India*, *Pakistan or the Partition of India* and extend to numerous essays as he was a prolific writer.

Ambedkar, though himself an admirer of Kabir and the tenets of Buddhism, realized that the evils of untouchability had become so deeply entrenched in the Hindu social and cultural psyche that mere reforms would not be sufficient to undo generations of faith in the superiority of the Brahmins and the hierarchy of castes based on the principle of karmavaad. He therefore demanded the very annihilation of the caste system through a total rejection of Hinduism itself in the final stages of his life. His burning of the Manusmriti and his final conversion to Buddhism after a defiant declaration that he was born a Hindu but he would not die a Hindu are strong and courageous acts of a learned man and a leader who had faced all the atrocities that belonging to the Dalit community entailed during his time.

Ambedkar's views on women's rights and functions, both Dalit and caste women, is the next important aspect of his views that one should be aware of. At a time when the entire Indian society was in the iron grip of patriarchy and even high caste Hindu women hardly had any autonomy or agency, Ambedkar emphasized upon the double subjugation and domination faced by Dalit women. They suffered both as women and as Dalits. At all his public meetings and conferences, he passionately called upon the Dalit women to get educated and to encourage education amongst their family members. Women, Ambedkar felt, could play a very active role in changing and improving the lifestyle and decadent habits of the Dalits. He exhorted Dalit women to participate in and lead their own

movements instead of waiting for external agencies to change existing caste conditions. Not just Dalit women, Ambedkar was conscious about and sensitive towards the needs of women in general. He had therefore demanded a Uniform Civil Code and the Hindu Code Bill as the first Law Minister of independent India. He was sure that equal partnership in marriage and equal right to inherit and own property were the keys to women empowerment. Sadly, both these bills failed to acquire the support of the government and Ambedkar resigned from the post of Law Minister of the Nehru cabinet. Today, it is not difficult for us to understand the importance of these ideas of Ambedkar. (Roy, 2018, pp 26-27) As a member of the Legislative assembly of Bombay, Ambedkar had shown the magnitude and sensitivity of introducing maternity leave and other such benefits for the women state government workers.

Political and Legal Reforms: As mentioned in the section on economic reforms, Ambedkar was a supporter of State Socialism. However, we must understand that he was favour of state ownership and enterprise in agriculture, basic and heavy industries, banking and insurance only because he felt that this could generate employment for the masses, provide support in the form of subsidies and other benefits to public sector units and reduce the gap between the rich and the poor. We must not forget that the key principle that Ambedkar worked for was equality, be it economic, social or political. Politically speaking, he was in favour of parliamentary democracy with maximum decentralization of power and separate electorates for both Dalits and the minorities. He did not look upon separate electorates as being a divisive mechanism. To the contrary he felt that separate electorate would ensure the representation of the demands of all backward, oppressed and marginalized people of the Indian population. This view of Ambedkar collided with that of M.K. Gandhi and led to the rise of the Gandhi- Ambedkar debate.

Another lesser discussed issue to be mentioned here is that the famous Mahad Satyagraha organized at the behest of Ambedkar in 1927 was not only significant because the Dalits present there collected water from a tank that had till then been prohibited to them. It was also significant because it was at this Satyagraha that the resolution of rights for Dalits that had been drawn up and adopted at this meeting is the perhaps the first document or charter of human rights that had been drafted and adopted in India. “The first resolution to be passed in this conference demanded that the downfall of a nation such as India had been brought about by the internal rivalries, dissensions and injustices conducted in the name of religion.” (Roy, 2018, pp 26 – 7). The inequality of status and opportunity, the denial of human dignity to large sections of society and the meaningless rituals and practices that had dehumanized the Dalits, women and the poor could only be cleansed and corrected through the recognition of the equal human worth of all.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In this module we have looked at the ideas and activities of two of India’s most erudite, socially conscious men, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Dr. B.R.

Ambedkar. Both showed keen inclination towards the principles of rationalism, scientific approach and humanism. Both tried in their own way to cleanse Indian society of the major evils that were afflicting this great civilization. Both were keen on promoting and giving legal recognition to the rights of the backward, the downtrodden, the illiterate and the powerless. Both emphasized upon the need and importance of secular and scientific education as the first requirement for social reform. Instead of comparing the contributions of each to Indian society let us appreciate the fact that both were dedicated towards reforming Indian society during their time.

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SOCIALISM

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objective
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Nehru and socialism
- 4.3 Nehru's political thought
 - 4.3.1 On Nationalist.
 - 4.3.2 On Democracy
 - 4.3.3 Individual Freedom and Equality
 - 4.3.4 On Parliamentary Democracy
- 4.4 Nehru's thoughts on Cultural
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 References

4.0 OBJECTIVE

This chapter aims to examine the thoughts of Jawaharlal Nehru. The aim objective this chapter is to develop an understanding of socialism and understand Jawaharlal Nehru's perspective viewed on socialism in the context of India. At the end of the chapter students would understand and critically think about socialism and develop the personality of Jawaharlal Nehru and his thoughts too.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was born in Allahabad on November 14, 1889. He received his early education at home under private tutors. At the age of fifteen, he went to England and after two years at Harrow, joined Cambridge University where he took his tripos in Natural Sciences. He was later called to the Bar from Inner Temple. Here turned to India in 1912 and plunged straight into politics. Even as a student, he had been interested in the struggle of all nations who suffered under foreign domination. He took keen interest in the Sinn Fein Movement in Ireland. In India, he was inevitably drawn into the struggle for independence.

In 1912, he attended the Bandipore Congress as a delegate, and became Secretary of the Home Rule League, Allahabad in 1919. In 1916 he had his first meeting with Mahatma Gandhi and felt immensely inspired by

him. He organised the first Kisan March in Pratapgarh District of Uttar Pradesh in 1920. He was twice imprisoned in connection with the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-22. Pt. Nehru became the General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee in September 1923. He toured Italy, Switzerland, England, Belgium, Germany and Russia in 1926. In Belgium, he attended the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels as an official delegate of the Indian National Congress. He also attended the tenth anniversary celebrations of the October Socialist Revolution in Moscow in 1927. Earlier, in 1926, at the Madras Congress, Nehru had been instrumental in committing the Congress to the goal of Independence. While leading a procession against the Simon commission, he was lathi-charged in Lucknow in 1928. On August 29, 1928 he attended the All-Party Congress and was one of the signatories to the Nehru Report on Indian Constitutional Reform, named after his father Shri Motilal Nehru. The same year, he also founded the 'Independence for India League', which advocated complete severance of the British connection with India, and became its General Secretary.

In 1929, Pt. Nehru was elected President of the Lahore Session of the Indian National Congress, where complete independence for the country was adopted as the goal. He was imprisoned several times during 1930-35 in connection with the Salt Satyagraha and other movements launched by the Congress. He completed his 'Autobiography' in Almora Jail on February 14, 1935. After release, he flew to Switzerland to see his ailing wife and visited London in February-March, 1936. He also visited Spain in July 1938, when the country was in the throws of Civil War. Just before the court-break of the Second World War, he visited China too.

On October 31, 1940 Pt. Nehru was arrested for offering individual Satyagraha to protest against India's forced participation in war. He was released along with the other leaders in December 1941. On August 7, 1942 Pt. Nehru moved the historic 'Quit India' resolution at the A.I.C.C. session in Bombay. On August 8, 1942 he was arrested along with other leaders and taken to Ahmednagar Fort. This was his longest and also his last detention. In all, he suffered imprisonment nine times. After his release in January 1945, he organized legal defence for those officers and men of the in a charged with treason. In March 1946, Pt. Nehru toured South East Asia. He was elected President of the Congress for the fourth time on July 6, 1946 and again for three more terms from 1951 to 1954.

Jawaharlal Nehru was an Indian politician and statesman who served as the first Prime Minister of India from 1947 until his death in 1964. He was a central figure in Indian politics before and after independence from British rule in 1947. Nehru was a leader in the Indian National Congress and worked closely with Mahatma Gandhi during India's struggle for independence. He was a strong advocate for secularism, democracy, and socialism, and played a key role in shaping India's modern identity as a diverse, democratic, and pluralistic nation. Nehru's legacy continues to influence Indian politics and society today.

Jawaharlal Nehru's ideology was based on the principles of secularism, democracy, and socialism. He believed in the importance of building a modern, industrialized India, while also promoting social justice and equality for all citizens. Nehru was a strong advocate for education, believing that it was essential for the development of a modern and democratic society. He was also a supporter of non-alignment in foreign policy, believing that India should maintain its independence and not align with any major power blocs. Overall, Nehru's ideology was based on the belief that India should be a progressive, democratic, and secular nation, with a strong commitment to social justice and equality for all. Socialism is the political economic theory of social organisation which advocates the means of production their distribution and exchange is regulated by the society/community. Jawaharlal Nehru was a brilliant exponent of the socialist ideology. His aim was to attain the complete independence for the people of India. The method to be adopted to accomplish this task was democratic socialism. Democratic Socialism is practicing socialism in a practical way. It is committed to systematic transformation of economy. It is a logical scientific approach in democracy to realize equitable distribution of income and wealth. He said that "There cannot be democracy without socialism and there cannot be socialism without democracy" In spite of his Marxist faith Nehru never believed in conformity and he certainly did not think that a society where uniformity was the rule was a good society. He wrote "I had long been drawn to socialism and communism and Russia had appealed to me much; In Soviet Russia I dislike the ruthless suppressing of all contrary opinions, the wholesale regimentation, the unnecessary violence in carrying out various policies but there was no lack of violence and suppression in the capitalist world and realized more and more how the very basic and foundation of our acquisitive society and property was violence.

Check Your Progress Exercise1

Q1. What did you understand about Jawaharlal Nehru's ideology?

4.2 NEHRU AND SOCIALISM

4.2.1 Nehru on Socialism

Jawaharlal Nehru was a strong proponent of socialism and believed that it was essential for India's development as a modern, democratic, and egalitarian society. Nehru was inspired by the principles of socialism and believed that it offered a path to create a more equitable and just society. He saw socialism as a means to address the economic and social inequalities that existed in India, particularly in the context of colonialism and the exploitation of Indian resources and labour by foreign powers.

Nehru believed that the state had a vital role to play in promoting social welfare, economic development, and industrialization. He believed that the government should take an active role in promoting public ownership of key industries and resources, such as land, water, and minerals. Nehru

saw public ownership as a means to ensure that the benefits of economic growth were shared more equitably among all citizens, rather than being concentrated in the hands of a few powerful interests.

Nehru also believed that socialism was closely linked to democracy and that democratic institutions were essential for ensuring that the government remained accountable to the people. He saw socialism as a means to promote political freedom, social equality, and economic justice, and believed that it offered a path to create a more egalitarian and just society. During his tenure as Prime Minister of India, Nehru implemented a range of socialist policies, including land reforms, the nationalization of key industries, and the promotion of public sector enterprises. He also championed policies aimed at promoting social welfare, including universal education, healthcare, and access to basic necessities such as food and shelter. Overall, Nehru's commitment to socialism was a central aspect of his political philosophy, and he saw it as essential for building a modern and equitable India. While his policies and approach to socialism have been subject to criticism and debate, Nehru's vision of a democratic and socialist India remains an important aspect of his legacy.

4.2.2 About Socialism

Socialism is a political and economic ideology that advocates for a system of collective or public ownership and control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of goods and services. In a socialist society, resources such as land, factories, and natural resources are owned and managed by the state or by the community as a whole, rather than being privately owned and controlled by individuals or corporations.

The goal of socialism is to create a more equitable and just society, where wealth and resources are distributed fairly and everyone has access to basic necessities such as food, housing, healthcare, and education. Socialism also emphasizes the importance of social welfare and collective responsibility for the well-being of all citizens. Socialism can take different forms, ranging from democratic socialism, which advocates for a mixed economy where the government provides certain public services and regulates certain industries, to more extreme forms such as communism, which aims to abolish private property and establish a classless society. Critics of socialism argue that it can lead to inefficiencies and disincentives to work and innovate, as well as a loss of individual freedoms and liberties. Supporters, however, see Socialism as a means to promote social justice and equality, and to address issues such as poverty, inequality, and social exclusion.

4.2.3 Socialism in the Context of India in Nehru Time and Now

In the context of India, socialism during Nehru's time referred to a set of economic policies and measures aimed at promoting public ownership and control of certain industries and resources, while also prioritizing social welfare and reducing economic inequalities. Nehru's socialist policies included the nationalization of certain key industries, such as banking and insurance, as well as land reforms aimed at redistributing land from

wealthy landlords to landless peasants. During Nehru's time, socialism was seen as a means to promote economic development and social welfare and to address the inequalities and injustices perpetuated by colonialism and a deeply unequal social structure. Nehru saw socialism as a means to create a more egalitarian and just society, where everyone had access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare, and where economic growth was shared more equitably among all citizens.

Today, socialism in India has taken on a different form, with a greater emphasis on market-oriented economic policies and liberalization. While certain aspects of Nehru's socialist legacy continue to shape India's economic and social policies, such as the promotion of public sector enterprises and certain forms of social welfare, India's current economic system is generally seen as more market-oriented and less socialist in nature. However, socialist ideas and principles continue to influence Indian politics and society, particularly in the context of debates around economic inequality and social justice. There is ongoing discussion and debate about the role of the state in promoting economic development and social welfare, and the extent to which market-oriented policies have contributed to rising inequality and social exclusion in India. Overall, socialism remains a contested and evolving concept in the Indian context.

Check Your Progress Exercise2

Q1. Use the space given below for your answer

Q2. What were Jawaharlal Nehru's views on socialism and how did he apply them in India?

4.3 NEHRU'S POLITICAL THOUGHTS

4.3.1 On Nationalism

Nehru had a thorough knowledge of what made nationalism unique. He was aware of the benefits of nationalism and how it had helped modern civilization advance. His command of how nationalism's role in the development of Western culture. He was fully aware of how nationalism continued to be the fundamental motivator of the struggle for freedom. He thinks that nationalism contributed to some degree of neutrality and vigour on a global scale. He claimed that "narrow nationalism caused civilization to suffer and expressed the hope that free India would welcome the work for global cooperation." He believed that narrow-minded and self-centered nationalism would be a scourge. He claims that ferocious nationalism is damaging and inspires others' anxieties. He believed that Indian nationalism will begin on the basis of the universal virtues, peace, liberalism, and rationalism and that nationalism's narrowness, exclusivity, and selfishness stunt the development of the mind. He opposed fanatical and religious nationalism because he was aware of its limitations.

Jawaharlal Nehru's political thought was shaped by his experiences during the Indian independence movement and his belief in the importance of building a modern, democratic, and secular India. On nationalism, Nehru

believed in the importance of a strong and inclusive Indian nationalism that transcended regional and religious differences. He saw Indian nationalism as a means to unite people from different backgrounds and create a sense of shared identity and purpose. Nehru believed that India's struggle for independence was not just a political struggle, but a struggle for social and economic justice. He saw India's independence as an opportunity to build a society that was free from exploitation, poverty, and inequality. Nehru's vision of nationalism was based on the principles of secularism and democracy. He believed that India should be a secular nation, where people of different religions and backgrounds were treated equally and without discrimination. He also believed in the importance of democracy as a means to ensure that the government remained accountable to the people and that the rights and freedoms of citizens were protected. Overall, Nehru's political thought on nationalism was centered on the idea of building a strong and inclusive Indian nationalism that was based on the principles of secularism, democracy, and social and economic justice.

4.3.2 On Democracy

Jawaharlal Nehru's political thought emphasized the importance of democracy as a means to ensure that the government remained accountable to the people and that the rights and freedoms of citizens were protected. He saw democracy as essential to building a modern and progressive India. Nehru believed in the importance of free and fair elections as a means to ensure that the government reflected the will of the people. He saw democracy as a way to ensure that power was not concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or groups, but was distributed fairly among all citizens.

Nehru's political thought on democracy was also based on the principles of social justice and equality. He believed that democracy should be used as a means to promote economic and social progress and to address the inequalities and injustices that existed in Indian society. He saw democracy as a way to empower the marginalized and disadvantaged sections of society, and to ensure that their voices were heard in the political process. Nehru also believed in the importance of a strong and independent judiciary as a means to protect the rights and freedoms of citizens and to ensure that the government remained accountable. He saw the judiciary as a check on the power of the executive and legislature, and as a means to uphold the rule of law. Nehru's political thought on democracy emphasized the importance of building a modern, progressive, and inclusive India, where the rights and freedoms of citizens were protected and where power was distributed fairly among all sections of society.

4.3.3 Individual Freedom and Equality

Jawaharlal Nehru believed in the principles of individual freedom and equality. He saw these as essential to building a modern, progressive, and inclusive India. Nehru believed that every individual had the right to live their life according to their own choices and preferences, as long as they or

did not harm others or infringe upon their rights. He saw individual freedom as essential to personal growth, creativity, and innovation. At the same time, Nehru believed that individual freedom should not come at the cost of equality. He saw inequality as a major challenge facing India and believed that it needed to be addressed through a range of policies and measures aimed at promoting social justice. Nehru's vision of equality was based on the principles of social and economic justice. He believed that every individual should have equal access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, healthcare, and education, regardless of their background or social status. He also believed in the importance of affirmative action and other measures aimed at empowering marginalized and disadvantaged sections of society, such as Dalits, Adivasis, and women.

Overall, Nehru believed that individual freedom and equality were essential to building a just and inclusive society in India. He saw these principles as complementary rather than contradictory and believed that they could be achieved through a range of policies and measures aimed at promoting social and economic progress, while also protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens.

4.3.4 On Parliamentary Democracy

Jawaharlal Nehru was a strong proponent of parliamentary democracy and saw it as the most effective form of government for India. He believed that parliamentary democracy was essential to building a modern and progressive India and that it provided a framework for ensuring accountability and transparency in government. Nehru believed that parliamentary democracy allowed for the peaceful transfer of power, which was essential for stability and continuity in government. He saw democracy as a means to ensure that power was distributed fairly among all citizens and that the government remained accountable to the people. Nehru believed in the importance of a strong and independent judiciary, which he saw as a necessary check on the power of the executive and legislature. He believed that the judiciary had a critical role to play in upholding the rule of law and protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens. Nehru also believed in the importance of free and fair elections, which he saw as a means to ensure that the government reflected the will of the people. He believed that every citizen had the right to participate in the political process and to have their voice heard.

Nehru saw parliamentary democracy as an essential component of India's political system. He believed that democracy provided a framework for ensuring accountability, transparency, and the protection of individual rights and freedoms. Nehru's commitment to parliamentary democracy has helped to shape India's political system and continues to be an important part of its political culture today.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Q3. What do you understand by Nehru's political Thoughts?

Q4. How did Nehru's thoughts on individual freedom and equality influence his political vision for India?

4.4 NEHRU'S THOUGHTS ON CULTURAL

Jawaharlal Nehru believed that culture played a critical role in shaping the identity of a nation and its people. He saw culture as an important aspect of India's rich heritage and believed that it was essential to preserve and promote it. Nehru believed in the importance of cultural diversity and pluralism and saw India's cultural richness as being derived from its many different religions, languages, and traditions. He believed that this diversity was a source of strength for the country and that it was essential to preserve it. At the same time, Nehru also believed in the importance of a common national identity that transcended regional and cultural differences. He believed that this sense of national identity was essential to building a modern and progressive India and that it could help to overcome some of the challenges posed by regionalism and communalism.

Nehru was a strong proponent of secularism and believed that the state should not promote any particular religion or culture. He believed that every citizen had the right to practice their own religion and follow their own cultural traditions, as long as they did not infringe upon the rights of others. Nehru saw culture as an important aspect of India's identity and believed that it was essential to preserve and promote its diversity. At the same time, he believed in the importance of a common national identity that was based on the principles of secularism, democracy, and social justice. Nehru's thoughts on culture continue to influence India's cultural policies and debates today.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

Q 5. What role did Nehru see culture playing in the identity of India, and how did he balance diversity with a common national identity?

4.5. SUMMARY

Jawaharlal Nehru was a visionary leader who played a crucial role in shaping India's political, social, and cultural landscape. His political thought was deeply influenced by his commitment to democracy, socialism, individual freedom, equality, and cultural diversity. Nehru believed that democracy was the most effective form of government for India and that it provided a framework for ensuring accountability, transparency, and the protection of individual rights and freedoms. He was a strong proponent of parliamentary democracy, free and fair elections, and an independent judiciary.

Nehru also believed in the principles of socialism and saw it as a means to address the challenges of inequality and poverty in India. He believed in the importance of social and economic justice and saw individual freedom and equality as essential components of a just and inclusive society. Nehru believed that culture played a critical role in shaping the identity of a nation and its people. He saw culture as an important aspect of India's rich heritage and believed in the importance of preserving and promoting its diversity. At the same time, he believed in the importance of a common

national identity that was based on the principles of secularism, democracy, and social justice. Nehru's political thought and vision have had a profound impact on India's political, social, and cultural landscape, and continue to influence the country's policies and debates today. His commitment to democracy, socialism, individual freedom, equality, and cultural diversity remains essential components of India's national identity and aspirations for the future.

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