

IMPERIALIST SCHOOL

Unit Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Influential works of history in imperial India
- 1.3 Some other historiographic growths
- 1.4 Imperial ideology in historiography
- 1.5 Impact of historical writings in imperial India
- 1.6 Questions
- 1.7 Summary
- 1.8 Additional Readings

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, student should be able to:

1. Understand imperial historiography.
2. Explain imperial ideology in historiography.
3. Discuss the impact of historical writings in imperial India.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

When we talk of Imperial (Colonial) Historiography the first task is to remove a possible source of confusion. The term 'imperial historiography' applies to (a) the histories of the countries colonised during their period of imperial rule, and (b) to the ideas and approaches commonly associated with historians who were or are characterised by an imperialist ideology. In British India the term was used in the first sense and only since independence the second meaning of the term has come into prominence. Many of the front-rank historians were British colonial officials, and the term imperial history, when it was used at all, was meant to refer to the *subject* rather than to the *ideology* embedded in that history. Today the ideology is the subject of criticism and hence the term 'imperial historiography' has acquired a pejorative sense. In this Unit we shall use the term 'imperial historiography' in both senses mentioned above.

In a sense imperial history as a subject of study and colonial approach as an ideology are interconnected. The theme of empire building in the historical works of the British naturally gave rise to a set of ideas justifying British rule in India. This justification included, in different degrees in different individual historians, a highly critical attitude towards Indian society and culture at times amounting to contempt, a laudatory attitude to the soldiers

and administrators who conquered and ruled India, and a proneness to laud the benefits India received from Pax Britannica, i.e., British Peace.

1.2 INFLUENTIAL WORKS OF HISTORY IN IMPERIAL INDIA

Before we take up the question of the imperial ideology in historiography, let us attempt and get a clear thought of the historians we are talking in relation to the imperial India. In the eighteenth century there were very few genuinely historical works. The British were perhaps too busy fighting their method to the top of the political pyramid in India to devote much attention to history.

Charles Grant:

One of the notable writers in the historical vein in the eighteenth century was Charles Grant, who wrote *Observations on the State of Society in the middle of the Asiatic Subjects of India* in 1792. He belonged to the

‘Evangelical school’, i.e. the group of British observers who whispered that it was the divine destiny of the British rulers of India to bring the light of Christianity to India which was sunk in the darkness of primitive religious faiths and superstitions. Though, this type of reflective writing on Indian society and history was rather unusual in till the early decades of the nineteenth century. By the second decade of the nineteenth century British rule in India had stabilized considerably and was in relation to enter a new era of expansion. By 1815 in Europe Britain was not only recognized as a first-class power after Britain’s victory more than Napoleon and France, but Britain had also undergone the first Industrial Revolution and had appeared as the mainly industrialized country in the world. Britain’s confidence in being at the top of the world was nowhere better displayed than in British writings on India, a country she dominated and regarded as backward. This attitude is reflected in the historical writings of the British from the second decade of the nineteenth century.

James Mill:

Presently in relation to the time, flanked by 1806 and 1818, James Mill wrote a series of volumes on the history of India and this work had a formative power on British imagination in relation to India. The book was entitled

History of British India, but the first three volumes incorporated a survey of ancient and medieval India while the last three volumes were specifically in relation to the British rule in India. This book became a great success, it was reprinted in 1820, 1826 and 1840, and it became a vital textbook for the British Indian Civil Service officers undergoing training at the East India’s college at Haileybury. By the 1840s the book was out of date and in his comments its editor H.H. Wilson pointed that out in 1844 ores in the book; but the book sustained to be measured a classic.

Mill had never been to India and the whole work was written on the foundation of his limited readings in books by English authors on India. It contained a collection of the prejudices in relation to the India and the natives of India which several British officers acquired in course of their stay in India. Though, despite shortcomings from the point of view of authenticity and veracity and objectivity, the book was very influential for two reasons. One of these reasons is often recognized: James Mill belonged to an influential school of political and economic thought, the Utilitarian inspired by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. As a Utilitarian exposition of history Mill's history of India was also at the similar time implicitly a Utilitarian agenda for British management in India. The other cause for the immense power the book exercised has not been recognized as much as one might have expected. This book perfectly reflected the cast of minds at the beginning of the nineteenth century which we have noticed earlier, a cast of minds which urbanized in the wake of Britain's victory in the Anglo-French wars for hegemony in Europe, and Britain's rising industrial prosperity. James Mill broadcast a message of confident imperialism which was exactly what the readers in England wanted to hear.

Mountstuart Elphinstone:

While James Mill had produced a Utilitarian interpretation of history, a rival work of history produced by Mountstuart Elphinstone is harder to categorize in conditions of philosophical affiliation. Elphinstone was a civil servant in India for the greater part of his working life and he was distant better equipped and better informed than Mill to write a history of India. His work *History of Hindu and Muhammedan India* universities and was reprinted up to the early years, after that century. Elphinstone followed this up with, "*History of British Power in the East*", a book that traced systematically the expansion and consolidation of British rule till Hastings' management. The periodisation of Indian history into ancient and medieval era corresponding to Hindu era and Muslim era was recognized as a convention in Indian historiography as a result of the lasting power of Elphinstone's approach to the issue. While Elphinstone's works sustained to be influential as a textbook, especially in India, a more professionally proficient history was produced in the 1860s by J. Talboys Wheeler. The latter wrote a comprehensive *History of India* in five volumes published flanked by 1867 and 1876 and followed it up with a survey of *India Under British Rule* to Elphinstone's work as an influential textbook, one would almost certainly turn to the *History of India* by Vincent Smith who stands almost at the end of an extensive series of British Indian civil servant historians. In 1911 the last edition of Elphinstone's history of 'Hindu and Muhammedan India' was published and in the similar year Vincent Smith's comprehensive history, structure upon his own earlier research in ancient Indian history and the knowledge accumulated by British researchers in the decades since Elphinstone, saw the light of day.

Vincent Smith:

From 1911 till in relation to the middle of the twentieth century Vincent Smith's was the authoritative textbook on the syllabi of approximately all Indian universities. While Vincent Smith's book approximated to the professional historians' writings in form and was unrivalled as a textbook in summing up the then state of knowledge, in some compliments his approach to Indian history appears to have been colored by his experience as a British civil servant in India. The rise of the nationalist movement since 1885 and the intensification of political agitation since the Partition of Bengal in 1905 may have influenced his judgments in relation to the course of history in India. For instance, time and again he referred to the fragility of India's unity and the outbreak of chaos and the onset of common decline in the absence of a strong imperial power. The disintegration and decline experienced in ancient and medieval times at the end of great empires suggested an obvious lesson to the Indian reader, viz. it was only the iron hand of imperial Britain which kept India on the path of stability with progress, and if the British Indian empire ceased to be there would be the deluge which will reverse all progress attained under British rule. As regards the potentials of the nationalist movement and the fitness of the Indian subjects to decide their own destiny, Vincent Smith did not pay much attention to that political question. The political question, however, was assuming increasing importance in the last years of British rule and a historical work more accommodative to the political outlook of the Indian nationalist movement appeared in 1934. This work, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* was different from all the previously mentioned books in that it was written from a liberal point of view, sympathetic to Indian national aspirations to a great extent.

Thompson and Garratt:

The political question, though, was assuming rising importance in the last years of British rule and a historical work more accommodative to the political outlook of the Indian nationalist movement appeared in 1934. This work, *Rise and Fulfillment of British Rule in India* was dissimilar from all the previously mentioned books in that it was written from a liberal point of view, sympathetic to Indian national aspirations to a great extent. The authors were Edward Thompson who was a Missionary who taught for several years in a college in Bengal and became a good friend of Rabindranath Tagore, and G.T. Garratt, a civil servant in India for eleven years and thereafter a Labour Party politician in England. Given their background, both were disinclined to toe the line laid down by the civil servant historians of earlier days. Thompson and Garratt faced very adverse criticism from conservative British opinion leaders. On the other hand, several Indians established this work distant more acceptable than the officially prescribed textbooks. This book, published less than fifteen years before India attained independence, is a landmark indicating the reorientation in thinking in the more progressive and liberal circles in the middle of the British; it was in accord with the mindset which made the transition of 1947 acceptable to the erstwhile imperial power. From James Mill to Thompson and Garratt historiography had traveled forward a great

aloofness. This era, spanning the beginning of the 19th century to the last years of British rule in India, saw the development from a Euro-centric and disparaging approach to India towards a more liberal and less ethno-centric approach.

Check your Progress:

1. What is imperialial historiography? Discuss some of the important works of historians who are generally associated with colonial historiography.

1.3 THE BRITISH HISTORIANS' IMPERIALIST HISTORIOGRAPHIC GROWTHS

Till now we have focused attention on histories which were mainly widely read and attained the status of textbooks, and hence influenced historical imagination and understanding. There were other historical works not of that type but nevertheless of historiographic importance.

Lord Macaulay:

In the middle decades of the nineteenth century two great authors wrote on India, though

India was not in the centre of their interest. One was Lord Macaulay whose essays on some great British Indian personalities like Robert Clive were published in *Edinburgh Review*. Macaulay's literary approach made Indian history readable, though his essays were flawed by poor information and poorer judgment in relation to the 'native' part of British India. It was a great change from the uncommonly dull and censorious James Mill's writings. Macaulay's lasting power was the establishment of a custom of writing history in the biographical mode; this was widely imitated later and hence volume after volume of biographies of Viceroy's and the like and histories of their management.

Sir Henry Maine :

Sir Henry Maine's contribution was of another type. A great juridical historian, Maine applied himself to the revise of ancient Indian institutions while he was for a short era the Law Member of the Governor-Common's Council in India. His *Ancient Law* mutinies were path-breaking works in history. Maine changed the course of European thinking on the

development of law by looking at laws and institutions beyond the domain of Roman law. There were, though, few mentionable contributions by British Indian scholars to follow up Maine's custom in legal and institutional history. His impact was limited to European scholarly work in the late nineteenth century and perhaps even beyond in the development of sociology in the hands of Max Weber and others.

Sir James Fitz James Stephen :

In the region of legal history, the works which British Indian authors produced were of a stage dissimilar to, indeed inferior to Maine's. Therefore for instance Sir James Fitz James Stephen, also a Law Member of the Viceroy's Council, wrote a defense of British management under Warren Hastings. Edmund Burke, he argued, was wrong in thinking that the punishment awarded to Nanda Kumar by Justice Elijah Impey was a case of miscarriage of justice. This was the subject of Stephen's *Story of Nuncoomar and the Impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey* icer, Henry Beveridge, wrote in support of the impeachment and in condemnation of the trial and punishment of Nanda Kumar: *Nanda Kumar: a narrative of a judicial murder* envious British management, Sir John Strachey of the I.C.S., wrote *Hastings and the Rohilla War* debates in relation to the a thing in the past, Warren Hastings and his impeachment and Edmund Burke's criticism of British management. The location of this type of debate was history, but the hidden agenda was modern – to present British conquest and management of India as an unsullied record which necessity is not questioned.

Sir William W. Hunter and Sir Alfred Lyall:

In the high noon of the Empire two very contrary tendencies of historical writing were displayed by two prominent authors. One was Sir William W. Hunter, the editor of a good series of Gazetteers and the author of a pedestrian work on the history of British India. From 1899 he began to edit a series of historical books described *The Rulers of India*. The series lauded the makers of empires in India – mainly the makers of the British Indian Empire, though one or two token Indians, like Asoka and Akbar, were incorporated. The series was endowed with government sponsorship and the volumes establish lay in official libraries and syllabi. The substance was to present history in a popular form and very often incorporated not only solemn moments of resolve to do good on the part of an empire builder, but also cute stories of incidents in their childhood back house. The hardboiled kinds of empire builders were chosen for immortality in a biographical form – British civil servants who sympathized with India were excluded — and it was a caricature of the eighteenth-century English custom of writing history as biography.

Sir Alfred Lyall's work, *Rise and Expansion of British Dominion in India* great originality in his methodology and interpretation, although one may disagree very fundamentally with the trend of his interpretation. In methodology his originality consisted of the use, in the manner of ethnographers, of his own observation and knowledge of modern Indian

society, customs, institutions, etc. to understand the past events and procedures. Therefore, he went beyond the textual proof which mainly historians at that time depended upon. In his interpretation of Indian history Lyall projected the story on a very wide canvas, looking at the incursion of the British into India in the light of the whole history of the connection flanked by the East and the West from the days of the Greeks and the Romans. This wide sweep of history, resembling in some methods Arnold Toynbee's wide-angled global vision of connection flanked by civilizations, was dissimilar from that of mainly British Indian historians of the nineteenth century. The third element of originality in Lyall was his theoretical location that India and Europe were on the similar track of development, but India's development was arrested at a sure point. This was also the view of Sir Henry Maine who wrote that Indian society had a great part of our own culture with its elements...not yet unfolded.

India as an arrested culture was an influential thought in Europe but in India it had few takers. The nationalistically inclined intelligentsia rejected the view that India was presently a backward version of Europe; they whispered that India was radically dissimilar from Europe in the organisation of her society and state systems, and that India necessarily be allowed to work out a dissimilar historical destiny rather than attempt to imitate Europe. At any rate, while in some matters Lyall's interpretative framework may be questioned, his effort to see at India as a civilization merits recognition.

Finally, a noteworthy historiographic development that occurred in the first two or three decades of the twentieth century was the beginning of explorations in economic history. A foundation for that had already been laid in the work of several British civil servants who examined economic records and shaped broad conclusions in relation to the course of agrarian dealings and agricultural history. This they did as district collectors or magistrates responsible for land revenue resolution', i.e., fixation of tax on agricultural income in order that Land Revenue may be composed by the government. In the middle of such civil servants an outstanding historian appeared: this was

W. H. Moreland:

W. H. Moreland who examined the economic condition of *India at the Death of Akbar*, published in 1920. This work was followed up with another work of economic history on the era *From Akbar to Aurangzeb* and *System of Mughal India* was flawed by a preconceived notion that the economic condition of India was better under British rule than what it was in medieval times. He tried to prove this preconception by several means in his works, including his writings on Indian economics in the twentieth century. Moreover, his response to the Indian economic nationalists' critique of British economic impact was distant from being adequate. One of his junior contemporaries was Vera Anstey who wrote on similar rows; she taught at the University of London and wrote an average textbook on *The Economic Development of India* depth which Moreland attained. Moreland's outstanding contribution was to lay the foundation of a new discipline of economic history.

P E Robert:

Though, economic, and social history remained marginal to the concerns of the typical colonial historians. This is apparent from the classic summation of all the British historians’ work on British India in the volume in the *Cambridge History of India* P E Roberts’ textbook, *History of British India*. Neither Indian economic and social circumstances nor indeed the people of India were in focus in such works; their history was all in relation to the British soldiers and civil servants did in India.

Check your Progress:

1. Do you think that all the works written by imperial or the British historians on India belong to the imperial school of history-writing? Answer with examples.

1.4 IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

It will be an error to homogenize all of British historical writings as consistently imperial, since dissimilar approaches and interpretative frameworks urbanized within the colonial school in course of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Though, there were sure features general to mainly of the works we have surveyed till now. Though simplistic it maybe it may be useful to sum up these features:

- An imperialist representation of India was general, promoting the thought of the superiority of contemporary Western civilization; this is a theme recently brought into prominence by Edward Said and others, but the Indian nationalist intelligentsias had recognized and criticized this trend in British writings from James Mill onwards.
- The thought that India had no unity until the British unified the country was commonly given prominence in historical narratives; beside with this thesis there was a representation of the eighteenth-century India as a ‘dark century’ full of chaos and barbarity until the British came to the rescue.
- Several late nineteenth century British historians adopted Social Darwinist notions in relation to India; this implied that if history is a thrash about flanked by several peoples and cultures, akin to the thrash about in the middle of the species, Britain having approach to the top could be *ipso facto* legitimately measured to be superior and

as the fittest to rule.

- India was, in the opinion of several British observers, a stagnant society, arrested at a stage of development; it followed that British rule would illustrate the path of progress to a higher stage; hence the thought that India needed Pax Britannica.
- The mythification of heroic empire builders and 'Rulers of India' in historical narratives was a part of the rhetoric of imperialism; as Eric Stokes has remarked, in British writings on India the focus was on the British protagonists and the whole country and its people were presently a shadowy background.
- As we would expect, imperial historiography displayed initially a critical stance towards the Indian nationalist movement since it was perceived as a threat to the good work done by the British in India; at a later stage when the movement intensified the attitude became more intricate, since some historians showed plain hostility while others were more sophisticated in their denigration of Indian nationalism. In common, while some of these features and paradigms are commonly to be established in the imperial historians' discourse, it will be unjust to ignore the information that in course of the first half of the twentieth century historiography out-grew them or, at least, presented more sophisticated versions of them.

In essence imperial historiography was part of an ideological effort to appropriate history as a means of establishing cultural hegemony and legitimizing British rule in excess of India. The vital thought embedded in the custom of Imperial Historiography was the paradigm of a backward society's progression towards the pattern of contemporary European civil and political society under the tutelage of imperial power. The guiding hand of the British officers, education combined with 'filtration' to the lower orders of society, implantation of such institutions and laws as the British thought Indians were fit for, and protection of Pax Britannica from the threat of disorder nationalism imposed in the middle of the subject people – these were the ingredients needed for a slow progress India necessarily create. Sometimes this agenda was presented as 'the civilizing mission of Britain'.

What the intellectual lineages of the imperial ideology were as reflected in historiography? Benthamite or Utilitarian political philosophy represented Britain's role to be that of a guardian with a backward pupil as his ward. It may be said that Jeremy Bentham looked upon all people in that light, European or otherwise. That is partly true. But this attitude could discover clearer expression and execution in action in a colony like India. Another source of inspiration for the imperialist historian was Social Darwinism, as has been mentioned earlier. This gave an appearance of scientific respectability to the notion that several native Indians were below par; it was possible to say that here there were victims of an arrested civilization and leave it at that as an inevitable outcome of a Darwinian determinism. A third major power was Herbert Spencer. He put forward an evolutionary scheme for the explication of Europe's ascendancy and his relative way

addressed the differences in the middle of countries and cultures in conditions of progression towards the higher European form. It was an assumption general in the middle of Europeans, that non-European societies would follow that evolutionary pattern, with a bit of assistance from the European imperial powers. This mindset was not peculiar to the British Indian historians. In the heydays of mid-Victorian imperialism, the British gave free expression to these thoughts while in later times such statements became more circumspect. In the 1870s Fitzjames Stephen talked of ‘heathenism and barbarism’ versus the British as representatives of a ‘belligerent culture’. In 1920s David Dodwell’s rhetoric is milder, indeed approximately in a dejected tone: the Sisyphean task of the British was to raise to a higher stage the –great mass of humanity in India and that mass ‘always tended to relapse into its old posture ...like a rock you attempt to lift with levers.’ *a, 1858- 1918.*

1.5 IMPACT OF HISTORICAL WRITINGS IN IMPERIAL INDIA

The ideological characterization applies to the dominant trend in historical thinking in the imperial school. But it will be inaccurate to apply this without discrimination. It is well recognized that in the middle of the British

officers of the government of British India, as we all know, there were some like Thomas Munro or Charles Trevelyan who were widely regarded as persons sympathetic to the subject people although as officers they served an alien and exploitative regime; there were British officers and British Missionaries in India, 1925, who sympathized with the National Congress; and there were also those, like say Garratt of the Indian Civil Service and later of the Labour Party in England, or George Orwell of the Indian Police Service who were inveterate critics of the empire. It was the similar case with the historians. But the inclinations of lone individuals were insignificant in the face of the dominant custom in the middle of the servants of the British Raj. Official encouragement and sponsorship of a method of on behalf of the past which would uphold and promote imperial might, and the organized or informal peer opinion the dissident individual had to contend with. Our characterization of the ideology at the root of colonial historiography addresses the dominant trend and may not apply in every respect to every individual historian. Such a qualification is significant in a course on Historiography in scrupulous because this is an instance where students of history necessity exercise their judgment in relation to the range and the limits of generalization. Its necessity be noted that despite the colonial ideology embedded in historiography in British India, the early British historians of India made some positive contributions. Separately from the obvious information that the imperial historians laid the foundations of historiography according to methodology urbanized in contemporary Europe, their contribution was also substantial in providing in institutions like the Asiatic Society and Archaeological Survey of India opportunity for Indian historians to obtain entry into the profession and into academic research. Further, despite an ethnocentric and statistic bias, the data composed by the British imperial historians as well as the practice of

archiving documents was and remnants a significant resource. Mainly significant of all, the teaching of history began from the very inception of the first three universities in India at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. This had many unintended consequences.

The history that was taught under imperial auspices was highly biased in favor of the imperial point of view. The textbooks were those produced by

the school of imperial historiography. Nevertheless, there was a positive outcome. First, beside with the history of India by James Mill or Elphinstone, Indian students also read histories of England and of Europe and therefore were implanted in the minds of the educated Indians the thoughts of Liberty and Freedom and Democracy and Equity, as exemplified in European history, the lessons of the Magna Carta, the Glorious Revolution, the American War of Independence, the struggles of Mazzini and Garibaldi in Italy, etc. Any one familiar with the early Moderate stage of the development of nationalism in India will see the relevance these thoughts acquired through reading history. Secondly, professionally trained Indian historians began to engage in writing history. Writing history on contemporary rows with documentary research and the usual tools of scholarly work was no longer a monopoly of the amateur historians of British origin. Indians professionally trained began to engage in research, first in learned associations like the Asiatic Society, then in the colleges and universities, and in the government's educational services, particularly the Indian Education Service.

Thirdly, and this is the significant part, the history which the Indian students were made to read, the books by British civil servant historians of the nineteenth century, created a critical reaction against that historiography. The first graduate of an Indian University, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, repeatedly reviled the British interpretation and raised the question, when shall we write our own history? Rabindranath Tagore put it mainly eloquently: in other countries, he wrote, history *reveals* the country to the people of the country, while the history of India the British have gifted us *obscures* our vision of India; we are unable to see our motherland in this history. This reaction was typical of the intelligentsia in India and it led some of the best nationalist minds to search for a new construal of history. Therefore, there urbanized a Nationalist interpretation of Indian history, putting to an end the hegemony of British imperial historiography. Writing history became a major means of structure the consciousness of a national identity. In the after that Unit in this collection the Nationalist School of historiography has been surveyed.

Check your Progress:

1. Discuss the basic elements of imperialist ideology contained in imperial historiography.

1.6 SUMMARY

The term ‘imperial historiography’ has been used in two senses. One relates to the history of the colonial countries, while the other refers to the works which were influenced by colonial ideology of domination. It is in the second sense that most historians today write about the colonial historiography. In fact, the practice of writing about the colonial countries by the colonial officials was related to the desire for domination and justification of the colonial rule. Therefore, in most such historical works there was criticism of Indian society and culture. At the same time, there was praise for the western culture and values and glorification of the individuals who established the empire in India. The histories of India written by James Mill, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Vincent Smith and many others are pertinent examples of this trend. They established the colonial school of historiography which denigrated the subject people while praising the imperial country.

In such accounts, India was depicted as a stagnant society, as a backward civilisation and as culturally inferior while Britain was praised as a dynamic country possessing superior civilisation and advanced in science and technology.

1.7 QUESTIONS

1. What is imperialial historiography? Discuss some of the important works of historians who are generally associated with colonial historiography.
2. Do you think that all the works written by imperial or the British historians on India belong to the imperial school of history-writing? Answer with examples.
3. Discuss the basic elements of imperialist ideology contained in imperial historiography.

1.8 ADDITIONAL READING

Indian National Movement
(1857 CE to 1947 CE)

1. Beard, Charles Theory and Practice in Historical Study.
2. Hook, Sindy, The hero in History : A study in limitation and Possibility.
3. Powicke, F.M., Modern historians and the study of history.
4. Reiner, J.H., History: Its Purposes and Methods.
5. Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern : Ernst Breisach
6. Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge :Georg G. Iggers
7. Modern Historiography: An Introduction : Michael Bentley

munotes.in

NATIONALIST SCHOOL

Unit Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Colonial versus nationalist historiography
- 2.3 Nationalist School of Indian National Movement
- 2.4 R.G. Bhandarkar
- 2.5 Hemchandra Raychaudhuri
- 2.6 Jadunath Sarkar
- 2.7 Summary
- 2.8 Questions
- 2.9 Additional Readings

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, student should be able to:

1. Know the nationalist school of historiography of the Indian National Movement.
2. Comprehend the Colonial versus nationalist historiography.
3. Understand the Nationalist School of Indian National Movement
4. Explain contributory factors to the writing of historiography of the Indian National Movement.
5. Understand the Nationalist School of Indian National Movement
6. Summarize the writings of some eminent nationalist historian

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Historiography is an aspect both of history and persons, and events and intellectual history. It should also be kept in view that when discussing historical approach of a historian, his or her sincerity and honesty is seldom in question. A historian worth discussing does not write to order or to deliberately serve specific interests. Though it is true that a historian's work may reflect the thinking of a class, caste or a social or political group, he basically writes through intellectual conviction or under the impact of ideas and ideologies. This is why often a historian may transcend the class, caste, race, community or nation in which he is born.

Thus concrete relationship of a historian to a particular approach to Indian history – for example, imperial, nationalist, or communal approach is evolved not by analyzing or ‘discovering his motives but by seeing the

correspondence between his intellectual product and the concrete practice of the imperialists, nationalists or communalists. Quite often a historian – or any intellectual – is affected by contemporary politics and ideologies. Of course, it is an important aspect of intellectual history to study how and why certain ideas, approaches and ideologies are picked up, popularised, debated – supported and opposed—become dominant or lose dominance, or the ideas arising in one milieu are picked up in another milieu.

2.2 IMPERIAL VERSUS NATIONALIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

Nationalist approach to Indian history may be described as one which tends to contribute to the growth of nationalist feeling and to unify people in the face of religious, caste, or linguistic differences or class differentiation. This may, as pointed out earlier, sometimes be irrespective of the intentions of the author.

Initially, in the 19th century, Indian historians followed in the footsteps of imperial historiography, considering history as scientific based on fact-finding, with emphasis on political history and that too of ruling dynasties. Imperial writers and historians, who began to write the history of India from late 18th and early 19th century, in a way created all India history, just as they were creating an all-India empire. Simultaneously, just as the imperial rulers followed a political policy of divide and rule on the basis of region and religion, so did colonial historians stress division of Indians on the basis of region and religion throughout much of Indian history. Nationalist historians too wrote history as either of India as a whole or of rulers, who ruled different parts of India, with emphasis on their religion or caste or linguistic affiliation. But as colonial historical narrative became negative or took a negative view of India's political and social development, and, in contrast, a justificatory view of colonialism, a nationalist reaction by Indian historians came. Imperial historians now increasingly, day by day, threw imperial stereotypes at Indians. Basic texts in this respect were James Mill's work on Ancient India and Elliot and Dawson's work on Medieval India. Indian nationalist historians set out to create counter-stereotypes, often explicitly designed to oppose imperial stereotypes thrown at them day after day. Just as the Indian nationalist movement developed to oppose colonialism, so did nationalist historiography develop as a response to and in confrontation with imperial historiography and as an effort to build national self-respect in the face of imperial denigration of Indian people and their historical record. Both sides appealed to history in their everyday speech and writing. Even when dealing with most obtuse or obscure historical subjects, Indians often relied in their reply on earlier European interpretations.

For example, many imperial writers and administrators asserted that historical experience of Indian people made them unfit for self-government and democracy, or national unity and nation-formation or modern economic development, or even defence against invasion by outsiders. Imperial rule would gradually prepare them – and was doing so

– far all these tasks. Moreover, in the second half of the 19th century, the need for permanent presence of imperial rulers and imperial administration for the development of India on modern lines was sometime simplified and sometimes explicitly asserted. While the utilitarians and missionaries condemned Indian culture, the Orientalists emphasised the character of India as a nation of philosophers and spiritual people. While this characterisation bore the marks of praise, the accompanying corollary was that Indians had historically lacked political, administrative and economic acumen or capacity. Indians should, therefore, have full freedom to develop and practice their spiritualism and influence the world in that respect, the British should manage the political, administrative, and economic affairs and territorial defence of India against foreign aggression, which had succeeded whenever India had an Indian ruler. In fact, in the absence of foreign rule, India had tended to suffer from political and administrative anarchy. For example, it was the British who saved India from anarchy during the 18th and 19th centuries. The imperial writers and administrators also maintained that, because of their religious and social organisation, Indians also lacked moral character. (This view was often the result of the fact that British administration came into social contact only with their cooks, syces and other servants or with compradors who were out to make money through their relations with the Sahibs). Also, some of the European writers praised Indian spiritualism, because of their own reaction against the evils of the emerging industrialism and commercialism in their own countries.

Many imperial historians also held that it was in the very nature of India, like other countries of the East, to be ruled by despots or at least by autocratic rulers. This was the reason why British rule in India was and had to be autocratic. This view came to be widely known as the theory of Oriental Despotism. Furthermore, these writers argued that the notion that the aim of any ruler being the welfare of the ruled was absent in India. In fact, the traditional political regimes in India were ‘monstrously cruel’ by nature. In contrast, the British, even through autocratic, were just and benevolent and worked for the welfare of the people. In contrast with the cruel Oriental Despotism of the past, British rule was benevolent though autocratic.

The imperial writers also held that Indians had, in contrast to Europeans, always lacked a feeling of nationality and therefore of national unity, – Indians had always been divided. Indians, they said, had also lacked a democratic tradition. While Europeans had enjoyed the democratic heritage of ancient Greece and Rome, the heritage of Indians – in fact of all people of the Orient or East – was that of despotism.

Indians also lacked the quality of innovation and creativity. Consequently, most good things—institutions, customs, arts and crafts, etc. – had come from outside. For example, it was imperial rule which had brought to India law and order, equality before law, economic development, and modernization of society based on the ideas of social equality.

All these imperial notions not only hurt the pride of Indian historians and other intellectuals but also implied that the growing demand of the Indian intellectuals for self-government, democracy, legislative reform, etc., was unrealistic precisely because of Indians' past history. After all, democracy was alien to their historical character and therefore not suitable to them.

2.3 NATIONALIST SCHOOL OF INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Nationalist historiography flourished mainly in dealing with the ancient and medieval periods. It hardly existed for the modern period and came into being mainly after 1947, no school of nationalist historians of modern India having existed before 1947. This was in part because, in the era of nationalism, to be a nationalist was also to be anti-imperialist, which meant confrontation with the ruling, colonial authorities. And that was not possible for academics because of colonial control over the educational system. It became safe to be anti-imperialist only after 1947. Consequently, a history of the national movement or of colonial economy did not exist. This is, of course, not a complete explanation of the absence of nationalist historiography before 1947. After all, Indian economists did develop a sharp and brilliant critique of the colonial economy of India and its impact on the people.

A detailed and scientific critique of colonialism was developed in the last quarter of the 19th century by non-academic, nationalist economists such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Justice Ranade, G. V. Joshi, R. C. Dutt, K. T. Telang, G. K. Gokhale and D. E. Wacha. Several academic economists such as K. T. Shah, V. C. Kale, C. N. Vakil, D. R. Gadgil, Gyan Chand, V.K.R.V. Rao and Wadia and Merchant followed in their footsteps in the first half of the 20th century. Their critique did not find any reflection in history books of the period. That was to happen only after 1947, and that too in the 1960s and after. This critique,

however, formed the core of nationalist agitation in the era of mass movements after 1920. Tilak, Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Subhash Bose, for example, relied heavily upon it. A few historians who referred in passing to the national movement and nationalist historians after 1947 did not see it as an anti-imperialist movement. Similarly, the only history of the national movement that was written was by nationalist leaders such as R.G. Pradhan, A.C. Mazumdar, Jawaharlal Nehru and Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Post- 1947 historians accepted the legitimacy of nationalism and the Indian national movement but seldom dealt with its foundation in the economic critique of the colonialism. They also tended to underplay, when not ignoring completely, other streams of the nationalist struggle.

Modern historians have also been divided between those, such as Tara Chand, who held that India has been a nation-in-the-making since the 19th century and those who argue that India has been a nation since the ancient

times. At the same time, to their credit, all of them accept India's diversity, i.e., its multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and therefore multi-cultural character. Nationalist historians also have ignored or severely underplayed inner contradictions of Indian society based on class and caste or the oppression of and discrimination against women and tribes. They have also ignored the movements against class and caste oppressions. They have seldom made an in-depth analysis of the national movement, and often indulged in its blind glorification. While adopting a secular position and condemning communalism, they do not make a serious analysis of its character or elements, causation, and development. Quite often, it is seen merely as an outcome of the British policy of 'divide and rule'. They give due space to the social reform movements but do not take a critical look at them, and often ignore the movements of the tribal people and the lower castes for their emancipation. As a whole, historians neglected economic, social and cultural history and at the most attached a chapter or two on these without integrating them into the main narrative.

We may make a few additional remarks regarding nationalist historians as a whole. They tended to ignore inner contradictions within Indian society. They suffered from an upper caste and male chauvinist cultural and social bias. Above all they tended to accept the theory of Indian exceptionalism that Indian historical development was entirely different from that of the rest of the world. They missed a historical evaluation of Indian social institutions in an effort to prove India's superiority in historical development. Especially negative and harmful both to the study of India's history and the political development of modern India was their acceptance of James Mill's periodisation of Indian history into Hindu and Muslim periods.

2.4 R.G.BHANDARKAR (1837-1925)

Indian scholars of the nineteenth century had concentrated mostly on editing the sources, fixing the chronology or discussing the genealogy of the various rulers. They had yet to establish their claim as sober, critical and creative historians, although one or two like Rajendralal Mitra and Romesh Chandra Dutt seem to stand out higher. But with Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar.

Bhandarkar's writings have a characteristic features of their own namely thoroughness and precision, fullness of knowledge and versatility, with objectivity and frankness. He was the first Indian scholar to apply western techniques and methods to the study of Sanskrit and Indian antiquities, and he was the first to judge the oriental values with Occidental standards. The fame of Bhandarkar as a historian rest on his two books, the Early History of the Deccan (1884) and A Peep into the Early History of India (1900). Bhandarkar was great liberal and in all his writings there is not a single trace of any anti-British feelings. On the other hand he was a fond admirer

of Britain and Germany. He appreciated the Western technique of shifting the historical data, and was perhaps the first Indian to apply Ranke's method

to Indian problems. Very clearly he says that a historian should eschew the tendency to glorify his own race or country, and he should not have as well the negative prejudice of disliking any race or country. Nothing but dry truth should be his object. He should be a judge and not an advocate. Bhandarkar is very fair minded. He likes neither the tone of Vincent Smith, who has an assumed air of superiority for things western nor of those Indian historians who claim needless superiority for things eastern. Very scrupulously he applied the critical method to sources, and in some respects he was far more critical than many European historians of ancient India. Judging the chronology of the Satavahana fixed by Vincent Smith on the basis of the Puranas, one could easily say that it could hardly stand the test of scrutiny, but on the same subject what Bhandarkar has said has not yet been refuted. Despite his deep religious bent of mind, he never allowed religious views to influence his historical conviction. He never believed in the Divine will as the determining factor in history. He was more interested in describing what happened rather than why it happened. As long as we are not fully aware what had happened, we cannot answer the question why it happened. Bhandarkar is one of the very few historians of India who consciously attempted to be objective and were successful to a great degree. He is certainly the Ranke of India.

2.5 HEMCHANDRA RAYCHAUDHURI

Hemchandra Raychaudhuri belonged to that unique band of scholars of Ancient Indian History who lived their lives immersed in the passion of their scholarship. After a brilliant academic career right from his school days in the then East Bengal and then at University of Calcutta, he embarked on a career of teaching Ancient Indian History after his M.A, first in leading colleges of Calcutta and then in Chittagong in Bangladesh.

The legendary Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee, the first Indian Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University was quick to spot the extraordinary talent of Hemchandra and offered him a lectureship in the newly founded Post-graduate Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture in 1917, which he readily accepted.

From then on there was no looking back for Hemchandra. Recognitions, prizes, doctorate, and responsibilities followed acknowledging his scholarship, and he became the head of the department of Ancient Indian History and Culture of Calcutta University in 1936. What Prof Hemchandra Raychaudhuri will always be remembered for is his pioneering work "Political History of Ancient India" with its reconstruction of Ancient Indian History; and other works like

"The Early History of the Vaishnava Sect" and "Studies in Indian Antiquities". As well as his great love for teaching and the reverence that generations of students had for him, some of whom became luminaries in their own right.

So began a lifelong love affair with Ancient Indian History for Hemchandra. A passion that so consumed him that he would research, read and lecture

for up to 18 hours a day! On the one hand, he expanded the frontiers of knowledge in Ancient Indian History right up to the 9th. Century B.C, by reconstructing history beyond the time of Alexander – that was the accepted documented period of Ancient Indian Historians of the time like the acknowledged authority Vincent Smith – and finding documentary evidence through his study of ancient Indian texts. On the other hand, his lectures on Ancient Indian History, became renowned for bringing alive Ancient Indian History to such an extent that generations of students swore by them, and even students of Medieval History would bunk their classes to attend them!

Prof. Hemchandra Raychaudhuri belonged to a unique breed of academicians. A product of the Bengal Renaissance that was greatly responsible for a revived interest in Indological studies in the country, he was a rare combination of a great scholar, an indefatigable researcher and a spellbinding teacher.

From his research and reconstruction of Ancient Indian History from the 9th. Century B.C. to the extinction of the Gupta dynasty, Prof Raychaudhuri arrived at his distinctive and original central theme of how kingdoms in ancient India that transcended provincial limits were subjected to a struggle between what he called the "centripetal" and "centrifugal" forces. The centrifugal force, he showed, trying to hold the kingdom together and the centripetal force trying to dissolve the kingdom and leading to its extinction.

Prof Raychaudhuri was a passionate votary of truth and facts and did not allow any external influence like nationalism or a pursuit of novel theories to colour facts in any way, as is seen in the works of many historians. For example, Asoka the third Mauryan emperor has been hailed as the greatest monarch of Ancient India by most historians. But Prof. Raychaudhuri while evaluating the achievements of Asoka in great detail, never fails to criticize Asoka's Dharma Vijay, which in some measure (the centripetal force), Prof. Raychaudhuri showed, brought about the downfall of the once mighty empire. "(Asoka) turned civil administrators into religious propagandists," he wrote, "... (when) India needed men of the caliber of Chandragupta and Puru, she got a dreamer. Magadha after the Kalinga war frittered away her conquering energy in attempting a religious revolution ... the result was politically disastrous."

This unique combination of adherence to truth, rapier sharp judgment, clarity of thought and depth of knowledge is what sets Prof Hemchandra Raychaudhuri apart.

The second famous work of Prof. Raychaudhuri is Materials for the Study of the Early history of the Vaishnava Sect. This is regarded as the most definitive source book for all serious students of Vaishnavism.

Prof Raychaudhuri also contributed a number of articles to learned periodicals which were incorporated in his Studies in Indian Antiquities that show the vast range of his scholarship and the clarity of thought.

He also contributed chapters to such works as Dhaka University's History of Bengal Vol - I, even when he was bedridden, he contributed an important chapter to the Early History of the Deccan edited by G. Yazdani.

He wrote the Advanced History of India (for undergraduate students) in collaboration with Prof. R.C. Mazumdar and K.K. Dutta.

2.6 JADUNATH SARKAR (1870-1958)

Jadunath was against those nationalist Bengali writings which tried to refute the current English view that the Bengalis were cowards. As a result, Jadunath had often been dubbed a supporter of the English. Such a view of Jadunath gained momentum when the British Government knighted him. His words of praise for the English, whom he thought to have been instrumental in bringing progress in India, further strengthened this view.

The historical works of Jadunath can be divided into two broad types. In the first category were his major works, such as History of Aurangzib (5 Vols, 1912-1958), Shivaji and His Times (1919), Mughal Administration (1920), Later Mughals (ed., 1922, 2 Vols.), Fall of the Mughal Empire (4 Vols, 1932-38), Military History of India (1960) etc. The other category included all his translations into English and Bangla of the Persian and Marathi documents as well as innumerable articles in English and Bengali, reviews, forewords etc. His published Bengali articles numbered 148, much less than his English articles which numbered 365. He had only four Bengali books while the number of his English books, including those edited by him, was thirty-one. It is difficult to formulate Jadunath's concept of history since he had rarely written on the subject. It is also difficult to determine why Jadunath veered to the medieval history of India after studying English literature.

In nineteenth century Bengal, two historical concepts were confronting each other. One derived from the writings of English historians from the end of the eighteenth century. The second came from Bengali nationalistic writings, which often created heroes in Bengal and against which Jadunath had written often. Such writings, particularly against the historicity of the 'freedom fighter' Pratapaditya strengthened the view that Jadunath was pro-English.

Jadunath was equally reticent about the periodisation of Indian history by James Mill. He did not specifically protest against the racial and communal basis of such periodisation but foresaw difficulties in periods overlapping each other. One of the methodologies of Jadunath was his insistence on the 'evidence', although he was not so profuse or detailed in the notes supporting the evidence. He took great pains to get documents in different languages to establish the 'facts'. Given the situation of the times, Jadunath, like most of his predecessors, established 'facts' of mostly a political and military nature. But the results of his search unearthed several important documents, including Akhbarat from Jaipur, Baharistan-i Ghayebi, Haft

Anjuman and other documents, some of which had remained for so long either in personal collections or in the European archives. Jadunath is remembered for his books, some of which he re-edited in his later years. His *Aurangzib and Shivaji* narrated the history of the seventeenth century around two individuals while his *Later Mughals and Fall of the Mughal Empire* dealt with the personalities and events of the eighteenth century. *Aurangzib* traced the fall of the Mughal Empire and *Shivaji*, a contrast, the rise of a nation under a heroic leader. To Jadunath, it was individual leadership which mattered, but actually, these two were tales of the decadence of an empire and the rise of another, the state being the principal object.

The other works almost had the same picture, the decline of both the Mughals and the Marathas and the rise of the English. It was the country and the state that concerned Jadunath in the background of the contrasting forces. Strictly speaking, Jadunath dealt only with the decline of the Mughals and did not go into the details of the decline of the Marathas or the rise of the English, who were kept always in the background, so that their attempts at expansion were not given due attention. This becomes quite clear in his narrative of the fall of Nawab Sirajuddaulain Bengal in 1757, where the internal weakness of the Nizamat, and the weak character of the nawab had been painted in detail. Jadunath supported such analysis by drawing on the later Persian sources written under the aegis of the British officials.

The change towards the pragmatic concept came somewhere between 1928 and 1932. By then Jadunath had become conscious about the formation of Indian nationality. That *Aurangzib*, by his fundamentalist approach, had heightened communal tension, thereby destroying the formation of Indian nationality, in contrast to that of Akbar, an Elphinstonian touch, had been the theme of Jadunath.

In his edition of the medieval History of Bengal Vol. II (Dhaka University, 1943), Jadunath seemed to believe that the English had rescued the Bengalis from oblivion and darkness, a kind of 'reverse nationalism', which did not look at the colonial policies of the English. He was silent on the question of independence of India and in a sense, there was not much difference between him and the English historians. He evaded the questions arising from the fact that the English colonial policy had started soon after the battle of Palashi.

In his long career, he wrote over two dozen authoritative books on history, translated Persian historical works and records, translated Tagore's works into English. Professor Sarkar's enormous literary output could be judged by the fact that a list of his works, published in *Life and Letters of Sir Jadunath Sarkar* runs into 17 pages!

In short Jadunath is the brilliant star on the Indian horizon of historical scholarship. His conception of history was a lofty one. Like Croce he believed it was higher than art, science and philosophy, for it was the foundation for all knowledge. It comprises the gamut of all higher thought,

all human experience, faith, belief, morals and manners. Its destiny is truth and accuracy. Its mode of travel is methodical approach. Its journey is through a jungle of errors and fallacies. Its motivating force is the spirit of inquiry and thirst for knowledge. Jadunath illuminated the path of writing history of India, so that other pilgrims in this field need not lose their way. He tells us that crusader in this struggle has to hold fast to his chosen mission undaunted by any difficulties, unmoved by any misfortunes and unshaken by any shocks.

2.7 SUMMARY

Nationalist historians did, however, set up high tradition of scholarship. They based their writings on hard research and commitment to truth as they saw it. They carefully and meticulously footnoted all their statements. Consequently, their writing was very often empirically sound. Their research advanced our understanding and interpretation of the past. They also contributed to the cultural defence against colonisation of our culture. Simultaneously, most of them contributed to the positive aspects of the modernisation of our society. Many of them also uncovered new sources and developed new frameworks for the interpretation of existing sources. They raised many new questions, produced controversies and initiated active debates. They also inculcated the notion that historical research and writing should have relevance for the present. Even when not going far in their own research, they accepted and promoted the notion that the role that the common people play in history should be a major component of history writing.

Above all, nationalist historical writing contributed to the self-confidence, self-assertion and a certain national pride which enabled Indian people to struggle against colonialism especially in the face of denigration of India's past and the consequent inferiority complex promoted by imperial writers. Nilkanth Shastri and other historians also helped overcome the regional bias – the bias of treating India as coterminous with the Indo-Gangetic plane. In this respect, as in many others, nationalist historical writing in India became a major unifying factor so far as the literate Indians were concerned.

2.8 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the differences between the imperial and nationalist historiography.
2. What are the specific features of nationalist historiography of R.G.Bhandarkar?
3. What are the specific features of nationalist historiography of Hemchandra Raychaudhuri ?
4. What are the specific features of nationalist historiography of Jadunath Sarkar?
5. Write a note on the issues discussed by nationalist historians writing on the modern period.

2.9 ADDITIONAL READING

1. Beard, Charles Theory and Practice in Historical Study.
2. Hook, Sindy, The hero in History : A study in limitation and Possibility.
3. Powicke, F.M., Modern historians and the study of history.
4. Reiner, J.H., History: Its Purposes and Methods.
5. Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern : Ernst Breisach
6. Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge :Georg G. Iggers
7. Modern Historiography: An Introduction : Michael Bentley

munotes.in

MARXIST SCHOOL

Unit Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Beginnings
- 3.3 Indian Nationalism
- 3.4 Some Major Marxist Historians of India
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Questions
- 3.7 Additional Readings

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, student should be able to:

1. Explain the Marxist school of Historiography of Indian National movement. Comprehend the Marxist approach of Bipin Chandra.
2. Assess the contributions of D.D. Kosambi to Marxist school of historiography of Indian National movement.
3. Understand the contribution of R.S.Sharma to Marxist school of historiography.
4. Perceive the contributions of Romila Thapar to Marxist school of historiography.
5. Know the contribution of Irfan Habib to Marxist school of historiography of the Indian National movement.
6. Grasp the Marxist school of historiography of the Indian National Movement.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit is concerned with the major findings of Marxist work done on Indian National Movement so far, as well as with the problems that are being debated. Marxism is a dominant presence in the field of Indian historiography. A lot of historians either come directly within its fold or have been influenced by it in certain degrees. It has also influenced most of the trends of Indian historiography in some way or the other. It is, therefore, not possible to give a comprehensive account of all the trends in it and the historians associated with this stream of historiography. However, in this Unit, we will try to cover some of the important trends and provide information about some important historians within Marxist tradition in Indian historiography.

3.2 BEGINNINGS

R. Palme Dutt and A.R. Desai

The two books which heralded the beginning of Marxist historiography in India were *India Today* by R. Palme Dutt and *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* by A.R. Desai. *India Today* was originally written for the famous Left Book Club in England and was published by Victor Gollancz in 1940. Its Indian edition was published in 1947. In the preface to a new edition of the book in 1970, the author was aware of its limitations and realised that it 'can now only be regarded as a historical work of its period, constituting a survey from a Marxist standpoint of the record of British rule in India and of the development of the Indian people's struggle, both the national movement and the working class movement, up to the eve of independence, as seen at that time'.

Despite its limitations, however, its position as a foundational text of Marxist thinking on Indian history has not diminished over time. It comprehensively covers most aspects of Indian society, economy, and politics under colonial rule. It applies Marxist analysis to various developments in the colonial economy, to the problems of peasantry, to the national movement and to the communal problems.

Dutt divides the entire period of imperialist rule in India into three phases, a periodization which, with certain modifications, has now become conventional, particularly among the Marxist historians. The first phase belonged to the merchant capital 'represented by the East India Company and extending in the general character of its system to the end of the eighteenth century.' Then came the domination by industrial capitalism 'which established a new basis of exploitation of India in the nineteenth century'. The third phase is that of financial capitalism which started in the last years of the 19th century and flourished in the 20th century.

The phase of merchant capitalism was characterised by the monopolistic hold of the East India Company over the Indian trade. This was facilitated by its increasing territorial control from the second half of 18th century. Apart from this monopolistic control, Indian wealth was also plundered directly by the colonial state and privately by the servants of the Company. The massive wealth transferred through this plunder made the Industrial Revolution possible in England. This started the search for a free market for the products of English industries. Thus, India had to be transformed 'from an exporter of cotton goods to the whole world into an importer of cotton goods. The monopoly of the East India Company had to be abolished now and this was achieved in phases and after 1858, the rule of India was transferred to the British Crown. This started the process of turning India into an uninhibited market for the British goods.

After the First World War (1914-1918), a new stage of imperialism was inaugurated in India. Although the older forms of getting 'tribute' and seeking India as a market British goods continued, there was now an emphasis on capital investment in India. According to Dutt, it was clear that

by 1914 the interest and profits on invested capital and direct tribute considerably exceeded the total of trading, manufacturing, and shipping profits out of India. *The finance- capitalist exploitation of India had become the dominant character in the twentieth century*'. He further talks about the 'stranglehold of finance capital' and its rising volume and concludes : 'Modern imperialism ... no longer performs the objectively revolutionising role of the earlier capitalist domination of India, clearing the way, by its destructive effects, for the new advance and laying down the initial material conditions for its realisation. On the contrary, modern imperialism in India stands out as the main obstacle to advance of the productive forces, thwarting and retarding their development by all the weapons of its financial and political domination. It is no longer possible to speak of the objectively revolutionising role of capitalist rule in India. The role of modern imperialism in India is fully and completely reactionary.'

Another area of Dutt's concern was Indian nationalism. On the revolt of 1857 his view is that it 'was in its essential character and dominant leadership the revolt of the old conservative and feudal forces and dethroned potentates'. This is a view which is supported even today by several Marxist historians. Thus, it is only from the last quarter of the 19th century that Dutt traces the beginning of the Indian national movement.

The premier organisation of this movement was the Indian National Congress which was established in 1885. According to Dutt, although the Congress arose from the 'preceding development and beginnings of activity of the Indian middle class', it was brought into existence through British official initiative as a safety-valve. In detail Dutt writes about the role of Hume and his alarm at the impending rebellion. Hume then contacted the officials of the colonial government and pleaded with them to help establish the Congress to stall the insurgency against the British rule. Dutt is, therefore, sure that : 'the National Congress was in fact brought into being through the initiative and under the guidance of direct British governmental policy, on a plan secretly pre-arranged with the Viceroy as an intended weapon for safeguarding British rule against the rising forces of popular unrest and anti-British feeling.'

However, it soon grew out of its original subservient nature due to pressure of populist nationalist feelings. Thus, from 'its early years, even if at first in very limited and cautious forms, the national character began to overshadow the loyalist character'. It gradually became a strong anti-colonial force and started leading people's movement against colonial rule. Dutt based his analysis of nationalism on its varying class base over the years. Thus 'in its earliest phase Indian nationalism ... reflected only big bourgeoisie – the progressive elements among the landowners, the new industrial bourgeoisie, and the well-to-do intellectual elements'. Then rose the class of the urban petty bourgeois who made its aspirations felt in the years preceding the First World War. It was only after the War that the Indian masses – peasantry and the industrial working class – made their presence felt.

However, the leadership remained in the hands of the propertied classes who were quite influential in the Congress. These elements were against any radicalisation of the movement and, therefore, tried to scuttle it before it could become dangerous to their own interests. He is particularly harsh on Gandhi whom he castigates as the 'Jonah of revolution, the general of unbroken disasters ... the mascot of the bourgeoisie' for trying 'to find the means in the midst of a formidable revolutionary wave to maintain leadership of the mass movement'. Thus the Non-cooperation Movement was called off because the masses were becoming too militant and a threat to the propertied classes within and outside the Congress: 'The dominant leadership of the Congress associated with Gandhi called off the movement because they were afraid of the awakening mass activity; because it was beginning to threaten those propertied class interests with which they themselves were still in fact closely linked.'

A similar fate befell the Civil Disobedience Movement which was 'suddenly and mysteriously called off at the moment when it was reaching its height' in 1932. Dutt thinks that this dual nature of the Congress could be traced to its origins: 'This twofold character of the National Congress in its origin is very important for all its subsequent history. This double strand in its role and being runs right through its history: on the one hand, the strand of co-operation with imperialism against the "menace" of the mass movement; on the other hand, the strand of leadership of the masses in the national struggle. This twofold character, which can be traced through all the contradictions of its leadership, from Gokhale in the old stage to his disciple, Gandhi, in the new ... is the reflection of the twofold or vacillating role of the Indian bourgeoisie, at once in conflict with the British bourgeoisie and desiring to lead the Indian people, yet fearing that "too rapid" advance may end in destroying its privileges along with those of the imperialists.'

This was the foundational statement of Marxist historiography on Indian National Congress, the leading organisation of the Indian national movement, for quite some time to come. Most of the subsequent works of the Marxist historians on nationalism were in some measures influenced by it.

A.R. Desai's book, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, has been a very popular book and several editions and reprints of this book have been published since its first publication in 1948. It has also been translated into many Indian languages. It is another thoroughgoing account of the colonial period and the rise of nationalism from a Marxist perspective. As Sumit Sarkar writes in the 'Foreword' to a new edition in 2000: 'For fifty years, it has served generations of students all over the country as an introduction to modern Indian history, and one which for many also provided a highly accessible illustration of Marxist historical method'.

In a single volume this book provides us a synoptic account of the various aspects of economy, society and politics of colonial India. It particularly focuses on the rise of nationalism in India. Desai traces the growth of the national movement in five phases, each phase based on particular social

classes which supported and sustained it. Thus, in the first phase, 'Indian nationalism had a very narrow social basis'. It was pioneered by the intelligentsia who were the product of the modern system of education. Desai considers Raja Rammohan Roy and his followers as the 'pioneers of Indian nationalism'. This phase continued till 1885 when the Indian National Congress was founded. It heralded a new phase which extended till 1905. The national movement now represented 'the interests of the development of the new bourgeois society in India'. The development in the modern education had created an educated middle class and the development of the Indian and international trade had given rise to a merchant class. The modern industries had created a class of industrialists. In its new phase, Indian national movement 'voiced the demands of the educated classes and the trading bourgeoisie such as the Indianization of Services, the association of the Indians with the administrative machinery of the state, the stoppage of economic drain, and others formulated in the resolutions of the Indian National Congress'. The third phase of the national movement covered the period from 1905 to 1918. During this phase 'the Indian national movement became militant and challenging and acquired a wider social basis by the inclusion of sections of the lower-middle class'. In the fourth phase, which began from 1918 and continued till the end of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1934, the social base of the national movement was enormously enlarged. The movement 'which was hitherto restricted mainly to upper and middle classes, further extended ... to sections of the Indian masses.' However, according to Desai, the leadership of the Congress remained in the hands of those who were under the strong influence of the Indian capitalist class : 'It was from 1918 that the Indian industrial bourgeoisie began to exert a powerful influence in determining the programme, policies, strategies, tactics and forms of struggle of the Indian national movement led by the Congress of which Gandhi was the leader.'

Two other significant developments during this period were the rise of the socialist and communist groups since the late 1920s, which tried to introduce pro-people agenda in the national movement, and the consolidation of communalist forces which sought to divide the society.

The fifth phase (1934-39) was characterised by growing disenchantment with the Gandhian ideology within the Congress and further rise of the Socialists who represented the petty bourgeois elements. Outside the Congress various movements were taking place. The peasants, the workers, the depressed classes and various linguistic nationalities started agitations for their demands. Moreover, there was further growth of communalism. However, according to Desai, all these stirrings were not of much consequence and the mainstream was still solidly occupied by the Gandhian Congress which represented the interests of the dominant classes. These two books, particularly the one by R. Palme Dutt, laid the foundations of the Marxist historiography on modern Indian history.

Check your Progress:

1. Discuss the contribution of R. Palme Dutt and A.R. Desai to the Marxist school of Indian Historiography.

3.3 INDIAN NATIONALISM

Earlier, we discussed the views of R.P. Dutt and A.R. Desai on Indian nationalism. They analysed it as a movement which was mostly dominated by the bourgeoisie. Although various classes, including the peasantry and the working classes, participated in it, its basic character remained bourgeois. This view of national movement remained quite common among the Marxist historians for quite some time. However, over the years, several Marxist historians began to disagree with this paradigm for understanding Indian nationalism.

Bipan Chandra

Bipan Chandra mounted a major critique of this view and this criticism became more comprehensive over the years. In his very first book, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* (1966), he pleaded for according certain autonomy to the ideas as significant vehicle of action and change. Even though he accepts that ‘social relations exist independently of the ideas men form of them’, he feels that ‘men’s understanding of these relations is crucial to their social and political action’. Moreover, he argues that the intellectuals in any society stand above the narrow interests of the class in which they are born. It is ‘sheer crude mechanical materialism’ to sort out the intellectuals only on the basis of their class of origins. It is because the intellectuals are guided ‘at the level of consciousness, by thought and not by interests’. Thus the Indian nationalist leaders were also, as intellectuals, above the interests of the narrow class or group they were born in. This does not mean, however, that they did not represent any class. They did represent class interests, but this was done ideologically and not for personal gain. As Bipan Chandra puts it : ‘Like the best and genuine intellectuals the world over and in all history, the Indian thinkers and intellectuals of the 19th century too were philosophers and not hacks of a party or a class. It is true that they were not above class or group and did in practice represent concrete class or group interests. But when they reflected the interests of a class or a group, they did so through the prism of ideology and not directly as members, or the obedient servants, of that class or group.’

On the basis of his analysis of the economic thinking of the early nationalist leaders, both the so-called moderates and the extremists, Bipan Chandra concludes that their overall economic outlook was 'basically capitalist'. By this he means that 'In nearly every aspect of economic life they championed capitalist growth in general and the interests of the industrial capitalists in particular'. This does not mean that they were working for the individual interests of the capitalists. In fact, the capitalist support for the Congress in the early phase was negligible. Nationalist support for industrial capitalism derived from the belief of the nationalists that 'industrial development along capitalist lines was the only way to regenerate the country in the economic field, or that, in other words, the interests of the industrial capitalist class objectively coincided with the chief national interest of the moment'. Thus, Bipan Chandra abandons the instrumentalist approach espoused by Dutt and Desai.

This was a major change in perspective in the historiography of the Indian national movement. However, despite this change in perspective, Bipan Chandra remained anchored to several points within the paradigm developed by R.P. Dutt. In an essay presented at a symposium at the Indian History Congress in 1972 and published in his book *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India* (1979), his arguments come remarkably close to the traditional Marxist perspective developed by R.P. Dutt on Indian nationalism. In this article entitled 'Elements of Continuity and Change in the Early Nationalist Activity', he still criticizes the narrow perspective which dubs the nationalist leaders as bourgeois in an instrumentalist sense that they were following the commands of the capitalists. In his opinion, the early nationalist leaders were trying to unify the Indian people into a nation. Their basic objective was 'to generate, form and crystallize an anti-imperialist ideology, to promote the growth of modern capitalist economy, and in the end to create a broad all India national movement'. This view corresponded with the perspective developed in his earlier book on economic nationalism. But there were other points where his arguments resembled those of Dutt and Desai. Firstly, he interprets the 'peaceful and bloodless' approach of struggle adopted by the nationalist leadership as 'a basic guarantee to the propertied classes that they would at no time be faced with a situation in which their interests might be put in jeopardy even temporarily'. This understanding of non-violence was the same as that of Dutt and Desai.

Secondly, the relationship between the Indian masses and the nationalists always remained problematic. For the moderate leaders, the masses had no role to play. Even the extremists, despite their rhetoric, failed to mobilise the masses. Although the masses came into nationalist fold during the Gandhian period, they were not politicised and the lower classes of agricultural workers and poor peasants in most parts of country were never politically mobilised, 'so that the social base of the national movement was still not very strong in 1947'. And even when they were mobilised, the masses remained outside the decision-making process and the gulf between them and the leaders was 'unbridged'. According to Bipan Chandra : 'Above all, the political activity of the masses was rigidly controlled from the top. The masses never became an independent political force. The

question of their participation in the decision-making process was never even raised. The masses were always to remain ... “passive actors” or “extras” whose political activity remained under the rigid control of middle class leaders and within the confines of the needs of bourgeois social development. Herein also lay the crucial role of the way non- violence was defined and practiced by Gandhi.’

Thirdly, the nationalist leaders in all phases of the movement stressed that the process of achievement of national freedom would be evolutionary, and not revolutionary. The basic strategy to attain this goal would be pressure-compromise-pressure. In this strategy, pressure would be brought upon the colonial rulers through agitations, political work and mobilisation of the people. When the authorities were willing to offer concessions, the pressure would be withdrawn and a compromise would be reached. The political concessions given by the colonial rulers would be accepted and worked. After this, the Congress should prepare for another agitation to gain new concessions. It is in this phased, non-violent manner that several political concessions would be taken from the British and this process would ultimately lead to the liberation of the country. On the basis of his analysis of the social base, the ideology, and the strategy of political struggle, Bipan Chandra concluded that the nationalist movement as represented by the Congress was ‘a bourgeois democratic movement, that is, it represented the interests of all classes and segments of Indian society vis-à-vis imperialism but under the hegemony of the industrial bourgeoisie’. This character remained constant throughout its entire history from inception to 1947. Even during the Gandhian phase, there was no change. In fact, according to Bipan Chandra, ‘the hegemony of the bourgeoisie over the national movement was, if anything, even more firmly clamped down in the Gandhian era than before’.

In a later book, *India's Struggle for Independence, 1857-1947* (1988), Bipan Chandra has decisively moved away from the views of Dutt and Desai on Indian national movement. In this book, co-authored with some other like-minded scholars, he applies the Gramscian perspective to study the national movement. Most of the propositions regarding the Indian National Congress developed in the earlier quoted article are now dropped or revised. The Congress strategy is no longer seen in terms of pressure-compromise-pressure. It is now viewed in terms of Gramscian ‘war of position’ whereby a prolonged struggle is waged for the attainment of goal. As Bipan Chandra puts it : ‘The Indian national movement ... is the only movement where the broadly Gramscian theoretical perspective of a war of position was successfully practised; where state power was not seized in a single historical moment of revolution, but through prolonged popular struggle on a moral, political and ideological level; where reserves of counter-hegemony were built up over the years through progressive stages; where the phases of struggle alternated with “passive” phases.’

This struggle was not overtly violent because the nationalist leaders were seized of the twin agenda of forging the Indian people into a nation and to undermine the colonial hegemony. Through their prolonged struggle they wanted to expose the two important myths about the British colonial rule

that it was beneficial to the Indians and that it was invincible. The Gandhian non-violence is also to be considered in this light. According to Bipan Chandra, 'It was not ... a mere dogma of Gandhiji nor was it dictated by the interests of the propertied classes. It was an essential part of a movement whose strategy involved the waging of a hegemonic struggle based on a mass movement which mobilized the people to the widest possible extent.'

The national movement was now conceived as an all-class movement which provided space and opportunity for any class to build its hegemony. Moreover, the main party, the Congress, which led 'this struggle from 1885 to 1947 was not then a party but a movement'. He criticises the various schools of historiography on India for their failure to address the central contradiction in colonial India which was between the Indian people and the British colonialism. Although he still considers that 'the dominant vision within the Congress did not transcend the parameters of a capitalist conception of society', he has made a clear break from the conventional Marxist interpretation of the Indian national movement and it appears that any study of Indian nationalism has to take his views into account.

Sumit Sarkar

Sumit Sarkar is another Marxist historian who is critical of Dutt's paradigm. In his first book, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908* (1973), he terms it as a 'simplistic version of the Marxian class-approach'. Contrary to the assertion by Dutt that the moderate phase was dominated by the 'big bourgeoisie' while the extremist phase by the 'urban petty bourgeoisie', he thinks that 'a clear class-differential between moderate and extremist would still be very difficult to establish, and was obviously nonexistent at the leadership level'. According to him, this version of Marxist interpretation suffers from the 'defect of assuming too direct or crude an economic motivation for political action and ideals'. He instead prefers to analyse the actions of the nationalist leaders by using Trotsky's concept of 'substitutism' whereby the intelligentsia acts 'repeatedly as a kind of proxy for as-yet passive social forces with which it had little organic connection'. He also uses Gramscian categories of 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectuals. According to Antonio Gramsci, the famous Italian Marxist activist and thinker, the 'organic' intellectuals participate directly in the production-process and have direct links with the people whom they lead. The 'traditional' intellectuals, on the other hand, are not directly connected with either the production-process or the people. However, they become leaders of particular classes by ideologically resuming the responsibility of those classes. According to Sarkar, the leaders of the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 'recruited overwhelmingly from the traditional learned castes, and virtually unconnected after the 1850s with commerce or industry ... may be regarded perhaps as a "traditional" intelligentsia in Gramsci's sense'. This view is quite close to that of Bipan Chandra in

which he emphasises the role of ideology in the formation of the early nationalist leaders. Sumit Sarkar, however, considers that even though the nationalist leaders were not directly linked with the bourgeoisie, they 'objectively did help to at least partially clear the way for the independent

capitalist development of our country'. He emphasises this point further in his article 'The Logic of Gandhian Nationalism' (1985). Here the objective stance of - the Swadeshi movement in favour of the bourgeoisie gets transformed into direct intervention by the bourgeoisie and the subjective position in the interests of the capitalists by the leaders of the Civil Disobedience Movement. By studying the social forces involved in the Civil Disobedience Movement and the developments leading to the Gandhi-Irwin pact, he concludes that there was 'the vastly enhanced role of distinctively bourgeois groups, both in contributing heavily to the initial striking power of Civil Disobedience and ultimately in its calling off'. He qualifies his statement by saying that Gandhi was 'no mere bourgeois tool in any simplistic or mechanical sense' and that he can hardly be considered as 'a puppet' in the hands of the capitalists. He, however, insists that the Gandhian leadership had 'a certain coincidence of aims with Indian business interests at specific points' and 'an occasional significant coincidence of subjective attitudes and inhibitions with bourgeois interests'.

EMS Namboodiripad

In 1952 was published EMS Namboodiripad's *The National Question in Kerala*. It was a careful study of the society of the region, its specific features and the emergence of the national movement in Kerala and the struggles of the exploited and the oppressed. While describing the economy of Kerala as "feudal-colonial", Comrade EMS paid much attention to the caste system, and saw "the struggle for the equality of all castes" as a necessary prelude to "the struggle for economic and political democracy". In many ways it remains a classic work.

Marxist historians, and it is not possible here to survey their studies of its various phases and regional forms. For a narrative that takes into consideration various aspects of interest to Marxists one may mention Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India (1885-1947)*, pub. 1983. E.M.S. Namboodiripad's *History of the Freedom Struggle* (1986) is a major effort after R.P. Dutt's *India Today*, of forty years earlier, to survey the entire history of the National Movement and appraise the tactics and strategy of its leadership.

There has been another aspect of the work of Marxist historians, which needs to be mentioned. This is the defence of the scientific method and resistance to communal and chauvinistic distortions of History. Here strictly professional scholars as well as liberal historians are often on the same side as we are. While the doyen of Marxist historians, Professor R.S. Sharma, has been a leading figure in this struggle, Professor Romila Thapar through her writings has made a signal contribution to the presentation of a rational approach to our history. The role of the Indian History Congress also deserves to be recognized. The struggle is not only important for the political reason that communalism must be opposed at all levels, but for the equally valid reason that the Marxist approach cannot flourish without History being investigated on rigorously scientific lines.

Check your Progress:

1. Discuss the contribution of Bipan Chandra, Sumit Sarkar and EMS Namboodiripad to the Marxist school of Indian Historiography.

3.4 SOME MAJOR MARXIST HISTORIANS OF INDIA

Dr. Damodar Dharmananda Kosambi: (1907-1966)

Damodar Dharmanand Kosambi is best known as a mathematician, but he is endowed with a truly Renaissance versatility. His formula for chromosome distance occupies a central place in classical genetics. His work on coins makes the numismatics of hoards into an exact science.

An unrivalled collection of microliths, the discovery of a Brahmi inscription at Karle, and of a remarkable number of megaliths with rock engraving form substantial contributions to archaeology. His editions of the poetry of Bhṛtrihari and of the oldest known Sanskrit anthology are landmarks in Indian text-criticism.

Romila Thapar credits D.D. Kosambi (1907-66) for affecting a 'paradigm shift' in Indian studies. According to her, such paradigmatic changes had occurred only twice before in Indian historiography. These were done by James Mill and Vincent Smith. James Mill, whose book *History of India* (1818-23) set the parameters for history writing on India, was contemptuous towards the Indian society. He

considered the precolonial Indian civilisation as backward, superstitious, stagnant and lacking in most respects as a civilisation. He was an unabashed admirer of the British achievements in India and relentless critic of pre-British Indian society and polity. He divided the Indian history into three parts- the Hindu, the Muslim and the British. This division, according to him, was essential to demarcate three different civilisations. Vincent Smith's *The Oxford History of India* (1919) provided another break in Indian historiography as it avoided the sharp value judgments and contemptuous references to the pre-British period of Indian history contained in Mill's book. He instead tried to present a chronological account of Indian history and focused on the rise and fall of dynasties.

Kosambi viewed history completely differently. For him, Mill's religious periodisation and Smith's chronological accounts of dynasties were of no value. He believed that the 'Society is held together by bonds of

production'. Thus he defines history 'as the presentation, in chronological order, of successive developments in the means and relations of production'. This, according to him, is 'the only definition known which allow a reasonable treatment of pre-literate history, generally termed "pre-history"'. He further argues that history should be viewed in terms of conflict between classes: 'The proper study of history in a class society means analysis of the differences between the interests of the classes on top and of the rest of the people; it means consideration of the extent to which an emergent class had something new to contribute during its rise to power, and of the stage where it turned (or will turn) to reaction in order to preserve its vested interests.' He describes his approach to history as 'dialectical materialism, also called Marxism after its founder'. However, Kosambi was flexible in his application of Marxism. He argued that 'Marxism is far from the economic determinism which its opponents so often take it to be'. He further asserts that the 'adoption of Marx's thesis does not mean blind repetition of all his conclusions (and even less, those of the official, party-line Marxists) at all times'. He, instead, considered Marxism as a method which could be usefully applied for the study of Indian society and history.

The paucity of relevant data for the early period of Indian history was one factor which prompted him to analyse the broad social formations rather than small-scale events. He thought that the use of comparative method would balance out the absence of reliable historical sources. He, therefore, adopted an inter-disciplinary approach in his studies of Indian society. This enabled him to view the reality from various angles to get a full picture of it. These ideas are evident in his four major books: *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History* (1956), *Exasperating Essays: Exercises in the Dialectical Method* (1957), *Myth and Reality: Studies in the Formation of Indian Culture* (1962) and *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline* (1965). Kosambi's non-dogmatic approach to history is clear when he rejected two key Marxist concepts – the Asiatic Mode of Production and Slavery – as inapplicable to ancient Indian society. Although he accepted the concept of feudalism in Indian context, he denied the existence of serfdom. According to him, it would be more rewarding to view the early Indian society in terms of the transition from tribe to caste. He argues that the 'pre-class society was organised ... into tribes. The tribes were small, localised communities and 'for the tribesman, society as such began and ended with his tribe'. The beginning and development of plough agriculture brought about a radical change in the system of production. This destabilised the tribes and the clans and gave rise to castes as new form of social organisation. This was an extremely crucial development. Kosambi writes: 'The entire course of Indian history shows tribal elements being fused into a general society.'

This phenomenon, which lies at the very foundation of the most striking Indian social feature, namely caste, is also the great basic fact of ancient history.' Kosambi tried to relate the intellectual and cultural production with the prevailing social and economic situation. Thus, according to him, the teachings of *Bhagavad Gita* can be understood only with reference to the feudal society in which it originated. It, therefore, preaches the ideology of the ruling class which emphasised 'the chain of personal loyalty which

binds retainer to chief, tenant to lord, and baron to king or emperor'. Similarly, he considers the Bhakti movement as preaching a sense of loyalty to the lord which, in the earthly sense, translates into loyalty and devotion to the rulers. His detailed study of the poetry of Bhartrihari, the 7th-century poet, reflects a similar approach. He describes Bhartrihari as 'unmistakably the Indian intellectual of his period, limited by caste and tradition in fields of activity and therefore limited in his real grip on life'. In his study of the myths, he contended that they reflected the transition of society from matriarchy to patriarchy.

Check your Progress:

1. Asses the contribution of D.D.Kosambi to the Marxist school of Indian Historiography.

Ram Sharan Sharma:

Born in Bihar's Barauni village (Begusarai district) on September 01, 1920, Professor Ram Sharan Sharma had his early education in a rural milieu. Later, he went to the Patna University to do his graduate and postgraduate studies. After a short stint of teaching in colleges of Arrah and Bhagalpur (1943-46), he joined the renowned Patna College as a Lecturer in 1946 and rose to become Professor and Head of the Department of History of the Patna University in 1958. He continued to hold that position till 1973, when the University of Delhi offered him professorship and headship of its history department.

He retired from active service there in 1985. Though a widely travelled person, both in India and abroad, he never forgot his *mula* (roots) and actively worked for the upliftment of his village. He was particularly concerned about the need of educational facilities for all, and specially for the education of women. He was instrumental in inspiring the local people to create a library in the village. The peasant leaders of the National Movement such as Pandit Karyanand Sharma and Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and progressive and irrepressible Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayana had considerable formative influences on his persona. As a result, he became simplicity personified.

Amongst the numerous Awards and Honours bestowed upon him, the Professor H.K. Barpujari National Award [for his seminal work *Urban Decay in India, circa 300 to 1000* (1987)] and the V.K. Rajwade National

Award (2002) for his 'lifelong service and outstanding contribution to the study of ancient and early medieval history' by Indian History Congress (IHC) stand out prominently. He was also an active member of the National Commission of the History of Sciences in India and UNESCO Commission on the history of Central Asian Civilizations.

Before accepting the offer of professorship and headship of the history department of the University of Delhi in 1973, Professor Sharma had already created a distinctive identity of the same department in Patna University during his 15-year tenure (1958- 1973). He laid special emphases on restructuring of syllabi of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in History (cf. *Proceedings of Seminar on Undergraduate Teaching in History*, edited by him, 1968). No wonder, immediately after reaching Delhi, he tried to harness the enormous pool of talent lying scattered over scores of constituent colleges of this illustrious university. It is remarkable that he realized very early that the undergraduate teaching of the discipline in these colleges was its distinctive feature and the greatest asset. Sharmaji strongly believed that every person possesses some or the other positive quality and that opportunities should be created for him/her to concretize it. He was invariably spot on in identifying talent and harnessing it. He was a great institution builder – a quality that is well represented in the way he shaped the academic programme and administrative structure of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) as its founder Chairman (1972-77). Much of that has survived till this day. Prof. R.S.Sharma breath his last on 20th August, 2011.

In his long academic career spanning over nearly six decades, Sharmaji, as he was known to his friends, colleagues and students, produced several seminal works (over twenty monographs, more than a hundred seminal essays and book reviews, and several edited volumes) on social, economic, political and cultural histories of ancient and early medieval India. Cumulatively put, all his writings tend to bring out the dynamics of ever-changing social formations through the several millennia of India's historical developmental processes.

Whichever area of human activity that Professor Sharma chose to write about – political, social or economic processes, forms of property, women and *varna*, – their inter-links and links with productive processes interested him the most. In his keenness to understand the unfolding of historical processes, he evaluated many theories and models available to a historian.

Prof.Sharma made a strong case for the application of historical materialism to the study of early Indian history. His steadfast conviction in the dialectics of modes of production and the society's ability to produce surplus enabled him to undertake a multi-pronged analyses of the state of the shudras and women, different stages of economy, landmarks in the evolutionary processes of state formation, rise and fall or urban centres, emergence and dissemination of feudalism and other phenomena.

Prof. Sharma wrote in 1983: “Mode of production involving the theory of surplus leading to class formation continues to be the best working hypothesis, notwithstanding countless assertions to the contrary. The effort to eliminate class and surplus has introduced ‘elite’, ‘status’, ‘hierarchy’, ‘decision-making’, etc. in their place. The theory of surplus is rejected on the ground that people do not produce more on their own but are compelled to put in more work or more people are mobilized for work. Whatever motives be assigned for producing more – and this will differ from society to society– almost all types of serious investigators admit that only extra produce can support whole time administrators, professional soldiers, full-time priests, craftsmen, and other similar specialists who do not produce their food themselves. The argument that people were compelled to produce more would imply the existence of an organized coercive authority such as the state or at least a protostate represented by a strong chief, but it would not negate the idea of surplus.”

Though a Marxist in his methodology and orientation, Professor Sharma was neither a strict doctrinaire nor a propagandist nor even an apologist for any political ideology. He had the conviction to take on the orthodox Marxists. Marxism for him was not a substitute for thinking but a tool of analysis that required considerable skill to unfold historical processes. No wonder, he could comment on S. A. Dange’s understanding of historical development in terms of a uni-linear progression in his *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery* (1949) thus: “The book shows more schematicism than scholarship”. With such a focus, ‘people’ acquired a totally different connotation in Sharmaji’s writings and ‘people’s histories’ coming out of his pen were qualitatively different from several volumes of Indian history that came out with such evocative titles as *New History of the Indian People* in the 1940s (under the auspices of the Bharatiya Itihas Parishad) and *The History and Culture of the Indian People* in the 1950s and the 1960s (the famous Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series).

These series failed to bring ‘people’ into the focus. No wonder, developments in Indian society, polity, economy, arts, religions and literature, etc. through the millennia affecting millions of toiling masses remained compartmentalised and also somewhat mere adjuncts of the dynastic history framework in these ventures.

During six decades of his active academic career, Sharmaji had written so prolifically not for adding many letters against his name, but to spread scientific historical consciousness amongst his readers. The fact that his first book (*Vishwa Itihas ki Bhumika*, in two volumes, 1951-1953; its revision and translation into English is in process) was published in Hindi when he was merely in his early thirties; and that he deliberately got almost all his works translated into Hindi and other Indian languages are indicators of his concern for making his writings available to the maximum possible readers in their own languages.

The works of Professor Sharma show his mastery over all genres of texts — epigraphic, literary, numismatic and archaeological. This competence is not very common. It enabled him to demolish many myths created by

imperialist-colonialist historiography as well as by the cultural chauvinists of more recent times, and made scientific study of ever changing Indian society in all its dimensions possible. Even the most familiar texts acquired a very radical purpose and tenor in his writings. Epigraphs, for example, did not interest him for reconstructing minutiae of succession struggles or mere genealogies of political powers. Instead, they were made to yield vital details about socio-political and economic structures, changing land rights, etc. Same holds true of material antiquities unearthed during archaeological explorations and excavations. His use of such finds from more than a hundred sites spread across the whole length and breadth of the sub-continent for working out different phases of urban centres in early and early medieval India was equally innovative. *Urban Decay in India, circa 300-1200* is an exquisite example thereof, which also shows the way to read section drawings making the navigation easy even for a novice.

He displays his phenomenal skill of saying things simply and clearly without caring to be seen as indulging in fashionable ‘discourses’. His *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India* is a classic example of this trait. But long before that, and referring to the current craze for peddling of ‘models’, he wrote thus in 1975: “For comprehending and explaining the past in India we naturally look for models and typologies, but the intellectual market in social sciences, like any other market, is flooded with ‘western’ commodities...what is needed is not only an awareness of the various models that are being peddled in the field but also their careful examination, otherwise we would just become middlemen and paraphrasers. I would rather prefer to be damned as old-fashioned than go in for the latest fad without assessing its analytical validity and social relevance. New terms are needed to express new ideas, but phrase-mongering should not be confused with advance in historical knowledge.”

Professor Sharma has been a colossus. It would be difficult to fill the void created by him. He remained the *historian of the people and for the people* in the real sense of the term.

Check your Progress:

1. Revie the contribution of Ram Sharan Sharma to the Marxist school of Indian Historiography.

Romilla Thapper

Indian National Movement
(1857 CE to 1947 CE)

Romila Thapar born 30 November 1931 is an Indian historian whose principal area of study is ancient India. Romila Thapar was born of a well-known Punjabi family and spent her childhood in various parts of the country, as her father was then in the army. She took her first degree in India from the Punjab University and her doctorate at London University in 1958. She has taught Ancient Indian History at London University and Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi.

Her keen interest in understanding how societies disintegrate or integrate and how relationships change over time, led her to history and historiography, and she went on a scholarship to School of Oriental and African Studies. Working with the famous indologist Dr. A.L. Bhasham, she earned a Ph.D on the Mauryan era, in 1958.

An interesting aspect of Prof. Thapar's work spanning four decades is her ability to constantly expand the horizons of her concerns, but still produce a consistently high quality of research output, as Sanjay Subramaniam, a Professor at Oxford comments. A teacher throughout her life, generations of historians underwent rigorous training at Delhi University and later for two fulfilling decades at Jawaharlal Nehru University. One of the founder members of the JNU's famed Centre for Historical Studies, Prof. Thapar, along with a galaxy of historians was able to expand the quests and concerns of History and move it beyond the narrow confines of chronicling events.

Professor Thapar's works range from *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* (1961) to *The Aryan: Recasting Constructs* (2008). Professor Thapar has been a visiting professor at Cornell University, the University of Pennsylvania and the College de France in Paris. She was elected General President of the Indian History Congress in 1983, as well as Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy in 1999.

Professor Thapar is also an Honorary Fellow at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford and holds honorary doctorates from the University of Chicago, the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales in Paris, the University of Oxford and the University of Calcutta. In 2004 the US Library of Congress appointed her as the first holder of the Kluge Chair in Countries and Cultures of the South. Thapar's major works are *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, *Recent Perspectives of Early Indian History* (editor), *A History of India Volume One*, and *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*. Her historical work portrays the origins of Hinduism as an evolving interplay between social forces. Her recent work on Somnath examines the evolution of the historiographies about the legendary Gujarat temple. In her first work, *Asoka and the Decline of the Maurya* published in 1963, Thapar situates Ashoka's policy of dhamma in its social and political context, as a non-sectarian civic ethic intended to hold together an empire of diverse ethnicities and cultures. She attributes the decline of the Mauryan empire to its highly centralized administration which called for rulers of exceptional abilities to function well.

Thapar's first volume of A History of India is written for a popular audience and encompasses the period from its early history to the arrival of Europeans in the sixteenth century. Ancient Indian Social History deals with the period from early times to the end of the first millennium, includes a comparative study of Hindu and Buddhist socio-religious systems, and examines the role of Buddhism in social protest and social mobility in the caste system. From Lineage to State analyses the formation of states in the middle Ganga valley in the first millennium BC, tracing the process to a change, driven by the use of iron and plough agriculture, from a pastoral and mobile lineage-based society to one of settled peasant holdings, accumulation and increased urbanization.

Thapar is critical of what she calls a "communal interpretation" of Indian history, in which events in the last thousand years are interpreted solely in terms of a notional continual conflict between monolithic Hindu and Muslim communities. Thapar says this communal history is "extremely selective" in choosing facts, "deliberately partisan" in interpretation and does not follow current methods of analysis using multiple, prioritised causes.

Thapar has an interest in the social and cultural history of ancient India. The increasing interest in the historiography of the early period is an indicator of the awareness of the role of ideology in historical interpretation. She has also used comparative method to study similar societies with the evidence both literary and archaeological sources. Other sources include linguistic, ethnographic and other fields of Indology.

Check your Progress:

1. Trace the contribution of Romila Thapar to the Marxist school of Indian Historiography.

Irfan Habib:

Irfan Habib was born on 12th August, 1931 in Baroda (now Vadodra) Gujrat in a very aristocrat family of learned scholars. Irfan Habib started his education in Aligarh Muslim University and completed his B.A. in 1951 securing first position and a gold medal and M.A. in History in 1953 with honors and joined as Lecturer in Department of History in Aligarh Muslim University at a very young age of 22 years. He obtained his D.Phil. degree from New College, Oxford. His research "Agrarian System of Mughal India" was well taken by the research community was published in form of

a book in 1963. He was appointed as “Reader” in 1960 and “Professor” in 1969 in the Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University.

Indian National Movement
(1857 CE to 1947 CE)

His major publications including, *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, *Essays in Indian History: Towards a Marxist perception* and *Atlas of the Mughal Empire* gave his due place in the academic community. He is also the editor of *Peoples History of Indian Series*, besides having edited UNESCO publications and *Cambridge Economic History of India, Volume I*. He has authored and edited number of books, over hundred research papers on various fields of Indian and world history. Prof. Irfan Habib has worked on the historical geography of Ancient India, the history of Indian technology, medieval administrative and economic history, colonialism and its impact on India, and historiography. Amiya Kumar Bagchi describes Habib as "one of the two most prominent Marxist historians of India today."

Prof. Irfan Habib had served as Chairman of Department of History of AMU from 1975 to 1977 and from 14th June 1984 to May 1988. He had also served as Coordinator of Center of Advance Studies (CAS) in Department of History, AMU Aligarh from 1975 to 1977 and 14th June 1994 to 13th May 1996. In 1986, Prof. Irfan Habib was appointed as Chairman of Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) New Delhi, India. He served as its Chairman from 9th September, 1986 to 1st July 1990. He had also served as President and Vice-President of Indian History Congress in 1981 and 2006 respectively. Indian History Congress is India's largest peer body of historians. He delivered Radhakrishnan Lecture at Oxford in 1991. In 1998, he was elected as Corresponding Fellow of British Royal Historical Society, a unique honor earned by his scholarly contribution, recognized by the international community. Prof. Irfan Habib, formally retired on 30.08.1991 has remained associated with the Aligarh Muslim University for all these years without a break, displaying unusual academic interest and scholarly activity that stand out as a model par excellence for everyone. Prof. Irfan Habib remains a towering personality fully wedded to the secular values of the Indian Republic. He has illuminated the minds of millions of Indians by his in depth, path breaking erudition of Indian History with a new insight that was so refreshing to the promotion of secular ideals in India. The nation has bestowed on him the coveted civilian title “Padma Bhushan” in 2005. In December 2007, Aligarh Muslim University appointed Prof. Irfan Habib as Professor Emeritus in the department of History. The presence of such a brilliant scholar in the Aligarh Muslim University will add to the academic glory of the institution. He will remain a beacon light for teachers and students of History for several years to come.

As a historian, he has few peers. His research on *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, published in the 1960s, immediately became a classic. Recognition as a fearless exponent of Marxist historiography rained down on him. His initial work pertained to the medieval era of Indian history. He has ceaselessly produced tracts on aspects of this historical period, each of which bears the stamp of his intellectual depth and clarity of writing. His mind and interest did not, however, long stay confined to any particular, narrow phase of events and occurrences. He soon spread out; nothing from

the very ancient period to the outer fringes of modern Indian history has escaped his attention. The point has to be emphasised over and over again: whatever he has written has been the product of scholastic endeavour of the highest order: reasoning, primary data not unraveled in the past, application of such data towards formulating credible hypotheses, and the entire corpus built, stone by stone, into a magnificent edifice which can be held in comparison only with other products emanating from Irfan Habib's mind and pen. It is the combination of quantity of output and quality of excellence which has enabled his works reach the reputation of being the other word for supreme excellence. Inevitably, he has attracted attention as much within the country as outside. Honours have come to him easily. What is of stupendous additional significance, his interpretation of data, building of premises based on such data and expansion of the underlying reasoning, have never strayed away from their Marxist foundation. He has been unabashedly Marxist in his scholastic activities, and has never made a secret of his intellectual and emotional inclination. No run-of-the-mill braggart, his output, every line of it, every expression of his format, has spelled out his faith and belief. Ours is a hide-bound society; it breathes reaction from every pore. Nonetheless, it has been unable to either bypass or be indifferent to Irfan's towering scholarship. Not only has he been accorded the highest academic distinction in an educational institution which has its fair share of retrograde thoughts and demeanour. Even the country's administrative establishment could not fail to take cognisance of his intellectual prowess. Thus the Chairmanship of the Indian Council of Historical Research was offered to him. He held this position for well over a decade, and it was no vacuous adornment of a throne. He used the opportunity to wonderful effect, guiding and counseling historical research at different centres of learning in the country. The result shows in the secular advance in the quality of history teaching and writing in the different Indian universities.

But research interests have not held back Irfan in a narrow mooring. Alongside his individual research activities and the scholastic work he has encouraged around him; his focus of attention has continued to be his students. He has lived for his students, and it would be no exaggeration to claim that he is prepared to die for them. A little facetious research will prove the point: about half of his colleagues on the faculty of history in the Aligarh Muslim University happen to be his former students. It would still be a travesty to infer that he built his students in his own image. He has been a radical thinker, a weather-beaten socialist prepared to combat all ideological challenges, and yet his catholicism as a teacher is by now a legend. Even those whose stream of thought is not in accord with his wavelength have nonetheless found in him the most painstaking teacher who would not deny a student, any student, what he, rightfully or otherwise, can expect of a teacher. Irfan's style of exposition has an elegance of its own: he is an accredited socialist, and yet his command of language, and the manner in which he puts it across, have the hallmark of the legatee of a benign, civilised aristocracy. Maybe in this matter his heredity has been a natural helper.

That does not still tell the entire story of his dazzling career. It is possible to come across scores and scores of arm-chair socialists and radicals whose faith has not nudged them into political activism.

From that point of view too, Irfan Habib is all together out of the ordinary. He has been, for nearly three decades, an accredited member of a revolutionary political party; he has not concealed this

datum from any quarters. Quite on the contrary, that identity has been his emblem of pride. He has been prepared to serve the cause of the party whenever called upon, without however compromising or neglecting his academic responsibilities. It is this blend of intense - if it were not a heresy, one could say, almost religious - belief and fearless participation in political activism which has marked him out in the tepid milieu of Indian academia. His activism, one should add, has widened beyond the humdrum sphere of political speech-making and polemical writing (although, even in his absent-mindedness, his polemics has never descended to the level of empty rhetoric). Irfan's social conscience has prodded him into trade unionism, what many academics would regard as waywardness of the most shocking kind. Irfan could not have cared less for such snobbery. He has also encouraged his students to combine radical thought with political engagement. He has been at the forefront of organisers of teachers' movements. To cap all, he has been the main inspirer and mobiliser of the non-teaching employees of his university and elsewhere. He has suffered on all these accounts including, for a period, suspension from his university. This was an outrage, and social pressure forced the university to revoke its insensate decision.

To fail to mention his relentless opposition to communal revanchists of all genres will be an unpardonable omission. Muslim fundamentalists have made him their favourite target; of late, Hindu communalists have joined the ranks of this motley crowd. Irfan has not for one moment cowered before this rabble. A quiet, tranquil person in his natural disposition, there is a reservoir of fire in him which has been continuously directed against society's reactionary scum.

Check your Progress:

1. Examine the contribution of Irfan Habib to the Marxist school of Indian Historiography.

3.5 SUMMARY

The Marxist historians have contributed enormously to Indian historiography. In all field of Indian history, whether we divide it by periods or by topics, the Marxist historians have made significant contributions. In several areas, their works have changed the course of historiography. The Marxist historians do not form a monolithic bloc. As we have seen in our discussion of several trends, there are wide divergences of views among the Marxist historians. However, there are certain common elements among them.

The history of the dynasties was replaced by the history of the common people. More emphasis was now given to the study of economy and society in preference to the political history. The study of broad social and economic systems such as feudalism and colonialism were undertaken and the social, economic and political changes were considered not in the light of the actions of individual statesmen, but in terms of the working out of economy and conflicts between classes. At the level of methodology, Kosambi's works introduced an interdisciplinary approach to history which encompassed literature, archaeology, linguistics, anthropology, numismatics and statistics. Moreover, the Marxist historiography has made interpretation and explanation more important than narration or description.

3.6 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on the Marxist historiography of Indian nationalism. Discuss the differences between various Marxist historians on this issue.
2. Discuss the contribution of R. Palme Dutt and A.R. Desai to the Marxist school of Indian Historiography.
3. Discuss the contribution of Bipan Chandra, Sumit Sarkar and EMS Namboodiripad to the Marxist school of Indian Historiography.
4. What is the role of D.D. Kosambi and Ram Sharan Sharma in the development of Marxist historiography in India?
5. Examine the contribution of Irfan Habib to the Marxist school of Indian Historiography.

3.7 ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1956.
2. Romila Thapar, 'The Contribution of D.D. Kosambi to Indology', in Romila Thapar, *Cultural Pasts : Essays in Early Indian History*, OUP, New Delhi, 2000.
3. R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, Manisha, Calcutta, 1979.

4. A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay, 2000.
5. Harbans Mukhia (ed.), *The Feudalism Debate*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2000.
6. Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1966.
7. Bipan Chandra, et al, *India's Struggle for Independence, 1857-1947*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1988.
8. K.N. Panikkar, *Culture, Ideology, Hegemony : Intellectuals and Social Consciousness in Colonial India* , Tulika, New Delhi, 1995.
9. Ramesh Chandra Sharma, et al, *Historiography and Historians in India since Independence* , M G Publishers, Agra, 1991.
10. E. Sreedharan (2004). *A Textbook of Historiography, 500 B.C. to A.D. 2000*. Orient Longma.

munotes.in

THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL AND SUBALTERN SCHOOL

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 The Emergence of the Cambridge School
 - 4.2.1 The Major Works of the Cambridge School
 - 4.2.2 Characteristics of the Cambridge Interpretation
 - 4.2.3 The Skepticism of the Cambridge School
 - 4.2.4 The End of the Cambridge School
- 4.3 Subaltern School: Beginning of the Thought
 - 4.3.1 Development of the Project
 - 4.3.2 Critique
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Questions
- 4.6 Additional Readings

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, student should be able to;

1. Grasp the emergence of the Cambridge school.
2. Know the major works of the Cambridge school.
3. Understand the features of the Cambridge interpretation.
4. Comprehend the skepticism of the Cambridge school.
5. Perceive the end of the Cambridge school.
6. Comprehend the historical perspective of the Subaltern school of Indian Historiography.
7. Explain the Subaltern Historiography as the historiography of protest.
8. Understand the nature of the Subaltern Historiography
9. Perceive the growth of Subaltern school of Indian Historiography
10. Explain the important Subaltern historians and their Historiography
11. Grasp the contribution of major Subaltern historians to Subaltern school of Indian Historiography.

In last three Units we discussed some major views on Indian nationalism – the imperialist, nationalist, and Marxist. In this Unit we will discuss some other views on Cambridge School and *Subaltern Studies* which are also of crucial significance so far as the interpretation of the national movement is concerned. A consideration of all these perspectives is aimed towards illustrating the point that not only was nationalism a complex phenomenon but also that history-writing is an intricate exercise informed by varying ideological and political practices.

Earlier, two historiographical schools had appeared in course of the 1960s. One favored the Marxist view and the other advanced the elite theory of the West. It was out of the latter camp that the Cambridge School appeared in 1973. To understand the tenets of Cambridge requires knowledge of the earlier debates in the 1960s. The debate involved the Cambridge School in due course. Since the Cambridge School appeared out of the elite theory and branched off from it, the interpretation offered by the elite theorists is relevant in this context. Historians from a number of Western universities, especially from Canberra, Sussex and Cambridge, offered this interpretation in reaction to Marxist historiography in India and the Soviet Union. Three influential works emphasizing the role of the English-educated elite in Indian politics came out in quick succession: D. A. Low, *Soundings in Contemporary South Asian History*; J.H. Broomfield, *Elite disagreement in a Plural Society. Twentieth Century Bengal*; and Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century*. The interpretation had three points to create against the Marxists. First of all, the main motive force behind contemporary politics, including nationalist politics, was not economic change, but on the contrary the institutional innovations introduced by the British. Anil Seal emphasized the institutional opportunities offered by English education, especially the new jobs accessible in the subordinate civil service and the contemporary professions of law, western medicine, journalism and teaching. John Broomfield for his part dwelt on the institutional opportunities offered to a rising group of politicians by the new constitutional structure of elections and representatives in the changing system of government. Secondly, the interpretation focused upon the region, as against the nation, and upon the traditional cultures in each region; it was against the background of the region that the elite theorists traced the course of political change set off by the institutional changes. Thirdly, the interpretation focused, not upon class and class disagreement, but upon the formation of English-educated elite, and upon the rivalries within each region flanked by contending castes and societies for securing the opportunities offered by English education and legislative representation.

The *Subaltern Studies* is the title given to a series of volumes initially published under the editorship of Ranajit Guha, the prime mover and the ideologue of the project. He edited the first six volumes of the *Subaltern Studies*. The next five volumes are edited by other scholars associated with

the project. Right from the beginning the *Subaltern Studies* took the position that the entire tradition of Indian historiography before it has had elitist bias. The historians associated with the *Subaltern Studies* declared that they would set the position right by writing the history from the point of view of the common people. In this Unit we will discuss the various positions taken by the writers associated with the *Subaltern Studies* as well as the criticism of the project by historians and others working in the area of Indian studies.

4.2 THE EMERGENCE OF THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL

Anil Seal, whose thesis at Cambridge was supervised by John Gallagher and which was subsequently published under the title *Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, subscribed to these views in his thesis. So did the first generation of Anil Seal's students, especially Judith Brown, the author of *Gandhi's Rise to Power*. In their view, the English-educated nationalist elite were originally the high caste minority of Bengal, Bombay and Madras, and the politics of the backward castes and regions was also a minority's protest against this English-educated nationalism. Subsequently, though, John Gallagher, Anil Seal and yet another batch of their students radically customized their stand, and the Cambridge School was the product of the customized standpoint.

John Gallagher, jointly with Ronald Robinson, had earlier written a book entitled *Africa and the Victorians*, which had made a critical impact on imperial studies in the early 1960s. Briefly, Gallagher and Robinson had argued that imperialism was not the product of the new economic forces in Europe, but was induced by the political collapse caused by indigenous procedures in Africa and Asia. Imperialism was compelled to move into the political vacuum created by the internal conflicts in native societies. Anil Seal, as a brilliant young pupil of Gallagher, had also dwelt on the political rivalries within Indian society in his explanation of the emergence of contemporary politics in India, focusing especially upon caste and the competition for English education in the middle of several regions, societies and castes. In the early 1970s, a new batch of research students gathered approximately John Gallagher, Anil Seal and Gordon Johnson. This was the Cambridge School, and it distinguished itself from the earlier elite theory version by formulating new answers to the questions posed in the ongoing debate. Though, they still subscribed to the view that nationalism was basically a play for power.

In the new version, the dynamic factor behind contemporary politics was no longer English education and its opportunities, nor of course any broad economic change under colonial rule. On the contrary, the dynamic factor was the rising centralization of government in the subcontinent and the rising element of representation within its structure. This implied the increasingly great attendance of government in the countryside and the integration of the margin to the centre through the new mechanism of legislative representation. Government impulse fostered contemporary politics in British India and created the space for national politics in the country. Secondly, the locality was now projected as the real base of

politics instead of the region or the nation. The real interests involved in politics were local interests, not a mythical national interest, or even a local-cultural interest. Local interests sought to pass themselves off as the cultural interest of the region or the national interest of the whole country. Thirdly, the operating unit in politics was recognized, not as caste or society, not to speak of class, but as the faction based on the patron-client linkage in the locality. The patron-client network was a pragmatic alliance cutting crossways classes, castes and societies. The patrons in whose interest the networks were shaped were local magnates, either town notables or rural-local bosses, depending upon the locality. The local notables were now projected as more influential than the English- educated professional men who constituted the educated elite. The dynamic factor that pulled the local networks of patronage into national politics was the increased attendance of government in the locality and the rising attendance of the representative element in the government.

Check your Progress

1. Discuss the emergence the Cambridge School.

4.2.1 THE MAJOR WORKS OF THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL

The origins of the Cambridge School may be traced back to Robinson and Gallagher's *Africa and the Victorians* and Seal's *Emergence of Indian Nationalism* in the 1960s, but the Cambridge School announced itself only in the 1970s with *Locality, Province and Nation*. The tenets of the Cambridge School were set forth in a number of works, in the middle of which may be mentioned John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal; Gordon Johnson, *Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism: Bombay and the Indian National Congress 1890 to 1905*; C.A. Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad 1880 –1920*; D.A. Washbrook, *The Emergence of Provincial Politics: Madras Presidency 1870 –1920*; C.J. Baker, *The Politics of South India 1920 –1937*; B..R. Tomlinson, *The Indian National Congress and the Raj 1929 – 1942*; and C. J. Baker, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal. The first and the last were collections of essays by members of the Cambridge School; the rest were Cambridge and Oxford Theses supervised by Anil Seal and John Gallagher. These books may have differed in their tone and emphasis to some extent, but they shared a number of general characteristics. Collectively, they constituted the Cambridge School. Some Cambridge theses, which Anil Seal supervised at approximately the similar time, did not share the similar characteristics. For instance, Mushirul Husan's *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India 1916-1928*, and Rajat Kanta Ray's *Social Disagreement and Political Unrest in Bengal 1875-1927*, did not share the emphasis on power play, but

on the contrary dwelt on ideological and economic factors. Despite guidance by Anil Seal, they did not belong to the Cambridge School. What distinguished the historians of the Cambridge School was their focus upon the search for power by individuals and factions. They pushed their inquiries down from the nation and the region to the locality; and in the locality, their attention focused, not upon social groups such as classes or castes, but on _connexons' straddling these social categories. Their analysis concentrated on the slow bonding jointly of these local factions and connections into an all- India political structure by the rising intrusion of the power at the centre into the affairs of the margin.

The gradual centralization of the government, matched as it was by the growth of a representative element within the centralized structure, pulled local politics outwards, into politics with a national focus. Nationalism, in this view, was disguised collaboration with imperialism.

Check your Progress

1. Trace the major work of the Cambridge School.

4.2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CAMBRIDGE INTERPRETATION

The Cambridge interpretation began with the locality, and with the connexons' in each locality. In C.A. Bayly's analysis of mid-nineteenth century politics in Allahabad town, local politics consisted of a series of loose consortia of patrons each with their clientela to satisfy'. The town was dominated by commercial magnates who in the vicinity enjoyed the status of *rais* or notable. He establishes it useful to describe the several groups in clientage to the commercial *raises* as connexions. A bunching of economic functions approximately the magnates gave the connexions a cross-caste, cross-society aspect. Later the similar _connexions became the operative units in nationalist politics in Allahabad. In his revise of Bombay politics, Gordon Johnson concurred with this. The mainly obvious feature of every Indian politician was that each politician acted for several diverse interests at all stages of Indian society, and in doing so cut crossways horizontal ties of class, caste, region and religion. 'Anil Seal put the similar point forcefully in the introductory article on Imperialism and nationalism in India in *Locality, Province and Nation*. Politics was originally a local affair and there it was a race for power, status and possessions. In this race, patrons would regiment their clients into factions which jockeyed for location.' So these were not partnerships flanked by the similar sorts of fellows. They were rather associations of bigwigs and their followers. In

other languages, the factions were vertical alliances, not horizontal alliances.' The local rivalries were seldom marked by the alliance of landlord with landlord, educated with educated, Muslim with Muslim, and Brahman with Brahman. More regularly, Hindus worked with Muslims, Brahmins were hand-in-glove with non-Brahmins.

According to the Cambridge interpretation, the roots of politics lay in the localities – the district, the municipality, the village. There the town notables and the rural-local bosses enjoyed the power to distribute possessions without any interference by the seemingly impotent imperial government. But things began to change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Motivated, according to David Washbrook, by the need to improve, to gather more wealth, to do more good, the imperial authorities accepted out bureaucratic and constitutional reforms which forced more and more local politicians to turn their attention from the local centers of power to the government at the centre. This was John Gallagher's Government impulse and it altered the working of Indian politics. That is not to say, he cautioned, that Indian politics had been tidied up into parties with programmes, tailored to fit the needs of coherent social groups. The main elements were still the links flanked by patrons and clients, the connections in localities and the shifting alliances flanked by factions; these sustained to cut crossways the spurious unities which now seemed to have appeared. Nevertheless, there had been a significant change; more localities had to be bonded jointly, and they had to be related to the politics of superior arenas. The lessons of these electoral systems followed the logic of administrative change'.

Anil Seal, in his introduction to *Locality, Province and Nation*, had the similar thing to say. As a centralized and increasingly representative government appeared, it was no longer enough for Indians to secure political benefits in the localities alone. The rising power to be bargained for at the centers for government necessitated the creation of provincial and then all India politics. Village, district and small-town politics sustained unabated in the undergrowth, but political associations, such as the Madras Native Association or the Indian National Congress, deployed a dissimilar grammar of politics in the provinces and at the centre. For the formal structure of government provided the framework of politics, and it was only by operating within it that Indians could share and determine the sharing of power and patronage.

According to C. J. Baker, local bosses, so extensive left on their own to strike local bargains of power, establish it necessary to match the new administrative and representative structure of the British Raj with a national political structure built upon organisations with broader constituencies, such as the Justice Party in Madras, the Hindu Mahasabha, The All India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress. Ascribing spurious political change to administrative logic, the Cambridge School denies any sudden transformation of elite clubs into mass movements on the advent of Gandhi. In their view, successive doses of constitutional reform were the medicine which revitalized the otherwise languishing all India politics in

each stage: the Montford reforms precipitated the Non- Cooperation movement, the Simon Commission provoked the Civil Disobedience Movement, and the Cripps Mission brought on the Quit India Movement. Whenever government proposed any reform at the centre which would affect the sharing of patronage in the locality, the politicians establish it necessary to be active in the new national arena of politics. As Gordon Johnson puts it, There is no easy chronological growth of nationalism in India: nationalist action booms and slumps in stage with the national action of the government.’

Check your Progress

1. Review the characteristics of the Cambridge Interpretation.

4.2.3 THE SKEPTICISM OF THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL

What *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume V, Historiography* has recognized as the Cambridge School ‘questioning the nationalist pretensions of the Congress movement’ is marked above all by its skeptical tone towards Indian Nationalism. Behind the skepticism lay an assumption in relation to the politics in common. Politics is in relation to the individual’s search for power, patronage and possessions. It is not a reflection of social sentiment or economic location, but a separate arena of action which possesses its own laws. Disputing the assumption that class, societies or castes supplied the foundation for political organisation, D.A. Wash brook claimed that in the pursuit of power some men would do anything to obtain their goal. Power is wanted for its own sake. The vital concern of the politicians is power, office and lay rather than a wish to change society, particularly in a society like that of the Madras Presidency where wealth was concentrated in a few hands and where no significant person wanted to change this scheme of things. In order to set up power, politicians needed the support of several interests, classes and societies. Merchants, landlords, lawyers, Brahmans, untouchables, Hindus, Muslims, in information all types of people were perfectly prepared to work with one another to obtain the general goal – power. The pure skepticism of this view allows little room for any fundamental social and economic conflicts of a common character. Above all, the Cambridge School denies any deep-seated contradiction flanked by imperial rule and its native subjects.

Imperialism did not really manage the vast and diverse subcontinent, and its subjects, who were concerned for the mainly part with local issues, did not really oppose it. As Anil Seal had earlier pronounced in *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, Indians competed with one another, and collaborated with their British rulers. He now went further and observed in the

introduction to *Locality, Province and Nation* that it was no longer credible to write in relation to a nationalist movement grounded in general aims, led by men with similar backgrounds, and recruited from widening groups with compatible interests. That movement seemed to him a ramshackle coalition throughout its extensive career. Its unity appears a figment. Its power appears as hollow as that of the imperial power it was supposedly demanding. Its history was the rivalry flanked by Indian and Indian, its connection with imperialism that of the mutual clinging of two unsteady men of straw. Consequently, it now appears impossible to organize contemporary Indian history approximately the old notions of imperialism and nationalism’.

This is a skeptical view of Indian nationalism in scrupulous and of politics in common. The Cambridge School follows a purely political approach to the revise of Indian politics, setting aside the inputs of economics or sociology. In this approach, the individual behaves in politics, as does the man in the market. One seeks power, the other seeks profit and both are guided by self-interest.

Check your Progress

1. Assess the skepticism of the Cambridge School.

4.2.4 THE END OF THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL

John Gallagher, Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History in Cambridge University, died, in 1980. In his memory the Cambridge group brought out a collection of essays: Christopher Baker, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal, *Power, Profit and Politics: Essays on Imperialism, Nationalism and Change in Twentieth Century Politics*. In the middle of other essays it incorporated a joint article by Ayesha Jalal and Anil Seal entitled Alternative to Partition: Muslim Politics flanked by the Wars, which stimulated rethinking in relation to the partition, and later led to a path breaking book by Ayesha Jalal entitled *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim league and the Demand for Pakistan*, wherein she showed that a confederation with Muslim consent had been a very real possibility and an alternative to Partition. But *Power, Profit and Politics* was the last communal statement of the Cambridge School. After that the group ceased to exist and the individual authors went their individual methods. Under Anil Seal’s supervision, Ayesha Jalal wrote *The Sole Spokesman*, and Joya Chatterji wrote *Bengal Divided; Hindu Communalism and Partition 1932-47*, but these were individual’s works and not part of a communal.

Another communal, *Subaltern Studies*, claimed public attention in 1982. It was critical of the Cambridge School, but in some compliments, there was

a parallel. The Subalternists, too, denied the importance of class division in politics, and they gave primacy to power dealings rather than class dealings. From the angle of power, they set separately the elite from the subalterns, and accused the nationalist elite of collaboration with imperialism. They, too, went back to the locality in their search for the roots of subaltern politics. There was an echo of Cambridge here. All in all, the Cambridge School left a visible trail in Indian historiography.

Check your Progress

1. Explain the end of the Cambridge School.

4.3 SUBALTERN SCHOOL: BEGINNING OF THE THOUGHT

The *Subaltern Studies* was proclaimed by its adherents as a new school in the field of Indian history-writing. Some of the historians associated with it declared it to be a sharp break in the custom of Indian historiography. A group of writers dissatisfied with the convention of Indian history-writing became part of the communal and contributed for the volumes. It, though, also involved historians and other social scientists not formally associated with the subaltern communal. Besides the articles published in the volumes of *Subaltern Studies*, these writers also wrote for several other journals and edited volumes as well as published monographs which are today associated with subaltern themes and methodology. Starting the venture with the help of those whom Ranajit Guha termed as ‘marginalized academics’, the *Subaltern Studies* soon acquired vast reputation both inside and outside India for the views they professed as well as for rigorous research on subaltern themes. Initially planned as a series of three volumes, it has now become an ongoing project with eleven volumes in print till date. Separately from these volumes, Ranajit Guha has also edited one volume of essays taken from the several earlier volumes for the international audiences. In some of the recent volumes the *Subaltern Studies* has incorporated themes from non-Indian Third World countries also.

The term ‘subaltern’ has a rather extensive history. It was initially applied to the serfs and peasants in England throughout the Middle Ages. Later, by 1700, it was used for the subordinate ranks in the military. It, though, gained wide currency in scholarly circles after the works of Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), an Italian Marxist and Communist Party leader. Gramsci usually used the term in a broader connotation of ‘class’ to avoid the censorship of the prison authorities as he was in jail and his writings were scanned. Gramsci had adopted the term to refer to the subordinate groups in

the society. In his opinion, the history of the subaltern groups is approximately always related to that of the ruling groups. In addition, this history is usually ‘fragmentary and episodic’. Ranajit Guha, though, in the Preface to *Subaltern Studies I*, did not mention Gramsci’s use of the term, even though he referred to Gramsci as an inspiration. Instead, he defined it as given in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*:

‘The word ‘subaltern’ in the title stands for the meaning as given in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, that is, ‘of inferior rank’. It will be used in these pages as a name for the common attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in conditions of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other method.’

A little later, at the end of his opening essay in the volume, he further clarified this term:

The conditions ‘people’ and ‘subaltern classes’ have been used synonymously throughout this note. The social groups and elements incorporated in this category symbolize the demographic variation flanked by the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the ‘elite’.

The Subaltern historians made a radical departure in the use of the term from that of Gramsci. Even while accepting the subordinated nature of the subaltern groups, they argued the history was autonomous from that of the dominant classes.

Check your Progress

1. Explain the beginning of the thought of the Subaltern School.

4.3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

Now there is a common and clear acknowledgement of basically two phases in the career of the Subaltern Studies. Stage I consist of:

- a) Concern with the subaltern, i.e., lower, exploited classes;
- b) Criticism of the elite, i.e., exploiting classes; and
- c) Power of Gramscian thought and Marxist social history and an effort to work within broader Marxist theory.

In the second stage, there is a clear shift from these concerns. Now:

- a) There is a rising engagement with textual analysis, a shift absent from exploring the history of the exploited people, and more engagement, even though critical, with elite discourses; and
- b) Marx and Gramsci are jettisoned in favor of Michel Foucault, Edward Said, and other postmodernists and post colonialists.

First Stage: Elite vs. Subaltern

The Subaltern Studies asserted itself as a radically new form of history-writing in the context of Indian history. It was initially conceived as a series of three volumes to be edited by its eldest protagonist and the prime mover of the thought, Ranajit Guha. The thought was seemingly informed by Gramscian thought. A deliberate effort was made to break from both the economic determinism of a diversity of Marxist theory as well as the elitism of bourgeois-nationalist and colonialist interpretations. A group of writers likewise dissatisfied with the convention of Indian historiography joined the communal and contributed essays for the volumes. It, though, also involved historians and other social scientists not formally associated with the subaltern communal.

Although basically concerned in relation to India, the *Subaltern Studies* project was first conceived in England by some Indian academics, Ranajit Guha being the principal motive force behind it. Right from the beginning it was set against approximately all existing traditions of Indian historiography. In what can be described as the manifesto of the project, Ranajit Guha, in a vein reminiscent of the opening row of *The Communist Manifesto* declared in the very first volume of the *Subaltern Studies*, that 'The historiography of Indian nationalism has for an extensive time been dominated by elitism – colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism.' Both kinds of historiography was said to derive from the ideological discourse of the British rule in India. Despite their differences, both shared sure things in general and the mainly significant of these was the absence of the politics of the people from their accounts. In his view, there was now an urgent requirement for setting the record straight by viewing the history from the point-of view of the subaltern classes. This standpoint as well as the politics of the people was crucial because it constituted an autonomous domain which 'neither originated from elite politics nor did its subsistence depend on the latter'. The people's politics differed from the elite politics in many crucial characteristics. For one, its roots lay in the traditional organisations of the people such as caste and kinship networks, tribal solidarity, territoriality, etc. Secondly, while elite mobilizations were vertical in nature, people's mobilizations were horizontal. Thirdly, whereas the elite mobilization was legalistic and pacific, the subaltern mobilization was relatively violent. Fourthly, the elite mobilization was more careful and controlled while the subaltern mobilization was more spontaneous.

The *Subaltern Studies* soon became the new 'history from below' which did not attempt to fuse the people's history with official nationalism. It, so, attracted the attention of the scholars who had become disenchanted with the nationalistic claims as embodied in the post-colonial state. Mainly influenced by Gramsci in its initial stage in trying to discover the radical consciousness of the dominated groups, it was pitted against the three main trends in Indian historiography – colonialist, which saw the colonial rule as the fulfillment of a mission to enlighten the ignorant people; nationalist, which visualized all the protest behaviors as parts of the creation of the nation-state; and Marxist, which subsumed the people's struggles under the progression towards revolution and a socialist state. The aim of the project was manifold:

- a) To illustrate the bourgeois and elite character of Congress nationalism which was said to restrain popular radicalism;
- b) To counter the attempts by several historians to incorporate the people's struggles in the grand narrative of Indian / Congress nationalism; and
- c) To reconstruct the subaltern consciousness and stress its autonomy. Considering the non-availability of evidences from subaltern sources, it was a hard task. To overcome this, the subaltern historians endeavored to extract their material from the official sources by reading them 'against the grain'.

Subaltern Studies was conceived in an atmosphere where Gramsci's thoughts were creation important impact. Eric Hobsbawm, Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall were incorporating Gramsci's thoughts into their works. Perry Anderson and Tom Nairn, on the other hand, were developing a favorable critique of Gramsci. Other powers were that of the new social history, written by Western Marxist historians such as Henri Lefebvre, Christopher Hill, E. P. Thompson, Eugene Genovese and others, who emphasized the necessity for considering people's point of view. Therefore, the objective of the *Subaltern Studies* was proclaimed to 'promote a systematic and informed discussion of subaltern themes in the field of South Asian studies and therefore help to rectify the elitist bias feature of much research and academic work in this scrupulous region'. Guha, in the Preface to vol. III, stated that what brought the subaltern historians jointly was 'a critical idiom general to them all – an idiom self-consciously and systematically critical of elitism in the field of South Asian studies'. He further asserted that it was in the opposition to this elitism that the unity of the subaltern project laid:

'We are indeed opposed to much of the prevailing academic practice in historiography and the social sciences for its failure to acknowledge the subaltern as the maker of his own destiny. This critique lies at the very heart of our project. There is no method in which it can express itself other than as an adversary of that elitist paradigm which is so well entrenched in South Asian studies. Negativity is so the very *raison d'etre* as well as the constitutive principle of our project.'

On the political face, the international and national scenes of the late 1960s and early 1970s had become radicalized and questions were being raised on the recognized and conventional thoughts. The conventional political parties, from the Right to the Left, came for criticism and much emphasis was placed on the non-conventional political formations and behaviors.

The Subaltern historians, disenchanted with the Congress nationalism and its embodiment in the Indian state, rejected the thesis that popular mobilization was the result of either economic circumstances or initiatives from the top. They claimed to have exposed a popular domain which was autonomous. Its autonomy was rooted in circumstances of use and its politics was opposed to the elites. This domain of the subaltern was defined by perpetual resistance and rebellion against the elite. The subaltern historians also attributed a common unity to this domain clubbing jointly a diversity of heterogeneous groups such as tribals, peasants, proletariat and, occasionally, the middle classes as well. Moreover, this domain was said to be approximately totally uninfluenced by the elite politics and to possess a self-governing, self-generating dynamics. The charismatic leadership was no longer viewed as the chief force behind a movement. It was instead the people's interpretation of such charisma which acquired prominence in analysis of a movement or rebellion.

Shahid Amin's revise of the popular perception of Mahatma Gandhi is a revealing instance. In his article, 'Gandhi as Mahatma', deriving evidences from Gorakhpur district in eastern UP, he shows that the popular perception and actions were totally at variance with the Congress leaders' perception of Mahatma. Although the mechanism of spread of the Mahatma's message was 'rumors', there was an whole philosophy of economy and politics behind it – the need to become a good human being, to provide up drinking, gambling and violence, to take up spinning and to uphold communal harmony. The stories which circulated also emphasized the magical powers of Mahatma and his capability to reward or punish those who obeyed or disobeyed him. On the other hand, the Mahatma's name and his supposed magical powers were also used to reinforce as well as set up caste hierarchies, to create the debtors pay and to boost the cow protection movement. All these popular interpretations of the Mahatma's messages reached their climax throughout the Chauri Chaura incidents in 1922 when his name was invoked to burn the police post, to kill the policemen and to loot the market. Earlier historians were criticized not only for ignoring the popular initiative but, equally seriously, accepting the official characterization of the rebel and the rebellion. Ranajit Guha, in his article 'The Prose of Counter-Insurgency', launched a scathing attack on the existing peasant and tribal histories in India for considering the peasant rebellions as 'purely spontaneous and unpremeditated affairs' and for ignoring consciousness of the rebels themselves. In his opinion, 'Historiography has been content to deal with the peasant rebel merely as an empirical person or member of a class, but not as an entity whose will and cause constituted the praxis described rebellion. The omission is indeed dyed into mainly narratives by metaphors assimilating peasant revolts to

natural phenomena: they break out like thunder storms, heave like earthquakes, spread like wildfires, infect like epidemics.'

He accused all the accounts of rebellions, starting with the immediate official reports to the histories written by the left radicals, of writing the texts of counter-insurgency which refused 'to acknowledge the insurgent as the subject of his own history'. Gyan Pandey, in 'Peasant Revolt and Indian Nationalism, 1919-1922', argued that peasant movement in Awadh arose before and independently of the Non-cooperation movement and the peasants' understanding of the local power structure and its alliance with colonial power was more advanced than that of the urban leaders, including the Congress. Moreover, the peasant militancy was reduced wherever the Congress organisation was stronger.

In Stephen Henningham's explanation of the 'Quit India in Bihar and the Eastern United Provinces', the elite and the subaltern domains were clearly defined and separate from each other. Therefore, 'the great revolt of 1942 consisted of an elite nationalist uprising combined with a subaltern rebellion'. Their motives and demands were also dissimilar:

'Those occupied in the elite nationalist uprising sought to protest against government repression of Congress and to demand the granting of independence to India. In contrast, those involved in the subaltern rebellion acted in pursuit of relief from privation and in protest against the misery in which they establish themselves.'

He further contends that it was this dual character of the revolt which led to its suppression. David Hardiman, in his numerous articles, focused on subaltern themes and argued that whether it was the tribal assertion in South Gujarat, or the Bhil movement in Eastern Gujarat, or the radicalism of the agricultural workers throughout the Civil Disobedience Movement, there was a self-governing politics of the subaltern classes against the elites. Likewise, Sumit Sarkar, in 'The Circumstances and Nature of Subaltern Militancy', argued the Non-cooperation movement in Bengal 'revealed a picture of masses outstripping leaders'. He stated that the term 'subaltern' could refer to basically three social groups: 'tribal and low-caste agricultural labourers and share-croppers; landholding peasants, usually of intermediate caste-status in Bengal; and labour in plantations, mines and industries.' These groups might have divisions in the middle of themselves and contain both the exploiters and exploited in their ranks. Though, he argued that:

'The subaltern groups so defined shaped a relatively autonomous political domain with specific characteristics and communal mentalities which need to be explored, and that this was a world separate from the domain of the elite politicians who in early twentieth century Bengal came overwhelmingly from high-caste educated professional groups linked with zamindari or intermediate tenure-holding'.

Therefore we see that in these and in several other essays in the earlier volumes, an effort was made to separate the elite and the subaltern domains and to set up the autonomy of subaltern consciousness and action. Although there were some notable exceptions, such as the writings of Partha

Chatterjee, this stage was usually characterized by emphasis on subaltern themes and autonomous subaltern consciousness.

Second Stage: Discourse Analysis

Over the years, there began a shift in the approach of the Subaltern Studies. The power of the postmodernist and post colonialist ideologies became more marked. While the emphasis on the subalterns may be associated with Guha, Pandey, Amin, Hardiman, Henningham, Sarkar and some others, the post colonialist powers were revealed in the works of Partha Chatterjee right from the beginning. His influential book, *Nationalist Thought and Colonial World*, applied the postcolonial framework of Edward Said which viewed the colonial power-knowledge as overwhelming and irresistible.

Such themes were also apparent in Chatterjee's articles in the volumes of the Subaltern Studies even earlier. His later book, *The Nation and its Fragments*, carries this analysis further. Several other writers in the Subaltern Studies slowly abandoned the earlier adherence to Marxism. There was a bifurcation of intellectual concerns in their ranks. While some of the Subaltern historians still stuck to the subaltern themes, a superior number began to write in post colonialist manners. Now there was a clear move from the research on economic and social issues to cultural matters, particularly the analysis of colonialist discourse.

Subalternity as a concept was also redefined. Earlier, it stood for the oppressed classes in opposition to the dominant classes both inside and outside. Later, it was conceptualized in opposition to colonialism, modernity and Enlightenment. The researched articles on themes concerned with subaltern groups decreased in number in later volumes. So, while in the first four volumes there were 20 essays on the subaltern classes like peasants and workers, in the next six volumes there were only five such essays. There was now a rising stress on textual analysis of colonial discourse. Consequently, the discourse analysis acquired precedence over research on subaltern themes. The earlier emphasis on the 'subaltern' now gave method to a focus on 'society'. Earlier the elite nationalism was stated to hijack the people's initiatives for its own project; now the whole project of nationalism was declared to be only a version of colonial discourse with its emphasis on centralization of movement, and later of the state. The thoughts of secularism and enlightenment rationalism were attacked and there began an emphasis on the 'fragments' and 'episodes'. There is also an effort to justify this shift and link it to the initial project. Therefore the editors of Vol. X of *Subaltern Studies* proclaim that 'Nothing – not elite practices, state policies, academic disciplines, literary texts, archival sources, language – was exempt from the effects of subalternity'. So, all the elite domains need to be explored as the legitimate subjects of Subaltern Studies.

Gyan Prakash has argued that since the Indian subalterns did not leave their own records, the 'history from below' approach in imitation of the Western model was not possible. So, the *Subaltern Studies* 'had to conceive the subaltern differently and write dissimilar histories'. According to him, it is

significant to see the ‘subalternity as a discursive effect’ which warrants ‘the reformulation of the notion of the subaltern’. Therefore, ‘Such reexaminations of South Asian history do not invoke –real subalterns, prior to discourse, in framing their critique. Placing subalterns in the labyrinth of discourse, they cannot claim an unmediated access to their reality. The actual subalterns and subalternity emerge flanked by the folds of the discourse, in its silences and blindness, and in its over determined pronouncements.’

The subalterns, so, cannot be represented as subjects as they are entangled in and created by the working of power. Dipesh Chakrabarty goes even further in denying a separate domain not only for the subaltern history, but the history of the Third World as a whole: ‘It is that insofar as the academic discourse of history – that is, “history” as a discourse produced at the institutional location of the university – is concerned, “Europe” remnants the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories, including the ones we call “Indian”, “Chinese”, “Kenyan”, and so on. There is a peculiar method in which all these other histories tend to become variations on a master narrative that could be described “the history of Europe”. In this sense, “Indian” history itself is in a location of subalternity: one can only articulate subaltern subject positions in the name of this history.’

The second stage of the *Subaltern Studies*, so, not only moves absent from the earlier emphasis on the exploration of the subaltern consciousness, it also questions the very ground of historical works as such, in row with the postmodernist thinking in the West.

Check your Progress

1. Review the development of the Project of the Subaltern School.

4.3.2 CRITIQUE

There has been wide-ranging criticism of the *Subaltern Studies* from several quarters. Right from the beginning the project has been critiqued by the Marxist, Nationalist and Cambridge School historians, besides those who

were not affiliated to any location. Approximately all positions it took, ranging from a search for autonomous subaltern domain to the later shift to discourse analysis, came under scrutiny and criticism. Some of the earlier critiques were published in the *Social Scientist*. In one of them, Javeed Alam criticized *Subaltern Studies* for its insistence on an autonomous domain of the subaltern. According to Alam, the autonomy of the subaltern politics is

predicated on perpetuity of rebellious action, on 'a constant tendency towards resistance and a propensity to rebellion on the part of the peasant masses'. Whether this autonomous action is positive or negative in its consequences is of not much concern to the subalternists:

'The historical direction of militancy is ... of secondary consideration. What is primary are the spontaneity and an internally situated self-generating momentum. Extending the implications of the inherent logic of such a theoretical construction, it is a matter of indifference if it leads to communal rioting or united anti-feudal actions that overcome the initial limitations.' In another essay, a review essay by Sangeeta Singh and others, Ranajit Guha was criticized for presenting a caricature of the spontaneous action by peasant rebels. In Guha's understanding, it was alleged, 'spontaneity is synonymous with reflexive action'. Since 'Spontaneity is action on the foundation of traditional consciousness', Guha's whole effort is said to 'rehabilitate spontaneity as a political way'. Moreover, Guha, in his assertion in relation to the centrality of religion in rebel's consciousness, approves the British official view which emphasizes the irrationality of the rebellion and absolves colonialism of playing any disruptive role in the rural and tribal social and economic structures. Ranjit Das Gupta points out that there is no precise definition of the subaltern domain. Moreover, the subaltern historians 'have tended to concentrate on moments of disagreement and protest, and in their writings the dialectics of collaboration and acquiescence on the part of the subalterns ... have by and big been underplayed'. The rigid distinction flanked by the elite and the subaltern, ignoring all other hierarchical formations, was criticized by others as well. David Ludden, in the Introduction to an edited volume, writes that:

'Even readers who applauded Subaltern Studies establish two characteristics troubling. First and foremost, the new substance of subalternity appeared only on the underside of a rigid theoretical barrier flanked by 'elite' and 'subaltern', which resembles a concrete slab separating upper and lower space in a two-storey structure. This hard dichotomy alienated subalternity from social histories that contain more than two storeys or which move in the middle of them... Second, because subaltern politics was confined theoretically to the lower storey, it could not threaten a political structure. This alienated subalternity from political histories of popular movements and alienated subaltern groups from organized, transformative politics....'

Rosalind O'Hanlon offers a comprehensive critique of earlier volumes of *Subaltern Studies* in her article 'Recovering the Subject'. She argues that, despite their claims of surpassing the earlier brands of history-writing, 'the manner in which the subaltern creates his appearance through the work of the contributors is in the form of the classic unitary self-constituting subject-agent of liberal humanism'. In the middle of the Subaltern historians, particularly in the writings of Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Stephen

Henningham and Sumit Sarkar, there is 'the tendency to attribute timeless primordiality' to the 'communal traditions and civilization of subordinated groups'. She discovers essentialism at the core of the project 'arising from an assertion of an irreducibility and autonomy of experience, and an easy-minded voluntarism deriving from the insistence upon a capability for self-determination'. This leads to idealism, particularly 'in Guha's drive to posit originary autonomy in the traditions of peasant insurgency. He does at times appear to be approaching a pure Hegelianism'.

Christopher Bayly, in 'Rallying approximately the Subaltern', questions the project's claim to originality. According to him, the Subaltern historians have not made use of 'new statistical material and indigenous records' which could substantiate their claim of writing a new history. Their main contribution appears to be re-reading the official records and 'mounting an internal critique'. Therefore, the only distinguishing spot which separates the Subaltern Studies from the earlier and modern 'history from below' is 'a rhetorical device, the term 'subaltern' itself, and a populist idiom'. Bayly thinks that 'the greatest weakness of the Subaltern orientation' is that 'it tends to frustrate the writing of rounded history as effectively as did-elitism'.

Sumit Sarkar, who was earlier associated with the project, later on criticized it for moving towards post colonialism. In his two essays, 'The Decline of the Subaltern in Subaltern Studies' and 'Orientalism Revisited', he argues that this shift may have been occasioned due to several reasons, but, intellectually, there is an 'effort to have the best of both worlds: critiquing others for essentialism, teleology and related sins, while claiming a special immunity from doing the similar oneself.' Moreover, such works in Indian history have not produced any spectacular results. In information, 'the critique of colonial discourse, despite vast claims to total originality, quite often is no more than a restatement in new language of old nationalist positions – and fairly crude restatements, at that.' The later subaltern project became some sort of 'Third World nationalism, followed by post modernistic valorizations of 'fragments'. In information, the later *Subaltern Studies* 'comes secure to positions of neo-traditionalist anti-modernism, notably advocated ... by Ashish Nandy'. Even earlier, according to Sarkar, there was a tendency 'towards essentialising the categories of 'subaltern' and 'autonomy', in the sense of assigning to them more or less absolute, fixed, decontextualised meanings and qualities'. Sarkar argues that there are several troubles with the histories produced by the subaltern writers and these arise due to their restrictive analytical frameworks, as Subaltern Studies swings from a rather easy emphasis on subaltern autonomy to an even more simplistic thesis of Western colonial cultural power'. Such criticism of the *Subaltern Studies* is still continuing and the Subaltern historians have responded to it with their own justification of the project and counter-attacks on critics.

Check your Progress

1. trace the critique of the Subaltern School.

4.4 SUMMARY

Historians in India, Marxist, liberal and subalternist sharply criticized the Cambridge School's skeptical views. They accused the Cambridge historians of 'Namierism, recalling that the Oxford historian Lewis Namier, too, had reduced Parliamentary politics in England to pure self-interest and power play. The several critical reviews in journals incorporated a trenchant attack by Tapan Raychaudhuri in the *Historical Journal*, Vol. XXII, 1979, entitled 'Indian Nationalism as Animal Politics'. Summing up the criticism in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Historiography* later, Raychaudhuri conceded that it would not be quite fair to dismiss the Cambridge School as a sophisticated restatement of the old colonial view which saw Indian nationalism as nothing but a masquerade concealing a cynical quest for material gain. Since British rule in India undoubtedly rested on the collaboration of some and the indifference of several, the exploration of this face of Indian politics by the Cambridge School has certainly enriched understanding by the whole procedure.' Raychaudhuri, though, is still critical of the view that genuine opposition to imperialism was no more than collaboration by other means' or that nationalism was a mere create-consider in the Indian case. In his view, the Cambridge interpretation takes no explanation of a pervasive feeling of humiliation, and the need for cultural self-assertion.

Looking back, it is possible to see that the Cambridge School provided historians of India with two useful insights, which they could not afford to ignore even if they were opposed to the in excess of-all tone of the interpretation. In the first lay, much politics was, and still is, by its nature local, and there, patron-client linkages cutting crossways caste, class and society were and still are an everyday truth. Secondly, in a diverse subcontinent where life was existed in so several localities, the tightening administrative constitutional structure of the Raj did undoubtedly make a political space for central and national concerns which allowed the nationalist movement, psychical and ideological in its origin, to gain momentum. Needless to say, nationalism cannot exist without a national arena of politics, and one consequence of British imperialism in India was the creation of an all-India stage in politics in excess of and above the local and local stages. Acute and sophisticated as the Cambridge interpretation of Indian nationalism is, it still, though, lacks the analytical framework for capturing the fleeting psychical dimension of society and nation.

The *Subaltern Studies* began in the early 1980s as a critique of the existing historiography which was accused by its initiators for ignoring the voice of the people. The writers associated with the project promised to offer a completely new kind of history in the field of Indian studies. Judging from the reactions from the scholars and students in the early years, it seemed to have fulfilled this promise to some extent. It soon received international recognition. In the early years, encompassing six volumes, edited by Ranajit Guha, the *Subaltern Studies* made efforts to explore the consciousness and actions of the oppressed groups in the Indian society. However, there was another trend discernible in some of the essays published in it. This trend was influenced by the increasingly important postmodernist and postcolonialist writings in the Western academic circles. In the later years, this trend came to dominate the works of the writers associated with the *Subaltern Studies*. This trend was marked by a shift from the earlier emphasis on the subaltern themes. Sometimes the scepticism became so extreme that it questioned the need for the writing of history itself.

4.5 QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by the 'Cambridge School'? Which historians are generally associated with it?
2. How did the Cambridge School emerge?
3. Discuss the basic constituents of Cambridge School interpretation of Indian history.
4. What do you understand by the term 'subaltern'? How did the *Subaltern Studies* begin in India?
5. What are the basic points of criticism directed towards the *Subaltern Studies*?
6. What is the response of the Subalternist historians?

4.6 ADDITIONAL READINGS

Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Anil Seal, 'Imperialism and Nationalism in India', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1973.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *Nationalist Movement in India: A Reader*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1983.

Bipan Chandra, "The Making of the Indian Nation: The Theoretical Perspective" in *Indica* (Journal of the Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture, Mumbai), March 2004.

Bipan Chandra, et al, *India's Struggle for Independence, 1857-1947*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 1988.

C.A. Bayly, *Origins of Nationality in South Asia: Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Chandra, Bipan, 'Nationalist Historians' Interpretations of the Indian National Movement', in S. Bhattacharya and Romila Thapar (eds.), *Situating Indian History*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990

John Hutchinson & Anthony D. Smith (ed.), *Nationalism*, Oxford, 1994.

Rajat Ray, 'Three Interpretations of Indian Nationalism', in B.R. Nanda (ed.), *Essays in Modern Indian History*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Subaltern Studies, 11 volumes (1982-2000).

David Ludden (ed.), *Reading Subaltern Studies : Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia* (Delhi, Permanent Black, 2001).

Vinayak Chaturvedi (ed.), *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (London and New York, Verso, 2000).

Vinay Lal, 'Walking with the Subalterns, Riding with the Academy : The Curious Ascendancy of Indian History', *Studies in History*, 17, 1 (2001).

Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History', in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986-1995* (Delhi, OUP, 1998).

Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography', *Nepantla : Views from South*, 1:1, 2000.

Gyanendra Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment', in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986-1995* (Delhi, OUP, 1998).

Gyan Prakash, 'Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism', *The American Historical Review*, December, 1994 (99, 5).



HISTORIOGRAPHY OF REVOLT OF 1857

Unit Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Historiography of Revolt Of 1857
- 5.3 Some Eminent Historians
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 Questions
- 5.6 Additional Readings

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, student should be able to;

1. Grasp the Historiography of Revolt of 1857.
2. Know the contribution of major historians of Revolt of 1857.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The revolts that took place on 10th of May, 1857 in Meerut and their marched to Delhi on 11th May and very soon the spread of the revoltss in Kanpur, Lucknow, Jhansi etc. have been called as “Sepoy Mutiny” by the colonial official and British colonial historians. But after a few decades of the revolt, perception of the historian like John. W. Kaye was different in nature. A remarkable turning point came out on the notion of the revolt in 1909 when V.D. Savarkar published his work and defined it as the Indian War of Independence. While the celebration of 100th anniversary of revolt has brought a large number of research and books on the topic by Joshi, Chaudhary and Sen etc. where they saw the revolt of 1857 into a new perspective. Then the new kinds of historiographies emerged by Mukherjee and Stokes in the late 20th century and works of Dalrymple, Yadav and Rajendran in early decades of 21st century presented the history of the revolt in the very new perspectives that had been never written by the early historians. In this unit, we highlight the issues and concept of historiography that had been done both in the colonial India and independent India.

5.2 HISTORIOGRAPHY OF REVOLT OF 1857

The causes, concept and the nature of the mutinies that took place at Meerut on 10th May 1857 and soon the sepoy of the Meerut cantonment reached to Delhi and proclaimed 80's year old Bahadur Shah Zafar as the

Badshah (king) of Hindustan, can not only be understood by the writings that had been produced in the 19th century and early 20th century, whether they are John Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War in India* or V.D. Savarkar's *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*. It is also not possible for us to understand and write the history of the revolts based on the readings of the text produced in the Independent India. If we must learn the things that exactly caused the revolt of 1857 and the circumstances and problems that the people of Indian sub-continent faced. To find the full history of the mutinies that had been occurred basically in Meerut, Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Jhansi and Jagdishpur etc., there is need to study all the writings that had been produced during and after the revolts, whether it was written by foreigners or Indians, in colonial India or Independent India. To hide the cause of the mutinies broke out in Meerut and its spread to Delhi, the British colonial official began to credit the grease cartridges which caused the breakout of the revolt in terms to save their religious beliefs. But very soon after the breakout of the mutinies, Syed Ahmad Khan (1817 - 1898) wrote a tract called '*The Causes of the Indian Revolt*' to counter this allegation, where he sought to examine the underlying features that determined the nature of 1857. The most serious dissenting voice was that of Karl Marx who linked the colonial exploitation of India to the anger that was displayed by the people during the Revolt. Marx and Engels hailed the unity displayed by the different religious communities who opposed British colonialism.

5.3 SOME EMINENT HISTORIANS

John W. Kaye

The most important books on the mutinies that had been written on the colonial point of view in the next decade of revolt is the work of John W. Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War in India*. In his book, Kaye has given a detailed analysis of the causes and the phases of the revolt that had been occurred during the revolts. He provides a detailed account of the background to the Upsurge, concentrating especially on the trials and tribulations of Awadh in the decade preceding the revolt. Kaye's work can be read at one level as a historiographical discourse on the exercise of colonial power over Indian society. The preface of Kaye's work directly shows that his work is written to highlight the history of the struggle between the colonizers and the colonized. He talks that this uprising was marked by the rising of Black man against the White man. But Shahid Amin in his review of John Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War in India* points out that "Kaye's history is not so much about the Black Man's rising as about the White Man's suppression of that uprising. It underlines the unity of his enterprises as one where the colonial masters are so completely the subject of Indian history that an account of the most important rebellion against them, can only be written up as the history of the English-under-fire."

V. D. Savarkar

By the end of the nineteenth century the 1857 Revolt attracted and inspired the first generation of the Indian nationalists. Thus, V. D. Savarkar, who

was perhaps the first Indian to write about the Revolt in 1909, called it The Indian War of Independence of 1857. His pro-nationalist stance made Savarkar reject the colonial assertion that linked the Revolt with the greased cartridges. As he put it, 'if this had been the issue it would be difficult to explain how it could attract Nana Sahib, the Emperor of Delhi, the Queen of Jhansi and Khan Bahadur Khan to join it.' Besides, he also focused on the fact that the Revolt continued even after the English Governor General had issued a proclamation to withdraw the offending greased bullets. Savarkar went ahead and connected the Revolt to the 'atrocities' committed by the British. At the same time, the importance he gave to religion illustrates the influence of the imperialist writers on him. Jyotirmaya Sharma in review of Savarkar's writings has pointed out that "Savarkar's account of 1857 has served to legitimise retributive violence in the name of Hindu nationalism. It is based on a conception of how the history of the "Hindu Rastra" ought to be written, while enunciating a model of politics based on the opposition between "friend" and "foe". A justification of revenge, retaliation and retribution was carefully built into Savarkar's retelling of 1857. For Savarkar, a massacre is a terrible thing that happens because humankind has failed to approximate the lofty ideals of natural justice, peace, parity and universal brotherhood. And he says that these kinds of humankind are largely absent in the rule and nature of the both the colonial rulers and their authority.

M.N.Roy and Rajni Palme Dutt

From the 1920s, efforts were made to analyse the Revolt from a Marxist position by pioneers like M.N.Roy (India in Transition, 1922) and Rajni Palme Dutt (India Today, 1940). Roy was rather dismissive about 1857 and saw in its failure the shattering of the last vestiges of feudal power. He was emphatic about the 'revolution of 1857' being a struggle between the worn-out feudal system and the newly introduced commercial capitalism, that aimed to achieve political supremacy. In contrast, Palme Dutt saw 1857 as a major peasant revolt, even though it had been led by the decaying feudal forces, fighting to get back their privileges and turn back the tide of foreign domination.

After the independence, the Govt. Of India had celebrated the 100th anniversary of the revolt of the 1857 and during and after the occasion many works were written to highlight the causes and the nature of the revolt in the different types of point of view. Some of the important works are of R.C. Majumdar's *The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857* (1957), S.B.Chaudhuri's *Civil Revolt in the Indian Mutinies, 1857-59*, (1957) and *Theories of the Indian Mutiny*, (1965), S.N. Sen's *Eighteen Fifty- Seven*, (1957), and, K.K. Datta's *Reflections on the Mutiny*, (1967). These historians were not uniformly comfortable with the idea that the 1857 Revolt was the 'First War of Indian Independence'. Moreover, they referred to ideas like nationalism that were supposedly witnessed during 1857 or saw the very inception of the national movement contained in the Revolt.

S.N. Sen

The most important and widely read work produced after the independence was S.N. Sen's *Eithteen Fifty- Seven* was written 1957. It was written by Sen when he received a request from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, then Education Minister. Azad felt that “time had now come to write a new and objective history of the movement of 1857.” So he commissioned S.N. Sen to write an “authentic account” based on “facts and facts alone.” After the publication of S.N. Sen's works, Azad's comments on the book shows Sen's writings had avoided “all appeal to passion or sentiment.” Sen followed in the footsteps of Kaye and treated the uprising in terms of administrative divisions or geographical regions. Rudrankshu Mukherjee points out that Sen has given a lot of time in his work to highlight the details of the events, but in order to highlight “the linkages which existed between the events and the activities of the rebels of one area with those of another Zone of the rebellion.” Whatever we study about the revolts, whatever we write about the causes of 1857, the last decision that many historians show that more or less the revolt of the 1857 was caused by the domination of the Company's colonial rule and the exploitation of the Indian people whether it might be the economic resources or social or cultural identities. But here in his book Sen did not link the revolt to the colonial domination and exploitation of India, and while he saw the British rule in India as the “agent of a social revolution” However, Sen's work had brought together an enormous amount of material within the compass in his single one volume and his book contains the most comprehensive bibliography on the subject of the revolt of the 1857. Till now his book has referred as the single textbook which has the enormous comprehensive details of the revolt by the common people or the historians.

Check your Progress:

1. Discuss the contribution of John W. Kaye, V. D. Savarkar, M.N.Roy, Rajni Palme Dutt and S. N. Sen to the Revolt of 1857 Historiography.

P.C. Joshi

Apart from Sen's writing, the writings of P.C. Joshi have focused on both the diversities and the specificities of the 1857 Revolt . This included assessing 1857 against the colonial backdrop, examining aspects of participation and focusing in a major way on the internal contradictions. His volume also sought to highlight dimensions of popular culture by incorporating folk poems that have survived.

In 1980's a new historiography came out to highlight the revolt of the 1857 produced by Eric Stokes.

He wrote a lot of essays on the concerned topic, but due to his death, his all works on the topic were brought in publication which edited by C.A. Bayly called *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857* (1986). Eric Stokes examined issues ranging from the way the nature of 1857 was conditioned by the background, the demographic and ecological features to the social composition and the role of the peasants, especially the 'rich' peasants. He in his "*Peasant Armed*" basically focused on the upper and central Doab and argued that "ruler political affiliation in the hour of crises" was related to British land-revenue policies and its impact on patterns of landholding in different regions. He has talked about the military dimension of the revolt of the 1857 and the operations headed by the British in order to suppress the mutinies. He then turns to the world of peasants and British administration, focusing his attention on the "swollen proprietary communities" which formed the recruiting base for the Bengal army. The most important thing should be talked is his description on the progress and failures of the rural revolts. But he did not try to highlight the social status of the '*purvi*' *sipahi* which was the phases of the recruitment and the situations they faced while they were in their duties. Here, it can be noted that social structure of the Bengal army was very effected by the policies of the Company which might have bring these *sipahi* into the thinking's for the mutinies.

Rudrangshu Mukherjee and Tapti Roy

However, the historians like Rudrangshu Mukherjee and Tapti Roy gave their focus on the popular level of the Revolt. Their effort was based on specific area studies such as Awadh and Bundelkhand that brought to light fascinating complexities of popular militancy that had remained ignored. The central thesis of Mukherjee's writings is advanced in a straight-forward fashion in the introductory chapter on agrarian relations in pre-annexation Awadh. He basically focusses on the 'well-knit relationship between lord and peasant' to illuminate the history of the revolt in Awadh by isolating the districts of Bahraich, Gonda, Fyzabad, Sultanpur, Partapgarh and parts of Rae Bareilly which, for him, are the core areas of 'peasant-talukdar interdependence and co-operation'. His works highlight the relationship between the landlords (talukdars) and the peasants and the mobilization of the peasants into the revolt because they were aware of the approaches of the colonial rule and its exploitation in India.

Michael H. Fisher in his book review point out as to how Mukherjee asserts that the revolt was the conflict in terms of "popular resistance" and concluded that people's essential aim was the "restoration" of the feudal order disputed by the British rather than any revolutionary movement by the subaltern classes. Tapti Rai's work on Bundelkhand shows the looking of larger area of Bundelkhand lying between Kanpur in east and Gwalior in west. Her works presented the history of the revolt by focusing on the

village level events and the condition of the common people effected by the Company's brule.

K.S.Singh

The historical writings on the revolt of the 1857 produced after the 1990's have focused on the popular dimensions of 1857. The scholars like K.S.Singh has highlighted the participation of Adivasis in the revolts of the 1857. He says that the tribal movements during the early parts of 19th century in terms of resistance, deferential, spontaneous, violent, led by tribal chiefs or other chiefs, aimed at overthrowing the colonial authority that destroyed the old system. Most of these characteristics were present in the uprising of the 1857.

However, important things are that the revolt of the 1857 represents possibly one of the most powerful and dramatic anti-colonial movements which united the peasants and the landed sections against the ruthless imperialist onslaught over the first half of the nineteenth century. At the same time, it also questioned the internal exploiters like the moneylenders and buniyas. 21st century historians have shifted their focus from the mutinous 'sepoys' and seeing in it the origins of Indian nationalism to studying the diversities of the Revolt both in terms of popular participation and regions affected by it as also highlighting the internal contradictions. Presently some historians are engaged in researching gender-related issues, which would undoubtedly enrich our understanding of the Revolt of 1857.

Check your Progress:

1. Discuss the contribution of P. C. Joshi, Eric Stokes, Rudrangshu Mukherjee, Tapti Roy and K. S. Singh to the Revolt of 1857 Historiography.

Prof Irfan Habib

Prof Irfan Habib, in his scholarly articles, recently published²⁵, categorized the Revolt of the sepoys of 1857 as the "largest anti-colonial uprising anywhere in the world in the 19th century". He argues that there were "over one hundred and twenty five thousand of Bengal

Army Sepoys going into armed Revolt". Citing a statistics of the numbers of sepoys, Prof Habib continues that "In terms of the percentage of the people inhabiting the rebellious territory involved, it consisted about thirty percent of the population of the territory of the present union of India".

thus "it was a major event in modern world history" Prof. Habib categorically explained the discontent of the Bengal Army during the Revolt. For more than eighteen years before the outbreak of the Revolt these sepoys were constantly engaged in continuous warfare for the British colonial expansion. "It was in the process of this expansion that the Bengal Army sepoys were continuously made cannon-fodder, to fight and die in battlefields from Crimea to China" The exhaustion of the Bengal Army in continuous warfare, deprivation in their service and day to day humiliation were the crucial factors for the Revolt of the sepoys. The introduction of the new Enfield Rifle added flame to the fire.

Prof. Rajat Roy

Prof. Rajat Roy has studied the mentality of 1857. In his book²⁸ Prof. Ray very comprehensively dealt with the mental attitude of the various sections of the rebels; whether sepoys or civilians, they joined the movement forgetting their religious differences which was unique in its character. Both the Hindus and Muslims came together to fight for a common cause against their common enemy-the British.

William Dalrymple

The coming of the new research on the topic of the revolt of 1857 during the 150th anniversary of the revolt produced a new kind of historiography on the topic. One of the most important works was William Dalrymple's *The Last Mughal*. Dalrymple has here written an account of the Indian mutiny such as it had never written before, of the events leading up to it and of its aftermath, seen through the prism of the last emperor's life. He has vividly described the street life of the Mughal capital in the days before the catastrophe happened, he has put his finger deftly on every crucial point in the story, which earlier historians have sometimes missed, and he has supplied some of the most informative footnotes that had been ignored by earlier historians.

Amar Farooqui

Amar Farooqui in his book review of *The Last Mughal* show this work of Dalrymple as "not so much a biography of Bahadurshah II, better known by his takhallus or pen-name 'Zafar', as a history of the revolt in Delhi... The real strength of the book is its portrayal of the everyday lives of various sections of the people of 'independent Delhi' during the hot summer months of 1857." In order to highlight the issues of the causes and nature of the revolt, he argues that till 1830's the colonial official and Indian elites could interact with meaningful way in terms of socially, culturally; they all eat food of both people, bear the cloths and live together in the colonies, but after 1840's these interaction came to be collapsed and distinction were made due to the interference of the colonial authority and its effect on the Indian society and culture.

Finally, we can also see the research that highlight the revolt of the 1857 in all India character that have been presented by the new kinds of research. The most development and advanced research on the causes and nature of

1857 have been presented during and after the celebration of 150th anniversary of the revolt in 2007. These new types of works based on the different perspectives have not only countered the colonial writings, but also oppose to accept the notion that the revolt of 1857 was only limited in the areas of Northern and Central India and some parts of Bihar.

K.C. Yadav

The works of K.C. Yadav highlight the participation of the people of Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh that had not been cited by any other historians before it. Even earlier there was notion created by the British Indian Empire that Punjab had been loyal. He cited a various serious sepoy mutiny at Ferozepur, Jullundur, Phillour, Jhelum, Sialkot, Thaneswar, Ambala, Sirsa, Lahore, Ferozepur, Peshawar, and Mianwali etc. where the people and the rulers of the princely states had broken out the mutinies.

N. Rajendran and Surendra Nath Sen

Apart from K.C. Yadav the works of N. Rajendran has surveyed the history of the revolt in new perspectives that shows the presence of the revolt in the areas of Tamilnadu and other parts of south India. He says that for colonial writers, "benighted Madras" was a "model Presidency" and even Surendra Nath Sen, in his work *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, says: "The Presidency of Madras remained unaffected all through, though some slight signs of restlessness were perceived in the army. The educated community unreservedly ranged itself on the side of law and order and condemned the rising in unambiguous terms." But he in his article has clearly shown as to how the areas of Madras, Arcot and Salem etc. were affected by the mutinies, but it is true that it was suppressed by the Company's armies very soon.

What have been delineated above illustrates the evolution of the historiography on the 1857 Revolt. Thus historiography has accorded its own interpretation to 1857-an interpretation that is changing even today-after hundred and fifty years.

Check your Progress:

1. Discuss the contribution of Prof Irfan Habib, Prof. Rajat Roy, William Dalrymple, Amar Farooqui , K.C. Yadav, N. Rajendran and Surendra Nath Sen to the Revolt of 1857 Historiography.

5.4 SUMMARY

In the 150th years of the revolt of 1857, a good number of seminars have been organized at different parts of the country to commemorate the great event through the lens of hundred and fifty years. Voluminous literature, articles, monographs have been published on the various aspects of the Revolt. A project has been taken by the Indian Council of Historical Research to prepare an exhaustive bibliography of the works on the Revolt of 1857. In the year 2006, the number of collections had exceeded eight hundred. No doubt, the Great Revolt of 1857 is a much-discussed event in our history. Even after 150 years, scholars are not unanimous with regard to the nature of the Revolt. There is scarcity of singularity in the interpretation and characterization of the uprising. This is partly because of the hypothetical proverb that "All history is contemporary history" and partly for the information mostly documented in the official records and for the historian's analysis of the matter from their own paradigmatic outlook. After Independence, archival documents, letters, especially Rebel's Proclamations, newspaper accounts have been published and are now accessible to scholars. Taken all the projections (as far as possible) on the subject, the present discourse will try to make a historiographical construction of the Great Revolt of 1857 in hundred- and fifty-years perspective.

5.5 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the contribution of John W. Kaye, V. D. Savarkar, M.N. Roy, Rajni Palme Dutt and S. N. Sen to the Revolt of 1857 Historiography.
2. Trace the contribution of P. C. Joshi, Eric Stokes, Rudrangshu Mukherjee, Tapti Roy and K. S. Singh to the Revolt of 1857 Historiography.
3. Review the contribution of Prof Irfan Habib, Prof. Rajat Roy, William Dalrymple, Amar Farooqui, K.C. Yadav, N. Rajendran and Surendra Nath Sen to the Revolt of 1857 Historiography.

5.6 ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The First War of Independence, 1857-1859*, Moscow, 1975.
2. J.W. Kaye, *Hisotry of the Sepoy War*, Vol. 2, 1910 (reprinted at New Delhi in 1988).
3. S.N. Sen, *Eighteen-Fifty-Seven*, New Delhi: Prakashan Division, 1957 and 1995.
4. Rudrangshu Mukherjee, Introduction to *Eighteen-Fifty-Seven* by S.N. Sen, New Delhi: Prakashan Division, 1957 and 1995.

5. Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt, 1857-58: A Study of Popular Resistance*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 1984.
6. Shahid Amin, English Domination, and Indian Subordination: A Reading of John Kaye's *Hisotry of the Sepoy War*, Vol. 2, 1910. Vol. II Nos. 7 & 8, July-August 1997.
7. V.D. Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, London, 1909.
8. K. S. Singh, "The 'Tribals' and the 1857 Uprising" in *Social Scientist*, Vol. 26, No. 1/4 (Jan. - Apr., 1998).
9. William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi 1857* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2006).
10. Amar Farooqui, Book Review of *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi 1857* by William Dalrymple, New Delhi: Penguin, 2006.

GROWTH OF WESTERN EDUCATION AND SOCIO RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Unit Structure

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Spread of Western education in India
- 6.3 Background of the Socio religious reform movements
- 6.4 The major issues of social inequalities were as follows
- 6.5 Raja Rajmohan Roy and Brahma Samaj
- 6.6 Satyashodhak Samaj
- 6.7 Prarthana Samaj
- 6.8 Arya Samaj
- 6.9 Theosophical society of India
- 6.10 Aligarh Movement
- 6.11. Conclusion
- 6.12 Questions
- 6.13 Reference

Objectives:

- To understand the circumstances which led to the spread of western education in India.
- Identify some common characteristics of religious and social reform movement.
- Explain the role played by Raja Rammohan Roy and his Brahma Samaj in bringing about religious reforms.
- Recognise the Prarthana Samaj as an institution that worked for religious as well as social reforms.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of an old civilization, Indian society has gone through several periods. In India, the seeds of civilisation were sowed throughout the Vedic period. The emergence of complex philosophy, religion, astrology, science, and medicine characterised Indian civilisations. Many underlying social difficulties existed in the highly praised Indian society, which hampered social growth. These concerns were highlighted in the 19th century with the formation of modern Indian socio-political ideologies, and efforts were undertaken to correct societal imbalances. Individual social reformers made such attempts, as well as social reform movements as a whole.

Contemporary western culture, reformation, and renaissance movements all contributed to the social struggle against numerous socioeconomic

injustices. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, M.G. Ranade, Jyotibha Phule, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Dadabhai Naoroji, and others were among the pioneers in this field.

6.2 SPREAD OF WESTERN EDUCATION IN INDIA

Pre-colonial Indian education is well-known. Gurukulas and Patashalas promoted Hindu education, while Madarasas and Makhtabs promoted Muslim education. By the time the British came as traders in India, Persian had become the court language, and both Hindus and Muslims, regardless of creed, studied Persian to work for the kings of pre-colonial India.

Then there were the traditional schools which taught linguistic competence through oral tradition and text memorization. Only in 1813 did the British have geographical and political capacity to meddle in education. After 1813, a few Indians helped the British colonial rulers bring the western education system to India.

It was a point of conflict between Indians and British, known as Orientalists and Anglophiles, over Indian education. This policy of non-intervention in indigenous people's religion and culture lasted over half a century. Eventually, under pressure from many parties Christian missionaries, liberals, Utilitarian's, and Anglicists the British gave in and agreed to expand Western education. The educational objective is also seen to legitimise British colonial control.

The promotion of oriental study was certainly supported by some British figures such as Warren Hastings (1781), Jonathan Duncan (1791), and William James (1784). Because of this great debate, Anglicists were able to introduce the Western educational system to India. A general commission of public instruction was established in 1823 to govern education in India.

"The great object of the British government in India is henceforth to be the promotion of European literature and science among natives of India, and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone," Macaulay, the president of the General Committee of Public Instruction, and Lord Bentinck overrode the orientalist viewpoint and declared, "The great object of the British government in India is henceforth to be the promotion of European literature and science among natives of India, and that all the In addition to Macaulay and William Benting, Charles Grant and William Wilberforce should be noted in this regard.

In 1835, William Bentinck said that English would take the place of Persian as the court language, that English literature would be made more affordable, that more resources would be dedicated to English education, and that spending on oriental studies would be reduced. Lord Auckland, who succeeded Bentinck as Governor-General, continued to encourage English study by founding English colleges at Dacca, Patna, Banaras, Allahabad, Agra, Delhi, and Bareilly.

In 1841, the General Committee of Public Instruction was dissolved and replaced with a council of education. Another watershed milestone in the growth of Western education occurred with the publication of Wood's Dispatch in 1854. "The education we aim to see spread in India is one that is dedicated to the transfer of Europe's superior arts, sciences, philosophy, and literature, or, in a nutshell, European knowledge," the Dispatch declares unequivocally.

The Woods Dispatch served as a paradigm for India's future educational growth. Christian missionaries and others took a significant interest in Western education in India, in addition to government backing. David Hare and others helped to create the Hindu College, which was subsequently renamed Presidency College in Calcutta, which aided in the advancement of secular learning among Hindus. Women's education gained widespread support, in addition to Western education. The similar pattern of education promotion can be seen in the Bombay and Madras presidencies as well.

As a result of this, a new spirit of reason and critical thinking among Indians emerged, fostering self-rule and self-reliance. It is erroneous to blame Western education for the above process, although it did help raise awareness of colonial economic exploitation.

As the Western educational system extended over Indian culture in the late nineteenth century, new conceptions of reason, justice, and welfare started to shape educated Indians' thoughts. As Western education expanded and the British East India Company transitioned from trader-conqueror to ruler, a middle-class professional elite arose to support British colonial and imperial interests. Western education also supported numerous social and religious reform initiatives in nineteenth-century India.

6.3 BACKGROUND OF THE SOCIO RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTS

Beginning in the late 19th century, some European and Indian scholars began studying ancient Indian history. As understanding of India's historic glory spread, so did pride in Indian civilisation. It also helped religious and social reformers resist harsh practises, superstitions, and the like.

They fought against caste and untouchability, as well as sati, child marriage, socioeconomic inequality, and illiteracy. Some of these reformers received direct or indirect assistance from British officials, and some supported British reform programmes and legislation.

6.4 THE MAJOR ISSUES OF SOCIAL INEQUALITIES WERE AS FOLLOWS

- i. **Caste Issue:** Casteism has always been a barrier to Hindu society's cohesiveness. The subjugation of disadvantaged castes resulted from the transition of the ancient movable varna system into a rigid social order. Upper-caste hegemony, disputes, and caste violence have

always existed in Indian society. Thus, caste inequality was a big concern in the nineteenth century.

- ii. **Sati System:** Sati (Widows' Self-immolation) deprived women the right to life after their husbands died. Raja Ram Mohan embarked on a campaign against this practise and battled for the rights of women. In 1829, it was disbanded.
- iii. **Widow remarriage:** In Indian society, the refusal to allow widow remarriages was a rejection of gender equality. It was considered a sin for widows to remarry since Hindu customs held marriage to be holy. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was a staunch supporter of widow remarriage. His efforts resulted in the Widow Remarriage Act (1856).
- iv. **Illiteracy:** The denial of education to the poor or lower castes, particularly women, was a major source of social injustice. For generations, it has resulted in the exploitation of weaker sections. As a result, social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy pushed for universal access to contemporary scientific education.
- v. **Child marriage and infanticide:** Both of these behaviours were common in Indian civilization. Children were denied the right to choose their life partners since they were married at a young . While infanticide denied a kid's right to life, it had a significant impact on a female child.
- vi. **Economic exploitation of the poor:** Agriculture has always been India's primary occupation. However, the people's right to make a living was denied by the feudal framework in the form of landlordism. Revenue demands were raised at the landlord's discretion. It caused inconvenience to tenants, reducing them to enslaved labour agriculture and starvation.
- vii. **Untouchability:** For millennia, the notion of filth and cleanliness prevailed in India, denying the so-called lower castes the right to a dignified existence.

The following are examples of how the practise manifested itself:

- (a) Entry to stores, public restaurants, hotels, and public entertainment venues was denied.
- (b) Refusal to use a well, a tank, a bathing ghat, a road, or a public location.
- (c) Refusal of inter-caste marriages and sharing of public religious spaces, among other things.

Article 17 of the Indian constitution made untouchability illegal after independence. The current upheaval in Indian social and political philosophy may be traced back to Raja Ram Mohan Roy. There was no other prominent social or political thinker in India for over a century but Ram Mohan. Ram Mohan was aware that the Indian elite, inspired by

Western ideals of social liberty and equality, believed that the same liberty and equality should be established in Indian society. As a result, Ram Mohan spoke out against the exploitation of the lower classes, notably women and untouchables. Through the implementation of new social laws, he worked tirelessly to eliminate their impairments and bring about not just social but also political reforms. After Ram Mohan, the India saw another wave of social and political transformations in the 18th century. Keshab Chandra Sen, Dayananda, Annie Besant, and Ramakrishna Paramhansa were among the significant contributions to this movement. From the second part of the 18th century until the beginning of the 19th century.

6.5 RAJA RAJMOHAN ROY AND BRAHMO SAMAJ

Religious and social changes initiated this awakening, which expanded across the country's social, economic, cultural, and political life. European and Indian researchers began exploring ancient Indian philosophy, science, religion, and literature in the late 18th century. This instilled a sense of pride in the Indian culture.

Reformers relied on the authority of ancient literature to put a stop to societal difficulties, superstitions, and harmful practises and traditions. Rather of simply believing, they provided evidence. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was possibly born in Bengal in 1772. In Banaras, he learned Sanskrit; in Patna, he studied Arabic and Persian. He subsequently studied English, Greek, and Hebrew. He was fluent in French and Latin. He conducted in-depth studies of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

He was a multilingual author, having written in Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian, and English.

He began publishing two newspapers, one in Bengali and another in Persian. He was appointed envoy to England by the Mughal Emperor and given the name Raja. He arrived in 1831 and died in 1833 in England. He believed that English education would lead to enlightenment and development and scientific knowledge. He was a staunch supporter of journalistic freedom and fought tirelessly to eliminate constraints.

Ram Mohan Roy thought that the greatest approach to cleanse the Hindu religion of its flaws was to educate the populace about its ancient teachings. As a result, he embarked on the task of translating the Vedas and Upanishads into Bengali. He suggested a universal religion predicated on the existence of a supreme God. He was a staunch opponent of idol worship, ceremonies, and rituals. He established the Brahma Sabha, India's first prominent religious reform organisation, in 1828. It prohibited idol worship as well as superfluous rites and rituals. Additionally, the Samaj outlawed criticising any faith.

The elimination of Sati in 1829 was a watershed moment in social development. He'd witnessed his elder brother's wife shove Sati. His conflict with Sati infuriated orthodox Hindus, who condemned him brutally. Sati was identified by Ram Mohan Roy to be a result of Hindu women's inferiority. He fought for the abolition of polygamy, the education of

women, and the right to inherit. The Brahma Samaj's influence grew throughout the country, and it today has branches in every state. Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen were the Brahma Samaj's leaders. Keshab Chandra Sen travelled across the Madras and Bombay presidencies, as well as northern India, on behalf of the Brahma Samaj.

In 1866, the Brahma Samaj split when Keshab Chandra Sen and his followers professed beliefs in opposition to the founders. They proclaimed their independence from caste, tradition, and Hindu literary authority. They promoted inter-caste marriages and widow remarriages, attacked caste differences, and condemned purdah. Additionally, they criticised the traditional Hindu hostility to sea travel, disregarded dietary constraints, and dedicated their lives to the propagation of knowledge. This campaign was essential in igniting reform movements across the country. While this group grew in power, the influence of the other group waned.

6.6 SATYASHODHAK SAMAJ

The Satya Shodhak samaj was established with the purpose of educating the lower classes. This organisation became a vehicle to teach scheduled castes and tribes about the exploitative history of the society. It was formed in 1873 by Jyotirao Phule.

Jyotirao wrote and campaigned against the caste system and the Brahmins' dominant status. He criticised religious unfairness, rigidity, exploitation, blind and deceitful rituals, and prevalent sexist beliefs in Hinduism in his writings and actions.

Jyotirao Phule founded the Satya Shodhak Samaj with a number of objectives in mind, including human welfare, happiness, togetherness, equality, and fundamental religious convictions. Their persecution was motivated by their conviction that they were God's messengers and the intermediary between humanity and the divine. They were contemptuous of the Upanishads, Vedic culture, and Hindu way of life. After Phule's death, Shahu Maharaj, the Maratha king of Kolhapur, resumed the endeavour. Following him were Maratha leaders such as Keshavrao Jedhe and Nana Patil.

6.7 THE PRARTHANA SAMAJ

The Prarthna Samaj was a Hindu reform movement in Bombay during the early nineteenth century. As with the more famous Brahma Samaj, it was most powerful in and around India's Maharashtra state. The society's early objectives included the abolition of child marriage, the introduction of widow remarriage, the promotion of female education, and the eradication of caste.

The Paramahansa Sabha (1849) in Bombay was a hidden club for debate, hymn singing, and shared meals served by a low-caste chef. The Bharatvarshiya Brahma Samaj was created in 1864 during a visit to Bombay by founder Keshab Chunder Sen. Unlike the Brahma Samaj in Calcutta, the

Prarthana Samaj did not press members to abandon caste, idol worship, or other religious practises. M.G. Ranade (1842–1901), a distinguished social reformer and judge, and R.G. Bhandarkar (1837–1925), a renowned Sanskrit scholar, were early pioneers of the movement.

The Prarthana Samaj sponsored study groups, published a journal, operated working-class night schools, provided free libraries, organised women's and student organisations, and operated an orphanage. At the turn of the century, its members also founded the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India and the National Social Conference. As with the Brahmo and Arya Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj restored Hindu dignity, which supported the emergence of Indian nationalism and finally resulted in political independence.

6.8 ARYA SAMAJ

Dayananda Sarasvati created the Arya Samaj in 1875 to restore the Vedas as revealed truth. He believed that all post-Vedic philosophy was degenerate, despite the fact that he assimilated it into his own knowledge. Additionally, in this organisation there was hostility to child marriage, pilgrimages, the domination of priests, and temples in public life. Additionally, the Arya Samaj condemned the establishment of caste based on birth rather than merit. All of the following are defended: the sacred cow, samskaras (individual sacraments), the effectiveness of Vedic oblations to fire, and social reform ideals. It has established missions, orphanages, and widows' homes, as well as a network of schools and universities, as well as offered famine relief and medical assistance. It was essential in the early development of Indian nationalism. It has been criticised for its animosity against both Christianity and Islam.

6.9 THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA

It was founded in 1875 by Madam Blavatsky and Col. Henry Olcott in New York. The founders arrived in India in January 1879 and set up their centre in Adyar, near Madras. Ancient Hinduism was considered the world's most spiritual religion by the Theosophical Society. Theosophy was a Hindu spiritual system that encompassed Karma and soul transmigration. Theosophical Society beliefs straddled religion, philosophy, and occultism. It emphasised human brotherhood regardless of caste, creed, colour, or sex. It made Indians proud of their heritage. Famous European Theosophists like Annie Besant declared India's cultural primacy and sparked Indian nationalism amid arrogant white supremacy claims and denunciations of Hinduism.

The Theosophical Society did well in the field of education. Its most successful endeavour was the Central Hindu College in Varanasi in 1898. The Society developed schools for boys, girls, and the underprivileged. Abolition of caste, upliftment of depressed section of society, and better conditions for widows were all goals of the Society. The Theosophical Society aided "Indian awakening and self-respect."

6.10 ALIGARH UPRISING

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, a notable Muslim scholar, writer, and leader, led the Aligarh Movement to better the social, economic, and political circumstances of Muslims on the Indian subcontinent. The Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental School was founded in 1875 in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India. After two years, the government declared the institution a college. Sir Syed seized this chance to educate the students of this college in both English and Arabic.

The Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College became a scholarly hub for Muslims.

a. The Aligarh Movement's aims

The leaders of Aligarh Movement wanted to achieve the following:

- i. To promote modern education among Muslims while helping them to overcome related superstitions.
- ii. To keep Muslims out of agitational anti-British politics.
- iii. Improve the social, economic, and political status of Muslims in India.

6.11 CONCLUSION

As a result of spread of western education and socio religious reform movements various reformatory bills were passed. Widow remarriage was made possible in 1856, and various other legislative measures were taken to help widows. 1860 legislation raised the female marriageable age to ten.

Inter-caste and inter-communal marriages were lawful in 1872. Juvenile marriage ban was introduced in 1929. After 1919, the Indian national movement became the main promoter of social change. To reach the public, reformers increasingly embraced Indian values. Aside from the press and public speeches in the 1930s, they used novels and plays to spread their beliefs.

Reformers and religious organisations worked hard to support ideals of women's education, prevent young children from marrying, remove women from purdah, promote monogamy and allow middle-class women to work or serve in the government. These initiatives led to Indian women playing an active in the country's struggle for Independence. As a result, many superstitions faded and society became much more progressive.

6.12 QUESTIONS

1. Examine the growth and development of western education system in India.
2. What role did Raja Ram Mohan Roy play in India's social reforms?
3. List Prathana Samaj's and the Theosophical Society's contributions towards social reforms in India.
4. Discuss Sayyid Ahmed Khan's efforts to rid the Muslim community of its ills.

6.13 REFERENCE

1. Grover B.L. and Grover S., A New Look At Modern Indian History, S. Chand, Delhi, 2001.
2. A. R. Desai, Social Background of Indian nationalism, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, 2005.
3. Bipin Chandra, History of Modern India, orient Blackswan, 2009.

BRITISH ECONOMIC POLICIES AND THEIR IMPACT

Unit Structure

7.1 Introduction

7.2 The first phase of British colonialism

7.3 The second phase of British colonialism (free trade)

7.4 The third phase of British colonialism

7.5 Conclusion

7.6 Questions

7.7 Reference

Objectives:

After studying the lesson, students will be able to:

- Delineate the three phases of British colonization in India.
- Comprehend the changes brought by colonial revenue settlements in the Indian countryside.
- Analyse the mixed impact of colonial capitalist innovations within the colony.
- Explain the 'drain of wealth' theory propounded by early nationalists and.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The relationship between Britain and her Indian colony was one of political subjugation, but economic exploitation was at its heart. This colonisation procedure was plainly designed to enrich the home nation, even at the expense of the colony. In this chapter, we will analyse the economic exploitation that occurred during the colonisation process.

Colonial exploitation occurred mostly in three stages. The initial phase of 'mercantilism' (1757-1813) was one of direct pillage, with surplus Indian resources utilised to purchase Indian finished products for sale to England. India was transformed into a source of raw materials and a market for British manufactured goods during the second phase of free trade (1813-1858). From 1858 onwards, the third phase was one of financial imperialism, in which British capital-controlled banks, international trade corporations, and controlling agencies in India. This staged exploitation was accomplished through a variety of economic measures, mainly in the colonial economy's industrial and agricultural sectors.

7.2 THE FIRST PHASE OF BRITISH COLONIALISM

Indian National Movement
(1857 CE to 1947 CE)

This 'First Phase' is commonly defined as the period from 1757, when the British East India Company obtained the authority to collect income from its possessions in the eastern and southern regions of the subcontinent, and 1813, when the Company's monopoly on commerce with India expired.

The British came to India in the seventeenth century solely as a commercial enterprise, sponsored by their queen, Elizabeth I, who granted them an exclusive royal licence to trade with India. They established their first 'factory' in Bengal on the banks of the Hughli River. The Company had obtained licences or 'Dastaks' from the Mughal emperor exempting it from duty on its commerce. This resulted in widespread corruption among the Company's personnel, since the 'Farman' was frequently misappropriated for their own private trade. Additionally, it resulted in significant financial losses for the Bengal rulers (later nawabs) due to customs taxes. This became a sensitive subject and was a major element in the 1757 Battle of Plassey. The British East India Company's principal job during this era was to purchase spices, cotton, and silk from India and sell them at a profit in Britain. This meant that vast amounts of bullion would be sent from the United Kingdom to India to pay for these commodities.

Despite attempts, it was impossible to locate British commodities suitable for trade in India in order to prevent the outflow of bullion. Apart from the expense on commodities, the Company spent a fortune on the battles it fought with other European nations over the same commodities. The Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French were among them. Thus, the Company's acquisition of the 'Diwani' (right to collect income) in Bengal during the Battle of Buxar, paved the door for the Company to generate funds for its expenditure in India.

i. Land revenue policies:

Following the gift of the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa to the East India Company in 1765, the British administration's principal purpose became maximisation of colonial income. Agricultural taxes were the company's primary source of revenue, as it was required to pay dividends to its British investors. As a result, the British administration conducted several land revenue experiments to accomplish this goal. Additionally, these experiments shaped the relationship between the colonial state and the people it controlled. In 1772, Warren Hastings, the Governor of Bengal, established a system of revenue farming in the province of Bengal. European District Collectors would 'farm' the right to collect taxes to the highest bidder under this scheme. This approach was a complete disaster and destroyed growers' livelihoods as a result of the arbitrary high-income requirements. Cornwallis developed the Permanent Settlement concept in 1793 to avert this calamity.

- a. **Permanent Settlement:** Under this system, 'zamindars,' who had previously been limited to tax collection, were appointed as proprietors or owners of land. The state's requirement for land revenue was set in stone. However, if zamindars are unable to pay the whole tax on time, the state was free to seize and auction their lands. The state attempted to establish a new class of landowners through this system, who would seek to enhance agricultural productivity on their fields in order to generate profits. Furthermore, dealing with a small number of zamindars would be easier for the state than dealing with every peasant, and a powerful segment of society would grow loyal to the British rule. However, this method exacerbated the tenant-poverty as a result of the heavy revenue assessment load. Additionally, it created significant difficulties for zamindars, many of whom were unable to pay the tax on time and thus lost their holdings. Numerous traditional zamindari families ceased to exist during this time. Additionally, the system promoted subinfeudation, or the existence of many levels of middlemen between the zamindar and cultivator, compounding the peasantry's troubles.
- b. **Ryotwari System:** Alexander Read established the Ryotwari System in 1792 for the Madras Presidency in order to eliminate middlemen from tax collection and allow the state to obtain a greater part of income. Later, it was adopted by the Bombay Presidency. Initially, money was collected separately from each hamlet, but eventually, each cultivator or 'ryot' was assessed individually. Thus, peasants were established as property owners, not zamindars. Although this approach enhanced the state's income collection, the assessments were flawed, and the peasants were overtaxed.
- c. **The Mahalwari Settlement:** Following 1822, the state reached out to either the local community or, in certain cases, the customary 'Talukdars'. Each of these fiscal units were referred to as a 'mahal'. Collective property rights were accorded some status under this framework. Agriculture stalled as a result of the British's revenue policy, and peasants practically became tenants at will. Additionally, they boosted the number of landed intermediaries and solidified the figure of the moneylender in rural areas. Landlords and zamindars developed into a class of collaborators with the British colonial regime. The Company's acquisition of the Diwani rights enabled it to tap into the riches of local kings, zamindars, and merchants in the prosperous province of Bengal and utilise it to purchase the products that would be sent to Britain for sale. From Bengal, large sums of cash, including the unlawful earnings of corporate officials, made their way to Britain. Company leaders accumulated enormous sums before returning home, and they were dubbed 'Nabobs' in Britain due to their extravagant lifestyles. Much of this money was utilised to drive Britain's Industrial Revolution. The Company's need for cash from land also drove it to adopt an aggressive programme of territorial expansion in India.

7.3 THE SECOND PHASE OF BRITISH COLONIALISM (FREE TRADE)

The 'Second Phase' is often regarded as beginning with the 1813 charter Act, when the Company lost its exclusive trading rights in India, and concluding in 1858, when the British crown assumed direct control and administration of all British territory in India.

As the Company's earnings increased, the Company's relationship with the British government deteriorated. Previously, many members of parliament had 'East Indian' interests and relied on the Company's money to preserve their government patronage. However, when extraordinary levels of industrialisation were attained in Britain. Adam Smith's book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, heralded the birth of a new school of economic thinking that criticised the concept of exclusive monopolies and argued for a government policy of 'free trade' or 'laissez faire'. In an attempt to gain greater control over the Company's revenues, the parliament began prosecuting individual Company officials on 'misconduct' accusations. The 'Free Traders,' who dominated parliament at the turn of the nineteenth century, demanded unrestricted access to India, which resulted in the passage of the Charter Act of 1813, effectively ending the Company's monopoly in India while subordinating its territorial possessions to the British crown's overall sovereignty. Through a twin policy, 'Free Trade' altered the structure of the Indian colony fundamentally. To begin, it opened Indian markets to the arrival of low-cost, mass-produced, machine-made British products that faced little or no tariff limitations. However, the transportation of expensive, hand-crafted Indian textiles to Britain, where they were extremely popular, was hampered by prohibitively high tariff charges. Second, British-Indian land was developed as a supply of food and raw materials for Britain, which spurred fast expansion in the industrial sector, which was critical for the creation of a strong capitalist economy. These developments resulted in the reversal of India's previously favourable balance of trade. This era established the foundations of a conventional colonial economy in India through the intricate processes of agricultural commercialization and deindustrialization outlined below.

a. Commercialization of agriculture: It is frequently claimed that the colonial authority fostered agricultural commercialization, which benefited peasants in several parts of the Indian colony. Since the 1860s, the character of agricultural output has been controlled by the demand for Indian raw materials in international markets. In the early part of the nineteenth century, cash crops such as Indigo, Opium, Cotton, and Silk were exported. Raw jute, food grains, oilseeds, and tea gradually supplanted indigo and opium. Raw cotton remained the most sought-after product. Following 1850, this rise in cash crop output was matched by the construction of railways to boost trade networks.

However, commercialization appears to have been a coerced artificial process that resulted in agricultural progress being extremely constrained.

It resulted in divergence within the agricultural sector but did not result in the emergence of the 'capitalist landowner' as it did in the United Kingdom. Due to the absence of concurrent large-scale industrial growth, accumulated agricultural capital lacked feasible avenues of investment through which it might be transformed to industrial capital. Agriculture expansion initiatives were also a dangerous business, as the sector serviced to a distant foreign market with wildly shifting prices and the colonial authority offered little security to agriculturists. Thus, commercialization fostered rural sub-infeudation, and money was channelled into trade and usury. The export trade produced the lion's share of profits for British commercial houses, which dominated the shipping and insurance sectors in addition to commission agents, dealers, and bankers. The colony benefitted large farmers, certain Indian tradesmen, and moneylenders. Commercialization exacerbated the feudal system of landlord-moneylender exploitation that existed in rural regions. The so-called commercialization process, which was meant to result in capitalist agriculture, was frequently conducted through extremely exploitative and nearly unfree kinds of labour. Tea was cultivated on Assam plantations owned by whites who employed indentured labour, a form of slavery. White planters were forced to coerce farmers into growing indigo due to its low profit margins and disruption of the harvesting cycle. This required inhumane levels of force, which culminated in the 1859-60 indigo uprising. Commercialization did result in brief periods of success in the cotton-producing districts of western India in the 1860s and in jute production in eastern India in the 1880s, but these were due to increased demand rather than capitalist innovation in production and organisation.

Farmers were also compelled to plant cash crops by the requirement to pay high revenue, rents, and obligations in cash. The conversion of food crops like as jowar, bajra, and pulses to cash crops frequently resulted in calamity during famine years. In the 1870s, a drop in global demand for Indian cotton resulted in widespread indebtedness, starvation, and agrarian uprisings in the Deccan cotton region. In the 1930s, the jute industry failed, followed by a severe famine in Bengal in 1943. Although historians have debated the origins of these famines, it is apparent that aggregate food crop output lagged behind population expansion, and millions perished of starvation and infections.

Among the few measures taken by the colonial authority to increase agricultural production was the construction of a few irrigation canals in northern, north-eastern, and south-western India. Eastern India's 'Permanently Settled' region was excluded from this government project due to the lack of additional revenue opportunities. Thus, income maximisation and restricted famine assistance in dire circumstances were the primary drivers of this public expenditure. It did result in considerable affluence and commercial agriculture in a few enclaves, most notably the canal colonies of Punjab, but only for a tiny number of already prosperous farmers who could afford the exorbitant water charges. Additionally, it promoted the growing of cash crops like as sugar, cotton, and wheat, while lowering millets and pulse output. In certain instances, such as the United Provinces, it was incompatible with local circumstances, resulting in wetlands and

excessive salinity. Lord Dalhousie made the decision to build railroads in India in 1853. Railways have frequently been viewed as a symbol of the modernity that occurred during British administration. However, the construction of railways in India accentuated the colonial character of India's economic progress. Instead of connecting internal markets to one another, the railway network made it simpler to enter the colony's interior markets and supplies of raw material by connecting them to port towns. As a result, the railway network was designed largely to serve the interests of foreign trade. Railway lines were constructed in frontier regions to ease army movement, while some "famine lines" were constructed in areas of shortage. Additionally, the entire project was financed with British cash, and investors in the United Kingdom were promised a 5% interest rate paid from Indian earnings. The majority of high-level knowledge and railway equipment, such as machinery, railway lines, and, to a lesser extent, coal, were brought from the United Kingdom. This meant that the 'multiplier' impacts of railway construction were missing in India as well.

Among other consequences, the railroads' penetration of the country's interiors had another terrible consequence the demise of the Indian handicrafts sector, which had received favour from both local governing elites and markets outside. With the British extending their influence, traditional indigenous tribunals ceased to exist. Additionally, the British imposed an unfair tariff system, which restricted the admission of Indian items into British markets through hefty customs taxes. As a result of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, mass manufacturing of low-cost machine-made items swamped Indian marketplaces. Indian goods, unable to compete, lost both their international and domestic markets. This damaging process resulted in deindustrialisation, which exacerbated land pressures.

7.4 THE THIRD PHASE OF BRITISH COLONIALISM

The third phase is said to have begun in the 1860s, when British India was integrated into the ever-expanding British Empire, placing it directly under the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the British crown. This was a time of 'finance-imperialism,' with British cash being invested in the colony. This capital was structured via a restricted network of British banks, export-import companies, and management agencies. Although the colonisation process has been separated into stages, it is important to keep in mind that this periodization is rather arbitrary. The third phase was just a consolidation of the patterns seen in the second phase. Perhaps it is more instructive to view these eras as overlapping, with new and more complex forms of exploitation coexisting with earlier, cruder ones. However, the third phase was defined by a heightened struggle between rich and industrialised countries for colonies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Countries such as France, Belgium, Germany, the United States, and even Japan saw tremendous industrialisation during the nineteenth century. In the face of global competition, Britain's edge in this area diminished. In quest of new markets and raw materials, these countries increased their colonial ambitions and tightened their grip on existing ones. Industrial expansion also resulted in the accumulation of capital, which was concentrated in a

few banks and enterprises. This cash was invested in the colonies in order to support the fast inflow of raw materials necessary for industrial growth. In other developing capitalist nations, high tariffs resulted in a decrease of markets for British manufactured products. And the requirement for substantial imports of agricultural items placed Britain in a vulnerable position in terms of trade with other countries.

India was critical in resolving Britain's deficit situation. Britain's hegemony over India assured that Lancashire textiles would always have a captive market. Additionally, India's surplus in raw material exports to nations other than the United Kingdom offset her deficits elsewhere. While local handicrafts risked extinction, the colony made little attempts to build modern enterprises. While the colonial administration proclaimed 'free commerce,' indigenous firms encountered several impediments created by the state's discriminatory policies. Initially, British wealth was invested in railways, jute manufacturing, tea plantations, and mining.

European financial firms controlled the Indian money market. While British businesspeople had easy access to finance through this banking network, Indian businessmen were forced to rely on family or caste groups for funding. British banking firms and business interests were highly organised through Chambers of Commerce and Managing Agencies, and they had considerable influence over the colonial authorities, which was cautious to deny Indian entrepreneurs access to finance. Prior to the First World War, British managing agencies controlled around 75% of industrial capital, and the majority of revenues from this restricted industrialization were also returned to the United Kingdom. Despite the obstacles, Indian entrepreneurs found ways to develop and thrive throughout periods of economic distress in the United Kingdom. Several Marwari industrialists from Calcutta, such as G.D.Birla and Swarupchand Hukumchand, ventured in the jute industry during the First World War. Their power gradually expanded into other sectors, such as coal mines, sugar mills, and the paper industry, and they were even able to acquire certain European enterprises. Indian capital achieved its greatest success in western India's cotton sector, which capitalised on increased demand during the war years (1914-18) to solidify its triumphs and finally competed with Lancashire. Certain historic trade communities, such as the Gujarati Baniyas, Parsis, Bohras, and Bhatias, established themselves as significant players in this industry. Under government sponsorship, the Tata Iron and Steel Company headed India's young iron and steel industry. After World War I, connections to the foreign market were restored, but during the Depression years (1929–1933), the domestic market became relatively free for indigenous industry to exploit, as foreign trade declined. Additionally, the colonial government protected the sugar and cotton industries from falling agricultural prices. Low prices forced capital away from agriculture and towards manufacturing. Indians also entered the insurance and banking industries. Again, during World War II (1939–45), when foreign economic influence waned, Indian entrepreneurs profited handsomely. The Indian capitalist class, emboldened by its limited success, strengthened its ties to the nationalist movement. They quickly began demanding the formation of state-owned heavy industries and organised themselves to prevent foreign capital entry. To put

these success indicators into context, indigenous capital remained restricted to the domestic market, and indigenous capital had a protracted war against the structural limitations of a colonial economy.

Given India's vast poverty, the potential for growth remained muted. Early Indian nationalists such as Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade, and R.C. Dutt anticipated that Britain would conduct capitalist industrialization in India but were disappointed by the consequences of colonial industrial policy. As a result, in the late nineteenth century, they developed a strong economic criticism of colonialism. Dadabhai Naoroji created the hypothesis of Drain of wealth. According to them, poverty in India was caused by a persistent drain of Indian riches into Britain as a result of British colonial policy. This drain occurred as a result of the interest paid on the East India Company's foreign debts, military expenditure, guaranteed returns on foreign investment in railways and other infrastructure, importing all stationery from England, 'home charges' paid to the British Secretary of State in the United Kingdom, and salaries, pensions, and training costs for military and civilian staff employed by the British state to rule India. Even if this outflow represented a negligible portion of India's overall exports, if reinvested within the nation, it may have contributed to the generation of a surplus necessary to develop a capitalist economy. The final debate about colonial economic policy in India has been whether any progress occurred at all.

This is not a straightforward question to answer. We can begin by examining eighteenth-century Mughal India, prior to the British establishing themselves as an invincible territorial power. Historians have long held the idea that eighteenth-century Mughal India was facing a severe economic crisis and collapse. It has been seen as the key larger framework within which the fall of the Mughal empire may be located. However, several subsequent historians have challenged this perspective, focusing instead on the emergence of new rebellious parties. They have maintained that rather than stagnation or catastrophe, the Mughal period was one of overall well-being and economic prosperity. Within the political structure, local landed elites and urban guilds had sufficient space and autonomy to generate and accumulate surplus. Some of these surplus areas' included Moradabad-Bareilly, Awadh, Banaras, and Bengal. Forests were being removed to make way for agricultural expansion. Consequent increases in agricultural productivity and the emergence of a cash nexus enabled former landowners and zamindars to accumulate excess, challenging Mughal supremacy to emerge as the new regional power elites.

Thus, the image we receive of India is one of a thriving economic climate with decent development potential. How, then, do we account for the backwardness and poverty encountered at the conclusion of the subsequent 200 years of British colonialism? According to some writers, the British attempted to partially 'modernize' India, but failed due to the hegemony of traditional structures. However, as previously said, these half-hearted attempts at 'modernisation' were driven solely by the 'mother country's' profit seeking nature. Backwardness in 'peripheral' colonies must be viewed as a necessary corollary to the Industrial Revolution in the 'core,' centred on the West. The same forces that developed and perpetuated industrialization

in Britain also generated and sustained backwardness in her Indian colony, because the British economy was parasitically tied to the Indian economy through an integrated international economic system of 'free trade.' India was not in a pre-industrial stage in 1947, and as a result, her post-independence economic growth patterns cannot be compared to Western modernization processes. India has previously been a part of western capitalist system for 200 years before to 1947, but as a colony. Thus, independent India started on a modernisation process in 1947 from a 'colonial' rather than a 'traditional' structurally backward and impoverished paradigm.

7.5 CONCLUSION

The British established their power in the Indian subcontinent on the basis of phased economic exploitation of the colony. The form of this exploitation altered during the duration of their rule in response to developments inside Britain, which had a direct impact on the colony's economic, social, and political development. The majority of the colonial state's economic initiatives were framed in terms of development and 'modernisation,' but they had a disparate impact on the colony, frequently resulting in backwardness rather than growth. Finally, the majority of these initiatives aided in the country's resource extraction in order to facilitate industrialization in Europe.

7.6 QUESTIONS

1. What were the revenue policies introduced by the British, and what changes did they bring about in the countryside in India?
2. Discuss the second phase of British economic colonisation.
3. Why was the commercialization of agriculture in the colony a 'forced' process?
4. Explain the phase of 'finance imperialism'.

7.7 REFERENCE

1. Grover B.L. and Grover S., A New Look At Modern Indian History, S. Chand, Delhi, 2001.
2. A. R. Desai, Social Background of Indian nationalism, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, 2005.
3. Bipin Chandra, History of Modern India, orient Blackswan, 2009.

THE FOUNDING OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, ITS POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

Unit Structure

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Early political organisations
- 8.3 Circumstances that led to the foundation of the Indian National Congress
- 8.4 The role of Allan Octavian Hume
- 8.5 The first session of the Indian National Congress
- 8.6 Aims and Objectives of the Congress
- 8.7 Resolutions passed in the first session
- 8.8 British attitude towards the congress
- 8.9 Conclusion
- 8.10 Questions
- 8.11 Reference

Objectives:

After going through this unit, the student will be able to: -

- Understand the emergence of political forces which preceded the Indian National Congress.
- Understand the circumstances that led to the foundation of the Indian National Congress.
- Comprehend the aims and objectives of the Indian National Congress.
- Understand the British attitude towards the Indian National Congress.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was not a coincidental historical occurrence. It was the culmination of a process of political awakening that had its beginning within the 1860s and 1870s and took a serious breakthrough within the late 1870s and early 1880s. The year 1885 marked a turning point during this process. The modern intellectuals interested in politics, who no longer saw themselves as spokesmen of narrow group interests, but as representatives of national interest as a national party, saw their efforts bear fruit. The all-India nationalist body that they brought into being was to be the platform, the organiser, the headquarters, the symbol of the new national spirit and politics.

The political Associations and activities in the pre-Congress period in India and abroad regarding the Indian freedom struggle made it mandatory to form an All-India Association that would lead the country against the foreign rulers. These early Associations had, though, an important contribution in terms of arousing the political will and demands of the Indian public, but their area and activities were limited. They mainly questioned local issues and their members and leaders were also limited to one or adjoining provinces. Despite good leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjee, Ananda Charlu and others there was a lack of national unity in case of political association later it was gained by the formation of the Indian National Congress.

Some of the prominent Political Associations which played a very important role in arousing general will and laying down a path towards modern Nationalism are as follows-

8.2 EARLY POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

i. **Landholders Society:**

In July 1838, the "Zamindari Association", also known as the "Landholders Society", was established to safeguard the interests of the landlords. Landholders' Society was limited in its objectives i.e. covered demand of Landlords only. The activists of the Society used the methods of constitutional agitation for the redressal of grievances and marked the beginning of organised political activities.

ii. **Bengal British India Society:**

In April 1843, another political association under the name of the Bengal British India Society was founded. Its objective was "The collection and dissemination of information relating to the actual condition of the people of British India".

iii. **The British Indian Association of Calcutta (1851):**

It was formed in 1851 by the merger of the Bengal British India Society and the Landholders' Society. It was established to convey Indian grievances to the British Govt. It suggested various reforms in the Company's upcoming charter-like Need for the establishment of a separate legislature, separation of judicial functions from executive functions, salaries of higher officers to be reduced, abolition of abkari, salt duty and stamp duties. Some of the recommendations of the association were accepted when the Charter Act of 1853 provided the addition of six members to the governor general's council for legislative purposes.

iv. **The Deccan Association (1852):**

British India Association of Calcutta was confined only to Bengal but British India Association's Secretary, Debendranath Thakur wanted to expand the association, as the aim of the British India Association was

to make representations from every part of British India to the British Parliament. In February 1852 as a further expansion of the British India Association, the Deccan Association was established at Poona. Deccan Association did not last long and could not fulfil its objective of sending any mission or petition for suggesting reforms to the upcoming Charter Act i.e. Charter Act of 1853.

v. The Madras Native Association (1852):

After the establishment of the Deccan Association, political activists in Madras acted next by establishing, the Madras branch of the British Indian Association in February 1852. Within a few months, its name was changed to the Madras Native Association as it decided to act independently of the parent body. The possibility of a joint Indian petition to Parliament was wrecked by the split between Calcutta and Madras associations. However, the Madras Native Association right from its start exhibited very little life, had virtually any grip over the public imagination and withered into oblivion after 1857.

vii. The Bombay Association, founded in 1852:

On 26 August 1852, the Bombay Association was founded on the model of the British India Association of Calcutta with the purpose of reminding from time to time the government authorities in India or England for the removal of existing evils, the prevention of proposed measures which may be deemed harmful, or for the introduction of legislation which may tend to promote the general interest of all connected with this country'. The Bombay Association petitioned the British Parliament to establish a new legislative council with Indian representation. It further denounced the strategy of excluding Indians from all higher positions and extravagant spending on Europeans-only offices. This relationship, however, did not last long.

vii. East India Company:

Dadabhai Naoroji formed the East India Association in London in 1866. In 1869, the East India organisation established branches in Bombay, Kolkata, and Madras. The East India Association's mission was to discuss India's problems and issues and to influence British leaders toward India's development. Later on, Dadabhai Naoroji established branches in a number of key Indian cities.

viii. Sarvajanik Sabha of Poona:

Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was founded in 1867. Its mission is to act as a link between the government and the people.

ix. India Football League:

It was founded in 1875 by Sisir Kumar Ghose. The India league sought to instil a sense of nationalism among the populace.

x. The Calcutta Indian Association:

The Indian Association of Calcutta was formed in 1876 by Surendranath Banerjee and Anand Mohan Bose. The founders of the Indian Association of Calcutta were dissatisfied with the British India Association's pro-landlord and conservative attitudes, which motivated them to create this new organisation. This group was formed with the objective of uniting the Indian people behind a unified political platform and fostering a strong public opinion on political issues. Following its foundation, the East India Association also launched an all-India movement known as the Civil Service Agitation.

ix. The Association of the Bombay Presidency:

In 1885, Pherozeshah Mehta, K.T. Telang, and Badruddin Tyabji founded the Bombay Presidency Association. Lytton's regressive tactics and the Ilbert Bill dispute sparked political unrest in Bombay and resulted in the establishment of the Bombay Presidency Association.

Mahajan Sabha of Madras Viraraghavachari, P. Ananda-Charlu, and B. Subramaniya Aiyer founded the Madras Mahajan Sabha in 1884. In May 1884, the Madras Mahajan Sabha was founded to coordinate the operations of local groups and to 'give a focal point for non-official intelligence flowing up across the Presidency'. M. V. Raghavachari, G. Subrahmanyam Aiyar, and Anand Charlu created it.

8.3 CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The Indian demands of these years included no expansion into Afghanistan or Burma, press freedom, reduced military spending, increased famine relief spending, Indianization of the civil services, the right of Indians to join the semi-military volunteer corps, and the right of Indian judges to prosecute Europeans in criminal cases. The appeal to British voters to vote for a party that would listen to Indians appears rather mild. However, these were demands that a colonial authority could not readily accede, since doing so would jeopardise the colonial regime's power over the colonial population.

Between 1875 and 1885, the political drive was to generate young, radical nationalists, the majority of whom entered politics. They founded new organisations. The earlier associations were far too exclusive. The Bombay Association and the Madras Native Association had become more conservative than the Bengali youth led by Surendranath Banerjee and Anand Mohan Bose, who created the Indian Association in 1876. In 1884, G. Subramaniya Iyer, P. Ananda Charlu, and others founded the Madras Mahajan Sabha. In 1885, intellectuals like as K.T. Telang and Pherozeshan Mehta created the Bombay Presidency Association in opposition to leaders such as Dadabhai and Dinshaw. Among the surviving organisations, only

the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha retained its previous status. By 1885, the establishment of an all-India political organisation had become an objective requirement felt by nationalists throughout the country. Numerous researchers have provided thorough information on the steps taken in that direction beginning in 1877. These movements gained urgency, particularly after 1883, and there was a flurry of political action. The Indian Association had already hosted an All-India National Conference in December 1883 and another in December 1885. Since 1875, a popular campaign was centred on cotton import taxes, which Indians wanted to keep inside the bounds of the Indian textile industry. Between 1877 and 1888, a huge movement was launched around the demand for Indianization of government services.

The Indians resisted Lord Lytton's Afghan mission and subsequently coerced the British Government into making changes to the Vernacular Press Act. They organised a protest against plantation labour in 1881-1882, and therefore against the Inland Emigration Act, which sentenced plantation labourers to serfdom. In 1883, a significant movement was organised in support of the Ilbert Bill, which would let Indian magistrates to prosecute Europeans. The Europeans successfully defeated this measure. The Indians were quick to see the political implication. Their attempts had failed due to a lack of coordination across India. On the other side, the Europeans acted cooperatively. Again, in July 1883, a massive pan-Indian campaign was launched to establish a National Fund for the purpose of promoting political agitation in India and England.

8.4. THE ROLE OF ALLAN OCTAVIAN HUME

The All-Indian Congress was claimed to have been conceptualised in a secret gathering of seventeen persons following the Theosophical Convention held in Madras in December 1884. Hume's Indian union, which he founded upon his retirement from the Civil Service, is also credited with helping to convene the Congress. Whatever the source, and whomever the originator of the concept, there was a need for such an organisation, and Allan Octavian Hume was the one who took the initiative.

Hume was the son of radical British politician Joseph Hume. He inherited his father's political ideals and became interested in European revolutionary organisations throughout his youth. In 1849, he was appointed to the East India Company's civil service and sent to the North-western Provinces. He became active in a variety of causes, including the development of education, the struggle against social ills, and the promotion of agricultural progress. Hume even founded a journal in 1861 to educate the residents of Etawah about political and social issues. Hume's pro-Indian stance and efforts to further the Indians' welfare did not go unnoticed by his fellow British commanders.

In 1870, Hume was appointed Secretary to the Government of India. Viceroy Northbrook threatened Hume with expulsion from service for his opinions. He also fell out with Lord Lytton and was demoted in 1879, before retiring from service in 1882. Hume established himself in Shimla and

developed an interest in Indian politics. He sided with the Bombay and Poona political groups more than he did with Calcutta leaders like Surendranath Banerjee and Narendranath Sen. Hume also met Viceroy Lord Ripon and developed an interest in the latter's plan for local self-government.

- **An Appeal to Calcutta University Graduates:**

On 1 March 1883, upon his retirement from the Government, Hume issued an open letter to graduates of Calcutta University, urging them to take the lead in creating an organisation dedicated to the mental, moral, social, and political regeneration of the Indian people. Additionally, Hume argued that if only fifty persons of integrity can be found to join as founders, the enterprise may be started and future expansion will be quite simple. Hume's petition was not in vain.

- **Hume's Consultation with Indian Leaders:**

Hume held lengthy discussions in Calcutta, Bombay, Poona, and Madras with notable Indian Nationalist leaders. Hume, on the other hand, leaned heavily on Bombay figures such as William Wedderburn, Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta, and D.E. Watcha to begin his new political organisation in India. Hume and his Bombay and Poona friends devised a scheme for an Indian National Union.

The Union intended to be organised around an annual conference attended by representatives from several regional organisations. The conference was to be sponsored by the government and serve as a forum for informed Indian public opinion. Officials would be urged to attend, and the province's governor would be tasked with presiding over the meeting.

- **The Meeting between Hume and Lord Dufferin:**

Hume met Lord Dufferin in Shimla in May 1885 after consulting with Indian Leaders. He informed the Viceroy of his intention to convene a gathering of delegates from all regions of India in Poona in December 1885. Lord Dufferin was a strong supporter of Hume's proposal for an Indian National Union. In March 1885, Hume published a circular announcing that the meeting would be attended by representatives chosen from the Bengal, Bombay, and Madras Presidency. The Poona Sarvajanic Sabha agreed to organise a welcoming committee in preparation for hosting the Indian National Union's maiden convention. Following his preparatory work for convening the conference of Indian leaders, Hume travelled to England in August 1885 and remained there until November 1885.

He sought advice from prominent politicians, including Lord Ripon. He created what became the foundation of the Indian Parliamentary Committee in England on their suggestion. He also founded an Indian Telegraph Union to facilitate the dissemination of Indian news in

England's top newspapers. Hume returned to India before the congress began to function, having completed all necessary arrangements in England. Hume left a lasting impression on his liberal and democratic contemporaries, notably Lajpat Rai, as a man of lofty values, courageous and devoted individuals such as Dadabhai Navroji, Justice Ranade, Pheroza Shah Mehta, G. Subramaniya Iyer, and Surendranath Banerjee collaborated with Hume out of a desire to avoid arousing government animosity at such an early stage of their work. They reasoned that if the leading organiser of a potentially subversive group was a former British official, authorities would be less suspicious and less inclined to attack it. Gokhale, with his trademark humility and political savvy, expressed this plainly. No Indian could have founded the Indian National Congress; even if some Indian had come forward to initiate such a movement encompassing all of India, Indian officials would not have let the movement to exist. If the Congress's founding father had not been a good Englishman and famous former official, such was the suspicion of political activity in those days that the authorities would have suppressed the movement in one way or another. In other words, if Hume and other English liberals desired to utilise the Congress as a safety valve, Congress leaders desired Hume to act as a lightning rod. And, as subsequent events demonstrate, it was the Congress leaders who's hopes have and plans finally materialised .

8.5 THE FIRST SESSION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

While numerous additional conferences were conducted around India in the second half of December 1885, the most significant conference held during this fortnight was the First Indian National Congress, which met from 28 to 30 December 1885. The Congress was relocated from Poona to Bombay due to a cholera outbreak in Poona. The Indian National Congress had its inaugural session in the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Bombay.

The overall number of delegates attending were around seventy-two, although they fairly represented India's many regions. Among the gathering's notable leaders were Dadabhai Naoroji, K.T. Telang, Pheroza Shah Mehta, D.E. Wacha, B.M. Malabari, and N.C Chandavarkar from Bombay; M.G. Ranade and G.G. Aagarkar from Poona; Dewan Raghunath Rao, P. Rangiah Naidu.

8.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CONGRESS

Thus, it becomes evident that the establishment of the Indian National Congress was a natural climax of the preceding years' political activity. In 1885, a watershed moment in India's political evolution occurred when some fundamental objectives were established. These aims were inextricably linked and could only be accomplished via the formation of a single pan-Indian organisation. The men who gathered in Bombay on 28

December 1885 were motivated by these goals and wanted to commence the process by which they would be accomplished.

These aims may be examined as follows:-

- i.** The primary purpose of the Indian national movement's founders was to advance the process, to unite Indians into a country, and to establish an Indian people. Colonial administrators and ideologues frequently asserted that Indians could not be untied or emancipated since they were neither country nor nation but a geographical manifestation. The Indians did not dispute this, but maintained that they were not developing into a country. India was, as Tilak, Surendranath Banerjea, and several others emphasised, a nation-in-development. The leaders of Congress realised that objective historical causes were uniting the Indian people. However, they recognised that the populace needed to be made aware of the objective process, which necessitated promoting a sense of national unity and nationalism among them. Thus, one of the Congress's fundamental purposes and objectives, as stated forth by its first President W.C. Banerji, was the full growth and consolidation of national unity among the Indian people.
- ii.** To reach out to adherents of all religions and allay minority' anxieties, a provision was enacted during the 1888 session prohibiting the passage of any proposal to which an overwhelming majority of Hindu or Muslim delegates disapproved. In 1889, a minority provision was included in a resolution calling for legislative council reform. Wherever Parsis, Christians, Muslims, or Hindus were a minority, the condition stipulated that their representation on Councils would not be less than their demographic share. The early national leaders were similarly committed to establishing a secular republic, as seen by the Congress's zealous secularism.
- iii.** A subsequent important purpose of the first Congress was to establish a common platform around which political activists from all sections of the nation could convene and conduct their political operations, teaching and organising people throughout the country. This was to be achieved by assuming those grievances and defending those rights that Indians shared with their rulers. Congress was not to take up social change issues for the same reason. At its second session, Congress President Dadabhai Naoroji established this rule, stating that the National Congress must limit itself to issues involving direct participation of the whole population.
- iv.** India was unfamiliar with the politics of public engagement, agitation, and mobilisation. The concept of politics was unfamiliar to the populace. No modern movement was possible until this was recognised. An informed and resolute political viewpoint had to be developed on the basis of this realisation. The Congress leaders saw the creation, training, organisation, and consolidation of public opinion as a vital duty. All of the early nationalists' activity was directed toward this objective.

- v. In order to give birth to a national movement, it was required to establish a common pan-Indian national-political leadership, or to construct. Only organised nations and other groups of people are capable of meaningful and effective political action.
- vi. W.C. Bannerji, as the first Congress President, reiterated that one of the Congress's objectives was the eradication of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices among all lovers of our country, as well as the promotion of personal friendship among all the more earnest workers in our country. Among the early nationalist leaders' primary aims was the internalisation and indigenisation of political democracy. They founded their politics on the theory of popular sovereignty, as Dadabhai Naoroji phrased it, that rulers are created for the people, not the other way around.

8.7 RESOLUTIONS PASSED IN THE FIRST SESSION

The Congress's first session debated and passed nine resolutions.

- i. The establishment of a Royal Commission to investigate the functioning of the Indian administration.
- ii. Abolition of the Indian Council of the Secretary of State for India.
- iii. Expansion and reform of the Imperial and Legislative Councils created by the 1861 Indian Councils Act.
- iv. Establishment of Legislative Councils for the Northwest Province, Oudh, and Punjab, as well as the establishment of a House of Commons Standing Committee to consider formal protests.
- v. The establishment of concurrent Public Service Examinations in England and India, as well as the increasing of the eligibility age for applicants.
- vi. Military spending reductions.
- vii. Protest against Upper Burma's annexation and intended integration into India.
- viii. That all resolutions be sent to political groups throughout the nation for deliberation and formation of positions.
- ix. The Congress's next session was scheduled for 28 December 1886 in Calcutta. Though the Indian leaders convened for the first time on a political platform, their understanding of contemporary public issues seemed to be sufficiently broad in several aspects. They demonstrated an extraordinary level of expertise of governance issues in their statements. According to Dadabhai Naoroji, because England is the mother of free and representative government, we as her subjects are entitled to receive the tremendous blessings of liberty and representation. While Muslims did not constitute a sizable portion of

the Congress, the Congress did not discriminate against adherents of any faith or sect.

The Congress's second annual session was chaired by a Parsi, the third by a Muslim, and the fourth by a Christian. The Indian National Congress's leaders had a strong faith in the British sense of justice and demanded political reforms during their first session in 1885.

8.8 BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CONGRESS

British government officials were averse to the growth of nationalist groups. Lord Dufferin had expressed reservations about the formation of the Indian National Congress. He attempted to derail the movement by advising Hume that the Congress should focus on social issues rather than political ones. Congress leaders, on the other hand, had refused to make the modification. The Indian National Congress began publishing popular pamphlets in indigenous languages and convening mass meetings to disseminate nationalist messages.

The British could not tolerate the Congress playing this role. Economic unrest sparked by nationalists highlighted British imperialism's true exploitative character. British officials' attitudes toward the Indian National Congress shifted as a result of these circumstances, and they began publicly criticising and condemning the Congress. Nationalists were dubbed disloyal babus and ferocious villains. Congress was seen as a breeding ground for revolution, and Congressmen as dissatisfied contenders for office. In 1887, Lord Dufferin delivered a public speech in which he attacked the Congress and mocked it for representing a microscopic minority of the population. Lord Salisbury, who served as Secretary of State for India from 1874 to 1886 and as Prime Minister of England from 1886 to 1892, opposed the Congress's demand of legislative powers to elected councillors in an 1888 memorandum.

- **Lord Dufferin's response to the Congress:**

Dufferin and his liberal colleagues in Bombay and Madras, as well as conservative officials like as Alfred and J.B. Lyall, D.M. Wallace, A. Colvin, and S.C. Bayley, were not sympathetic to the Congress. Not only in 1888 did Dufferin launch a savage attack on Congress, stating that he would not permit the institution to continue to exist. He had written to Reay in May 1885, advising him to exercise caution regarding Hume's Congress, advising him that it would be unwise to identify with either the reformers or reactionaries. Reay successively referred to the new political activists as the 'National Party of India' in a letter in June 1885, warning against Indian delegates, like Irish delegates, making their appearance on the British political scene. Earlier in May, Reay warned Dufferin that Hume was the brains behind an organisation dedicated to bringing indigenous opinion to the fore.

Indeed, by the end of May 1885, Dufferin had developed a dislike for Hume and began to distance himself from him. From 1886 on, he began to accuse the Bengali Babus and Maharashtrian leaders for being motivated by dubious motivations and desiring to initiate Irish-style revolutionary agitation in India. And, in May-June 1886, he described Hume as "cleverish, a bit cracked, exceedingly conceited, and entirely indifferent to reality," adding that "his primary failing is that he was one of the leading stimulants of the Indian National Movement." The government used a variety of strategies and policies to contain the Indian National Congress's power. One of them was promoting anti-Congress forces and pressuring the wealthy to remove their support for the Congress.

To fight the Indian National Congress' rising dominance, the British authorities implemented a policy of divide and rule. British officials urged Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Raja Siva Prasad, and other pro-British figures to organise an anti-Congress agitation. With the arrest of Tilak and other nationalist leaders in Western India, a devastating attack on nationalists was launched. In 1898, legislation was adopted to curtail press and speech freedoms and to strengthen the police and magistrates' authority. The government decided to promote religiously affiliated private colleges.

Modern secular education, which fostered the spread of rational democratic and nationalist ideas, was to be supplanted by a religious and moral education system. Even though it was founded on Indian faiths and extolled Indian culture, this new system was regressive in that it failed to foster a forward-thinking and modern mentality among the youth. The preceding observations undoubtedly debunk the myth that the Indian National Congress was founded by A.O. Hume and others under the official direction, guidance, and advice of none other than Lord Dufferin, the viceroy, in order to provide a secure, mild, peaceful, and constitutional outlet or safety valve for the growing discontent among the masses, which was inevitably leading to a popular and violent revolution. From its beginning, the British authorities viewed the Indian National Congress as a serious threat to the security of their Indian Empire.

8.9 CONCLUSION

British control in India resulted in the development of a new political awareness, as well as the concepts of nationhood and political rights. Confronted with various forms of exploitation under British rule and the open racism of Anglo-Indians, the Indians felt compelled to speak out against foreign rule. Indian intelligentsia, as beneficiaries of western education, was instrumental in exposing the exploitative nature of British rule and uniting public opinion. You have seen how people formed associations to discuss issues affecting their interests in various provinces, and how this political consciousness eventually paved the way for the formation of the Indian National Congress. Early Congress founders recognised India's degeneration under British rule and sought to organise Indian opinion in response to the influence of British rule. Historians have examined the origins of Indian nationalism from a variety of angles.

However, despite its narrow social base and limited approach, the Indian National Congress' formation marked the beginning of a new democratic political movement for nationhood.

8.10 QUESTIONS

1. Examine the role of Allan Octavian Hume in the formation of Indian National Congress.
2. Circumstances that led to the foundation of the Indian National Congress.
3. Examine the several political organisations that existed before the Congress.
4. Enumerate the Indian National Congress's ideals and objectives.

8.11 CITATION

1. B.L. Grover and S. Grover, A New Perspective on Modern Indian History, S. Chand, New Delhi, 2001.
2. A. R. Desai, Indian Nationalism's Social Background, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, 2005.
3. Bipin Chandra, Modern India: A History, Orient Blackswan, 2009.

GANDHIJI AND HIS MOVEMENTS: DOCTRINE OF SATYAGRAHA, NON CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Doctrine of Satyagraha
 - 9.2.1 Method of the Doctrine of Satyagraha
- 9.3 Non-Cooperation Movement
- 9.4 Civil Disobedience Movement
- 9.5 Summary
- 9.6 Question
- 9.7 Additional Reading

9.0 OBJECTIVES

After the completion of this unit the student will be able to:-

- Understand the conditions of Indians in South Africa.
- Explain the basic postulates and steps of Satyagraha.
- Perceive the application of Satyagraha in Africa & India.
- Comprehend the background of the non-co operation movement.
- Grasp the reasons of the withdrawal of the movement.
- Comprehend the effects of the non-co operation movement.
- Perceive the background of the Civil Disobedience Movement.
- Understand the Congress ultimatum and Viceroy Irwin's Declaration.
- Know the Gandhi-Irwin Meeting and the Congress Session at Lahor of 1929.
- Explain the Launch of the Movement and the Dandhi March.
- Perceive the programme of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Gandhi as the undisputed leader of the Indian National Congress is an interesting story by itself. His heroic fight for the Indians in South Africa was well-known. His novel method of Satyagraha had opinion yielded good results. The Congress leaders had formed a high of his

character and organising ability. Till his arrival in India in 1915, he had not played any leading part in the Congress and he was unknown to the masses.

In March 1919, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi made his entry on the stage of India's freedom struggle by giving a call for a nation-wide 'Satyagraha' against the Rowlatt Act. To understand the man who was about to take over the reins of the Indian national movement and guide its destinies through its most climatic years, it is necessary to trace his career in South Africa where he began the struggle of Indians against racial discrimination since 1893 and developed his unique method of resistance, 'Satyagraha'.

Gandhi's political activities from 1894 to 1906 in South Africa may be classified as the 'Moderate' phase of the struggle of the South African Indians. During this phase, he concentrated on petitioning and sending memorials to the South African legislatures, the Colonial Secretary in London and British Parliament. He believed that if all the facts of the case were presented to the Imperial Government, the British sense of justice and fair play would be aroused and the Imperial Government would intervene on behalf of Indians who were, after all, British subjects. His attempt was to unite the different sections of Indians, and to give their demands wide publicity. This he tried to do through the setting up of the National Indian Congress and by starting a paper called 'Indian Opinion' but by 1906, Gandhi having fully tried the 'Moderate' methods of struggle, was becoming convinced that these would not lead anywhere.

The second phase of the struggle in South Africa, which began in 1906, was characterized by the use of the method of 'passive resistance or civil disobedience, which Gandhi named 'Satyagraha'. It was first used when the government enacted legislation making it compulsory for Indians to take out certificates of registration which held their finger prints.

It was essential to carry these on people at all times. Thus, the Doctrine of Satyagraha was the outcome of Gandhi's struggle against the injustice meted out to the Indians in South Africa.

9.2 DOCTRINE OF SATYAGRAHA

While in South Africa in the course of his struggle Gandhi had developed his philosophy of action-Satyagraha. This term was a combination of two words 'sat' and 'agraha'. 'sat' meant truth and 'agraha' meant firmness. Jointly the term meant 'firm assertion of truth'. This was not so much a device of agitation as a process of self-purification. It was new technique of action which, though perfectly peaceful, implied non-submission to what was considered wrong and, as a consequence, a willing acceptance of pain and sufferings involved in this. Gandhi defined it to be soul-force or love-force, the force which is born of truth and non-violence. The satyagrahi would refuse to submit to whatever he considered to be wrong. He would remain peaceful under all provocations. He would resist evil but would not hate the evildoer. He would vindicate truth not by infliction sufferings on the opponent but accepting suffering himself. He hoped thereby to arouse the conscience of the wrong doer. To be successful the satyagrahi must

utterly give up fear, hatred and falsehood. He differed from the passive resister, for he gave up violence not from expediency but as a matter of principle. Gandhi said that passive resistance was a weapon of the weak while satyagraha was the weapon of the strong. The device of satyagraha was based on universal humanitarian principles of love, righteousness, harmlessness, and human dignity.

According to Gandhi nothing worthwhile could be achieved through Violence, the end could never be subordinated to the means or morals to politics. Thus, through satyagraha Gandhi evolved a method of struggle that would eschew violence and malice. He exhorted his followers to be killed rather than to kill. He wanted to make non-violence and satyagraha the basis of the Indian National Movement. While presiding over the 'Disorder Enquiry Committee' Lord Hunter in 1920 closely questioned Gandhi about his method of satyagraha. Gandhi said: "It is a movement intended to replace methods of violence and a movement based entirely upon truth. It is, as I have conceived it, an extension of domestic law in the political field and my experience has led me to the conclusion that movement and that alone can rid India of the possibility of violence spreading throughout the length and breadth of the land, for the redress of grievances..."

Gandhi claimed that in satyagraha he had discovered an altogether new principle which had not been envisaged by the hitherto known doctrine of passive resistance. While in South Africa Gandhi had announced in his paper 'Indian Opinion' that a prize would be given to one who would suggest a suitable name for his movement there. One of his readers suggested the word 'sadagraha', but this word did not fully represent the whole idea that Gandhi had in mind, and he therefore corrected it to 'satyagraha'.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 What do you understand by the Doctrine of Satyagraha of Mahatma Gandhi?

9.2.1 The methods of satyagraha:

The methods of satyagraha, civil disobedience and non-violent non-co operation were devised as methods to fight an alien government. As the device of satyagraha was successful in South Africa Gandhi decided to try it in India. He experimented with it in Champaran in Bihar and in Ahmedabad and Kaira in Gujarat.

While other politicians were debating the reforms, Gandhi responded to the call of the peasants of Champaran in Bihar. Under the Tinkathia system they were bound by law to grow indigo on 3/20th of their land and sell it to the British planters at prices fixed by them. These peasants were subjected to unlawful extraction and oppression by the planters. Gandhi held a systematic enquiry into their grievances, despite threat of imprisonment. He produced such irrefutable evidence from the long-suffering peasants that the Government had to appoint an enquiry committee. He was one of its members. The outcome was more than the abolition of the system. The sleepy villages had been aroused from the inertia of centuries. Young nationalists, like Rajendra Prasad, Mazhar ul-Huq, Mahadev Desai and J.B. Kripalani, had worked with him in Champaran and were impressed by his idealism as well as his dynamic, fearless, practical, and down to earth approach to political action.

The Kaira District in Gujarat offered a similar opportunity. The crops had failed in that district in 1918, but the officials insisted on full collection of land revenue. Gandhi organised the peasants to offer satyagraha. They refused to pay revenue and were prepared to suffer all consequences. Even those who could afford to pay declined to do so as a matter of principle, in spite of all threats of coercion and attachment. The Government was ultimately forced to yield and arrive at a settlement with the peasants. During this movement Indulal Yangik was one of the chief lieutenants of Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a flourishing, strong minded barrister of Ahmedabad was so impressed by the success of the Kaira satyagraha that he became one of the most eminent and powerful followers of Gandhi. Gandhi also took up the cause of the millworkers of Ahmedabad. In 1918, he led them in a strike against the mill-owners who had refused to pay them higher wages. When the workers seemed to weaken, he rallied them by undertaking a fast. It attracted such wide all-India attention and united the millworkers of Ahmedabad so firmly, that afraid of consequences mill-owners gave in on the fourth day of Gandhi's fast and agreed to a 35% wage rise.

These first experiments in satyagraha brought Gandhi into close touch with the masses, both the peasants in the rural areas and the workers in the urban areas. This was one of the great contributions of Gandhi, to the national movement. So far, the national movement by and large, remained the concern of the urban lower middle class, middle class and the intelligentsia. With the coming of Gandhi, the masses became all at once active participants in the movement. Gandhi was perhaps the only leader whose personal identification with the rural masses was total and complete. He fashioned his own personal life along ways familiar to the villagers and spoke a language they could easily understand. In course of time, he became the symbol of the poor and the downtrodden, of the large masses that lived in rural India, and in the sense was a truly representative Indian, whose authenticity could not be questioned or doubted. Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability and raising the status of women, were three causes very close to Gandhi's heart.

By his 'experiments with truth' Gandhi became convinced that satyagraha was the most effective weapon to fight against British injustice and misrule. On 29th February 1919, he announced that he would resort to satyagraha if the Rowlatt Bills were passed. The non-official members of the Imperial Legislative Council asserted that the consideration of the Bill be postponed for the new Council that was to be constituted under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. But the authorities paid no heed. True to his word, Gandhi published on 18th March, 1919, the following pledge: "Being conscientiously of the opinion that the Rowlatt Bills are unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual on which the safety of India as whole and the state itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming law, we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, property and person."

This warning had no effect, and the bills were passed into Act on 21st March 1919. Gandhi decided to oppose the Rowlatt Act with satyagraha. He started a Satyagraha Sabha and devised a pledge to disobey these repressive laws. A general 'hartal' all over the country was called for 6th April 1919 and this was to be followed by civil disobedience movement. The 'hartal' was a unique success, but police firing on a Delhi crowd caused several casualties, both Hindu and Muslim.

Few days later the grim tragedy of Jalianwalla Bagh took place on 13th April 1919. The people of the Punjab had been excited over war loans and Governor O'Dwyer's harsh methods of recruitment. The Muslims were deeply affected by the Khilafat propaganda. The Government unnecessarily panicked and ordered the arrest of the principal leaders, Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew. The result was mob fury at Amritsar, where following a police firing some officials were killed and two British women seriously injured. When people defiantly assembled next day at Jalianwalla Bagh, General Dyer wanted to strike terror into the whole of the Punjab and ordered his troops to open fire without warning on the unarmed crowd in a park from which there was no way out. When Dyer withdrew after all his ammunition was exhausted, he left about 1,000 dead and several thousand wounded.

There was a current of horror and dismay all over the country, particularly in the Punjab, when the news of the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre spread out. The administration of O'Dwyer was denounced and violence occurred at several places. The nationalist press demanded the impeachment of O'Dwyer and recall of Viceroy Chelmsford. But the authorities remained unmoved. O'Dwyer applauded General Dyer's action and promulgated Martial law all over the Province on 15th April, 1919. On 21st April, Gandhi sent to the Viceroy a telegram protesting public flogging and whipping of those accused of defying the Martial Law. The Jalianwalla Bagh tragedy brought Gandhi into the forefront of Indian politics. The Congress boycotted the official Committee of enquiry headed by Lord Hunter, which the Government had appointed. Many of the erstwhile moderate nationalists also now joined forces with Gandhi.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Trace the method of the Doctrine of Satyagraha by Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian national movement.

9.3 NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

The non-co-operation movement signalled the beginning of the next phase of the Indian National Movement. The Rowlatt Act and the Jalian walla Bagh tragedy had alienated the Indian people from the British and angered Gandhi. Added to this the Muslims felt cheated when in May 1920, the terms offered to Turkey proved to be humiliating, which led to the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, the Sultan of which was the Kalifa of the Muslims all over the world. The terms of the treaty of Serves imposed on Turkey by the victorious Allies were regarded by the Indian Muslims as a breach of the solemn pledge previously given by the British Government. Soon after Gandhi issued a statement. urging upon the Muslims to adopt Non-co-operation 'as the only effective remedy' as suggested by him as far back as 10th March, 1920. The Central Khilafat Committee accepted his advice and in a huge public meeting at Bombay, on 28th May, adopted the Non-co-operation as the only practical line of action. On the same day was published the report of the Hunter Committee which caused a painful impression and profound indignation throughout India. The All India Congress Comm ttee, which met at Varanasi on 30th May 1920, made a strong and recall the Viceroy and award elaborate protest against the majority Report of the Hunter Commission and urged the British Government to recal suitable punishment to Sir Michael O'Dwyer, General Dyer and other officers guilty of atrocities. The Committee also protested against the peace terms offered to Turkey in flagrant violation of the solemn pledge given by the government to the Muslims. The Moderate party also passed similar resolutions but opposed the adoption of Non-co-operation. Thus, the All India Congress Committec. decided to convene a special session to consider the question of Non-co-operation.

The Central Khilafat Committee organised a general all-India 'hartal' on 1st August 1920, under the guidance of Gandhi. He wrote a letter to the Viceroy and returned all the war medals which were awarded to him by the British

for his war services. "Valuable as these honours have been to me", wrote Gandhi, "I cannot wear them with an easy conscience so long as my Mussalman countrymen have to labour under wrong done to their religious sentiment. venture to return these medals, in pursuance of the scheme of Non-Co-operation, inaugurated today in connection with Khilafat movement." Thus, the launching of the Non-co-operation movement on 1st August 1920, was the direct outcome of the Khilafat movement.

The special session of the Congress was held in Calcutta on 4th September 1920, under the shadow of a grave calamity. The great national leader, Tilak, had passed away on 1st August 1920. The session was presided over by Lala Lajpat Rai. The Congress met in a tense atmosphere to decide upon the momentous, but controversial, issue of Non-Co-operation. It was a new weapon, which was devised by Gandhi and was tried on a small scale with varying success. Now it was going to be used against the mighty British Empire. At this session Gandhi moved a resolution which recalled that on the Khilafat question England had till then failed in her duty to the Muslims and that the Government had not yet repented for the Jalianwalla Bagh massacres and that, in the circumstances, the Congress desired that the policy of progressive nonviolent non-co operation, which had already been launched by Gandhi, should continue till these two wrongs were righted. The resolution also advised the people :

1. surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies;
- 2) refusal to attend Government Levies, Durbars, and other official and semi-official functions held by government officials, or in their honour;
- 3) gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided, or controlled by Government, and in place of such schools and colleges establishment of National schools and colleges in the various provinces;
- 4) gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants, and establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid, for settlement of private disputes;
- 5) refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Meso potamia;
- 6) withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils, and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election;
- 7) boycott of foreign goods.

Though sponsored by Gandhi and backed by the Ali Brothers and nearly the whole Muslim bloc, the resolution was strongly opposed by a large section. There were nearly thirty amendments to the resolution. In the open session of the Congress, on 8th September 1920, this resolution was opposed by

C.R. Das, Bipin Chandra Pal, Annie Besant, Malaviya, Jinnah, and others. Only Motilal Nehru supported Gandhi. After a prolonged debate the motion was carried by 1886 against 884 votes.

The resolution passed at the special session at Calcutta had, according to the rules, to be ratified in a regular session. Such a session held at Nagpur in December 1920. As it was believed that there would be a fresh trial of strength on the question of Non-co-operation more than 14,000 delegates attended. But C.R. Das who had come with a strong contingent of delegates to oppose the Gandhian policy of Non co-operation, on arrival at Nagpur changed his mind and supported Gandhi to the consternation of Bipin Chandra Pal and others. The policy of Non-co-operation was once again opposed by Annie Besant, Malaviya, Bipin Chandra Pal and Jinnah, but again without success.

The Non-Co-operation movement launched by Gandhi had two aspects which may be called positive and negative, or constructive and destructive. The positive aspect included the promotion of Swadeshi, particularly the revival of hand-spinning and weaving, removal of untouchability, promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity, prohibition and the collection of a crore of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. The negative aspect fell into three parts; boycott of legislatures, courts, and Government educational institutions.

Boycott of Government educational institutions was successful largely due to picketing by the students themselves. Picketing also helped in reducing the sale of liquor and foreign goods. The boycott of the reformed councils, however, naturally led to the election of non-congressmen. So far as boycott of the legal profession is concerned, the same was inaugurated by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru, who gave up their practice and princely income. The boycott of titles and honours, as well as Government offices, was a hopeless failure. As regards the resignation of Government jobs the response was insignificant and negligible. The number of persons who renounced honours and titles was very small compared to the total number. But these titles and honours henceforth ceased to be distinctions in the estimation of the people at large, and generally came to be regarded as badges of slavery.

In July 1921 the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution deciding to boycott the visit to India of the Prince of Wales. It was originally proposed that the Prince of Wales would formally inaugurate the legislatures in India, both Central and Local, constituted under the Reforms Scheme of 1919. The Prince of Wales landed in Bombay on 17th November 1921 at about 10 a.m. He was welcomed by the Viceroy, officials and a large number of ruling chiefs, leading businessmen and landed aristocrats.

The City, however, observed 'hartal' and swelling crowds rushed into streets. They joined the boycott meeting at the beach which was addressed by Gandhi, and a huge bonfire was made of the pile of foreign cloth. The mill-hands came out and began hooliganism of all kinds. Other people joined them, and a swelling mob was molesting the peaceful passengers in the tram cars and held up the tram traffic. Their special wrath fell upon those who had joined or gone to witness the royal procession. Soon there was police firing,

and the Anglo-Indian and Parsi quarters: took revenge upon those wearing 'Khaddar'. Many Congress volunteers were seriously injured. The casualties were heavy. According to official report 53 persons were killed and about 400 were wounded.

Gandhi was deeply hurt at the incidents of Bombay. He strongly denounced the rioters and vowed to abstain from food till the violence stopped. He remarked: "With non-violence on our lips we have terrorised those who happened to differ from us. The Swaraj that I have witnessed during the last two days has stunk in my nostrils." As a result of this ugly riot Gandhi suspended the Civil Disobedience Movement which was to be launched at Bardoli on 23rd November 1921. Generally speaking, the 'hartal' was successfully observed all over India on November 17 and passed off quietly everywhere except at Bombay.

The Government of Lord Reading was filled with rage over the treatment the Congress meted out to the Prince of Wales. The Government issued a notification within twenty-four hours, declaring the Congress and Khilafat volunteer organisation as unlawful. Week later proclamations were issued suppressing all public assemblies and processions for three months in Calcutta and some important towns. Lord Ronaldshay, the Governor of Bengal, threatened to take more drastic steps if this measure proved inadequate, and many other Provincial Governments followed suit. Thousands of volunteers in U.P., Bombay, Bengal and the Punjab were arrested and put in prison. Even the leaders were not spared. By the end of 1921, C.R. Das, his wife and son, Lala Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and Azad were put behind the bars.

Pandit Malaviya sought to bring about a rapprochement between the Government and the Congress, and urged the Viceroy, who was then in Calcutta, to release the civil disobedience prisoners. The Prince of Wales planned to celebrate the Christmas in India, and Reading was anxious to avoid all untoward happenings during the celebrations. He expressed willingness to concede to Malaviya's suggestion and also the future scheme of reforms with the Congress leaders. But Gandhi demanded not only the release of all prisoners who had to discuss been arrested under the Criminal Law Amendment Act but also the release of the Karachi and 'Fatwa' prisoners. (Karachi prisoners - Ali Brothers, Dr. Kitchlew and various others who were convicted on 1st November 1921 for having participated in the All-India Khilafat Conference held at Karachi in July 1921, where the resolution regarding military was adopted. Fatwa prisoners were those Ulemas who had endorsed this resolution in a Fatwa.). Gandhi also urged that the people's right of picketing should be conceded. The Viceroy turned down these demands, and the negotiations broke down. The programme of boycott of the Prince's visit was resumed. The city of Calcutta observed complete 'hartal' on the Christmas day.

Shortly after the failure of the above negotiations the annual session of the Congress was held at Ahmedabad in December 1921. As nearly 40,000 Congress workers were in jail, the number of delegates was only 4,726, as against 14,583 at Nagpur a year ago. The main resolution adopted by the

Congress urged the continuance of the Non-Co-operation Movement with greater vigour and advised all Congress workers to organise not only individual civil disobedience but also mass civil disobedience as soon as the masses were sufficiently trained in the method of non-violence. Accordingly, on 1st February 1922 Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy stating that mass civil disobedience would commence at Bardoli, a small tashil in the Surat District in Gujarat having a population of about 87,000. Gandhi made a final appeal to the Viceroy to revise his policy, set free all the prisoners convicted for non-violent activities, to free the Press from all administrative control and declare in clear terms the policy of absolute non-interference with all non-violent activities undertaken for "the redress of the Khilafat or the Punjab wrongs or Swaraj".

The Government took up the challenge. The Secretary of State was informed by the Viceroy that the army and the great majority of the police are staunch and believed that there was no disaffection on the part of the majority of the population.

Gandhi proceeded to Bardoli to lead the campaign in person. The whole of India watched the great battle in a spirit of animated suspense. But the battle it, was lost even before it had begun. At the crucial moment Gandhi halted because a dastardly crime was committed by the people of Chauri chaura, a village in U.P. near Gorakhpur. The police had opened fire on a procession, but when their ammunition was exhausted, and they shut themselves up inside a building, the excited mob set fire to it. As the members of the police force were forced to come out due to fire they were all, twenty two in number were burnt alive in the flames. This cruel incident took place on 5th February 1922. There was another mob outbreak at Bareilly, but it was easily suppressed. These incidents created a feeling of disgust, and about fifty prominent leaders of the U.P. issued a manifesto condemning the conduct of the volunteers. Some prominent leaders made an urgent appeal to Gandhi Civil Disobedience Movement, and Gandhi immediately agreed. The Working Committee of the Congress, hastily summoned at Bardoli discussed the matter on 11th and 12th February and upheld Gandhi's view. The All India Congress Committee which met at Delhi on 24th and 25th February, also endorsed the same. However, there was a strong opposition and many considered the suspension a great blunder. It put a stop not only to the civil disobedience but practically to the whole programme of Non-Co-operation. The nationalists all over India were staggered and the devotees and admirers of Gandhi, both Indian and foreign, were the loudest in denouncing his action.

The Government correctly gauged the situation and took full advantage of the unpopularity of Gandhi in having him arrested, a step which they had not dared to adopt so long for fear of popular outbreak. Gandhi was tried at Ahmedabad on 18th March 1922, and was sentenced to six years simple imprisonment. Thus ended the first phase of the Non Co-operation Movement. The whole movement centred round one person and his disappearance gave a deathblow to it, at least for the time being. This shows the greatness of Gandhi and gives us a fair measure of the role he played in

India's struggle for freedom. At the same time, it illustrates the precarious nature of a political movement whose success depends entirely upon one man.

The Non-Co-operation movement of Gandhi could not make much headway and later on realised that it was 'a Himalayan blunder' on his part to have launched the movement without adequate groundwork and proper training of the masses. But the movement was not quite fruit less. Gandhi's followers went to the towns and villages, and the countryside was filled with the activity of innumerable messengers of the new gospel of action. The call of the action was two-fold: It involved challenge and resistance to foreign rule and action to fight the social evils like the disunity of the nation, the backwardness of the depressed classes and the practice of untouchability. Professor Coupland pointed out that Gandhi "converted the nationalist movement into a revolutionary movement". He gave it a direction and a purpose. The most outstanding feature of the Non-Co-operation Movement was the willingness of the people in general to endure, to a remarkable degree, hardships and punishments inflicted by the Government. This is the reason why though the Non-Co-operation Movement collapsed, the memory of its greatness survived, and was destined to inspire the nation to launch it again at no distant date. The movement proved to be a great inspirer which gave a new confidence to the people to fight for freedom.

Check Your Progress

Q.4 What were the causes of the Non-Cooperation Movement? What were its consequences?

9.4 CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

The Non-Co-operation Movement and certain other political developments radically changed the political atmosphere in the country. In 1926 when Lord Irwin succeeded Lord Reading as the Viceroy, he found that the political situation was fast deteriorating. Realising that a policy of mere repression would not suffice, in November 1927 the British Government appointed a statutory commission under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon to report on the working of the Government of India Act, 1919 for the purpose of considering further reforms. The Simon Commission did not contain any Indian member. This all-white commission was boycotted by almost all political parties of British India. There was a countrywide 'hartal' on 3rd February 1928, when the Simon Commission arrived at Bombay.

In February, an All-Parties Conference was held at Delhi to Draft a new constitution of India. In August the Conference published a report which was drafted under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru, called the Nehru Report. The Report declared that the aim of Indian political endeavour should be the attainment of Dominion Status. But the Nehru Report gave rise to bitter controversy. The elders supported the Report whereas the younger generation led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Base demanded complete independence and not Dominion Status.

The Calcutta Congress met in December 1928. It became an arena of the political battle between the advocates of Dominion Status and the protagonists of immediate independence. Gandhi attended the Congress session and brought all his influence to bear on the delegates to vote for a compromise resolution which asked the Congress to accept Dominion Status if it was granted within a year and failing that, to launch a non-violent non-co-operation movement. Subhas Bose proposed an amendment to the resolution moved by Gandhi in order to ensure that the aim of the Congress shall be the attainment of complete independence. The fact that Bose moved this amendment brought to the forefront the fundamental cleavage between the old school and the new. However, the resolution proposed by Gandhi was accepted by the Congress.

On 31st October 1929 a significant announcement about the political future of India was made on behalf of the British Government by Lord Irwin, the Viceroy. Lord Irwin stated that it was implied in the previous declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of Indian constitutional advance was Dominion Status. Though Lord Irwin's declaration was welcomed in India, certain comments made on it in England made the Congress sceptical about British intentions and this strengthened the hands of militant group inside the Congress. Accordingly, the Lahore Congress of 1929, under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru gave up the ideal of Dominion Status and declared that henceforth the aim of the Congress would be complete independence or 'purna swaraj'. The resolution which embodied the spirit of the vast audience read as follows:

"This Congress endorses the action of the Working Committee in connection with the manifesto signed by party leaders, including Congressmen on the Viceregal pronouncements of the 31st October relating to Dominion Status... The Congress, however, having considered all that has since happened... therefore, in pursuance of the resolution passed at its session at Calcutta last year, declares that the word 'Swaraj' in Article 1 of the Congress Constitution shall mean complete Independence... and hopes that all Congressmen will henceforth devote their exclusive attention to the attainment of Complete Independence for India. As a preliminary step towards organising a campaign for Independence, and in order to make the Congress policy as consistent as possible with the change of creed, this Congress resolves upon complete boycott of the Central and Provincial Legislatures and Committees constituted by the Government and calls upon the Congressmen and others taking part in the national movement to abstain from participating, directly or indirectly, in future elections, and directs the present Congress members of the Legislatures and Committees to resign their seats. This Congress appeals to the nation zealously to prosecute the constructive programme of the Congress and authorises the All-India Congress Committee, whenever it deems fit, to launch upon a programme of Civil Disobedience, including non-payment of taxes, whether in selected areas or otherwise, and under such safeguards as it may consider necessary."

The adoption of independence as the goal of India was hailed with befitting solemnity. As the clock struck midnight on December 31st, and the date of

ultimatum issued by the Congress expired, Jawaharlal Nehru the President of the Congress, came out in solemn procession to the banks of the Ravi and hoisted the tricolour flag of Indian Independence in the presence of a huge gathering that dared the biting cold of Lahore winter to witness the historic scene. Sunday the 26th January, 1930 was celebrated all over India as the first Independence day. On this occasion a declaration prepared by the Congress was read to the people in the villages and towns all over the country. This declaration expressed the ideal that Freedom is 'the inalienable right of the Indian people.

The Working Committee of the Congress met again at Sabarmati on February 14-15 and authorised Gandhi to start a non-violent civil disobedient movement for attaining 'purna swaraj'. Its resolution on civil disobedience read: "In the opinion of the Working Committee, Civil Disobedience should be initiated and controlled by those who believe in non-violence for the purpose of achieving 'Purna Swaraj', as an article of faith and... welcomes the proposal of Mahatma Gandhi and authorises him and those working with him who believe in non-violence as an article of faith to start Civil Disobedience. The Working Committee further hopes that, in the event of a mass movement taking place, all those who are rendering voluntary co-operation to the Government, such as lawyers, and those who are receiving so-called benefits from it, such as students, will withdraw their co-operation or renounce benefits as the case may be and throw themselves into the final struggle for freedom." The Working thus, authorised only Gandhi and his followers in faith to start Civil Disobedience. But the All India Congress Committee, which met at Ahmedabad on 21st March, 1930, i.e. after Gandhi had begun his march for Dandi, not only endorsed the resolution of the Working Committee but somewhat widened its scope. They expressed the hope "that the whole country will respond to the action taken by Gandhi" and authorised "the Provincial Congress Committees to organise and undertake such Civil Disobedience as to them may seem proper and in the manner that may appear to them to be most suitable".

Mahatma Gandhi, who was authorised by the Congress to plan, start and direct Civil Disobedience first hit upon what has come to be known as 'Salt Satyagraha'. Salt Satyagraha means breaking the Salt Law which had imposed a tax on the manufacture of salt, by manufacturing salt freely. To understand why Gandhi chose the Salt-tax for satyagraha it is important to know the origin of salt-tax. In 1836, the Government of India had appointed a Salt Commission. It recommended that the Indian salt should be taxed and through this made costlier in order to enable salt from England to be sold in India. British exports to India ng manufactures required fewer ships than was required for taking Indian raw materials and food products back to England. So, more ships had to be sent in addition to these which carried British manufactured goods to India. But these ships could not come empty. Hence the British thought of loading these ships with Cheshire salt to be sold in India but if this was to be sold at a profitable price, Indian salt should be made more costly. For this purpose, Indian salt was taxed. Gandhi pointed out to the Viceroy that the salt-tax was the most iniquitous of all from standpoint of vast majority of Indians who were poor. It is for this

reason that Gandhi chose salt-tax for the Civil Disobedience movement. He decided to launch the Satyagraha campaign by manufacturing salt at Dandi, a village on the sea-coast in Gujarat about 200 miles from Sabarmati, and thereby openly break the salt law. He wrote a long letter to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, on 2nd March 1930, communicating this decision. Irwin's reply being unhelpful, Gandhi decided to proceed with his Satyagraha.

The essence of the Salt Satyagraha was to break the salt-laws, manufacture salt in violation of the salt laws and raid salt depots. While Gandhi was making necessary preparations for the 'Dandi March' in the Sabarmati Ashram, Vallabhbhai Patel went in advance, 'to prime up the villagers for the coming ordeals'. On the way he was arrested and sentenced to three months imprisonment by the Government. This arrest aroused the people of Gujarat. 75,000 people gathered on the sands of Sabarmati and passed the following resolution: "We the citizens. Ahmedabad, determine hereby that we shall go the same path where Vallabhbhai has gone and we shall attain full Independence while attempting to do so. Without achieving freedom for our country, we shall not rest in peace, nor will we give government peace. We solemnly declare that India's emancipation lies in truth and non-violence."

The arrest of Vallabhbhai, who went as the forerunner did not deter Gandhi from his resolve. He began his 24-day march to Dandi on foot on 12th March 1930 accompanied by well-trained and disciplined 72 members. These Dandi 'pilgrims' passed through hundreds of villages on the way to Dandi. The inhabitants of these villages were automatically educated about the significance of the national movement by seeing the illustrious batch of the Satyagrahis.

On the eve of the epic march, Gandhi gave detailed instructions to the people about what they should do when he is arrested, an event that he clearly foresaw. He instructed the people not to resort to violence, but to keep the fight going with full faith in the and non-violence. He exhorted that everyone should become a votary efficacy tyagraha. He said that once begun this time with his Dandi March. Civil Disobedience "cannot be stopped and must not be stopped so long Satya there is a single civil resister left free or alive". Thus Gandhi contemplated that the movement he was launching with the Dandi March for breaking the salt-law was the great beginning of a great movement for a fight to the finish. He expected great response from the people all over the country.

Gandhi reached Dandi on 5th April 1930. But Gandhi's long march was a veritable triumphal procession. Villagers sank on their knees as the marchers proceeded. Over 300 village headmen gave up their jobs and the entire countryside became acutely conscious of the struggle for Swaraj which was intensifying. Early on the morning of 6th April, Gandhi and his party dipped into the sea-water, returned to the beach and picked up some salt left by the waves, thus making a technical breach of law. Immediately thereafter, he issued a press statement. In this he declared that it was 'now open to any one who would take the risk ne of prosecution under the salt law to manufacture salt wherever he wishes and wherever it is convenient.'

He wanted them to manufacture clean salt and use it or sell it cheaply to others. But they should know that by doing so they are violating the salt law for which they may be prosecuted and punished and that they should be ready for this too.

As wide publicity was given in the Press to every detail of the march and display of the unique devotion to Gandhi and enthusiasm for the cause he had espoused among the masses, the story of the Dandi March worked up the feelings of the country as a whole, such as nothing else could. The technical breach of the salt law by Gandhi on 6th April, 1930, was a signal for the countrywide repetition of the same. Where natural conditions did not permit of the illegal manufacture of salt, violation of other laws was resorted to. J.M. Sen Gupta, the Mayor of Calcutta, defied the law of sedition by openly reading seditious literature in a public meeting. An intensive campaign was started on an extensive scale for the boycott of liquor as well as of foreign clothes and British goods of all sorts, with the help of volunteer organisations of picketers. In defiance of forest laws people began to cut down timber in Central Provinces and Bombay. A campaign for the non-payment of taxes and land-revenue was started in Gujarat, U.P. and Midnapore district in Bengal. In the North-West Frontier Province, the home of the fierce warlike Pathans, the Red Shirt volunteers organised by Abdul Gafar Khan followed in a non-violent manner, an intense anti-Government movement in various ways including non-payment of taxes.

Gandhi made the violation of the salt law his chief object. He announced his intention of raiding the salt depot of Dharasana in Surat District. As usual, he communicated his decision in a long letter to the Viceroy and again requested him "to remove the salt tax and the prohibition on private salt making". But before Gandhi set he was arrested and put out for Dharasana into prison. Abbas Tyabji took up Gandhi's place as leader of the Salt Satyagraha, but he also was arrested. Then Saronjini Naidu hurried to Dharasana and directed the raid on 21st May; 2,500 volunteers from all parts of Gujarat took part in it. A series of raids were made on the Wadala salt depot in Bombay. Everywhere the volunteers were mercilessly beaten and arrested in large numbers. A detailed account of the heroic non-violent fight put up by the salt raiders at Dharasana has been preserved by Webb Miller, Foreign correspondent of the United Press, U.S.A., who was an eyewitness of the - grim tragedy.

On 10th April, 1930, Gandhi had made a special appeal in his paper 'Young India' to the women of India to take up, the work of picketing and spinning. The effect was almost miraculous. Thousands of women responded, and even those of orthodox and aristocratic families who had never before come out of their seclusion, offered themselves for arrest and imprisonment. It took by surprise not only the Government but even the Indians themselves. The awakening of the women not only added to the number of civil resisters to a considerable extent. but their examples also redoubled the energy and activities of men.

The Government did not at first take the Civil Disobedience campaign very seriously. But before a month had passed, the Government realised the gravity of the situation caused by a wide national movement, and struck hard, in a ruthless manner. The Working Committee of the Congress refers to 'numerous indiscriminate and brutal lathi-charges, various forms of torture, firing resulting in the wounding and deaths of hundreds of people, looting of property, burning of houses, depriving the people of the right of public speech and association by prohibiting meetings and processions and declaring Congress and allied associations unlawful. New Ordinances were passed authorising the Government to curtail the liberty of the individual in various ways. On 27th April, 1930, the Government passed an Emergency Ordinance, called Press Ordinance restricting the Press.

The November 1930, when India was engulfed in this Civil Disobedience movement, the First Round Table Conference for deciding the political future of India was inaugurated at London under the presidency of Ramsay MacDonald, the British Prime Minister. The deliberations of this Conference were boycotted by the Congress. In February, 1931, political talks began between Gandhi, who had by then been released, and Lord Irwin. On 5th March, 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed, which inter alia provided that the Congress would discontinue the Civil Disobedience movement and would participate in future discussions on constitutional reforms.

In September 1931, Gandhi attended the Second Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Congress. The question of the representation of the Muslims in the new constitution emerged as one of the major problems at this conference. Later in August 1932, the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, announced what is called Communal Award. This contemplated separate representation not only for the Muslims, Europeans and Sikhs, but also for the depressed classes. Realising that this last provision would destroy the growing unity of the Country, Gandhi started a fast unto death. On 25th September, 1932, the 6th day of the fast, a compromise was reached at Poona with Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the depressed classes. This Poona Pact provided that there would not be any separate electorate for the depressed classes, but that their seats would be filled by joint electorates out of panels of names to be selected by them.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Explain the Circumstances that led to the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930.

9.4.1 REVIVAL OF THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT:

Gandhi, soon after his return to India in December, 1931, asked Lord Willingdon, the new Viceroy, for an interview to discuss important issues. The latter, however, declined to meet Gandhi. The Congress decided to revive the Civil Disobedience movement when negotiations between the Congress and the Government finally broke down. Gandhi was arrested on 4th January, 1932. The Government issued a number of ordinances to suppress the Congress and the national movement. The Congress organisations were banned. Practically all Congress leaders were arrested. A large number of civil resisters were also arrested. The Government under the powers provided by the ordinances, confiscated the property of a number of organisations and took action against the section of the Press which supported the struggle. The Government soon released Gandhi from prison. The Civil Disobedience movement was suspended temporarily by the Congress in the light of the fast of Gandhi on the issue of the Communal Award and under his advice. The All India Congress Committee officially wound up Civil Disobedience, mass or individual, in May 1934.

Thus the great Civil Disobedience campaign came to an ignoble end, in spite of all the brave and heroic deeds of which any nation may well feel proud.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Explain the revival of the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930.

9.5 SUMMARY

Satyagraha means adherence to truth or insistence on truth, which Gandhiji applied in South Africa and India to solve the problem of Indians in South Africa. He says that it is the greatest spiritual experiment known to history. It is a movement towards simplicity and increasing emphasis on spiritual against material values. This is a method of non-violent direct action, a complete and comprehensive programme and an attitude towards life. It takes the man to the highest ethical plane. With the help of this Satyagraha, Gandhiji started non-cooperation movement against the British for which several causes were responsible. This movement was based on non-violence but the incident at Chauri Chaura, the movement took violence turn due to the British. Gandhiji was constrained to withdraw the movement in 1922.

All India Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi launched two more mass movements. The movement started in 1930 came to be known as the Civil Disobedience Movement for which the factors like the appointment of Simon Commission, Nehru Report and the British attitude towards reforms in India were responsible.

9.6 QUESTIONS

1. Examine the Doctrine of Satyagraha. How was it practiced in South Africa?
2. Give an account of the application of the Doctrine of Satyagraha in and out side of India.
3. What were the causes and consequences of the non-co operations movement of 1920-22?
4. Analyse the non-co operation movement. Bring out its importance in the Indian National Movement.
5. Discuss the circumstances that led the Congress to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement.
6. Give an account of the Dandhi March of 1930.

9.7 ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. A.R. Desai, Social Background of Indian Nationalism, 5th Edition, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1976.
2. R.C. Majumdar, Three Phases of India's Freedom Struggle, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1961.
3. A.K. Majumdar, Advent of Independence, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1963.
4. S.R. Mehrotra, Towards India's Freedom and Partition, Vikas Publications, Delhi, 1979.
5. K.M. Panikkar, The Foundation of New India., Allen And Unwin, London, 1963.
6. Tara Chand, History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol.IV. New Delhi, Government of India Publications Division, 1961-72.
7. J.B. Kripalani, Gandhi: His Life and Thought. New Delhi, Govt. of India Publications Division, 1970.
8. R. Kumar (Ed.), Essays on Gandhian Politics: The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919. London, Oxford University Press, 1971.
9. D.A. Low (Ed.), Congress and the Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle, 1917-1947. New Delhi, Arnold Heinemann, 1977.
10. R.C. Majumdar, History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vols. 1-III, Calcutta, Firma K.L. Mukhy opadyay, 1963-1965.
11. R.C. Majumdar (Ed.), History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. XII; Struggle for Freedom. Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969.

GANDHIJI AND HIS MOVEMENTS: QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Quit India Movement

10.2.1 Circumstances that led to the Quit India Movement

10.2.2 The Cripps Mission

10.2.3 Quit India Resolutions

10.2.4 Government Repression

10.2.5 The mass upheaval

10.2.6 Nature and Significance of Quit India Movement

10.4 Summary

10.5 Questions

10.6 Additional Readings

10.0 OBJECTIVE:

After the completion of this unit the student will be able to

- Know the circumstances that led to the Quit India Movement.
- Explain the nature and significance of the Quit India Movement.
- Understand the recommendations of Cripps Mission.
- Perceive the Quit India Resolutions.
- Omprehend the Government Repression and the mass upheaval towards Quit India Movement.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The Quit India Movement of 1942 is a landmark in the history of the Indian freedom movement. Unlike the Revolt of 1857, the Quit India Movement swept across the length and breadth of the country as a mighty tidal wave. It was a powerful, multi-dimensional and all-embracing movement. The dominant urge behind the movement was the urge to be free from the British domination and the spirit of nationalism. The Quit India movement symbolised the pen-ultimate phase of the anti-imperialist struggle in India.

Another point of significance about the Quit India movement was that for the first time Gandhi's age-long creed of non-violence was repudiated not only by the people as a whole but to some extent by him too. The Quit India call given on 8th August 1942 by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi produced a mass upheaval of unprecedented dimensions. The Quit India call was not a mere rhetoric. It posed real threat to British rule, and the Government responded by unleashing a reign of terror, leaving the country devastated, ruined and ravaged. The mass upheaval was no doubt suppressed by the superior forces of the British power. Nevertheless, the British did quit India soon after in 1947.

10.2.1 Circumstances that led to the Quit India Movement

The Quit India movement was the last in the series of mass movements launched by Mahatma Gandhi under the aegis of the Indian National Congress. Earlier way back in 1920-22, the non-violent non-co-operation movement had been launched against the British rule. A decade later, Gandhi underlook the historic Dandi March to break the salt laws and as its sequel, the civil disobedience movement of epic proportions started involving truly the masses of India. During the course of these years Gandhi and the Indian National Congress were able to forge a most powerful anti-imperialist united front of the Indian people against the British. The movement electrified the political atmosphere of the country, the people responding to the call made by the Indian National Congress. The movement launched under the Congress was unique in many respects. It was a form of political action with a difference. Nothing like it had been undertaken in the history of mankind.

During 1930-31, Gandhi had chosen salt as a symbol of a war against the British. By doing so, he demonstrated with great effect the utter callousness and exploitative nature of British rule in India. After a pause of ten years, Gandhi gave a call for the Quit India movement in 1942: using the hypnotic slogan 'Quit India'.

It is important to note that each successive mass movement generated among the vast multitudes of Indians renewed awareness of their social, economic and political degradation suffered under British rule, and infused in them an intense sense of nationalist sentiments. The Quit India movement of 1942 spread all over the country bringing within its fold people from all walks of life, arousing in them tremendous patriotic fervour and an irresistible urge to act, and suffer for the national cause with an ultimate aim of gaining freedom from the alien rule. This was to be the final assault on British power in India. The Quit India movement, however, followed an unchartered and unintended course, quite different from the non-violent satyagraha movements of previous years. This happened because the entire leadership of the Indian National Congress was removed in one swoop from the political scene soon after the passing of the Quit India Resolution 8th August, 1942, leaving the people utterly leaderless and confused. As a result, the movement developed into a peoples' revolt; a mass upheaval of gigantic proportions ensued which threatened the very existence of the British power, until it was brutally suppressed by the Government. In order

to understand the significance of the Quit India movement it is important to analyse the circumstances under which the movement was started by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

When the Second World War broke out in September 1939 and England declared war against Nazi Germany, India was also dragged into the war. The Congress asked for a declaration of British War aims and sought for India the status of an independent nation. Receiving no response from the British Government, the Congress ministries in the provinces, in protest, resigned between October and November 1939. Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League and then a bitter critic of the Congress, was happy that the Congress ministries had resigned and he organised 22nd December 1939 as ‘a day of deliverance and thanks giving’.

On 8th August 1940, Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, made a declaration, known as the August Declaration, to the effect that the British Government did not contemplate any immediate transfer of power, but he added; “His Majesty’s Government authorize me to declare that they will most readily assent to the setting up after the conclusion of the war with the least possible delay of a body representative of the principal elements in India’s national life in order to devise the framework of the new Constitution”. On 31st August 1940, the Muslim League welcomed the August offer. But it hardly evoked any response from the Congress or nationalist India.

The rejection of the August Offer widened the gulf between England and nationalist India. The Congress then decided to launch a civil disobedience movement under Gandhi’s leadership. Gandhi, however, started not a mass civil disobedience but an individual satyagraha movement. The movement was started on 17th October 1940 and as soon as an individual was arrested another took his place till the prisoners numbered 600. Later on 17th December 1940, Gandhi suspended this movement, but it was resumed on 5th January 1941 and more than 20,000 people were arrested. This movement was not started on a big scale because the Congress leaders were yet hesitant to embarrass British war efforts in India.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Enumerate the circumstances that led to the Quit India Movement.

10.2.2 THE CRIPPS MISSION:

During the twelve month period, from June 1940 to June 1941, the military situation of the Allied Powers in the European and Asian Theatres became

very grave. After the capitulation of France, the Germans had started war against the British Isles, and it was only the flow of American arms that saved the British war machine from complete destruction. Realising that victory over England would not be easy, Germany opened war in the Balkan peninsula and took over the island of Crete and thereby came in possession of valuable base of operations against the British Mediterranean fleet. The war spread into the Middle Eastern region also. On 22nd June 1941, in violation of the Non-aggression Pact and Neutrality, Germany launched an attack against the Soviet Union and with this, the war entered into a new phase. The Nazi troops achieved astounding victories at several points within the Russian territory, and this brought home to the authorities in London and Washington the gravity of the military situation. With this realization, both Churchill and Roosevelt declared their solidarity with Stalin and proclaimed that they would give all aid and military material to the Soviet Union. In the Asian Theatre also, the Allied Powers were in a sad plight. The Japanese had penetrated into Indo-China and their thrust, in the quest of a "New World Order", was on in the South-East Asian region. The negotiations that were started by the Japanese diplomats in Washington, in April 1941, to resolve the conflict with the United States in a peaceful manner produced no result, and all of a sudden, the Japanese bombers struck at the American Navy in Pearl Harbour, on 6th December 1941. The news of the disaster wrought by Japan reached America, and the administration, Congress and the people were full of rage and annoyance. War was declared upon Japan and the United States, thereafter, became fully involved in fighting.

But in the meantime, political frustration in India was mounting. This frustration was aggravated by the statement that Churchill made on 8th September 1941, that the Atlantic Charter, which in enunciating the war aims of the Allied Powers had affirmed the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they would live, did not apply to India. The situation became more critical as the Axis Powers mounted their war offensive against England and as the news of British reverses in the war started coming in. In 1942 Rangoon and Singapore fell before the advancing Japanese armies. Japanese soldiers not only captured Rangoon and Singapore but they came knocking at the eastern frontiers of India. There was no united or popular war front against the Japanese in India. On the contrary, Churchill's declaration that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to India had created great frustration and resentment. The British Government realised that an unfriendly India would cause great damage to its war effort. It was in this predicament, that Churchill, was forced to think of conciliatory moves to pacify India and specially the Congress.

As a first gesture to reconcile the differences with the Indian Congress, on 4th December, 1941, Churchill ordered the release of many of its leaders including Nehru and Azad. The British Government also tried to utilise the good office of the President of China to pacify and win over Indian leaders for active help in the war. Chiang Kai Shek came to India in February 1942 and met several leaders. Roosevelt also wrote a letter to Churchill counselling settlement of the Indian political problem by offering some move towards self-government to India.

Taking all these factors into consideration Churchill decided to make an offer of Dominion Status for the people of India after the War ended. On 11th March 1942, the day after Roosevelt had cabled to Churchill about India's political problem, Churchill announced the appointment of Cripps Mission.

Sir Stafford Cripps came to India on 22nd March 1942. After negotiating with the leaders of several political parties and few other prominent persons in India he formulated his proposals. The Cripps plan provided that India would have Dominion Status and a constitution making body after the end of the war and that, in the meantime, the British Government would, with the co-operation of the Indian people, "retain control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort." The plan stated that after the war steps would be taken for the earliest possible realisation of self-government in India and India will be constituted in "a Dominion, associated with the United Kingdom and the other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown, but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs."

The Cripps Proposals which had been made at the every last hour and because of the compulsion of events was rejected by the Congress Working Committee by resolution passed on 11th April 1942. It regretted that the "new proposals relate principally to the future, upon the cessation of hostilities," that they ignored the ninety million people in the Indian states, and that they required "the acceptance beforehand of the novel principle of nonaccession of a Province." Gandhi dismissed the proposals outright as "a post-dated cheque on a falling bank."

The failure of the Cripps Mission produced uneasiness and frustration among the leaders of the Congress. The Congress felt that only a people's war could avert the Japanese menace. On 26th April 1942, Gandhi demanded the withdrawal of the British power from India. The plea that England could not leave India because of her obligations to the princes and minorities was ridiculed by Gandhi who said: "All talk of treaties with the princes and obligations towards minorities are a British creation designed for the preservation of the British rule and British interests."

However, the question arose as to whether the launching of a movement against the British when England was waging a war against Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy would be consistent with the past policy of the Congress. Before the war fascism had often been denounced by the Congress, mainly at the instance of Nehru. After the beginning of the Second World War Nehru felt that the victory of fascism would be a tragedy for the world. Nehru would have been happy if the Indian people could fight in support of the Allied powers but he knew that unless India was free Indians could not fight a war in defence of freedom. Under these circumstances, before the Congress launched the Quit India movement in 1942 there were considerable doubts and questioning amongst Congress leaders, particularly in the minds of Nehru and Azad, as to the ethics of starting a civil disobedience movement at that time.

Azad was particularly uneasy about the proposed movement. If the Japanese invaded India, then he considered that it would be the sacred duty of Indians to oppose them by every means at their disposal. However, by the middle of 1942 Gandhi had decided upon starting a civil disobedience movement against the British. When this question was discussed at the Congress Working Committee in July 1942, Azad, as the President of the Congress opposed Gandhi. "Among the members of the Working Committee only Jawaharlal supported me", Azad claimed, "and then only upto point. The Other members would not oppose Gandhi even when they were not fully convinced..." On the question whether a civil disobedience movement should be started during the war the differences between Gandhi and Azad were so great that Gandhi even wrote to Azad asking him to resign. Later Gandhi said that he had written the letter in haste and that he wanted to withdraw it. Gandhi, however, held firm to his idea of starting a civil disobedience movement during the war.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Write a note on "Cripps Mission".

10.2.3 QUIT INDIA RESOLUTIONS:

On 14th July, 1942, the Congress Working Committee passed a long resolution, generally referred to as the 'Quit India' resolution. It renewed the demand that "British rule in India must end immediately", and reiterated the view that the freedom of India was "necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, Fascism, Militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another."

The gist of the Quit India Resolution may be put as follows:

- 1) The continuance of the British Rule in India was good neither for India nor "for the success of the United Nations."
- 2) A provisional Government representing all important sections of the people should be formed if India was to "resist aggression."
- 3) This Provisional government would evolve a scheme to convene a Constituent Assembly and representatives of free India and of Great Britain "will confer together for the adjustment of future relations and for the co-operation of the two countries as allies in the common task of meeting aggression."

- 4) The Congress could change the ill-will against Britain into good will only "if India feels the glow of freedom."
- 5) The Resolution emphasised that the communal tangle could not be solved because of the British policy of 'divide and rule' and that once the British Rule was withdrawn this problem could be solved easily.
- 6) It was stated that "In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British Rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied Powers in their prosecution of the war or in any ways to encourage aggression on India or increased pressure on China by the Japanese or any other Power associated with the Axis Group."
- 7) The Congress pleaded that its "very reasonable" and "just proposal" be accepted by Britain "not only in the interest of India but also that of Britain and of the cause of freedom to which the United Nations proclaimed their adherence.
- 8) In case the British did not agree to withdraw from India, it was resolved that the Congress would be forced "to utilise all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted non-violence as part of its policy, for the vindication of political rights and liberty." "A mass struggle on non-violent lines" under the "inevitable leadership" of Gandhi would be started.

When the Quit India Resolution was passed by the Congress Working Committee on the 14th July, 1942, on behalf of Gandhi, Mira Ben (daughter a British Admiral who adopted Indian way of life under the influence of Gandhi. Her earlier name was Miss Slade) was sent to meet the Viceroy and explain to him in person the Quit India Resolution. But the Viceroy refused even to interview her, saying that he would not meet any representative of the Congress which had taken up the path of a revolution. However, the Congress gave an ultimatum to the authorities in London giving 24 days' time to British Government to arrive at a political settlement with it on the basis of the Quit India Resolution.

Before the Wardha meeting of the Congress Working Committee adopted the 'Quit India' Resolution, Gandhi wrote to the Chinese President Chiang Kai Shek explaining the Congress point of view. Knowing that American opinion was in favour of India he also wrote to the American President, Roosevelt to enlist American support to the freedom struggle. Both Chiang and Roosevelt tried to influence Churchill. Both of them felt that political settlement between the Congress Party and the British Government was most important to secure the good will and support of the Indian people for the prosecution of the war. But Churchill's replies to both Chiang and Roosevelt were that the British Government had already made a fair offer to Indians and that under the circumstances it could not do anything more. Churchill was too stubborn a British Conservative imperialist to be influenced by even Roosevelt and Chiang. All this disappointed Gandhi and the Congressmen.

The All India Congress Committee had decided to meet in Bombay on 7-8 August 1942 to review the political situation in India and to adopt a course of action to be followed for liberation of India. After prolonged discussions of 7th August, the Committee reassembled at the Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay on 8th August 1942 at 3 p.m. Nearly 250 members of the AICC and 10,000 visitors attended this historic meeting, wherein the Quit India Resolution was passed amidst wild enthusiasm and tumultuous cheers. The Resolution had been drafted earlier by Jawaharlal Nehru, who moved the Resolution and Sardar Patel seconded it. Only thirteen members of the AICC voted against it.

The AICC expressly repeated with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India, and explicitly stated that free India would join the Allies with all her great resources. It sanctioned the non-violent mass struggle under the leadership of Gandhi, provided also for the contingency of his arrest. "A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committee can function. When this happens, every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India."

The Quit India Resolution was a great document comparable to the fundamental rights resolution passed at the Karachi Congress 1931, and the independence resolution passed at the Lahore Congress presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru on 31st December, 1929, and the pledge of independence taken way back on 30th January 1930. It reiterated the nation's resolve to fight for the legitimate and inalienable right to independence. It examined the circumstance leading to the unilateral decision taken by the British Government declaring that India was a party to the Second World War. This declaration was made without reference to popular Congress ministries, which ruled over most of the British Indian provinces, after winning the elections, as provided by the Government of India Act of 1935. The Indian National Congress resented the unilateral declaration, saying that the Congress Governments had not been consulted and India was plunged into war without the consent of the Indian people. The Resolution referred to the meagre response of the British Government to Indian demands in the form of Cripps Proposals, and the humiliation which India suffered under British rule.

The Resolution further asked, how could India participate in the war as a slave nation. If the war was being fought for freedom and democracy, as had been declared by the Allied Powers to be their ultimate aim, is it not its foremost duty to recognise freedom and democracy for India? India could only resist aggression if it was reinforced by the driving power, i.e. freedom. "Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war", it reaffirmed.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad and others in their speeches, forcefully argued that India was left without any alternative than to launch a mass movement to force the British to see reason failing which, it must quit India, leaving Indians to their fate. Jawaharlal Nehru moving the resolution spoke with great dignity and anguish, and justifiable at the intransigent attitude of the British Government anger at to India's legitimate demands for Freedom. "The conception of the resolution is is not narrow nationalism, but it has an international back he said. "If Britain had acted rightly, the entire history of the war would have been different. But in spite of perils and disasters, England has stuck to her imperialism and Empire." Hinting at the character of Government under Churchill, Nehru pointed out that nothing could be expected from such Government till it lasts, and Indians a must "dissociate with that Government and that country." He declared. The Quit India Resolution reiterated that "India, the classic land of modern imperialism", had been ruined culturally, economically, politically and socially under British rule. The continuation of that rule degrading and enfeebling India and making her of progressively less capable defending herself and contributing to the cause of world freedom. The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depends the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and imperialism." Mahatma Gandhi made a passionate plea for mass action for the achievement of these goals.

Addressing the gathering in the open session, Gandhi declared that nothing short of complete freedom will satisfy Indians and asked every Indian "from this moment onwards to consider yourself a free man or woman, and as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism." Furthermore, he exhorted them to remember the 'mantra', which he gave to the people. "The 'mantra' is," he said, "Do or Die. We shall either free India or die in the attempt. We shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery" and observed further: "Take the pledge with God and your own conscience as witness that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it."

The tone of the battle cry given by Gandhi was indeed unmistakable. It was to be the last and final assault on the citadel of British power in India; "a fight to the finish" as Nehru had urged. However, Gandhi had not given a call to embark on a violent path; nor had he issued an ultimatum to the Government out of desperation. Jawaharlal Nehru, in fact, had said that the Resolution was "not a threat" but an "invitation" to the Government to respond to Indian urges in a constructive fashion.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Discuss the Resolutions of the Quit India Movement.

10.2.4 GOVERNMENT REPRESSION :

When the AICC endorsed the Quit India Resolution in the evening of 8th August, 1942, it was also decided that on the following morning Nehru would explain to the United States Government and the people through the radio, the scope and contents of the Quit India Resolution. But Churchill and Linlithgow had already finalised their plans to arrest the Congress leaders and crush their movement. Even before dawn on the 9th August quite a large number of national leaders including Gandhi, Nehru, Azad, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Kripalani, Asaf Ali, Sarojini Naidu and a host of others were arrested. About 148 Congress leaders were arrested, and their internment was followed by the imprisonment of the rank and file all over the country. The British Government expected that by this quick and drastic action the new movement would be effectively nipped in the bud. This step of the Government worked as a spark, and the Quit India movement began and was not launched. The bureaucracy did not even allow the Congress leadership an opportunity of explaining to the countrymen what it actually wanted them to do-some kind of non-co-operation or protest hartals or cessation of work in the country or general strike or some other form of nation's protest.

10.2.5 THE MASS UPHEAVAL:

In the absence of leaders and without a proper lead as to the actual line of action, the people spontaneously did what they could or what they put thought, paralyse the administration and bring an end to the foreign rule. There was mass upheaval throughout the country. As Nehru it, "For the first time since the Great Revolt of 1857, vast numbers of people rose to challenge by force the fabric of British rule in India. There were disturbances all over the country. The people in Bengal, U.P. and Bihar took the lead in the movement. Disturbances took many forms. Communications were disrupted; electric and telephone wires were cut, railway carriages were attacked and put on fire; police stations were raided and burnt; even military vehicles were destroyed. The teachers and students abstained from schools and colleges and many universities were closed. Workers in the factories refused to attend to duties. There were mob violence, lawlessness, riots and disorder in certain places. The message which Gandhi gave before being arrested on the morning of 9th August pointed to the fact that the movement

ought to remain non-violent, which was not fully grasped by the He had said, "Everyone is free to go to the fullest length under ahimsa. People. Complete deadlock by strikes and other non-violent means. Satyagrahis must go out to die, not to live. They must seek and face death. It is only when individuals go out to die that the nation will survive, 'Karengē ya marengē' "(we will do or die). During the course of the movement, the earlier part of the message seems to have been forgotten or ignored by the people, who chartered their course of action on the basis of their own interpretation of the message of Gandhi.

The developments in India in the wake of the Quit India Resolution evoked disapproval in certain quarters, denunciation in others, and strong action from the authorities. Some persons like the Liberal leader T.B. Sapru, the Depressed Class Leader, B.R. Ambedkar, the Muslim League Leader, Jinnah, the Hindu Mahasabha leader, Veer Savarkar and the Sikhs were against the Quit India movement. They called the Wardha resolution 'ill-considered' and 'ill-opportune', and urged 'a concerted effort on a collected basis for the settlement of our internal dispute'. Ambedkar described Gandhi's mass Civil Disobedience plan as 'irresponsible and insane,' and even suggested that it was better to wait for the termination of the war for settling the dispute with England. Jinnah appealed to all Muslims to keep aloof from the disturbances, warned Congressmen not to picket, harass or interfere with Muslims, and condemned the campaign. The Muslim League, all through the movement, maintained the attitude of "benevolent neutrality" towards the Government. Savarkar, the spokesman of the Hindu Mahasabha, also appealed to all Hindus, on the very day Gandhi and other Congress leaders were arrested, not to lend any support to the Congress move'. He was a promoter of Hindu communalism (Hindutwa) and there appeared to him nothing on the Congress move to advance this cause. The Sikhs, traditionally loyal to the British, remained aloof from the movement, and on certain occasions even decried it.

International reaction to the Quit India movement was mixed. Some prominent leaders like Clement Atlee felt that the Congress could have waited till the war was over and expressed that India's freedom after the war was a certainty. In the United States important persons like Wendell Wilkie, Henry Wallace, the Vice President of the U.S.A., Pearl Buck and Lin Yu Tang espoused the cause of dependent India. But several important newspapers condemned India's agitation, bringing 'lawlessness! and 'violent activities' with it. The best champion abroad of India's cause was Chiang Kai-Shek of China. He sent a very strongly worded letter of protest against the large-scale arrests of Congress leaders in India to President Roosevelt of America. But the American President hesitated to do anything except to forward it to Churchill. Churchill resented Chiang's message as 'intervention in the affairs of the Empire and told Roosevelt to advise the Chinese leader to mind his own business'.

The unprecedented mass upheaval, which engulfed the country after the arrest of Gandhi and other prominent leaders of the Congress on 9th August 1942, took everyone by surprise. On the night of 8th August 1942, after the Quit India resolution was passed, thousands of Congress workers, who had

attended the Bombay meeting, left for their respective destinations in anticipation of a programme to be announced shortly by the Congress and Gandhi. The sudden and swift action of the Government immobilised the Congress leadership. This precipitated and electrified the political atmosphere in the country resulting in a mass upsurge throughout the months of August and September. To begin with, peaceful processions, hartals and demonstrations were undertaken in which all the sundry joined, but inevitably these ended up in violence and conflict when the Government began repressive measures. The extraordinary speed with which the movement spread to small towns and villages starting from the cities was truly amazing. It effectively demonstrated the intensity of the feelings of the people against the Government and its measures taken against their leaders.

During the later part of August and September 1942, throughout north India, from Delhi to U.P., Bihar, Bengal and Assam, and from Central India to Maharashtra, from Orissa to Central Provinces and South India, public communication system was tampered with. Workers of mills and factories in Jamshedpur, Bombay, Ahmedabad and other places went on strike. The peasants of U.P., Bihar and Bengal came out in large numbers. In many towns and cities the shopkeepers downed their shutters for several weeks. Expressing serious concern on the situation in India, Viceroy Linlithgow informed the Secretary of State: "I am engaged here in meeting by far the most serious rebellion since that of 1857, the gravity and extent of which we have so far concealed from the world for reasons of military security." There was total breakdown of Government in most parts of U.P. and Bihar.

The British Government pressed into service its entire machinery to suppress the movement. It showed utmost ferocity in dealing with the Quit India movement employing force to suppress it. Villages after villages were burnt down under official supervision. Cumulative punitive fines were imposed and collected with ruthless severity. The houses of Congressmen and suspected 'rebels' were singled out and set on fire. Several hundred heads of cattle belonging to the agitators were rounded up and summarily auctioned. Innumerable workers and peasants were tortured. Tarini Shankar Chakravorty relates the story of the reign of terror unleashed in Bengal and Assam in his book 'India in Revolt, 1942' so also Govind Shahi in his work '42 Rebellion'.

According to an official estimate, the number of people killed and wounded by police or military firing during the 1942 disturbances, was 1,028 killed and 3,200 wounded. The police and military resorted to firing at least on 538 occasions and violent mobs were fired upon or bombed from aeroplanes. The unofficial figure of the dead, however, was stated to be about 25,000. Jawaharlal Nehru observed in 'The Discovery of India' that about 10,000 persons were killed in 1942. More than 90 lakhs of rupees were collected as fines from villages. By the end of 1942, more than 1,00,000 persons were thrown into the jails without trial, most of whom were released only after the War came to an end. The brutal power used by the Government was as unprecedented as the violent means adopted by the people during the course of the Quit India movement.

Regarding the nature and extent of the repressive measures taken by the Government, the official and non-official statements in the Legislative Assembly at various times give a fair idea. There is hardly any doubt that the Government used the most stringent measures to suppress the movement. "The disturbances" stated Churchill in the House of Commons the weight of on 10th September, 1942, "were crushed with all the Government... large reinforcements reached India and the number of White soldiers now in that country, although very small compared to its size and population, are larger than at any time in the British connection." Hundreds of persons were arrested and imprisoned and a large number were killed. Insult, indignity, injury and even assault were meted out in complete disregard of the position and status of the persons concerned. Whipping was inflicted on many. Several members of the Central Assembly made a demand for setting up of a Commission having a majority of non-official members to enquire into the excesses committed by the military and police on the people.

In spite of the acts of repression, in certain areas like the Satara region in Maharashtra, Midnapore in Bengal, parallel Governments were formed, which collected land revenue and taxes from the villages and dispensed justice through Panchayats and courts constituted by them. This continued for months till the Government captured most of the intermediate and village leaders and punished them. The underground activity of some of the Congress Socialist leaders such as Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan and others like Aruna Asaf Ali, also was a prominent aspect of the movement of 1942. Independent radio broadcasts through a transmitter from Bombay were made by some underground leaders creating considerable excitement among the people.

The Quit India Movement turned out to be "essentially a spontaneous mass up-heaval", as Jawaharlal Nehru put it. He wrote: "The sudden and unorganised demonstrations and outbreaks on the part of the people, culminating in violent conflicts and destruction, and continued against overwhelming and powerful armed forces, were a measure of the intensity of their feelings... there were no directions, no programme. There were no well-known persons to lead them or tell them what to do, and yet they were too excited and angry to remain quiescent". The people, no doubt, had acquitted themselves with glory, showing exemplary heroism, suffering, and dying for the national cause.

The British Government blamed the Congress for the disturbances in the country and held the view that the Congress had secretly devised a concerted plan of action including sabotage and violence. The Government's attitude towards the Congress was one of unconcealed hostility and disdain. They believed that the Congress was ungrateful and had launched a gigantic mass movement without in the least bothering about the fact that the British and the Allied powers were engaged in a life and death struggle. They also felt that at such a moment of peril, when the British power was suffering severe reverses in war, the Congress has launched an agitation. Viceroy Linlithgow believed that Cripps Proposals were more than what could have been offered to India. In fact he was opposed even to the half-hearted proposals offered by the Cripps Mission

and he breathed a sigh of relief when the Mission failed. The vast gulf which separated the British and the Indians hardly appeared capable of being bridged. Reginald Maxwell, the Home Member of the Government of India had openly said in the Central assembly in 1941 that the Congressmen "were enemies of society who wanted to subvert the existing order", who were worse criminals than the Germans and Italians. The British policy aimed at crushing Gandhi and the Congress once for all. Thus, both sides had taken an uncompromising stand and the Government's reaction to the movement was as violent as had been the movement itself and the Government moved its powerful machinery to suppress the movement displaying unparalleled ferocity and brutality.

The Quit India movement lasted less than two months. Before the end of September 1942 it had petered out, though it was continued in an insidious manner till the beginning of 1943. Despite its weaknesses, its bad planning and its ill execution and the fact that it failed, it was the last great struggle before independence. The British realised that they were still as unpopular as in 1857, and that they could not stay on for long. After the Quit India movement the British attitude softened. The readiness of the masses to make an all-out bid for freedom unnerved the British Government. The British became sure that they were not wanted India. Even the strongly imperialistic and colonial minded Churchill was impressed, and gloomily admitted to the King of England in July 1942 that "the idea of transfer of power in India had become an admitted inevitability in the minds of the British Party leaders." Thus, the Quit India movement was not completely a damp squib. It had far reaching results. In the final analysis, however, it was a mixed blessing. It brought a free India. But it also brought with it, Pakistan.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Describe the Government Repression and the mass upheaval to the Quit India Movement.

10.2.6 NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT:

The Quit India movement constituted another important landmark in the history of Indian struggle for freedom. It marked the triumph of nationalism and left behind a heightened sense of nationalist and political consciousness among Indians. The violent mass upsurge of 1942 left no doubt that freedom's battle in India had begun in right earnest.

The movement was truly multi-dimensional, all-embracing and broad based. It cut across the barriers of caste, creed, community, religion, sex and produced a spontaneous mass upheaval engulfing the entire country. The elites, the intelligentsia, the middle and lower middle. Classes, lawyers, students, workers, artisans, craftsmen and peasants all participated in the movement. It was not an elite sponsored middle-class movement fighting to safeguard its class interest. It essentially marked a climatic phase of the anti-imperialist struggle and the people of India as a whole came closer to each other and overcame class barriers. The struggle epitomised a conflict between the forces of nationalism and imperialism. The individual, and in many instances, collective heroism and bravery in the face of heavy odds, and the readiness to suffer and sacrifice everything for the freedom of the motherland displayed by a very large number of people all over the country.

The spontaneous mass upheaval brought in its wake conflict, violence and destruction. It produced anarchy and chaos and the Government was paralysed for some time. The Government responded by unleashing a reign of terror to suppress the revolt, bringing untold miseries and sufferings to the people and causing devastation to large tracts of the countryside. Since the movement culminated in violence and conflict, it has been argued by a historian that "Quit India" marked the end of non-violence, and that even Gandhi and senior leaders of the era of the Congress had given up non-violent means to attain their goal. This is entirely untenable assertion. It is important to note that Gandhi's call mass for open rebellion was the penultimate phase in the non-violent action. Such an action need not have been ended in violence, given the adequate and firm leadership of the Congress and Gandhi, who withdrew the mass movement of 1920-22 at the outbreak of violence in Chauri Chaura. The mass civil disobedience movement of 1930-32 had remained by and large peaceful and non-violent under Gandhi's control and direction. There is no reason to believe that if the movement had remained under the direction of a much more powerful and organised political party like the Congress in 1942, the form of political action envisaged could have remained within the framework of non-violent satyagraha. The concept of non-violent mass satyagraha was as revolutionary a concept and form of political action as any revolutionary strategy evolved elsewhere in the world.

Another historian, Francis Hutchins, has described the Quit India movement as a "spontaneous revolution". The assertion is full of many implications. The response of the masses indeed was spontaneous, but only after the leaders had been removed from the political scene on 9th August 1942. Over the years, the Indian people had been able to grasp the essence of the ideology of nationalism and its philosophy of mass action advocated by the Congress, long before the Quit India call was given. A series of mass movements were launched earlier beginning with the non-co-operation movement of 1920-22. Also, during the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-32, the people had tested their power and strength, through mass action. These movements had no doubt differed dimensions and intensity, but each successive wave mass movement had heightened their nationalist political consciousness. Hence, the Quit movement as such could not be

regarded as spontaneous, in the sense it did not emerge suddenly without any precedent or past experience or without proper preparation.

The Quit India movement released powerful forces, but they were not product of revolutionary ideology, nor did it produce any revolution. No socio-economic revolution occurred during after the movement, nor did it initiate or generate any great structural changes in the form of social engineering or in the nature of politics.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Enumerate the nature of the Quit India Movement. Explain its Significance.

10.4 SUMMARY

The Quit India Movement launched in 1942 for which the British Government, its declaration of India in the World War II on the side of England, scorched earth policy, rendering thousand & homeless on the sea coast in Bengal and Orissa, forced war collections, War time shortages and rising prices were the reasons. Due to British policy of suppression the movement turn violent. Both the movements were withdrawn by the Congress.

The Quit India movement 1942 is memorable event in the history of our national movement. It cannot be brushed aside as a trial attempt for freedom. Though it was crushed by the Government with an iron hand, the movement succeeded in awakening and emboldening masses. It removed from the Indian hearts the fear of bullets. The movement in fact prepared the ground for the transfer of power.

10.5 QUESTIONS:-

1. Discuss the causes and consequences of the Quit India Movement.
2. Assess the events that led to the Quit India Movement.
3. Write a note on "Cripps Mission".
4. Discuss the Resolutions of the Quit India Movement.
5. Describe the Government Repression and the mass upheaval to the Quit India Movement.
6. Enumerate the nature of the Quit India Movement. Explain its Significance.

10.6 ADDITIONAL READING

Indian National Movement
(1857 CE to 1947 CE)

1. R.C. Majumder, Three Phases of India's Freedom Struggle. Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1961.
2. S.R. Mehrotra, Towards India's Freedom and Partition, Delhi, Vikas Publications, 1979.
3. Sankar Ghose, Socialism Democracy and Nationalism in India. Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1973.
4. Sumit Sarkar, Modern India. New Delhi, Macmillan India Limited, 1983.
5. Tara Chand, History of the Freedom Movement in India. Vol.IV, New Delhi, Govt. of India Publications Division, 1961-72.
6. Francis G. Hutchins, Spontaneous Revolution: The Quit India Movement. Delhi, Manohar Book Service, 1971.
7. D.N. Panigrahi, Quit India and the Struggle for Freedom. New Delhi, Vikas Publications, 1984.
8. D.A. Low (Ed.), Congress and Raj : Facets of the Indian Struggle, 1917-1947. New Delhi. Arnold Heinemann, 1977.
9. R.C. Majumdar (Ed.), History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol.XI; Struggle for Freedom. Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969.
10. B.R. Tomlinson, The Indian National Congress and the Raj. 1929-1942: The Penultimate Years. (Cambridge Commonwealth Series). London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1976.

ALL INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE, HINDU MAHASABHA, RASHTRIYA SWAYANSEVAK SANGH

Unit Structure :

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Muslim response to the British conquest
- 11.3 The Aligarh Movement
- 11.4 Lucknow pact
- 11.5 Hindu Mahasabha
- 11.6 Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.)
- 11.7 RSS Ideology
- 11.8 Summary
- 11.9 Questions
- 11.10 Additional Reading

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After the completion of this unit the student will be able to :-

- Understand the Muslim response to the British conquest.
- Understand the establishment of the Muslim league.
- Know the aims, objective and sessions of the Muslim league.
- Trace the role of Aligarh Movement and Hindu Mahasabha.
- Know about the Lucknow Pact. Understand the important leader of the Hindu Mahasabha.
- Know the work undertaken by the Hindu Mahasabha.
- Understand the aims and objectives of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh.
- Explain the programmes and activities of the Rashtriya Swayam
- Review the contribution and ideology of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.)

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The rise and growth of religious sentiments during the later part of the nineteenth century continued to shape the course of Indian history during the freedom struggle. The great communal divide gradually began to harden the attitudes of the two predominant communities of India, Hindus and Muslims. The religion based nationalism led to the establishment of communal organizations to streamline the aspirations of the respective communities. The religious-cultural organizations of both the Muslims and the Hindus gave way to the establishment of political organizations such as the Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha. The British instigated the drift between two communities a part of their imperialistic strategy. They were neither the true friends of the Muslims nor Hindus but they were the true friends of British imperialism.

According to Bipin Chandra, Communalism or communal ideology comprises of three basic elements or stages. First, it is the belief that people who follow the same religion have common secular interests such as political, economic, social and cultural. This is the basic foundation of communal ideology. 'From this arises the notion of socio-political communities based on religion. The second element of communal ideology rests on the notion that in a multi-religious society like India, the secular interests of the followers of one religion are dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the followers of another religion. The third stage of communalism is reached when the interests of the followers of different religions or of different communities are seen to be mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile. Thus, the communalists assert at this stage that Hindus and Muslims cannot have common secular interests are bound to be opposed to each other.

11.2 MUSLIM RESPONSE TO THE BRITISH CONQUEST

The Muslims and Hindus responded differently to the British conquest of India. With the advent of the British rule the social relations between the Hindus and Muslims did not undergo any radical change. However, the political outlook of the two communities was very different from the beginning. While the Hindus took advantage of the English education to further their socio-economic and political interest under new dispensation, the Muslims lagged far behind the Hindus in this respect. Other factors also powerfully operated in the same direction. As a result that the two, communities, though subject to the same foreign rule, suffering from the same disabilities and seeking the same remedies or reforms, could not present a united front in politics and meet on a common political platform.

The difference of approach in politics between the communities was clearly manifested, for the first time, in the Wahabi movement. Although the later phase of the movement, namely, a violent hatred against the English and an organized attempt to drive them out of the country should have evoked sympathy at least among a section of the Hindus. However, there is no evidence of such sympathy. The reason for the lack of sympathy among the

Hindus to the Wahabi Movement was that it was a purely Muslim movement and was directed theoretically against all non-Muslims. It aimed to establish in India 'dar-ul-Islam', that is 'Muslim sovereignty pure and simple'.

In 1863, Abdul Latif, a leading public servant and one of the first Bengali Muslims proficient in English, organized the Mohammedan Literacy and Scientific Society of Calcutta, to represent those 'Bengal Muslim who wish to adopt English education and European customs without contravening the essential principles of Islam, or ruffling the traditional prejudices of their Mohammedan fellow countrymen'. Its purpose was primarily educational and social. As the leader of one section of Calcutta's small community of educated Muslims, Latif was regularly consulted by the government, and the Literary Society intentionally avoided any adventurousness in its politics.

In 1878, Nawab Amir Khan founded the National Mohammedan Association. Amir Ali held that Muslim fortunes would not revive by Muslim efforts alone. Government help was essential, and if it was to be won, Muslims needed a political organization of their own. Thus, when he was invited by Surendranath Bannerjee to join the Indian Association, he refused to do so. In its memorial of 1882, the National Mohammedan Association listed its demands - a proportion of jobs to be reserved for the Muslims, less emphasis to be placed on University education as a qualification for office, no simultaneous examinations for the covenanted service and no competitive examinations for the uncovenanted, and the provision for the special educational requirements of the Muslim community. Thus, almost two years before the first Indian National Congress was convened, a separate Muslim political conference had been suggested.

Gradually, the Muslim leaders began to appreciate the value of the English education. In a public meeting held on 10 January 1868, Abdul Latif made a vigorous plea for the English education of the Muslim boys. Suggestions were made for the transformation of the Anglo-Persian Department of the Calcutta, Madras to the status of a college. The Muslim leaders in Bengal thus took a lead in this matter even before Sir Syed Ahmed Khan thought of the Aligarh College. Although the proposal of Abdul Latif was not put into effect, Muslim education in Bengal got a great impetus from the munificent charity of Haji Muhammad Moshin in 1873. He left a large legacy, and it was resolved by the government that out of the Moshin Trust Fund, two-third of the fees would be paid to every Muslim student in any English school or college in Bengal. This partly accounts for the greater progress of Muslim students of Bengal in English education as compared to other provinces.

So far evidence goes, Muslim politics, throughout the nineteenth century, has followed a course different from that of the Hindus. While the Hindus were developing their political ideas and political organizations on modern lines under the influence of English education, the Muslims launched the

Wahabi Movement which was most violent and anti-British, and extremely communal in character.

Check your Progress :

1) Which movement was launched by Indian Muslims against Britishers?

11.3 THE ALIGARH MOVEMENT

After the Revolt of 1857, there were two main threats to their position. One was the conviction in official circles that Muslims had been responsible for the revolt. The other was the growing competition both from Bengalis and local Hindus. Syed Ahmad Khan was the first to look synoptically at these problems. He felt that unless Muslims could be persuaded to come to terms with their Christian rulers and the new learning, they would continue to fall behind 'in the race for position among the magnates of the world.' They would remain inflexibly orthodox, their rulers would discriminate against them, and more adaptable groups would usurp their position and offices.

Syed Ahmad Khan was born in 1817. He began his career as an official of the British Government at the age of twenty. At the time of the Revolt of 1857, he was serving the Company's Government in a subordinate judicial post. He remained loyal and asked his coreligionists to behave likewise. He saved the local Europeans by successful diplomacy, first with the mutineers and then with Nawab Mahmud Khan. His loyal services were recognized by the grateful British Government and he was given a distinguished position after the Revolt of 1857. Syed Ahmad Khan utilized the opportunity not for advancing his own material interests, but for the upliftment of his co-religionists. He pondered deeply over the deplorable condition of the Muslim community and made a noble resolve to take up its cause.

11.3.1 Drift from Nationalism to Communalism

Syed Ahmed Khan tried to restore the good name of his community by denying that the Revolt had been a Muslim conspiracy. He argued that Bahadur Shah's cause had been self-evidently hopeless, and since the English Government did not interfere with the Muslims in the practice of their religion, they had no reason to launch a 'Jehad'. Most of them, according to Syed, had in fact stood by the Raj. Together with these political vindications, Syed Ahmad Khan wanted to give new orientations in

religion. Without this, his educational projects could not have succeeded. He had to show that western learning was compatible with the faith. On the assumption that the Quran was the only reliable guide to Islam, Syed set himself to formulate traditional Quranic teachings anew, so as to avoid all that was irrational in Islam. This brought him into conflict with the ulemas and all their orthodox followers in northern India.

At first Syed Ahmad Khan had argued that the best way of bringing western learning to the people of his province was through the vernacular, but later he became convinced that English must be the medium. His most notable educational achievement was the foundation of the Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, which became a great centre for the spread of western knowledge and the study of Islamic ideas. The reform movement among the Muslims initiated by Syed Ahmad Khan came to be, known as the Aligarh Movement. In the address presented to Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, who laid the foundation-stone of the college in 1877, it was said that British rule in India was the most wonderful phenomenon the world had ever seen, and that the object of the college was to make this fact clear to the Indians, to educate them about the blessings of such rule as also 'to reconcile oriental' learning with western literature and science, to inspire in the dreamy minds of the people of the East the practical energy which belongs to those of the west'.

Theodore Beck, the Principal of the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College who regarded himself as a disciple of Syed Ahmad Khan in matters political, claimed that Indian Muslim thought resembled the old Tory school of England far more than Radical and that Indian Muslims were not very enthusiastic about democratic institutions as was generally believed. Beck was entirely hostile to Congress. Beck made a systematic effort to divide the Hindus and Muslims. His contribution to the anti-Hindu bias in Aligarh Movement was very considerable.

Beck was succeeded as principal by Theodore Morrison, who was in charge of the London Office of the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental Defense Association. Morrison who continued in this post till 1905 was a pupil of Beck. He was alarmed at the growing political solidarity among the Muslims. Thus, he tried to wean away the Muslims from political agitation and divert their energies to educational and economic upliftment of their community. Due to the efforts of the first two principals of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, an open manifestation of hostility against the Indian National Congress formed the basic creed of the Aligarh Movement.

Syed Ahmad Khan felt that if the British left India then the Hindus and the Muslims would not be able to live together peacefully. In March 1888 he asked that if the English army left India then was it possible that the 'two nations - the Muslims and the Hindus - could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down'. Syed Ahmed Khan, the father of the Muslim renaissance was radical so far as educational and social questions were concerned, but he was conservative in political matters.

Syed Ahmad Khan passed away in 1898. Both the Aligarh Movement and its founder have been severely criticized and condemned by a class of writers, mostly Hindus. They rightly point out that this movement was responsible for bringing about the conflict between the Hindus and Muslims and promoting communalism in the Indian sub-continent. The Aligarh Movement finally led to the foundation of the Muslim League and the creation of Pakistan.

11.3.2 Establishment of the Muslim League

With the establishment of the Muslim League in 1906, the Muslims entered a new era of political manifestation and organization. Congress movement was assuming a militant tone by the turn of the twentieth century. Towards the end of 1903, the Governor General, Lord Curzon announced a plan for the partition of Bengal. This announcement led to an outburst of public indignation all over the province. When the Government of India announced, on 7 July 1905, the scheme of partition, there were public meetings and demonstrations all over the country. One month after the announcement of the partition of the province Congress launched the Swadeshi movement against the British. Thus the situation in India was deteriorating.

The new Viceroy, Lord Minto, who assumed office in November 1905, felt seriously concerned about the situation. Minto wrote to the Secretary of State, John Morley that he was thinking of 'a possible counterpoise to Congress aims', and that he had in his mind the formation of a Privy Council of the native rulers and few other 'big' men which would give ideas different from those of Congress. Morley in turn warned Minto that the Muslims were likely to throw their lot with Congressmen against him. Meanwhile the Viceroy began to devise plans to wean away the Muslims from Congress movement. He started working on a scheme of reforms to satisfy at least the moderate elements in India.

This spurred the Muslim leaders into action. They were faced by the fact that since the Indian Councils Act of 1892, not only the principle of representation but also in practice the principle of election introduced in the constitution of the provincial legislature. They felt that another scheme of reforms was sure to confirm and extend the elective principle. As soon as it was known that the reform was in the air and the Viceroy had appointed a Committee to consider, among others, the question of extending the representative element in the Legislative Council. Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk, who succeeded Syed Ahmad Khan as leader, decided to wait upon the Viceroy in a deputation at Simla. The Deputation consisted of 36 members with Agha Khan as their leader. The Deputation was received by Lord Minto on 1st October 1906. The address presented by the deputation demanded several special concessions for the Muslim community.

After some preliminary observations of a general nature, Lord Minto assured the deputation that 'in any system of representation, whether it affects a Municipality, a District Board or a Legislative Council, in which it is proposed to introduce or increase the electoral organization, the

Mohammedan community should be represented' as a community, (and its) position should be estimated not merely on numerical strength but in respect to its political importance and the service it has rendered to the Empire'.

This assurance given by Lord Minto heralded a new policy of British rule in India. In the first place, it gave the official seal of approval to the principle that the Hindus and the Muslims constituted practically two separate nations with different interests and different outlook. In the second place, the government practically promised to show undue favour to the Muslims in respect of their number of representatives in the Legislative Council, by making it far in excess of their numerical ratio to the whole population. These two points formed the chief planks in Muslim politics ever since, and it may be said without much exaggeration that they formed the foundation on which Pakistan was built about forty years later.

The partition of Bengal and the events that followed also filled them, with a new zeal and quickened their political consciousness. They felt the need to have a central political organization to promote the political interest of the entire Muslim community. Syed Ahmad Khan had not encouraged' the idea of such organizations as he regarded them as unnecessary. He had implicit faith in the justice of the British Government. His English friends also supported his view, as they were afraid that if the Muslims were politically organized, they might follow in the footsteps of the Hindus and may turn against the British. The situation was, however, completely changed, first by the partition of Bengal, and next by the announcement of the coming constitutional reforms. The anti-partition agitation among the Hindus was mounting high and Congress championed their cause. Under these circumstances the Muslims felt the need to have their own central political organization in order to counteract the political organization of the Hindus.

Taking advantage of the presence of a large number of eminent Muslim leaders at Decca in connection with the Mohammedan Educational Conference, Nawab Salimullah of Decca convened a meeting and proposed the scheme of a Central Mohammedan Association to look exclusively after the interests of the Muslim community. He said that it would provide scope for the participation of Muslim youth in politics and thereby prevent them from joining the Indian National Congress. The proposal was accepted and at a meeting held on 30 December 1906, the All India Muslim League was established.

The aims and objectives of the Muslim League were laid down as the following –

- 1) To promote, amongst the Muslims of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government and to remove any misconception that may arise as to the intentions of Government about Indian measures.
- 2) To protect and advance the political rights of the Muslim of India and respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government.

- 3) To prevent the rise among the Muslim of India of any feelings of hostility towards other communities without prejudice to the aforesaid objects of the League.

The communal spirit to which the Muslim League owed its origin in December 1906, characterized its activities during the next seven years, and its chief objective throughout this period was to secure political and other advantages for the Muslims at the cost of the Hindus. The first annual session of the Muslim League was held at Karachi on 29 December 1907. The choice of the venue was an indication of the new nationalism which was growing among the Muslims. Sindh was chosen because, as a League publication put it, 'Sindh is that pious place in India, where Muhammad bin Qasim came first, with the torch of religion and the gift of Hadis. No other place could appeal to our elders'.

In the second annual session of the League held at Amritsar on 30 December 1908, there was a prolonged discussion on the forthcoming constitutional reforms. From 1912 onwards the Muslims became more militant. The Muslim middle classes developed increasing political maturity in the years immediately preceding the First World War. The Young Turk Movement led by Enver Pasha in Turkey also greatly influenced the Indian Muslims in the direction of a programme of self-government for India, which was subsequently adopted by the Muslim League in 1913. The Muslims steadily began to be drawn into the orbit of national movement. The Muslim League at its Lucknow session on 1913 adopted the goal of 'attainment under the aegis of the British Crown, the self-government suited to India'.

11.4 LUCKNOW PACT

The common cause against the British brought about the Lucknow Pact between Congress and the Muslim League. England was at war against Turkey, a Muslim state and this had aroused strong Muslim sentiments against the British. The Lucknow Pact was the first instance of collaboration between the two organizations. The Pact provided greater weightage with separate electorates to the Muslims in areas where they constituted a minority, and demanded from the British Government that definite steps should be taken towards self-government by granting the reforms. The League with the Muslim middle classes as its predominant social basis was steadily orienting towards nationalist conceptions and aims though on its own communal basis. At its session at Delhi in 1918, the Muslim League passed a resolution demanding the application of the principle of self-determination to India. The Indian Muslims were indignant at the terms of the Treaty of Sevres imposed by the victorious Allies on Turkey. By this treaty, Turkey was deprived of her homelands such as Syria, Palestine, Arabia and other Asiatic zones to the Ottoman Empire. They argued that their holy places situated in these territories should always be under the rule of the Sultan of Turkey who was also the Kalifa or the religious head of the Muslims all over the world. 244 Gandhi and other Congress leaders supported the Khilafat issue and allied with Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali in organizing the powerful Khilafat Movement in India. However, with

the abolition of the Sultanate and Caliphate in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Pasha in Turkey, the Khilafat Movement lost its purpose. Hence, the Muslim League began to drift from cooperation with Congress towards confrontation which finally led to the demand of a separate state for the Muslims and the creation of Pakistan.

Check your Progress :

- 1) Lucknow pact was signed between whom?

11.5 HINDU MAHASABHA

The Hindu Mahasabha was originally founded as a social, cultural and religious organization and not as a political body. A Hindu Sabha was formed in 1907 in Punjab. Later in 1915, the All India Hindu Mahasabha party was founded in Punjab where the Hindu minority which had the monopoly of wealth power and talent, was given a bad deal both in the new legislation and the Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909. The Hindu Mahasabha was opposed to the Muslim orientation of Congress and not to Congress itself. However, it was in direct conflict with the Muslim League.

The first important session of the Hindu Mahasabha was held in 1923. It was attended by many Congressmen including the Ali Brothers and Abul Kalam Azad. With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the Hindu Mahasabha became more Hinduised. It justified making converts to Hinduism. This was to stem the tide of conversion of Hindus, particularly untouchables to Islam and Christianity. Originally, Hindu Mahasabha did not have much mass appeal as it comprised largely of zamindars and princes along with landlords, teachers, government servants and the like. It opposed separate electorates which was the persistent demand of the Muslim League. As Hindu- Muslim riots spread, more and more Congressmen began to come over to the Hindu Mahasabha, especially in support of its 'shuddhi' and 'sanghatana' movements.

1.5.1 Important Leader of the Hindu Mahasabha

The most important leader of the Hindu Mahasabha was **Vinayak Damodar Savarkar**. Savarkar, born in 1883, was a Chitpavan Brahmin. Later at the age of sixteen, he was deeply disturbed at the hanging of the Chaphekar brothers by the British Government. Savarkar took a pledge that he would participate in an armed revolution and even lay down his life for freeing the country. In January 1900 he started 'Mitra Mela', later known

as 'Abhinava Bharat', an organization of firebrands and revolutionaries. In 1905 Savarkar organized a bonfire of foreign cloth and the crowd that gathered was addressed by Tilak. Because of such activities he was expelled from the Ferguson College, Poona. with the help of Shyamji Krishna Varma, the India revolutionary leader in London, Tilak arranged for Savarkar's study there on the condition that Savarkar would never accept a government job. Shyamji Krishna Varma was so impressed by the devotion of Savarkar that he entrusted to Savarkar the management of his India House in London. In July 1909 Madanlal Dhingra assassinated Sir Curzon Wylie. The British press charged that Dhingra was inspired by Savarkar. Savarkar had drafted a statement, which Dhingra read in court, in which he claimed that he was a soldier in the Indian war of independence against the British. Dhingra was sentenced to death and hanged. Savarkar was arrested and was sent to India. He was tried in March 1911 and was sentenced to fifty years' imprisonment. He was sent to Andamans.

Later in 1923, he was brought to India and was interned at Ratnagiri. He was released in 1924 on the condition that he would not take part in political activities. Later he joined the Hindu Mahasabha and was its president for several years. Savarkar's ideas on Hinduism were espoused in his treatise 'Hindutva', published in 1923. In 'Hindutva' he detailed the geographical, racial, religious and other factors which contributed to the making of the 'Hindu nation.' Savarkar was convinced that Hindu civilization which had 'survived through the centuries, whereas many others had perished, was the best. He glorified Vedic Hinduism.

Savarkar wanted the Hindus, or at least Hindu ideas, to have pre-eminent position in the Indian subcontinent. Savarkar said that the India Muslims, who went for Haj to other countries, did not look upon India as their own country. He also denounced Pan-Islamism and maintained that the Hindus could never resign their rights as a majority community. In his introduction to 'The Indian War of Independence' he had, however stated, that the feelings of hatred against the Muslims, though justified in Shivaji's time, would be unjust and foolish if nursed now.

The Hindu Mahasabha which supported the war effort of the British did not take part in the Quit India Movement. This politically harmed the Hindu Mahasabha and it fared badly in the 1945-46 election. Savarkar was not in agreement with Gandhi's nonviolence. He was also not a supporter of Gandhi's love of villages and cottage industries. He denounced Gandhi's decentralist policy. In his presidential address at the 1931 session of the Hindu Mahasabha he said, 'We shall first of all welcome the machine. This is a machine age. The handicrafts will have their due place, but national production will have to be on the biggest possible scale' Savarkar did not believe in class struggle. According to him class collaboration was essential for building a prosperous economy. The interest of both capital and labour would have to be subordinated to the interests of the nation. Savarkar wanted the state to take steps to maximize production and to keep strict control over strikes and lock-outs.

Hindu Mahasabha leaders claimed that Congress policy of appeasement had widened the gulf between Hindus and Muslims, and had jeopardized the rights of the Hindus. Savarkar asked the Hindus to consolidate and strengthen Hindu nationality. Savarkar’s concept of nationality was based on cultural, racial and historical affinities. He claimed that in Europe, during the last three to four centuries, only those nations such as England, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal, which had developed racial, linguistic, cultural and other organic affinities, in addition to territorial unity had survived.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was another important leader of the Hindu Mahasabha. He was also a member of Congress. In his presidential address at the special session of the Mahasabha in 1924, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya argued that the Mahasabha was not a communal organization and was not antagonistic to Congress. The Hindu Mahasabha, he claimed, would supplement the work of Congress. He argued that, Congress being a political body, could not deal with social and nonpolitical matters such as untouchability, inter-caste jealousies, child marriage and various other social abuses. But the Mahasabha could deal with them and also safeguard the interests of the Hindus. Thus, Malaviya had envisaged a socio-cultural role for the Hindu Mahasabha. However, this role was superseded by its political role. The decision to participate in the elections was taken in 1926 and the Mahasabha became primarily, if not exclusively, a political body. Thus, the Hindu Mahasabha became a party of the Hindus and the Muslim League was a party of the Muslims. The Hindu Mahasabha strongly opposed the demand for the establishment of a separate state for the Muslims and attacked Gandhi for eventually agreeing to the partition of the country.

Check your Progress :

1) In which year the first important session of Hindu Mahasabha was organized?

11.6 RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH (R.S.S.)

Indian National Movement
(1857 CE to 1947 CE)

In pre-independence India, the chief nationalist organization was the Indian National Congress. It was an umbrella organization which accommodated a variety of interests, including the revivalists. In order to retain the support of its diverse membership, Congress adopted a consensual strategy requiring the acceptance of compromise and, by extension, the principle of territorial nationalism. However, it was not entirely successful in accommodating all groups. Many Muslim leaders, for example, felt that the westernized Hindu-elite who controlled Congress did not adequately respond to Muslim interests. Moreover, there were Hindu revivalist leaders, who also believed that the interests of the Hindu community were not adequately protected by Congress.

The founder of the RSS doubted whether Congress, which included Muslims, could bring about the desired unity of the Hindu community. The RSS was established in 1925 as a kind of educational body whose objective was to train a group of Hindu men who, on the basis of their character-building experience in the RSS, would work to unite the Hindu community so that India could again become an independent country and a creative society. Its founder was convinced that a fundamental change in social attitudes was necessary precondition of a revived India. A properly trained cadre of nationalists would play an important role in that change.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was founded by Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940), an Andhra Brahmin who had settled in Maharashtra. He was a close friend of Savarkar and a member of the Hindu Mahasabha until 1929. Hedgewar realized that the cause of India's decline was the divisive and fragmented character of Hindu society. Thus, he wanted to build a cohesive corporate life for the Hindus. To achieve this he did not regard politics as important. What important was religious and social regeneration. Hedgewar believed that this could be achieved only on the basis of the revival and purification of Hindu 'Sanskriti', which was to be brought about by devoted 'Swayam Sevaks', i.e. volunteers.

The RSS emerged during a wave of Hindu-Muslim riots that swept across India in the early 1920s. Hedgewar viewed the communal rioting as a symptom of the weakness and divisions within the Hindu community. He believed that Congress, in which he had been an active participant, had appeased Muslims and was therefore unable to unite the Hindus. In his opinion Hindu unity was the necessary precondition of any successful independence struggle. As a result of the intensification of Hindu-Muslim tension between 1921-1923, the dormant Hindu Mahasabha, formed in 1915 as a forum for a variety of Hindu interests was revitalized. The challenge from Islam in the early 1920s was viewed by many Hindus as a threat to their self-esteem. This proliferation of Hindu 'Sabha' and other 'defensive' Hindu associations were reactions to the growing communal violence, the increasing political articulation of the Muslim community, the cultural 'Islamization' of the Muslims and the failure to achieve independence. While these organizations probably had little effect on

British policy, they did advance Hindu unity. It is in this setting of Hinduism in danger that the RSS was established.

The roots of the RSS are imbedded in the soil of Maharashtra. Its membership and symbols were almost exclusively Maharashtrian. Its discipline and ideological framework were shaped almost entirely by Dr. Hedgewar, a medical doctor who had abandoned a potentially lucrative practice to participate in the struggle against colonialism. According to his most reliable biographer, the Hedgewar family migrated from Hyderabad, a Muslim princely state and settled in Nagpur around the turn of the nineteenth century. As a young student, Hedgewar was keenly interested in history and politics.

Dr. Munje persuaded him to join Congress. During the early 1920s, Hedgewar became even more deeply engaged in Congress party activities. At the 1920 annual Congress session in Nagpur, he organized a volunteer unit of some 1,200 young men to keep order at the meeting. The outbreak of communal riots in 1923 made Hedgewar to think that the disunity among Hindus was a major social problem. On 30 October 1923, the Collector banned Dindi procession. But influential Hindus decided to disobey the ban. One newspaper reported that upto 20,000 Hindus marched in defiance of the government order. Hindu leaders were surprised not only by the popular response, but also by the involvement of most segments of the Hindu community. Out of this defiance emerge the Nagpur Hindu Sabha. Dr. Munje was chosen the vice-president of the local sabha and Hedgewar became its secretary. Hindu revivalists such as Hedgewar saw that organization was necessary, but they argued that more was needed to protect Hindu interests. A Major influence on his thinking a handwritten manuscript of Savarkar's 'Hindutva' which advanced the thesis the Hindus was a nation. The central propositions of Savarkar's manuscript are Hindu's are the indigenous people of the subcontinent and that they form a national group. He defines Hindu as a person who feels united by blood ties all those whose ancestry can be traced to Hindu antiquity and who accepts from the Indus River in the north, to the Indian Ocean, as his fatherland (Pitrubhumi).

Though Savarkar's work provided Hedgewar with an intellectual justification for concept of a Hindu nation that embraced all the peoples of the subcontinent, it did not give him a method for uniting the Hindu community. Hedgewar had experimented revolution, Satyagraha, and constitutional reform, but each method for uniting the Hindu community, he felt, had failed to achieve independence or national rejuvenation believed that independence and national revitalization could be achieved only when, the root cause of India's weakness was discovered.

In September 1925 on the Hindu festival of Dasera, Hedgewar launched his new movement of Hindu revitalization. The first participants were recruited from a largely Brahmin locality in Nagpur. This early group had neither a name nor developed Programme of activities. The participants were expected to attend an 'akhara' (gymnasium) during the week and take part in political classes on Sunday and Thursday. Hedgewar selected the first mission of the young organization with great care. Wanted to demonstrate

the value of discipline to both the volunteers and to the general public, and chose a popular religious occasion, Ram-Navami, to do so. According to Hedgewar's biographer, the chaotic conditions around the temple at Ramtek, a village near Nagpur during the Ram-Navami festival, created great hardships to the worshippers. Moreover, many villagers were reportedly cheated by Muslim fakirs' and 'Brahmin pandits'. Hedgewar decided to take his volunteers to the 1926 festival to remedy the situation. For the occasion, he chose both the name and the uniform of the organization.

The 'Swayamsevaks', in their new uniforms, marched to temple singing verses from Ramdas. According to RSS sources, they enforced queues for the worshippers visiting the temple housing the main idol, provided drinking water, and drove off the corrupt priests. . Soon after this dramatic introduction to the public, 'lathi' instruction and group prayers were incorporated into the RSS discipline. In 1926, the first daily 'shakha' (branch) was held, and the practice of meeting daily was quickly adopted by the RSS group. Ninety-nine young men were accepted into RSS membership in 1928 by taking a life oath in a forest close to Nagpur. When communal riots broke out in Nagpur in September 1927, Anna Sohoni, a former revolutionary and close associate of Hedgewar, organized RSS members into sixteen squads to protect various Hindu neighbourhoods in the city. Hedgewar's revolutionary past and the paramilitary nature of the RSS convinced the Central Provinces Home Department that RSS could develop into a dangerous revolutionary group, and this suspicion continued throughout the pre-independence period.

The RSS movement gradually began to expand. Because of its growth, Hedgewar called senior RSS leaders to Nagpur in November 1929, to evaluate its work and to consider ways to coordinate the expanding network of 'shakhas'. They decided that the organization should have one supreme guide, 'sarsanghchalak', who would have absolute decision making power. He would choose all office bearers and personally supervise the activities of the RSS. By a unanimous decision of the senior workers, Hedgewar was acclaimed the first 'sarsanghchalak.' In the early 1930s, the RSS began to spread beyond its Marathi speaking base in the Central Provinces. RSS activities were introduced in Sindh, Punjab and the United Provinces.

G.D. Savarkar, a former revolutionary and the older brother of V.D. Savarkar, helped the RSS expand into western Maharashtra. He merged his own Tarun Hindu Sabha as well as the Mukeshwar Dal into the RSS. He accompanied Hedgewar on trips to western Maharashtra, introducing him to Hindu Nationalists. Pune developed into the centre of RSS activities in western Maharashtra.

A women's affiliate, the Rashtra Sevika Samiti, the first RSS affiliate, was started in October 1936 in the Central Provinces by 253 Mrs. Lakshmi Bai Kelkar, mother of a 'Swayamsevak'. The discipline and organization of this group was parallel to that of the RSS. While there was no formal connection between the two groups, leaders of the Rashtra Sevika Samiti often consult with their RSS counterparts, and they supported the other organizations

affiliated with the RSS. Hedgewar maintained close ties with the Hindu Mahasabha leadership, due to his close association with Dr. Munje and Savarkar.

Dr. Munje presided over the 1927 Hindu Mahasabha annual session at Ahmedabad, and he invited the RSS to perform drills at the session. This provided opportunity to Hedgewar to establish contacts with Mahasabha leaders throughout India. Prominent members of local Hindu 'Sabhas' would introduce RSS organizers to potential recruits and donors, provide organizers housing and the RSS with a meeting area. This assistance led many members of the Mahasabha including Dr. Munje, to conclude that the RSS would function as the youth wing of the Mahasabha. However, events were to prove them wrong.

To emphasize the nonpolitical character of the RSS, Hedgewar refused to sanction RSS support to the Mahasabha's 1938-39 civil disobedience campaign in the princely state of Hyderabad, through individual RSS member took part in it. Savarkar was trying to convert the Hindu Mahasabha into a political party at a time when Hedgewar was seeking in to insulate the RSS from politics. The Hindu Mahasabha established its own paramilitary youth group, the Ram Sena in 1939. The distancing of relations between the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS after the death of Hedgewar in 1940 was a continuation of a process that had begun three years earlier when Savarkar was elected president of the Hindu Mahasabha. Savarkar attempted to give the organization a more specifically political orientation. Neither Hedgewar nor his successor wanted the RSS to be closely associated with a group whose political activities would place the RSS in direct opposition to Congress. Savarkar's disdain for Golwalkar, Hedgewar's successor further soured relations between the two organizations. Both men were apprehensive regarding the other's role in the Hindu unification movement. Savarkar did not appreciate Golwalkar's saintly style and Golwalkar had reservations about Savarkar's unwillingness to compromise. Savarkar's followers, particularly those in Maharashtra, considered him the driving force behind the Hindu unification movement. While many of the RSS members respected Savarkar, they did not consider him the supreme leader of Hindus

11.6.1 RSS after Hedgewar

After the death of Hedgewar on 21 June 1940, Golwalkar who was designated by the former a day before his death succeeded him as the 'sarsanghchalak.' Two years after earning his M.Sc. in biology at Banaras Hindu University, he was selected as a lecturer in zoology there. Some of Golwalkar's students encouraged him to attend RSS meetings. Hedgewar met Golwalkar while visiting Banaras in 1931 and was attracted to the ascetic twenty-five year old teacher. In the summer of 1935, shortly after completing his law examination, Golwalkar was asked to manage the RSS Officers' Training Camp, a clear sign of his high standing with Hedgewar. Yet Golwalkar was a reluctant leader. Hedgewar feared that Golwalkar's ascetic temperament could lead him to become a 'sanyasi'. In spite of his apprehensions regarding Golwalkar, Hedgewar recognized the former's

leadership qualities and after assigning him various responsibilities in the RSS organization nominated him as his successor. Golwalkar's saintly style and his apparent disinterest in politics convinced some 'Swayamsevaks' that the - RSS had become more concerned with other-worldly implications of character building than with its national political implications. Links between the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS were virtually severed, the military department of the RSS was dismantled, the RSS remained aloof from the anti-British agitations during the World War II, and it refused to assist the various militarization and paramilitary schemes advocated by many other Hindu nationalists. Golwalkar, unlike Hedgewar, showed no public interest in the movement to enlist Hindus in the armed forces of British India.

Golwalkar was not a revolutionary in the conventional sense of the term. The British understood this. In an official report on RSS activity, prepared in 1943, the Home Department concluded that, 'it would be difficult to argue that the RSS constitutes an immediate menace to law and order.' Commenting on violence that accompanied the 1942 Quit India Movement, the Bombay Home Department observed, 'the Sangh has scrupulously kept itself within the law, and in particular, has refrained from taking part in the disturbances that broke out in August 1942' Golwalkar opposed the effort of some Hindu organizations to encourage the recruitment of Hindus into the military and considered it unpatriotic. He was openly critical of the Hindu Mahasabha for engaging in such recruitment activities.

The RSS continued to expand rapidly during the war years in spite of the defection of some members disappointed by its apparent retreat from activism. The post-war expansion of the RSS in northern India coincided with deteriorating communal relations between Muslims and Hindus. The Muslim League, campaigning for the creation of a separate Muslim state, declared a Direct Action Day on 16 August 1946. Communal violence erupted in Bengal and north-western India. On 3 June 1947 Lord Mountbatten, the British Viceroy, announced his Majesty's Government's decision to partition the subcontinent on communal basis and to terminate colonial rule on 15 August 1947.

Gandhiji was assassinated on Friday evening, 30 January 1948, at 5.30 p.m. by Nathuram Godse. He had previously been a member of the RSS, and at the time of assassination, was an editor of a pro-Hindu Mahasabha newspaper in Pune. Because of his background, the government suspected that the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS had both been involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Gandhiji and to seize control of the government. Leaders of both groups were arrested. On 3 February 1948 Golwalkar was arrested and the government banned the RSS the next day. Before his arrest, Golwalkar had instructed the RSS leaders temporarily to cease all RSS activities. In spite of this instruction and the subsequent ban, a large number of 'swayamsevaks' continued to meet under the guise of study groups, sports associations, devotional assemblies etc. The government was not able to show any RSS involvement in Gandhi's murder its involvement in a conspiracy to overthrow the government. By August 1948 most of the detainees were released and Golwalkar himself was released on 5 August 1948.

Check your Progress :

1) Who was the founder of R.S.S.?

11.7 RSS IDEOLOGY

As the RSS draws liberally from the Hindu past to construct its belief system, an investigation is necessary of how Hindu thought and practices inform the verbal symbols, signs, and rituals which the RSS employs. Hedgewar, like all revivalists, believed that the Hindu past possessed the conceptual tools for the reconstruction of the society. Also like other revivalists, he was convinced that only Hindu thought would motivate the population to achieve independence and to reconstruct society. In the early part of the twentieth century, Aurobindo Ghose stated the case in terms that the RSS was later to emphasize. RSS theoreticians maintain that the social body functions well only when individuals perform their economic, social and religious duties (dharma).

The founders of the RSS concluded that the Hindu social body was weak and disorganized because ‘dharma’ was neither clearly understood nor correctly observed. While the disintegration of Hindu society was perceived as advancing at a rapid pace in the contemporary period, the malady is traced back at least to the Islamic invasions of India when it is alleged creative Hindu thought ceased to inform society about new ways to respond to changing conditions. A recurrent theme in the RSS belief systems is the identification of hostile forces which plot against the nation and which are responsible for the ‘disruptive’ strains in the country.

These forces are often identified with particular social groups, who are usually defined as different, united and powerful. RSS writers identify two general types of potentially ‘disruptive’ forces in contemporary Indian society - (1) Muslims and Christians who propagate values that might result in the denationalization of their adherents and (2) the ‘Westernized’ elite who propose capitalism, socialism, or communism as solutions for Indian development. RSS writers allege that Christian values have tended to distance Christians culturally from the national mainstream in some parts of the country. From this proposition, a sub proposition is deduced, because some Christians do not consider themselves culturally Indian, they do not experience a sense of community with Indians. The case against Islam is stated in similar terms. However, Islam is viewed as a more serious problem because of the size of the Muslim community, the history of communal

animosity between Hindus and Muslims and existence of Muslim states in the subcontinent. Democracy, capitalism and socialism, according to RSS writers, are western concepts that have failed to improve the human condition. According to a leading RSS publicist - 'democracy and capitalism join hand to give a free reign to exploitation, socialism replaced capitalism and brought with it an end to democracy and individual freedom'. These concepts are considered contrary to the traditional principles of the Hindu thought. The argument is that each of these concepts limits itself to the premise that man is a 'bundle of physical wants'. While not disregarding the notion that 'passion' is natural to man, RSS writers argue that these 'foreign' philosophies stimulate the quest for material gratification which results eventually in greed and class antagonism, attitudes that lead to exploitation, social warfare and anarchy. As an alternative to these socio-economic systems, the RSS offers a social blueprint that minimizes social conflict and functionally links the various social units together into an organic whole.

Such a transformation is considered a necessary prerequisite for revitalizing society and for sustaining it. Golwalkar, in his major treatise on the RSS belief system mentions four virtues that characterize the ideal person. The first is 'invincible physical strength', which he interpreted as the calm resolve that is needed for commitment to the disciplined activity. The second virtue is 'character', which is a personal resolve to commit oneself to a noble cause. The third virtue is 'intellectual acumen' and lastly, 'fortitude' which permits the honourable person to persevere in a virtuous life. The virtuous life can be summarized by industriousness combined with zealous and painstaking adherence to 'dharma'. The RSS belief system proposes that disciplined activity is the sign of a virtuous life. Life is considered a struggle against disorder and anarchy, and it requires organization, calculation and systematic endeavor. Because disorder and anarchy are presumably strengthened by human passion, the individual must diligently tame and discipline his energies.

11.8 SUMMARY

Due to the British rule in India the rise and growth of communalism came into existence and which shaped the political life of the country. This gave birth to certain organizations and began to function for their own people. The British used the Muslim league as a counterpoise to the Indian National Congress in pursuit of their divide and rule policy which ultimately led to the creation of Pakistan. The Hindu Mahasabha was brought into existence to oppose the Muslim orientation of Congress and finally came in direct conflict with the Muslim League. The Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh was established in 1925 as an educational body for character building of the people and uniting the Hindu Community. It wanted to make independent India a creative society. But before and after independence of the country it surmised that the Hindu-Muslim riots projected the weakness and divisions within the Hindu community.

11.9 QUESTIONS

1. Account for the rise and growth of the All India Muslim League.
2. Give an account of the work of Syed Ahmed Khan and Aligarh Movements.
3. Examine the circumstances that led to the foundation of the Hindu Mahasabha.
4. Give a brief account of the aims, objectives, ideology and programmes of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh.

11.10 ADDITIONAL READING

1. P.N. Chopra (Ed.), Role of Indian Muslims in the Struggle for Freedom, New Delhi, Light and Life Publications, 1979.
2. A.R. Desai, Social Background of Indian Nationalism, 5th Edition, Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1976.
3. R.C. Majumdar, Three Phases of Indian Freedom Struggle, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1961.
4. S.R. Mehrotra, Towards India's Freedom and Partition, Delhi, Vikas Publications, 1979.
5. R.J. Moore, Crisis in Indian Unity, 1917-1940, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1974.
6. Anita Inder Singh, The Origins of the Partition of India 1936-1947, Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1987.
7. R.C. Majumdar (Ed.), History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol.XI, Struggle for Freedom, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969.
8. Jim Masselos, Indian Nationalism: An History New Delhi, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 1985.
9. L.M. Reisner and N.M. Goldberg (Eds.), Tilak and the struggle for Indian Freedom New Delhi, Peoples Publishing House 1966.
10. B.L. Grover, Alka Mehta, Vash Pal, Adhunik Bharat ka Itihas, Ed Naveen Mulyankan (Hindi), S. Chand & company Ltd., 2011.
11. Bipin Chandra, History of Modern India, orient Blackswan, 2009.
12. Bipin Chandra, India's struggle for independence 1857-1947, Penguin Books
13. Markl Juergensmayer, Religious Nationalism confronts the secular state, oxford university Press, Bombay 1993.
14. Dr. Eugene D'souza, Modem India, Manan Pakistan, Mumbai, 2004.



ROLE OF PRINCELY STATES

Unit Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Princely States and the National Movement
- 12.3 All India States' People's Conference
- 12.4 The policy of the Indian National Congress towards the Indian States
- 12.5 The Cabinet Mission
- 12.6 Constituent Assembly
- 12.7 Mountbatten Plan
- 12.8 Summary
- 12.9 Questions
- 12.10 Additional Readings

12.0 OBJECTIVE

After the completion of this unit the student will be able to:-

- Know the role of Princely States to the growth of Nationalism.
- Explain the the internal administration of the Princely States and their political set up varied greatly.
- Understand the major developments as the activities of the All India States' People's Conference carried and spread the national movement to the princely states.
- Perceive the policy of the Indian National Congress towards the Indian States.
- Perceive the plans which Cabinet Mission announce for the Princely States.
- Know the principles which Constituent Assembly declare for the Princely States.
- Grasp the plans which Mountbatten announce for the Princely States.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The pre-independent India comprised of two categories of territories- the territories directly governed by the British which were divided into provinces and territories ruled by Indian princes. Nearly two-fifths of the Indian sub-continent was under the rule of Indian princes. The main feature that distinguished the princely states from the provinces of British India was

that the former unlike the latter had not been annexed by the British. The areas ruled by the princes included Indian states like Hyderabad, Mysore and Kashmir, that were equal in size to many European countries, and numerous small states whose population could be counted in the thousands. The states were scattered all over the Indian sub-continent.

The common feature was that all of them, big and small, recognised the paramountcy of the British Government. The internal administration of the states and their political set up varied greatly. According to the information circulated by the Chamber of Princes in 1946, over sixty states had set up some form of legislative bodies. In many others, schemes for associating the people with the governance of their states were under consideration. In most cases, the development of representative institutions did not approximate to the growth of self-governing institutions in the provinces. However, everywhere there was a growing consciousness of the rights and liberties of the people.

12.2 PRINCELY STATES AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENTS

The Revolt of 1857 demonstrated the value of the princes to the British Government. Except for minor defections, the Indian Princes not only remained aloof from the rising, but in certain cases, extended effective assistance to the British to suppress it. Gradually, it was realised that the states could play a most helpful role as a bulwark against the forces of nationalism. This led to a radical change in the British policy towards the states. The new policy found expression in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, which promised, "We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of native Princes as our own and there would be no further conquests".

The advance of the national movement in British India, and the accompanying increase in political consciousness about democracy, responsible government and civil liberties had an inevitable impact on the people of the states. However, until the last phase of the First World War (1914-18), Indian nationalism had not developed into a real to the foreign rule in India.

With the emergence of Gandhi on the political stage and the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919), the nationalist movement fired the imagination of the people and deepened the anxiety of the British rulers of India. The aim was to neutralise, or at least to isolate the growing upsurge of Indian nationalism by using the princes as a counterweight. This marked the beginning of the policy of utilising the services of the states for organising a counter revolution.

Under the pretext of bringing together Indian India and British India the British organised a Chamber of Princes on 8 February 1921. The formation of this new body had other important consequences. So far Indian questions had a triangular one involving the British, the Indian nationalists and the Muslim communalists. From now onwards another dimension was

introduced into the conflict and with the involvement of the Indian states it became quadrangular.

The authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1918) had noted, there is a strong reason why the present stir in British India cannot be a matter of indifference to the princes. Hopes and aspirations may overlap frontier lines like sparks across a street. There are in the Native States men of like minds to those who have been active in spreading new ideas in India. It is not our task to prophesy, but no one would be surprised if constitutional change in British India quickened the pace in the Native States as well."

During the eleven years following this prophecy great changes took place in India. While a large number of people of different states were demanding responsible government, a section was growing demanding a complete abolition of the princes, just as a demand for complete severance of British connection was fast gaining ground in British India. The princes in order to maintain their hold over the people and administration began to device methods to suppress public opinion. They issued orders prohibiting public meetings, arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned public and respectable citizens, confiscated their property and banished people from their native land. The people who had long tolerated the arbitrary rule of the princes began to organise themselves. Their organisations began to gather momentum as the numerous conferences of the people of the various states indicate.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Enumerate the role of Princely States to the growth of nationalism.

12.3 ALL INDIA STATES' PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE

The Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movement launched under the leadership of Gandhi in 1920 had a powerful influence on the people of the princely states. Around this time a number of local organisations of the States people came into existence. Some of the states in which 'praja mandals' or states' Peoples Conferences were established included Mysore, Hyderabad, Baroda, the Kathiawad States, the Deccan States, Jamnagar, Indore and Nawanagar. This process came to a head in December 1927 with the convening of the All India States' People's Conference (AISPC) which was attended by 700 political workers from the states. The leaders responsible for this initiative were Balwantrao Mehta, Maniklal Kothari and G.R. Abhyankar. The All India States' People's Conference set up its

headquarters at Bombay. It was one of the major developments as the activities of the All India States' People's Conference carried and spread the national movement to the princely states.

The All India States' People's Conference was a very moderate body. It confined itself to drawing up petitions and issuing pamphlets for representative institutions. Some of their manifestoes even contained expression of sympathy and support for the princes in their efforts to maintain their rights and status vis-a-vis the paramount power. At the first national meeting the representatives of AISPC called for a federal arrangement between the two parts of India, an amalgamation of smaller states into politically and economically viable units, political reforms such as an independent judiciary and responsible ministers within the states' governments and various social and educational reforms. The policy of the Indian National Congress towards the Indian States.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 What was the major developments as the activities of the All India States' People's Conference carried and spread the national movement to the princely states?

12.4 THE POLICY OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS TOWARDS THE INDIAN STATES

The policy of the Indian National Congress towards the Indian States had been first enunciated in 1920 at Nagpur when a resolution calling upon the princes to grant full responsible government in their states had been passed. Simultaneously, however, the Congress, while permitting individuals of the states to become members of the Congress, made it clear that they could not initiate political activity in the states in the name of Congress but only in their individual capacity or as the members of the local political organisations. The main emphasis was that the people of the states should build up their own strength and demonstrate their capacity to struggle for their demands. Informal links between the Congress and the various organisations of the people of the states, including AISPC, always continued to be close. In 1929, Jawaharlal Nehru, in his presidential address to the Lahore Session of the Congress, declared that the Indian states cannot live apart from the rest of India... the only people who have a right to determine the future of the states must be the people of those states. The Calcutta Session (1928) as well as the Lahore Session (1929) of the Congress adopted resolutions urging the princes to introduce 'responsible

government based on representative institutions in the states' and assuring the states' people its sympathy and support in their 'legitimate and peaceful struggle for the attainment of responsible government.

In its efforts to voice the people's aspirations the AISP had to face many heavy odds. The hostile attitude of almost all the rulers to the conference and the local organisations checked the development of public opinion inside the states. The British Government's attitude towards the states' people's organisations was one calculated to discourage its growth. It consistently refused to recognise the competence of these bodies to speak on behalf of states's people.

The anti-autocratic and anti-feudal agitations were emerging in some of the princely states. In Kashmir, for example, in July 1931, where the inevitable confrontation between an overwhelming Muslim subject population and a Hindu ruling dynasty did acquire at times a certain communal tinge. It was during these years a powerful National Conference Movement also started. The agitation was started by a group of Muslim graduates including Sheikh Abdullah. In Jammu there were anti-money-lender riots. In early 1933 in the Rajasthan state of Alwar there was a formidable rising against Maharaja Jai Singh Sawani's revenue enhancements, 'begar', grazing dues and reservation of forests for hunting. The Meos, a self-contained semi-tribal peasant community with affinity to Islam, began a guerilla war on a large scale. Eventually the British decided to pack off the unpopular Maharaja to Europe and take over Alwar administration for some years.

During the first phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement (April 1930 to March 1931) the British seemed primarily concerned with securing the cooperation of the princes at the forthcoming Round Table Conference in London. The Imperial Government also tried to use some princes to reduce the Muslim participation in Gandhi's civil disobedience movement. In May 1930, at the instance of the Viceroy Lord Irwin, Nizam Usman Ali Khan of Hyderabad issued a manifesto exhorting all the Muslims to stand firmly aloof from the movement. The British Government also sought the cooperation of the princes to thwart the activities of the Indian National Congress. The Bombay Presidency was particularly vulnerable to hit and run' activities of the Congress operating from princely territories because it contained so many 'islands' of state territories and shared long boundaries with several other states. At the request of the Bombay Government the Government of India decided to solicit princely collaboration.

The princes were asked to ensure that special activities of the Civil Disobedience Movement such as boycott of British goods were not allowed to be practiced in their states and that their states were not used as a base for the agitation in British India. Many princes responded quietly to the suggestions of their political officers. By January 1932, the Viceroy Lord Willingdon could publicly announce that nineteen princes had approved governmental policies to deal with disorder and had offered to cooperate to the fullest extent with the government. The more important princes in this group were the Maharajas Patiala, Indore, Kishangarh, Kapurthala and Jind. In the following months, other prominent princes such as the Nizam, the

Maharaja of Kashmir, Bikaner and Bundi and the Council of Regency in Gwalior endorsed the policies of the Government on India.

In Central India, the Maharaja Gulab Singh of Rewa pursued a conciliatory policy towards the Congress activities in his territories. It was felt by the British that Rewa was setting a 'bad' example for other states in the region. Gulab Singh's 'permissiveness' was attributed to his lack of efficient and organised troops capable of dealing with the situation. In May 1932, after a reorganisation of his forces and under British pressure the Maharaja issued restrictive ordinances. A number of agitators were arrested and lathi charge was ordered to disperse assemblies declared illegal by the new ordinances.

The Kathiawar states were divided in their attitudes towards the Civil Disobedience Movement. Because of the interlocking pattern of their territories, this division made it difficult to contain anti-government agitations. Limbi, Morvi and Nawanagar were loyalist states pursuing a strong policy of suppression of the Congress activities other states included Bhavnagar, Junagarh, Porbandar, Wadhwan and Gondal which more or less permitted the Congress to implement its programme of boycott of foreign clothes and the defiance of the salt laws. The Nizam of Hyderabad, noted throughout his long life for his miserliness, contributed twenty lakhs of rupees to the treasury of the Chamber of Princes to counteract the Civil Disobedience Movement.

An analysis of the varying response made by the most active princes to the national movement may not manifest a clearly defined pattern but it would certainly give some insight into the thought-process and activities of the princes.

The federal scheme embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935 was the first effort to provide for a constitutional relationship between the Indian states and the Government of India on a federal basis. One of the specific features of this scheme was that, whereas in the case of provinces accession to federation was to be automatic, in the case of the states the accession was to be voluntary. Besides, the establishment of the contemplated federation was conditional on the accession of states entitled to fill not less than one half of the total population of the states, A state was considered to have acceded when its ruler executed an instrument accession and after it was accepted by the British Crown. The states were to send representatives to the Federal Legislature. However, the representatives would be nominees of the princes and not democratically elected representatives of the people. They would number one-third of the total members of the Federal Legislature and act as a solid conservative block that could be trusted to thwart nationalist pressure. The Indian National Congress and the AISPC and other organisations of the states' people clearly saw through this imperialist manoeuvre and demanded that the states be represented not by the princes' nominees but by elected representatives of the people. However, the federal scheme was not implemented as majority of the states refused to join the proposed federation.

The princely states experienced a new wave nationalist movement during the years following the introduction of the Government of India Act 1935. The assumption of office by Congress ministries in the majority of the provinces in British India in 1937, created a new sense of confidence and expectation in the people of the Indian states and acted as a spur greater political activity. The All India States 'Peoples' Conference under its secretary Balwant Rai Mehta took initiative for the movement with renewed vigour. The years 1938-39, in fact, stand out as years of a new awakening in the Indian States and were witness to a large number of movements demanding responsible government and other reforms. 'Praja Mandals' came up in many states that had earlier no such organisations. Major movements were launched in Jaipur, Kashmir, Rajkot, Patiala, Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and the Orissa states. Some rulers took strong measures to suppress the agitation, forcing their subjects to seek help from British Indian politicians. The Congress which had all along maintained its policy of 'benevolent neutrality' towards the states now felt inclined to revise its policy. As late as 1938, in the Haripura session of the Congress, the leaders had reiterated the policy that movements in the states should not be launched in the name of the Congress but should rely on their own independent strength and fight through local organisations. However, a few months later, on seeing the new spirit of national consciousness and the capacity of the people of states to struggle, Gandhi and Congress changed their attitude on the issue. Explaining the shift in policy in an interview to the Times of India' on 24 January, 1939, Gandhi said, "The policy of non-intervention by the Congress was, in my opinion, a perfect piece of statesmanship when the people of the states were not awakened. That policy would be cowardice when there is all-round awakening among the people of the states and a determination to go through a long course of suffering for the vindication of their just rights... The moment they became ready, the legal, constitutional and artificial boundary was destroyed."

As a follow up of the change of policy towards the struggle of the people of the states, the Congress at its Tripuri session in March 1939 passed a resolution outlining its new policy, "The great awakening that is taking place among the people of the states may lead to a relaxation, or to a complete removal of the restraint which the Congress imposed upon itself, thus resulting in an ever increasing identification of the Congress with the states' people. For the Ludhiana session of the AISPC Jawaharlal Nehru was elected as its President. This marked the beginning of the fusion of the movements in Princely India and British India.

The Princes of different states reacted to this new political awakening in the states in different ways. The local 'Praja Mandal' had started agitation in Rajkot for political and administrative reforms under U. N. Dhebar. Virawala, the unpopular Dewan of Rajkot, had imposed a number of monopolies which affected the local traders. He also stopped summoning an advisory elected council set up earlier. Nearly half the revenue of the state was appropriated by the privy purse of its ruler. Gandhi together with Sardar Patel intervened in the Rajkot affair. In the famous Rajkot satyagraha in 1938-39, Kasturba Gandhi and Maniben Patel courted arrest in February 1939, and Gandhi himself started a fast in Rajkot on the eve of the Tripuri

congress in 1939 [Tripuri, a small village near Jabalpur (M.P.)]. Meanwhile Sardar Patel intervened and a compromise was effected between the Thakur of Rajkot and his subjects. But soon the British Political Department instigated Virawala to withdraw the concessions he had offered earlier.

Meanwhile far more impressive and significant movements had started in many other parts of princely India. In Aundh, the ruler on his own accord granted constitutional reforms of far reaching character to his people. He also decided to utilise the resources of his state to the promotion of the welfare of his subjects. The ruler of Baroda, without much difficulty consented to the reduction of the land revenue even though it meant a loss of Rs.20 lakhs to the state's treasury. Mansa followed the example of Baroda and reduced the assessment. The state also recognised peasants proprietary rights in land. Though initially Jaipur imposed a ban on the Praja Mandal and prohibited the entry of Seth Jamnalal Bajaj into the state, it later consented to lift the ban and to withdraw regulations regarding public meetings. The ruler of Jaipur also assured to solve some of the problems of his subjects.

While rulers of certain states were ready to see reason and grant some reforms to their subjects, rulers of many states of Saurashtra, Orissa, Central India and Rajasthan such as Limdi, Dhenkanal, Talcher, Nilgiri, Ratlam, Jhabera, Jodhpur and Udaipur were determined to crush the political unrest ruthlessly at all costs. They initiated reign of terror in their respective states and some even preferred devastation and depopulation to political concession.

In the state of Hyderabad, a small Muslim elite held ninety percent of the government jobs and Urdu was maintained as the only official language and the medium of instruction in a state which was fifty percent Telugu, twenty-five percent Marathi and eleven percent Kannada speaking. The people were denied even the basic civil and political rights. Feudal exploitation like forced labour and compulsory payment in kind prevailed in Telangana region. Popular awakening in the state took the form of middle class language based cultural organisations such as the Andhra Mahasabha in Telangana and Maharashtra Parishad in Marathwada. At about the same time, a State Congress had been founded on a secular basis by Swami Ramananda Tirtha and Govinddas Shroff from Marathwada, Ravi Narayan Reddi from Telangana and a few Muslims like Sirajul Tirmijl from Hyderabad. Among the students at the Osmania University a powerful 'Vandemataram' movement began. In spite of its secular nature, the Nizam banned Hyderabad State Congress in September 1938 on the pretext that it was constituted on communal lines. At Gandhi's insistence the Congress activities were withdrawn December 1938 as it was felt that it could get mixed up with Hindu communalists agitation. There after a number of agitators joined the communist ranks.

In the southern states of Travancore and Cochin, the national movement was built up largely under leftist leadership and guidance. In August 1938, the Travancore State Congress started a powerful agitation against the Dewan C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer. In spite of brutal repression, the students

joined the 'satyagraha' in large numbers, and 'jathas' marched into Travancore from many parts of Kerala.

The Muslim Conference was at the fore forefront of popular agitation in Kashmir. On the advice of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Muslim Conference of Kashmir was converted into the National Conference. Rather than responding to the anti-autocratic and anti-feudal wishes and aspirations of the people, the Dewan of Kashmir maintained that the States 'People' Organisation was promoted by the Muslims against the Hindu prince.

Confronted with the growing popular agitation, some of the larger and middle sized states decided to meet together in order to review the situation and seek the moral and material support of the Paramount Power. Thus, the Chief Ministers of many states including Hyderabad, Kolhapur, Baroda and Gwalior met in a conference in 1938. Following a thorough discussion on their common problems, the conference decided to send a memorandum to the Political Department with regard to the Congress attitude towards the popular agitation in the states and seek its support, material and moral.

The Chief Ministers' Conference, in its memorandum squarely blamed the Indian National Congress for fomenting popular agitation in the princely states'... in furtherance of their programme to capture power in the forthcoming Federation. The memorandum also asked the British Government to provide moral and material support to combat the agitations.

The outbreak of the Second World War brought about distance change in the political atmosphere in India. Congress ministries resigned. The government armed itself with Defense of India Rules to thwart national movement. Even in the princely states political activity was not tolerated. Meanwhile the All India States peoples' Congress was strengthened by its identification with the Congress. This identification was evident by their identical approach to the war issue and also in their statements. Moreover, with the consent of Gandhi, the Congress appointed a sub-committee consisting of Nehru, Bulabhai Desai, Vallabhbhai Patel and J. B. Kripalani to bring the States' people within the orbit of the Congress organisation.

When the Congress launched the Quit India Movement under the leadership of Gandhi in August 1942, some workers of the All India States' Peoples' Conference actively participated in it. This time the Congress made no distinction between British and the Indian States and the call for struggle was extended to the people of the states. The people of the states thus formally joined the struggle for India's independence, and in addition to their demand for responsible government they asked the British to quit India and demanded that the states become integral parts of the Indian nation.

The negotiations for transfer of power that ensued after the end of the war brought the problem of the states to the centre of the stage. In September 1945, the Viceroy Lord Wavell, on his return from England announced the government's determination for the early realisation of full self-government for India. The proposed measures included, the summoning of a constituent assembly; consultations with the representatives of the states and the

formation of a new Executive Council having the support of the main political parties.

The princes welcomed the plan and the opportunity to participate in the constitution-making body. However, there were differences on the matter of representation. The Congress insisted that only popular representatives could represent the states. But the princes asserted their right to nominate or represent themselves in the constitution making body. The princes further made it clear that any such constitution would be subject to ratification by the princes and that their existing treaties and 'sanads' would not be altered unilaterally without their consent.

Under these circumstances the annual session of the Chamber of Princes was held on 17 January 1946 under the presidentship of Lord Wavell. He assured them: that no changes in their relationship with the Crown or the rights guaranteed to them by treaties and engagements would be initiated without their consent. Meanwhile he expressed his confidence that the states would take their full part in the proposed constitution-making body. On their part the princes affirmed that the states fully shared the general desire of the country for the immediate attainment of self-government and their intention to make every possible contribution to it.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Explain the policy of the Indian National Congress towards the Indian States.

12.5 THE CABINET MISSION

The Labour Government which came to power in England following the end of the Second World War realised that it was a matter of time before it granted freedom to India. A parliamentary delegation visited India in 1945-46 to gain a first hand knowledge of the political situation in this country. This was followed by a Cabinet Mission consisting of Lord Pethic Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander which arrived in New Delhi on 24 March 1946 to discuss with the Indian leaders the steps for achieving 'early realisation of full self-government. Speaking in Parliament on 15 March 1946, Prime Minister Atlee referring to the Indian states had expressed the hope that princely India and British India would cooperate with each other.

On his arrival in India, Cripps made it clear that the Cabinet Mission would follow the earlier precedents in its negotiations and would consult only the

the ruler. A suggestion that the Mission should interview the representatives of the states' subjects was not acceptable either to the political Department or to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. The Cabinet Mission also did not pursue the question. This attitude disappointed the All India States 'People' Conference, which had been demanding that the states 'Peoples' opinion should also be taken into account.

The Cabinet Mission held discussions with rulers representing, larger, middle and smaller states along with the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. In their talks with the Mission, the members of the Chamber, specially the Chancellor, made it clear that the states wished to retain the maximum degree of sovereignty and desired no interference in their internal affairs by British India. The Chancellor also suggested the formation of a Privy Council of the states and British India on the lines contemplated in the Simon Report. He emphasised that none of the rulers wanted a constitutional set up of the kind contemplated in the Government of India Act, 1935. Broadly, the position taken up by the state representatives was that paramountcy should not be transferred to a successor government, but that it should lapse; that the states should not be forced to join any union or unions; that there should be prima facie no objection to the formation of a confederation of states the rulers so desired; and that there should be no interference in their internal affairs by British India.

After concluding its consultation with different parties, the Cabinet Mission announced its plan on 16 May 1946, for setting up of a Constitution-making authority. Referring to the states, the Mission said that with the attainment of independence by British India, whether within or without the British Commonwealth, the relationship which had hitherto existed between the states and the British Crown would no longer be possible. Paramountcy could neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new government.

The Cabinet Mission Plan proposed that the states were to retain all the subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union, namely, foreign affairs, defence and communications. In the Constituent Assembly the princes were to have appropriate representation, not exceeding 93 seats.

The General Council of the All India States 'People' Conference met in Delhi during June 8 to 11, 1946 to discuss the Cabinet Mission Plan. Nearly 200 delegates from all over India participated. Jawaharlal Nehru in his presidential address, emphasised the need of democratisation of the states to bring them up to a common level with the rest of India. He further maintained that paramountcy should vest in the Union Federal government.

Jawaharlal Nehru deplored the fact that the Cabinet Mission had entirely ignored the states' people in its deliberations. The General Council of AISPC welcomed the announcement of the princes that they stood for a free and united India'. However, it regretted the way the states' people had been by passed and ignored by the Cabinet Mission.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Which plans did Cabinet Mission announce for the Princely States?

12.6 CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The General Council of AISPC suggested that, in the Constituent Assembly, the people elected representatives and not nominated members should participate. For the interim period the General Council suggested that an Advisory Council should be formed comprising of the rulers, the states 'people' representatives and the representatives from British India, to discuss matters of common concern.

The Constituent Assembly met for the first time on 9 December 1946. It elected Rajendra Prasad as the President. On 21 December it passed a resolution appointing a Negotiating Committee to negotiate with a similar body which already been appointed by the Chamber of Princes to deal with the representation of the states in the Constituent Assembly.

When the Constituent Assembly met, the states 'people representatives were not included among the states' members of the Assembly. This was against the declared principle of the AISPC and the Congress which had been insisting that all the representatives of the states to the Constituent Assembly should be elected by the people of the states and none of them should be the nominee of the princes.

On 17 April 1946, addressing the AISPC at Gwalior, Nehru declared that any ru's observation. Nehru's state which did not come into the Constituent Assembly would be treated by the country as a hostile state and such a state would have to bear the consequences of being so treated. The Muslim League took strong exception It declared that the Congress had no right to coerce the states and that the states were perfectly within their rights in refusing to have anything to do with the Constituent Assembly. Jinnah stressed that the states were to be independent with the termination of British paramountcy. The attitude of the Muslim League encouraged many princes to think of independence and of forming a 'Third Force' and emboldened them not to join the Constituent Assembly. However, consequently a large section of the Indian princes joined the Constituent Assembly.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Which principles did Constituent Assembly declare for the Princely States?

12.7 MOUNTBATTEN PLAN

Lord Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy of India announced his plan on 3 June 1947, according to which the dominions of India and Pakistan would be established long before June 1948 and that the question of Indian states would be dealt with in light of the Cabinet Mission's memorandum of 12 May 1946. The very next day in the press conference it was also declared by Mountbatten that the British Government would relinquish power by 15 August 1947, and the British paramountcy would lapse on that date.

These announcements stirred both British India and the Indian states. Some of the rulers continued to favour independence after the transfer of power without bothering about the geographical and economic compulsions and implications of such a move. Bhopal, Hyderabad, Travancore etc. were some of those states who thought in such terms. Many still hoped to form a Third State. However, a great majority of the states became increasingly conscious of the need of accession to the new dominions. Even amongst those who were convinced that geographical conditions required them to join either India or Pakistan, there were considerable differences. While the politically conscious amongst them, such as Bikaner and Patiala, stood for accession to the Indian union with a strong centre at Delhi, others like Jodhpur and Junagarh seemed prepared to be lured to Pakistan by Jinnah.

As regards the question of the future relationship of the states with the successor government, it was thought that some sort of an Instrument of Accession, based more or less on the model of the draft Instrument of Accession of 1935, might be prepared. On 10 July 1947, a number of rulers and states' ministers met at the Sardar's residence. The Sardar urged that the states which had joined the Constituent Assembly should forthwith accede to India. Mountbatten advised the rulers to accede the appropriate dominion in regard to the three subjects (i) defence, (ii) external affairs, and (iii) communications. He appealed them to join either of the two dominions before 15 August 1947.

In order to facilitate the accession of the states to either dominions two documents were drawn up – Standstill Agreements and the Instrument of Accession. These were approved by the General Conference of the

Chamber of Princes on 1 August 1947. The Instrument of Accession were not uniform for all the states. In the case of 140 rulers, who were the members of the Chamber of Princes, the Instrument of Accession provided accession to the Dominion of India on the three subjects of defence, external affairs and communications. The Standstill Agreement however, was identical in all cases. It laid down that all agreements and administrative arrangements as to the matters of common concern specified in the schedule then existing between the Crown and the states should continue 'until new arrangements in this behalf were made. The Agreement excluded the exercise of any paramountcy functions by the Central Government.

Before 15 August 1947, all the states except Junagadh, Kashmir and Hyderabad acceded either to India or Pakistan. However, after the raid of the tribals of Pakistan on Kashmir, the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession with India on 26 October 1947. Hyderabad acceded to India following 'police action' taken by Sardar Patel, the then Home Minister. Junagadh also acceded to India following the revolt of the people.

Check Your Progress

Q.1 Which plans did Mountbatten announce for the Princely States?

12.8 SUMMARY

The common feature was that all of them, big and small, recognised the paramountcy of the British Government. The internal administration of the states and their political set up varied greatly. According to the information circulated by the Chamber of Princes in 1946, over sixty states had set up some form of legislative bodies. In many others, schemes for associating the people with the governance of their states were under consideration. In most cases, the development of representative institutions did not approximate to the growth of self-governing institutions in the provinces. However, everywhere there was a growing consciousness of the rights and liberties of the people.

12.9 QUESTIONS

- Q.1 Enumerate the role of Princely States to the growth of nationalism.
- Q.2 What was the major developments as the activities of the All India States' People's Conference carried and spread the national movement to the princely states?

Q.3 Explain the policy of the Indian National Congress towards the Indian States.

Indian National Movement
(1857 CE to 1947 CE)

Q.4 Which plans did Cabinet Mission announce for the Princely States?

Q.5 Which principles did Constituent Assembly declare for the Princely States?

Q.6 Which plans did Mountbatten announce for the Princely States?

12.10 ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. M. M. Ahluwalia, Freedom Struggle in India, 1858 to 1909, Delhi, Ranjit Printers and Publishers, 1968,
2. Daniel Argove, Moderates and Extremists in the Indian National Movement, 1883-1920, Bombay. Asia Publishing House, 1967.
3. Bipan Chandra, The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India, New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1977.
4. Bipan Chandra, Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India, New Delhi, Orient Longman Ltd., 1979.
5. Tara Chand, History of the Freedom Movement In India, Vols. I-IV, New Delhi, Govt. of India Publications Division; 191-72.
6. R. L. Handa, History of Freedom Struggle in Princely States Delhi, Central News Agency, 1968.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Unit Structure

- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Introduction
- 13.3 Government of India Act 1858, Indian Councils Act, 1861 and 1892
- 13.4 Morley-Minto Reforms and The Indian Councils Act 1909
- 13.5 Montague-Chelmsford Reform and the Government of India Act, 1919
- 13.6 Main features of the system introduced by the Act of 1919
- 13.7 The Simon Commission 1927-30
- 13.8 The Nehru Report 1928
- 13.9 Ramsay Macdonald Award – Communal Award
- 13.10 The Government of India Act 1935
- 13.11 India independence Act 1947
- 13.12 Summary
- 13.13 Conclusion
- 13.14 Questions
- 13.15 Additional Readings

13.1 OBJECTIVES

After completion of the unit, the students will be able to understand

- The passing of various acts before the act of independence
- The efforts undertaken by freedom fighters to set up a responsible government
- Various Features of Indian constitution in different acts
- The base of building a united India

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Dr. Durgadas Basu in his book “**Introduction to the Constitution of India**” stated that the Constitution of the Indian Republic is not a result of political revolution but a through research and deliberation of representatives of the people for improving the existing system of administration (p.3).

The company Raj was established in India in mid-18th century. The Regulating Act of 1773 formally recognized parliamentary right to control Indian affairs. The Court of Directors of the Company were obliged to

submit all communications received from Bengal about civil, military and revenue matters in India to the British government. The status of Bengal governor was raised to that of governor general who would be assisted by four council members. The governor general and council members were under the control of the Court of Directors. A supreme court was established in Calcutta and legislative powers were vested in the governor general and the council.

The Pitts India Act of 1784 brought public affairs and administration of Company's territorial possessions under more direct government control. A Board of Control was set up with its six members includes secretaries of state, the chancellor of the exchequer and four privy councilors. They were given the power **“superintend, direct and control all acts, operations and concerns”** related to the **“civil, military governments or revenues of the British territorial possessions in the East Indies”**. The act of 1784 established a clear hierarchy of command and more direct parliamentary control over Indian administration.

The Charter Act of 1793 introduced in India the civil law. It has extended the power of governor general. All laws were printed with translations in Indian languages. The passed regulations applied to all rights, person and property of the Indian people and it bound the courts to regulate their decisions by the rules and directives contained therein. The charter Act of 1813 asserted the “undoubted sovereignty of the Crown of the United Kingdom” over the Indian territories. However, the Charter Act of 1833 considered as a landmark in the constitutional history of India. The monopoly of company's tea trade was abolished in China and in India also the possessions of the Company were to be held in trust for the British Crown. The Board of Control president became the Indian Affairs minister and the board was empowered to superintend all administrative affairs in India. The Governor General of Bengal became the Governor General of India and empowered to control all civil, military and revenue matters in consultation with his council in the whole of India. A law member was added to the council and a law commission was instituted for codification of laws. The further Act of 1853 provided for the separation of the executive and legislative functions of the governor general's council by adding new members for legislative purposes. The competition was introduced for the recruitment of the Indian Civil Service. The revolt of 1857 made the English people more aware of the Indian situation and generated support. Finally, the blow had hit and the Company Raj was abolished and the Crown rule was established.

Check your Progress

1. The early phase of Constitutional developments did changes in important feature in today's Constitution of India. Do you agree...justify your answers

13.3 GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT 1858, INDIAN COUNCILS ACT 1861 AND 1892

After the revolt of 1857, the **Government of India Act 1858** was enacted wherein the sovereignty of the British Crown assumed in India over the East India Company. This act served the principle of absolute imperial control without any administration participation of the country. The power of the Crown was to be exercised by the Secretary of State for India with 15 council of India. This act had centralised the administration of the country; the role of Provincial governments was restricted; the power of Governor General who would henceforth to be known as the Viceroy, was to superintend, direct and control all matters relating to the province government. The act established the bureaucratic system of government. i.e. 'Limited Raj'. In 'Limited Raj' the colonial regime dependent on local power elites like Zamindars and contributing to the foundation of a more authoritarian Raj.

The **Indian Councils Act 1861** introduced the additional non-official members in the Governor General's Executive Council however, their role was just to place legislative proposals before the Governor-General. However, **the Indian Councils Act 1892** improved the state of affairs at Indian and Provincial Legislative Councils and this act gave the powers to non-official members to discuss the annual statement of revenue and expenditure and it also asserted that the non-official members of the Indian Legislative Council to be nominated by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and the Provincial Legislative Councils to be nominated by certain local bodies such as universities, district boards and municipalities.

Check your Progress

1. What are the key features of the Act of 1858, 1861 and 1892? Analyse and explain.

13.4 MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS AND THE INDIAN COUNCILS ACT 1909

Indian National Movement
(1857 CE to 1947 CE)

“We have distinctly maintained that representative government, in its western sense, is totally inapplicable to the Indian empire and would be uncongenial to the traditions of eastern populations; that Indian conditions do not admit of popular representation; that the safety and welfare of the country must depend on the supremacy of British administration; and that the supremacy can, in no circumstances, be delegated to any kind of representative assembly’

– Lord Minto on 25 January 1910.

(Benerjee, Vol.2 p.224)

Though, the reforms of 1909 considered as the first step towards representative government in India, the above comment summed up the typical British skepticism about India’s political future. The Secretary of State for India (Lord Morlay) and the Viceroy (Lord Minto) introduced the Indian Councils Act 1909 therefore, this act known as Morley-Minto reforms. This act has brought the changes related to the Provincial Legislative Councils and enlarged the size of the Councils including elected non-official members. Election was introduced in the Legislative Council. The members were given an opportunity to influence the policy of the administration by budget resolution, public interest matter and specified subjects such as the Armed Forces, Foreign Affairs and the Indian states. The act also introduced separate representation of the Muslim community. Special provision was made for additional representation of professional classes, landholders, the Muslims European and Indian commerce. Official majority was retained in the Imperial Legislative Councils such as only 27 seats were for elected members and out of which 8 seats were reserved for the Muslim separate electorate.

The Indian National Congress expressed their discontent and dissatisfaction towards the act and the discontent among the Indians towards the act was aggressive as well. The British government introduced repressive measures such as the Indian Press Act of 1910, the Seditious Meetings Act of 1911 and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 1913. Thus, the dissatisfaction with the existing constitution and the demand for self-governing rights increased during World War one. Indians were looking for self-government and 19 members of the Central legislatures including Mr. Jinnah, Srinivas Shastri and S.N. Benerjee submitted a memorandum in 1916 and demanded for good government or efficient administration. A joint scheme prepared by the Congress and the Muslim league in December 1916 as an outcome of the Lucknow Pact.

13.5 MONTAGU CHELMSFORD REPORT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT 1919

On August 20, 1917, the Secretary of State (Mr. E.S. Montagu) made a statement in the House of Commons and announced that the British government had a desire to increase the association of Indians in every branch of administration and gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.

Mr. Montagu came in India in November 1917 and took the task of formulating proposals with the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford along with British civil servants and the Indian politicians. A committee was appointed. The team members of committee include Sir William Duke, Bhupendra Nath Basu and Charles Robert and published a draft report of reform scheme in July 1918 which was known as **Montagu - Chelmsford Report**. On the basis of report, the Government of India Act 1919 was drafted.

13.6 MAIN FEATURES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT 1919

1. **Dyarchy in the Province** – Dyarchy means dual government. A provision was made for classification of central and provincial subjects. The Central subjects were completely reserved under the control of the central government and the provincial subjects were sub-divided into ‘transferred’ and ‘reserved’ subjects. The reserved subjects were with the Governor and Transferred subjects with the Indian ministers. The reserved subjects included essential areas of law enforcement such as justice, police and revenue. The transferred subjects included education, public health, public works etc. the Ministers in the Legislative Councils were responsible for transferred subjects under the administration of Governor.
2. **Relaxation of Central control over the provinces** – There was a relaxation of the central control over the provinces in administration, legislative and financial matters. The budget for Provinces was also separated from the Government of India and Provincial legislatures were empowered to present its own budget and levy its own taxes relating to the provincial sources of revenue. In spite of giving the power to the provinces, the final enact of any Bill could not be passed without the assent of the Governor- General however, the Governor general would enact a bill without the assent of the Legislature.
3. **Changes introduced in the Indian Legislatures** – the size legislative councils were increased, their total membership varying from province to province. It is also stated that at 70 % members were to be elected out of which not more than 20 % were to be officials and

remaining members to be nominated as non-officials. The direct system of election was introduced for the Provincial Councils and primary voters were electing the members. The provincial council members enjoyed the right and freedom of speech, ask questions, move resolutions, initiate legislation concerning any provincial subjects with the approval of the governor. The Indian legislature was bi-cameral. The Upper House named the Council of State, composed of 60 members out of which 34 were elected and Lower House named as the Legislative Assembly consisted of 144 members out of which 104 were elected. The electorate, however further arranged on religion sectional basis which strengthened the divide between Indian Unity.

4. The Act further provided for the establishment of **Public Service Commission** and set up the **Statutory Commission** at the end of ten year after the act was passed to 'inquire into the working of the system of government'. The Simon commission, appointed in 1927, was the outcome of this provision.

Analysis of the Government of India Act 1919

Though it is claimed that the Montford reforms brought many new formulas which would have given the power to Indians as well to participate in administration, legislation and financial matters, however it is observed that the changes introduced by the Government of India Act 1919 were far short of self-government.

According to **Grover B.L.**, the act of 1919 p.530) had three major defects as follows: -

- a) The absence of partial responsible government at the Centre;
- b) The consolidation of '**separate electorates**' which came as a permanent feature of the Indian political life;
- c) The introduction of dyarchy in the provinces was complicated and cumbersome.

The **Basu D.** observed that the reforms proposed in the act of 1919 failed to fulfil the aspiration of the people in India which led to start the agitation of Indians for Self-government or swaraj. The shortcomings of act of 1919 system were as follows: -

- a) The Governor General was considered as the keystone of the whole constitutional edifice. The courts had no authority to decide whether the subject was Provincial or Central. No bill could be taken for consideration any bill relating to a number of subjects.

- b) At the provincial level, the Governor came to dominate ministerial policy and override financial powers and official block in the Legislature.

Coupland also stated that quote, “*The act crossed the line between legislative and executive authority. Previous measures had enabled Indians increasingly to control their legislatures but now their government.... Now Indians were to govern, so to speak, on their own...as leaders of the elected majorities in their legislatures, and responsible to them.*”

However, there are other historians like **Philip Woods** found the act crucial in establishing parliamentary democracy and beginning of the process of decolonization. **Carl Bridge** stated that the act safeguarded the essentials of the British position. **Tomilson** in his writing found the act to mobilize an influential section of Indian opinion...to support the Raj. **Lokmanya tilak** described the act as ‘extremely disappointing and unsatisfactory’. The non-co-operation movement of Gandhiji boycotted the new councils and made an attempt to liberate Indian politics from this constricted arena of constitutionalism.

13.7 THE SIMON COMMISSION 1927-30

- According to the Government of India Act 1919, there was a provision to set up a statutory commission after 10 years to enquire into the working of the system of government, the growth of education and development of representative institutions on British India and matters connected therewith. The all-white Simon Commission was appointed on 8th November 1927 two years before because of the Conservative government under Lord Birkenhead fear of losing next general election and found this as an opportunity to appoint a commission as a bargaining counter and disintegrate Swarajist Party.
- The Simon Commission was composed of seven British members of Parliament, with Sir John Simon as its President. The commission had no Indian member.
- Indian leaders were disappointed with such compositions and did not accept it. The Indian National congress in December 1927 at Madras boycotted the Commission at every stage, everywhere and in every form. A complete hartal was observed all over parts of India wherever commission visited and slogan was shouted “Simon Go back”. Police used many suppressive activities such as lathi charge to suppress the hartal. Lala Lajpat Rai in Lahore while leading the anti-Simon commission, was lathi charged and mortally injured. The Central committee was invited to form a joint committee but it refused to participate. The Simon Commission did its two visits in 1928 and 1929 and submitted the report in May 1930. The report of Simon commission was later discussed in round Table Conference held in

London. A white paper prepared on the results of this conference was examined by a Joint Select committee of the British parliament and the government of India bill was drafted with certain amendments, as the Government of India act 1935.

13.8 THE NEHRU REPORT -1928

The All-Parties Conference, presided by Dr. M.A. Ansari convened a meeting on May 19, 1928 in Bombay and appointed a committee under Motilal Nehru as a chairman to determine the principles of a constitution for India. The members of the committee were Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Ali Iman, G.R. Pradhan and Subhash Chandra Bose etc. The Nehru committee submitted its report on August 28, 1928 and accepted by the All Parties Conference on August 28, 1928 at Lucknow. The report had many important features such as: -

- a) Demand for Dominion Status which means Independence withing the British Commonwealth.
- b) Joint electorates with reservation of seats for minorities except in the Punjab and Bengal on population basis with the right to contest additional seats.
- c) Full protection to the religious and cultural interests of the Muslims and new provinces may be created to the planning of Muslim majority provinces.
- d) The members of the Provincial councils to be enacted on the basis of adult franchise for five years and the Governor to be appointed by the British Government) on the advice of the Provincial Executive council.
- e) It talked about India as a federation, having a bicameral legislature at the centre to which the Ministry would be responsible.
- f) Citizenship was defined and fundamental rights were enunciated.

The Congress passed the Poorna Swarajya Resolution at its Lahore session in 1929.

13.9 RAMSAY MACDONALD AWARD – COMMUNAL AWARD

The British Prime Minister Ramsay Mac Donald on 4th August 1932 after the failure of second Round Table Conference announced his ‘Communal Award’ related to the electorate representation of different religious communities and the depressed classes. This award had made the provisions of the Muslim, European and Sikh voters to elect their candidates by voting in separate electorates. The provision of separate electorates for the

depressed classes was also made and described as Scheduled Castes, as a separate community. The Ramsay Macdonald award was later modified in Poona pact as a result of Gandhiji's fast to oppose the idea of a separate electorate.

13.10 THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT 1935

- The government of India Act 1935 was a lengthy and elaborate document. Many years went into the framing of this act. The Simon commission, Nehru report, the three successive Round Table Conferences, White paper, the Joint Select committee report and the Lothian report which determined the electoral provision of the act, a unique act was presented as Government of India Act 1935. This act had many significant provisions and important to be studied in detail because of its provisions, constitutional measure, and groundwork for the negotiations that led to the transfer of power into Indian leaders.
- **The main features of the Act of 1935 were as follows: -**
 - 1) **Proposed All-India Federation – ‘Federation of India’** consisting of Governors’ provinces and Princely states. The ‘Instrument of Federation’ was to be an ‘Instrument of Accession’ signed by the Princely states. The joining of federation from Princely states was voluntary however, it is also stated that the Federation could not be formed unless the acceding states sent not less than 104 members of the Council of States.
 - 2) **The Federal Executive** – Dyarchy was withdrawn from the provinces and implemented at the Centre. Certain ‘Reserved subjects’ such as defense, tribal affairs, external affairs, etc. were reserved in the hands of the Governor General with the assistance of a maximum of three councilors appointed by him. The other Federal subjects would also be administered by the Governor General after obtaining the assistance and advice of not more than 10 Council ministers who would be chosen by him and hold office during his pleasure. These ministers consisting of representatives of Indian States and Minorities and to be responsible for the Federal legislature. The Governor General received the ‘special responsibilities’ regarding certain specified subjects and power to accept or reject the advice of the ministers.
 - 3) **The Federal Legislature** – The federal legislature was bi-cameral in its nature – the Council of State and the Federal Assembly. The Council of State was permanent body with its one third of the membership being vacated and renewed triennially. It had members of 156 members of British India and not more than 104 from the Indian states, to be nominated by the rulers concerned. On the other hand, the Federal Assembly tenure was fixed of five years and it has

250 representatives of British India and not more than 125 members from the Indian states. The British India members were elected indirectly by the members of the provincial Legislative Assemblies on the system of proportional representation with the single transferable vote. The rulers nominated the state members.

- 4) **The Federal Structure** – The Governor General was given the pivotal role in the entire constitution of India. The Governor General acted in three capacities as an **advisor** to the ministers; giving his **own individual judgement** to safeguard the financial stability, tranquility of the country, protection of the legitimate interests of the minorities, public servants and their dependents, prevention of commercial discrimination, safeguarding the interest and dignity of the rulers of the Indian states, securing the due discharge of his own discretionary powers; using his own discretion power in the matters of the reserved department of Defense, External Affairs, Tribal areas etc.; appointment and dismissal of the Council of Ministers; ordinance making and enacting Governor General's act; the assent of his for passing of any bill.
- 5) **Provincial Executive** – The provincial affairs was carried by a Council of ministers appointed by the Governor from among the elected members of the provincial legislature and responsible to that body. The Governor in the provinces had 'special responsibilities' on certain subjects to protect the peace of the provinces. Governor at the provinces had powers in the line of Governor General. The provinces were the autonomous units of administration. Ministers were appointed by the Governor but they were to be responsible to elected legislative assemblies. The act divided the British Indian provinces into two categories - 11 Governor's provinces (Madras, Bombay, Bengal, United provinces, Punjab, Bombay, Bengal, Bihar, Central Provinces and Berar, Assam, NFWP, Orissa and Sind) and 5 provinces of Chief Commissioners.
- 6) **Provincial Legislatures** – The number of ministers in each province varied from province to province. The members in the provincial legislative assemblies were elected by the people. In some provinces, there were bi-cameral legislatures consisted of legislative councils and legislative assembly wherein few seats in each of the council were filled through Governor's nomination. The separate representation of religious communities was also a prominent feature of the act of 1935.
- 7) The act also made the provision for the establishment of a **Federal Court** with original appellate and advisory jurisdiction. But the final word remained with the Privy Council in London.
- 8) The **residuary power** of legislation in the act was vested with either Central or the Provincial Legislature but the final decision to enact a

law with respect to any matter was vested in the hands of Governor General which was not enumerated in the Legislative Lists.

- **Lord Linlithgow**, Governor General while talking of the act stated, “By the joint statesmanship of Britain and India there is about to be initiated an experiment in representative self-government which, for breadth of conception and boldness, is without parallel in history. These changes cannot a profound modification of British policy towards India as a member of the Commonwealth. They involve nothing less than discarding old ideas of imperialism for new ideas of partnership and co-operation.”

Check your progress

1. According to you, why the act of 1909, 1919 and 1935 are considered to be landmark act for the constitutional developments?

2. What is dyarchy and provincial autonomy?

13.11 THE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE ACT 1947

The efforts undertaken by Indian freedom fighters for Swadeshi, Swaraj, Poorna Swaraj and then Full Independence was expressed in the different acts passed for the freedom and constitutional developments in India. The Act of 1935 was amended and the Indian Independence Bill was drafted and passed by the British Parliament in July 1947.

The main provisions were as follows: -

- a) **Abolition of the British Parliament Sovereignty and Responsibility** on the Indian territories through the act and altered the constitutional position, root and branch. It also declared that with effect from 15th august 1947, India would remain independent and sovereignty of the Briths crown over the Indian States would lapse.

- b) **The act also** set up two independent dominions to be known as India and Pakistan.
- c) **The British authorities** were removed and all the units of federation including the provinces drew their authority direct from the crown.
- d) The Governor Generals and Provincial Governors became the constitutional heads of the two new Dominions.
- e) The act also removed the Executive Council or Counsellors and they had lost all the extraordinary powers which were mentioned in the Act of 1935.
- f) The Constituent Assemble was set up with a dual function constituent and legislatures.
- g) Provision was also made the division of the Armed forces and the Civil Services between the new dominions. Each dominion was vested the authority to exercise authority over its armed forces and civil services.
- h) The act also lapsed all treaties and agreements between his Majesty's Government and the rulers of Indian (Princely) states or any authority in tribal areas.
- i) The act also gave the full powers to each dominion legislature to make laws. The jurisdiction of the British parliament over India would cease from August 15, 1947.

3.12 SUMMARY

The process of constitutional developments in India started from the Regulating Act 1773. The Act of 1773 made the Presidency of Bengal supreme over those of Bombay and Madras. The Governor-General in Council was given the power of 'superintendence, direction and control' and assisted by four councilors. The Pitt's India act 1784 declared the Company's territories as 'the British possessions in India'. It established a Board of Control, appointed by the Crown. The Charter act of 1793 extended company privileges in India for another 20 years, the Charter act of 1813 trade in India was opened to all British citizens except the tea trade and trade with China. The Charter act of 1833 gave the full powers to Governor General of Bengal and he had names as Governor General of India relating to the civil, military and revenue administration. A law member, was also added in Governor General's council. The Charter act of 1853 had authorized Board of Control to make rules and regulations governing appointments to the services in India. The act of 1858 was passed after the suppression of the revolt of 1857. The power was transferred from the Company to the Crown. The East India Company was abolished. All the powers from the Board of control were transferred to the Secretary of State for India. The Indian Councils act 1861 had given the opportunity for

Indians to be nominated for the first time in the Legislative Council for the purpose of legislation. The act of 1892 expanded the Executive Council of the Governor-General for the purpose of Legislation. A system of Indirect election for the non-official members to the Councils was evolved. The Minto-Morley reforms or the Government of India act 1909 enlarged the Legislative Councils under Constitutional and Functional. The act also provided for the appointment of an Indian to the Viceroy's Executive Council and Provincial Executive Council. The grant of separate electorate for Muslims was also proposed in the act.

The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms or the Government of India act 1919 introduced 'dyarchy' in the provinces. The ministers responsible to their respective legislatures had given the charge of 'transferred subjects' while the provincial Governor and his Councilors were in charge of the 'Reserved subjects'. The separate electorate which was proposed in 1909 for Muslims was extended to the Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, and Christians in Provinces.

The Government of India act 1935 was an elaborate and detailed one. It was the longest and the last constitutional measure introduced by the British in India. It provided for the establishment of a Federation in India consisting of Governor's Provinces and the Princely States. The Federal legislature was introduced as bi-cameral consisting of the Federal assembly and the Councils of state, which was to be permanent body with one-third of its members retiring every three years.

The Indian Independence Act 1947 provided for the partition of India and establishment of two new dominions – India and Pakistan. The act terminated the suzerainty of the British Crown over the Princely states. The struggle for India's independence and the power to Indian citizens were elaborated in detail in the Constitution of India which came into existence on 26th January 1950. The Constituent assembly of India under Dr. Rajendra Prasad as its President prepared the draft of new Constitution of India in February 1948.

The constitution was finally adopted by the Constitution assembly on November 26, 1949 and came into force on 26 January 1950 when the Republic of India was born.

3.13 CONCLUSION

India has come a long way to establish its existence administratively, constitutionally and socially. The struggle for Independence which started for fulfilling the basic rights reached at the level of representation in the legislatures to the attainment of full-independence. The journey of making constitutional developments were not easy. It was a long process. Gradually, the Indian leaders made it successful and finally the outcome of these development is the Constitution of India which speaks about the rights of people.

3.14 QUESTIONS

1. What are constitutional developments?
2. Explain the differences between Government of India Act 1909 and 1919.
3. Do you think the Government of India Act 1935 was an elaborate and constitutional? What are its key features? Explain in details.
4. What are the unique features of India's independence Act 1947?
5. Do you think, the British did the changes in the Constitution provisions of India for the increasing association of Indians in the British India or they had their personal motives too? Analyze in detail.

3.15 ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. Chandra Bipin, India after Independence: Penguin Books, New Delhi 2009.
2. Kashyap Subhash, The Framing of the Constitution and the Process of Institution Building, in A centenary History of The Indian National Congress, General Editor, B.N. Pandey, Vol IV, New Delhi 1990.
3. Basu Durgadas, Introduction to the Constitution of India, 19th Edition, Wadhawa Nagpur 2006.
4. Gover B.L., A Documentary Study of British Policy Towards Indian Nationalism, National Publications 1967.
5. Sarkar Sumit, Modern India 1885-1947, Macmillan, 2009.
6. Khanna H.R., Constitution and Civil Liberties, Radha Krishna Prakashan 1978 Bandyopadhyaya Shekhar, From Plassey to Partition, Orient Blackswan ,2013

INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY, NAVAL MUTINY OF 1946 AND FREEDOM AND PARTITION

Unit Structure

- 14.1 Introduction - Indian National Army
 - 14.1.1 Formation of Indian National Army
 - 14.1.2 Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army
 - 14.1.3 Contribution of INA in Freedom Independence
- 14.2 Naval Mutiny of 1946
 - 14.2.1 Introduction
 - 14.2.2 The Event
 - 14.2.3 Analysis of the Revolt
- 14.3 Freedom and Independence
- 14.4 Summary
- 14.5 Conclusion
- 14.6 Questions
- 14.7 Additional readings

Objective

After study this unit, the learner will understand

- 1) The formation of Army and contribution of Indian leaders towards freedom movement
- 2) The role of Indian National Army and Naval mutiny towards India's independence
- 3) The struggle of independence

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Col. P.K. Sahgal in the volume of “**Netaji and the INA, Lok Sabha Secretariat 1994**”, proposed the division of history of the establishment and development of Indian National Army in four phases.

The first phase was the period when Shri Ras Bihari Bose along with the support of Indian patriots came together against the Japanese Imperial Forces and organized the civilians and leaders together for the freedom of India's independence.

The second phase started on 16th February 1942 during the tenure of Colonel Hunt, who on behalf of the British High Command in Singapore, handed over the prisoners of war of Indian to Major Fujiwara of the Japanese Army, later handed them over to Captain Mohan Singh.

The third phase started when the dissolution of orders issued by Captain Mohan Singh in anticipation of his arrest and the last phase i.e., fourth phase when the Indian National Army became an independent army under the control of the Azad Hind Provisional Government.

14.1.1 Formation of Indian National Army

Shri Ras Bihari Bose, the oldest Indian revolutionary who took the political refuge in Japan played a pivotal role among the politicians and members of the Japanese government. He organized the Indian Independence League with the support of Indians living in South East Asia and mobilized Indians for armed struggle against the British. There were many Indian soldiers who were fighting on behalf of the British during Second World War. The Japanese defeated British in South East Asia and took many Indian soldiers as Prisoners of War (PoW). Major Fujiwara, a Japanese Army officer persuaded Captain Mohan Singh, a POW to collaborate with Japanese for India's freedom. In March, 1942 a conference was held in Tokyo, and formed the Indian Independence League. A conference in Bangkok (June 1942), got elected Ras Bihari Bose as the League president and the idea of Indian National Army was started conceptualizing. The idea of the INA was first conceived in Malaya by Captain Mohan Singh. This has also raised the Indian wing in Japanese army to fight against the British. Japanese government had handed over the POW to Captain Mohan Singh and he had been asked to lead the team of 45,000 Indian POWs. It is documented that by the end of 1942, more than 40,000 men expressed their willingness to join Indian National Army. The INA also played a crucial role and kept on checking the misconduct of the Japanese against Indians in South East Asia and became like a wall against a future Japanese occupation of India. The outbreak of Quit India Movement in India gave the awakening call to all Indians including Indian National Army. Indians organised anti-British demonstrations in Malaya. There were few incidents wherein the differences between Indian army officers led by Mohan Singh and the Japanese arose. The Japanese arrested General Mohan Singh on 20th December 1942. The Indian National Army was dissolved and Japanese wanted their support during war. Considering the support garnered to Indian National Army, Japanese understood that they would need to treat this army as an honourable allied army enjoying equal status. The demand of inviting Shri Subhas Bose to come to East Asia was also accepted. Rash Bihari Bose was requested to negotiate with the officers and men of the Indian National Army.

14.1.2 Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army

Shri Subhas Chandra Bose arrived in Singapore on 2nd July 1943 and on 4th July 1943, a conference of Indian delegates was held from all over East Asia. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (Now refer as Netaji) assumed supreme

command on 25th August. The INA started expanding under his leadership. Netaji also formed a women's regiment called the Rani of Jhansi regiment. Netaji also reserved the seat of commander in the cabinet when the provisional government of Azad Hind Sena was formed. On the 21 October 1943, Netaji formed the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. While forming the policies of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind Sena, Netaji proclaimed that the task of the Provisional Government to launch and conduct struggle which would compel the British and their allies to leave the soil of India. After that, the task of Provisional Government to establish a permanent national government of Azad Hind in accordance with the will of the Indian people. The provisional government guaranteed religious liberty, and equal opportunities to all its citizens. He further stated that quote, "*In the name of God, in the name of bygone generations who have welded the Indian people into one nation, and in the name of the dead heroes who have bequeathed to us a tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice, we call upon the Indian people to rally round our banner, and to strike for India's freedom.*" (p.45 Lok Sabha Secretariat 1995).

On 6 July 1944, Subhas Bose, in a broadcast on Azad Hind Radio addressed to Gandhiji, said: 'India's last war of independence has begun. . . Father of our Nation! In this holy war of India's liberation, we ask for your blessing and good wishes. (p. 477 Chandra Bipin). One INA battalion commanded by Shah Nawaz accompanied the Japanese army to the Indo-Burma territory and participated in the Imphal campaign. However, the war at Imphal campaign was failed and Japanese retreated thereafter in mid-1944 continued till mid-1945 and ended with the surrender to the British in South East Asia. The INA under the leadership of Netaji fought bravely side by side with the forces of Japanese army.

The slogan such as "Jai Hind", "Tum Mujhe Khoon Do, Mein Tumhe Azaadi Dunga" and song "Kadam Kadam Badaye Ja" aroused the feeling of nationalism and kept the moral high of INA to fight against the British. But, due to collapse of German and set back to the Japanese army, the INA could not do much. The disappearance of Netaji also disintegrated the further movement of INA.

14.1.3 The Famous trials of INA army

The government announcement of limiting trials of INA personnel was made by the end of August 1945. Nehru, proactively before the release of this statement raised the demand for generosity from the British government and leniency in the meeting held in Srinagar on 16th August 1945. Nehru called for their judicious treatment which was unanimously accepted in All India Congress Committee resolution from 21st to 23rd September 1945 and adopted a strong resolution declaring its support for the cause. The trials of INA prisoners were advocated by the veteran political leaders of Congress such as Bhulabhai Desai, Tej Bahadur Sapru, K.N. Katju, Nehru and Asaf Ali. They appeared in court at the historic Red Fort trials. The Congress established an INA relief and enquiry committee, and provided small sums of money and food to the men on their release and also made an attempt to help them to secure their employment. There were many authorised bodies

of Congress such as Central INA Fund Committee, the Mayor's Fund in Bombay, the AICC and the PCC offices and Sarat Bose set up to collect funds. The congress and its leaders were fully in support of INA cause. The media coverage of its trials was unprecedented. By November 1945, when the trials began at the First Red fort, the report of media was in favour of INA men than the Government. The media coverage on INA trials and pamphlets with the slogan such as 'Patriots Not Traitors', 'Jai Hind' and 'Quit India' were widely circulated. The sentiments of people were emotional and aggressive. It is reported that almost 160 political meetings were held in the Central Provinces and Berar and demand for release of INA prisoners were raised. The impact of INA and their voice was very strong. Due to the observance of people solidarity and their unanimous emotional sentiment for them, the INA day was observed on 12 November and INA week from 5th to 11th November 1945. Everyday, the numbers of people were increasing and the turnout of people was beyond geographical reach and reported in lakhs in numbers. The support received by Indian masses towards INA was observed in the words of Nehru wherein he said that never before in Indian history had seen such unified sentiments and unity of all different sections of communities of the Indian population with regard to the matter of the Aza Hind Fauz.

The agitation of India's population spread across nation and covered the cities such as Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Punjab, Coorg, Baluchistan and Assam.

14.1.4 Contribution of INA in Freedom Independence

Though the work of INA was mainly seen in Indian history as an allied military support to the Japanese army, the contribution of its leaders was respected enormously and impact of their high morale and bravery were felt by the British government. Due to the military movement of INA, it became clear to the British government that they could no longer depend on Indian soldiers and treat them as their mercenaries. The war had people belonging from all communities irrespective of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, etc. This has brought the feeling of Unity among people and challenged the divide and rule policy of the British. The actions of Rani Jhansi regiment also empowered women and encouraged women to participate in the armed struggle. The independent existence of INA and visionary leadership of Netaji taught the many principles of manhood and nationalism to the younger generation of nations.

Check your Progress

Q.1) Discuss in brief the reason for the formation of Indian National Army.

Q.2) Do you agree that SC Bose has contributed in India's freedom struggle war of Independence? If yes, then explain in brief.

14.2 NAVAL MUNITY OF 1946

14.2.1 Introduction

Between the period of late 1945 and early 1946 India had seen the growth of strikes, armed struggle across common people and military establishments. It is surmised that these movements of Indians across borders hastened the coming of independence in few months. The famous historians like **Bipin Chandra** and **Sumit Sarkar** in their book respectively i.e.; **India's Struggle for Independence and Modern India: 1885–1947** documented that the armed struggle at that time and rebellion movements had been succeeded, India's struggle for freedom could had a different turn. The armed rebellion and naval mutiny had challenged to the British empire.

14.2.2 The Event

The naval mutiny which is known as Royal Indian Navy Mutiny started on 18th February 1946 when 1100 naval ratings of HMIS Talwar stopped work at Bombay and protested against the treatment towards them. These demands were against the racial discrimination, unequal food quality and abuses etc. This mutiny started at Colaba quickly spread to 66 ships and on-shore naval establishments across the subcontinent. The base of munity was Bombay and Karachi but strike took place in all over India including Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Vishakhapatnam, Cochin, Jamnagar, Andamanas, Baharain and Aden men and sepoys.

To fulfil their demands, the ratings issued a '**Charter of Demands**' which were as follows: -

- 1) Release of all Prisoners of War of India;
- 2) Release of all Indian National Army personnel unconditionally;
- 3) The withdrawal of all Indian troops stationed in Indonesia and Egypt;
- 4) Quit India by the British;
- 5) Actions against those commanding officers who misbehaved and illtreated the Indian crew;

- 6) Release of all arrested navy officers and demobilisation of RIN ratings and officers;
- 7) Equal status of Indian navy vis-a vis of the British navy regarding pay, family allowances and other facilities given to the officers from time to time;
- 8) The quality of food for Indian officers should also be in good quality;
- 9) Finally, the services of Indian officers should get all the benefit at par with British officers and supervisors.

The ratings started getting their support from industrial workers in large numbers and trade unions in Bombay declared a general strike. The solidarity between the sailors, infantry soldiers, airmen and R.I.A.F. pilots, ordinary mill hands, students, workers, citizens in many cantonments, military stations as far afield as Karachi, the Punjab, Calcutta and port cities of the Peninsula increased and gave a threat to the colonial establishments. The British got asked for unconditional surrender of R.I.N. and Bombay closed down. Finally, the strike ended on 23rd February post Naval Central Strike Committee (N.C.S.C.) asked for black flags of surrender to be raised.

In spite of receiving the assurance of national leaders, a large contingent of ratings were arrested, was put on jail for months in deplorable conditions and eventually discharged with dishonour.

14.2.3 Analysis of the Revolt –

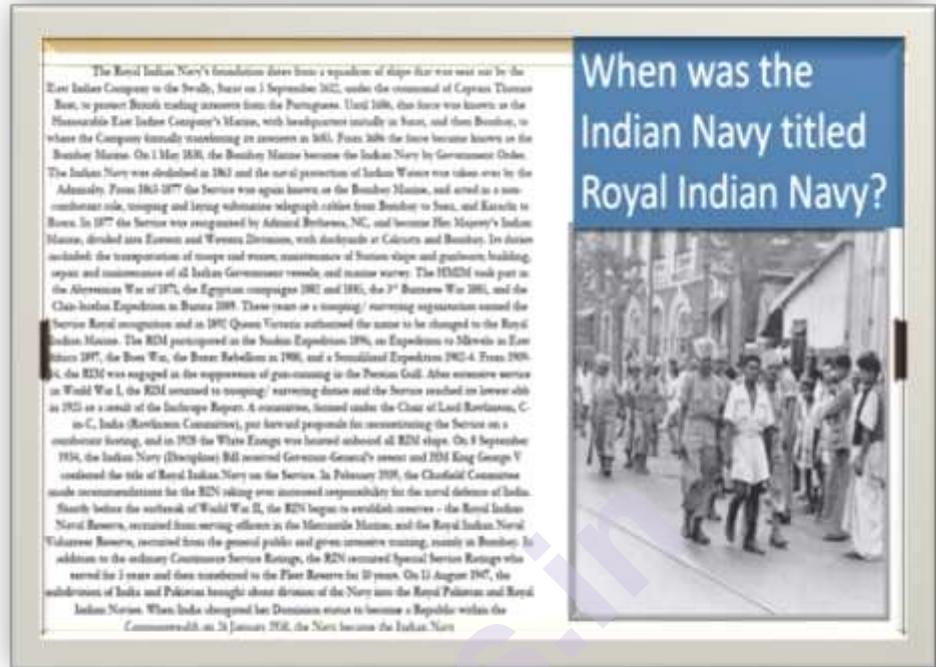
What was the significance of these events? There is no doubt that these two upsurges were significant in as much as they gave expression to the militancy in the popular mind. Action, however reckless, was fearless and the crowds which faced police firing by temporarily retreating, only to return to their posts, won the Bengal Governor's grudging admiration. The RIN revolt remains a legend to this day. When it took place, it had a dramatic impact on popular consciousness.

A revolt in the armed forces, even if soon suppressed, had a great liberating effect on the minds of people. The RIN revolt was seen as an event which marked the end of British rule almost as finally as Independence Day, 1947. But reality and how men perceive that reality often proves to be different, and this was true of these dramatic moments in 1945-46.

Contemporary perceptions and later radical scholarship have infused these historical events with more than a symbolic significance.' These events are imbued with an unrealized potential and a realized impact which is quite out of touch with reality.

A larger-than-life picture is drawn of their militancy, reach and effectiveness. India is seen to be on the brink of a revolution. The argument goes that the communal unity witnessed during these events could, if built upon, have offered a way out of the communal deadlock. When these

upsurges are examined closely, we find that the form they took, that of an extreme, direct and violent conflict with authority with certain limitations.



Ref – Picture 1 – Rasika Lonkar [Naval Munity](#)

Check your Progress

Q.1) what was the Charter of Demands for Naval Mutiny?

Q.2) When was the Indian Navy titled Royal Indian Navy?

14.3 FREEDOM AND PARTITION

Shekhar Bandyopadhyay, in his book raised the relevant questions while mentioning about the historiography of decolonisation of India which is polarised on the question of freedom and partition. Howard Brasted and Carl Bridge raised whether freedom was seized by the Indians or power was transferred by the British which was described “as an act of positive statesmanship”.

During World War II, India was a strategic point for the defence of the British empire in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The British government during the war was looking for a complete support from India therefore, they tried to maintain a strong grip over Indian affairs. German move in European countries made Indian cooperation in war efforts more crucial. Winston Churchill in 1940 became a prime minister in a coalition War Cabinet and as R.J. Moore has observed that, British policy in his time towards India was caught into two different perspectives i.e., “Churchillian negativism and Crippsian constructiveness”. Churchill acknowledged that self-government was the crucial aspect for India and it shall be given to India in some stage of future but preferred to postpone as long as possible. However, such opinion of Churchill was not appreciated by the Indian leaders too which resulted the dissatisfaction of Indian congress.

The war situation at international level and rapid advances of Japanese army in Southeast Asia compelled Britishers to get the collaboration of Indian government. The British government started a number of negotiations formula through their senior political representative to sort out the India’s demand on priority basis. The Cripps mission, though rejected by Congress was a significant move as it announced India’s independence post war. The historic Quit India movement and famous slogan of Gandhiji ‘Do or die’ awakened the national consciousness in the minds of Indians and proved that India would go at any limit to get the independence. The non-concern attitude and approach of the British government had impacted the relationship between the British Raj and Congress. The Bengal famine, wartime food scarcity, agitation towards INA trials, treatment given to Indian army, etc was unable to be side-lined.

Therefore, the Labour party which came in power in 1945 brought the positive atmosphere to bring political change in India and it is recorded by many contemporary observers that labour party leaders particularly, the new Prime Minister Clement Atlee, the new Secretary of State Lord Pathick Lawrence and Stafford Cripps, president of the Board of Trade were positive towards India’s independence. the further process of transfer of power in India was strengthened. However, the Hindu Muslim divide was a major obstacle for the transfer of power in India. The Congress tried to establish unanimity with Muslim league demands and came up with C. Rajgopalachari formula in 1944 which proposed a solution such as: to form a post-war commission, demarcation of districts where Muslims were in absolute majority, plebiscite of adult population, etc. Gandhiji proposed

talks based on ‘Rajaji Formula’ to Jinnah but the talks failed due to fundamental differences in perspectives. After the multiple plans which came later did not bring the Muslim league in align with the demand of Congress. The differences in the perspectives, and background of religion intolerance between Hindu and Muslims ultimately resulted the partition between Hindu and Muslims as India and Pakistan. The declaration of Clement Atlee on 20th February 1947 stated that the power would be transferred by June 1948 to such authority or in such a way as would seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people. Mountbatten plan came on 3rd June 1947 and he advanced the transfer of power from June 1948 to 15 August 1947. The plan suggested the partition of Punjab and Bengal. The plan was endorsed by Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh. The Bengal Assembly on 20th June and Punjab Assembly on 23rd June decided in favour of partition. West Punjab and East Bengal were given to Pakistan and rest areas were remained in India. Sind, Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province opted to join Pakistan. Sir Cyril Redcliffe was appointed to delineate the international boundaries between Bengal and Punjab of not more than six weeks.

The Indian Independence act was corroborated by British government on 18th July and implemented on 14th and 15th August 1947. Pakistan became independent on 14th August 1947 and Jinnah took over as the first governor general of the Dominion of Pakistan. India took the independence oath on 15th August 1947 and Jawaharlal Nehru became the first prime minister of India. he delivered his famous speech “Tryst with Destiny”.

However. The freedom of celebration and independence brought the future of uncertainty and many challenges to the people of India. Gandhiji decided not to celebrate the Independence Day and spent his day on fasting and prayer. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was also not in favour of partition. Dr. Maulan Azad also expressed his agony and pain towards partition. The people in Punjab and Bengal faced the worst-case scenario of communal violence and human displacement. It is recorded that almost one million people were killed and more than seventy-five thousand women were raped. The mass killing of people in trains and refuge camps brought the bitter truth of freedom. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on 30 January 1948 itself was a condemned act in the name of partition.

Check your progress

Q.1) Do you think partition was avoidable?

Q.2) Do you think the World War II and the freedom movement of India are interconnected? State the reasons.

14.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has dealt with three important movements in India which has brought the significant understanding of national and international efforts undertaken by Indian leaders to bring freedom in India. The four phases of Indian National Army in the words of Col. P.K. Sahgal had spoken about the efforts which was built up during different time periods by the Indian National Army and its leaders. In the first phase, Ras Bihari Bose with the support of Indian leaders tried to unite civilians and leaders together at international level. The second phase started when the Indian Prisoners of War in Japan started working together under Captain Mohan Singh. During third phase, the movement of Azad Hind Fauz escalated and in the final and fourth phase, the Indian National Army became an independent army under the control of the Azad Hind Provisional Government and boosted its efforts under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose.

The naval mutiny which is known as Royal Indian Navy Mutiny started on 18th February 1946 when 1100 naval ratings of HMIS Talwar stopped work at Bombay and protested against the treatment towards them. These demands were against the racial discrimination, unequal food quality and abuses etc. This mutiny started at Colaba quickly spread to 66 ships and on-shore naval establishments across the subcontinent. The base of mutiny was Bombay and Karachi but strike took place in all over India including Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Vishakhapatnam, Cochin, Jamnagar, Andamanas, Baharain and Aden men and sepoys.

Finally, the efforts undertaken by all the strata of society, came in the form of freedom which was a long-awaited demand for Indians. However, the happiness of independence also documented the sad state of nation's affairs in the form of partition. Partition is observed as the darkest phase of human history and killing of humanity. The two nations which was born in the name of tolerance and secularism, felt into the phase of intolerance and inhuman situations. The killing of Hindus and Muslims and displacement of people from one state to another was actually unexpected and not in the dram of any civilians.

14.5 CONCLUSION

Historians documented the struggle of India for freedom and Independence was a complex process of change through struggle which was far to complete. The freedom of India had not only brought the tragedy of partition but also another episode of transfer of power of dealing with 565 princely states after the lapse of British paramountcy. However, Indian leaders took the strenuous efforts and made an attempt to develop India at all levels.

15th August 1947, a day of joy and grief, was accepted by Indians with a heavy heart. The Indian leaders Gandhiji, Nehru, Ambedkar, Maulana Azad, and others understood the feeling of Indian people. They all tried at their level to minimise the loss of freedom. The famous speech of Nehru which states that ‘At the stroke of the midnight hour when the world sleeps India shall awake to light and freedom.’ His poetic words, ‘Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny,’ reminded the people about their real dream. The glorious struggle of India and sacrifices of martyrs and leaders, final gave the end result.

14.6 QUESTIONS

- 1) What was the role played by Ras Bihari Bose for the early phase of development of Indian National Army?
- 2) Do you think Subhas Chandra Bose was a visionary leader? State the contribution made by him during freedom struggle?
- 3) Why naval mutiny took place?
- 4) State in brief the INA Trials?
- 5) Do you think partition was inevitable? How the freedom movement took place post World War II?

14.7 ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. Chandra Bipin, India after Independence: Penguin Books, New Delhi 2009.
2. Sarkar Sumit, Modern India 1885-1947, Macmillan 2008
3. Bandyopadhyay Sekhar, From Plassey to Partition, Orient Blackswan 2013
4. Bhardwaj R.C. (ed.), Netaji and INA, Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1994
5. Valentina Vitali, Meanings of Failed Action: a reassessment of the 1946 Royal Indian Navy uprising, University of East London, UK.
6. Lonkar Rasika, Articles on Royal Indian Navy Revolt.
7. The rise and fall of the Indian National Army, Office of the Strategic Services, 1945



ROLE OF THE DEPRESSED CLASS, WOMEN WORKERS AND LEFT MOVEMENT

Unit Structure

- 15.1 Introduction – The role of the Depressed Classes
 - 15.1.1 Background of Depressed Classes movements in India
 - 15.1.2 Role of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for bringing reforms in India for depressed classes
- 15.2 Role of Women workers in Freedom Movement
- 15.3 Role of Left Movement Towards Independence
 - 15.3.1 Congress Socialist Party
- 15.4 Summary
- 15.5 Conclusion
- 15.6 Questions
- 15.7 Additional Readings

Objective

After study of this unit, the learners will understand

- 1) The struggle of Depressed Classes in India
- 2) Efforts undertaken by Indian leaders for the upliftment of depressed classes
- 3) The women emancipation and encouragement
- 4) Participation of women in India's struggle
- 5) Role of Left Movement for freedom struggle

15.1 ROLE OF THE DEPRESSED CLASSES – INTRODUCTION

The movement for empowering people with depressed classes actually got momentum when Gandhiji intervened and put it on top priority of removal of untouchability after the 1917 resolution of Congress which urged its people 'the necessity, justice and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom upon the depressed classes and Lokmanya Tilak's appeal to denounce untouchability.

The Indian national movement was unique because it appealed and included the contribution of all the sections of communities and provided an opportunity to different social groups to experiment their ideas in freedom

movement against the British Raj. The depressed classes in India faced many challenges at social, political and administrative level. Their voices were unheard and they had really struggled a lot to mobilise the masses of communities to assert their social and political rights.

When the nation was fighting towards independence, their fight was on two folds: First was obvious freedom against the British raj by the second was to liberate from internal oppression to get social equality and justice. Depressed classes made all the possible efforts to come out of ideological tradition and opposed Brahmanical tradition. The struggle of Depressed classes was important to document to empower the community and reason for unity of India.

15.1.1 History of the Depressed Classes

In English language, the term 'depressed classes' denote the poor and disadvantaged section of communities. In 1849 and 1866 there were books on depressed classes named as "depressed classes in Great Britain and Ireland". the term also used loosely in India at initial phase for e.g., in 1917 a list was prepared by Sir Henry Sharp, the Educational Commissioner of Government of India of 'depressed classes' and included 'backward and educationally poor communities' in the list. However, the term became more distinct in terms of 'untouchables' and 'unapproachable' in the Parliament speech of Charles Roberts, an MP in 1918. After this, the 1931 census the label 'depressed classes' were identified with communities who were denied access to temples, wells and schools.

The protest raised by Depressed classes in India in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were organised one. There were various movements such as the Ezhavas or Iravas, Pulayas of Kerala, Nadars of Tamilnadu, Mahars of Maharashtra, chamars of Punjab, UP, and Chattisgarh in Central India, Balmikis of Delhi and Namasudras of Bengal and many more documented their protest against the inequal treatment. Though each movement was different and distinct, some of the shared features of these groups were as follows: -

- Protesting against the Hindu practices and visible symbols of high ritual status such as sacred thread wearing, ritual ceremonies, community pooja etc.
- Organised temple entry movements from where they were historically barred by the Hindu priests. The temple entry movements which took place in different parts of India such as Vaikkam Satyagraha in 1924-25, Guruvayur Satyagraha in 1931-33 in Malabar, Munshiganj Kali Temple Satyagraha in Bengal in 1929 and the Kalaram Temple Satyagraha in Nashik in Western India in 1930-35 made an attempt to fight for their social rights. They also offered their stiff resistance to decline the living of dignified life.

- The social solidarity among Depressed classes for their rights, resurgence of their Bhakti inculcated the message of devotion and social equality.

15.1.2 Factors of Caste Identity

Depressed classes in India faced various forms of adverse situations in the name of caste system irrespective of the province which they belonged. As we have seen earlier, that people raised their voice and offered their strong resistance against the suppression and exploitation. The organised Depressed classes protests in different provinces put them on lights. The British bureaucracy which was shaken due to the Great revolt of 1857 was looking for a strategy to prevent any form of discontent in the local society and threat to the empire. The division among the Indian society on the basis of castes provided them an opportunity to identify and legitimize caste division through official documentation. The colonial government established a friendly gesture for depressed classes and aroused their aspirations to voice their grievances against the upper castes. The western education, literature of western education and values of liberty, equality and justice gave birth to new consciousness among depressed classes. The non-brahman movement was started and probably considered as the first idealogue of anti-caste movement in the writing of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and his society of Truth-seekers' (Satyashodhak Samaj) in 18715. He turned the Orientalist theory of Aryanization of India and raised the voice for liberation of depressed classes. Phule in his book Gulamgiri (1873) also asserted that: 'There cannot be a 'nation' worth the name until and unless all the people of the land of King Bali – such as Shudras and Ati Shudras, Bhils (tribals) and Fishermen etc., become truly educated, and are able to think independently for themselves and are uniformly unified and emotionally integrated”.

15.1.3 India's Fight for Independence and the Depressed Class Issues

As we have seen that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Depressed classes became more aware of their rights and got the support of colonial government too like the inclusion of caste status in the census, nomination of Dalits in local bodies, encouragement of Dalit leadership for social emancipation and empowerment etc. gave them confidence and desire to participate in political representation. The act of 1909, 1919 and 1935 act gave political representation of depressed classes in political representations. Though the nationalist leaders were not in favour of separate identity based on castes and religion, and initiated many constructive programmes to unite them however, the efforts were not satisfactory and the demand for separate representation were very strong. Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji were in favour of removing untouchability to attain Swaraj and the resolution were passed from time to time for their assimilation in national schools, providing same facilities like other castes etc. The temple entry movements of depressed classes were supported by Congress and in 1929 the Congress Working Committee at Delhi appointed an anti-untouchability sub committee with Madan Mohan Malviya as its President and Jamnalal Bajaj as the secretary to ensure Dalit

rights to get their social rights. Gandhiji personally raised a campaign during Civil Disobedience Movement for removing untouchability. However, the efforts of Gandhiji and Congress towards the depressed classes upliftment did not convince them because of the failure of dealing with economic and political roots of their problems. Therefore, many leaders of depressed classes like Dr. Ambedkar were dissatisfied with the Gandhian approach and preferred a political solution through access to education, employment and political representation.

Check your Progress

Q.1) Discuss in brief the history of depressed class movement?

Q.2) What were the efforts undertaken for empowering depressed classes in India?

15.1.4 Role of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for Bringing reforms in India for depressed classes: -

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a man of intellect and visionary, adopted a socio-political strategy to negotiate with British empire for India's independence. Dr. Ambedkar used the intellectual tools to question the moral right of the colonial powers since his college days and his struggle for independence started since 1920s, when the colonial government appointed a committee headed by OHB Started, an Indian Civil Service to look into the matters concerning depressed classes and aboriginal tribes. In this committee, Dr. Ambedkar was included who a relatively young Bombay legislator. He worked relentlessly and used his deep legal knowledge, political experience and international exposure to create the Constitution of India. He also incorporated the important clauses in the Constitution of India that guaranteed social justice and social equality to all citizens of a free nation. The objective of Dr. Ambedkar's struggle of independence to bring socio-economic empowerment of depressed classes through political presentation.

Dr. Ambedkar always believed that the principle of natural justice means accommodating socially different groups in political power. Unless there is a representation of population of social groups, it is difficult to address the social concerns of the depressed classes and finding political solutions to those concerns. The empowerment of depressed classes is crucial because without the empowerment of depressed classes, it is not possible to get India's empowerment. He did not find the agenda of Congress in align with the interest of depressed classes, therefore a separate struggle for independence was decided to be built by him. Ambedkar followed the philosophy of pragmatism. He had a vision to empower society with social empowerment.

In his effort to empower depressed classes, Dr. Ambedkar reported to the Southborough commission known as the Franchise Committee about the exclusion of Dalits. The Indian national congress and the representation of other communities through political parties made him think about the representation of depressed classes as well in political arena. Since then, he decided to take a lead and demanded India's freedom from caste oppression. He made the representation before Franchise Committee on 27th January 1919 for Dalit rights and argued for a separate electorate for Dalit Indians. He also asserted his idea for equal opportunity for all communities. In 1920, Dr. Ambedkar started Mooknayak, a fortnight newspaper in Marathi on 31st January 1920 to voice Dalit protests against the injustice against them. Dr. Ambedkar continuously negotiated with the power for safeguards, concessions, opportunities and rights. He also understood the plight of Shudra community known as Backward castes. Ambedkar desired an alliance between Dalits and Shudra as both were socially deprived and economically depressed classes. Ambedkar formed an alliance with Shahu, the Prince of Kolhapur and established Depressed classes union. On 20 March 1920, a conference was organized under the presidentship of Dr. Ambedkar at Managaon wherein Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj considered him a true leader of the depressed classes. The first All India Conference of Depressed Classes was held from 30th May to 1st June 1920 at Nagpur under the presidentship of Shahu. In this conference Dr. Ambedkar spoke about self-help and self-reliance and a resolution was also passed for the nomination of Dalits to the Legislative Council by the government or by the Dalit institutions.

Ambedkar was fearless and strong in his argument against the British government's economic policies during his academic thesis. He formed a welfare association for Depressed Classes known as Bahishkrit Hitakarni Sabha in Mumbai on 20th July 1924 based on the motto of 'Educate, Agitate and Organise'. The association aim to work for the educational and economic advancement of the depressed classes by raising their grievances against the British government. He also founded Bahishkrit Bharat Prakashak Sanstha, a publication institute in Mumbai on 4 December 1924. He was nominated to Bombay Legislative Council for 10 years since 1927 and in 1928, he introduced the bill to amend the Bombay Heredity Offices Act 1874. He also became the labour member in Viceroy's Executive Council on 27th July 1942 and worked till July 1946. The historic Mahad Satyagraha which became the symbol of liberty and equality initiated by

him to assert the rights of Dalits for drinking water from public tanks on 20 March 1927. Ambedkar through his literary works and newspapers, journal like Bahiskrit Bharat in Marathi (3rd April 1927), Samaj Samata Sangh (4th September 1927) and Samata Sainik Dal (December 1927) kept on educating masses for their rights, empowerment, liberation and education's importance. During the visit of Simon commission of Indian in 1927, Dr. Ambedkar made a statement before it on 29 March 1928 and gave evidence for improving the educational facilities for Dalits.

In 1928, Dr. Ambedkar founded the Depressed Classes Education Society in Bombay. The efforts of him were well taken by his followers like P.N. Rajbhoj and B.D. Gaikwad who began Satyagraha for entry to Kalaram Temple at Nashik on 2nd March 1930. Dr. Ambedkar was not in agreement with the report of Simon Commission Report and demanded political independence. Dr. Ambedkar, as a representative of Depressed classes attended all the three Round Table Conferences (RTC) held in London. The first RTC was held from 12 November 1930 to 19 January 1931; the second RTC was from 7 September to 1 December 1931 and the third one was from 17 November to 24 December 1932. Congress boycotted the first RTC but attended second RTC wherein Gandhiji represented Congress. In second RTC, the separate electorates were proposed and Gandhiji agreed for separate electorates for all the other communities except depressed classes which was granted by the Communal Award of Ramsay MacDonald on 16th August 1932. Through the communal award, the separate voting rights were given to them for a period of 20 years. Gandhiji was not in favour to this and went for fast unto death. After a much discussion, the compromise formula was agreed by Gandhiji and Dr. Ambedkar in Yerwada, Poona and a pact was signed to replace separate electorates by joint electorates and reserved seats of electorates were also encouraged for Dalits which became a part of the Government of India Act 1935.

Dr. Ambedkar in 1936 established the Independent Labour Party and included workers, labourers and peasants in his struggle against the British government. He did not leave any stone unturned to identify Dalits as a separate element of the society and they were different from other depressed classes. His writing work was very apt, intellect and visionary such as **'Federation vs Bharat in 1939'**; **'Thoughts on Pakistan in 1940 etc.'** He was a nation leader and his purpose of life is to have a casteless India where people are united as a citizen of India. He gave a new direction to the newly independent India. After Independence, he was elected to the Constituent Assembly from Bombay on 23rd July 1947 and became the first law minister of Independent India on 3 August 1947. He was also appointed as Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution and the Constitution of India for which he was the main instrumental, are still relevant today and advocate the right to social equality and justice for its citizens. The contribution made by Dr. Ambedkar for India and depressed classes are truly a great example for people to lead the country and develop the nation as a whole.

Check your progress

Q.1) Write in short, the role played by Dr. Ambedkar for emancipation of depressed classes and contribution for India's freedom struggle.

15.2 ROLE OF WOMEN WORKERS TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

Women in India played a crucial role in all aspects. In early centuries, the condition of women was secondary and faced many challenges in terms of their existence and basic rights. However, in the 19th century, a search of 'new woman' was started with the spread of education and Geraldine Forbes classified three agencies who contributed – "the British rulers, Indian male reformers and educated Indian Women." Many Indian women, mentioned to be made of Pandita Ramabai, Tarabai Shinde, Sister Subbalaxmi, Begam Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain etc. who became the pioneer women for achieving education and leading women towards education and their rights.

In the early 20th centuries, there were considerable number of women who were working in the cotton and jute mills, in tea plantations and in the coalmines. However, they had been treated lesser than men and impacted on their basic rights such as equal wages, respect at workplace etc. the female workers, however offered their resistance, but nothing changed. However, later women participated in freedom struggle and during Swadeshi movement, they boycotted British good and broke their glass bangles. Women, though less in numbers were also revolutionaries and got involved in a physical culture movement in every part of India. Gradually, the more changes started occurring in Indian politics, when women also started working actively in Indian politics. Ms. Annie Besant, president of the theosophical society of India, founder of the Home Rule League and President of the Congress in 1917 and Ms, Sarojini Naidu, the England educated poet led a delegation to London to meet Montague, Secretary of State and demanded the rights of female franchise. Ms. Naidu also became the President of Congress in 1925.

Mahatma Gandhi, father of nation, involved women and encouraged them to participate in India's freedom struggle for independence. Gandhiji conceptualised the ideal womanhood into sisterhood and called the 'natural division of labour'. He rather sympathised women's condition, in fact believed that women had a dual role to play and balance between 'family and work'. Therefore, he encouraged women workers to participate within their ordain spheres, and serve the nation by spinning, picketing at foreign

cloth and liquor shops etc. Sujata Patel, a famous historian argued that Gandhiji was well aware of India's social structure therefore he redefined political participation of women and created space for them while encouraging them to participate in politics in home. In the words of Sujata Patel, **“Gandhiji's work was an extraction and reformulation of received social ideas in moral terms.”**

After that, women participated in many public demonstrations during India's freedom struggle which recognised the political potential of the Indian womanhood. In November 1921, thousands of women greeted the Prince of Wales in Bombay and in December the wife of C.R.Das, Basanti Devi, sister Urmila Devi and niece Suniti Devi had done the open demonstration at Calcutta and went to Jail. Similar movement took place in others parts of country as well and every section of women communities including marginalised women also participated in the freedom struggle. During the Civil Disobedience movement, thousands of women participated and walked with Gandhiji during Dandi march to participate in the illegal manufacture of salt, picketing foreign cloth and took part in processions. As it is documented by **Sekhar Badyopadhyaya** that women's participation during this time was more organised in Bombay, most militant in Bengal and limited in Madras (p.391). Women at this time, were not just playing the supportive roles but actually shooting pistols at magistrates and governors.

Therefore, it is identifiable to note here that women had come a long way to participate in India's freedom struggle. Women workers like Margaret Cousins, Anne Besant, Bi Amman, Lady Mehribai Tata, Sarala devi Chaudhurani, etc. were the symbols of 20th Century's new consciousness, new organisations and the politicisation of women. They did not take the backseat to mobilise mass agitation but raised the petition and appealed to the nationalists for support. Through their continuous efforts, the voting rights were granted to women in the provincial legislatures between 1921 and 1930. The act of 1935 also reserved seats for women in legislatures. Also, there were many acts were passed in the Central and Provincial legislatures to define women's right to property, inheritance, dowry prohibition, etc. the Age of Consent Bill of 1891, the Child Marriage Restraint Act or the Sarda Act of 1929 was also passed to improve gender relations and quality of life of women in India.

Women, who were more enlightened claimed themselves a niche in public space. On one hand, women were empowered and actively aspiring to participate in public life, on the other hand they were constantly working to balance their work-life. Women during freedom movement was not restricted themselves only for participation in politics etc, they claimed for more active roles and fought as comrade-in-arms with their male counterparts during the last phase of the struggle for freedom. During Quit India Movement, when at the beginning, almost all the male Congress leaders were put in prison, women leaders took upon the responsibility of coordinating the movement for police repression. For e.g., Sucheta Kriplani co-ordinated the non-violent resistance, Aruna Asaf Ali gave leadership to underground activities, Usha Mehta to run the Congress radio mobilised

rural women to liberate their country. The entrance of communist party in 1942 also mobilised the working class in organising industrial actions and campaigning the release of political prisoners.

Outside the country, at the same time, Subhas Chandra Bose actually initiated an experiment to involve Indian women in actual military action. Mr. Bose was instrumental in 1928 for raising a Congress women's volunteer corps under the colonel "Latika Ghosh" who had marched on the streets of Calcutta in full uniform. In 1943, he raised Indian National Army in Japan, and added a women's regiment known as Rani of Jhansi Regiment. In October 1943, around 1500 women joined the training from all families living in Southeast Asia. They were given full military training and prepared for combat duties. They also participated on ground operations during 'Imphal Campaign' of 1945.

Thus, it is evident to note that women contributed a lot in the freedom struggle and broke the myth of their own image for being a submissive population who explored the gender identity of their existence and heroic activism of historic Rani of Jhansi fighting as comrade-in-arms with male soldiers.

Therefore, it is concluded that role of women workers during freedom struggle had come a long way. Though, it was not in priority, women were active throughout the freedom struggle and took the responsibility of fighting for independence vis-à-vis their counterparts. They never hesitated to make sacrifices and offering their protests for balancing out their participation in all aspects of life.

Check your progress

Q.1) Do you think, the role of women workers was visible during freedom struggle? Prove your answer with examples.

Q.2) Read more about Sarojini Naidu, Aruna Asaf Ali, Usha Mehta and women leaders during freedom struggle? Make a list of their leadership attributes and learning from their work.

15.3. ROLE OF LEFT MOVEMENT TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

The left movement in freedom struggle is being referred here the organisations/groups other than Indian National Congress. The group of left wings started developing in India in the late 1920s and 1930s which contributed in the national movement. The reason for their development are social and economic context. They were in idea to do social and economic emancipation of the marginalised communities and suppress exploitations. The socialist ideas were accepted by the youth who were participating in the freedom movement. This led to the emergence of various other groups such as Communist Party of India, Congress Socialist Party, the influence of left ideology by two well-known personalities Jawaharlal Nehru and S.C. Bose.

The idea of left ideology in India started in the early 19th century. In the words of Bipin Chandra Pal, the extremist leader in 1919, **“Today after the downfall of German militarism, after the destruction of the autocracy of the Czar, there has grown up all over the world a new power, the power of the people determined to rescue their legitimate rights — the right to live freely and happily without being exploited and victimized by the wealthier and the so-called higher classes.”** (Chandra Bipin, p.291)

The socialist ideas spread in the minds of youth after non-cooperation movement’s failure and the differences in the minds of youth started occurring against Gandhian policies and ideas. Several socialist and communist groups were established such as in Bombay, S.A. Dange started the first socialist weekly i.e. The Socialist and published a pamphlet Gandhi and Lenin. In Bengal, Navayug was started by Muzaffar Ahmed and Langanal with poet Nazrul Islam, in Punjab, Inquilab was started by Ghulam Hussain, and in Madras, M. Singaravelu established the Labour-Kisan Gazette. Students and youth were very active in this time and many conferences were organised all over the country during this time between 1928 and 1929. Jawaharlal Nehru and S.C. Bose travelled the country and preached the idea of socialism and attacked on imperialism, capitalism, and landlordism. The revolutionary freedom fighters were also inspired by the ideas of socialism and it was largely influenced by youth role model such as Chandrasekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh and many others. The working class and peasant movements also grew in 1920s. The Great Depression of 1929 left many Indian youth unemployed and world was struggling to come out of the depression caused by economy. This was the time when the Marxism and socialism drew the people’s attention.

Nehru imparted socialist vision to the national movement. Nehru in his books, (Autobiography and Glimpses of World History) propagated the ideas of Socialism and stressed on the economic emancipation of the masses. The literature on Russian revolutions influenced the Indian freedom fighters towards Lenin’s ideology. The government observed that by the end of 1928, the communist and socialist ideology was increasing. In

Calcutta, the communists mobilised 30,000 workers in Congress Pandal procession. By the end of 1928, the left wing influenced the working class and dominated a number of trade unions all over the country particularly in Bombay. There were a series of strikes in the middle of 1920s in the labour front in view of the Great Depression of 1928-29. Girni Kamgar Union, GIP Railway Union, and many others were under the influence of communists. The All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) also decided to be a socialist party. Jawaharlal Nehru became the president of AITUC in 1929 and the connection between nationalism and socialism was established.

15.3.1 The Congress Socialist Party

After the failure of Civil-disobedience movement, started by Gandhiji, there were differences in congress workers opinion. The first All-India socialist conference was convened and decision was taken to establish an All-India Congress Socialist Party. As many youths were not agreed with the decision to participate in elections and enter in the Central Legislative Assemblies, the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) came into existence and pressed to use the different strategy for more progressive position on the question of social and economic reform. In 1930s, the CSP was rudimentary in nature. Leaders like Narayana and Acharya Narendra Deva were Marxists. Minoo R. Masani was a member of the former British Labour Party and Ashok Mehra was democratic socialists. Achyut Patwardhan and Ram-Manohar Lohia were pro-Gandhi. The CSP in Congress was balanced. Though, it was influenced by the ideology of the Marxist etc., it was not affiliated with the second (socialist) or the third (communist) internationals.

M.N. Roy in his book, “**India in Transition**” published in 1922 in which he analysed the past, investigated the future and visualised the future of Indian society through a Marxist view. Although there were many differences from the Roy’s ideology, and the desire for attaining political independence with social and economic reform, was common to all. Therefore, the thought process of Roy influenced Congress Socialist party programme and policies in its early years. The awakening occurred among peasants, workers and the youth. The leaders like N.G. Ranga, Indulal Yagnik, Swami Saraswati and others organised ‘All India Kisan Sabha’ and first All-India Kisan Congress met in Lucknow in 1936. They have demanded abolition of landlordism, reduction in rent and land revenue. Between 1936 and 1940, there were many successful strikes. The membership of Kisan Sabha and All India Trade union Congress rose in high numbers.

The left wing started getting stronger in politics and being recognised as “United Front Group” and initiated the policy of United Front on a world scale. R.P. Dutt and Dan Bradley worked on it. The election of 1939 for Congress president became one of the important issues at that time. As the election was being contested between Pattabhi Sitaramayya and Subhas Chandra Bose, the left was in favour of S.C. Bose because of the strong belief of Bose of less efforts undertaken by right wing leaders in the struggle against imperialism and he did not favour the idea of compromise with the

colonial government. However, Nehru was neutral on election issues. The election was contested on 29th January 1939 and Bose defeated Sitaramayya by 1580 votes against 1375. Gandhiji advised Bose to form the working committee of his own choice without right wing leaders. As this was a threat of Congress split and other left wing leaders' socialists and communists withdrew their support, Bose was unable to form the Working Committee and he resigned from the Presidentship.

Bose in 1939 formed the 'Foreword Bloc' to work with the Congress and work for rallying against the anti-imperialist progressive elements. M.N. Roy organised Radical Democratic Party. However, on the eve of Second World War, the left group soon disintegrated because of the lack of shared strategy, clear analysis of the Indian national movement and Gandhiji's leadership. World War II was a phase of internal and external testing times. On one hand, the whole world was divided into two groups and India as a colony of the British, adopted a resolution in March 1940 to support the allies in return for national independence. Communists did not like Congress's wait and watch policy. Except M.N. Roy's group, there was no any other group which was giving their full support to the British war efforts.

Communists led the freedom movement aggressively and pursued the 'proletarian path' of armed insurrection, general strikes etc. This has led to deviation of national movement and government attacked the communists. It is recorded that till 1941, about 480 leading communist activists were arrested in various parts of the country and large numbers of them were detained.

It was in 1942 under the leadership of P.C. Joshi the General secretary of the Communist party, large number of detained communist leaders were released from various jails post the arrest of Congress leaders during Quit India Movement struggle, CPI gained strength. Under R.P.Dutt's advice in March 1946, the CPI opposed the demand for Pakistan and decided to work in the form of Congress-League- Communist joint front.

However, the mass upsurge and suppression of India's freedom movement by the British government determined and gave the courage to Indians to liberate themselves from their slavery. The British understood it well post the second world war.

Check your progress

Q.1) Do you think the strategy of Left wing was correct? Prove your answers with suitable examples?

Q.2) List out the left-wing leaders and analyse their ideology and reason for separate thinking process as compare to right wing of Indian National Congress?

15.4 SUMMARY

The Indian national movement was unique because it appealed and included the contribution of all the sections of communities and provided an opportunity to different social groups to experiment their ideas in freedom movement against the British Raj. The depressed classes in India faced many challenges at social, political and administrative level. Their voices were unheard and they had really struggled a lot to mobilise the masses of communities to assert their social and political rights. Women, another section of communities registered their participation in India's freedom struggle and has come a long way to liberate themselves from the shackles of old ritual and customs. The right to education, work and living an independent life was a dream for them but they have proved and fought till the time they got successful in their efforts. Gandhiji who encouraged and mobilised them to participate in freedom struggle as the extension of their household responsibilities and supporting their families, later on, actively conceptualised by women and they were in political, administrative and military level. The left movement in form of left wing in Congress was also played an active participation and influenced from Marxist ideology. The socialism was essential for independent India and this has led many leaders to analyse the policies and programmes accordingly. However, the disunity and non-clarity of abstract thinking led the denouncement of left wing group in India.

15.5 CONCLUSION

The freedom movement in India is also a struggle of many voices of nation. The depressed classes, workers and left movements were the ones who contributed towards independence not to get the freedom only at political or administrative level but at social and economic level too. The justice, equality, freedom of speech and many other important human rights related concerns are important to address to get the real free country for all sections of communities. Therefore, the contribution made by these voices are imperative to recognise.

15.6 QUESTIONS

- Q.1) Define Depressed Classes? How were their struggle different from another group?
- Q.2) State in brief the Women's participation in freedom struggle?
- Q.3) Assess the success and failure of Left movement in India.

15.7 ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. Chandra Bipin, India after Independence: Penguin Books, New Delhi 2009.
2. Bandyopadhyay Sekhar, From Plassey to Partition, Orient Blackswan 2013
3. Satyabrata Rai Chowdhuri, Leftist Movement in India:1917-1947, Minerva Publications, Calcutta, 1976.
