



ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ  
ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਟੇਟ ਓਪਨ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ  
ਪਟਿਆਲਾ

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SKILL ENHANCEMENT

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JAGAT GURU NANAK DEV

PUNJAB STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

(Established by Act No. 19 of 2019 of the Legislature of State of Punjab)

BACHELOR OF ARTS

HISTORY

SEMESTER III

(BAB32303T)

HISTORY OF INDIA: c. 1750-1947

Head Quarter: C/28, The Lower Mall, Patiala-147001

WEBSITE: [www.psou.ac.in](http://www.psou.ac.in)

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**JAGAT GURU NANAK DEV PUNJAB STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY, PATIALA**  
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## **PREFACE**

Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala was established in December 2019 by Act 19 of the Legislature of State of Punjab. It is the first and only Open University of the State, entrusted with the responsibility of making higher education accessible to all, especially to those sections of society who do not have the means, time or opportunity to pursue regular education.

In keeping with the nature of an Open University, this University provides a flexible education system to suit every need. The time given to complete a programme is double the duration of a regular mode programme. Well-designed study material has been prepared in consultation with experts in their respective fields.

The University offers programmes which have been designed to provide relevant, skill-based and employability-enhancing education. The study material provided in this booklet is self-instructional, with self-assessment exercises, and recommendations for further readings. The syllabus has been divided in sections, and provided as units for simplification.

The University has a network of 99 Learner Support Centres/Study Centres, to enable students to make use of reading facilities, and for curriculum-based counselling and practicals. We, at the University, welcome you to be a part of this institution of knowledge.

Dean Academic Affairs



**SEMESTER- III**

**HISTORY BAB32303T: HISTORY OF INDIA: c. 1750-1947**

**MAX. MARKS: 100**

**EXT MARKS: 70**

**INT MARKS: 30**

**PASS PER: 40%**

**TOTAL CREDITS: 6**

**Course Objective:**

The objective of this paper is to familiarize the students with the major developments in the colonial period. The main political events along with their economic and social impact is the focus of study. It aims at introducing students to the history of colonial India and the beginning of change to the modern Era.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PAPER SETTER/EXAMINER:**

1. The syllabus prescribed should be strictly adhered to.
2. The question paper will consist of three sections: A, B, and C. Sections A and B will have four questions each from the respective sections of the syllabus and will carry 10 marks each. The candidates will attempt two questions from each section.
3. Section C will have fifteen short answer questions covering the entire syllabus. Each question will carry 3 marks. Candidates will attempt any 10 questions from this section.
4. The examiner shall give a clear instruction to the candidates to attempt questions only at one place and only once. Second or subsequent attempts, unless the earlier ones have been crossed out, shall not be evaluated.
5. The duration of each paper will be three hours.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES:**

Candidates are required to attempt any two questions each from the sections A, and B of the question paper, and any ten short answer questions from Section C. They have to attempt questions only at one place and only once. Second or subsequent attempts, unless the earlier ones have been crossed out, shall not be evaluated.

**SECTION -A**

**Unit 1:** Establishment of British Rule: Conquest and Expansion,  
Administration, Colonial Policy

**Unit 2:** 1857 First War of Indian Independence

**Unit 3:** Transformation under Colonial Rule: Agriculture, Railways,  
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**Unit 4:** Socio Religious Reform: Agenda of Reformers, Activity, Nature of  
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**Unit 5:** Political Developments 1885-1935

**SECTION -B**

**Unit 6:** Constitutional Developments 1909-1935

**Unit 7:** The Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim  
League

**Unit 8:** Militant Nationalism

**Unit 9:** Politics of the 1940's

**Unit 10:** Partition and Independence

**Suggested Readings**

- Bipan Chandra, *History of Modern India*, Orient Black Swan, Hyderabad, 2009.
- -----, *India's Struggle for Freedom*, Penguin, Delhi, 1989.
- Kenneth Jones, *Socio Religious Reform Movements in British India*, Foundation Books, Delhi, 1993.
- Sekhar Bandhopadhyaya, *From Plassey to Partition*, Orient Black Swan, Delhi, 2007.
- Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, MacMillan, Delhi, 1983.



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**SEMESTER – III**

**BAB32303T: HISTORY OF INDIA: c. 1750-1947**

**COURSE COORDINATOR AND EDITOR: MS. PARAMPREET KAUR**

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## **SEMESTER III**

### **HISTORY OF INDIA: c. 1750-1947**

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#### **UNIT 1: ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH RULE: CONQUEST AND EXPANSION; ADMINISTRATION; COLONIAL POLICY**

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## **1.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students, after reading this unit you will be able to:

- Examine the circumstances which led to the conquest of Bengal, Deccan, Mysore, territories under the Marathas, Punjab and Awadh by the British.
- Understand the new administrative structure under the colonial rule.
- Acquaint yourself with the colonial policies in the British occupied territories.

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Students, the death of last powerful Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 paved the way for the rise of British power in India. In order to establish its dominance in India, British had to wage a number of wars. The most important encounters in this regard were the Battles of Plassey and Buxar in Bengal, the Carnatic Wars, Anglo-Mysore Wars, Anglo-Maratha Wars and Anglo-Sikh wars. So, in this module an attempt has been made to study the circumstances and course of events which led to their final sway over India. This module will also help you to understand the administrative structure and policies extended by the British in the newly conquered territories of India.

## **1.2 CONQUEST AND EXPANSION**

Students, the regional kingdoms in Awadh, Bengal, Punjab, Deccan, Marathas, and Mysore were among the successor states which arose on the Indian political scene after the dissolution of the Mughal Empire in the early half of the 18th century. However, the short sightedness of the Indian elites ruling these states, insufficient modernization of the Indian state and military apparatus, inherent institutional weaknesses, Indian political disunity and economic weaknesses paved the way for the rise of British power in India. The period from the mid eighteenth to the mid nineteenth century (1757-1857) was characterized by the rise and simultaneous consolidation of British power in India. After conquering Bengal, with large revenues of Bengal at its behest, British embarked on a conquest of other parts of India. In the process, British defeated all these Indian regional states. Let us discuss the British process of expansion, annexation and consolidation in detail.

### **1.2.1. BRITISH CONQUEST OF BENGAL**

Students, Bengal was the first province to declare independence from the Mughal Empire under Murshid Quli Khan. In the beginning of the 17th century, Bengal was one of the great silk-producing regions of the world. Its fertile lands, well-developed industries and commerce, a strong community of skilled artisans, and a major point of international trade- all contributed to Bengal's history of economic prosperity. Seeing the bright prospects of trade in the region, towards the end of the seventeenth century, Company established its headquarters in Calcutta. By the early 18th

century Bengal became a key region for the Company's trade in textiles, and Bengal goods came to comprise nearly 60 percent of the British imports from Asia.

The Farman of 1717 issued by the Mughal Emperor Farrukh Siyar had permitted the British to trade in Bengal without paying custom and other duties on an annual payment of mere three thousand rupees but the Farman didn't apply to private trade by Company officials. This private trade by Company officials brought enormous loss of revenue to the Nawab's government. By the time Siraj-ud-daula succeeded Alivardi Khan as Nawab of Bengal in 1756 trade privileges and their misuse by the Company and its officers had already become an issue of conflict. Certain other factors like the fortification around Calcutta without the permission of the Nawab, repeated defiance of the Nawab's authority along with sheltering the offenders of the Nawab were the acts on the part of the Company which provoked the Nawab.

The young and short-tempered Nawab could not tolerate this defiance, laid siege to Calcutta and took control of British factory at Qasim bazar and Fort William. 146 Englishmen were locked up into a tiny dark cell that measured 14 feet by 18 feet with no ventilation. 123 died of suffocation and thirst. This episode is known as Black Hole Tragedy (1756). Within no time the troops under Robert Clive recovered Calcutta and in February 1757, a Treaty of Alinagar was concluded by which the Nawab restored all the privileges of the Company and promised compensation for losses.

The very next month (in March 1757) Clive captured Chanderanagore, a French settlement, which was under Siraj-ud-daula's protection. British further planned to overthrow the Nawab of Bengal by winning over Mir Jafar, Rai Durlabh, Jagat Seth and other key persons around him to their side. In the battle between the British army led by Robert Clive and Admiral Watson and Siraj-ud-daula at Plassey on 23 June 1757, the Nawab was defeated. He was captured and executed. So, British victory in the battle of Plassey was pre-decided. It was not the superiority of the military power but the conspiracy that helped the British in winning the battle. Mir Jafar, the commander-in-chief of the Nawab was awarded the Nawabship for his support to the British. In turn Mir Jafar granted Company undisputed right to trade freely in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. Company also received the Zamindari of 24 Parganas and 22 million rupees were paid to the British for their losses. But soon Mir Jafar, failing to meet the ever-increasing revenue demand by the British, was replaced by his son-in-law Mir Qasim. He rewarded British by giving expensive presents totaling 29 lakhs of rupees.

However, Mir Qasim was determined to set Bengal free from British. Therefore, he shifted his capital from Murshidabad to Monghyr (1762) to avoid the growing interference of the British in his court. His various reforms like to improve the economic condition of Bengal he took the extreme step of abolishing all the duties on internal trade for Indian merchants, his attempt at reorganizing the army and navy on modern lines led to confrontation between them. Soon Mir Qasim with the help of Shuja-ud-daula, Nawab of Awadh and Shah Alam II, the fugitive Mughal Emperor waged a war against British. In this battle of Buxar (22 October 1764) their joint confederacy got defeated. Mir Qasim fled to the north-west and died. Shah Alam II and Shuja-ud-daula sought shelter in the British camp. The war concluded with the signing of two treaties of

Allahabad with the Shuja-ud-daula and Shah Alam II. Shuja-ud-daula was made to pay a war indemnity of 50 lakhs of rupees and was given back his dominions except the two districts of Kara and Allahabad, which were given to the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II for the upkeep of his Allahabad court. From Shah Alam II the Company received the Diwani rights or revenue collection rights of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in return for a regular annual payment of 26 lakhs of rupees.

The annexation of Bengal was the first step towards establishing a strong foothold in India. The conquest of Bengal gave the British unlimited access to its vast rich resources, needed to conquer other regions of India. She was able to establish her supremacy in the sea. The conquest of Bengal also gave the Company easy access to the large military labour market located on the border of Bengal in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The availability of professional soldiers in large numbers combined with the rich revenues of Bengal created the famous Bengal Army. This proved to be the most powerful army in India which helped the British conquer south and west India.

### **1.2.2. BRITISH CONQUEST OF DECCAN**

Students, let us now discuss the expansion and consolidation of the British rule in the Deccan region. The absence of any central power after the death of Aurangzeb gave the Europeans an opportunity to expand their political influence and control over the affairs of the south Indian states. By the early eighteenth century, the Portuguese, the Danish and the Dutch lost their important position in trade between India and the West to the British and the French. It was left for the British and the French to contest among themselves for the control of trade, wealth and political power in India. Let us discuss how Company expanded in Deccan.

The French East India Company founded in 1664 was firmly established at Chandranagore near Calcutta and Pondicherry on the south east coast of India. In 1740, the war was declared between the French and Britain over the Austrian succession in Europe. The war spread to India and the French and English settlements in India also became involved in open hostilities. The first Carnatic War (1746-48) began in 1745, when the English navy captured French ships off the south-east coast of India and threatened Pondicherry. Dupleix, the French Governor-General at Pondicherry retaliated and occupied Madras, the British settlement, in 1746. With the signing of the treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle in 1748 the war of Austrian succession came to an end in Europe which also ended the Carnatic war in India. In accordance with the treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle, the French government returned Madras to the British in exchange for Louisburg in North America.

The cause of the second Carnatic War (1749-54) was the interference of the British and the French in the wars of succession in the states of Hyderabad and Carnatic with a view to enhance their political power and area of influence in southern India. After the death of Asaf Jha, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the throne was contested between his son Nasir Jung and his grandson Muzzafar Jung. Similarly, after the death of Dost Ali, the Nawab of Carnatic, the throne was contested between Anwar-ud-din and his son-in-law Chanda Sahib. The French supported Muzzafar Jung and Chanda Sahib. To undermine the growing French power in the region, the British decided to support the other two namely the Muhammad Ali and Nasir Jang. So, a war broke out in 1748. The combined armies of Muzaffar Jang, Chanda Sahib and the French defeated and killed Anwar-ud-din at the Battle of

Ambur (near Vellore) in 1749. To revert the French, British under Robert Clive successfully laid sudden raid on Arcot (the capital of the Carnatic). This war came to an end with the Treaty of Pondicherry in 1755. By this treaty, both French and British agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Indian princely states and returned each other's territories captured during the war.

As a result of Seven Years War (1756–1763) in Europe, the French and English settlements in India also became involved in open hostilities. In the third Carnatic war (1758-63), the French under Count De Lally were defeated by Sir Eyre Coote at Wandiwash in January 1760, and French lost their Indian possessions including Pondicherry, Mahe, Gingee and Karaikal to the British. Thus, ending almost a century of conflict over supremacy in India. The Seven Years War came to an end with the Treaty of Paris in 1763. This also brought to close the third Carnatic War in India. As per the Treaty, Chandranagar in Bengal and Pondicherry were returned to France but the French were forbidden to fortify their settlements in India. They could only carry trading activities. The Third Carnatic war put an end to the French ambitions to create a colonial empire in India. In the aftermath of the war, the British reigned supreme over India as all their European rivals had been decisively eliminated. The path was clear for the establishment of a British rule in India.

### **1.2.3. BRITISH CONQUEST IN MYSORE**

Students, Mysore located in the north of Malabar, emerged as a powerful state and a formidable opponent of the British in the wake of the Mughal decline in the eighteenth century. It grew in strength under the leadership of powerful rulers like Haidar Ali (ruled from 1761 to 1782) and his famous son Tipu Sultan (ruled from 1782 to 1799). The rulers of Mysore, Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, fought four wars against the Company before Mysore was finally defeated by the British in 1799. Let us discuss these wars.

Haider Ali with French assistance was able to build a strong army and his annexation of coasts of Canara and Malabar in south threatened the growth and commercial prospects of Madras under Company's control. The British, along with the Marathas and the Nizam of Hyderabad declared war on Mysore. Haider skillfully managed to win over the Nizam and the Marathas. This first Anglo-Mysore war (1767 and 1769) continued for 3 years without any conclusion. Finally, Haidar changed his strategy and suddenly appeared before the gates of Madras, the British Presidency. Following complete chaos and panic at Madras, British sued for peace and signed a very humiliating Treaty of Madras in 1769, which brought an end to the war. Both parties agreed to a mutual restitution of territories and it was also agreed upon that they would help each other in case an enemy's attack. The British acceded to this treaty under pressure and to buy time.

British attack on Mahe, a French settlement in 1780 under Haider Ali's jurisdiction and the only outlet for Mysore's trade with Europe, resulted in second Anglo-Mysore war (1780-84). British forces under Eyre Coote defeated Haidar in Portonova. In 1782, Haider Ali died in the course of the war but his son Tipu continued the war which ended with the Treaty of Mangalore in 1784. The prisoners of war and the conquered territories were mutually returned.

The immediate cause of the third Mysore War (1790-92) was Tipu's attack on the Kingdom of Travancore in 1790, a British ally in Malabar coast (which controlled profitable trade of British in pepper and cardamom). British got into action immediately under Cornwallis, who with the help of Nizam of Hyderabad and Marathas seized his capital Seringapatam. The British defeated him at various places before the war came to an end with the Treaty of Seringapatam in 1792. This treaty made Tipu surrender a half of his territory to the British, which was divided among the British and their allies, namely the Maratha and the Nizam and his two sons were taken to Calcutta as hostages. Cornwallis did not completely destroy Mysore rather let it remain an independent state, a counterweight to the Marathas.

The fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799) was the final confrontation between the British and Tipu Sultan. Tipu secretly tried to enlist the support of the French to oust the British from the south. This gave the new Governor-General Lord Wellesley a pretext to overrun Mysore. In 1799, the capital city of Seringapatam fell to the British forces and Tipu died defending it. The young Wodeyar Hindu Raja was restored to the throne as a 'subsidiary'. The greater part of Karnataka was annexed by the British and was made a part of the Madras Presidency. The threat of French revival in the Deccan was permanently eliminated by the British.

#### **1.2.4. BRITISH CONQUEST OF TERRITORIES UNDER THE MARATHAS**

Students, Marathas presented perhaps the most formidable challenge to British East India Company both in the Deccan and in the North. The Maratha empire at this time consisted of a confederacy of five big chiefs, namely, the Peshwa at Poona, the Gaekwad at Baroda, the Sindhia at Gwalior, the Holkar at Indore and the Bhonsle at Nagpur. The Peshwa was the nominal head of the Maratha confederacy (1720-1818). Though they united on occasion, as against the British (1775-82), but more often they quarreled with each tried to expand at the cost of other. Internal strife among the Marathas was the order of the day. The internal dissensions of the Marathas and the growing imperialistic designs of the British brought the beginning of the Anglo-Maratha struggle.

The first Anglo-Maratha War (1775-82) was caused by the British interference in the struggle for power between Madhav Rao II and Raghunath Rao. All the leading Maratha chiefs under Nana Phadnavis refused to accept Raghunath Rao as their new Peshwa. As a consequence, Raghunath Rao sought the help of the British. Marathas under Nana Phadnavis defeated the forces of Raghunath Rao and the British near Pune at the Battle of Wadgaon in January 1779. However, this defeat did not deter the British. They continued to fight against the Marathas and finally the war ended with the Treaty of Salbai signed in 1782. As per the Treaty of Salbai, the British took control of Salsette, all the territories occupied by the British were given back to the Marathas and Madhav Rao II was accepted as the Peshwa.

After the death of Nana Phadnavis in 1800, the Maratha confederacy could no longer stay united. Soon, the throne of Peshwa was challenged by Jaswant Rao Holkar, the chief of the Holkar's of Indore. In the Battle of Poona in 1802, Jaswant Rao Holkar defeated the combined

armies of the Peshwa and the Sindhia. Thereupon, Baji Rao II fled to Bassein and concluded a 'subsidiary alliance' treaty with the British in December 1802. Following this, the British reinstated the Peshwa in Pune and issued an ultimatum to the Maratha Sardars opposing him. It was a decisive step in the breakup of the Maratha confederacy. The Scindia, the Bhonsle and Holkar rulers refused to accept this treaty. As a result, the second Anglo-Maratha war (1803-05) broke out in central India in 1803. The British destroyed the Maratha's power. The large part of central India, and Delhi (1803) came under British occupation.

The third Anglo-Maratha war (1817–18) was the result of an invasion of Maratha territory in the course of operations against Pindari robber bands by the British Governor-General, Lord Hastings. The *Peshwa's* forces, followed by those of the Bhonsle and Holkar, rose against the British but the Sindhia remained neutral. This war ended in a complete rout of the so-called Maratha confederacy. The office of Peshwa was ended and was pensioned off to Bithur near Kanpur. The Peshwa's territories were absorbed into the Bombay Presidency and the territories seized from the Pindaris became the Central Provinces of British India. With this, most parts of India barring Punjab and Sindh directly or indirectly came under the control of the British.

### **1.2.5. BRITISH CONQUEST OF PUNJAB**

Students, the final step in the consolidation of British power in India was the annexation of the state of Punjab by Lord Dalhousie. So, let us discuss the circumstances leading to the annexation of Punjab.

It was in the year 1799 that Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1839), often called Sher-i-Punjab, laid the foundation of the first independent Sikh Kingdom in the north-west of river Sutlej. His kingdom formed between the rivers Indus and Sutlej, acted as a barrier between the British and the Afghans Empire. In his attempt to extend his kingdom to as far as river Jamuna, he crossed river Sutlej in 1809 and occupied Ludhiana with a large force. British government saw this as a good opportunity to offer protection to the 'Cis-Sutlej' states of Patiala, Nabha, and Jind and then contain Maharaja Ranjit Singh. A compromise was achieved by the Treaty of Amritsar of 1809, under which river Sutlej was accepted as the eastern boundary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. British undertook not to interfere in matters 'north of Sutlej', while Maharaja Ranjit Singh committed himself to abandon any further designs on territories on the left side of the Sutlej (Cis-Sutlej Punjab) which was placed under the British protection. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was thus free to extend his conquests to the north and the west. On the other hand with the friendly power on the north of the Sutlej, the only dangerous frontier of India, British could now utilise their whole strength in consolidating their position in India.

The first Anglo-Sikh War (1845), was the outcome of British expansionism and the near anarchical conditions that overtook the Lahore court after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in June 1839. In 1843, Dalip Singh, the youngest son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was made the ruler of Punjab in the regency of his mother Maharani Jindan. Actual power, however, resided with the army, which was itself in the hands of *Panchs*, or military committees. An attempt to enthrone

Shah Shuja's (their friend) on the throne of Afghanistan, annexation of Sindh (1843) to the south of Punjab, establishing cantonments at Ambala, Ferozepur, just a few miles from Sutlej, clearly pointed to the offensive nature of the British military preparedness. Sikhs emboldened by British defeat in the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-42) crossed river Sutlej and invaded the British territory. After fighting hard, the Sikhs finally lost the war. This ended with a peace Treaty of Lahore 1846. Under the Treaty, Dalip Singh was recognized as the Maharaja, Maharani Jindan was removed from the post of regency, the Bist Jalandhar Doab was added to the Company's territory, Henry Lawrence was appointed British Resident to assist the Sikh council of Regency at Lahore and a British force was sent to garrison Punjab on behalf of seven and half year old king, Dalip Singh.

The immediate cause that led to the outbreak of Second Sikh War was the revolt of Mulraj, the governor of Multan. The rebellion sparked when British forced Diwan Mulraj to pay exorbitantly enhanced land revenue and taxes. Mulraj resigned as Diwan, and he was soon indicted to become the leader of the disbanded soldiers of Multan which led to the outbreak of the war. This war resulted in the annexation of Punjab on 29 March 1849 by Lord Dalhousie. Dalip Singh was pensioned off to England. Maharani Jindan was separated from her son and was sent to Ferozepur. By winning this battle, the British had become supreme power in India, and in control of affairs directly or indirectly over most of India except the Indus basin.

### **1.2.6. BRITISH CONQUEST OF AWADH**

Students, final state to fall within the ambit of British Empire in India was Awadh. Let us discuss it in detail.

Awadh was one of the important independent state which emerged out of the break-up of the Mughal Empire under Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk, the first Nawab of Awadh in 1722. It was a prosperous region, controlling the rich alluvial land between Ganga and Yamuna rivers and was the main trade route between north India and Bengal. The subjugation of Awadh began with the Treaty of Allahabad signed by Shuja-ud-daulah and the British after the former's defeat in the Battle of Buxar (1764). It is important to note that despite the total collapse of Shuja-ud-daula in the Battle of Buxar, British decided not to annex Awadh and made Awadh as its firm ally to use it as a 'buffer' state between the Bengal Presidency and the rest of north India dominated by the Marathas and Sikhs.

After signing this treaty Shuja, in an effort to check further advance of the British into his territory and to assert his authority expanded the territorial limits of his kingdom, reorganized his army on the European model, hired French artillery experts and built a formidable arsenal at his capital Faizabad. This threatened the British, who impelled Shuja to enter into another treaty with them in 1768. This treaty forced the Nawab to reduce the strength of his army to 35,000 troops. Another treaty signed in 1773, increased the number of British troops in the kingdom and the Nawab was made to agree to bear the maintenance expenses of the British troops in addition to payment of rupees 20 lakhs. But despite these impingements made by the British, the Nawab

managed to safeguard the internal workings of the kingdom from British encroachment to a large extent.

A serious erosion of Awadh's independence started during the reign of Asaf-ud-daulah (1775-97). On the death of Shuja-ud-daula (1775) a Treaty of Faizabad was concluded with his successor, Asaf-ud-daula in 1775, which further tightened the control of British over the Awadh. The subsidy for the maintenance of the British troops in Awadh was increased. The amount of tribute and other liabilities were increased in such a disproportionate manner that it drove Awadh into chronic indebtedness. From the beginning of the 19th century the Company Resident became the indirect ruler of Awadh. In other words, the Resident posted at Nawab court, positioned himself firmly in the day to day working of the administration of Awadh and kept a track of all Nawab's diplomatic relations and almost directed the course of events.

Asaf-ud-daula died in 1797, nominating his son Wazir Ali as the fifth Nawab of the kingdom. He re-organized his army and administration and was determined to check the growing influence of the British in Awadh. British found this development as detrimental to their interests in Awadh, therefore, were quick to replace him by Saadat Ali Khan (brother of deceased Asaf-ud-daula), a mere puppet in the hands of British.

In 1798, a British Resident was assassinated in Banaras by Wazir Ali, the deposed Nawab of Awadh, which gave the British further excuse for interference in the internal affairs of Awadh. Lord Wellesley who came to India as a Governor-General between the years 1798-1805, forced the Nawab to accept the 'subsidiary alliance' with the British in 1801, which made him an entirely dependent ally of the British. The Nawab was also made to cede a major portion of his dominion, amounting to more than one crore in revenue, for the exclusive management and control of the Company and their officers. Though the Company did not formally take over the administration of Awadh till 1856, its intervention in the matters of governance kept on increasing. Due to the exploitive and over-assessed revenue policies of the British, Awadh was seething in discontent by the time Asaf-ud-daula died in 1797, which adversely affected its administration. Lord Dalhousie formally annexed Awadh in 1856 on the pretext of its maladministration.

### **1.2.7. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I**

1. Who was the Governor-General of India during the second Anglo-Sikh war?

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2. When was the third Anglo-Maratha War fought?

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3. What was the reason for annexation of Awadh?

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4. What is the significance of the Treaty of Mangalore?

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5. Which Peshwa signed the 'subsidiary alliance' with the British?

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6. What is the importance of Plassey battle?

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India in 1798<sup>1</sup>

### 1.3. ADMINISTRATION

Students, the establishment of colonial rule in India brought significant changes in the traditional administrative system of the country. Let us discuss these changes in detail.

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara D.Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002,pp. 70-71.

**Dual Administrative System in Bengal:** In order to administer newly conquered province of Bengal Robert Clive introduced the dual government or joint rule of East India Company and Nawab of Bengal, which lasted from 1765 to 1772. Under this system, the administration of Bengal was divided in to two parts- Diwani and Nizamat. The right to collect the Diwani or revenues of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was given out to the Company and the administration of law and order and criminal justice were given to Nawab. As the Nawab himself was a minor, the Company appointed two native officials Mohammad Raza Khan and Raja Shitab Rai as the Deputy Nazims of Bengal and Bihar respectively. They were also given an additional charge of collecting Diwani from their respective areas. So, Mohammad Raza Khan and Raja Shitab Rai had a dual role to play, of a Deputy Nazim and a Deputy Diwan. The Deputy Nazims could not be removed without the consent of the Company. So, indirectly both the Nizamat and the Diwani rights were exercised by the British. This implied that the British had power and resources without responsibility while the Nawab had the responsibility of the administration without power to discharge it. Thus, the Nawab had to take all responsibility for bad governance. Company's repressive policies of high taxation, cruel methods of collection of revenues, led to famine in Bengal in 1770. The system was abolished by Warren Hastings in 1772 and Bengal was brought under direct control of the British and the Nawabs remained as the mere pensioners of the East India Company.

**Administration in three Presidency Towns:** British territories were broadly divided into administrative units called Presidencies. By the mid of the eighteenth century there were three Presidencies: Bengal, Madras and Bombay. Each was ruled by a Governor. The Regulating Act of 1773 made the presidencies of Bombay and Madras, subordinate to the Governor-General of Bengal, especially in matters of foreign policy. Under the Charter Act of 1833, the Governor-General of Bengal was hereafter called the 'Governor-General of India'. The Governor-General was given full control over revenue, civil and military administration. The Act also deprived the presidencies of Bombay and Madras of its power to make laws, now the Governor-General would make laws for all India. With expansion of the British territories and the increasing administrative responsibilities, a bureaucracy was also required to control British possessions. In 1785, Lord Cornwallis created a professional cadre of Company servants, outlawed private trade by company employees, enhanced the salaries of company's servants to prevent them from indulging in fraudulent means of earning money, system of regular promotion and were entitled to pensions. All high-level posts were reserved for the British, and Indians were excluded. Bureaucrats were appointed as judges, revenue collectors and magistrates. From 1806 the Company trained its young recruits in Haileybury College near London. The Charter Act 1853 gave birth to the Indian Civil Services and was opened to all including Indians. This ended the system of appointments by recommendation and started a system of open and fair competition.

**Judicial Administration:** From 1772, a new system of justice was established. Under the new system each district had two courts: a criminal court (Faujdari Adalat) and a civil court (Diwani Adalat). Maulvi and Pandits interpreted Indian laws for the district collectors who presided over civil courts. The criminal courts were still under a Qazi and a Mufti, but under the supervision of

the Collectors. A Supreme Court was established under the Regulating Act of 1773, and a court of appeal (Sadar Nizamat Adalat) was also set up at Calcutta. The Supreme Courts in Madras and Bombay were finally established in 1801 and 1823, respectively. The laws were codified and attempts were also made to separate the judiciary from the executive. Efforts were made to establish the 'Rule of Law' in India. But this only helped the British to enjoy arbitrary powers and to interfere with the rights and liberties of the Indians. The new judicial system also discriminated between Europeans and Indians.

**Transfer of Power from East India Company to Crown:** The British government was no longer willing to allow the Company's affairs to continue unsupervised. Therefore, from 1773 to 1857, British Parliament enacted 5 major laws to regulate the functioning of British East India Company and to help them rule over India, namely the Regulating Act of 1773, Pitt's India Act of 1784, the Charter Act of 1813, the Charter Act of 1833, and Government of India Act of 1858. The Government of India Act of 1858 brought an end to the rule of East India Company. The powers were transferred to the British Crown. The Secretary of State for India was given the powers and duties of the former Court of Directors. He Controlled the Indian administration through the Viceroy of India. The Secretary of State for India was assisted by the Council of India. This Council had 15 members. The Council was an advisory body. Governor-General of India was made the Viceroy of India. Lord Canning became the first Viceroy of India.

The Indians found it difficult to adjust to the new system of administration introduced by the British. The Indians were denied political rights and the British officers treated them with contempt. Indians were excluded from all higher positions in the civil administration and military.

### 1.3.1. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II

1. Who established the dual government in Bengal?

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2. Name the Act which made Governor of Bengal, the Governor-General of India.

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3. Name the first Viceroy of India.

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4. Which Government of India Act brought an end to the rule of East India Company?

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#### **1.4. COLONIAL POLICY**

Students, new policies were formulated to give shape to their imperialistic designs in India. Let us discuss these policies.

**Agricultural Policy:** The colonial economic policies were more concerned with arrangements which would guarantee their revenue and not provoke too much political disturbance rather than in increasing productivity. The main source of colonial revenue was the land tax exacted from the peasants. Therefore, British devised three systems of collection of land revenue, namely the Permanent Settlement, Mahalwari Settlement and Ryotwari system. Lord Cornwallis introduced the Permanent Settlement (also called Zamindari system) in Bengal and Bihar in 1793. It granted legal ownership of land to the Zamindars in Bengal and the peasant was reduced to the status of the tenant on his own land. In return, Zamindars had to pay the government fixed revenue by a certain particular date. This arrangement was to last forever; hence the title 'permanent settlement' was given. Now land became a negotiable property and the state was excluded from agricultural expansion and development, which came under the purview of the Zamindars. But, if the Zamindar failed to pay the fixed revenue on time his land was sold off to another Zamindar. In Madras and Bombay, the Ryotwari (peasant) settlement system (introduced by Munro in 1818) was set in motion, in which peasant cultivators had to pay annual taxes directly to the government. Under no circumstances a peasant could claim anything of the nature of proprietary rights which were vested in the state. In 1833, in the north-western provinces, Punjab, the Ganga valley and parts of central India, British introduced the Mahalwari settlement. This too was a settlement of land revenue with the Zamindars who held their Mahal (estate) in joint proprietorship, not in individual ownership. Here all the proprietors of Mahal were jointly responsible for paying the sum of revenue assessed by the government.

Regardless of the system employed, it brought no benefit to the peasants as the colonial power exacted the maximum possible land tax, and peasants were barely left with enough to improve the agricultural implements and techniques used. Under the colonial government fixed taxes were laid down and these were collected regardless of whatever unfavourable conditions might develop in the country. The extracted taxes from the farmers were used to finance their policies and war efforts.

**Industrial Policy:** The primary objective of the British rulers was to develop such an industry in India that would never be able to compete with the British industry. Under the pressure of its industrialists, the British government followed discriminatory tariff policy by imposing a high protective tariff on Indian textiles. For instance, on imports of British cloth into India an import duty of only 2-3.5% was levied. Whereas import duties on Indian goods in the Britain market was between 20 and 30 %. By 1813, the Indian handicrafts lost both their domestic as well as foreign market. It was only during the second half of the nineteenth century that modern industry began to take root in India but its progress remained very slow. Initially, this development was confined to

the setting up of cotton and jute textile mills. Between the years 1850-55, the first cotton mill, jute mill, and coal mine were established.

**Policy with Regard to Transportation and Communication:** The Governor-General Lord Dalhousie is credited for introducing railways, posts and telegraphs in India. However, the real motive behind this development was not to provide basic amenities to the people but to sub serve various colonial interests. The roads and railways were primarily built to serve the purposes of mobilizing the army within India and drawing out raw materials from the countryside to the nearest railway station or the port to send these too far away England or other lucrative foreign destinations. The first railway line connecting Bombay with Thane was opened in 1853. Railway lines connecting from Calcutta to the Raniganj coal-fields were opened in 1854 and from Madras to Arakkonam in 1856. Along with the development of roads and railways, the colonial government introduced electric telegraph in India, which similarly, served the purpose of maintaining law and order. Main cities of the country viz., Calcutta, Peshawar, Bombay and Madras were telegraphically connected. About 4000 miles long telegraph lines were laid before the departure of Dalhousie. During the Revolt of 1857, the system of telegraphic communication proved a boon for the British. A new Post Office Act was passed in 1854. Consequently, irrespective of the distance over which the letter was sent, a uniform rate of half an anna per post card was charged throughout India. Postage stamps were also introduced for the first time. The first regulation of the press was introduced by the Governor-General Lord Wellesley in 1799. Though it did not harshly affect the functioning of the press owing to its small presence, it marked the beginning of the authority control over the press of India. In 1823, the acting Governor-General John Adam made prior registration and licensing compulsory. However, when Sir Charles Metcalf took over the office of the Governor-General in 1835, the regulation was abolished marking the liberation of the Indian press. As soon as the Revolt of 1857 broke out government gagged the press.

**Social Policy:** Female infanticide was one of the horrible and heartless deeds committed even by civilized people. This practice of killing female infants was very much prevalent in places like Rajputana, Punjab, Malwa and Cutch. Bentinck took effective steps to prevent the ritual of child sacrifice at Saugor Island in Bengal. He not only prohibited female infanticide but declared them as punishable crime. Sati (widow burning) was prohibited by Regulation XVII in 1829. Slavery was abolished without compensation under the Act V of 1843.

From the above discussion it is evident that their policies were meant only to serve the interests of the East India Company and later the British Empire.

### 1.4.1. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS III

1. When was Sati banned in India?

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2. How were Indian industries affected by the British policy of industrialization?

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3. Who introduced the Permanent Land Revenue Settlement system?

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4. When was the first railway line started in India?

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### **1.5. SUMMARY**

Students, this unit discussed at length the expansion and consolidation process of the British in India. Bengal was the first province to be occupied by the British in India. The British used its vast resources (men, money and material) as a springboard to further its expansion process. From the late 18th century, Mysore, the Deccan and Western India and finally Punjab and Awadh came into the Company's hands. On the whole Company successes can be attributed to a combination of the following factors like superior leadership, superior navy, vast resources, unity in command, a well-paid and disciplined army, Indian political disunity, friendly collaborating sections of the Indian elite and finally the inefficient armies of Indian rulers. These annexations made the Company the supreme power in the region. The British government was no longer willing to allow the Company's affairs to continue unsupervised. Therefore, from 1773 to 1857, the British Parliament enacted 5 major laws to regulate the functioning of the British East India Company and to help them rule over India. This module also discussed at length the new colonial policies in India, which were meant only to serve the interests of the East India Company and later the British Empire.

### **1.6. SUGGESTED READINGS**

Irfan Habib, *A People's History of India: The Establishment of British Rule 1757-1813*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2016. (Second edition)

Irfan Habib, *A People's History of India: The Indian Economy Under Early British Rule, 1757-1857*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2014. (Second edition)

Amar Farooqui, *A People's History of India: The Establishment of British Rule 1757-1813*, vol. 23, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2014.

B.B. Misra, *The Administrative History of India, 1834-1947*, London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

## **1.7. QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

### **1.7.1 LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. 'The Battle of Plassey was not a great battle but a great betrayal'. Comment.
2. Discuss the circumstances which led to the Anglo-Carnatic Wars in India.
3. Examine the circumstances which led to the Anglo-Maratha wars.
4. Discuss the expansion and consolidation of British rule in Mysore.
5. Give the main causes and significance of the Anglo-Sikh wars.
6. Write a detailed note on the annexation of Awadh.
7. Discuss colonial agrarian and industrial policies between the years 1757-1857.
8. Discuss the colonial administrative structure between the years 1757-1857.

### **1.7.2 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Explain briefly the significance of Battle of Plassey.
2. Give two reasons which caused the First Anglo-Carnatic War in India.
3. Give two terms of Treaty of Seringapatam.
4. Give two reasons which led to the Battle of Buxar.
5. What was Ryotwari system?
6. Who was Maharani Jindan?
7. Explain briefly the 'Doctrine of Lapse'.
8. What do you understand by the 'Subsidiary alliance' system?
9. Give two impacts of British economic policies over India.
10. Give two demerits of dual system established in Bengal.

**SEMESTER III**  
**HISTORY OF INDIA: c. 1750-1947**

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**UNIT 2: 1857: FIRST WAR OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE**

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**STRUCTURE**

**2.0. Learning Objectives**

**2.1. Introduction**

**2.2. 1857: First War of Indian Independence**

**2.2.1. Causes**

**2.2.2. Extent**

**2.2.3. Composition**

**2.2.4. Significance**

**2.2.5. Check Your Progress I**

**2.2.6. Nature**

**2.2.7. Causes of the Failure of the Revolt**

**2.2.8. Check Your Progress II**

**2.3. Summary**

**2.4. Suggested Readings**

**2.5. Questions for Practice**

**2.5.1. Long Answer Questions**

**2.5.2. Short Answer Questions**

**2.6 Appendix**

## **2.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students, after reading this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the causes of rise and failure of the First War of Indian Independence (1857).
- Analyze the extent and nature of the First War of Indian Independence.
- Understand the significance of this Great Revolt of 1857.

## **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

Students, one hundred years after the Battle of Plassey, anger against the unjust and oppressive policies of the British Government took the form of a historic revolt of 1857 that shook the very foundations of British rule in India. The aim of the chapter is to apprise you with the circumstances that led to the First War of Indian Independence in 1857. The chapter will also look into the nature of the revolt, people's participation, its extent, and impact on the British government.

## **2.2. 1857: FIRST WAR OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE**

India was under the British rule for 200 years. The fight for independence was not easy and certainly not won in a day. Many revolts were won and lost that paved the way to the independence of India. One of the major revolt fought was the 'Revolt of 1857' also known as 'The Sepoy Mutiny', 'The Great Rebellion' and 'India's First War of Independence'. The year 1857 witnessed several dispersed elements coming together in parts of northern and central India to mount the very first serious challenge to the British dominion. As a result of which from the local British administration to the highest authority of England all were shaken and effective British rule nearly collapsed in these regions until the spring of 1858, when order was restored again by the advancing imperial forces. The revolt witnessed an extraordinary amount of violence unleashed on both sides. As British rule had "meticulously constructed a monopoly of violence", it was retorted with an equal amount of counter-violence of their subjects. If the British counter-insurgency measures included public execution of the rebels, blowing them off from cannons and indiscriminately burning native villages, the rebels also massacred white civilians-women and children without mercy. Let us look into the causes which led to this First War of Indian Independence in 1857.

### **2.2.1. CAUSES**

Students, the Revolt of 1857 was not sudden, but was the end result of the already simmering discontent of Indians against the policies of East India Company. Multiple causes: social-religious-political- economic worked together to produce the rebellion. Let us discuss them.

#### **a. POLITICAL CAUSES**

The expansionist policy of the British created distrust among the rulers of the then existing Indian states. Their distrust against the British was confirmed by the imperialist policy of 'Doctrine of Lapse' adopted by Lord Dalhousie. Under this policy, any state could be annexed on the ground

of mis-governance and also if the native ruler died without any biological heir to the throne then after his death the territory would automatically 'lapse' into the British India. It completely disregarded the right of an adopted heir to the throne. Rulers of tributary states were allowed to adopt heirs only with the prior consent of the Company. Rani Lakshmi Bai's adopted son was not permitted to sit on the throne of Jhansi. Satara (1848), Punjab (1849) Nagpur and Jhansi (1854) were annexed under the Doctrine of Lapse. Oudh, despite being the loyal ally of the British was annexed on the plea of misrule by Lord Dalhousie, which left thousands of nobles, officials, retainers and soldiers jobless. This measure converted Oudh, a loyal state, into a hotbed of discontent and intrigue. The refusal to continue the pension of Peshwa Nana Saheb, the adopted son of Baji Rao II, created hostility among the ruling class. The maltreatment towards the Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah-II hurted the sentiment of the Muslim community. A large number of Indian rulers and chiefs dislodged aroused fear in the minds of other ruling families who apprehended a similar fate.

#### **b. ECONOMIC CAUSES**

The annexation of Indian states one after the other by the Company rendered the large number of artisans and craftsmen unemployed as the native rulers and the nobles, could no longer afford to patronage them. The ruined artisans and craftsmen unable to find an alternative job began to come to villages and crowded agriculture. This broke the union of agriculture and self-sufficient rural economy. The imposition of high tariffs on Indian goods led to the destruction of Indian handicraft and cottage industries which were the backbone of the Indian economy as they failed to compete with cheaper imported machine-made goods from Britain. The peasant was also progressively impoverished under the British rule. The British policy of extracting the largest possible amount of land revenue ruined the peasant's condition. They were left at the mercies of the Zamindars who ransacked them, compelled them to pay illegal dues and to perform forced labour. The high land revenue demand was accompanied by rigidity in collection, and intrusion of money lenders. Many peasants were unable to meet the heavy revenue demands and repay their loans to money lenders, eventually losing the lands that they had held for generations. All this resulted in the unprecedented poverty in Indian villages throughout the British regime. The imposition of high tariffs on Indian goods, de-industrialization, and drain of wealth led to the overall decline of the economy. It caused widespread resentment among all sections of the people. So they bore a deep-seated grievance against the British. Large numbers of sepoys were drawn from the peasantry and had family ties in villages, so the grievances of the peasants also affected them.

#### **c. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CAUSES**

One of the major reasons for the revolt was socio-religious policies of the British which included racial superiority and discrimination, missionary activities and deliberate efforts to subvert the socio-religious beliefs of the people in India. British hurling insults mixed with racial slurs and abuses towards Indians was a common sight in colonial India. The attempt at socio-religious reforms like abolition of Sati, female infanticide, child marriage and encouragement to widow remarriage and women education were considered as a threat to the established Indian traditions.

Even the introduction of the railways and telegraph was viewed with suspicion. In 1850, Religious Disabilities Act was passed to make conversion to Christianity easier. This Act changed the Hindu law of property. It enabled a convert from Hinduism to other religion to inherit his ancestral properties. Hindus regarded this as an incentive to give up one's religious faith. Also, the British decision to collect taxes from Mosque and Temples angered the locals, thus creating hatred among them for British officials. It seemed to the people that their socio-religious customs that they cherished and held sacred were being destroyed by the British. This created a kind of discontentment and distrust among the people against the British rule.

#### **d. MILITARY CAUSES**

In 1856, Lord Canning's government passed the General Service Enlistment Act, which decreed that all future recruits to the Bengal army would have to give an undertaking to be ready to serve even in British land across the sea when required. The Bengal army was recruited from high caste communities in Oudh. They were not prepared to cross the ocean (Kalapani) which was forbidden as per Hindu religious beliefs as to the Hindus of the time, crossing the seas meant loss of caste and his right in his ancestral property. Secondly, Indian sepoy's formed more than 87% of British troops in India. They were considered inferior to British soldiers. Indians were unable to obtain promotion beyond the rank of Sergeant and any fresh recruit from Britain would automatically be placed above them. A more immediate cause of the sepoy's dissatisfaction was the order that they were required to serve in areas far away from their homes and would not be given the foreign service allowance (Bhatta) when serving in Sindh or Punjab. The annexation of Oudh in 1856 had a special adverse effect on the morale of the Bengal army, as about 75,000 of them were recruited from this region. The annexation of Oudh shook the loyalty of these sepoy's. Nawab's army was disbanded. These soldiers lost their means of livelihood. They became bitter enemies of the British.

#### **e. IMMEDIATE CAUSES**

The immediate factor was the introduction of the 'Enfield' rifle and cartridge. The cartridge had to be bitten off before loading it into the gun. Rumour aroused amongst the Indian sepoy's that the cartridge was greased with pig and cow fat. The pig is taboo in Muslims and the cow is sacred in the Hindu religion. The sepoy's became convinced that the introduction of the greased cartridge was a deliberate attempt to defile their religion. The sepoy's refused to use these cartridges despite of persuasion and intimidation. In the court of inquiry that followed, the offenders were tried, condemned and sentenced to 10 years of hard labour. The sentenced men were stripped of their shoes and uniform. It was an act of gross humiliation and set out the signal for the mutiny the following evening.

Therefore, its causes lay deeply embedded in the grievances that all sections of Indian society right from royal families, army men and common people jointly nurtured against the British rule.

### **2.2.2. EXTENT**

Students, the revolt triggered on 29 March 1857 when an Indian sepoy of 34 Native Infantry, Mangal Pandey refused to use the greased cartridges and in retaliation killed two British officials at Barrackpore (near Calcutta). The Indian soldiers present there refused to obey orders to arrest Mangal Pandey. However, he was later on arrested, tried and hanged. On 24 April 85 soldiers of the 3rd cavalry regiment at Meerut refused to use the greased cartridges. On 9 May, they were publicly disgraced and were sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. After that incident, the entire regiment at Meerut revolted and hence the Mutiny really started at Meerut on 10 May 1857, when the Indian sepoys broke the jails and got released their comrades, murdered the Europeans, burnt their houses and marched to Delhi after sunset. The soldiers along with other group of civilians went on a rampage shouting 'Maro Firangi Ko' proclaiming their intention to restore the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II to imperial glory. The workers, farmers, and common man also supported the revolt and helped the soldiers. On 12 May, they captured Delhi and obliged the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar to give leadership: the Revolt had become open and formal.

From Delhi the revolt spread over the entire area from the neighborhood of Patna to the borders of Rajasthan. On 4 June 1857, Lucknow, the capital of Oudh, witnessed an intense civilian revolt under the leadership of Begum Hazrat Mahal, one of the Begums of the ex-king of Oudh. The day after, Kanpur also jumped into the revolt under the leadership of Nana Saheb. His troops were commanded by Tantya Tope and Azimullah. In Jhansi, Rani Lakshmi Bai and in Arrah, Kunwar Singh led the revolt. Khan Bahadur Khan was the leader in Bareilly. According to the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Rose, Rani Lakshmi Bai was the best and bravest military leader of the rebels who died in the battle field after giving a strong fight. Kunwar Singh was killed in a battle in Bihar. Begum Hazrat Mahal, Nana Saheb and Khan Bahadur Khan escaped to Nepal. Tantya Tope was captured while he was asleep. He was hanged after a trial. The old Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II along with his two sons was taken prisoner. After a trail he was deported to Rangoon, where he died in 1862, at the age of 87. This brought an end to the heroic battle and on 8 July 1858, fourteen months after the outbreak at Meerut, peace was finally proclaimed by Lord Canning.

### **2.2.3. COMPOSITION**

Students, the Revolt of 1857 was not one movement but many. Though the majority of the rebels consisted of the sepoys who were discontented with the discrimination they faced in the service in the British army, but the revolt of the sepoys was also accompanied by a rebellion of civil population, particularly in the north-western provinces and Oudh. Their accumulated grievances found immediate expression and they rose in big numbers to give vent to their opposition to the colonial exploitive rule. The participation of peasants, Zamindars, religious mendicants, priests, shopkeepers, day laborer's, and civil servants gave it the real strength as well as the character of a popular revolt. It is pertinent to note that regions and people who were beneficiaries of colonial rule did not revolt. Entire South India remained unaffected.

Different classes had different grievances, for instance, while the peasants were angered by exploitative land levies and losing their lands under permanent settlement system; Zamindars resented the British for taking away their titles and lands on their own whims and the Taluqdars of Oudh raised the banner of revolt for the revival and restoration of their feudal privileges. Similarly, artisans and traders suffered under British regime due to exploitative economic and mercantilist policies. The local rulers like Tantya Tope, Rani laxmi Bai, etc., were looking for personal gains and resented the British for annexing their states. Similarly, the nature of grievances also varied from region to region. For instance, some areas of central India, where there was no such dispossession, like Indore, Gwalior, Saugar or parts of Rajasthan, where the sepoys rebelled, the princes remained loyal to the British. Not all peasants suffered equally either. Those in the fertile and irrigated areas could more easily withstand the burden of over assessment than those in the backward regions. It is also important to note that it was not a class revolt. The peasantry did not rebel against the landlords. They only directed attacks against money-lending grain dealers or the representatives of the British Indian government.

It was for the first time that soldiers of the Indian army recruited from different communities, Hindus and Muslims, and civilians including landlords and peasants etc., having different interests had come together in their opposition to the British. Perhaps, the only common trait that pervaded all the layers of rural society was a suspicion of British rule, allegedly threatening their religion. It also provided the necessary foundation for the later successful anti-colonial struggles against the British.

#### **2.2.4. SIGNIFICANCE**

Students, the mutiny clearly brought to the surface the growing resentment amongst the Indians against the exploitive rule of East India Company and its consequences and forced the colonial masters to reconsider their policies and strategies.

The Revolt of 1857 proved useful as it showed up the glaring shortcomings in the Company's administration and its army. To pacify the Indians the first development that happened almost immediately was that the British parliament passed Government of India Act on 2 August 1858 for the better governance of India as it did not want to lose India, its biggest and most beneficial colony. The Act formally abolished the rule of East India Company in India and transferred all its powers to the Crown; declaring Queen Victoria to be the sovereign of British India. India became a colony of the British Empire and the East India Company returned to being just a trading organization. The Board of Control was abolished and the Board of Directors was done away with. For the administration of India, a new ministry was created known as 'India House', headed by the Secretary of State for India, who was to be assisted by an advisory council of 15 members. The India House was the apex body to administer India and was a connecting link between the British Parliament and the Indian governing system.

The Governor-General acquired the additional title of Viceroy. The difference between Governor-General and Viceroy was that the Viceroy would act as the representative of the Queen and the Governor-General was the representative of the British Parliament whose authority was

restricted to that of British India itself and not on the princely states. In other words, he remained Governor-General for the provinces under his rule, and came to be known as Viceroy while dealing with the princely states.

After the revolt of 1857, the British rule in India underwent major transformation in its policy. It started protecting and fostering the princes as its puppets. The Queen Victoria's announcement declared against any desire for extension of territorial possessions (a direct reversal of Dalhousie's policy). The native princes were assured of maintenance of their treaties and engagements of territorial integrity of their states and promised to respect their rights, dignity and honour. The right to adopt sons as legal heirs was also accepted. A similar move was made which promised religious toleration and promise to safeguard the customs and traditions of India. It was in this way that the British government made attempts to win over the confidence of the people of India for years to come.

The sepoy who had once been a trusted ally of the British could no longer be trusted, therefore, new recruitment policy of the army men was announced to make sure that they could not organize any such revolt in future. The strength of European troops in Indian army was increased from the pre-1857 figure of 45,000 to 65,000 and the number of Indian troops reduced from the pre-1857 figure of 238,000 to 140,000. All Indian artillery units with the exception of a few mountain batteries were disbanded, even the artillery was kept with the British soldiers. All higher posts in the army and police were reserved for Europeans. Separate units were created on the basis of caste, community and region to keep the Indian army divided.

It was a glorious landmark in history as Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder against the exploitive colonial rule. After initial harsh treatment of Muslims, the rulers started talking for the betterment of the Muslim subjects. Realizing that Hindu-Muslim unity would pose a serious danger to them, the British gave a fillip to the policy that came to known as 'Divide and Rule' and used one class or community against another unscrupulously.

The British territorial conquest ended only to start a period of systematic economic exploitation of India, which became more serious and much wider from here.

Though the revolt was unsuccessful, the spirit of the people remained unshaken. The revolt left an indelible impression on the minds of the Indian people and thus paved the way for the rise of a strong national movement in future.

### **2.2.5. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I**

1. Give two causes that led to the Revolt of 1857.

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2. Who was the prominent leader in Lucknow during the Revolt of 1857?

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3. Name four important centres of Revolt of 1857.

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4. Sir Huge Rose described whom as 'the best and bravest military leader of the rebel'?

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5. What is the significance of Revolt of 1857 in Indian history?

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### **2.2.6. NATURE**

Students, debate over the nature of 1857 continues to rage mainly because of its unique position in Indian history. There are differences of opinions amongst historians on the nature of the 1857 revolt. Let us discuss.

For the British like Stanley (Secretary of State for India), Sir John Lawrence, Malleon and Seeley, the Revolt of 1857 was nothing more than a sepoy mutiny. According to John Seeley, the revolt of 1857 was “a wholly unpatriotic and selfish sepoy mutiny with no native leadership and no popular support.” However, the truth lies somewhere in between. In his *Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru maintains that the Revolt of 1857 was much more than just a sepoy mutiny. Though initially it started as a mutiny of the Indian soldiers, the revolt spread rapidly and assumed the nature of a mass rebellion. Jawaharlal Nehru maintains that the Revolt of 1857 was essentially ‘*a feudal uprising though there were some nationalistic elements in it*’. By looking closely, we can see that to term the revolt of 1857 as a sepoy mutiny was rather a British propaganda. It is true that the revolt was started by the sepoys but was joined in large numbers by the civilian population. The participation of peasants and artisans made the revolt a widespread and popular event. In some areas, the common people revolted even before the sepoys. All this shows that it was clearly a popular revolt.

The differing views from across the political spectrum were also being voiced since the time of the revolt itself. “Is it a military mutiny, or is it a national revolt?”, asked Benjamin Disraeli in the House of Commons on 27 July 1857. Karl Marx in his several essays described this revolt as nationalist fight for independence. It was V.D. Savarkar, who drafted the first nationalist interpretation of the event in 1909 in his book *The Indian War of Independence, 1857*, called the revolt of 1857 the ‘Indian War of Independence’ when Indians rose up in arms for safeguarding their religion (Swadharm) and their land (Swaraj). In 1959, it received serious academic support from S.B. Chaudhuri. For whom it was certainly the first war of independence, as in the whole canvas of the recorded history of India it would be difficult to find a parallel to this gigantic anti-foreign combine of all classes of people and of many provinces of India. There was never a war in India lasting continuously for more than a year and simultaneously in all the regions which had for its objective the abasement and ejection of the alien ruling power. According to Stanley Wolpert, it was far more than a mutiny, yet much less than a war of independence. However, this claim was vigorously denied by R.C. Majumdar, S.N. Sen and Tarachand. A national war of independence necessarily implies or presupposes a definite plan and organization. Further such an organization

implies a pre-concerted conspiracy or plot to drive out the British. However, there is no evidence for the existence of any such conspiracy. R.C. Majumdar in his work *The Sepoy Mutiny and the Rebellion of 1857*, considers it as neither the 'first', nor 'national', nor a 'war of independence' as large parts of the country remained unaffected and many sections of the people took no part in the upsurge. He argued that the mutiny brought different kinds of people fighting for different interests. S.N. Sen in his centenary volume on the mutiny, *Eighteen Fifty Seven*, writes, "The movement began as a military mutiny, and then when the administration collapsed the lawless elements . . . took the upper hand." The civil population that revolted thought more of plunder and other means of attaining wealth and power than anything else, at least there is no evidence to show that with the probable exception of a very few individuals the people were inspired by the idea of regaining freedom of India. In fact, a large section of Indians were friendly to the British and even sided with them in the revolt. So, it will be an exaggeration to call the revolt of 1857 as national war of independence. He denied that the rebel leaders were in any way 'nationalist' in the modern sense of the term. He admitted the use of religion as the unifying factor but denied that the rebels had any clear conceptions about either individual freedom or territorial allegiance. Tarachand also admits that the war against the British was not inspired by any sentiment of nationalism, for in 1857 India was not yet politically a nation. Sen, in fact went to the extent of saying, "India in the first half of the nineteenth century was a geographical expression." Nationalism in India was yet in its infancy. There was no feeling of nationalism, as we know it today. In 1857, the Bengalis, the Punjabis, the Marathas the Madrasis, and Rajputs never felt even for a movement that they all belonged to one and the same nation. It is a fact that the Hindus and Muslims cooperated but the leaders and the followers of the two communities were moved by personal loyalties rather than loyalty to a common motherland.

Marxist writers looked at this event as uprising of peasants against feudal system of exploitation. M.N. Roy said that it was the reaction of the feudal against capitalism.

*The revolt of 1857 is not easy to categorize. While one can easily dismiss some views such as Medley have described the Revolt of 1857, as a war of races, it was a struggle between the whites and the blacks. However, this view is also not correct. Undoubtedly, all the whites in India irrespective of their nationality were on one side, but not all the blacks. In the British war camps, Indians were employed as cooks, and palanquin-bearers, who carried the white wounded sepoys out of the danger zone. Moreover, there was a considerably large number of Indian soldiers in the company's army that took part in the suppression of the rebellion.*

Students we can say that, the revolt of 1857 definitely had some seeds of nationalism and anti-imperialism and it was much more than a mutiny of disgruntled sepoys which is reflected in the widespread participation of the civilian population. However, one cannot go so far to call it a war of independence.

### **2.2.7. CAUSES OF THE FAILURE OF THE REVOLT**

Students, the revolt was an extraordinary event in Indian history. On 8 July 1858, fourteen months after the outbreak at Meerut, peace was finally proclaimed by Lord Canning. It can be said that the Great Revolt of 1857 was a failure, but was not fruitless. The result of the revolt was unsuccessful due to some major drawbacks. Let us discuss them.

There was no unity of purpose among the rebels. Most of the leaders of the revolt were motivated by their own narrow personal gains. They only fought to liberate their own territories and lacked a coherent idea for modern India. For instance, the sepoys of Bengal wanted to revive the ancient glories of the Mughals while Nana Saheb and Tantya Tope tried to re-establish the Maratha power. Rani Lakshmi Bai fought to regain Jhansi, which she had lost as a result of the British policy of Doctrine of lapse. A common agenda among them could not be evolved.

This rising was not widespread, it remained confined to north and central India only. The southern provinces did not take part in it. Some of the local rulers like Scindia of Gwalior, the Holkar of Indore, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Raja of Jodhpur, the Nawab of Bhopal, the rulers of Patiala, Sindh, and Kashmir, the Afghans and Gurkhas of Nepal, provided active support to the British. All these groups had their reasons to do so. For instance, the Sikhs who had faced so much of oppressions at the hands of the Mughals, and Rajput chiefs, Nizam of Hyderabad, were so much harassed by the Marathas that they dreaded their revival. Thus, it failed to have the character of an all-India struggle.

Some epicenters of the revolt were- Kanpur, Lucknow, Aligarh, Agra, Arrah, Delhi, and Jhansi. Due to lack of communication facilities, the sepoys of these widely dispersed cantonments could not act simultaneously in a concerted manner.

Another major factor contributing to the failure of the revolt was the weak leadership of the movement. The Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, was an old and exhausted man who failed to fuse the scattered elements into a consolidated force of great momentum with a definite policy and plan of action. Therefore, the uprisings in different parts of the country remained uncoordinated and sepoys often behaved in an uncontrolled manner.

The English educated middle class also did not support the revolt as they believed that the British would usher in an era of modernization. Similarly, the Zamindars of Bengal Presidency were the creation of the British. They acted as break-waters to storm. Oudh Taluqdars also backed off, once promises were made by the British to restore their land and titles. Similarly, the rich merchants, who were benefiting from the colonial rule too stayed away from the uprising.

The lack of resources both in trained men and modern weapons made the Indian rebels to give up the fight on many occasions. Whatever few weapons existed, were old and outdated. In many areas, rebels fought with swords and spears. On the other hand, the European soldiers were equipped with latest weapons of war like the Enfield rifle. The electric telegraph kept the commander-in-chief informed about the movement and strategy of the rebels. The English mastery of the sea enabled them to get timely help from England and crush the revolt ruthlessly.

### **2.2.8. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II**

1. Who wrote the book *The Indian War of Independence, 1857*?

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2. What are the views of S.N. Sen about the Uprising of 1857?

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3. Who called the revolt of 1857 as “a wholly unpatriotic and selfish sepoys mutiny with no native leadership and no popular support”.

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4. Give two reasons responsible for the failure of 1857 revolt.

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### **2.3. SUMMARY**

Students, in this unit you learnt about the First War of Indian Independence in 1857 that was an important landmark in the history of modern India as by far it was the largest, most widespread, and dangerous threat to the British rule in India. The rebellion of 1857 is considered the first blow that came to shatter the British rule in India. For the first time it united, though in a limited way, many sections of Indian society to put up a unified challenge to the British rule. It started essentially as a sepoy mutiny but was soon joined by the civilians from different classes viz. peasants, Zamindars, local rulers etc. There are different views and opinions among the nature of the revolt. For some it was a mere sepoy mutiny, for some it was a first war of Independence, and for some it was far more than a mutiny, yet much less than a war of independence. By the end of 1859, the revolt was suppressed and the British authority over India was firmly re-established. Though the efforts of the rebels failed, the British government was pressurized to change their policy towards India. The revolt marked the end of the East India Company’s rule in India. India was placed under the direct rule of the British Crown. The revolt is remembered for the valour and the courage of its rebels. Even though they failed to achieve their objective they succeeded in sowing the seeds of nationalism among the Indians and paved the way for the rise of a strong national movement.

### **2.4. SUGGESTED READINGS**

Irfan Habib, *A People’s History of India: The National Movement: Origins and Early Phase, to 1918*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2019.

Ishita Banerjee Dube, *A History of Modern India*, Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010.

Lakshmi Subramanian, *History of India: 1707-1857*, Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan, 2018. (first published in 2010)

## **2.5. QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

### **2.5.1. LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Elaborately explain the causative factors that led to revolt of 1857.
2. “The Mutiny was not inevitable in 1857, but it was inherent in the constitution of the Empire.” Comment.
3. Critically examine the nature of the Revolt of 1857. How did it affect the British policy in India after 1858?
4. Analyze the causes for the failure of Revolt of 1857.

### **2.5.2. SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Give two political causes that led to the Rebellion of 1857.
2. How did the introduction of Enfield rifles become an immediate cause of the war of independence in 1857?
3. Who was the Governor-General of India during the Uprising of 1857?
4. Why and when was Mangal Pandey executed?
5. Write two impacts of Uprising of 1857.
6. Name two states which were annexed under the ‘Doctrine of Lapse’.

## 2.6 APPENDIX

### CHRONOLOGY OF REVOLT OF 1857

DATE	REVOLT OF 1857
March 29, 1857	Barrackpore, Mangal Pandey, a sepoy from Oudh, mutinies. Said to be initial action of Revolt.
May 10, 1857	Meerut: Initial mutiny of Indian troops. Troops march to Delhi.
May 11, 1857	Delhi: Mutiny. City seized by rebels.
May 13, 1857	Ferozepore Mutiny. 45th Regiment join rebels at Delhi.
May 14, 1857	Simla: Commander-in-Chief Anson leaves for Delhi. (Dies May 27 at Karnal).
May 30, 1857	Hindan River: First battle of Revolt
May 30, 1857	Lucknow: Mutiny
June 2, 1857	Peshawar: Forty surviving mutinies from Hoti Mardan blown guns as example of retribution.
June 4, 1857	Benares: Mutiny of troops during disarmament.
June 4, 1857	Cawnpore: Mutiny
June 6, 1857	Rebel's siege of city begins
June 7, 1857	Fyzabad: Mutiny: Maulvi Ahmad Shah becomes a major rebel leader.
June 8, 1857	Delhi Ridge: Arrival of British troops.
June 9, 1857	Benares: Gen. Neill begins punitive measures.
June 18, 1857	Fatehgarh: Mutiny
June 26, 1857	Cawnpore: City falls to rebels.
June 27, 1857	Massacre of British evacuees
July 1, 1857	Lucknow: Rebels set siege to British Residency.

July 16, 1857	Cawnpore: City falls to rebels
July 17, 1857	City retaken by British
August 12, 1857	Jagdishpur: First battle at stronghold of rebel leader, Kunwar Singh, who then moves into Central India.
Aug 16, 1857	Bithur: capture of place of exile of Maratha rebel leader, Nana Sahib.
Aug 17, 1857	Poonamallee: 8th Madras Native Regiment, in route to Madras, refuses to go north and is disbanded. (Other Madras regiments were used in quelling rebellions in Central India and Chota Nagpur.)
Sept 20, 1857	Delhi: Retaken by British
Sept. 25, 1857	Lucknow: British reinforced.
Nov. 22, 1857	2nd relief and evacuation except for Alambagh defended under Gen. Outram.
Nov. 23, 1857	Mandasor: British take stronghold of rebel leader from Delhi, Firoz Shah.
Nov. 28-Dec. 6, 1857	Cawnpore: Occupied by rebel Gwalior contingent.
Jan. 3-1858	Fatehgarh: Occupied by British
March 2-22, 1858	Lucknow: Retaken by British after siege. Securing of Oudh assured this victory.
March 19-April 3, 1858	Jhansi: Siege and capture by British under Maj-Gen. Rose of rebel leader, the Rani of Jhansi.
April 22, 1858	Kalpi: (Gathering place of rebels under the Rani and Tantia Tope.)
May 5-6, 1858	Bareilly: Sir Colin Campbell takes capital of Rohelkhand leader, Khan Bahadur Khan.
June 16-21, 1858	Gwalior: British take city and defeat fleeing rebels at nearby Jaura-Alipur ending effective Central India rebellion. Rani of hansi killed. Tantia Tope leads British on 1,000 mile, ten month chase.
Aug 31, 1858	Multan: Disarmed troops revolt. 1300 Indian rebels killed.
Nov 1, 1858	Proclamation of Queen Victoria, taking on Government of Indian Territories, offering clemency to all rebels not convicted of murder of British subjects.
April 7, 1859	Paron Jungles: Tantia Tope betrayed and captured.
May 21, 1859	Sirwa Pass Battle; remnants of rebels flee into Nepal.

**SEMESTER III**  
**HISTORY OF INDIA: c.1750-1947**

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**UNIT 3: TRANSFORMATION UNDER COLONIAL RULE: AGRICULTURE,  
RAILWAYS, EDUCATION, MIDDLE CLASSES**

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**STRUCTURE**

**3.0. Learning Objectives**

**3.1. Introduction**

**3.2. Agriculture**

**3.3 Railways**

**3.3.1 Check Your Progress I**

**3.4 Education**

**3.5 Middle Classes**

**3.5.1 Check Your Progress II**

**3.6 Summary**

**3.7 Suggested Readings**

**3.8 Questions for Practice**

**3.8.1 Long Answer Questions**

**3.8.2 Short Answer Questions**

**3.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students, after reading this unit you will be able to:

- Examine critically the transformations that took place with the establishment of British rule.
- Analyze the impact of commercialization of agriculture on the economy.
- Understand the significance of the introduction of railways in colonial India
- Analyze the response of the Indians to introduction of modern western education by the British.
- Learn about the factors responsible for the emergence of middle classes in India

- Analyze the contribution of the middle classes to the national movement.

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Students, this unit will deal with the transformation that came about with the new agrarian policies adopted by the British. The construction of canals by the British led to expansion of cultivation to dry arid areas, thereby increasing agricultural production. The introduction of railways to a large extent was responsible for the commercialization of agriculture in colonial India. The prices of land increased but it also led to large scale indebtedness of small farmers. The Railways were introduced in India to serve colonial interests. Similarly, education institutions too were established to benefit the British to man the lower rungs of administration with English educated Indians who were paid low wages as compared to the Europeans. Significantly, this module will examine the emergence of western educated urban middle classes who played an important role in India's struggle for freedom.

### **3.2 AGRICULTURE**

The Indian peasant in the second half of nineteenth century continued to follow traditional methods of crop production and effectively used simple tools. They willingly accepted new implements provided they could afford the price. There was a tendency towards the use of more iron in place of wood, leading to better quality irrigation equipment and better-quality irrigation equipment and better ploughs in some areas. In the early twentieth century, agricultural scientists at times advocated a heavy plough and deep ploughing for dry areas. The policy gave rise to a number of iron ploughs. Although partially successful in Punjab, elsewhere their diffusion remained limited as it was both heavy and expensive to maintain. The light wooden plough was easier to carry to far-off fields and it easily turned the thin fertile top soil. Significantly, the iron cane crusher that was introduced by the British was accepted almost in all parts of India despite the cost and difficulty in repairing. Improved varieties of wheat and cotton seeds were the result of the establishment of a chain of agricultural research stations by the British in India.

The British started construction of canals from the early nineteenth century in colonial India. The percentage of irrigated area was less than 12 per cent around 1820. Some old canals were restored but majority of the canals were newly constructed primarily in four regions – Punjab, deltaic Madras, western United Provinces and Sind. By 1892 70,500 km of canals and distributaries had been laid that irrigated 5.42 million hectares. As more canals were constructed a total of 6.32 million hectares were irrigated annually in 1912-1917. Canal network was extensive in the regions of Punjab, Sind, Western UP and parts of Madras Presidency.

The effects of different canal work varied and there some negative aspects as well. As canals in Punjab were constructed in areas where water was sparse there was a large addition to the cultivated area. Regions adversely affected were riverine tracts in which the water table fell tremendously as the canals took away the river water upstream. Canals constructed in Western UP

cut across natural drainage lines, creating malarious swamps, made Kuchcha wells fall in as the water table rose and spread saline which made soil unproductive. Availability of a large number of canals encouraged over-use of water harming crops. In spite of these problems, canal irrigated lands gave much higher yields than unirrigated lands. Government canals encouraged a change in the cropping pattern and raised the value of land. That in turn stimulated private investment in the form of wells. Canal water was cheap but supplies were seasonal. Well water was expensive but it was a controllable resource usually available throughout the year.

It is important to take note of the extent of cultivated area for calculating the volume of agricultural production. In colonial India cropped area expanded at a higher rate than the rate of increase of population. Increase in total cropped area was 11.77 per cent between 1891 and 1911, while the population in the same period increased no more than 7.41 per cent. Therefore, the increase in cropped area kept pace with the increase in population in British India. Even in individual regions expansion of cultivation outpaced the increase of population in most areas.

Railways impacted the crop distribution pattern in different parts of colonial India. Railways reduced the cost of transport, levelling off prices of crops in different regions. This resulted in regional specialization of different crops. Each region focused on crops grown best and least expensively within it, in order to take the benefit of nation-wide markets. Export of crops was another factor that influenced crop distribution. Railways transported goods to the port and from there steamships took over, reducing costs. Many crops were now grown to be sold in foreign markets. Naturally the extent of area producing such export crops as cotton, rice, wheat, jute, and oilseeds expanded in regions where they were produced best. Due to exports and internal market influences there was a shift from food to non-food crops in British India. Crop specializations started in certain regions like in Berar the area under cotton increased from 28.1 per cent of the total cropped area in 1870 to 38.1 per cent in 1900.

‘Commercialization of agriculture’, describes the ‘extension of trade and money relations’ in rural India after the construction of railways. The peasants started producing primarily for sale in the markets, rather than for self-consumption. The peasant used the money he got from selling the crop to purchase his requirements from the market. This was usually not done earlier. This was most common in areas like the cotton regions of Berar, where area under cotton cultivation increased from 21.1 per cent in 1860 to 35.8 per cent in 1901. This tells us that many peasants must have shifted from growing food grains to growing cotton. In Western UP most farmers grew wheat for selling in the market and bought cheaper grains for self-consumption.

Prices in general rose with the commercialization of agriculture. Between 1861 and 1901 prices doubled and by 1914 rose again by about a third. Significantly, agricultural prices increased proportionately more than non-agricultural prices. Agricultural prices in relation to non-agricultural prices rose by 35.8 per cent between 1873 and 1895 and by 47.4 per cent between 1873 to 1915. Thus, there was a shift in “the terms of trade” in favour of agriculture.

With commercialization of agriculture the cropped area increased in most regions from 1870 to 1920, mostly led by commercial crops such as wheat, cotton, oilseeds, sugarcane, and tobacco. Rents and prices of land also increased. Scale of credit transactions increased too. So, did

the scale of land transfers. Circulation of agricultural laborer's in and out of agriculture increased too.

Commercialization was facilitated by both demand and supply factors. The world demand for food and raw materials was stimulated by industrialization in Europe. Steam ships from the second quarter of the nineteenth century aided the process, as it enabled European buyers to reach South Asian supplies more cheaply and quickly than before. Within India railways brought pockets of excess supply and excess demand in closer touch. Industrialization created a demand for food and raw materials in the cities.

On the supply side, land taxes that had to be paid in cash was a lighter burden for some peasants. This to an extent encouraged saving and investment as product prices rose, and almost certainly increased the role of the profit motive in peasant production decisions. The railways too brought down the cost the farmers and merchants had to bear while accessing the ports. Large-scale irrigation systems such as canals made wastelands cultivable and increased cropping intensity in areas where rainfall was limited. Another factor that aided the production of commercial crops was changes in agricultural practices and technology, mainly canals, wells and seeds.

The peak period of commercialization of agriculture was between 1860 and 1925. By the early 1920s, world agricultural markets had begun to face persistent oversupply and price depression. In India, major cash crops faced stagnation or falling prices, though cotton was the exception. Furthermore, by the 1920s, good quality arable land had become scarce.

The earlier wave of commercialization of agriculture saw increased production of indigo and opium export. Between 1860 and 1890, indigo cultivation first shifted from Bengal to Bihar and eastern – UP districts, and thereafter declined. The reason for the shift was the Indigo Revolt in Bengal of 1860. Also, it failed to compete with the newly discovered mineral dyes. Opium production continued till the end of the nineteenth century mainly in Bihar and Benaras. Opium was the most important item of income after the land taxes. From roughly 4 per cent of the revenues in the 1790s, opium contributed 16-17 per cent between 1850 and 1880, after which it steadily declined. Two other Bengal exports, cane sugar and silk, also declined by mid nineteenth century. Important commercial crops in the later wave were cotton, wheat and rice. After the 1850s, export of both cotton and wheat expanded, and was joined by oilseeds, tobacco, groundnut and sugarcane.

In British India, the plantations were essentially capitalist enterprise fully under European control. Important were tea, coffee and rubber. The planters raised the crops and processed them. It was after 1850 tea plantations were set up in British India. Lands were given very cheaply to retired European civil and military officers. By 1871 there were 205 plantations in Assam. Soon plantations were established at Darjeeling, Travancore state and Madras. By 1910 the output of tea was 119.4 million kilograms. The condition of labourers in these tea plantations was pathetic. Wages were very low and living conditions were bad. They were almost like bonded labourers without any rights. Coffee plantations were established by local Europeans in the highlands of Mysore and Cochin. The peak of coffee production was 1885 after which it declined

due to competition from Brazilian coffee. Rubber plantations too were European controlled. Their number was not large and in 1911 there were only 48 rubber plantations. Rubber was mainly produced in Burma and the state of Cochin.

### **3.3 RAILWAYS**

Students, common means of long-distance transportation of cargo in the mid-nineteenth century British India were pack animals, bullock carts and small ships and boats on navigable rivers. The Banjaras used pack animals (camels, horses and donkeys) on roads that connected different regions of India. For short-distance trade and travel, the common means of transportation were palanquins, small river boats, and bullock carts. The older systems of long-distance trade were cumbersome and took a lot of time. The railways replaced these older means of travel. Short-distance travel continued via boats, carts, and palanquins even after 1947.

The interests of the railway building industry in London and that of the Lancashire industry coincided. The cotton industry wanted access to the inland cotton regions of India as a cheap source of supply for British cotton industry and also to expand the inland markets for British cotton items. It was also in the British interests to connect by rail different parts of India to make army movements easier and faster both in times of war beyond the boundaries of India as well as for suppressing internal rebellions. The financial investors in railway would get free land from the government of India. They would also get a return of 5 per cent on their capital from the government of India, if they faced a loss or failed to make profit. The railways would be privately managed with only minor government intervention. The contract was signed by the Directors of the East India Company in 1849 with two companies: East Indian Railway and Great Indian Peninsular Railway.

The terms of this contract proved to be a burden on the Indian tax-payer. He was to make good all losses in profits to provide a guaranteed return on investment which was over 56 per cent above the 1849 London market rate. Since the return was guaranteed there was no limit to the amount of capital being spent. They also felt no need for economizing or for employing Indians instead of high-paid Europeans. The railway lobby was very strong in 1860 as there were 186 railway company directors in both the Houses of British Parliament. By 1871 main railway lines coming inland from Calcutta, Bombay and Madras had been laid out at the cost of Rs. 100 crores.

Students let us now look at the numerous drawbacks of the railways established in colonial India by the British. India had to bear the burden of the guarantee system. The entire railway system was established in a haphazard manner with no single plan for railway construction. Many railway lines were laid down to meet the immediate concerns of Lancashire or the army, resulting in wasteful tracks. Organization of the Railway was complex as there were multiple companies as well as the government involved in administration. It was only after 1905 that a Railway Board was set up. Profit motives directed the fixation of freight and passenger travel rates. Freight rates for short distances was very high. Indian passengers were over-charged for bad travelling conditions. All railway administrations, whether private, state or princely were 'solidly

British'. In 1892 all 105 top officers in Indian railways getting a salary of over ten thousand a year were Europeans. All supervisory and technical staff, including ticket checkers, drivers and plate layers were Europeans. This not only increased the running cost but also encouraged racial discrimination against Indian travelers.

On an average nearly 1,000 km of railway lines were opened every year between 1859 and 1909. Between 1860 and 1940, total route miles of tracks had increased from 838 to 41852. Route miles per 1,000 square miles increased from 0.5 to 26, route miles per million persons increased from 3 to 107. Passengers carried by the railways increased from 48 million in 1880 to 604 million in 1940. The railways had revolutionized the mobility of people and goods in India.

The railways moved goods at a faster speed and a lower cost than any means of land transport. By 1914 the railways was moving 14 times what the Banjaras used to move 250 years earlier and of course faster and much more cheaply. This meant loss of jobs for people who worked in transportation and trade. By 1850 the number of Banjaras declined to one-fourth. The railways did increase employment but not much. There was a levelling effect on prices as bulk goods moved cheaply by railways. Temporary food shortages were relieved in specific areas by the railways. But in case of famines and large-scale failure of crops, the railways spread the rise in prices over a larger region, thereby extending the 'area of famine while lowering its intensity'. But some benefits of the railways could not be limited to the British only. The supply of inland cotton not only reached Lancashire but also the Bombay textile mill, helping Indian industry. By 1947, the Indian railways were the largest employer in the organized sector. Railways facilitated the major channels of internal labour migration.

### **3.3.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I**

1. Name two socio-religious movements started by Hindus.

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2. Name three cash crops.

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3. Name two railway companies that laid railway tracks in India.

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4. What were the means of transportation in medieval India?

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### **3.4 EDUCATION**

Students, pre-British Indian society was not without scientific knowledge and technical know-how. They possessed knowledge of different subjects like mathematics, astronomy, medicine etc. It was the British who introduced modern western education in India after colonizing it. There

were three agencies responsible for the spread of modern education in India, Christian missionaries, British government and 'progressive Indians'.

The Christian missionaries came to India for the spread of Christianity among the Indians. For this purpose, they set up modern educational institutions, that taught subjects English, Mathematics, History, Political Science, Sciences, Geography and economics as well religious instruction of the Christian faith. Their aim was to get Indians together in schools to preach tenets of Christianity with the purpose of converting them. Nevertheless, these educational institutions played a very important role in providing modern western education to a large number of Indians.

The British government was the principal agent in disseminating modern education in India. Their political, administrative and economic requirements motivated them to set up network of schools and colleges in India. The British needed a large number of English educated Indians to staff the administrative apparatus at the subordinate level. Some British administrators also believed that English education would make the Indian people accept the British rule and therefore it was a 'political necessity'. A large number of Indians too wanted to be educated in English. This led to the establishment of Hindu College at Calcutta (1816), the Elphinstone College at Bombay (1827), and the Delhi College at Delhi (1824). All the three colleges were built and maintained by Indian effort and donations.

In 1835, Lord Bentick and his Council resolved that funds for education would be used for English education alone. They had faith in the doctrine of filtration according to which the government needed to educate only a few Indians in English who would then teach others. This doctrine was modified in Sir Charles Wood's 'dispatch' of 1854 in which 'a system of 'vernacular' and English education from schools to Universities was outlined'. Only then the government established schools, one in each district and began to give aid to missionary schools as well. The first Universities in India at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were established in 1857. In 1880, there were 83 colleges, including medical and engineering colleges, and 155 normal and technical schools, with a combined student population of 14,000. More than a third of these were concentrated in Bengal. It was only after 1880 that there was rapid advancement of education in colonial India.

Numerous socio-religious reform organizations had been established by middle class progressive Indians. Some of them were, the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Aligarh movement, the Singh Sabhas, the Anjumans, the Prarthana Samaj etc. These organizations set up educational institutions for both men and women. Along with modern western education, religious instruction too formed part of the teaching in these institutions. The Arya Samaj along with schools established the Dayanand Anglo Vedic College at Lahore for men. They also set up a college for women, Kanya Mahavidhyalaya at Jalandhar. Similarly, the Singh Sabha established the Khalsa College at Amritsar.

Significantly, the bulk of English education was provided in private schools and colleges. These were Indian enterprises run by finances and donations provided by Indians. Some of these institutions got government aid occasionally. The number of students in schools and

colleges was limited. These students mostly came from well to do sections of the upper middle classes and landlords. The aim of obtaining such an education was to get government jobs.

In 1901-02, there were 696 government secondary schools with 1,03,077 students whereas there were private secondary schools were 2401 in number with 3,19,110 pupils in colonial India. Government art colleges in 1902 were 32 with 4417 students, whereas private colleges were 108 with 12,731 students.

Literacy rates and enrolment rates had caste and community biases. Significantly, the average literacy rate among the Parsi was 79 per cent in 1931 (73 among Parsi women), whereas the general literacy rate was on 8.3 (2.3 for women). Among the Jains, the literacy rate was 35 per cent (11 among women). Literacy rates were above average for the upper-caste Hindus: the Brahman, Kayasth and corresponding groups, and among men than among women within these groups.

After 1920, a number of higher educational institutions were established by eminent intellectuals and leaders of the national movement. In Bengal, Vishwa-Bharti was started by Rabindra Nath Tagore, and the S.N.D.T University was organized by Karve in Bombay. Some others institutions were Kashi Vidhyapith at Benaras, the Gujarat Vidhyapith in Gujarat and the Jamia Milia Islamia at Delhi.

The colonial character of education introduced in India was visible in its aims, methods, curricula and content that was designed to serve colonialism. Over emphasis on English as a medium of instruction prevented the spread of education among the masses. It also created a linguistic and cultural gap between the educated and the masses. As education was expensive it became the monopoly of the upper classes. Modern technical education was neglected and it was very late that technical institutions were established in India. Nevertheless, an expanding educated middle class in India became 'receptive to ideas of social cohesion' and were also responsible spreading 'national consciousness' among the masses.

### **3.5 THE MIDDLE CLASSES**

Students tracing the growth of the Indian middle-classes, B.B. Misra stated that, "the class of people which arose as a result of changes in the British social policy and with the introduction of the new economic system and industry and with the subsequent growth of new professions", from mid-eighteenth century to modern times. The factors responsible for the emergence of the Indian middle class were different from those responsible for the emergence of the middle class in the West. The middle class in the west emerged mainly as a result of the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century which brought about large-scale mechanical production as a result of economic and technological change. The Indian middle classes emerged due to the changes that occurred in the course of about 200 years of British rule largely as a result of changes in British land and legal policies. Introduction of modern western education that included the study of English language and literature and subjects like political science, world Geography (physical and political) Mathematics and many more was to a very large extent responsible for the birth of middle classes. Other important changes introduced by the British were establishment of modern capitalist

enterprise and transport and communications. A network of better roads, railways, steamships, motor vehicles and post and telegraphs aided the emergence of an urban western educated middle class in colonial India.

The process of the growth of the Indian middle class can be traced to the advent of political stability and contractual relations during the period of East India Company. Custom was replaced by law. The British brought with them a political and economic organization based on rational principles which ignored caste distinctions. Caste was ignored by the system of Western education as well. Increase in external trade created capital resources for industrialization. The higher castes were the first to take advantage of the changing conditions as they already occupied higher traditional social, economic and political positions. They shifted to urban centres where they received modern western education and were able to get profitable occupations. But they were restricted to urban centres especially to the Presidency towns because of the concentration of wealth and of educational institutions.

The emergent middle-class belonged roughly to four categories of people according to the role played by them in the new economy in British India.

(a) The commercial middle-class of middlemen and brokers worked in foreign companies and in indigenous businesses and banking houses in the second half of the eighteenth century. The indigo plantations employed a new category of officials like the clerks, supervisory group of persons and a group of contractors who distributed advances and supplied the plants. With the opening up of trade, establishment of Agency houses, Joint Stock Companies and Indian banks, a large number of people who specialized in business administration grew.

(b) The money-lenders, the brokers, the Banias, the agents and the creditors (the new moneyed class) invested their money in land which became transferable due to the British policy. In addition, there were people who held land on lease on behalf of the indigo factory (for before 1830 planters were not permitted to buy lands of their own). The recognition of the rights of the under-tenures in 1765 also gave birth to a landed middle-class. The class of salaried employees and money-lenders who invested money in land grew with the expansion of commerce, thus transferring land from the cultivating community to the commercial classes.

(c) The industrial middle class in colonial India was very small because the growth of industry was very slow. The first to invest money in industry were the English Civil Servants, followed initially by other Europeans and then by some Bengalis in Calcutta and Parsis in Bombay.

(d) The educated middle class comprised of a class of professionals which emerged with the introduction of modern Western education and technology. The importance of educating Indians on a larger scale was realized but due to limited funds colleges and schools could not be opened in rural areas. They were opened only in the urban centres. The rate of progress of higher education increased in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Lord Curzon also saw the need of coordinating technical education with industrial development and thus technical schools and

colleges were established. Some engineering and medical colleges were established in India. The professional classes grew rapidly. The public servants and men in the liberal professions were mainly high caste people, especially Brahmans. The changes in the system of law gave rise to a class of lawyers. Then emerged doctors, teachers, engineers, printers, publishers and journalists. The primary characteristic of these groups forming the Indian urban middle classes was that they acquired respect and prestige not through social status or birth but by education, wealth and position.

The urban western educated middle classes played an important role in politics and society in the first half of the twentieth century. Western education had exposed these middle classes to new ideas of freedom of speech, democracy, republic, liberty, equality, fraternity, and revolution. As a result, they had become politically conscious and had come to resent their status of being colonized people at the mercy of a dominant state. The middle class expressed their opinion against the extreme and continuous economic exploitation of India by the British. They formed political organizations that petitioned the British government placing forth numerous demands like representation of Indians in the government, reduction of taxes etc. Majority of the members of the Indian National Congress formed in 1885 came from the middle classes. The middle classes participated in the struggle for Indian's independence. They participated in the Swadeshi movement, Rowlatt Satyagraha, and mass movements like Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India. Large number of educated middle class youth were attracted to and participated in revolutionary activity as well. Well known were Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad and Rash Bihari Bose.

In a transformed environment created by the new British administrative structure, socio-economic policies, and new means of transport and communications and technology, the middle classed were unable to adjust and felt marginalized as they were neither completely modern nor were they comfortable in the traditional settings. They were on the margins of modernity and tradition. These 'marginalized' urban western educated middle classes of each religious community (Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parses) tried to reform their society and religion by setting up socio-religious reform organizations. The Hindus started Reform movements like the Brahma Samaj at Calcutta, Arya Samaj at Bombay and Lahore, and the Prarthana Samaj in Maharashtra. Similarly, a socio-religious movement like the Singh Sabha was founded by the Sikhs at Lahore. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan introduced reform among the Muslims.

All the socio-religious reform movements were dominated by the middle classes, strongly influenced by the west and focused on social service. The scope of the socio religious reform movements was religious reform, modification in ritual and ceremony, social welfare, education and political concerns. Uplifting the untouchables and improving the condition of women were important concerns for them. All these organizations used similar means to carry out the activities. They made use of public meetings and lectures, debates with other groups, criticism of other religions and used the press to spread their ideas among the people. They established schools and colleges for the dissemination of modern as well as traditional education.

### 3.5.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II

1. When and where was the first three Universities set up in colonial India?

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2. Name two agricultural implements.

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3. Why was Lancashire important?

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4. What was the filtration theory?

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### 3.6 SUMMARY

Students, this unit has analyzed the transformed nature of agriculture in India. The impact of commercialization of agriculture on the Indian economy as well as society has been noted. Waves of a variety of cash crops as well as plantations in the nineteenth and the twentieth century introduced a number of changes in the methods of cultivation. The railways too impacted the lives of people as movement of goods and passengers became faster and cheaper. Professional, commercial and industrial middle classes emerged primarily as a result of introduction of modern western education in India. These middle classes played a significant role in politics, economy and society of colonial India.

### 3.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

Irfan Habib, *A People's History of India: The National Movement: Origins and early Phase, to 1918*, vol. 30, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2018.

Tirthankar Roy, *The Economic History of India 1857-1947*, vol. 31, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, (3 ed.), 2019.

Ishita Banerjee Dube, *A History of Modern India*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010.

Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, Gurgaon: Macmillan, 1983.

A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, fifth edition, 1993 (rpt).

### **3.8. QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

#### **3.8.1 LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Critically examine the transformation in Agriculture in colonial India.
2. Trace the emergence of Railways in colonial India. What was its impact on the society and economy?
3. What factors led to the birth of the middle classes in colonial India?
4. Analyze the role of the middle classes in transforming politics and society.
5. Trace the emergence of modern education in colonial India. How did it result in the birth of middle classes?
6. Examine the primary agencies responsible for the introduction of modern western education in colonial India.

#### **3.8.2 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Define modern western education.
2. Define middle classes.
3. Give two factors responsible for the emergence of the middle classes.
4. What was the Guarantee system in Railways?
5. Define commercialization of agriculture.
6. What are plantations?
7. What were the drawbacks of construction of canals?
8. What was the role of middle classes in setting up socio-religious movements among different communities of India?
9. What was the importance of the Wood's Dispatch of 1854?
10. What role did the Christian missionaries play in spreading modern education in India?
11. What was the role of socio-religious reform movements in spreading modern western education in India?

## SEMESTER III

### HISTORY OF INDIA: c.1750-1947

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#### UNIT4: SOCIO RELIGIOUS REFORM: AGENDA OF REFORMERS, ACTIVITY, NATURE OF REFORM

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#### **STRUCTURE**

#### **4.0 Learning Objectives**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

#### **4.2 Emergence of movements in different regions**

#### **4.3 Agenda**

##### **4.3.1 Check Your Progress I**

#### **4.4 Activity**

#### **4.5 Nature**

##### **4.5.1 Check Your Progress II**

#### **4.6 Summary**

#### **4.7 Suggested Readings**

#### **4.8 Questions for Practice**

##### **4.8.1 Long Answer Questions**

##### **4.8.2 Short Answer Questions**

#### **4.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students after reading this unit you will be able to:

- To know about Socio religious reform activity in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries
- To understand how change was coming about in Indian society.
- To learn about the ideas, activities and methods of working of the movements.
- Analyze the nature of these movements as agents of change.

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The theme of socio religious reform in 19<sup>th</sup> century India has been a recurrent one in the study of modern Indian history and has often been used to explain social change in Indian society and the nature of modernity in India. In fact, most early scholars were of the view that the changes in

Indian society were a direct consequence of the efforts of the reformers and an impact of their activities. Recent historical work however, offers a wider and more complex perspective on the nature of reform in colonial times.

J. N. Farquhar's work on *Modern Religious Movements in India* talks of the 'awakening' of Indian people with the new colonial environment. He identifies three 'forces' responsible for this 'awakening' – the British, the missionaries and the Orientalists. The administrative change with colonial rule, the introduction of western education and the colonial concern with the social 'evils' at that time are seen as the factors bringing about social reform. Farquhar believes there were four phases of 'awakening'. The first from 1800-1828 marking the work and ideas of the Orientalist; the second from 1828-1870 in which the colonial authorities, brought reforms against 'cruel practices'; a third phase from 1870 – 1895 which was characterized by 'counter – reformation', i.e. social reform advocated by the Indian social leaders and a final phase from 1895 – 1913 which created a new 'national spirit' due to the earlier phases. Thus, in a sense, the process of reform was completed in these four phases.

A more recent work on *Social Reform Movements in British India* by Kenneth Jones overviews the broad sweep of reforms that took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He highlights that each region and every religious community responded to the new environment in a different way. In fact, there were various efforts at social reform in different regions. Jones talks of two kinds of social reform movements – transitional and acculturative. By transitional, he means those movements that sought to restore their religion to its earlier, 'pure' form and shed any 'outside' customs and practices. These movements looked to the past for inspiration. Acculturative movements attempted to adjust to the new colonial situation, suggested modifications in socio religious way of life and organized themselves on western lines. All these movements were responses to the new colonial milieu and ushered in several changes in the country both in contributing new ideas and in their activity in various spheres.

#### **4.2 EMERGENCE OF MOVEMENTS IN DIFFERENT REGIONS**

Every region had its own unique response to colonial rule giving rise to many socio religious reform movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Bengal, among the Muslims were– the Fararizis, Tariqa –i Muhamadiya and Ta'ayuni movements. They were led by the theologians (*ulema*) and influenced the cultivating groups through their use of the local language. They were searching for 'pure' religion and in the process mobilized and Islamized Bengali Muslims, strengthening their communal identity. Among the Bengali Hindus emerged acculturative movement – the Brahma Samaj, Vaishnavite revival of Bijoy Krishna and the Ramakrishna Mission. These movements took concepts and symbols from their own religious heritage as well as from western ideals. Led by the educated elite and middle classes they structured themselves on western lines and focused on social service. They created new forms of Hindu belief and practice.

In the Gangetic plains of Uttar Pardesh and Bihar arose transitional movements among the Muslims–Tariqa-i-Muhamadiya and Dar-ul-Ulum Deoband as well as acculturative movements like the Aligarh experiment of Sayyid Ahmed Khan and the Barelwis. Among the

Hindus were movements like Radhasaami Satsang and Bharat Dharm Mahamandal. In this region the dominant religious elites – Brahmans and Ulemas – restricted direct challenges to established customs. In a sense, they were defensive and orthodox in their outlook and wanted to restore their ‘rightful position in society’. They turned to their own traditions of thought and action to bring about reform

A greater response to colonial rule emerged in Punjab and the North West with three major communities – Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. Among the transitional movements of the Sikhs were Nirankari and Namdhari movements. Hindu tradition was defended by the Sanatanists and Pandit Shraddha Ram Phillauri, while the Arya Samaj and Dev Samaj emerged as acculturative movements. Acculturative movements among Sikhs were the Singh Sabha, among Muslims, Ahmediya and Anjumans. Each movement saw its own ideas as the ‘truth’ and took an aggressive stance to propagate their views. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century religious identity was being expressed in language, script and religion.

Transitional movements among the Hindus in the central regions of the subcontinent, Gujrat and Maharashtra included the Swami Narayan Sampradaya (Gujrat), Satnamis (Chhatisgarh), and Satya Mahima Dharma (Orissa). These movements opposed contemporary Hinduism and established new sacred spaces and rituals which gave them a new separate identity on the periphery of Hinduism. Among acculturative movements were the Manav Dharm Sabha, Paramhansa Mandali, Prarthana Samaj and Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha of the Parsis. In Maharashtra, the Brahmans dominated the reform movements among Hindus and supported orthodox ideals. The Parsis became divided over the reforms suggested by the Rahnumai Sabha.

The southern part of the country saw reform movements among the untouchables. The Nadars, Swami Narayan Guru (Izhavas) and the Sadu Veda Siddanta Sabha criticized Hinduism, rejected it and sought alternatives to escape socio religious restrictions. The colonial milieu gave rise to acculturative movements – Brahma Samaj Veda Samaj, Prarthana Samaj and Theosophist. This region was dominated by Hinduism and had a long Christian presence which had impact on the reform movements too.

### **4.3 AGENDA**

The agenda of the socio religious reform movements was focused on four broad areas – religious reform, modification in ritual and ceremony, social welfare and political concerns. The different movements took up one or all of these concerns as they responded in varied ways. These four aims were the core of the social reform efforts.

The most significant concern was with religious reform. Most of the movements spoke of ‘inner decay’ in the religion, deterioration or even change and wanted to review the basic ideas of their religion, to re-look at their beliefs. They clarified the basic elements, identified errors that had crept in, revised religious belief and gave new interpretation to the then contemporary ideas. In doing so, they introduced reform, demarcated their beliefs from that of others and reiterated basic ideas. The Brahma Samaj for example, focused on Vedas, Vedanta and Upanishads and rejected idol worship, caste and the role of the Brahman. The Arya Samaj was concerned with

Vedic religion and did not subscribe to the existing rituals, idol worship or the importance of a priest. The Faraizis underlined the basic duties of a Muslim (*faraiz*) – the five daily prayers, *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) *roza* (fasting in the month of Ramzan) and *zakat* or giving a portion of earnings for the betterment of fellow Muslims. Other than these, they did not accept any other religious belief. They all re-defined the basic beliefs of their religions, removing what they saw as errors. The movement at Aligarh under Sir Syed Ahmad also introduced modification in religious thought and even gave new interpretations of the ideas in the *Quran*. Similarly, the Ahmediyas at Qadian and the Parsees in Mumbai attempted to reform religious belief in their own groups.

The social reformers were concerned with rituals and ceremony as well. They stood against elaborate rituals and suggested modifications, even alternative rituals. The Brahmo introduced new rituals for marriage; the Aryas a new simple *havan* ceremony without the Brahman priest; the Satya Mahima movement and Ta'aisyuni movement introduced new prayers in place of the existing ones. Many spoke of inter-dining, inter-caste marriage, even remarriage of widows. In this way they changed the manner in which rituals and ceremonies were held. The Ramakrishna Mission spoke against superstitious rituals to strengthen religious consciousness. Sir Syed Ahmed tried to modify custom in the sacred space and believed that shoes/foot were should be allowed in it. He also supported western customs related to dining. The Namdharis and Radhasoami Satsang introduced the ideas of worship of a 'living guru'. The Bharat Dharm Mahamandal paid attention to worship of the Ganga, Cows and initiated the ritual of public recitation of *gayatri mantra* and procession of the sacred scriptures. The also opposed the governments intervention in Hindu customs. The Satya Mahima Dharm introduced new rituals – *saranam* in the morning, which consisted of praying seven times while facing east and *darshanan* in the evening while facing the west.

Social welfare was another of the aims of the socio religious reform movements. They took up the cause of education in a big way, provided famine relief, set up orphanages, widow homes and training centers to help people in distress and difficulty. Education was a major plank of the Arya Samaj, Aligarh Movement, Deoband movement while several other like the Brahmo Samaj, Ved Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, set up schools and libraries for the public. Famine relief and orphan homes were set up by the Aryas, Aligarh movement, Ramakrishna Mission, among others. The Arya Samaj established widow homes and vocational training centers. The Bharat Dharm Mahamandal repaired temples and maintained the sacred spaces. The social reform movements encouraged people to volunteer for social service and help fellow beings in times of distress and as a regular part of everyday life.

Some of the social reform movements had a political programme as well and became involved with protest and agitation against the colonial rulers and at times the zamindars or landed group. The Faraizis for instance, took up the economic issues faced by the tenants in the 1830's and provided support and solidarity with them against the landlords. They even set up a parallel government with the help of volunteers and courted arrest. This was however, a short lived programme. The Theosophists too, were concerned with political issues. The Namdharis also stood against the British and in fact, wanted to restore Sikh rule in the Punjab. On the other hand, the

Aligarh movement cooperated with the British to prove their loyalty and maintained an anti-Congress stance. They formed a new political party too. The social reform movement thus, took up political concerns in varying degrees which was largely in response to government policy and the attempt to make themselves relevant and visible. The political element remained a minor goal of social reform.

#### **4.3.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I**

1. What are transitional movements?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is meant by acculturative movements?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What were the aims of the social reform movements?  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **4.4 ACTIVITIES**

The activities of the social reform movements were linked to these goals. They had some common activities to meet their professed aims and used similar tactics and strategies. They propagated their beliefs through public meetings, debates with other groups, criticism of other religions and used the press to disseminate their ideas among the people. The reformers published newspapers, journals, tracts, pamphlets and books to reach out to a wider audience. Among the publications were: Ram Mohan Roy's 'A Gift to Deists (1804), the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, *Sulabh Samachar*, *Nava Samhita*, *Arya Patrika*, *Panchal Pandita* and *Koh-i-Noor*, *Hariyana* and *Mathura Akbar* of the Bharat Dharm Mahamandal, Syed Ahmed Khan's, *Loyal Muhammadans of India*, and many others. The spoke to the people in the regional languages to have a closer connect with them. The social reform movements also supported the regional languages and translated scriptures to reach out to the people. The Aryas and Singh Sabhas among others recruited people to mingle with the public and spread their ideas through *upadeshaks* and *pracharaks*. Open debates in the bazaar were held by the Aryas, Ahmediyas with the Christian missionaries and others. This led to controversy and competition, and even conflict among the different movements, as was seen in the case of the Aryas and Ahmediyas, and the Aryas and Singh Sabha.

Conversion was another contentious activity. The Aryas evolved the programme of *Shuddhi* a ritual to convert people into the Arya fold. This added to competition among the movements who were all keen to increase their numbers and even to conflict, as in the case of the Rahtias claimed by both the Aryas and Singh Sabhas. The social reform movements attempted to provide a new identity to their followers and in doing so clearly demarcated their boundaries and highlighted their differences from each other. They gave a new dress, and symbols to identify with the movement. For example, the woolen rosary of the Namdharis, the fez and Turkish coat by the Aligarh movement, the red tilak on the forehead and *tulsi* beads of the Sanatanists, the rope

of the Kumbhi tree bark by the Satya Mahima Dharm and the white dress of the Namdharis. The distinctive dress underlined their separate identities and their differences.

The social and religious reform movements set up new sacred spaces to function as centres of their activities and pilgrimage centers. The Radhasoami Satsang established new centers at Agra, and later Beas; the Nirankaris at the Dayalbagh; and later Bhaini; the Ahmediyas at Qadian near Batala; among others. They also framed rules of conduct for the followers as did the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal in an attempt to standardize Hindu belief and practice, the Rahit namas endorsed by the Singh Sabhas, the Aryas promotion of vegetarianism and the ban on alcohol or tobacco by several movements.

The establishment of educational institutions was a significant activity of the reform movements. Most outstanding was the DAV institutions of the Arya Samaj; which catered to primary, secondary and higher education. The Singh Sabhas set up the Khalsa Schools, the Brahmo Samaj, Aligarh Movement, Deobandis, Barelwis all supported educational centers. The Prarthana Samaj established study centers and libraries for young children and adults. The concept of education however varied. For example, the Ta'ayuni movement favoured a religious education in

the *pir-muridi* tradition; the Barelwis established a *madrasa* to prepare young men for understanding their traditional religion on Islamic law. On the other hand, the Aligarh movement wanted to initiate a new western education at par with the government institutions and adopted western style of functioning as well. They supported public speaking, debate, and invited the bright minds from Cambridge and Oxford to join the Mohammadan Anglo Oriental College, later Aligarh University. The Deobandis also introduced a new organized syllabus with regular examinations and course of study to prepare young men to become the *ulema*. The Aryas formed the Dayanand Anglo Vedic Trust and Management Society in 1886 and established institutions with the western government syllabi as well as religious study in a 'safe' Hindu environment, a happy compromise.

To serve society, the reform movements initiated the setting up of orphanages, widow homes, vocational centers, as by the Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha, Aligarh Movement and even individuals like Pandita Ramabai. They also worked to provide famine relief and spread anti caste, anti-dowry, anti-child marriage and anti-Sati ideas. They asked people to lead a morally upright life, help others and work for social upliftment – as seen in the Radhasowmi Satsang, Sanatam Dharma movement, Ramakrishna Mission, and others. The Namdharis introduced a new baptism, the Singh Sabhas supported voluntary service of society. To put forth their views to the colonial authorities the social reform movements sent delegations, signed petitions organized conferences and held public meetings and gatherings. This served as a part of their strategy to be seen and heard. In the effort to organize their activities the social reform movements re-structured themselves on western lines and set up more democratic ideals, with committees and elected members to supervise work. The Singh Sabha is an example of such new organization.

A significant element of the socio religious reform movements was their concern and action with regard to equality and casteism. Many of the movements were anti-caste and spoke of parity for all, permitting people from diverse social backgrounds all to join to fold. They established schools for the lower castes, and attempted to uplift the depressed groups in away.

For instance, the Brahmo Samaj was anti caste, rejected the Brahman and claimed that all persons could read sacred texts. They supported and propagated inter caste dining and inter-caste marriage too, and even refused to wear the sacred thread. The Sangat Sabha, Dev Samaj, Ved Samaj also had similar ideas. The Dev Samaj even established a Depressed Class School Fund. The Aryas programme of Shuddhi gave entry to untouchable groups like Ode, Megh and Rahtia. Other movements the Paramhansa Mandali pledged to abandon caste and even accepted food from lower castes; the Prarthana Samaj called for abandoning all caste restriction and spoke of education for all. The Swami Narayan Guru fought against caste disabilities and constructed their own temples. Some movements opened their doors to all caste but took no other concrete steps to act on ensuring equality – as in the Swami Narayan Samprada, Satya Mahima Dharm, Radhasawmis and Nirankaris. Yet other movements of lower castes took matters in their own hands to bring about change.

The Nadars turned to Christianity while the Satnamis started to follow upper caste norms to change their status. On the whole, the movement largely rejected caste, in varying degrees, talked of equality, and claimed their doors were open for all. In practice, however, the Brahmos supported giving up the sacred thread, inter-dining and inter caste marriage. The Dev Samaj too spoke up for inter-caste dining. Several movements supported conversion or re-conversion as well as education for upliftment of depressed groups with minor impact. It was mainly, the lower classes and untouchables themselves who acted to improve their social situation. The social reform movement thus, advocated varying degrees of change and employed different methods to put this into practice. The overall effect was however, rather negligible. This was not of any major concern to the reformers, but remained at the periphery of their activity.

#### **4.5 NATURE**

If we turn to the nature of socio-religious reform it is clear that the concerns of the reform movement were rather limited. They related more to the issues facing the upper classes and upper castes who were the new collaborators of the colonial rulers and wished to unproved their own image in the face of European criticism of society. The middle classes that had emerged at this time are seen as the ‘harbingers of social and economic progress’. This group however, varied from region to region and remained concerned about some specific ‘social evils’ only. In fact, even in their concern for the ‘women’s question’ they relied more on re-interpretation of sacred texts rather than rational and logical arguments. It is generally overlooked that the reform in the context of the ‘women’s question’ – sati, child marriage female infanticide and remarriage of widows – was passed by the state legislation and was opposed by the Hindu orthodoxy. Hardly any conviction was seen in the transgression of these new ‘social’ laws. Public opinion was mostly opposed to the government decisions where the legislation was concerned.

The social reform movements as a whole focused largely on reform for Hindus, while only a marginal concern is seen for other communities. Hindu revivalism is more visible on the nineteenth century along with a more militant nationalism. The social movements thus, created new tension in society and added to the conflict and competition that was becoming evident in the

different communities at this time. This conflict was at two levels – within the community and with outside groups. This conflict was mainly due to difference of opinion, re-interpretation of beliefs, degree of change or cultural adjustment, path of education and attitude to practices and language. In the movements linked to Hinduism, dissent was seen in the Brahmo Samaj eventually leading to a split. The orthodox Hindu Dharm Sabha opposed the Brahmos and got into a religious debate with them. Within the Brahmo Samaj internal dissensions took place over the wearing of the sacred thread, inter-caste marriage. Keshab Chandra Sen was more radical in his outlook and sought a higher degree of change, so he started another group, the Nava Vidhan. The Arya Samaj had differences over their educational programme, later separated into two groups-the college party or moderate group and the Gurukul party or militant group. They also got into debates with the Dev Samaj, Sikhs and Christian missionaries. The Sanatanists opposed the Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj and Dev Samaj over traditional beliefs. The Radhasoami Satsang had dispute over succession, the Bharat Dharm Mahamandal over organization and administration and the Satnamis over the use of tobacco. Conflict took place in the Nirankaries and Singh Sabha as well. Among the movements related to Islam there was opposition from orthodox groups to the ideas and activities of the Faraizis, Tariqa-i-Muhamadiya and Ta'aiyuni movement. Deoband was marred by controversy over functioning and the new institution with fellow Muslims and also by debate with Hindus and missionaries – like Swami Dayanand and Reverend Tara Chand. The Aligarh movement faced internal clash over ideas with opposition of orthodox groups – who even labeled Syed Ahmad Khan *nechari*, a term of disgust. There was a prolonged debate with Hindu groups over the use of language – Hindi or Urdu. The Barelwis, and Ahmediyas clashed within their groups and with 'others'. Barelwis debated with Deobandis and called them '*kafir*', even issued *fatwas* against them. They also attacked Shias. The Ahmediyas were condemned by the *ulema* as Ghulam Ahmad, the founder claimed he was a *mujaddid*, renewer of the faith, *mahdi* or messiah. The Ahmediyas also got into conflict with Pandit Lekh Ram (Arya Samajist) and the missionaries as he claimed he was their messiah as well. The social reformers on the whole, faced a lot of criticism from their own fellow reformers often leading to a split in the movement. As seen in the case of the Brahmo Samaj; the Deobandis and Aligarh movements also had to face severe criticism from the orthodoxy. Reform activity thus, led to heightened tensions within the group. The criticism of other religions in an attempt to highlight one's own also added to this growing conflict and divided society on communal lines. The leaders of these varied movements came from several diverse backgrounds and appealed to a specific group of people. There was no single dominant group, or pan-Indian movement but a variety of different attempts to bring about some change. They did collectively oppose the missionaries though. The degree of change they advocated also varied considerably with some focusing more on religion and others on the social sphere. They were all concerned with numbers and competed for followers. In their demarcation of their own group, re-definition of their own ideals they created new identities within each religious community.

The social reform movements made effective use of the press and brought out several newspapers and journals, as well as books. This propagation of their ideas through literary effort

led to a continued debate over religious belief and practice, a polemical one, in fact. They used the printed word to further their ideas and programmes and critique that of others.

#### **4.5.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II**

1. Which activities were initiated for social service?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How did the socio religious reform movements use the press?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why the Socio Religious Movements are called ‘agents of change’?  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **4.6 SUMMARY**

Students, the socio religious reform movements are seen as agents of change in the colonial period. They were collectively responsible for re-defining religion, clarifying custom, introducing new customs and rituals, taking up social issues and at times even took some interest in the politics of the time. They are thus, an instrument of change in society, bringing about a new consciousness and awareness about religions, custom, social practices and identities. Many of their programmes, especially educational institutions function even today. After the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century their impact seems to have weakened as the country got involved in the freedom struggle and the political domain. The social reform movements with their narrow agenda, and concerns largely with the middle and upper classes, no longer remained relevant to all categories of people. The modifications and adjustments they put forth reflect the new ways of thinking and expression in the colonial time. The contribution of the social reform movements is not merely in the form of individuals with a new vision who took up the fight against social ‘evils’, but as creators of a force to usher in change. In fact, the Arya Samaj, Radhasoami Satsang, Ahmediyas and Ramakrishna Mission extended to south East Asia and even the rest of the world taking the religion to a global level. The dimension of social service propagated by them was a new element in society. Today, the socio religious reform movements do not openly identify with nationalism but maintain them one religious organizations. Such movements continue to emerge and demand new forms of social behavior, custom and belief.

#### **4.7 SUGGESTED READING**

Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio Religious Reform Movements in British India*, India: Cambridge University Press, First published 1989, reprint 2003.

#### **4.8 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

##### **4.8.1 LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss the agenda of the socio religious reform movements.

2. Describe the various activities of the social reform movements to meet their goals.
3. What was the attitude of the social reform movements towards the depressed classes?
4. Comment on the nature of the social reform movements.
5. Elaborate on the socio religious reform movements as 'agents of change'.

#### **4.8.2 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Which movements emerged in Bengal and the north-east?
2. Identify the social reform movements in the Gangetic plains.
3. Name the socio religious reform movement that arose in the Punjab and North West.
4. What kind of political concerns did the social reform movements have?
5. List some of the publications of the social reform movements.
6. What was *shuddhi*?

## SEMESTER III

### HISTORY OF INDIA: c.1750-1947

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#### Unit 5: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS 1885-1919

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#### **STRUCTURE**

#### **5.0. Learning Objectives**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

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

#### **5.3 The Swadeshi Movement**

##### **5.3.1 Check Your Progress I**

#### **5.4 The Home-Rule Movement**

#### **5.5 The Rowlatt Act Satyagraha**

#### **5.6 The Khilafat Issue**

##### **5.6.1 Check Your Progress II**

#### **5.7 Summary**

#### **5.8 Suggested Readings**

#### **5.9 Questions for Practice**

##### **5.9.1 Long Answer Questions**

##### **5.9.2 Short Answer Questions**

#### **5.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students, after reading this unit you will be able to:

- Examine critically the foundation of the Indian National Congress.
- Trace the Swadeshi movement as a response to the partition of Bengal
- Analyze the emerging differences between the Moderates and the Extremists.
- Learn about the Home Rule movement
- Examine the response of the nationalist to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

## **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

Students, this unit will deal with the foundation and early activities of the Indian National Congress as first political organization of India. The response of the Moderates as well as the Extremists to the Swadeshi movement on the Partition of Bengal reflected the growing divide within the Congress. The role played by both Tilak and Annie Besant in the Home Rule Movement as well as in the Lucknow Pact of 1916 will be underscored in this module for a better understanding of the National movement. The tragedy of the Jallianwala Bagh of 1919 and its impact on the national movement will also be taken up in detail. Simmering discontent among the Indians due to the Punjab Wrongs, inadequate reforms of 1919 and the Khilafat issue will be underscored in the present module.

## **5.2 FORMATION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

As predecessors to the Indian National Congress, a few associations were formed for venting grievances of propertied and middle classes, and placing them before the British government. In 1851, the British India Association was formed at Calcutta; in 1852, the Bombay Association at Bombay; and later, the Madras Native Association at Madras. The East India Association was established in London in 1866, with Dadabhai Naoroji as its most prominent figure. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, that Indians felt that they should unite and organize themselves politically, so that their requests may be heard.

Ferozeshah Mehta (1845-1915), Badruddin Tyabji (1844-1906) and others formed the Bombay Presidency Association in January 1885, and Surendranath Benerjee and his group planned an Indian National Conference at Calcutta to be held in December, 1885. Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912) a British government servant, retiring from the civil service in 1882, decided to bring prominent Indians together in a national body to air their political grievances. He added that this would also suit the British since an Indian body of this kind could serve as a ‘safety valve’ to avoid a violent outbreak. W.C. Bonnerjee (1844-1906), a distinguished Calcutta lawyer was elected as President of the first session of the Organization. He was supported by groups from Calcutta and Madras. The first session of the Indian National Congress was held on 28 December 1885 at Bombay.

Initially, the Indian National Congress stance was loyalist and moderate. This can be gauged by the demands: an expansion of Legislative Councils so as to include a number of ‘elected’ Indian representatives; Civil Service examinations to be held in India as well as in England, with a raising of the age limit for candidates; and reduction of the tax burden through cuts in civil and military expenditure. Surendranath Banerjee's National Conference had merged with the Indian National Congress in the next session at Calcutta and as many as 434 delegates from different parts of India were present at the session—over six times the number at Bombay. This session was presided over by Dadabhai Naoroji.

The British were now disturbed with the success of the Congress and they encouraged Syed Ahmad Khan to oppose the Congress. On 28 December 1887, Syed Ahmad delivered a speech against the Congress at Lucknow. The Viceroy Lord Dufferin too in a speech in November 1888, denounced the Congress as representative of only a minority referring to its middle-class base.

A.O. Hume tried hard to expand the popular base of the Congress by organizing a propaganda campaign. Many public meetings were held and pamphlets in local languages were published and distributed. Muslims were reassured by a decision put before the Congress's Allahabad session (where it was approved) that no resolution would be passed by the Congress, without the approval of both Hindu and Muslim delegates. As a result, in spite of government hostility, 1,248 delegates attended its Allahabad Session in December 1888; and of these, as many as 222 delegates were Muslims. By now the Congress had established its position as the major political organization of the country. The British could not ignore the Congress and therefore took steps for constitutional progress of India. The Viceroy's Council, and the Governors and Lieutenant Governors Legislative Councils, were expanded by including a number of nominated Indian members. The Congress was recognized as a major opponent of the British government in India.

### **5.3 THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT**

On becoming the Viceroy, Lord Curzon (1899—1905), initiated a number of acts detrimental to the interests of Indians. He had changes made in the Calcutta Corporation Act, which reduced the public representation in the Corporation by half and made the European community in the city stronger. Next, he introduced the Indian Universities Act, in 1904 according to which all decisions on crucial matters such as affiliation and disaffiliation of colleges were now in the hands of government officials. There was an open protest in the colleges, primarily of Bengal.

Next, Curzon carried out the Partition of Bengal. The existing province of Bengal was divided and a full-fledged province of Eastern Bengal and Assam was created, with Dacca as its capital. It was suggested that this division would better serve the interests of Muslims who formed a majority of the population in Eastern Bengal. This was done to drive a wedge between Hindus and Muslims. At the same time, it would also weaken the influence of nationalist in Calcutta. Curzon himself left India for Britain in 1904, but the Partition of Bengal was announced on 19 July 1905, before his term of Viceroyalty ended.

The announcement resulted in the first real large-scale agitation launched by the nationalist. Protest meetings were held, with students in the lead. Moderate and Extremist leaders of the Indian National Congress like Surendranath Banerjee and Bepin Chandra Pal came together. 'Boycott' of British goods, cotton cloth and woollens, Britain's main items of export to India, was adopted as a weapon of protest. This would hurt Britain as well as promote Swadeshi or Indian home industry. On 7 August 1905, the Boycott resolution was passed at a meeting in the Town Hall of Calcutta. Fasting was organized throughout Bengal, a *hartal* (market closure) was also

observed in Calcutta. Many large meetings were organized, addressed by nationalist leaders, and Bankim Chandra's *Bande Mantaram* became overnight the national song of Bengal. Rabindranath Tagore composed his *Amar Sonar Bangla* (now the national anthem of Bangladesh), that inspired protest wherever Bengali was spoken or understood. For the first time Indian nationalism had become a 'mass movement'.

Understandably, the pace of the Swadeshi movement slowed down by 1906. A long term programme of mass awakening continued through national education and cultural upliftment. Rabindranath Tagore, promoted the principle of *Atmashakti* or 'self-power', and promoted a scheme of rural awakening and education. Others sought to promote industry by providing technical education. The Technical College at Jadavpur in Calcutta was established in 1907 and was maintained through private donations. Another feature of the movement in Bengal was the birth of Samitis or societies with their 'volunteers' for various causes, connected with the anti-Partition struggle.

Politically, in 1906 the Moderates and the Extremists kept together, in spite of differences. The Extremists used Hindu religion as a mobilizing force. For example, the Shivaji Utsav which the Extremists organized involved the worship of goddess Bhavani. They seemed to show little concern for the sentiments of Muslims that constituted a majority of the Bengali-speaking population. The differences between the Moderates and the Extremists were, temporarily put aside at the Congress session in Calcutta in December 1906. Tilak's Extremist group was present in full strength, and resolutions were passed with the approval of both groups. The Partition of Bengal was denounced and it was demanded that the British government 'reverse or modify the Partition in such a manner as to keep the entire Bengali-speaking community under one undivided administration'. The resolution on 'Self-Government' set for India the goal of dominion status (similar to 'self-governing British colonies'). In accordance with the decisions taken by the Congress, Provincial committees were formed and district conferences were held. In Bengal, Surendranath Banerjee organized a series of district conferences in 1907. The Extremists were mostly left out of these activities.

Differences between the Moderate and Extremist leaders again came out in the open. Bepin Chandra Pal, the Extremist leader of Bengal, started a daily, *Bande Mataram*. They began to raise the movement's level of militancy by extending boycott of foreign cloth to boycott of all activities of the government. The radical weekly *Yugantar* (or Jugantar), regarded even passive resistance insufficient and called for violent revolution. The Moderates objected to this escalation of protests by the Extremists.

The Extremists attended the Congress session at Surat in 1907 in large numbers, headed by Tilak. There was no compromise between the Moderates and Extremists. The Moderates occupied the platform whereas the Extremists were in majority among the delegates. Ultimately, the Extremists moved to another venue, and the split in the Congress was complete. Repression was let loose on the Extremists and in June 1908 Tilak was arrested and charged with disloyalty and enmity towards the British Crown, and he was deported for six years. This resulted in a general *hartal* in Bombay for a week. The army was called and about 200 men were killed in police and

army firing. Similar incidents took place in the Madras Presidency. The police arrested Aurobindo Ghose with thirty-eight others accused of conspiracy and armed actions. Aurobindo Ghose was acquitted in May 1909. Bipin Chandra Pal too was arrested for eight months after which he left India in 1908 for three-year stay in England. In Punjab, Lala Lajpat Rai had been deported to Burma in 1907 for participating in a peasant protest. The well-known nationalist poet of Tamil, Subramania Bharati (1882-1921) was also exiled. Other means were also used by the British government to suppress the Extremists. In 1908, many printing presses were seized and shut down. This was aided by passage of the Vernacular Press Act of 1910. Expectedly, the *Yugantar* was among the first to be closed down by the Police in 1908. Other nationalist papers met the same fate. Interestingly, towards the end of 1911 in order to rebuff the budding nationalist Muslim politicians, the British declared the annulment of the partition of Bengal. This was done inspite of repeated declarations by the British in the past that the partition of Bengal was 'irreversible'. The provincial boundaries of Bengal were redrawn.

### **5.3.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I**

1. Name two founders of the Indian National Congress in 1885?

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2. What was the Calcutta Corporation Act?

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3. Name two Extremist leaders.

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### **5.4 THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT**

The Lucknow Pact of 1916 was an important development bringing the Extremists and Moderates together after 1908. This Pact also united the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League. But all points of disagreements did not end. For the Extremists led by Tilak, and Annie Besant and her followers, this was only a first step towards 'Home Rule'.

The term 'Home Rule' came from the vocabulary of Irish nationalists, who began using it from 1870 as representing a high degree of autonomy but not necessarily full independence. In 1912 an Irish Home Rule Bill was passed by the House of Commons, giving to a contingent Parliament in Ireland a high degree of autonomy, but still much less than what the white dominions, Canada, Australia and South Africa, possessed.

Annie Besant was an Englishwoman of Irish descent with some socialist ideas, and faith in theosophist movement. She came to India in 1893 and started promoting education at Benares, and from 1907, she was active from Adyar, Madras (the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in India). In 1913, at a public meeting in Madras she asserted that the British Parliament should set up a committee to recommend constitutional reforms for India. She started the weekly, *Commonweal* (January 1914), and a daily, *New India* (June 1914) — both from Madras. In December 1914, she attended the annual session of the Congress at Madras. She also acted as an intermediary in the negotiations between the Moderates and the Extremists.

Annie Besant in September 1915 decided to form a 'Home Rule League' to undertake constant political activity. As the Moderates did not support her, she set up the Home Rule League on her own. She had plans to establish branches in several major cities of India. Soon Tilak too had formed a Home Rule League in April 1916, at a conference in Belgaum where representatives mainly from Bombay and the Central Provinces had gathered. The aim of Tilak's League too was 'attain [ing] Home Rule or Self-Government within the British Empire by all constitutional means. Tilak wanted to merge the two organizations, but Besant preferred only cooperation between the two Leagues.

Both these organizations had mass membership, though restricted to the educated classes. At its peak Besant's League had some 27,000 members and Tilak's League some 30,000. They also made use of the printing press to express their views. Both Annie Besant and Tilak toured the country and their speeches drew large audiences. Their influence penetrated the villages. This was confirmed by the presence of a large number of peasant delegates at the Congress session in Delhi. In June 1917, Annie Besant and her two colleagues, G.S. Arundale and B.P. Wadia were arrested. In protest Moderates like Madan Mohan Malaviya, Surendranath Banerjee and M.A. Jinnah joined the Home Rule League, and Sir Subramania Aiyar renounced his knighthood. In July, the All-India Congress Committee even circulated a proposal by Tilak to begin passive resistance over her arrest as well as over the issue of Home Rule. Annie Besant was soon freed in September, and was unanimously elected to preside over the 1917 session of the Calcutta Congress.

The Lucknow Pact with its scheme of provincial autonomy and the growing fervour of the Home Rule movement could no longer be ignored by the British government. It was therefore felt that the time had arrived to give some concessions to keep the Moderates and Home Rulers quiet. On 20 July 1917, Edwin Montagu, was appointed the Secretary of State for India and he soon made the Montagu Declaration. This declaration unlike the Morley-Minto Reforms spoke of constitutional progress in India. However, Montagu's statement was full of reservations and double-speak. India would remain 'an integral part of the British Empire, apparently forever. Reforms would happen only in stages but Indians would have no role in it. Everything would be decided by the government in London. Indians would have to accept these reforms and show their cooperation.

The declaration did not cause any division among the Nationalists since under its terms the entire constitutional scheme approved by the Congress in 1916, could be adopted. But once

the report prepared by Montagu and Chelmsford was released no illusions were left. The proposed full self-government in municipalities and district boards, was not welcomed. It suggested that certain powers be transferred to the provinces, but instead of provincial autonomy, it promised only what came to be known as 'dyarchy' i.e. transfer of some departments (invariably of less importance) to elected representatives, with major portfolios to remain with the Governor. At the centre, all executive powers and legislative authority would remain with the Viceroy.

Both Tilak and Annie Besant were disappointed with the scheme. The Congress in August labelled the Montagu proposals as 'disappointing and unsatisfactory' and suggested changes. This position was confirmed at the annual session at Delhi in December 1918. The Muslim League session, also held at Delhi in December 1918, similarly rejected the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals. By this time, the bulk of the Moderates had left the Congress. Tilak's and Annie Besant's Home Rule Leagues could not cooperate with each other. Tilak left for England in September 1918, to pursue (unsuccessfully) a defamation suit against a Tory journalist, V. Chirol, author of *Indian* (1910), and to persuade English politicians to improve the proposals. But even in this effort differences prevailed. While Tilak was joined by a Congress delegation in England in May 1919, Besant brought a separate delegation of her own. Only limited success could be attained due to internal differences between the two groups.

## **5.5 THE ROWLATT ACT SATYAGRAHA**

After the First World War, the situation in India was not good. India was made to gift 150 crores to Britain. Prices of goods nearly doubled between 1914 and 1919, increasing poverty. Returning soldiers brought influenza that spread in India in 1918-19 and took away 6.6 per cent of the country's total population. The Montague Declaration of August 1917, when put into practice gave nothing to Indians and India. The political reality was very different in 1918 in India.

Once the war ended a 'Sedition committee' under a British Justice Rowlatt, was formed. This Report collected information on seditious activities which had previously taken place. It recommended the imposition of measures such as detention without trial by provincial governments and speedy trials by special courts without right of appeal against their judgments. Two bills embodying these provisions were pushed through the Imperial Legislative Council, though all the non-official Indian members voted against them. The Bill was called the 'Revolutionary and Anarchical Crimes Act', popularly known as the Rowlatt Act. It received the Viceroy's approval in March 1919 and become a law.

These bills provoked anger among the Indians in the country. It was thought that these were framed to humiliate Indians in order to pacify the Europeans in India. Other factors too led to mass unrest: high prices, post-war unemployment and looming threat of dismemberment of Turkey, the seat of the Caliphate (Khilafat), which aroused bitterness among Indian Muslims. Gandhiji launched a Satyagraha agitation on a national scale, against the Rowlatt Act.

At Ahmedabad on 24 February 1919, Satyagraha pledge was taken by Gandhi and his followers. They swore to disobey certain laws. Gandhiji toured India, visiting and delivering

speeches at Delhi, Allahabad, Bombay, Madras and various towns of South India. A call was given for a general strike and closure of shops (*hartal*) all over India, fixed for 6 April. Owing to some misunderstanding, Delhi observed the *hartal* on 30 March, where a crowd assembled at the Delhi railway station was fired upon by police and army, leading to at least ten deaths and serious injuries to many. The general *hartal* on 6 April successful. Among the large cities, the *hartal* was nearly complete in Bombay and Madras. Calcutta too observed the *hartal* with a large protest meeting. In United Provinces and Punjab, the *hartal* was almost observed in all the towns. The Ram Naumi processions on 9 April were a striking demonstration of Hindu-Muslim unity. Due to the all-India protest the British acted against Gandhi. His train was stopped just before it reached Delhi and he was taken back to Bombay. Two more Congress leaders of the Punjab, Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal were arrested from Amritsar. At Kasur, a town in Lahore district, there was a complete *hartal* on 12 April, and a crowd attacked the railway station and murdered two British soldiers. Indians were arrested by the police.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer was the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab. Amritsar was placed under the control of Brigadier General Dyer. He began arresting suspects and cut off electricity and water supply to punish people. He also banned any 'procession' and 'gathering'. A public meeting at Jallianwala Bagh was planned to be held on 13 April. A large number of people along with children came to attend the meeting. While the meeting was being addressed by speakers, General Dyer arrived with a force of Indian army soldiers. He immediately ordered his men to open fire without any warning. The firing continued even when the crowd tried to escape from the walled ground. The shooting did not stop until 1,650 rounds had been fired and the gunpowder exhausted. Dyer then left the ground with the soldiers. No medical aid of any kind was made available to the injured. He had been keen to produce a 'moral effect'. His only regret later was that ammunition ran out. The official count of less than 400 dead was incorrect, the actual number was about a thousand with the injured three times that number.

A reign of terror followed: Lieutenant Governor O'Dwyer placed Amritsar under martial law on 15 April. Persons of all classes were arrested, maltreated and kept in intolerable conditions. Any Indian who did not offer respectful salutation to a passing European could be seized. Lahore was placed under Colonel Johnson. Summary courts were set up, which allowed imprisonment, whipping and fines. Some three hundred students and professors of a college were made to walk three miles under the sun. Indians were made to crawl in a lane in Amritsar where a white woman had been insulted. At Gujranwala, there was firing on a protesting crowd on 14 April, as a result a church and some government buildings were destroyed by an angry mob. Military planes bombed some villages in Gujranwala district. As many as eighteen persons were hanged on mere suspicion during Punjab's martial law. In the Punjab under the martial law, 1200 persons got killed and 3,600 were wounded.

People of not only Punjab but all over India protested and opposed Gandhiji's arrest. In Bombay there was a two-day hartal. There were violent protests in Ahmedabad, where many government buildings were attacked and set on fire. Martial law was imposed and twenty-eight deaths took place as a result of military and police actions. After his release Gandhiji reached

Ahmedabad and condemned violence. Gandhiji on 18 April announced the 'temporary' suspension of 'civil disobedience' due to escalation of violent incidents in Gujarat. This 'temporary' suspension resulted in the end of Satyagraha.

On 8 June, the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Allahabad formed a sub-committee to enquire into the Punjab events. The British government appointed its own committee of enquiry under a British lawyer, Lord Hunter (14 October 1919), taking care to nominate four Europeans on it to give them a majority over its three loyalist Indian members. The AICC collected considerable evidence and issued a detailed report on the 'Punjab disorders' on 25 March 1920. Mainly drafted by Gandhiji, it was signed also by C.R. Das, the famous leader from Bengal, and by Abbas Tyabji and M.R. Jayakar. Action was demanded against the guilty officials, O'Dwyer, General Dyer, Colonel Johnson and others, and asked for the resignation of Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy. The Hunter Committee's report was published only on 28 May 1920. Its European members tried to whitewash most of the dark deeds, putting all the blame squarely on 'Mr. Gandhi's movement' for what had happened. But the tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh could not be overlooked. The British Parliament stood up for General Dyer. In England a Dyer Fund was established, to which Europeans in India also liberally contributed. The support given to General Dyer in the British Parliament and press angered Indians. There was a great deal of resentment among Indians as no British official was punished for what had happened in Punjab, while a large number of Indians in that province were put to death and subjected to all kinds of hardship and torture without any crime being proved against them. The Bengali intellectual, Rabindranath Tagore, gave up his knighthood (the title of 'Sir' conferred by the British government) in protest against British atrocity in Punjab.

## **5.6 THE KHILAFAT ISSUE**

The Government of India Act of 1919 was passed by British Parliament. This Act embodied the 'reforms' that had been proposed by the Montagu—Chelmsford Report. The Indians were not happy with the Act, as it did not fulfill their demands. Understandably in the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1919 at Amritsar, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and C.R. Das, asked for a total rejection of the Montagu—Chelmsford Reforms and that the struggle for a full-fledged Home Rule should continue. Gandhi, however, opposed the proposal and forced a compromise.

In 1918 after the end of the first world war, there was increasing fear among Muslims in India over Britain's intentions regarding Turkey and the Caliphate (Khilafat). Until 1914 the Ottoman Empire had controlled a large part of West Asia, including the territories of the present-day regions of Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq and Hejaz. These territories contained the holiest sites of Islam: Mecca, Medina, Najaf and Jerusalem; and the Turkish Sultan's authority over these sites made him the Khalifa (Caliph), literally 'successor of the Prophet', and so the protector of the Islamic community. For the Indian Muslims his position as Caliph was

significant as it would preserve the holy places and maintain the prestige of Islam as an international faith.



**Delegates to the 1919 Congress Session in Amritsar<sup>2</sup>**

When First World War broke out in 1914 between Britain, France and Czarist Russia (Allied powers) on one side, and Germany and Austria-Hungary on the other, Turkey joined the latter side. At the end of the war British troops occupied much of the Ottoman territory outside Turkey. Britain had already decided to dismember the Ottoman Empire. In 1920 the British occupied Constantinople (Istanbul), the capital of the Caliphate, thereby obtaining control over the 'person and court of the Caliph'. These events created alarm among Indian Muslims who felt that now not only Islam's holiest places, but also the Caliph himself, had fallen into Christian hands. On 20 March 1919, at a mass meeting at Bombay, a Khilafat Committee was formed whose request to meet the Viceroy was rejected. Mohammad Ali and his brother Shaukat Ali held radical views as they not only spoke in support of Turkey, but also against the Rowlatt Act. They were jailed again in June 1919 and thus attained great popularity. A Khilafat Day was observed on 17 October all over India; and an all-India Khilafat Conference was held at Delhi in late November in which both Gandhiji and Madan Mohan Malaviya participated. Muslim theologians were introduced into the movement by the establishment of the Jamiat al-Ulama-i Hind (Association of Indian Religious Scholars) at Delhi immediately after the Khilafat Conference, under the leadership of a Muslim priest, Abdul Bari. The Jamiat al-Ulama joined the Congress, the Muslim League and the Khilafat Committee. Meetings were held at Amritsar when all these organizations passed resolutions in support of Khilafat and the freedom of Turkey. In November 1919 Gandhiji was elected President of the Khilafat Conference. Muslims were asked not to join public celebrations of the Allied victory and threatened boycott and non-cooperation. Muslim leaders like Azad, Akram Khan and

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<sup>2</sup> Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.186.

Fazlul Haq toured Bengal supporting Khilafat as well as Hindu-Muslim unity. The Maulanas of Deoband schools and the Ulemas of Lucknow followed the same programme in north India.

In early 1920, a Khilafat delegation was sent from India to England but they were not heard. Britain and France published the terms of the Treaty of Sevres, which was signed by the Ottoman government at Constantinople on 10 August 1920. By this treaty the Ottoman territories in West Asia were mainly divided between Britain and France. Britain occupied Iraq, Transjordan (now Jordan) and Palestine, while Hejaz (the area of Mecca and Madina) was given to the Sharif of Mecca, a British puppet. France acquired Syria and Lebanon.

Greece was given eastern Thrace and a large area around Izmir; Armenia received much of northeastern Turkey; while the French occupied Cilicia, a large region in southern Turkey. Turkey also lost all control over the Dardanelles, the narrow sea passage between Istanbul and Asian Turkey. The rump left to Turkey, nominally under the Caliph seated at Constantinople, was now to be controlled by Britain.

These events increased the anger of Muslim Indians against British actions against Turkey. Abul Kalam Azad spoke in support of both the defence of the Caliphate and Hindu—Muslim unity. Gandhiji in a Khilafat Conference at Meerut proposed a four-stage plan of non-cooperation: renunciation of titles, abandonment of government service (civil), resignation from army and police, and, refusal to pay taxes. At the Khilafat Conference in Allahabad in June 1920 it was decided that non-cooperation over the issue of Khilafat should begin on 1 August. A section of Muslims from Sindh and North West Frontier organized a Hijrat movement. As a protest against the Treaty of Sevres, they decided to leave India and migrate to Afghanistan, but the Afghan government refused them admission.

### **5.6.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II**

1. What is the importance of the Surat session (1907) of the Congress?

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2. Name two newspapers started by Annie Besant.

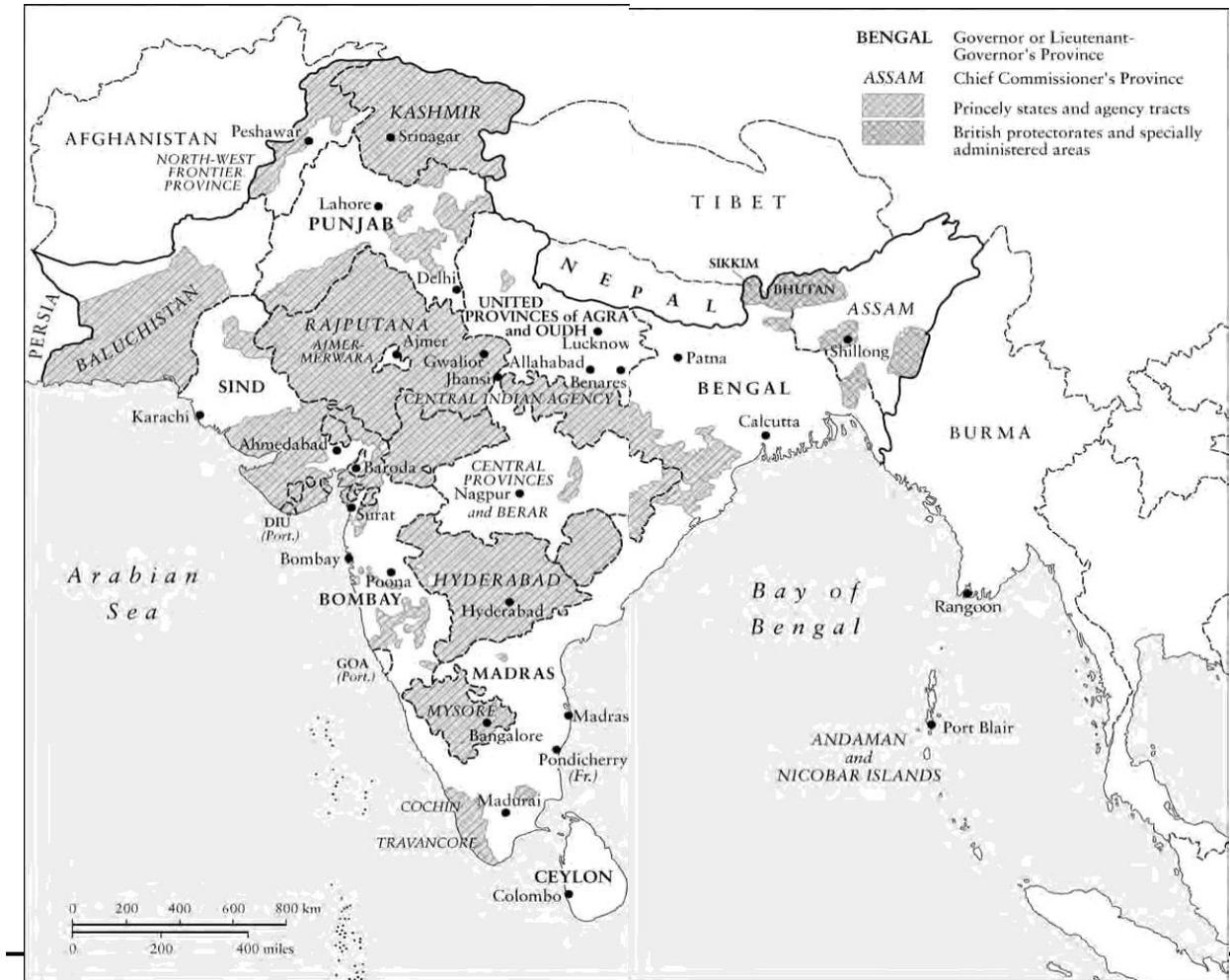
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3. Who was General Dyer?

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4. Name two Muslim leaders of the Khilafat movement.

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The British Indian Empire, c.1900<sup>3</sup>

## 5.7 SUMMARY

Students, this unit has traced the foundation of the Indian National Congress and has also taken note of the growing schism between the Moderates and the Extremists. The scope, extent and the significance of the Swadeshi movement has also formed part of this module. The struggle for a full-fledged Home Rule by Annie Besant and Tilak bore little fruit. The irate response of the Indians to the much-awaited Government of India Act of 1919 passed by British Parliament has been dealt with. Increasing alarm among Muslims in India over Britain's intentions regarding Turkey and the Caliphate (Khilafat) after the First World War has also been examined. The Khilafat issue provided Gandhiji with a platform to unite the Hindus and Muslims. Significant political developments from 1885 to 1919 leading to the Non-Cooperation movement have been highlighted. Students, the next module will examine the first mass movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp.128-129

## **5.8 SUGGESTED READINGS**

Irfan Habib, *A People's History of India: The National Movement: Origins and early Phase, to 1918*, vol. 30, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2018.

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Ishita Banerjee Dube, *A History of Modern India*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010.

Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, Gurgaon: Macmillan, 1983.

A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, fifth edition, 1993 (rpt).

Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

## **5.9. QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

### **5.9.1 LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Critically examine the Swadeshi Movement.
2. Trace the relationship between the Moderates and the Extremists in the first two decades of the twentieth century.
3. Write a note on the Home Rule League.
4. Trace and analyze the events leading to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. What was the impact on the National movement?

### **5.9.2 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Highlight the objectives of the Indian National Congress.
2. What role did A.O. Hume play in enhancing the base of the Congress?
3. Why did Lord Curzon announce the partition of Bengal?
4. When and why was Lucknow Pact signed?
5. Who was Annie Besant?
6. What were the main features of the Rowlatt Act?
7. What was importance of the Caliph for the Indian Muslims?

## SEMESTER III

### HISTORY OF INDIA: c.1750-1947 UNIT 5A:

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#### POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS 1920-1935

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#### **STRUCTURE**

##### **5A.0. Learning Objectives**

##### **5A.1. Introduction**

##### **5A.2. Non-Cooperation Movement**

##### **5A.2.1. Check Your Progress I**

##### **5A.3 The Decade of the 1920s**

##### **5A.4 Simon Commission-Nehru Report**

##### **5A.5 Civil Disobedience Movement-First Phase**

##### **5A.6 The Communal Award**

##### **5A.7 Civil Disobedience Movement-Second Phase**

##### **5A.7.1 Check Your Progress II**

##### **5A.8 Summary**

##### **5A.9 Suggested Readings**

##### **5A.10 Questions for Practice**

##### **5A.10.1 Long Answer Questions**

##### **5A.10.2 Short Answer Questions**

#### **5A.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students, after reading this unit you will be able to:

- Critically examine the Non-cooperation Movement and assess its impact on National Politics.
- Trace the political events of the 1920s
- Analyze the Simon Commission and highlight the significance of the Nehru Report.
- Trace the Civil Disobedience Movement and form an understanding of the Communal Award of 1932.
- Carry out a comparison of the two mass movements led by Mahatma Gandhi.

### **5A.1. INTRODUCTION**

Students, this unit will take up the Non-cooperation Movement and highlight the role of the masses in a first movement of this nature. The peasants and the working class participated in massive numbers as they had become aware of socio-economic injustice of colonial rule. The ideology and leadership of Mahatma Gandhi mobilized the masses of India. This movement was significant as it showcased Hindu-Muslim unity. The 1920s saw the rise of the Swarajists, birth of the Hindu Mahasabha and the communist party in India. Hindu-Muslim unity broke resulting in communal riots. The Simon Commission and the Nehru Report too have been examined. The Civil Disobedience movement as well as its significance for the freedom struggle will be highlighted.

### **5A.2. NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT**

Gandhiji wanted the Congress to adopt the campaign of Non-cooperation on three issues: Punjab wrong, Khilafat wrong and Swaraj. There was a tussle between two groups within the Congress, one supporting Gandhi and the other opposing the non-cooperation programme. But at a special session of the Congress at Calcutta (September 1920) Gandhiji's resolution on Non-cooperation was approved despite opposition from C.R. Das, Jinnah and Bepin Chandra Pal. The programme included surrender of government titles, boycott of schools, courts and councils, boycott of foreign goods, encouragement of national schools, arbitration courts and Khadi.

Non-cooperation began with a call to students to abandon government-aided institutions. The M.A.O. College, Aligarh was the first institution chosen. Gandhi and Mohammad Ali came to Aligarh and called on the college management, staff and students to convert it into an independent university. Mohammad Ali announced the foundation there of the Jamia Millia Islamia (Muslim National University) that was later shifted to Delhi. In Banaras a nationalist educational institution, Kashi Vidyapith, was inaugurated by Gandhi in 1921. The Gujarat Mahavidyalaya at Ahmedabad was set up admitting nearly 700 students. The Council elections under the Act of 1919, held in November 1920 were boycotted. Only 8 per cent of the registered voters voted in Bombay and 5 per cent in Lahore. Many candidates withdrew from the elections, and for six seats there were no candidates.

The annual session of the Congress at Nagpur held on 26-31 December 1920 endorsed the programme of Non-cooperation. A Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund was set up to be used for carrying out constructive activities (Bal Gangadhar Tilak had passed away on 1 August 1920). By 30 June 1921, as much as Rs. 1.05 crore had been collected for the Fund. A major step taken at the Nagpur session was to give to the Congress an organizational framework that would help in carrying on work in all parts of the country. Provincial committees were established. These units were extended to kinds of district and sub-districts in a kind of hierarchy. A nominated working committee would be at the top to provide leadership.

Initially the students were asked to leave government educational institutions. College enrolment in India declined by 13.5 per cent between 1919-20 and 1921-22. This was a remarkable phenomenon. Attempts were made to run 'national' institutions to absorb those leaving government-aided colleges and schools. Many such students joined the corps of 'National' and 'Khilafat' Volunteers, acting as foot-soldiers of the Non-Cooperation Movement. By March 1921 the movement had expanded to include renunciation of titles, boycott of courts by lawyers and litigants, besides the boycott of government educational institutions. A Swadeshi campaign was launched that included twin forms of boycott of foreign cloth and the promotion of yarn spinning on the *charkha* (spinning wheel). Mahatma Gandhi insisted on abandonment of untouchability that was necessary for entry of the lower castes and outcastes into the movement.

The Non-Cooperation Movement spread to almost all parts of the country. Bonfires of imported cloth were set alight everywhere, imports of foreign cloth fell dramatically — from Rs. 102 crores in value in 1920-21 to Rs. 57 crores in 1921-22, a drop of 44 per cent. Khadi (homespun locally woven cloth) became the fabric of the nationalist's clothing. The All-India Khilafat Conference meeting at Karachi on 8-10 July asked all Muslims to stop serving in the army, and Gandhi and other leaders appealed not only to civilians, but also to soldiers to give up government jobs.

Simultaneously there was violence in southern Malabar (now northern Kerala). The Moplah (Mappilla) was a Muslim community in south Malabar consisting mostly of peasants. They had grievances as tenants of *jenmis* or landlords who were mainly higher-caste Hindus. On 20 August 1921 there was a sudden uprising over a large area. Railway lines were uprooted, telegraph wires cut, and police stations and post offices set on fire in the district. The houses of the landlords were attacked and plundered, many Hindus killed or forcibly converted. Martial law was declared in October 1921. Government repression was hard on the rebels. Despite British criticism of the Moplah rebellion the Non-Cooperation Movement remain strong and undeterred.

In Punjab, the Non-Cooperation Movement was merged with the Gurdwara Reform Movement started by the Akalis, who wanted to liberate the Gurdwaras or Sikh temples from the hereditary *mahants* who now controlled them, under the protection of the British administration. On 31 October 1920, the Khalsa College, Amritsar refused to accept any grant from the government. On 21 February 1921 nearly 150 Akalis were killed at Nankana Sahib by armed men engaged by the shrine's *mahant*. Gandhi went to Nankana Sahib on 3 March and issued a statement in support of the Sikh cause. In May the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee resolved to support Non-Cooperation, and the Akalis courted arrest in large numbers over the management of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, carrying on the agitation until 17 January 1922, when the keys of the Golden Temple were finally handed over to Baba Kharak Singh, the Akali leader. Gandhiji praised the Akalis for their non-violent action and success.

Edward, Prince of Wales reached Bombay on 17 November 1921. He was welcomed with near-total *hartal* (general closure) all over India. In Bombay there was a complete strike. There was police firing resulting in deaths. A complete *hartal* was also noticed in Calcutta as all activity came to a standstill. The British government arrested leaders of the Non-cooperation

movement. They included Lala Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru and his son Jawaharlal Nehru, C.R. Das, Abul Kalam Azad and Asaf Ali. People in large numbers voluntarily courted arrest, the number arrested exceeding 25,000. The British government had to back down and release the volunteers.

By now almost every aspect of the non-cooperation programme had been used with varying degree of success. The next stage had to be that of civil disobedience involving a refusal to pay tax. This would hit the government hard. The Congress in November 1921 in Delhi decided to start a programme of civil disobedience which included non-payment of taxes. In the 1921 a general session of the Indian National Congress, Muslim League and Khilafat Conference was held at Ahmedabad. Many volunteers courted arrest. Mahatma Gandhi was given the authority to launch the Civil Disobedience movement. However, this programme did not have much importance as it was limited to Bardoli, a sub-district of Surat district in Gujarat. A no-tax campaign in Andhra was started by its Provincial Committee, but Gandhi recommended its withdrawal.

But before anything could happen even in Bardoli, a sudden event in a village in the United Provinces put an end to everything. In response to police firing some peasants set fire to a police station and caused the death of 23 policemen in Chauri Chaura on 4 February 1922. On hearing this news Gandhiji suspended the mass civil disobedience at Bardoli. He was criticized by his own supporters in the Congress, particularly the younger members for withdrawing the movement when it had reached its peak. Mahatma Gandhi was arrested on 10 March 1922. With most of the leaders in jail the first non-cooperation ended without the mass civil disobedience even being started. Soon the Khilafat question also became unimportant. A revolution had taken place in Turkey and Mustafa Kemal Pasha had come to power in Turkey and in November 1922 all powers of the Sultan were taken away. Turkey was set up as a modern secular state and the Caliphate was abolished.

The national movement got a mass basis for the first time as various sections of peasants and working classes participated in it. The Non-cooperation movement contributed to the awakening of the masses to economic problems and its 'political cause' that is 'imperialism'. Even villagers felt that only Swaraj would solve their problems and as such were ready to participate in the national struggle. However, middle class participation was not great. Except in Madras council election boycott was more or less successful. The polling average was 5-8 per cent. Economic boycott was more intense and successful as the value of imports of foreign cloth dropped from Rs. 1,020 million in 1920-21 to Rs. 570 million in 1921-22. The import of British cotton piece goods also declined. This was due to successful trader and businessmen participation. Production of handloom increased. Other Gandhian social movements too achieved some success. Anti-liquor campaign resulted in drop in liquor excise revenue in Punjab, Madras, Bihar and Orissa. Hindu-Muslim alliance remained unshaken during the period, except in the Malabar region. However, the anti-untouchability campaign remained a secondary concern for the Congress. The emphasis of the movement was always on the 'unifying issues' and effort was to cut across class and communal disjunctions.

Significantly, an important aspect of the non-cooperation movement was ‘its uneven geographical spread’ and ‘regional variations’. There was involvement of regions and classes that did not participate in the past in any movement started by the Congress. Large number of peasants participated in Rajasthan, Sindh, Gujarat, Avadh, Assam and Maharashtra. There was some non-Brahman lower caste participation in Madras and Maharashtra, tribal movements in Andhra and Bengal, Labour unrest in Madras, Bengal and Assam and trader’s participation in Bombay and Bengal. But the masses often resorted to violence. Gandhiji himself condemned this but was unable to stop them.

### **5A.2.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I**

1. What was the Khilafat issue?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Name two Nationalist education institutions set up during the Non-cooperation movement.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the significance of the Charkha?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What happened at Nankana Sahib?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **5A.3. THE DECADE OF THE 1920's**

After the withdrawal of the Non-cooperation movement the Hindu-Muslim unity was shattered. Communal feelings were revived with the Moplah revolt. Campaigns of Shuddhi (conversion) and Sanghathan (organization) were organized by the Arya Samaj. The All-India Hindu Mahasabha was founded in 1922 at the initiative of Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai. It gained strength in north and central India. In response the Muslims launched the Tabligh (propagation) and Tanzim (organization) campaign. Communal riots became common. There were Hindu-Muslim riots in Multan (1922) and Amritsar (1923) in Punjab and in Agra and Saharanpur (1923) in the United Provinces. In September 1924 a riot in Kohat in the North West Frontier Province took place. 31 persons were killed that included 20 Hindus and 11 Muslims. In UP between 1923 and 1927, 88 riots took place.

C.R. Das in his Presidential address of the Congress at Gaya in 1922 put forth his idea of ‘entering the Councils in order to wreck the system from within’. But this idea was not accepted by the ‘No-Changers’ who dominated the session. Therefore, Das and Motilal Nehru at a conference at Allahabad in 1923 formed the Congress Khilafat Swaraj Party (Swaraj Party). Their aim was to fight Council elections. Significantly, this party was to function within the Congress as well as outside. In the elections of 1923 the Swarajists were successful. In the Central Legislative Assembly, the Swarajists got 48 out of 105 seats. In the Provincial Councils the Swarajists won

‘sizable blocs’ in most states. In the Central Provinces they had a majority. In Bengal they had more than half the seats. But in Punjab the Swarajists fared poorly.

Mahatma Gandhi was released from prison in 1924. He did not approve of the Swarajists action of contesting Council elections. He was very worried about the deteriorating Hindu-Muslim relations all over India. He went on fast and broke it only after a Unity Conference had been held to promote ‘principles of religious liberty, tolerance of both cow slaughter and temple music, etc.

In the 1920s, the Muslim League too had moved away from the Indian National Congress. The League held its own session separate from the Congress at Lahore in 1924. M.A. Jinnah was the President and he looked to protect the interests of the Muslim community. In this atmosphere the Rashtra Swayamsewak Sangh was established by Hedgewar in 1925 in Nagpur.

The 1920’s also saw the re-orientation of revolutionary Nationalist groups. In March 1926 the Naujawan Bharat Sabha was set up by Bhagat Singh. Its aim was to establish ‘a republic of labourers and peasants’. Along with Chandrasekhar Azad he reorganized the Hindustan Republican Army as Hindustan Republican Socialist Army in 1928 in Delhi. Significantly, the Communist Party of India (CPI) was formally established at Kanpur in 1925. Their aim was to attain liberation from the British imperialism. With their aid and guidance many Workers and Peasants parties were formed in different provinces. This led to the founding of an All-India Workers and Peasants Party in 1928 at Calcutta. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar formed the All-India Depressed Classes Congress to organize the Harijans in 1930.

#### **5A.4. SIMON COMMISSION-NEHRU REPORT**

The British government appointed a commission on 8 November 1927 headed by Sir John Simon to recommend whether responsible government should be extended in India. The Indian National Congress boycotted the all-white Simon Commission. The Muslim League as well as the Hindu Mahasabha supported the national boycott of the Commission. No Indian leader gave evidence before the Commission. A nation-wide agitation started. An all-India Hartal was organized on 3 February 1928 when the Commission reached Bombay. There were protest demonstrations with flag flags and the slogan ‘Simon Go Back’. A procession led by Lala Lajpat Rai was attacked by the police. Lalaji was injured and died soon after. Working class as well as peasants took part in political agitations across India. The Bardoli agitation led by Patel received national attention.

The All-Parties Convention adopted the Motilal Nehru Report (a report on what India’s constitution should contain) in December 1928. The Report was moderate asking only for ‘Dominion Status’ of the same kind adopted by the White dominions. The Congress also adopted the same in Calcutta but only if it was also accepted by the British government by the end of 1929. Lord Irwin invited all parties to attend a round table conference in London to discuss Dominion Status. Gandhi and Motilal Nehru meet Lord Irwin without receiving any concessions on 23 December 1929. The Lahore session of the Congress in 1929 gave a call for struggle for ‘*purna swaraj*’ or full independence. 26 January 1930 was observed as Independence Day and a pledge

was taken by all. The national tricolor was unfurled throughout the country in various meetings. The British government arrested Subhas Chandra Bose on charges of sedition and conspiracy. Gandhi gave his 11 points in *Young India* on 30 January 1930 in response to Lord Irwin's speech.

The peasants were to have their tax or rent burden lightened by a 50 per cent reduction in land revenue, to be made possible by corresponding reductions in military expenditure and salaries in 'higher grade services'; and all the poor, generally, would benefit from the abolition of the salt tax. 'Protective tariff on foreign cloth' would appeal to the millions of hand spinners and weavers as well as the industrialists and workers in modern textile industry; the demand for the devaluation of the rupee to 1s. 4d. and the reservation of coastal traffic to Indian shipping were designed to harness the sympathies of Indian capital. Total prohibition had religious appeal for both Hindus and Muslims, and Gandhi had been appealing to women particularly to support it. Finally, the discharge of political prisoners, abolition of the CID (Civil Intelligence Department) and the issue of firearm licenses represented preliminary political demands affecting both the nationalists and ordinary people.

#### **5A.5. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT-FIRST PHASE**

Lord Irwin did not compromise and on 12 March Gandhiji began the historic Dandi March to the Gujarat seashore where on 6 April he publicly violated the salt law. The march was followed by wholesale illegal manufacture and sale of salt, along with boycott of foreign cloth and liquor. This was followed by non-payment of revenue in the Ryotwari areas, non-payment of Chaukidari taxes in the Zamindari areas and violation of forest laws in the Central Provinces. Towards the end of April violent terrorist activities and less disciplined mass agitation took place in different parts of India. The most important of these was the armory raid in Chittagong in Bengal, followed by similar activities throughout the province. In Peshawar there was unrest among the masses after the arrest of the local leader Badsha Khan. Then in mid-May Gandhi himself was arrested. This was followed by a spontaneous textile strike in Sholapur, where the workers destroyed government buildings in the city. In nearly all parts of India a mass movement started that did not merely involve non-cooperation with a foreign government, but actual violation of its laws to achieve complete independence. According to Sumit Sarkar, the present Civil Disobedience movement was definitely more radical than the 1920 movement. But at the same time, it was not a complete success. There was an absence of Hindu-Muslim unity, no major labour participation and the intelligentsia (middle classes) was not as involved as in the past.

A new feature of the Civil Disobedience movement was massive business support. They provided finance and promoted the boycott movement, particularly that of foreign cloth. The value of imported cloth declined from £26 million in 1929 to £13.7 million in 1930. The other most important feature of the Civil Disobedience movement was large-scale women's participation. During the Dandi March, women in thousands came to hear Gandhi and once the movement was launched, they fully participated in it. They took part in the picketing of shops dealing in foreign cloth and liquor, and at places processions participated by one to two thousand

women surprised the country and 'bewildered the authorities. These women belonged mostly to families of the upper castes, such as the Brahman and Marwari families in Berar or the Bhadrlok and orthodox Marwari and Gujarati trading families in Bengal. Gandhiji's name and support legitimized their coming out in the open street and participating in agitational politics. Both in urban as well as rural areas, in Bengal for example, the peasant women considered it to be a "religious mission" to participate in the Gandhian movement and they belonged mostly to the upwardly mobile peasant castes. In the villages there was more participation from the richer peasantry, whose grievances against high revenue demands were connected to the demand for Swaraj. Non-payment of Chaukidari taxes and no revenue campaign became major features of the movement in parts of Gujarat, UP, Bihar, Orissa and Coastal Andhra. This was accompanied by the boycott movement, illegal manufacture of salt and picketing of liquor shops.

The government adopted repressive measures and all-important leaders and thousands of volunteers were arrested. From September 1930 onwards, the movement began to decline. In the urban areas the fervor of the merchants declined due to the financial losses because of loss of daily business. The middle class had not been keen from the beginning, and now the educated youth felt more attracted and were influenced by the activities of revolutionaries.

Bhagat Singh in Punjab, who had assassinated a British officer and thrown bombs at the legislative assembly, and Benoy, Badal and Dinesh in Bengal, who had attacked the Writers Building in Calcutta, became their heroes.

Working-class support was almost nil. One exception was Nagpur, where there was a large working-class participation. In the rural areas the enthusiasm of the richer peasantry, such as the Patidars of Gujarat or the Jats of UP, reduced due to confiscation and sale of properties. Due to fall in agricultural prices the poor farmers started radical programmes such as no-rent campaigns in UP, violation of forest laws and tribal rebellions in parts of Andhra, CP, Maharashtra, Orissa, Bihar, Assam and Punjab. Gandhiji wanted to avoid such activities and thus the movement was withdrawn through the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 5 March 1931. By the terms of the agreement, the Civil Disobedience Movement was to be 'discontinued', the government would release all political prisoners and withdraw all ordinances issued during the movement as well as notifications of unlawful associations. The Congress agreed to participate in the Second Round Table Conference to discuss the future constitution of India.

The alliance between Congress and the capitalists was uneasy and from the very beginning the uncontrolled mass movement made the business classes uneasy as they wanted to give peace a chance. Thus, there was pressure on Gandhi to return to constitutional politics and the result was the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The enthusiasm of the industrialists was also dampened by the depression, boycott, *hartals* and the social disruptions, and they wanted to ensure the end of civil disobedience and to establish peace between Congress and the government. But on the other hand, the merchants and the traders still remained staunch supporters of Gandhiji. It is important to remember that the most important reason for withdrawal of the movement was radicalism and violence among certain lower classes who did not remain under the control of local Congress

leaders. The movement was moving in 'wayward directions – or going against the Gandhian creed of non-violence and was tearing apart the fragile unity of the political nation; hence, the compromise and withdrawal'.

But the negotiations with the British government failed the Gandhi returned empty-handed from the second Round Table Conference in London held in September-December 1931.

Congress had boycotted the first session of the conference; the second session deadlocked on the minority issue, as not just the Muslims, but all other minorities, such as the depressed classes (untouchables), Anglo- Indians, Indian Christians and Europeans demanded separate electorates, which Gandhi was adamant not to concede.

Gandhi announced the renewal of the movement on coming back to India. The government had already banned the Congress on 4 January 1932. The movement was renewed with 'greater vigour' but failed to evoke enthusiasm. The rich peasant groups felt betrayed by its withdrawal and did not join the renewed protests in coastal Andhra, Gujarat or UP. Some aspects of the Gandhian social programme, such as his crusade against untouchability, did not appeal to them as they belonged mostly to the higher castes. Significantly, Gandhiji's Harijan campaign failed to impress the Harijans themselves. In Nagpur and Berar, which had been the strongholds of Ambedkar's Dalit politics, the untouchables refused to support the Congress. In addition, certain sections of the lower peasantry adopted radical means like salt Satyagraha's, forest Satyagrahas, non-payment of Chaukidari taxes, no-rent and no-revenue campaigns. But these movements were not under the control of Congress leaders and therefore they distanced themselves from such activity. Business groups too did not respond in the urban areas. There was tension between the Congress and the Bombay mill-owners, who opposed the renewal of the movement. The big Indian business men did not want to spoil their relationship with the British government by joining the renewed Civil Disobedience. Therefore, the unity of the Indian capitalist class broke down.

#### **5A.6. THE COMMUNAL AWARD**

Meanwhile, the British government framed a 'Communal Award' on 4 August 1932 for granting representation to various communities of India in the government. The Award firmly established the principle of separate electorates for Muslim, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo Indian and European communities. All others (Hindus) would be voters in general constituencies. 'Qualified members of the Depressed classes ('Untouchables') would be voters in the general constituencies' but would also have a limited number of separate constituencies given to them.

In most of the provinces Muslim minorities got seats in provincial councils in excess of their share in population. But in Bengal the Muslims got 46.8 per cent of the seats though they formed a majority of the population. Their seats in Punjab too were limited to 49 per cent, Hindus got 27.4 per cent and Sikhs 18.9 per cent. The Sikhs got much more than their population which was only 11 per cent. Anglo Indians and Europeans were well provided for even though they constituted a minute proportion of the total population. The Depressed classes were granted 71

seats in the Councils of different provinces, where they alone would be voters. In the Central Legislature no provision was made for their representation.

The Muslim League and the Muslim Conference appreciated MacDonalld's Communal Award, On the other hand, leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha criticized it. Gandhiji was unhappy with the provisions made for the Depressed classes as he felt that the Hindus were being divided. He gave an ultimatum to the British Prime Minister that unless the terms of the Award regarding the Depressed classes was changed he would go on fast, that he started on 20 September 1932. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Tej Bahadur Sapru and some other Congress leaders negotiated with the two Depressed caste leaders, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and M.C. Rajah and reached an agreement known as the Poona Pact. According to this Pact:

All elections in general constituencies would be through joint electorates, where the seats reserved for Depressed Castes in the Provincial Councils would be increased to 148, more than double the number reserved for them in the MacDonalld Award. Moreover, for a limited period (ten years) there would still be separate electorates of Depressed Castes to elect four candidates who alone could then stand for election in respective reserved general constituencies. In the Central Legislature, for which no provision had been made in MacDonalld's Award, 18 per cent of the 'general' seats were to be reserved for Depressed Castes.

Gandhiji approved of the terms of the Pact and broke his fast when it was approved by the British Cabinet. Immediately after the Poona Pact, uplift of the 'Harijans' (the name used for Untouchables) became an important part of Gandhi's political and social programme. An All-India Anti-Untouchability League was formed, it was later renamed Harijan Sevak Sangh. Many Congress leaders regarded Gandhi's Harijan campaign as an 'unwelcome diversion' from the Civil Disobedience Movement.

### **5A.7. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT-SECOND PHASE**

The British government came down hard on the Civil Disobedience movement on its renewal, resulting in a 'cycle of arrests and imprisonment of leaders and workers'. Leaders of the Congress, like Jawaharlal Nehru, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Subhas Chandra Bose were repeatedly arrested. Ordinary Satyagrahis too were given harsh prison sentences. Between January 1932 and April 1933, 74,671 protestors were jailed. Among them 477 were women. Significantly, highest number of people in relation to the population were punished in the North West Frontier Province followed by Bombay.

By 1933, the weakening economy and growing violence even crushed the enthusiasm of the staunchest of Gandhian supporters-the Gujarati and Marwari merchants. The urban middle classes stopped following the Gandhian path. Bombs were used to disrupt the peace and express their anger by the protesters, which Gandhi condemned, but failed to stop. The labour class did not participate and the Muslim were opposed to the movement. Government repression saw thousands of Congress volunteers behind bars.

Mahatma Gandhi on 28 July 1933 withdrew the Civil Disobedience movement and replaced it with Civil Disobedience by select individuals. Gandhiji along with his supporters adopted this form of Satyagraha and marched from Ahmedabad to a village in Kaira district in

Gujarat. In November 1933 he toured India promoting the fight against untouchability. On 7 April 1934, Mahatma Gandhi suspended the Civil Disobedience movement thereby allowing Congressmen to contest elections to Legislatures.

For Congress, the Civil Disobedience movement was not a failure. The Congress was admired by the people for resisting harsh government repression. It had withstood closure of its offices and physical ill-treatment of its workers. The Congress had mobilized massive political support and gained moral authority, which were converted into a massive electoral victory in 1937. In this first election under the Government of India Act 1935, which offered franchise to a larger electorate, Congress achieved absolute majority in five out of eleven provinces, i.e., Madras, Bihar, Orissa, C.P. and U.P., near majority in Bombay and became the single largest party in Bengal, which was a Muslim majority province.

### **5A.7.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II**

1. What do you understand by Shuddhi?

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2. What was the importance of the Lahore session of the Congress held in 1929?

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3. What do you know about the Communal Award of 1932?

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4. Was the Second Round Table Conference successful? Comment.

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### **5A.8. SUMMARY**

Students, the causes, various stages, programme as well as the significance of the Non-cooperation movement has been analyzed. Mahatma Gandhi emerged as the leader of the national movement in colonial India. He had the support of the masses as well as the middle classes in this movement. The revival of revolutionary groups, birth of the communist party as well as the growing awareness and organization of the Harijans too has been examined to enhance the understanding of politics of this period. The call given for complete independence (*purna swaraj*) at Lahore in 1929 and the beginning and different phases of the Civil Disobedience movement has been highlighted. The Communal Award and the Poona Pact as a compromise have been dealt with. The gradual decline and withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience movement and the subsequent position of the Congress is also noted.

### **5A.9. SUGGESTED READINGS**

Irfan Habib, *A People's History of India: The National Movement: Origins and early Phase, to 1918*, Vol.30, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2018.

Irfan Habib, *A People's History of India: The National Movement Part 2: The Struggle for Freedom 1919-1947*, vol. 31, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2019.

Ishita Banerjee Dube, *A History of Modern India*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010.

Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, Gurgaon: Macmillan, 1983.

A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, fifth edition, 1993 (rpt).

### **5A.10. QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

#### **5A.10.1 LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Critically examine the circumstances leading to the Non-cooperation movement. What was its significance?
2. Write a note on the Simon Commission. What was the response of the nationalists?
3. Highlight the main events of the 1920s.
4. Trace and analyze the civil disobedience movement. Was it successful? Comment
5. Compare the Non-Cooperation and the Civil Disobedience movements under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership.

#### **5A.10.2 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Why was the non-cooperation movement called off?
2. What was the constructive programme of the Non-cooperation movement?
3. What were the Punjab wrongs?
4. What organization did Bhagat Singh establish?
5. Who were the Swarajists?
6. What were the main features of the Poona Pact?
7. What do you know about the Dandi march?
8. What do you know about the Gurdwara Reform Movement?
9. What do you know about the Gandhi-Irwin Pact?

## **SEMESTER III**

### **HISTORY OF INDIA: c.1750-1947**

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#### **UNIT 6: CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS 1909-1935**

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#### **STRUCTURE**

##### **6.0. Learning Objectives**

##### **6.1. Introduction**

##### **6.2. Constitutional Developments 1909-1935**

###### **6.2.1. Indian Councils Act of 1909**

###### **6.2.2. Check Your Progress I**

###### **6.2.3. Government of India Act, 1919**

###### **6.2.4. Check Your Progress II**

###### **6.2.5. Government of India Act, 1935**

###### **6.2.6. Check Your Progress III**

##### **6.3. Summary**

##### **6.4. Suggested Readings**

##### **6.5. Questions for Practice**

###### **6.5.1 Long Answer Questions**

###### **6.5.2 Short Answer Questions**

#### **6.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students, after reading this unit you will be able to:

- Explain why there was a need for the constitutional reforms between the years 1909 to 1935.
- Understand the important features of constitutional reforms of 1909, 1919 and 1935.
- Critically analyze the administrative reforms of Indian Acts of 1909, 1919 and 1935.

## **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

Students, the decades following the Indian rebellion of 1857 were a period of growing political awareness and the people began to demand an effective voice in the administration of the country. In the first half of the 20th century, the Indian National Congress started a vigorous agitation for 'responsible' rather than only 'representative' government in India. As a result of growing pressure from the nationalists the British had to enact a number of statutes to fulfil agitational demands of nationalists on one hand and to forestall more extreme demands on the other. Key among them were the Indian Councils Acts of 1909, Morley-Minto Reforms of 1919 and Montagu Chelmsford Reforms of 1935. Students, in this module an analytical attempt has been made to study these constitutional reforms in detail.

## **6.2. CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS 1909-1935**

Students, the need for constitutional change arose after the East India Company acquired political power in India after the Battle of Plassey in 1757. The British government was no longer willing to allow the Company's affairs to continue unsupervised. Therefore, from 1773 to 1857, five Acts were passed by the British Government which mainly aimed to control and regulate the affairs of the East India Company and to help them rule over India. None of the Act satisfied Indian aspirations because they all failed to grant political rights to the Indians and did not allow them any share in the administration of their country both at the central and provincial levels. By the Government of India Act of 1858, the East India Company rule was swept away and the governance of India passed into the hands of the British Crown. However, no fundamental change was made in the system of government in India until the Indian Councils Act of 1861 was passed. For the first time Indians were associated and nominated as non-official members in the Legislative Council of Viceroy. This was the first step in the development of representative government in India. The policy of association, which aimed at making the administration in some measure 'responsive' to public opinion in this country, was taken a step further in 1892. However, the provisions of the Indian Councils Act of 1892 like indirect elections, limited powers of Legislative councils, small number of elected members failed to satisfy the radical section of the country who were aiming for Purna Swaraj. To pacify the agitational tendencies of the nationalists, British government introduced three more constitutional reforms in the year 1909, 1919 and 1935, which aimed at conferring responsible government but in successive stages. These reforms have been critically analysed below in sequence.

### **6.2.1. INDIAN COUNCILS ACT OF 1909**

Students, the Indian Councils Act of 1909 popularly called the Morley-Minto reforms (Minto, the then Viceroy of India and Morley, the then Secretary of State for India) represented the next constitutional advance after the Indian Councils Act of 1892. The partition of Bengal (1905) hardened anti-government feeling in the country. This led to the rise of extremists in the country

which meant the end of an era of constitutional politics and the beginning of the new politics of boycott, political confrontation, non-cooperation with the government and promoting the cult of bomb to overthrow the British rule from India. The threatened British adopted the policy of repression towards the Extremists to check their activities, and to win the sympathy of moderate wing of the Congress and segregate the Muslims from the nationalist movement, the government decided to introduce some administrative reforms under the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909.

### **a. Main Provisions of the Act**

Students, let us now discuss the main provisions of this Act.

The strength of the Legislative Councils at the centre and the provinces was increased as compared to what it was under the Indian Councils Act of 1892. It was as following:

- a. Central Legislative Council – from 16 to 60 members.
- b. Legislative Councils of Bengal, Madras, Bombay and United Provinces – from 8, 20, 30, and 15 respectively to 50 members each.
- c. Legislative Councils of Punjab, Burma and Assam – from 15, 15 and 20 respectively to 30 members each.

The Legislative Councils, both at the centre and the provinces were to have four categories of members as follows:

- Ex-officio members: Governor-General and members of the Executive Council.
- Nominated official members: Government officials who were nominated by the Governor-General.
- Nominated non-official members: nominated by the Governor-General but were not government officials.
- Elected members: elected by different categories of Indians.

The elected members of the Imperial Legislature were elected indirectly. The members of local bodies were elected by the people who, in turn, were to elect members of electoral colleges. The members of electoral colleges were to elect members of the Provincial Legislature. These members would, in turn, elect the members of the Imperial Legislature. In order to win the support of maximum factions of the society, the government gave special representation to the loyalist classes like landlords, universities, traders' communities, chambers of commerce and other influential groups.

For the first time, the Governor-General was empowered to nominate one Indian member to his Executive Council. Satyendra Prasad Sinha became the first Indian to join the Governor-General's Executive Council.

It introduced a system of communal representation for Muslims by accepting the concept of a 'separate electorate'. Under this, the Muslim members were to be elected only by Muslim voters. A fixed number of seats were reserved for the Muslims in the Councils as well as in public services. The Muslims were favoured by giving them representation in excess of their population. Also, the income qualification for Muslim voters was kept lower than that of the Hindus.

It enlarged the deliberative functions of the legislative councils at both levels. For example, members were allowed to discuss budget, ask supplementary questions, move resolutions on matters of general public interest, but subject to certain limitations.

### **b.Evaluation of the Reforms**

Students, let us critically analyze the reforms introduced by the Indian Councils Act of 1909.

The Act failed to provide responsible government. The Governor-General was given the veto power who ensured that no bill detrimental to the British interest was ever passed. It made provisions for indirect elections. The result was that there was no direct connection between the people and the members sitting in the legislature. Therefore, Act failed to satisfy the political aspirations of the people.

The Act created a wide gulf between the Hindus and Muslims by legalizing communalism. Infact, by introducing communal electorates it sowed the seeds of partition of the country. These reforms, no doubt, introduced the system of elections but the rules for the qualification for a voter were based on high property qualifications and therefore only a few people could vote. In some constituencies, the number of voters did not exceed 9 or 10 or constituted a mere one percent of the population. Since the number of voters was less, all votes could be brought. Women were completely excluded from such a right. And above everything, the Government of India was given the general power to disallow any candidate from contesting the election on suspicion of being politically dangerous.

Elaborate rules were made for the discussion on budget. The members could only discuss the budget but could not make any substantial change in the budget. They could vote on separate items in the budget but the budget as whole could not be voted upon. No discussions on foreign policy or on relations with the princely states were permitted. They could only advise in the council but the British were not even bound to reply or listen to their suggestions.

The Indians were not given responsibility. So, they were in the legislatures only to air the criticism. The councils had no real power in the field of legislation and finance also. The Act turned out to be an eyewash and an indirect effort of the British in establishing constitutional autocracy.

Nevertheless, the Morley-Minto Reforms had some of their merits. The inclusion of the Indians in councils was a learning experience for the Indians. The Act marked an important stage in the development of representative establishments in India and one step ahead towards the responsible association of elected Indians with the administration. Further, it also gave recognition

to the elective principle as the basis of the composition of the legislative council for the first time. It gave some further avenues to Indians to ventilate their grievances. They also got the opportunity to criticize the executives and make suggestions for better administration. The enlargement of the legislatures furthered the demand of complete Indianization of the legislature. This paved the way to future constitutional reforms.

### **6.2.2. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I**

1. Who was Satyendra Prasad Sinha?

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2. Who were given the Separate Electorates under the Indian Councils Act of 1909?

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3. Give two demerits of Government of India Act 1909.

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4. Write down two merits of Government of India Act 1909.

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### **6.2.3. GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1919**

Students, the Indian Councils Act of 1909 was the most short-lived of all constitutional reforms in British India and had to be revised within ten years as it provided for limited self-government and therefore, satisfied none of the Indian political groups. Also, some political developments between the years 1909-1919 like outbreak of the World War I, Khilafat agitation, coming together of Congress and Muslim League under the Lucknow Pact of 1916 and their joint demand for self-rule, Home Rule movement, revolutionary activities of Ghadarites, and shattered economy post World War I, resulted in growing discontentment against the British rule. To pacify the Indians, British new policy was outlined in the famous announcement made on 20 August 1917 by Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India in which he made clear that progress towards realization of a full-fledged responsible government would be achieved in the gradual stages. The new policy found practical embodiment in the Government of India Act 1919, popularly known as the Montagu–Chelmsford reforms, named after the Edwin Montagu, the then Viceroy of India, and Frederic Chelmsford, the then Secretary of State for India.

#### **Main Provisions of the Act**

Students, let us discuss the important features of the Act.

### **a. Changes in the Central Government**

Students, under the Act of 1919 a bicameral legislature was introduced at centre with two houses consisting of an Upper House (Council of State) and a Lower House (Legislative Assembly). The majority of members of both the Houses were chosen by direct election. The Council of State consisted of 60 members. Out of 60 members, 34 were elected (20 General, 10 Muslims, 3 Europeans and 1 Sikh) and 26 were nominated members (16 official and 10 non-official). The Legislative Assembly had 145 members. Out of 145 members 103 were elected members (51 General, 30 Muslims, 2 Sikhs, 7 by landholders, 9 by Europeans and 4 by the Indian commercial community) and 41 were nominated members (26 official and 15 non-official members). The number of elected members was enlarged in both the Houses of the central legislature.

The tenures of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly were fixed at five and three years respectively but the Governor-General was empowered to dissolve them within the period or he could also extend their period, if needed. The Act further consolidated the system of communal and class electorates by extending the communal electorate to the minorities present in the nation at that time such as the Sikhs, the Europeans, the Anglo-Indians and Christians.

It should be noted that the distribution of the seats of the elected members amongst the provinces was not based on their population but on their supposed importance in the eyes of the government.

The financial powers of the central legislature were also very much limited. The budget was divided into two categories, votable (20%) and non-votable (80%). Even in this sphere, the Governor-General was empowered to restore any grant refused or reduced by the legislature if in his opinion the demand was essential for the discharge of his responsibilities. Again, the two Houses were given the power to make laws for the whole of British India, but the Governor-General had the right to veto or validate any bill against the wishes of the partially elected council. In addition to the power to veto any bill, the Governor-General was given the power of certification also, which meant he could certify or enact bills rejected by the Central Legislature. He could even summon, prorogue and dissolve the two Houses of Legislature.

To implement the policy of increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, it was provided that the three out of the eight members of the Viceroy's Executive Council (other than the commander-in-chief) would be Indians. The departments assigned to Indian officials were comparatively insignificant like health, law, forest, education, local government, labour, or industry.

### **b. Changes in the Provincial Government**

Students, the most important feature of the Act was the introduction of dyarchy or rule by two authorities in the provinces, in which one is accountable, the other is not accountable. Its relaxed control over provinces by demarcating subjects as 'central subjects' and 'provincial subjects'. Under this system, subjects to be dealt with by the provincial government were divided into two parts: transferred and the reserved subjects. The reserved subjects were controlled by the British Governor of the province. The reserved list included subjects such as police, justice, control over

printing presses, irrigation, land revenue, factories, law and order, finance, etc. The transferred subjects were given to the Indian ministers of the province. It included subjects which required more local knowledge and experience such as education, health, local government, industry, agriculture, excise, etc. The Secretary of State for India and the Governor-General could interfere in respect of reserved subjects while in respect of the transferred subjects, the scope for their interference was restricted. In case of failure of constitutional machinery in the province the Governor could take over the administration of transferred subjects also. Hence, the Governor was the head of transferred and reserved subjects.

The Governor and the members of the Executive Council were appointed by the British government and were jointly responsible to the Governor-General and the Secretary of State for India. The number of executive councilors was not to exceed four.

The provincial legislature could not introduce any bill relating to the matters enumerated in the provincial list with the prior consent of the Governor. The members could reject the budget, but the Governor could restore it, if necessary.

In each of the provinces, a unicameral legislature (one House alone), called the Provincial Legislative Council was created. The size of these legislative bodies was considerably increased which varied from province to province in accordance with the population of that area. The smallest council was that of Assam with 53 members and the largest that of Bengal with 139 members. Like the centre separate electorates were introduced in the provinces for the Muslim, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians.

The functions of the provincial legislature were greatly enlarged. Its members enjoyed the right and freedom of speech, the right to move resolutions, the right to ask questions and to move adjournment motions and motions of no-confidence even against the ministers.

The tenure of the Provincial Legislative Council was three years but the Governor could dissolve it earlier or could also extend its period, if required.

### **c. Miscellaneous Changes**

It was laid down that after 10 years a statutory commission would be appointed to inquire into the working of the government and suggest reforms to advance in successive stages in the direction of conferring responsible government. The Simon commission of 1927 was an outcome of this provision. It provided for the establishment of a Public Service Commission. An important change was brought by the Act that the Secretary of State for Indian affairs who was formerly paid out of the Indian revenues, was henceforth to be paid out of the British exchequer. It established the position of a High Commissioner with residence in London to represent India in the United Kingdom. He was to be paid out of the Indian fund.

### **Evaluation of the Reforms**

Students, the Act of 1919 was, of course, a step forward in this direction but reforms were nowhere near the Swaraj that the people had hoped to achieve at the end of World War I. Let us critically analyze these reforms.

The introduction of dyarchy in the provincial sphere was too complicated to be worked out smoothly. The interaction between the reserved and transferred subjects was difficult. For example, while industry was a transferred subject, electricity, water power, mines, labour were placed on the reserved list. How could a Minister for Industries administer his subject without control over mines, labour, electricity, water, etc.?

The position of ministers in the provinces was very weak. They had to now serve two masters namely the Governor and the Legislative Council, which was quite difficult as he was appointed by the Governor and could be dismissed by him but he was accountable to the legislature.

Undoubtedly, the size and power of both the central and provincial legislatures were increased under the Act but it did not improve the matters in any way because both the Viceroy and Governors could veto anything passed by them and were given certificate power.

Even though direct elections were introduced, the Franchise (right of voting) was granted to the limited number of people. Only those who paid a certain minimum income tax or land revenue to the government or had titles, or held office, were entitled to vote. The electorates were considerably enlarged to 5.5 million for the provinces and 1.5 million for the imperial legislature.

However, this Act marked the end of the policy of benevolent despotism, and thus began the genesis of the responsible government in India. It brought various new dimensions in Indian polity which were unknown hitherto like parliamentary system in India, involvement in budget making and policy formulation, participation in central legislative assembly, dyarchy (decentralized form of government) and others. For the first time, elections were known to the people and it created political consciousness among the people. One important significance of the reforms was that demand by nationalists for self-government or Home Rule couldn't be termed as seditious since the attainment of self-government for Indians now officially became a government policy which was indicated in the August Declaration of Montagu (1917). The key principles of responsible government, self-governance and federal structure grew out of these reforms.

#### **6.2.4. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II**

1. What was the Act of 1919 commonly known as?

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2. Write two important features of 1919 Act.

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3. Which Act introduced dyarchy at the provincial level?

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4. Write down two merits of Government of India Act 1919.

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### **6.2.5. GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1935**

Students, this Act was adopted in response to opposition and criticism of the Act of 1919 for doing too little in terms of granting autonomy. In 1927, the Simon Commission was appointed to inquire into the working of the government and suggest reforms to advance, by successive stages, in the direction of conferring responsible government. The commission submitted its report in 1930 and recommended the abolition of dyarchy, extension of responsible government in the provinces, establishment of a federation of British India and princely states, continuation of communal electorate and so on. To consider the Simon-Commission proposals, a Third Round Table Conference was held at London in 1930-31. The recommendations of this Conference were published in a White Paper in 1933 and later discussed in the British Parliament. The recommendations were analysed and the Government of India Act of 1935 was passed on its basis. This legislation was the longest Act passed by the British Parliament after its domination and overtaking of administrative control in India.

#### **Main Provisions of the Act**

Students, the Act of 1935 was a lengthy and intricate document. It consisted of 321 sections and ten schedules. Following were the main provisions of this Act:

##### **a. Changes in the Central Government**

The Act provided to form an All India Federation consisting of British provinces and princely states as its units. The All India Federation was to come into existence if 50% of Indian states decided to join it after signing the Instruments of Accession. They would then have a large number of representatives in the two houses of the central legislature. However, the federation never came into being as the required number of princely states did not join it.

The Act divided the powers between the Centre and units in terms of three lists, namely, the Federal list, Provincial list and Concurrent list. About 59 subjects which were of all-India interest and demanded uniform treatment like custom, railway, army, post and telegraph etc. were put in the federal list. 34 subjects mainly of local interest like education, land revenue, local self-government, etc. were included in the provincial list. While about 36 subjects which were primarily of provincial interest but at the same time required uniformity of treatment all over the country like criminal law, civil procedure etc. were put in the concurrent list, where both the federal and the provincial legislatures could make laws but in the event of conflict the law of the federal government would prevail. Residuary powers were given to the Viceroy, who was to decide which legislature should be loaded with the responsibility of enacting on subjects not mentioned in the three lists.

The bi-cameral Federal Legislature consisted of two Houses, the Council of State (Upper House) and Federal Assembly (Lower House). The Council of States was a permanent body with one third of its members retiring every three years. It was to consist of 260 members of which 156 were to be the representatives of British India while 104 of the Indian states. 150 out

of 156 representatives of British India were to be elected on communal basis while six were to be nominated by Governor-General from amongst women, minorities and depressed classes. The Federal Assembly had a tenure of five years with one third of its members retiring every three years. The Governor-General had the special power to dissolve it earlier if required. It was to be made of 375 members of which 250 were to be the representatives of British India and 125 members from princely states. Election to the Federal Assembly was to be indirect.

The dyarchy which was abolished in the provinces was introduced at the Centre. Consequently, the federal subjects were divided into reserved subjects and transferred subjects. Subjects like defence, press, police, external affairs, taxation, justice, ecclesiastical affairs (church related) and administration of tribal areas were classed as the reserved subjects, which were to be administered by the Governor-General with the help of three councilors appointed by him. They were not responsible to the legislature. The transferred subjects (under the control of Indian ministers) included local self-government, agriculture, public works, forests, education, health, etc. The Indian ministers were responsible to the federal legislature. However, the Governor-General was given 'special powers' to interfere in the transferred subjects also.

The Government of India Act 1935 provided for the establishment of a Federal Court for the resolution of disputes arising between the provinces, and also between the centre and provinces. It was to have one chief justice and not more than six judges. A provision was also made to hear appeals against the decisions of the High Courts. In 1937, a Federal Court was established at Delhi.

## **b. Changes in the Provincial Government**

The most important change introduced in the provincial sphere was that dyarchy was replaced by the 'provincial autonomy'. According to it, the elected ministers of the provincial governments were to be responsible to the legislature and secondly, provinces were free from outside control and interference in a large number of matters. The provinces were allowed to act as autonomous units of administration in their defined spheres. Now all the subjects (mentioned in the provincial list) were placed under the charge of the elected minister, however, in certain matters like the police, the government had the authority. The appointment of the Governors remained in the hands of the British government and they were not responsible to the legislatures. No bill passed by the provincial legislature could become law without his assent which he could refuse at his discretion. He could issue ordinances and dissolve the Legislative Assembly with any lame excuse. This came into effect in 1937 and was discontinued in 1939.

It introduced bicameralism in six out of eleven provinces. Thus, the legislatures of Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Bihar, Assam and the United Provinces were made bicameral consisting of two Houses namely a Legislative Council (upper house) and a Legislative Assembly (lower house). The Legislative Council was to be a permanent body, one-third members retiring after every three years, while the Legislative Assembly was to continue for five years. It was laid down that all the members of the Legislative Assembly were to be elected.

The executive authority of the province was vested in the Governor, who was to be assisted by a Council of Ministers. These ministers were appointed by the Governor from the majority party of the legislature, but it all lay in his discretion whether to accept their advice or not. In the discharge of his 'special duty', which covered almost every branch of administration, he could act the way he liked.

### **c. Changes in the Home Government**

It abolished the Council of India, established by the Government of India Act of 1858. In its place the Secretary of State for India was provided with a team of not more than six and less than three advisors appointed by him. The Secretary of State was not bound to consult them in every affair. This change made the Secretary of State more powerful than he was before.

### **d. Miscellaneous Changes**

The Act laid down for the establishment of a Federal, Provincial and Joint Public Service Commissions for two or more provinces, to conduct examinations and give aid in the selection of a candidate for the service. It provided for the establishment of a Reserve Bank of India to control the currency and credit of the country. It also provided for the establishment of a Federal Railway Authority to administer the railways. The Act re-organized certain provinces like creating the two new provinces of Orissa (Bihar and Orissa were split) and Sind (carved out of Bombay Presidency). Aden was separated from India and made into a Crown Colony. Burma was completely separated from India in 1935.

### **Evaluation of the Reforms**

Students, no doubt the Act of 1935 possessed certain principles of Federation, but it had many inherent and apparent defects. Let us discuss them.

The All India Federation established by the Act was defective as merger of states in the union depended on their will. Undue weightage was given to the princely states. The Indian princes could make nominations to the assembly while representatives from the provinces had to be elected. The native states were given representation in proportion larger than their geographic or demographic strength.

In a federation, the Constitution is supreme but under the Act, British Parliament retained a right to suspend responsible government. The Secretary of State for India and the Governor-General were the ultimate authority and they were not responsible to the legislature.

In theory, this Act provided for a responsible government in the provinces, but the degree of autonomy introduced at the provincial level was subject to important limitations like Governors retained 'discretionary powers' regarding summoning of legislatures, giving assent to bills, could veto any bill passed by legislature, and administering certain special regions (mostly tribal)- and on these matters ministers were not entitled to give advice.

The division of subjects under the dyarchy at centre was very defective. If law and order was a transferred subject then maintaining peace and tranquility was the special responsibility of the Governor-General.

The Act further consolidated the communal electorate by giving communal representation to the Muslims, Sikhs, Anglo-Indians, and the Indian Christians. The Muslims were given 1/3rd (33 per cent) seats in the Federal Legislature although their population was less than 1/3rd of the total population of India. It led to the further disintegration of India. Nehru called it “all breaks, no engine”.

Under the strict franchise rules, the voters constituted hardly 14 per cent of the adult population of British India. It was an advance over the 1919 Act, but it was too short of adult franchise which would make democracy broad based.

Residuary powers were left neither with provinces nor with the centres but with the Governor-General. This never happens in the case of federation, where such powers are left either with the centre or the provinces.

So, it can be concluded that the British rule was to continue as before; only a few popularly elected ministers were to be added to the structure and the Congress condemned the Act as ‘totally disappointing’. The Act was condemned by one and all. Mr. Jinnah called it, “thoroughly rotten, fundamentally bad and totally unacceptable”.

### **6.2.6. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS III**

1. Write down two main provisions of Government of India Act 1935.

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2. Why was the Simon Commission appointed?

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3. Which Act introduced dyarchy at centre?

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4. In which year Burma was completely separated from India?

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### **6.3. SUMMARY**

Students, in this unit the main focus have been given that there was a great deal of political consciousness amongst the Indians by 1909. The British realised that in order to defend British rule in India it was important to satisfy the aspirations of those Indians who were prepared to confine their demands within the narrow constitutional framework. Keeping this in view some constitutional changes were introduced by the British in India between the years 1909-1935. The narrow franchises, limited powers of the Legislative Councils, veto power of Governor-General

and Governors, faulty system of dyarchy, failed to pacify the enlightened Indians political aspirations. These Acts rather added new political problem with the introduction of the separate electorate system. These periodic reform schemes were just an expression to conciliate and suppress the anti-imperialist movement which had become a perennial feature of India.

#### **6.4. SUGGESTED READINGS**

Irfan Habib, *A People's History of India: The National Movement Part 2: The Struggle for Freedom 1919-1947*, vol. 31, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2019.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010.

Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, New Delhi: Macmillan, 1983.

#### **6.5. QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

##### **6.5.1 LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Critically examine the general features of the Indian Councils Act of 1909.
2. What circumstances led to the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms or the Government of India Act of 1919? What were its main features?
3. Explain the system of dyarchy set up in the provinces by the Government of India Act of 1919 and give reasons for its failure.
4. Critically evaluate the salient features of the Government of India Act of 1935.

##### **6.5.2 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Write down two main provisions of Morley-Minto reforms.
2. What do you mean by Dyarchy?
3. Write two demerits of the Government of India Act, 1919.
4. What were the two aims of the Government in introducing the Government of India Act 1935?
5. Write two main limitations of the Government of India Act 1935.
6. What did provincial autonomy mean?

## **SEMESTER III**

### **HISTORY OF INDIA: c.1750-1947**

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#### **UNIT 7: INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE ALL-INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE**

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#### **STRUCTURE**

#### **7.0. Learning Objectives**

#### **7.1. Introduction**

#### **7.2. Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League**

##### **7.2.1. Foundation of Indian National Congress**

##### **7.2.2. Check Your Progress I**

##### **7.2.3. Foundation All-India Muslim League**

##### **7.2.4. Check Your Progress II**

##### **7.2.5. Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League**

##### **7.2.6. Check Your Progress III**

#### **7.3. Summary**

#### **7.4. Suggested Readings**

#### **7.5. Questions for Practice**

##### **7.5.1 Long Answer Questions**

##### **7.5.2 Short Answer Questions**

#### **7.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students, after reading this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the contribution of A.O. Hume towards the foundation of the Indian National Congress and its aims and objectives.
- Explain the causes responsible for the growth of All-India Muslim League.

- Critically analyze the changing relationship between the Indian National Congress and All India Muslim League.

## **7.1. INTRODUCTION**

Students, the revolt of 1857 is considered as the culmination of popular discontentment against British rule and marked the beginning of a long-drawn struggle against British imperialism. The new Hindu intelligentsia who were the beneficiaries of western education became critical of the exploitative character of the colonial rule and continued the spirit of protest even after 1857. The emerging anti-colonial feelings created conditions and set the process in motion for the growth of the Indian National Congress in 1885. With the Congress emerging as a threat, the government began to actively promote Muslims as a separate political interest. This module will discuss in detail the foundation of Indian National Congress and formation of All India Muslim League as an alternative political group to the Indian National Congress to represent the interests of Indian Muslims in a country made up of mostly Hindus. Also, the changing relationship between the Congress and All India Muslim League has been analyzed in detail.

## **7.2. INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE ALL-INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE**

Students, before the uprising, the British had simply assumed that the Muslims and Hindus formed separate communities. But the mutiny showed that they could engage in united action. This scared the British and henceforth they began to actively pursue the policy of 'Divide and Rule' to strengthen and prolong their rule in India. W.W. Hunter, in his book Indian Musalmans published in 1871 analyzed the Muslims' grievances and recommended that the government should pay extra attention to improve the backward condition of Muslims by educating them and hence making them more suitable for official employment, thereby weaning them away from the path of disloyalty and to prevent Muslim rebellions in future like the Wahabis. The government took his analysis seriously. Further, in the 1890s, with the Congress emerging as a threat, the government began to actively promote Muslims as a separate political interest. By the dawn of the 20th century, an ideological divide developed between the Muslims and the Hindus of India. On one side there were strong feelings of nationalism in India, on the other side there were communal conflicts and movements in the country that were based on religious identities rather than class or regional ones. Students let us discuss them in detail.

### **7.2.1. FOUNDATION OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

Students, the efforts made by educated Indians at the provincial level to form political associations like Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, Indian Association, Madras Mahajan Sabha, Bombay Presidency Association etc., with the aim of organizing public opinion culminated in mobilizing a national political conference of educated Indians. A retired British official, Allan Octavian Hume, played an important part in bringing the educated Indians together to form one national political association. He did not want another rebellion like 1857, or revolutionary Indians to adopt violent and aggressive measures to register their discontent and anger against the British rule. Hume

wanted to provide a 'safety valve' against the growing discontent amongst the masses by encouraging people to take legitimate paths of protest like- appeals, memorandum, delegations to influence the British government, in order to fulfil their demands. The leaders of Congress, accepted the leadership of Hume in the foundation of Indian National Congress because they assumed that if Indians would come forward to start such an all India movement, authorities would have found some way or the other to suppress them and they were not in the position of having an open conflict with the British Government. It was thought prudent to cooperate with Hume, in order to have a common political platform from which they could fight against the imperialist government in an organized manner. Finally, in December 1885, the Indian National Congress was established at Bombay with 72 delegates. The year 1885 was a turning point as now the modern intellectuals interested in politics no longer saw themselves as spokesmen of narrow group interests, but as representatives of national interest. The all-India nationalist body that came into being was to be the platform, the organizer, the headquarters, the symbol of the new national spirit and politics.

The majority of the founding members of Congress were English educated like Allan Octavian Hume, Badruddin Tyabji, W.C. Bannerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjee, Pherozeshah Mehta, etc. Dufferin described the all-India Congress as the body representing only a "microscopic minority of India's vast population". He maintained that it represented only the English-educated class of the Indians in which more than half were lawyers, and the remainder consisted of journalists, businessmen, landowners, and professors. But its pattern changed in the very next year. It gave representation to the people of different parts of India belonging to different walks of life. The decision to hold the Congress session every year in different parts of the country and to choose the President belonging to a region other than the one where the session was being held, was meant to break the regional barriers and misunderstandings. 434 representatives who attended the second session of the Congress in 1886 belonged to different classes from different parts of India. To broaden the base of the Congress, leaders of different communities were invited to preside over its annual sessions. The first President of the Congress was an Indian Christian, W.C. Banerjee; second was a Parsi, Dadabhai Naoroji; third one was a Muslim, Badruddin Tyabji; and the fourth and fifth were two Englishmen, George Yule and William Wedderburn, respectively. This helped Congress to gain a national character representing all. The Muslim community was divided and a section under the leadership of Syed Ahmed Khan actively opposed the Congress after 1886. Even then, the number of Muslim delegates increased from 2 at Bombay to 33 at Calcutta and 81 in Madras. In 1890, at the sixth session, there were 156 Muslims (or 22%) out of 702 delegates.

The Indian National Congress was founded with a modest constitutionalist outlook and chose the strategy of 3P's, i.e., protest, prayer and petitions rather than violence, pressure and agitation. Loyalty to the British Crown was loudly and repeatedly declared. However, the Congress aimed at: reform of Central and Provincial Legislative Councils (with greater powers and with acceptance of elective principle in representation), the Indianization of higher administrative services, simultaneous organization of entrance examination to Indian Civil Service both in

England and India, repealing the Arms Act of 1878, freedom to form associations, freedom of speech and press for the defence of their civil rights, improvement of education, separation of executive and judicial functions, and removal of defects of local self-government. Other demands were economic in nature such as to end economic drain of India by the British, reduction of Home charges and military expenditure, the need to encourage technical education with a view to facilitate the industrial development of the country, abolishment of duty on sugar for the benefit of the poor, and permanent fixation of the rent paid by peasants to their landlords. These issues were of interest only to a small section of privileged individuals within the indigenous society. The nationalist paradigm of development reflected the aspirations of the propertied sections to take India onto an independent course of capitalistic development, although some broader issues such as reduction of salt tax, betterment of conditions of Indian migrant labour working in colonial plantations and revocation of Forest Acts were included to give the programme a semblance of general public concern. As most of the members of Indian National Congress, especially in Bengal belonged to Zamindars, the scope of agrarian programmes remained very limited. Indeed, initially they did not take up the cause of the workers and peasants considering them as 'local issues'. In its first twenty years, known as a 'moderate phase', Congress was not interested in campaigning for independence or self-rule but for greater political autonomy within the Empire. After the 1905 Partition of Bengal, Congress became more vocal and active in demanding substantial political reform, and eventually voiced demand for full independence from Britain. As Congress came under the influence of Gandhiji in the 1920s, Congress was transformed from an assembly dominated by western-educated elites to a mass organization that appealed to diverse sections of the Indian public in the decades to come.

### **7.2.2. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I**

1. Who presided over the first session of the Indian National Congress in 1885?

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2. Who described the all-India Congress as the body representing only a “microscopic minority of India’s vast population”.

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3. Mention any two aims of the Indian National Congress.

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4. Name the first Muslim President of the Indian National Congress.

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### 7.2.3. FOUNDATION OF ALL-INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE

Students, the Muslims were treated more harshly than any other social group involved in the revolt of 1857. Seeing Hindus advancing under the British rule at the expense of their Muslim counterparts, Syed Ahmed Khan took it upon himself to secure the future of Muslims through modern education and reconciliation with the British. To accommodate the backward Muslim community in the existing and future colonial administrative structures he was helped by the British in establishing the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh in 1877. He encouraged the Muslims to seek European education and enter into the colonial civil services to bring about changes in social and political aspects of their lives. So, under Syed a cultural and educational movement developed among the Muslim elite of north India, called the Aligarh movement. It is interesting to note that while M.A.O. College was founded for Muslims, its doors were open to all. Many graduates in the early years of this college were Hindus for which he was fiercely attacked by the conservative Muslims. He remained undaunted in his endeavor. Syed was also a champion of the Hindu-Muslim unity. He had once described the Hindus and Muslims as one Qaum.

However, certain Hindu revivalist activities in the late 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century deteriorated the relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. For instance, the Shuddhi Movement started by the Arya Samaj to win back converts to Hinduism, the rapid emergence of cow protection societies all over northern and western India to check cow-slaughter, reorganization of the private household Ganesh and Shivaji festivals into community festivals to propagate Hindu culture and nationalism by Tilak, the anti-partition Bengal agitation was started with dips in the Ganges, many prominent writers including Bankim Chandra Chatterjee often referring Muslims as foreigners in their writings, the attempt of Hindu revivalists to change the official script from Urdu (which was jointly developed by the Hindus and Muslims) to Hindu Devanagari script (Hindu-Urdu controversy), developed communal trend in the society causing large number of riots in the 1880s and 1890s and fear of Hindu political hegemony amongst the Muslims.

Syed Ahmad Khan, once the supporter of Hindu Muslim unity, vehemently opposed the formation of the Indian National Congress by delivering a remarkably intemperate speech at Lucknow (28 December 1887) by calling it essentially a party of Bengali Hindus who could not best represent the viewpoint of a Muslim population, full of appeals to regional, communal and casteist sentiments. It was mainly because none of the authoritative Hindu leaders paid heed to Sayyid's repeated warnings since 1870s against the linguistic division of the country. Congress clearly sided with Hindi and supported the movement against Urdu. It could hardly be a coincidence that he was awarded a knighthood (Sir) within four days of the speech (on 1 January 1888)! Also, in its very first session held in 1885, the Congress passed a resolution urging the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils on a representative basis. Muslims of the region perceived this new environment in a different way. For them, the movement in favour of the Hindi language and against the slaughter of cows were signs of an emerging nationalism that aspired to Hindu supremacy and feared the religious oppression that Muslim minority would

be exposed to in a representative system. All these events had a direct bearing on alienating Muslims from this militant brand of Hinduism. In August 1888, along with Theodore Beck, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan founded the Indian Patriotic Association, which aimed at informing the British nation that the Indian National Congress does not represent all communities of India. He believed that Indians were not yet ready to govern themselves and that their interests would be best served by remaining loyal to the British rule, which was conceived as a legitimate successor to the Mughal empire. The formation of Islamic nationalism was a gradual reaction to the manifestation of a looming Hindu nationalism. The Muslims were growingly recognizing the absence of a countrywide organization like the Indian National Congress, through which they could effectively put forward their demands. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan worked as a guiding force for the Muslims to form a separate organization.

The Secretary of State, Morley's budget speech of 1906 in the House of Commons, indicated that representative government was going to be introduced in India. This created great concern among the Muslim leaders, as they thought that in the new self-governing bodies they would be swayed by the Hindu majority who were now well organized under the Congress. Consequently, on 1 October 1906, Lord Minto, the then Viceroy of India, received a deputation of 35 prominent Muslims, headed by Agha Khan III at Shimla. The deputation asserted that introduction of European type of representative institutions, without consideration of peculiar social and religious conditions of India, 'might place the interests of Muslim minority at the mercy of an 'unsympathetic' Hindu majority'. The delegation proposed adoption of the institution of separate electorates for the Muslims and representation in excess of their numerical strength in view of 'the value of the contribution' Muslims were making 'to the defence of the empire' and their previous status as rulers. In reply, the Viceroy assured the delegation that the political rights and interests of the Muslim community would be protected in the electoral representation.

The success of Shimla deputation encouraged Nawab Salimullah of Dhaka, the staunchest supporter of the Partition of Bengal, to form a separate political party of their own to counter the anti-partition agitation launched by the Congress cadres. Encouraged by Viceroy's support, it was in the Dacca Educational Conference on 30 December 1906 that a new party called the All-India Muslim League was launched with a still poorly defined program but with a clear pro-British orientation and a contrary inclination to Indian National Congress. Its first secretaries were Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Viqar-ul-Mulk, and from March 1908 Agha Khan was appointed its permanent President. In this way Muslim league was established and became the sole representative of the Muslims. Its professed goals were to promote loyalty to the British, to safeguard and advance the political rights of the Muslims of India, and to represent their needs and aspirations to the government in a mild and moderate way. It was also stated that there was no intention to affect the rights of other religious groups. Like the Indian National Congress, they also conducted annual sessions and put their demands to the British government. Initially, they enjoyed the support of the British.

To intensify the communal tensions between the Hindus and Muslims British announced the separate electorates for the Muslims in the Minto-Morley reforms of 1909 wherein

only Muslims could vote for Muslim candidates in constituencies reserved for them. Additionally, seats were reserved for Muslims in the Imperial Legislature, Provincial Councils, and in District and Municipal Boards. The Muslims were accorded representation in excess of the strength of their population and were also given a vote in the general constituencies wherever they fulfilled the voting requirements. The income qualification for Muslim voters was kept lower than that for the Hindus in general constituencies. Out of 27 elected seats in the Imperial Legislative Council, 8 were reserved for the Muslims under separate electorates, while in 1910, 3 Muslims were also elected from the 'general' constituencies. By doing so the British wanted to promote the idea that the political, economic and cultural interests of the Muslims and Hindus were separate. The system of separate electorates was the single largest factor responsible for the emergence and the spread of communal politics. It created new challenges for Congress as representing the politics of secular nationalism.

#### **7.2.4. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II**

1. Who established the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh in 1877?

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2. Who led the Shimla deputation in 1906?

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3. Give two reasons responsible for the alienation of Muslims from the Indian National Congress.

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4. Who was Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan?

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#### **7.2.5. INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE MUSLIM LEAGUE**

Students, the Congress press criticized the birth of the Muslim League and in 1909 Congress passed four resolutions disapproving of the election of separate electorates on the basis of religion. It intensified the antagonism between the Congress and the League. Madan Mohan Malviya, presiding over the Lahore session of the Congress in December 1909, not only protested against the favour shown to Muslims, but also wondered why similar separate electorates for Hindu minorities had not been created in Muslim-majority provinces. In other words, Congressmen regarded the Muslims disproportionately large representation in relation to their share of population as "gross injustice to other communities". Congress also opposed it as it tended to perpetuate the rift between the Muslims and the Hindus.

The British alienated the Muslims in a series of episodes between 1911 and 1914. In 1911, the partition of Bengal was annulled. Having benefited from the partition, Muslims felt dejected and felt that the Hindus have got what they wanted, whereas Muslims loyalty has been

rewarded by betrayal by the British. The British foreign policy further alienated the Muslims by indirectly backing the attacks on the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) by Italy (1911-12). Seeing how easily the Italians had defeated the Ottomans, the members of the Balkan League attacked the Ottoman Empire starting the First Balkan War (1912-13). The two successive military conflicts deprived the Ottoman Empire of all its remaining territory in Europe except part of Thrace and the city of Adrianople (Edirne). This provoked a bitter feeling amongst the Indian Muslims against the British. The loyalist policy of the Muslim League now began to meet opposition from the more radical elements like Muhammad Ali, Abul Kalam Azad etc. From 1912 Pan-Islamic papers like Azad's *Al Hilal* in Calcutta, Mohammad Ali's *Comrade* in Delhi, and Zafar Ali Khan's *Zamindar* in Lahore denounced the British government and proposed reconciliation between the Muslim League and the Congress. Mohammad Ali felt that the Muslim League should promote the integration of India, not its fragmentation, stating that "The Congress and the League are like two trees growing on either side of the road, their trunks stood apart, but their roots were fixed in the same soil". In 1912, Agha Khan as the President of Muslim League resigned and in 1913, Muhammad Ali Jinnah joined the League without leaving the membership of the Congress. These tendencies became more prominent with the outbreak of the First World War when Britain declared war against Turkey, a symbol of the worldly power of Islam and the seat of its 'universal' Caliphate.

Jinnah acted as a bridge between the League and the Congress. In 1916, as a President of Muslim League and a member of Congress, Jinnah conducted the simultaneous meetings of both political parties at Lucknow to further their unity for a common cause of self-government for India. The heads of both political parties agreed and signed Lucknow Pact. The pact established an alliance between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. The Muslims led by the Muslim League promised to work with the Hindus to achieve freedom in return for the Congress conceding to the Muslims separate electorates with weightage far in excess of their numerical strength where they constituted a minority but not in Bengal and Punjab where they were in majority. The Muslims also gave up their right to vote in the general electorates. Also, the Congress recognized the Muslim League as legitimate representative of the Muslim community. This pact set the platform ready for an all India movement based on Hindu-Muslim unity which was anti-British in nature and not communal. However, the pact failed to fuse them into one political community by recognizing them as two different communities. In 1917 the Muslim League supported the Home Rule agitation started by Annie Besant. But the outbreak of communal riots in Bihar, United Provinces and Bengal soon after this rapprochement revealed the continuing disjunction between the masses and their leaders.

The next important landmark of this period was the passing of the Rowlatt Act, 1919 by the government. Rowlatt Act authorized the government to imprison any person suspected of terrorism for a maximum period of two years, without trial (Na Appeal, Na Vakil, Na Dalil). It aimed at severely curtailing the civil liberties of the Indians in the name of curbing terrorist violence. This Act was treated by the whole of political India as a grievous insult, especially as it came at the end of the war when substantial constitutional concessions were expected by the

Indians in lieu of the unconditional services provided by the Indian soldiers in the First World War to Britain. At this point, Gandhiji called a nationwide strike to protest against this draconian law. To combat protests against the British, martial law was declared in Punjab and police opened fire on a crowd gathered for the Baisakhi festival (13 April 1919) in Jallianwala Bagh, killing close to 1,000 people. In response, Gandhiji fashioned the tools that would win India freedom—non-cooperation and civil disobedience.

The First World War had ended with the defeat of Turkey and division of its territories under the Treaty of Sevres (10 August 1920) among European powers angered the Muslims who took it as an insult to the Caliph. To express Muslim support for the Caliph of Turkey and force the government to change its attitude towards Turkey soon a Khilafat Committee was formed in Bombay in March 1919 under the leadership of the Ali Brothers (Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali), Abdul Kalam Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Hasrat Mohani. Its main objective was to allow Caliph to retain his control over Muslim sacred places and the Caliph should be left with sufficient territories after territorial arrangements. For some time, the Khilafat leaders limited their actions to meetings, petitions, deputations to London to draw British attention but all in vain. The leaders of the Khilafat agitation, Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, now wished to initiate a full-fledged non-cooperation movement with the help of the Congress. This led some young brigade of the Muslim leaders to discuss with Gandhiji about the possibility of a united mass action on the issue. This was in tune with Gandhiji's idea that British can be fought only with united Hindus and Muslims. Hence, Gandhiji looked upon the Khilafat agitation as "an opportunity of uniting the Hindus and the Mohammedans as would not arise in a hundred years". This set the stage for a protracted struggle.

In the meantime, the conference of Muslims leaders held at Lucknow on 21 September 1919, called upon the people to observe 17 October as Khilafat Day, a day of fasting and prayer. On the advice of Gandhiji, Hindus also joined hands with the Muslims to showcase their solidarity to the British. The day was widely observed and may be said to mark the beginning of the Khilafat movement and of the short-lived period of political collaboration between Hindus and Muslims. After this, a first All-India Khilafat Conference was organized at New Delhi on 23 November 1919, in which Gandhiji was elected its President.

The Congress acted in close coordination with the Khilafat movement, which managed a wide participation of Muslims in the Non-Cooperation Movement organized by Gandhiji in 1920 to boycott all aspects of British rule, to undone the "Punjab wrongs" (Jallianwala massacre), the Khilafat wrong and demand Swaraj. The religious character of Gandhiji's Non-Cooperation Movement alienated Jinnah. Jinnah opposed this policy and resigned from the Congress. The movements, despite having different issues, adopted a unified plan of action of non-violence and non-cooperation. Khilafat and Non-Cooperation together produced India's first powerful mass upheaval. The Non-Cooperation Movement gained momentum through 1921-22. Thousands of students left government-controlled schools and colleges. Many lawyers such as Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, C. Rajagopalachari and Asaf Ali gave up their practices. British titles were surrendered and legislatures boycotted. People lit public bonfires of foreign cloth. The imports of foreign cloth

fell drastically between 1920 and 1922. Large parts of the country were on the brink of a formidable revolt.

Violent tendencies soon appeared in the Khilafat movement, as the masses lost self-discipline and the leaders failed to control them. The worst-case scenario was the Moplah uprising in Malabar (August 1921), where the poor Moplah peasants, emboldened by the Khilafat spirit, rose against the Hindu moneylenders and the British. It had proved to be another problem for Gandhiji, as the attitudes of the Khilafat leaders increasingly revealed that they had accepted the Gandhian creed of non-violence more as a matter of convenience to take advantage of Gandhiji's charismatic appeal, rather than as a matter of faith.

The year 1922 was a turning point in Indian history; Gandhiji announced the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement on 12 February 1922 when an infuriated mob attacked a police station causing the death of 22 policemen at Chauri-Chaura ( on 5 February 1922), a village in Gorakhpur district, U.P. After this incident and for publishing rebellious material Gandhiji was arrested in March 1922 and imprisoned for next six years.

In Turkey, with the triumph of Kemal Ataturk's nationalist movement, Turkey was transformed into a modern Republic. The Sultan was deposed in 1923, the institution of Caliphate was abolished in 1924 and Kemal Ataturk was elected the first president. This brought a great disappointment for the Muslims of India. The reason for the collaboration between the Muslim League and the Congress disappeared. The feelings of insecurity and fear of Hindu domination reasserted among them. The Muslims pulled away from the mainstream Indian nationalism and the fraternalism was replaced by the communal riots of 1924.

Muslim alienation became marked with the rejection of the Motilal Nehru Committee Report, published in 1928 as it recommended no separate electorates for any community, reservation of seats for Muslims only in provinces where they were in a minority, and discarded reservation of seats for Muslim in Punjab and Bengal where they formed majority. This was a reversal of the Lucknow Pact. This was viewed by almost all shades of Indian Muslim opinion as providing insufficient safeguards for India's Muslim minority. They saw in it the spectre of Hindu domination. After 1930 the demand for a separate Muslim nation after independence began to be articulated. Sir Muhammad Iqbal became the leader of the Muslim League in 1930 and for the first time articulated a demand for a separate Muslim state. He argued that Muslims and Hindus constitutes two different nations in themselves and are incompatible. The Congress rejected this theory and argued in favour of a united India based on unity between different religious groups. The policy of the British to divide and rule got exemplified in the Communal Award of 1932. This policy further strengthened the provisions for separate electorates.

The relations between the Congress and the Muslims finally broke down after the provincial elections of 1937. In the United Provinces, the Congress had won an absolute majority and the Muslim League wanted to form a joint government with the Congress but Congress refused to form coalition ministry with the Muslim League in U.P. It was demanded that the League in the United Provinces Legislature shall cease to function as a separate group, the members of the Muslim League in the U.P. shall become part of the Congress party and will fully share with other

members of the party their privileges and obligations as members of the Congress party. These conditions were in no case acceptable to the Muslim League, for that would have meant the complete loss of its identity and subjugation to the Congress camp. Congress on its part was not willing to accept League as a political organization because in none of the appeals to the Muslim masses did it find any reference to a political or economic issue. The Congress leaders believed that the League raised only the religious sentiments of the Muslims by raising the slogan of ‘Islam in danger’, and that the League wished that every organization other than the Muslim League, might thus become a non-Muslim organization, even though it may have Muslim members. In 1940, at a Muslim League session in Lahore, the first official demand was made for the partition of India and the creation of a Muslim state of Pakistan to safeguard the rights of Indian Muslims. His insistence on this issue through negotiations with the British government resulted in the partition of India and the formation of the state of Pakistan on 14 August 1947. This occurred against a backdrop of widespread violence between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, and a vast migration of population between the new states of Pakistan and India in which hundreds of thousands died.

### **7.2.6. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS III**

1. When was the institution of Caliphate abolished in Turkey?

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2. Who were the Ali Brothers?

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3. What were the main demands of the Khilafat agitation?

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4. When did the Chauri Chaura incidence take place?

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### **7.3. SUMMARY**

Students, this unit discussed the changing attitude of the British towards the Muslim community after 1870's. Initially, the British held the Muslims responsible for the uprising of 1857 and punished them by depriving them of government jobs and by stripping them off their power, prestige, glory and wealth, which engrossed them into acute poverty and backwardness. However, after 1870, the British changed their attitude towards the Muslims, when nationalism started gaining force under the Hindu intelligentsia class. The British tried to appease the Muslims in order to counter the political activities of Congress. It encouraged communal and separatist tendencies in Indian politics by following the policy of ‘Divide and Rule’ to sustain their rule in

India. Encouraged by the British, Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan, once the supporter of the Hindu-Muslim unity, started instigating the communal sentiments amongst the Muslims by advising the Muslims to remain away from the Hindus, the Congress, and the national movement as he feared Hindu hegemony in case of a withdrawal of the British rule. He felt that the continuance of British rule was a guarantee for the welfare and progress of the Muslim community. He encouraged the Muslim elites to gradually become aware of their right to constitute in nationhood and the need to organize politically to defend their interests. He worked as a guiding force for the Muslims to form a separate organization. All India Muslim League at Dacca on 30th December 1906 came as an expression of that desire. This led to the growth of the communal and separatist trend of thinking among the Muslims. In 1909, Muslims were awarded the separate electorates. The period 1916-22 witnessed a golden phase of Hindu-Muslim unity. Muslim solidarity and the Hindu-Muslim alliance was more emotional than concrete, the phase of Hindu-Muslim unity short lived and ended with the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924. The Muslims became conscious about their social, economic and political future in India. The Indian Muslims political resistance which initiated after WWI ended on the partition of India in 1947.

#### **7.4. SUGGESTED READINGS**

Irfan Habib, *A People's History of India: The National Movement: Origins and early Phase, to 1918*, vol. 30, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2018.

Irfan Habib, *A People's History of India: The National Movement Part 2: The Struggle for Freedom 1919-1947*, vol. 31, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2019.

Ishita Banerjee Dube, *A History of Modern India*, Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010.

Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, Gurgaon: Macmillan, 1983.

#### **7.5. QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

##### **7.5.1 LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. "In its origin, Congress was an officially sponsored body, intended to act as a safety valve for the growing discontent in India". Comment.
2. What circumstances led to the foundation of All-India Muslim League?
3. Trace the relationship between the Indian National Congress and Muslim League from 1885-1940.

##### **7.5.2 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. When was the Indian National Congress formed?
2. Who was A.O. Hume?

3. Mention two factors leading to the formation of the Muslim League.
4. When was the Lucknow Pact signed? What were its implications?
5. Mention any two aims of the Muslim League.
6. What was Shimla Deputation?
7. What is meant by Separate Electorates?

**SEMESTER III**  
**HISTORY OF INDIA: c.1750-1947**

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**UNIT 8: MILITANT NATIONALISM**

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**STRUCTURE**

**8.0. Learning Objectives**

**8.1. Introduction**

**8.2. Militant Nationalism**

**8.2.1. Militant Nationalism in Bengal**

**8.2.2. Check Your Progress I**

**8.2.3. Militant Nationalism in Maharashtra**

**8.2.4. Check Your Progress II**

**8.2.5. Militant Nationalism in other Parts of India**

**8.2.6. Check Your Progress III**

**8.2.7. Militant Nationalism Abroad**

**8.2.8. Fate of the Militant Nationalism**

**8.2.9. Check Your Progress IV**

**8.3. Summary**

**8.4. Suggested Readings**

**8.5. Questions for Practice**

**8.5.1 Long Answer Questions**

**8.5.2 Short Answer Questions**

**8.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students, after reading this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the rise and growth of the militant nationalism in India.
- Acquire knowledge about militant nationalists in Maharashtra, Bengal, Punjab and abroad.
- Understand how they roused the feeling of nationalism in millions of hearts in India and paved the way for independence of India.

## **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

Students, towards the opening years of the twentieth century, political discontent started brewing in the nation due to repressive policies of the British rule in India. The main aim of this lesson is to acquaint you with how the repressive policies of the British resulted in change in Indian national movement from conservative moderation to political extremism, from petitioning and public speeches to militant nationalism, passive resistance and boycott. Militant nationalism represented a distinct phase in the anti-colonial struggle. This chapter discusses in length about the factors responsible for the rise and growth of militant nationalism in India, its objectives, revolutionary methods and activities. The main centres of militant nationalism: Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab and its spread in foreign lands have also been discussed in detail.

## **8.2 MILITANT NATIONALISM**

Students, militant nationalism gained a powerful impetus when on 20 July 1905 Lord Curzon announced the partition of Bengal. Though the colonial masters cited administrative reasons, the nationalists saw the act of partition as a Machiavellian move to destroy the unity of the Bengali people, by dividing the Bengalis territorially and on religious grounds for western Bengal would have a Hindu majority and eastern Bengal and Assam would have a Muslim majority population. To protest this move of separating the province of Bengal on communal lines, the Indian National Congress and nationalists of Bengal started the Swadeshi movement. The anti-partition movement or Swadeshi movement at the initial stage was led by moderate leaders like Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjee and Krishna Kumar Mitra, who voiced their support for the boycott of the British goods in Bengal as a form of protest against partition. However, soon the radical wing of the Congress party lost all its faith in the official Congress policy of petitioning and expressions of loyalty and trust in the British government as it failed to yield any results. They wanted the movement to be taken outside Bengal to other parts of the country and go beyond the boycott of foreign goods to become a full-fledged political mass struggle with the goal of attaining complete independence from the colonial rulers. They criticized the limited demands of the moderate leaders for Swaraj within the colonial rule. Instead, they advocated the adoption of complete Swaraj as the goal of the Congress to be achieved by more self-reliant and independent methods. Tilak remarked “Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it”. But the moderates, dominating the Congress at that time, were not willing to go that far.

This led to the sharp criticism of the ideology and constitutional methods of moderate congressmen. But, most of all, it was the repressive policy of the government which led people to militant and revolutionary politics. For instance, the singing of Bande Mataram in public streets in East Bengal was banned, public meetings were restricted, freedom of press was completely suppressed, Swadeshi workers were severely beaten, or forcefully dispersed or arrested, many students were awarded even corporal punishment, etc. It is within this context that we have to view the rise of the militant nationalism that emerged as the most radical strand within the

Swadeshi movement after 1907, with its belief that in order to attain full independence for India the British must be physically expelled. This attitude marked the beginning of the militant nationalism in India.

Their methods included an armed struggle a short-cut to freedom via violence and conspiracies, contrary to the methods and policies of moderates and extremists; called for boycott of foreign cloth and other British institutions like schools, colleges, councils government services etc.; formed secret societies; propagated revolutionary ideas in traditional popular fairs and festivals and also through newspapers, pamphlets, books; launched Swadeshi or national education; manufactured bombs and other firearms and also imported them from foreign countries whenever possible, emphasized on self-sacrifice, and self-reliance or Atma Shakti; engaged themselves in dacoities to raise funds for their activities; copied the methods of the Irish terrorists and the Russian Nihilists of assassination of oppressive British officials. Through such assassinations they wanted to strike terror into the hearts of the rulers, arouse the patriotic instincts of the people, inspire them and remove the fear of authority from their minds.

### **8.2.1. MILITANT NATIONALISM IN BENGAL**

The era of revolutionary terrorism began and very soon number of secret societies of the revolutionaries sprung up all over the country. In 1902, by the efforts of Promotha Mitter (a barrister from Calcutta), Aurobindo Ghosh, Bhupendra Natha Datta (brother of Swami Vivekananda), Jatindranath Banerji and Barindrakumar Ghosh, the first secret society named Anushilan Samiti made its first appearance in Bengal with its capital in Calcutta. In the same year its branch was opened in Dacca under Pulin Das. The Dhaka Anushilan Samiti soon overshadowed its parent body in Calcutta and by 1932 it had 500 branches spreading from Bengal, Assam, Tippera, Bihar, Punjab, U.P., Central Provinces down to Poona. Initially their activities remained confined to physical and moral training of members and were not particularly significant till 1907. It gained a powerful impetus from the partition of Bengal (1905), which caused considerable anger amongst the revolutionaries of Bengal. These militant nationalists drew inspiration from thoughts, speeches, and writings of Swami Vivekananda, and from some works like *Bande Mataram* edited by Aurobindo Ghosh, *Sandhya* edited by Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Anandmath*, which encouraged and advocated the 'cult of the bomb'. It started a revolutionary press which issued newspapers, pamphlets and books, preaching revolutionary activities including terrorism. Their newspapers—*Yugantar* (End of the Era), a weekly newspaper published from April 1906 by Barindrakumar Ghosh and Bhupendranath Dutta, the evening daily *Sandhya* of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay, as well as the *Bande Mataram*, began to write about the need for political independence, without which national unity and economic and social progress could not be achieved. The *Yugantar* wrote on 22 April 1906 after the Barisal Conference: "The remedy lies with the people themselves. The 30 crores of people inhabiting India must raise their 60 crores of hands to stop this curse of oppression. Force must be stopped by force".

From 1907 the members belonging to the Anushilan Samiti were very active in revolutionary activities. On 6 December 1907, its members made an abortive attempt to blow up the train in which the Lieutenant-Governor of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam was travelling. A few days later, on 23 December, they attempted to assassinate Mr. Allen, formerly District Magistrate of Dhaka. In 1908, one of its members Hemchandra Qanungo, after learning the art of making bombs from France established a bomb factory at a garden house in the Maniktala suburb of Calcutta. On 30 April 1908, two of its members namely Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki attempted to kill sadistic Magistrate Douglas Kingsford of Muzaffarpur district in Bihar. However, the bomb thrown at his horse carriage missed its target and instead landed in another carriage and killed two innocent British women namely Mrs and Miss Kennedy (Kennedy's murder). The British cracked down hard on the activists. When chased by the police, Prafulla Chaki shot himself dead, while his associate Khudiram Bose was arrested, tried and hanged.

The bomb-throwing incident was soon followed by the arrest of 38 Indian nationalists of the Anushilan Samiti in Calcutta from a garden house in Muraripukur in the Manicktala area on the charge that they were manufacturing illegal weapons with the purpose of attacking the government. Among the famous accused was Aurobindo Ghosh, who was known as the spiritual Guru of the revolutionaries, was also arrested and the government followed up by bringing the arrested men to trial on the charges of sedition. The trial is famous in history as the Alipore bomb case (1908-1910) also called Manicktala bomb conspiracy case. Aurobindo Ghosh was acquitted due to lack of evidence who after serving a prison sentence awarded in the trial retired from active nationalist politics, thus beginning his journey into spirituality and philosophy, while others served varying life-terms in notorious Cellular jail in Andaman. Terrorism of a more efficient variety meanwhile developed in east Bengal, spearheaded by the much more tightly organized Dacca Anushilan of Pulin Das, with the Barrah dacoity (2 June 1908) as its first major venture. After 1913 the revolutionary work slowed down in Bengal.

Second phase of militant nationalism in Bengal started after the failure of the Non-Cooperation Movement. The militant groups started reorganizing and developing their underground activities once again. Among the several actions of the reorganized groups was an attempt to assassinate Charles Tegart, the hated Police Commissioner of Calcutta, by Gopinath Saha in January 1924. By an error, another Englishman named Day was killed. Saha was hanged despite massive popular protest.

In 1930, Surya Sen a member of the Anushilan Samiti formed the Indian Republican Army, by grouping young and passionate revolutionary men like Ganesh Ghosh, Ananta Singh, Ambika Chakravarty, Loknath Baul, Tegra (Tiger) Baul as well as women like – Kalpana Dutt and Pritilata Waddadar with the intention of liberating Chittagong, in the Bengal Presidency of British India (now in Bangladesh), from the British rule and to spark a nationwide uprising. On the night of 18 April 1930, they seized arms from the two main British armouries in Chittagong. The group also succeeded in dismantling the telephone and telegraph systems to isolate the city. In all, sixty-five raids were undertaken in the name of Indian Republican Army, Chittagong Branch. After the raids, the revolutionaries gathered outside the police armoury, where Sen took a military salute,

hoisted a national flag, and proclaimed a Provisional Revolutionary Government. To evade police action, they left Chittagong town and marched towards the Chittagong hill ranges, looking for a safe place to hide. On 22 April 1930, thousands of British army personnel surrounded them on Jalalabad hill and engaged in a brutal standoff, resulting in the death of 12 revolutionaries and 80 British army personnel. Analyzing the adversity of the standoff, Sen and his comrades escaped into the neighboring village, where they divided themselves into smaller groups conducting guerrilla raids and surprise attacks on colonial personnel and property for ensuing 3 years. Sen was finally arrested on 16 February 1933, tried and hanged on 12 January 1934. Many of his associates were also caught and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Chittagong Armoury Raid is said to be the first organized armed struggle for independence after 1857. The Chittagong armoury raid inspired many other militants in Bengal. In Midnapore district alone, three British magistrates were assassinated. During 1930-33, twenty-two officials and twenty non-officials were killed.

Remarkable aspect of this new phase of militancy in Bengal was the large-scale participation of young women. The traditionally home-centered women joined processions and picketing. Under Surya Sen's leadership, they provided shelter, acted as messengers and custodians of arms, and fought with guns. Pritilata Waddadar, an underground activist of Surya Sen, died while conducting a raid, while Kalpana Dutta was arrested and tried along with Surya Sen and was given a life sentence. From now on they were to take an active part in the nationalist movements.

### **8.2.2. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I**

1. Who founded Anushilan Samiti and what was its purpose?

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2. Who wrote *Anandmath*?

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3. Who was the leader of Chittagong armoury raid?

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4. Name two women who played an active part in Indian militant nationalism.

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### **8.2.3. MILITANT NATIONALISM IN MAHARASHTRA**

Students, in Maharashtra as well as in India, the first one to use militant methods was Vasudev Balwant Phadke. As a young boy, he was influenced by M.G. Ranade's speeches about how colonial economic policies were impoverishing the land of India. In 1876-77, a severe famine hit Maharashtra, he toured the area and was horrified by the actual devastation and the apathy of the authorities towards the plight of the poor farmer community. Therefore, he formed a revolutionary group of around 300 people, called Ramoshi with the help of Kolis, Bhils and Dhangars communities in Maharashtra to overthrow the exploitive colonial rule in an armed struggle. This

was probably the first revolutionary army in India. He provided his followers with arms and weapons to launch raids on English businessmen and oppressive moneylenders. With the funds looted, he tried to recruit professional soldiers, who according to his plans, were to become the nucleus of a popular militia. Phadke came into limelight when he got control of the city of Pune for a few days in 1879 and caught the British soldiers during one of his surprise attacks. Pursued by the British, Phadke fled to Hyderabad where he made another effort to raise an army. In 1879, Phadke was arrested and was sentenced to life imprisonment and transported to Aden where he died in 1883 in hunger strike at a young age of 38 years. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's patriotic novel *Anand Math* incorporated various contemporary acts of patriotism performed by Phadke during his freedom struggle. He is hence aptly called the 'Father of militant nationalism in India'.

In 1896, a severe plague epidemic had spread from Bombay to Pune. By the end of February 1897, the epidemic was raging, with a mortality rate double the norm. Half of the population had run away from the city and the British mercantile community panicked lest it might reach the shores of the British Isles and affect their commerce. The colonial government quickly decided to put serious measures in place to curb the spread of the plague by appointing a Special Plague Committee under the chairmanship of W.C. Rand in Pune. As soon as the operations to curb the plague began, W.C. Rand began his reign of terror too. Instead of employing doctors, troops were brought in to deal with the emergency. The troops forcefully entered private houses, stripped men, women and children naked for 'check-ups', sometimes even in public, and evacuated them to hospitals or quarantined them. At times they also indulged in vandalizing personal property including religious symbols in the name of controlling the epidemic. Such regular harassment of the Rand commission prompted the Chapekar brothers to take action against it. On 22 June 1897, the Chapekar brothers (Damodar Hari Chapekar and Balkrishna Hari Chapekar) assassinated W.C. Rand and his military escort Lieutenant Ayerst at Pune, Maharashtra. The Chapekar brothers were found guilty and were hanged. This was the first case of militant nationalism in India after the famous revolt of 1857.

Tilak transformed the simple Ganesh Puja (1893) and Shivaji Jayanti (1895) performed at home into social and public festivals to create unity, a national spirit among the people and to spread the message of boycotting westernization in India. Unfortunately, this move alienated non-Hindus from him. In 1897, Tilak published fiery articles in his Marathi newspaper *Kesari* asking the people not to suffer quietly the tyrannical and oppressive rule of Mr. Rand. This eventually led to the murder of two British officers, W.C. Rand and Lt. Ayester, who were heading the Special Plague Committee at that time. The British charged Tilak with 'incitement to murder' and sentenced him to 18 months in prison, the first nationalist leader to suffer imprisonment for a political cause.

The cause of the anti-partition movement of Bengal (1905) was taken up by Tilak in Maharashtra and tried to make it a full-fledged political mass struggle with the goal of attaining Swaraj. Through his newspaper *Kesari* and *Mahratta*, he advocated his militant views, made the Indians aware of their glorious past and encouraged the masses to be self-reliant. The boycott

movement involved boycotting foreign-made goods and also the social boycott of Indians who used foreign goods. Tilak preached non-cooperation and advocated abstaining from cooperating with the government directly or indirectly. In his newspaper *Kesari*, Tilak defended the two young revolutionaries Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose who were involved in the Kennedy's murder case and called for immediate Swaraj. This was followed by the immediate arrest of Tilak by the British on charges of sedition. The court termed Tilak's articles in *Kesari* as 'seething with sedition' and accused him of glorifying violence and approving of murder. Tilak was sentenced to six years rigorous imprisonment at Mandalay (Burma).

After the arrest of Tilak, revolutionaries again took the path of individual heroism, with the Nasik based Abhinava Bharat group as the most important. The Abhinav Bharat Society emerged from Mitra Mela, which was founded by Veer Savarkar and Ganesh Savarkar in 1899 in Nasik. It was renamed Abhinav Bharat in 1904, before Veer Savarkar left for London. It was Ganesh Savarkar, who really made militant nationalism a political force in Maharashtra. The society grew to include several hundred revolutionaries and political activists with branches in different parts of Maharashtra like Bombay, Poona, Kolhapur and Satara, etc. This was inspired from Mazini's 'Young Italy', an Italian secret society which was created to unify Italy. It came to highlight after its members were tried under the Nasik Conspiracy Case, a chain of investigations which were initiated after the assassination of Mr. Jackson, Collector of Nasik, by one of its members Anant Laxman Kanhere by using the pistols sent secretly from London by V.D. Savarkar in December 1909. For his involvement in the murder, Kanhere was hanged to death in 1910.

However, terrorism in Maharashtra never became anywhere near or as formidable as in Bengal, and we hear little more about it after the Nasik conspiracy case of 1909-10.

#### **8.2.4. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II**

1. Who is called 'Father of militant nationalism in India'?

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2. Name two newspapers started by Tilak.

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3. Name the two Chapekar brothers.

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4. Anant Laxman Kanhere was tried and hanged in which case?

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#### **8.2.5. MILITANT NATIONALISM IN OTHER PARTS OF INDIA**

Students, the militant nationalist groups spread from Bengal and Maharashtra to the whole of northern India. Let us discuss them.

In 1912, Ras Behari Bose and Sachin Sanyal made an abortive attempt on the life of Viceroy Lord Hardinge, when he was making his official entry in Delhi, the new capital of British India.

The militant activities in Punjab and the United Province region were dominated by the Hindustan Republican Association (Army). The HRA was founded in 1924 in Kanpur by Ramprasad Bismil, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee and Sachindranath Sanyal as an offshoot of Anushilan Samiti. Influenced by the socialist ideas, the party was renamed as Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA) in 1928. The main objective of HRA was to organize an armed revolution to overthrow the colonial government and establish in its place a 'Federal Republic of United States of India' which will be based on the principles of universal adult suffrage, nationalization of major industries, right to recall elected representatives and group rights. The organization conducted many robberies and raids in an attempt to raise funds to acquire arms and ammunition to strengthen the revolutionary cause. The most famous incident was the Kakori Conspiracy Case which took place on 9 August 1925, in which ten men looted cash from an official train by holding it at Kakori, a village near Lucknow. The reaction of the government was quick and hard. The government arrested a large number of young men and tried them in the Kakori Conspiracy Case. In the Kakori Conspiracy Case, Ashfaqulla Khan, Ram Prasad Bismil, Roshan Singh and Rajindra Lahri were hanged, four others were sent to Andaman for life and seventeen others were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

In 1924–25, many young people joined the party, prominent among them being Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Chandrasekhar Azad. To avenge the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, who died in a Lathi charge while protesting against the Simon Commission, its members Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad and Rajguru, assassinated Saunders, a police official at Lahore on 17 December 1928. On 8 April 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt, threw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly against the passage of the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill, which deliberately aimed at curtailing the civil liberties of citizens in general and workers in particular. The aim was not to kill, for the bombs were relatively harmless, and the ideology behind the bombing was 'to make the deaf government hear the voices of its oppressed people'. The objective was to get arrested and use the trial court as a forum for propaganda so that people would become familiar with their movement and ideology.

Some members of the HSRA again made another abortive attempt to blow up Lord Irwin's train near Delhi in December 1929.

Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt were tried in the Assembly Bomb Case. Later, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru and tens of other militants were tried in a famous Lahore Conspiracy Case for several cases. In prison, the revolutionaries started a hunger strike demanding better treatment and facilities. They demanded that they be treated not as criminals but as political prisoners. Hunger strike was observed and Jatin Das died on the 64th day of the epic fast. His body was carried from Lahore to Calcutta where a two-mile long procession of more than six lakh people carried his coffin to the cremation ground. A large number of militants were convicted in the Lahore Conspiracy Case and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment and deportation. Bhagat

Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were sentenced to be hanged. The sentence was carried out a day earlier on 23 March 1931 fearing public protest. Azad was also killed by the police in a shootout at Allahabad in 1931. After 1931, most leaders of the party had been killed or imprisoned. The party disintegrated as there was no leadership.

### 8.2.6. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS III

1. What does HSRA stands for?

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2. When were Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru hanged?

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3. Name two militant nationalists tried in Kakori Conspiracy Case.

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4. What was the aim of throwing a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly?

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### 8.2.7. MILITANT NATIONALISM ABROAD

Students, a number of militant activities were organized on the foreign lands by the Indians living abroad to hasten the process of ending the colonial rule in India. Let us discuss them.

Shyamji Krishna Varma took the responsibility of the mammoth task of uniting Indian revolutionaries in London by establishing Indian Home Rule society and a hostel for Indian students living in London, popularly known as the Indian House in 1905. The most important revolutionaries associated with him included Madan Lal Dhingra, V.D. Savarkar, Madam Bhikaji Cama, and Dadabhai Naoroji, all living in Britain at that time. Krishna Varma started a journal, *The Indian Sociologist*, which laid the foundation of the militant Indian nationalist movement in Britain. In 1909, Madan Lal Dhingra assassinated William Curzon Wylie in London for spying on Indian students. Madan Lal Dhingra was arrested, tried and hanged on 1 August 1909. After this incident, Shyamji Krishna Varma shifted his head-quarters to Paris and Savarkar took up the political leadership of the Indian House in London. From here he supplied weapons to the Abhinav Bharat Society, which was working under the direction of his brother Ganesh Sarvarkar.

Another important revolutionary activity organized on the foreign land was the Ghadar movement. In March 1913, nearly 200 immigrants under Lala Hardayal, met at Washington and founded an association called 'Hindu Association of the Pacific Coast' headquartered at Yugantar Ashram, San Francisco of USA. Their motive was to wage a nationwide armed struggle against British colonialism in India. By November 1913, this party popularly came to be called Ghadar party after the publication of its very famous weekly paper *Ghadar*. Ghadar, is an Urdu word meaning 'revolt' or 'rebellion'. The inaugural issue of *Ghadar*, which appeared in Urdu, Gurmukhi and Hindi, contained an advertisement with the following lines: "Wanted: Brave soldiers to stir up revolution in India; Pay: Death; Prize: Martyrdom; Pension: Liberty; Field of Battle: India"

and captions like *Angrezi Raj Ka Dushman*, *Angrezi Raj ka Kacha Chita* (or an expose of the British rule) etc, aroused anger amongst the Indians against the exploitive colonial rule. The ideology of the party was strongly secular. In the words of Sohan Singh Bhakna, “We are not Sikhs or Punjabis. Our religion is patriotism”. Their ideology helped in mobilizing a number of Indians living in other countries such as Mexico, Japan, China, Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, Thailand, Indo-China, and East and South Africa, which strengthened Indian's urge to free their country from the foreign Yoke. The government of the USA issued warrants of imprisonment for Hardayal. He left the USA and went to Switzerland. After his departure, the Ghadar party was led by Ram Chander, Bhagwan Singh and Barkatullah.

On 4 April 1914, a wealthy and influential businessman in Hongkong Baba Gurdit Singh Sandhu hired a Japanese steamship Komagata Maru (Nanak Jahaz) to immigrate 376 Indian passengers (mostly Sikhs) to Canada. They reached Vancouver's harbour a month later. Only 24 passengers who were able to prove that they were already Canadian residents and not new immigrants were given entry. The rest were deemed illegal and after a two-month standoff in the waters just off Vancouver, were forced to return to Calcutta. When the ship docked at Budge Budge (Calcutta), the police arrested 20 people thinking of them as revolutionaries including Baba Gurdit Singh. A riot ensued, and they were fired upon by the police, resulting in the deaths of 20 people. The events surrounding the Komagata Maru incident served as a catalyst for the Ghadarites' cause as they used the event to rouse the sentiments of the people and as a rallying point to recruit members for the Ghadar movement, most notably in support of promulgating plans to coordinate a massive armed uprising in India.

As soon as the First World War broke out in 1914, the Ghadarites though not fully prepared decided to send arms and men to India to start an uprising with the help of soldiers and local revolutionaries as they didn't want to let the much-awaited opportunity go. Therefore, leaders of the Ghadar party started sending its activists to Punjab by different ships. It's important leaders including Sohan Singh Bhakna, Harnam, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Barakatulla and others reached India. The Punjabis were already provoked due to the Kirpan issue, demolition of a wall of the Gurudwara Rakab Ganj and the Budge-Budge incident at Calcutta related to Komagata Maru. With the entry of the Ghadar agitators, the atmosphere became highly surcharged. Ras Bihari Bose and Sachin Sanyal reached Punjab to provide leadership to the Ghadarites. Meetings were held in different parts of Punjab. The leaders used to go to the rural fairs in Punjab to propagate their ideals. Contacts were established with the army cantonments. Ghadarites planned to revolt on 21 February 1915. Kirpal Singh, a traitor, leaked out the plan to the government. Plans for revolt in the regiments of Punjab did not go beyond the conspiracy stage. Government arrested the important leaders of the Ghadar movement and cases were started against them in a Special Tribunal under Defence of India Act under which all 'revolutionary and nationalist' activities were banned. People were incarcerated without trial and sent to indefinite detentions in jails. Fearing this, Ras Bihari Bose, who was at the time given the reins of the Ghadar movement, escaped to Japan, leaving the party with no leadership. 46 Ghadarites were executed, 18 were awarded life imprisonment and 58 were exiled. The prominent martyrs were Kartar Singh Sarabha,

B.G. Pingle and Harnam Singh. The Ghadar movement in Punjab failed but is known for setting the foundation for future Indian revolutionary movements like its influence was quite evident in Babbar Akalis movement, which culminated against the treatment meted out to the peaceful agitation of Akalis by the British government and also as a rejection of the ideology of peaceful movement adopted by the Gurdwara reform leadership. Though the Babbar movement could not hold out any longer, nevertheless it consolidated the Ghadar mode of armed revolution against repressive foreign rule and also provided a backdrop for the arrival of another armed revolutionary struggle led by Bhagat Singh, a nephew of Sardar Ajit Singh and ardent admirer of Kartar Singh Sarabha.

In 1915, India's Independence Committee, Berlin was set up by Virendranath Chattopadhyay, Bhupendranath Dutta and others with the help of German foreign office under the 'Zimmerman Plan'. It aimed at liberating India through the armed rebellion. It supplied bombs and seditious literature to politically awaken the masses against the exploitative rule of the British.

### **8.2.8. FATE OF THE MILITANT NATIONALISM**

Students, despite gaining popularity and a dedicated following, the militant nationalist activists failed to achieve its objectives of India's independence from the British rule. Several factors contributed to its failure. Let us highlight them briefly.

- The division of nationalist leaders into moderates and extremists in historic Surat split of 1907, did much harm to the militant nationalist activities.
- With the death of Chandra Shekhar Azad in a shooting encounter in a public park at Allahabad in February 1931, militant nationalism faded away in northern India. Surya Sen's martyrdom marked an end to the prolonged saga of militant activities in Bengal. They could not survive the arrest of their main leader Tilak and the retirement from active politics of Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh.
- One of the unintended consequences of glorifying Indian festivals, customs etc. is that it highlighted the religious identities of people and gave rise to communalism.
- The militant nationalists failed to create an effective organization or a party structure.
- The effective espionage system and repressive policies of the British government checked their growth.
- Militant nationalists faced the difficulty of procuring arms.
- They largely remained confined to the urban lower and middle classes and Zamindars, and failed to reach the masses, especially the peasantry. Moreover, they believed in individual heroism.

It should be noted that it aroused the people from their slumber of centuries; they learnt to have a bold and fearless attitude in politics. They had acquired self-confidence and self-reliance and learnt to participate in new forms of mass mobilization and political action. They now waited for a new movement to arise. The ultimate aim of the revolutionaries was not terrorism, but revolution and the purpose of the revolution was to install a national government.

### 8.2.9. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS IV

1. Who was Baba Gurdit Singh?

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2. Who established Indian House in London in 1905?

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3. Name two prominent leaders of the Ghadar party.

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4. Give two reasons responsible for the decline of militant nationalism in India.

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### 8.3. SUMMARY

Students, this unit discussed in detail how the partition of Bengal in 1905 opened the eyes of the Indians to the true colors of the British rulers, which ultimately resulted in the rise and growth of militant nationalism. They gave a new dimension to India's struggle for independence by boosting the idea of Swaraj as a matter of birth right. New militant leaders emerged at the local levels and their methods were at variance with the moderate form of struggle. Non-violence was no more a guiding principle, they believed in mass actions, self-sacrifices, self-reliance rather than methods of persuasive approach, petitions, prayers, adopted by Moderates. Leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh, and Lala Lajpat Rai played a very significant role in bringing masses to political struggle. Contrary to belief in western values they instilled confidence in self-reliance and Atma Shakti. National schools, colleges, Swadeshi goods sprung up during this anti-partition agitation. So, people brought their inner strength and traditional values to oppose the British. All over there were attacks on unpopular government officials, dacoities, hurling of bombs etc. Very soon secret societies of revolutionaries sprang up all over the country. Of such secret societies, the famous one of long-standing credit was Anushilan Samiti in Bengal. Apart from Bengal, Delhi, Kanpur, Chittagong, Nasik, Poona, Amritsar, Lahore, etc. also became the breeding grounds of militant activities. This type of revolutionary terrorist activities intensified even outside India on foreign lands. The most famous revolutionary terrorists acting abroad were Shyam Krishna Verma, Madan Lal Dhingra, V.D. Savarkar etc. However, terrorism in other parts of India or abroad, never became as formidable as in Bengal. The sacrifices of leaders like Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Surya Sen, Raj Guru, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh, V.D. Savarkar, etc., who became household names in the Indian society, aroused the patriotic emotions of the Indian people and thus helped in building up of the national consciousness which certainly contributed to gaining independence. This is how they prepared the way for mass struggles conducted by the Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji. Though the British government was able to crush these revolutionary activists, but it created a sense of apprehension in the minds of the British that time is nearing to leave India.

#### **8.4. SUGGESTED READINGS**

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

Ishita Banerjee Dube, *A History of Modern India*, Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, New Delhi: Macmillan, 1983.

T.R. Sareen, *Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad 1905-20*, New Delhi: Sterling, 1979.

Peter Heehs, *The Bomb in Bengal: The Rise of Revolutionary Terrorism in India 1900–1910*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004. (first ed. 1993)

Peter Heehs, *Nationalism, Terrorism, Communalism: Essays in Modern Indian History*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006. (first ed. 1998)

Manmath Nath Gupta, *History of the Indian Revolutionary Movement*, India: Somaiya Publications, 1972.

#### **8.5. QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

##### **8.5.1 LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. What factors gave rise to the growth of militant nationalism in colonial India?
2. Discuss the nature, methods and activities of the militant nationalists and assess its place in India's Freedom Struggle.
3. "The very idea of the bomb and the secret society, and of propaganda through action and sacrifice were imports from the West." Critically examine.

##### **8.5.2 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Write a short note on Anushilan Samiti.
2. Write a short note on Kamagatamaru incidence.
3. Who was Shyamji Krishna Varma?
4. Who was Lala Hardayal?
5. What was the Kakori Conspiracy Case?

## **SEMESTER III**

### **HISTORY OF INDIA: c.1750-1947**

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#### **UNIT 9: POLITICS OF THE 1940'S**

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#### **STRUCTURE**

#### **9.0. Learning Objectives**

#### **9.1. Introduction**

#### **9.2. Politics of the 1940's**

##### **9.2.1. Lahore Resolution 1940**

##### **9.2.2. August Offer**

##### **9.2.3. Cripps Mission**

##### **9.2.4. Check Your Progress I**

##### **9.2.5. Quit India Movement**

##### **9.2.6. C. Rajagopalachari's Formula**

##### **9.2.7. Check Your Progress II**

##### **9.2.8. Wavell Plan**

##### **9.2.9. Cabinet Mission**

##### **9.2.10. Elections of 1946 and its Aftermath**

##### **9.2.11. Check Your Progress III**

#### **9.3. Summary**

#### **9.4. Suggested Readings**

#### **9.5. Questions for Practice**

##### **9.5.1 Long Answer Questions**

##### **9.5.2 Short Answer Questions**

## **9.0. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students, after reading this unit you will be able to:

- Acquire knowledge how Lahore Resolution of 1940 sowed the seeds of partition.
- Critically analyze the different constitutional proposals offered by the British to pacify the Indians to seek their support during World War II.
- Understand the role played by the Quit India Movement in furthering the cause of India's independence.
- Trace the events leading to the partition of India.

## **9.1. INTRODUCTION**

Students, the Indian independence struggle had become more extensive during the period of World War II. The demand for the independence of India was gaining strength. The British rulers realized that it was necessary to take serious cognizance of this situation. Accordingly, the British government began preparing various plans for granting independence to India. This module will discuss in detail how the events in 1940's and different constitutional proposals of the British government played an important role in determining the final contours of independence and partition of India.

## **9.2. POLITICS OF THE 1940'S**

Students, on 3 September 1939, World War II broke out and Lord Linlithgow, the then Viceroy without consulting the main political parties of India declared that India had joined the war on the side of the British against Germany. The British claimed that they were fighting to save democracy in Europe. In protest against this unilateral act, which appeared to Indians as a reassertion of high-handed British imperialism, Congress withheld its cooperation in the war efforts by stating that India could not be the party to a war being fought for democratic freedom, when that very same freedom was being denied to her in her own land. If Britain is fighting for democracy and freedom, it should prove it by ending imperialism in its own colonies and establishing full democracy in India. The British refused to fulfil this demand and therefore the provincial ministers of Indian National Congress resigned in November 1939 refusing to cooperate in the war. On this, the Muslim League chief Muhammad Ali Jinnah called upon Indian Muslims to celebrate 22 December as 'Deliverance Day' from Congress. Meanwhile, in March of 1940, the Muslim League, at its annual meeting in Lahore, enacted the Pakistan Resolution, with its ill-defined demand for independent Muslim states. The political landscape was now becoming complicated: it was no longer Indians versus the British; rather, it had become a three-way struggle between the Congress, the Muslim League, and the British. The stage was set for the crisis that was to dominate the decade of the 1940s – the war, Lahore resolution of 1940's, British efforts to gain India's support in the war, the Congress final movement of non-cooperation, and then, finally, in 1947 independence with the devastating partition of the subcontinent into two states. Students, let us discuss in detail.

### 9.2.1. LAHORE RESOLUTION 1940

Students, under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935, provincial elections were held in 1937. Out of 11 provinces, Congress secured a sweeping majority in six provinces and formed its ministries. While the Muslim League fared better on Muslim seats from the non-Muslim majority provinces, its performance was less impressive in the Muslim majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal. After the election, Jinnah offered to form a coalition government with the Congress in U.P. and Bombay. The League insisted that the Congress should not nominate any Muslims to the ministries, as it (the League) claimed to be the exclusive representative of Indian Muslims. This was not acceptable to the Congress. Not only did Congress refuse to share power or enter into any coalition government in the minority provinces like U.P. and Bombay with the Muslim League, but also Jawaharlal Nehru declared with supreme arrogance that there are only two parties in the Indian political scene, the Raj and the Congress. This alienated the Muslims forever in 1937 and Hindu-Muslim controversy entered into a new phase. This finally convinced the League that even the right of separate electorates is not enough to protect their political, social, and religious identity. Muslim interests are not safe under the Congress rule and if India was to stay united under Congress, Muslims would always be a minority and their interests would always be considered below par. Subsequently, the demand for a separate nation started gaining momentum.

Meanwhile, World War II broke out and Congress leaders were ready to support the British war effort but in return they demanded immediate self-rule and complete freedom after the war from the British. In his negotiation with the Congress, the Viceroy made it clear that it could not go beyond the immediate expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council, and dominion status after the war. The Congress rejected the proposal, and asked the ministries to resign from 8 provinces where they were in power. The Congress ministries resigned in October and November 1939 in protest against Viceroy Lord Linlithgow's action of declaring India to be a belligerent in World War II without consulting the Indian people. On 2 December 1939, Jinnah put out an appeal, calling for Indian Muslims to celebrate 22 December 1939 as a 'Day of Deliverance' from Congress. This resulted in the changed attitude of the British towards the Congress and turned to Muslims for support. Jinnah readily assured his support to the British.

On 23 March 1940, Lahore Resolution was adopted by the Muslim League. The resolution repudiated the concept of united India and recommended the creation of an independent Muslim state consisting of Punjab, N.W.F.P, Sind and Baluchistan in the northwest, and Bengal and Assam in the northeast. The resolution signaled the transformation of Indian Muslims from a 'minority' to a 'nation', so that no future constitutional arrangement for India could any more be negotiated without their participation and consent. It made five specific demands:

- The resolution rejected the federal system of government as envisaged in the Government of India Act, 1935 because it was "totally unsuited to and unworkable in the peculiar conditions of this country and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India".

- The Muslims would not accept any revised constitutional plan unless it was framed with their consent and approval.
- The adjacent territorial units should be demarcated into regions that may involve some territorial adjustments in a manner that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in north-western and eastern zones of India become independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.
- The resolution offered “adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards for religious minorities” in the Muslim majority units for the “protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them”. Similar rights will be given to the Muslims in other parts of India.
- The Muslim League Working Committee was asked to formulate a constitutional scheme on the basis of the principles outlined in the resolution. The resolution thus offered a new course of action for the Muslims of British India as compared to the Muslim League position adopted on constitutional and political issues in the past.

In the resolution there was no mention either of the partition of the country or the creation of Pakistan and the official name of the resolution was ‘Lahore Resolution’. Sikandar Hayat Khan, the leader of the Unionist Party who drafted the resolution, was opposed to the idea of the formation of Pakistan. He opined of a loose federation with a lot of autonomy for the states. It was the Hindu newspapers including *Partap*, *Bande Matram*, *Milap*, *Tribune*, etc., who ironically dubbed it as the ‘Pakistan Resolution’. However, the idea was appreciated by the Muslim masses and the resolution is more known as ‘Pakistan Resolution’. With the passage of this resolution, the Muslims of the sub-continent changed their demand from “separate electorates” to a “separate state”. The Hindu called the “Pakistan” demand “anti-national.” They characterized it as “vivisection of Mother India” (i.e. its murdering India); above all, they denounced it as imperialist – inspired to obstruct India’s march to freedom”.

### **9.2.2. AUGUST OFFER**

Students, in 1940, the Allies (France, Britain, China, America, Soviet Russia) were suffering many reverses in the war and France had fallen to the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Japan). Britain herself was in danger of being occupied by the Nazis and in this light, the Congress softened its stand as also both Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru had been strongly critical of Hitler and the Nazis. They decided to support Britain in her fight to uphold democracy and freedom but only if Great Britain concedes to its two demands: the complete independence of India after the war, and constitution of a Provisional National Government at the centre immediately. In response to the Congress demands Lord Linlithgow, seeing the worsening situation of Allies in the war, suggested some measures to get the support of the Indians, which is known as ‘August Offer’. Some of the provisions were as follows:

- A representative Constituent Assembly would be framed to frame the constitution of India after the conclusion of war.
- No future constitution to be adopted without the consent of the minorities (veto power to the Muslim League).
- Dominion status would be granted to India.
- Immediate expansion of the Viceroy Executive Council by including more number of Indians.
- However, defence, finance, home affairs, minority rights, treaties with states, etc. will remain in the hands of the British government.
- A War Advisory Council was to be established, which would meet at regular intervals and include representatives of the Indian states.
- The government assured the minorities that the power would not be transferred to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in Indian national life.

The Indian National Congress rejected this proposal at its meeting held at Wardha in August 1940 as it turned down its demand to set up a provisional national government at centre and its demand of complete freedom. Jawaharlal Nehru said that the whole idea was “as dead as a doornail”. Muslim League also rejected the August Offer as it did not go far enough to meet the demand of the League for a separate nation.

The unsatisfactory provisions of the August Offer obliged the Congress to launch an Individual Satyagraha on 17 October 1940 under the leadership of Gandhiji. While the leftists and the radicals in the Congress demanded a mass movement, Gandhiji urged avoiding it saying that a free India should not rest on the ruins of Britain, which was now more vulnerable than ever. It was decided that instead of a collective movement, every single person should disobey the laws, propagate anti-war sentiments to pressurize the rulers to promise complete freedom once the war ends and also Gandhiji wanted to counter British propaganda that India was supporting the war of her own free will. “Not a pie, not a man for the war effort” became the watchwords of these Satyagrahis. The Individual Satyagraha was not to seek independence but to affirm the right to free speech. The non-violence was set as the centerpiece of Individual Satyagraha. Gandhiji chose Acharya Vinoba Bhave as the first Satyagrahi to launch the Individual Satyagraha, second Satyagrahi was Jawahar Lal Nehru and third was Brahma Datt, one of the inmates of the Gandhiji’s Ashram. These leaders followed by nearly 25,000 Satyagrahis were sent to jails for violating the Defense of India Act by making ‘seditious’ speeches. But later all the Satyagrahis were released with a hope of gaining Indian support in the war as the situation in Europe had become critical after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbour. Though the Satyagraha failed to achieve any tangible results but it was successful in displaying unity and patience in the masses of India and showed that in no condition India would settle for anything less than Poorna Swaraj.

### 9.2.3. CRIPPS MISSION

Students, in 1942, the Japanese army had reached the eastern borders of India and the Japanese threat to invade India seemed real now. The British realized that if Japan attacks India, then they will need cooperation from the Indians. There was also mounting pressure on Britain from the Allies to sort out Indian problems on priority basis to ensure that India remains a safe base to operate against the Japanese enemy in case of a war. Hence, in March-April 1942, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India. It tried to work out a formula for India's participation in the war and partial transfer of power acceptable to all three, the Hindu and Muslim parties in India as well as the British forces. The main provisions of the Mission were:

- For the first time, sole responsibility for framing the constitution was given to the Indians.
- An Indian Union with a dominion status would be established.
- It would be free to decide its relations with the commonwealth and free to participate in the United Nations and other international bodies.
- After the end of the war, a Constituent Assembly would be convened to frame a new constitution. Members of this assembly would be partly elected by the provincial assemblies through proportional representation and partly nominated by the princes. Hence, all members would be Indians.
- Cripps mission proposed that the new constitution would be accepted by the British on two conditions: (i) any province not willing to join the Union could have a separate constitution and form a separate union, and (ii) the new constitution-making body and the British government would negotiate a treaty to effect the transfer of power and to safeguard racial and religious minorities.
- In the meantime, until this new constitution came into force, India's defence would be controlled by the British and the Governor-General's powers would remain unaltered.

The Congress rejected the Cripps proposal as it ignored the Congress demand of immediate self-rule in return for its support in war efforts. It contained provisions which could divide India into hundreds of independent provinces. There was no time limit within which the constitution making body was to be set up. The Congress wanted that all subjects, including defence, should be handed over to the national government. For Gandhiji the proposal contained nothing worthwhile for the present, and gave only a promise for the future. Being upset with the proposal, he termed it as, "a post-dated cheque drawn on a crashing bank".

The Muslim League rejected the proposals because it did not accept the two-nation theory and refused to recognize the right of self-determination of the Muslims. The League reaffirmed its conviction that "The only solution of India's constitutional problem is the partition of India into independent zones". The Hindu Mahasabha opposed the Cripps proposals on two grounds. It was opposed to the freedom given to the provinces to leave the Indian Union and set up separate governments of their own. It also objected to the elections on the basis of communal awards which were anti-national and undemocratic. The Sikhs, the Indian Christians, the Anglo-

Indians and the labour leaders also refused to accept the proposals as it provided no safeguards for their interests.

The Cripps Mission failed to satisfy any political group or party. The failure of the Cripps has been generally interpreted from two angles. From the British viewpoint the mission failed due to Gandhiji's commitment to non-violence and his anxiety to keep India out of war. From an Indian point of view, the mission failed because Churchill, a staunch imperialist, had no intention of promoting the cause of India's self-government and simply designed the mission to appease the American opinion which was growing in favour of India's independence. Further, the incapacity of Cripps to go beyond the draft declaration and the adoption of a rigid "take it or leave it" attitude added to the deadlock. The procedure of accession was not well-defined. It was not clear who would implement and interpret the treaty affecting the transfer of power. Talks broke down on the question of the Viceroy's veto. Cripps' visit to India also made clear, for the first time, that the British envisaged that the main parties involved in the transfer of power would be the Congress and the Muslim League.

#### **9.2.4. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I**

1. Who presided over the Lahore session of the Muslim League held in the year 1940?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why 22 December 1939 was celebrated as a 'Day of Deliverance' by the Muslim League?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why was the Cripps Mission rejected by the Muslim League?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Which Viceroy of India made the declaration of August Offer?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was selected as the first Satyagrahi during the Individual Satyagraha of 1940?  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **9.2.5. QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT**

Students, the failure of the Cripps' mission prepared the ground for a total confrontation between the British and the Congress. The Congress got convinced that they could not expect anything better from the British government in the near future. In this context, Gandhiji thought that the time has come for a final assault on imperialism. Accordingly, he launched the Quit India Movement also known as India's 'August Movement' or '*Bharat Chhodo Andolan*' as his third major mass movement against British rule on 8 August 1942 in Bombay after the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution. It declared its demand for an immediate end of British rule. The Congress decided to organize a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale. Gandhiji's slogan of 'Do or Die' ('*Karo Ya Maro*') inspired the nation. This time the emphasis in the struggle was not on the traditional Satyagraha but on 'fight to the finish'. It therefore meant that now Gandhiji was also prepared for the riots and violence. He now conceded

that the masses could take up arms in self-defence. In March 1942, in his articles in the *Harijan* he wrote, “Armed resistance against a stronger and well-equipped aggressor is to be considered a non-violent act”. Every man, woman and child began dreaming of a free India.

The government response to the movement was quick. The Congress was banned and most of its leaders were arrested on the morning of 9 August in the expectation that the arrests would finish off any contemplated movement. The people, however, were unstoppable. Aruna Asaf Ali presided over the All India Congress Committee session on 9 August and hoisted the Indian flag at the Gowalia Tank Maidan in Bombay. The leaderless and unorganized supporters of the Congress rose in ‘spontaneous’ revolt in various parts of the country in reaction to the arrest of their popular leaders. Gandhiji’s ‘Do or Die’ call for the people, triggered violence, riots, and protests across the country. Jai Prakash Narayan, S.M. Joshi, Aruna Asaf Ali, Ram Manohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Biju Patnaik, Usha Mehta, Sucheta Kripalani, and others went underground and made attempts to redirect the movement in tune with the Quit India resolutions. In spite of severe risks and challenges, Usha Mehta ran a mobile ‘Congress Radio’ from different locations of Bombay for some nearly three months to disseminate information about the movement to the people, to upkeep their hope and morale and also to provide a line of command and guidance to distribute arms and ammunition.

There were hartals and demonstrations all over the country. The people attacked all symbols of the British government such as railway stations, law courts and police stations. Railway lines were damaged and telegraph lines were cut, many buildings were set on fire, electricity lines were cut, shops were shut down, students left their schools, etc. Almost every city and town in every nook and corner of the country witnessed violent activities. The events of 1942 showed the depth of the national will. The British responded with terrible brutality. The army was called out to assist the police. In August and September, the British used 57 battalions to crush the rebellion. There were Lathi-charges and firing at the unarmed demonstrators. Even old men and children were shot dead while taking part in processions. Protestors were arrested and tortured and their homes raided and destroyed. By December 1942, over sixty thousand people had been jailed.

One of the most remarkable features of the Quit India movement is the absence of any communal incident or disorder. Another significant feature of the Quit India movement was that in some places, people even set up their independent or parallel governments by driving out the British officers from their areas. Places such as Ballia, Tamluk, Satara, Dharwar, Balasore and Talcher were freed from British rule and the people there formed their own governments. People started accepting the verdict passed by the people’s court appointed by the parallel government. Opposition to money lenders, prohibition on liquor, spread of literacy, opposition to caste distinctions, cyclone relief work, supply of paddy from rich to the poor, many such constructive works were done by these governments. Though these governments failed to survive for long, it showcased the capability of the Indians to manage government and administration on their own.

The Congress had little success in rallying other political forces under a single flag and program. Smaller parties like the Hindu Mahasabha opposed the call under the apprehension that the movement would create internal disorder and would endanger internal security during the war.

The Communist Party of India strongly opposed the Quit India movement and supported the war effort since they were allied with the Soviet Union. In response the British lifted the ban on the party. Despite the lack of support to the movement by the communist group, workers did provide support by not working in the factories. Jinnah and provincial Muslim Leaguers appealed to the Muslims to keep themselves totally aloof from the movement. Jinnah's opposition to the call led to large numbers of Muslims cooperating with the British, and enlisting in the army. Lastly, the princely states and Indian bureaucracy also did not support the movement and funded the opposition.

The imprisonment of the Congress members of provincial assemblies enabled the League to form ministries, and establish itself as a major force in Sind, Bengal and Northwest Frontier, previously where it scarcely had any presence. The League, like Congress, introduced two Anna memberships and began to build up bases in villages. It promised not only an Islamic state but also a peasant utopia where Muslims peasants will be as prosperous as Hindu moneylenders, landlords or Zamindars. On the whole, this process made the demand for Pakistan seem realistic.

#### **9.2.6. C. RAJAGOPALACHARI'S FORMULA**

Students, Gandhiji on account of his deteriorating health was released from prison on 6 May 1944. The Muslim League was demanding the partition of India with the patronage of the British government. C. Rajagopalachari, one of the veteran leaders of the Congress, evolved a formula known as "C.R. Formula" to bring about a settlement between the League and the Congress. Gandhiji sincerely thought to bridge the gap between the Congress and the League taking Rajagopalchari's formula as a basis for discussion and held a series of meetings with Jinnah. The formula accepted the League demand of Pakistan for the first time. In turn, the Muslim League would support the demand of the Congress for independence of India. Both parties would cooperate and form a provisional government at the centre. After the war, a commission would be entrusted with the task of demarcating those areas with an absolute majority of Muslims and a plebiscite to be held in those areas where all the inhabitants (Muslims and non-Muslims) would vote based on adult suffrage whether to form a separate sovereign nation or not. In case of partition, joint agreements to be made for the safeguarding of defence, communications and commerce. The above terms were binding on the parties only if the British government transferred all control into the hands of Indians for the administration of the country. Jinnah rejected the formula. He declared that he would not accept anything less than the six provinces of Sind, Punjab, N.W.F.P., Baluchistan, Bengal and Assam. Moreover, he was not prepared to allow the non-Muslims living in the Muslim majority areas to vote along with the Muslims. Thus, Jinnah rejected the formula and continued his demand of Pakistan.

### 9.2.7. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II

1. Who was Aruna Asaf Ali?

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2. Name two places where parallel governments were formed during the Quit India Movement.

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3. Why did Jinnah reject the C.R. Formula?

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4. When and where was the Quit India Resolution passed?

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### 9.2.8. WAVELL PLAN

Students, in 1945, the Labour government came to power in Britain and committed itself to grant India the freedom it had been demanding for so long. All the members of the Congress working committee along with Jawaharlal Nehru were released from the jails as the war ended. Lord Wavell, was charged with presenting a formula for the future government of India that would be acceptable to both the Congress and the Muslim League, allowing for a smooth transition of power. He, therefore, convened a conference at Shimla and invited 21 political leaders including Gandhiji and Jinnah to Shimla, the summer capital of British India to discuss the Wavell Plan on 25 June 1945. The Wavell Plan proposed the following:

- The Viceroy's executive council was to have all Indian members except the Viceroy himself and the Commander-in-Chief.
- To establish an Interim Government at the centre with equal representation of both the Hindus and the Muslims.
- The Interim Government would deal with all portfolios except the defence and it would function under the framework of the Act of 1935 till a new constitution was formed.
- Wavell had given place to 6 Muslims in the Executive Council of 14, and the British had given it the power to veto any constitutional proposal which was not in its interest. The representation was far in excess of their number as Muslims represented only 25% of the Indian population.
- The council was to have a 'balanced representation' of all Indians including 'caste-Hindus', Muslims, depressed classes, Sikhs, etc.
- Though the Governor-General's veto would not be abolished, but it would not be used unnecessarily.
- The foreign affairs portfolio would be transferred from the Governor-General to an Indian member of the council.
- The defence would be handled by a British official until the full transfer of power was made.

The conference was a failure because the League and the Congress could not settle their differences. Jinnah insisted that only League members could be the Muslim representatives in the council, and opposed to the Congress nominating Muslim members. This was because Jinnah wanted the League to be the sole representative of Muslims in India. Congress refused to accept it, for that would amount to an admission that Congress was a party only of the caste Hindus. Ironically, at that time, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the Congress President! Congress also rejected the veto power given to the Muslims.



*Jawaharlal Nehru (left) and M.A.Jinnah (right) walking in the garden during Shimla Conference, June 1945.*

*Source: Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, A Concise History of Modern India, p.211.*

### 9.2.9. CABINET MISSION

Students, this new government under Sir Clement Attlee sent a Cabinet Mission to India for the transfer of powers from the British Indian government to Indian leaders without much delay. Lord Attlee deputed three members of his cabinet- Lord Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps, and A.V. Alexander. The mission had two main tasks— to discuss the principles and procedures of framing a new constitution in order to grant independence to India and to form an Interim Government on the widest possible agreement among political parties to facilitate the transfer of power. After having a prolonged discussion with the leaders of all sections of Indian society, the Mission announced its plan. The main terms of the Mission were:

- The central government at Delhi would have powers over the defence, foreign affairs, communications and currency. The rest of the powers would be vested with the provinces.
- The dominion of India would be granted independence but without any partition.
- It provided for the formation of a Constituent Assembly to formulate a constitution. For the composition of the Constituent Assembly each province shall be allotted a fixed number of seats in proportion to its population.
- An Interim Government would be formed at the centre with 14 members (6 from Congress, 5 from Muslim League and 1 member each representing the Sikh, Parsee, and scheduled caste minorities).

- It provided that all the members of the interim cabinet would be Indians and there would be minimum interference by the Viceroy.
- It recognized the Indian right to cede from the Commonwealth.
- The Union would have its own executive and legislature composed of members elected by all provinces.
- The Union government and its legislature were to have limited powers, dealing with finance, foreign affairs and communications. The Union would have powers necessary to raise the finances to manage the above-mentioned subjects. Thus, the Cabinet Mission Plan proposed a weak centre.
- The provinces would enjoy full autonomy for all subjects other than the Union subjects.
- The princely states would retain all subjects and all residuary powers.
- A Constituent Assembly was to be elected by provincial assemblies by proportional representation (voting in three groups- General, Muslims, Sikhs). This Constituent Assembly would be a 389-member body with provincial assemblies sending 292, Chief Commissioner's provinces sending 4, and princely states sending 93 members. Each province was allotted a total number of seats in proportion to its population.
- The representation of the provincial legislatures was to be broken up into 3 sections. However, a province could leave any group and join another by a majority of votes.

Section A: Madras, United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bombay, Bihar and Orissa (Hindu majority provinces).

Section B: Punjab, Sind, NWFP, Baluchistan (Muslim majority provinces).

Section C: Assam and Bengal. (Muslim majority provinces).

The full autonomy of the provinces and the provisions for grouping were meant to give the Muslim League the 'substance' of Pakistan.

The Congress on the whole was unhappy, one, for the formation of a weak central government with states having more powers. Two, the right of the province to leave the union in future was considered a dangerous proposal. Three, it rejected the grouping of provinces on the basis of religion. The Muslim League approved the plan because it felt that the grouping of Muslim majority provinces in a way meant the formation of Pakistan.

### **9.2.10. ELECTIONS OF 1946 AND ITS AFTERMATH**

Students, in accordance with the Cabinet plan, as an immediate measure, elections to the Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution had to be held and an Interim Government had to be formed. Accordingly, in July 1946 fresh elections were held to elect the members of the Constituent Assembly by the provincial legislatures. The Congress won 205 out of 296 seats, a clear majority in every province except Bengal, Sind and Punjab. The Congress won handsome majorities in two provinces being claimed for Pakistan, N.W.F.P. and Assam, while the Muslims

League won 73 seats. The League's success in the Muslim seats was equally spectacular. Unlike 1937, it had now clearly established itself as the dominant party among Muslims. In Group B and C, which the Muslim League claimed for Pakistan, the Congress secured a respectable tally of 41 seats against 54 seats secured by the Muslim League. After this election, the Muslim League refused to cooperate with the Congress. The political situation got worse and Hindu Muslim riots started. The Muslim League demanded for a separate Constituent Assembly for Muslims in India. So, the British declared that the decisions of the Constituent Assembly would not be valid in the Muslim majority areas. Thus the working of the assembly got virtually crippled.

Certain difficulties cropped up with regard to the formation of the Interim Government as provided for in the Cabinet Mission scheme. On 16 June 1946, Lord Wavell issued invitation to 6 representatives of the Congress, 5 representatives of the Muslim League and 3 representatives of the minorities. The Congress demanded the right to include one nationalist Muslim in its list of 6 members. As its claim was rejected Congress refused to join the Interim Government. The League demanded that it should be allowed to form the government even without the Congress but this was rejected by the British. This made Jinnah withdraw its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Scheme. On 27 July, the Muslim League council met at Bombay and called for a "Direct Action Day" to be observed on 16 August 1946 to press the League's demand for Pakistan. This day, called Direct Action Day or the Great Calcutta Killings, witnessed the worst communal riots British India had seen. Road battles between Hindus and Muslims, mainly in Bengal, saw widespread manslaughter and over 4,000 deaths and over 1 lakh displaced – all in a span of 72 hours. The communal riots spread to rural Bengal, then to Bihar, and then across the country to the United Provinces and the Punjab. The worst hit areas were Calcutta, Bombay, Noakhali, Bihar and Garhmukteshwar (United Provinces).

At the invitation of Lord Wavell, the Congress leaders agreed to form the Interim Government under Jawaharlal Nehru on 2 September 1946 to oversee the transition of the country from a British colony to an independent republic. The new government began the task of framing a constitution for the country. In October 1946 League agreed to join the government and nominated its 5 members. The League's purpose behind it was to fail the government. Liaquat Ali Khan refused to accept the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. Soon communal riots broke out again in different parts of the country such as Bihar, U.P., Amritsar, Lahore, Multan and Peshawar etc. Communal situation deteriorated day by day and the Interim Government failed to control the situation. Now, there was no other alternative than to accept the partition.

### **9.2.11. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS III**

1. Who headed the Interim Government formed in the year 1946?

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2. Which party called for the 'Direct Action Day' and when?

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3. Name the three members of the Cabinet Mission.

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4. Write down two important provisions of the Wavell Plan?

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### 9.3. SUMMARY

Students, this unit discussed how with the outbreak of the Second World War, India's struggle for independence entered its decisive and final phase. In 1940, under the Lahore Resolution, the Muslim League changed its demand from "separate electorates" to a "separate state" mainly concentrated in the North-west and the East, which set India on the path of partition. To seek India's unconditional participation in the war against Japan, the British had to offer a number of constitutional proposals like August Offer (1940), Cripps Mission (1942). Both these offers failed to pacify the Congress demand of immediate self-rule. Hence, the Congress decided to launch the Quit India movement as a final assault on British imperialism. Within hours of Gandhiji's historic speech, almost the entire leadership of the Congress was jailed without trial. Without the guidance of the leaders, the movement descended into violence. It showed the impatience of the Indian people to attain independence from colonial exploitive rule. The long imprisonment of Congress leaders like Gandhiji, Nehru and Patel enabled the Muslim League, which had rejected Gandhiji's calls to join the Quit India Movement, to grow in influence. The growing incidents of communal violence in the country escalated the rise of the League. By 1945, WWII had ended and the British, finding it difficult to rule over awakened India, decided to grant India its freedom at the earliest. The British had to deal with a major obstacle: while the Muslim League wanted the Muslim majority provinces of India to constitute a separate sovereign state of Pakistan, the Congress wanted a united India. In 1946-47, as independence grew closer, tensions turned into terrible violence between League and Congress, which finally resulted in partition of India into two states.

### 9.4. SUGGESTED READINGS

David Page, et al., *The Partition Omnibus*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Irfan Habib, *A People's History of India: The National Movement Part 2: The Struggle for Freedom 1919-1947*, vol. 31, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2019.

Ishita Banerjee Dube, *A History of Modern India*, Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010.

Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, Gurgaon: Macmillan, 1983.

## **9.5. QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

### **9.5.1 LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Why did Muslim League adopt the 'Lahore Resolution'? What were its main demands?
2. "The Cripps Mission gave India a post-dated cheque". Comment.
3. Examine the background and the objectives that were laid in the Cabinet Mission Plan, 1946 and the reasons for its failure.
4. Write a detailed note on the Quit India Movement.
5. Critically analyze the events in 1940's which led to the partition of India.

### **9.5.2. SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Briefly explain the Lahore Resolution of 1940.
2. What was the August Offer?
3. What were the objectives of the Individual Satyagraha that Gandhiji launched in the year 1940?
4. Why is the Quit India movement called the 'Spontaneous Movement'?
5. Why did the Congress Ministries resign in 1939?
6. State any two important proposals of Cripps offer.
7. What was Wavell's Plan?
8. What was C. Rajagopalachari Formula?

**SEMESTER III**  
**HISTORY OF INDIA: c.1750-1947**

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**UNIT 10: PARTITION AND INDEPENDENCE**

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**STRUCTURE**

**10.0 Learning Objectives**

**10.1 Introduction**

**10.2 The Beginning of the Process: 3rd June Plan**

**10.3 The Boundary Commission**

**10.3.1 Check Your Progress I**

**10.4 The Partition and Its Impact**

**10.4.1 Check Your Progress II**

**10.5 Summary**

**10.6 Suggested Readings**

**10.7 Questions for Practice**

**10.7.1 Long Answer Questions**

**10.7.2 Short Answer Questions**

**10.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- To understand the context of the partition.
- To learn the process of boundary demarcation and the issues related to it.
- To know about the impact of the partition.
- To identify the legacies of partition and independence.

**10.1 INTRODUCTION**

Students, historiography on the partition and independence reflects the evolving concerns of the people on this traumatic event. The first response was one of recording in biographies, auto biographies and memoirs what one had witnessed in this ‘historic’ event- civil servants, army

officers, even Mountbatten, reported their impressions. Many British historians wished to highlight the role of Mountbatten finding a solution to the ‘problem’. Indian writers, including Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, tried to underline the valiant struggle for Hindu-Muslim unity and the role of the leaders of the time in accepting a partition of the country. In fact, both India and Pakistan looked at the partition from their own perspectives to focus on the emergence of their national-states after a long struggle and both blamed the British and the other for the ensuing violence.

By the 1960’s historians took interest in the theme of the partition to focus on the historical context in which the events of achieving independence were shaped and the views of those participating in the event. They began to look at the transfer of power after partition and the political-administrative arrangements in the new nation-states. They had at their disposal vast documentation made available in the 1970’s and original sources to present a historical narrative of the partition and independence. They viewed the process of partition as the culmination of the long struggle for independence and creation of a new free nation. Thus, providing an Indian perspective. They looked at the partition as the price to pay for freedom and questioned why such communal discord had occurred; partition was seen as ‘inevitable. The strategy of the last three viceroys – Linlithgow, Wavell and Mountbatten as well as leaders of the major political parties – Congress and Muslim League – were highlighted as significant factors in the circumstances leading to partition and independence. Jinnah was portrayed as the main force pursuing a separate nation for the Muslim minority, a position challenged by recent historians in Pakistan who state that Jinnah was in favour of Dominion status for the six provinces forming Pakistan in which no population transfer would have taken place. This idea too, is challenged by other historians.

Most British accounts put Mountbatten in the role of a hero, while Indian and Pakistani work accuses him of manipulation, imposing his own ‘solution’ and hastily completing a process for which no adequate provisions had been made. In recent studies regional developments have been seen rather than ‘national studies and new concerns are being addressed – local movements, changes in cultural and national identities, impact of partition on irrigation works, economy, gender, patterns of violence, problems for Indian Muslims, consequences for individual communities and the social dimensions of partition. Literature and cinema have also contributed to the understanding of the partition specially from the gender perspective. There are thus, not one but several ways of looking at partition and independence which all remain relevant for the study of history. The aftermath of partition is a continuing legacy in which people and communities faced violence, loss of life and property, trauma for women, forced uprooting and refugeehood. The partition transformed the northern parts of the Indian subcontinent, millions crossed the borders and millions were killed. It impacted the administrative institutions, the economy and the life that people had known till 1947.

Historians have gone into the questions of why the partition took place when the Congress believed that India was one nation. Since the Congress had been unable to draw in the Muslim masses into the national movement, an increasing communal fury was becoming visible. This was further strengthened when the League won 90% Muslim seats in 1946. The Congress leaders, Nehru and Patel felt only transfer of power could stem this growing action and

disturbances. The Interim government had also failed to check communal activity. The acceptance of partition was a final act of the process of gaining independence and governance over the future of India. The Congress therefore, conceded to the idea of partition for independence. 15<sup>th</sup> August dawned with the dual reality of Independence and partition.

## **10.2 THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESS: 3rd JUNE PLAN**

The partition of India was an extremely complex exercise of boundary demarcation ever attempted. In a short period of time, between 3 June and 17 August 1947, the new boundaries between India and Pakistan were created. The division of the Punjab and Bengal in this process resulted in several problems – resettlement, and rehabilitation of refugees, Kashmir, water disputes and the relations of the two newly created nations.

Mountbatten came to India with the idea of transferring power to the Indian people as soon as possible. It had become clear in early 1947 that the Indian Union could not be maintained as a unitary state. On 3 June he announced a plan to create two nations – India and Pakistan – which was endorsed by Nehru, Jinnah and Sardar Baldev Singh. It was understood that communal majority would be the basis of division of the subcontinent. According to Mountbatten the Muslim majority provinces – Bengal, Punjab, Sind Baluchistan and North West Frontier province were to decide whether they wanted a new constitution framed by the then existing Constituent Assembly or by a new, separate one. If the consensus was for partition a Boundary Commission would be appointed to finalize the territorial division. The main political parties accepted partition in order to move towards independence for the nation, and saw it as the ‘only way forward’. In a separate meeting, West Bengal decided in favour of partition, as did Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and NWFP. This was not however, a unanimous decision.

The major challenge was the demarcating of boundaries as there was no clear idea about territories that could be defined as Pakistan. The Muslim League had passed the Lahore Resolution for Pakistan in 1940 but had not defined its territories, laying down only the demand of ‘Muslim Majority areas’. All political parties were clear however, that some adjustments would be required to ensure that ‘non-Muslim’ majority areas were excluded from the League’s demands. The process of division thus, began.

## **10.3 THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION**

To draw the boundaries, it was decided to have two separate Commissions each consisting of an independent Chairman and four other persons, two each to be nominated by the Congress and Muslim League. The process of demarcating the boundaries would obviously be influenced by the political parties and their agendas. With equal representation to Muslim and non – Muslim members in the Commission the Chairman would play a significant role. The Chairman, a European also held a casting vote. Cyril Radcliffe, a legal expert from Britain was appointed Chairman of both the Bengal and Punjab Boundary Commissions. Radcliffe had no experience of

India, was void of any local understanding of the provinces and had no knowledge of the problem at hand. He was however, said to be impartial, though it was believed that he would follow the dictates of Mountbatten. Radcliffe was unfamiliar with boundary making and was equally unfamiliar with the territories he had to divide. He was given only five weeks to complete the task. The 3 June Plan had no detail on the terms of reference for the boundary, and did not elaborate on 'other factors' in addition to Muslim majority areas. Radcliffe thus had three undefined criteria – demography, 'contiguous area' and 'other factors' which he had to interpret on his own. The task was further complicated by representations by the Muslim League, Congress, the Sikhs and the Hindu Mahasabha. At the end of July 1947, the Boundary Commission held a series of public meetings to listen to the submissions and arguments of Lawyers representing the different political parties. Their claims were divergent and competing, each trying to put forward a demarcation which best suited their own interests. The Muslim League highlighted demography and claimed Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan divisions which had a Muslim majority in the Census of 1941. Additionally, they demanded tehsils in the districts of Ferozepur, Nakodar, Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur where a Muslim majority had been recorded. The Congress focused on 'other factors' and favoured a boundary of the Chenab river stating that the city of Lahore and the areas of Lyallpur and Multan had a large non-Muslim component with 'historical association with Hindus and Sikhs' and a close connection with the economy of the region. They claimed that demography alone could not be the overriding factor. The Sikhs who were most impacted by a split through the areas they were numerous in – Lahore and Jalandhar divisions- argued that their sacred places, including the birth place of Guru Nanak, would go to Pakistan and the fertile lands of a large Sikh cultivating group would be lost to them. They submitted a long memorandum claiming significant portions of Lahore, Lyallpur, Gujranwala and Sialkot districts as they were the major contributors to land revenue in these areas. They stated that the 'integrity and solidarity' of the Sikhs should be maintained in the demarcation of boundaries.

The division in Bengal was less complicated to finalize the demarcation, but the length of the boundary was many times more than in the Punjab. Here in the public sitting's arguments were presented by the Congress, Hindu Mahasabha, Muslim League and new Bengal Association. The Congress accepted the contiguous area with Muslim majority principle but claimed the area in the Calcutta-Burdwan industrial region for economic regions. The New Bengal association wanted 57% of the area of Bengal, while the Congress about 46%. The Muslim League made an extreme claim even over the Hindu majority pockets if not contiguous with Hindu majority areas outside Bengal. It also proposed that Calcutta be a 'Free city' under joint administration, which was strongly challenged by the Congress. The Muslim League claimed more than 80% of the area of undivided Bengal. It also insisted that the demarcation should be on a district basis, while the Congress demanded a *thana* or police station basis for the division. The League wanted demography to be the criteria while the Congress wanted 'other factors' to be given importance.

Mountbatten too received many petitions and memoranda regarding the demarcation of boundaries – including from Nehru, Maharaja of Patiala and Liaqat Ali Khan but he clarified that the final boundary would be as decided by Radcliffe. The task for Radcliffe was a difficult

one, he had to interpret the ‘other factors’, contend with conflicting arguments, deal with topographical problems – specially access to Assam and the status of Calcutta, the main port of the region, decide on ‘disputed’ territories and even the system of communications in these areas.

The Radcliffe Award demarcating the boundaries between India and Pakistan was announced as scheduled, but Radcliffe was conscious that it was a hasty decision which would be criticized by many. No consistent criteria were followed in Bengal and it was unfavorable to both Hindus and Muslims. East Pakistan was awarded 54.5 sq miles for a population of about 40 million, 27% were non-Muslim. West Bengal received 28000 sq miles, and Calcutta, for 21.19 million people of which 29% were Muslim. The fertile area of Murshidabad, Jessore, Nadia and Sylhet were awarded to West Bengal leaving over 1 million Muslims out of East Pakistan.

In Punjab, the boundary was irrational and problematic. Radcliffe followed the demographic principle, but not consistently. All Muslim majority districts, except Lahore and Gurdaspur, were allotted to West Pakistan, while thirteen non-Muslim majority districts to East Punjab. These included Jalandhar and Ambala divisions, Amritsar district and Pathankot, Gurdaspur and Batala tehsils of Gurdaspur district. A part of Kasur tehsil of Lahore district also went to East Punjab as it had a non-Muslim majority. The ‘other factor’ kept in mind were the irrigation systems and road and railway networks. However, Amritsar district was allotted to East Punjab despite a 53% Muslim population. As were the tehsils in Gurdaspur with a 50.2% Muslim presence. It is believed that Radcliffe was influenced by Mountbatten and decided the boundary to give India access to Jammu and Kashmir. Radcliffe was thus, not only hasty and ill-formed of the terrain but arbitrary and inconsistent in determining the boundaries. West Punjab was granted 63000 sq miles with a 16 million population, of which 25% were non-Muslim, while East Punjab was allotted an area of 37000 sq miles with a population of 12.5 million people of which 35% were Muslim. This created Hindu-Sikh pockets in West Pakistan and Muslim enclaves in India. The award was not based on the demographic criteria and created resentment in both nations with long term consequences.

### **10.3.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I**

1. What was the 3 June plan?

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
What was the criteria for the Boundary Commissions?

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
What was the Radcliffe Award?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **10.4 THE PARTITION AND ITS IMPACT**

Mountbatten received the Radcliffe Award on 12 August 1947 but delayed the announcement till 17<sup>th</sup> August after the ceremonies of the two new independent countries had taken place. This gave

rise to rumors which sparked off violence and rioting. There was no adequate time to make arrangements for securing life and property and caught even the provincial administration by surprise. Mountbatten was of the view that displacement of people would be 'on a relatively minor scale and spread over a long period of time'. The choice of a delayed announcement also absolved the British of any responsibilities and placed it on the newly formed, yet to be organized, governments.

The migration of population between India and Pakistan exceeded all estimates and was eventually the largest transfer of population known in history. Over 13 million people crossed the newly created borders. Millions were displaced from their homes – 4.5 million Hindus and Sikhs were uprooted from West Punjab while 5.5 million Muslims moved to Pakistan. Both sides faced large scale violence, massacre, trauma, loss of property and inhuman treatment. It is estimated – that property worth 1.5 billion rupees was lost in this process. In 1951 about one fifth of the population in the Punjab was of refugees and 2% of the total population of India had crossed the borders. The violent nature of the partition created an atmosphere of hostility and suspicion between India and Pakistan.

The process of rehabilitation and resettlement of the refugees was the first task of the new government. After the partition plan was announced by the colonial authorities ten committees had been formed to deal with the transfer of power and related matters but not one dealt with dislocation, rupture and refugees. A broad division of responsibility was shared by the Indian and state governments. The Indian government was to look after and rehabilitate refugees in urban areas while the responsibility to resettle the refugees in the rural areas was given to the states. An MEO, Military Evacuation organization was hurriedly assembled to escort the massive foot columns (Kafilas) and the migration by trains, ships, even planes in an attempt to minimize any problems in the movement of such large proportions. The army escort could not however, ensure safety or even provision of food. They were active in four areas – Norawal – Dera Baba Nanak, Lahore – Amritsar, Kasur – Ferozepur and Montgomery – Fazilka. The refugees gathered their belonging and walked for days on end to reach their destinations. Kafilas of bullock carts, house carts and even hand carts snaked across the region with millions on the move.

A majority of the refugees were settled in Delhi and East Punjab. Delhi received the largest number of migrants who were housed in 'Camps' at Red Fort, Purana Qila and Kingsway Camp (with 35000 refugees). The campsites were later converted to permanent housing through government projects. In addition, several colonies emerged – Lajpat Nagar, Rajendra Nagar, Punjabi Bagh, Reharpura, Jangpura and Nizammuddin East. The government provided schemes for education, employment and loans for start – ups. Many refugees settled in west and central Uttar Pradesh, and even Mumbai.

Refugees from Bangladesh settled in West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Bihar and even Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Sindhis settled in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. A new township of Ulhasnagar was also founded for them. However, almost one million people were reported as missing due to partition related migration.

The issue of abduction and rape was one of the serious consequences related to the partition. The Indian government claimed 33,000 women – Sikh and Hindu were abducted while the Pakistan government put the number of Muslim women at 50,000. With the help of the Abducted Persons (Recovery and Restoration) Act 1949 it was claimed that 12,000 women had been recovered in India and 6000 in Pakistan. This was an additional trauma for women as they were usually not accepted back by their families. The recovered women were ‘partitioned’ twice in the mass violence of the partition

The refugees had left 5,700,000 acres of land in West Punjab and had to be settled in 4,500,000 acres left by Muslim landowners in East Punjab. The Government therefore evolved a system of graded cuts by which each landholder lost land in increasing proportion to the size of the holding. Large landholding were thus, virtually eliminated.

Several legislative measures between 1951-57 ensured that occupancy tenants did not lose their rights, jagirs were liable to resumption and land tenures were made secure. An effort to consolidate landholding was also made to aid agricultural production. The government built a new dam at Harike to ensure a steady supply of water in the canals. The Modhopur – Beas link was completed in 1955 and the Bhakra scheme was to be completed at a rapid pace. By 1957 2½ million additional acres of land were provided with irrigation.

With government support and the hard efforts of the people themselves transport and industry sectors began to revive. A new capital – Chandigarh – was built as a symbol of hope for the future and to provide opportunities to the refugees. A new University and a high court were also established.

Rehabilitation and resettlement brought about demographic change as well. The Sikhs now formed 35% of the total population in the new Punjab state and the Hindus 62% for the first time the Sikhs were in a large contiguous area.

The division of canal and communication network in Punjab resulted in long term issues between the two countries. While two headworks of the canal system were allotted to India a major part of the canal system was in Pakistan, which became dependent on India for a sustained water supply. An argument in December 1947 provided for proper allocation of water and maintenance of headworks but it expired a year later and was not renewed, becoming thus, a major dispute between India and Pakistan. The Indus Water Treaty of 1960, with the intervention of the World Bank, settled the conflict to some extent.

In Bengal too, there were long term implications of the boundary drawn by Radcliffe. Major disruptions, existed in road and rail systems disputes over the Ganga Waters and disagreements over the Brahmaputra projects created new issues and dissent. Since the Radcliffe award followed no natural features it dissected the two provinces, the canals and rail systems and even its homes. The trauma of the partition had a deep impact on the lives of millions of people and on the relations between the two nations – India and Pakistan.

The Sikhs in the Punjab had been concerned that the creation of two new states with partition would make them ‘politically subordinate to a Muslim or Hindu dominated post-independence ‘Punjab’. They wanted to secure safeguards for the community once the British

handed over power. However, they were not included in the demographic considerations and the Radcliffe award split the community into two and they faced, and even perpetrated violence along with the other communities. The Sikhs were a minority in East Punjab and were concerned about control by the majority. When demands for safeguards were not met by the Nehru government they raised the demand for a Sikh state and a linguistic unit, which was secured in 1966. The partition thus had long term impact on the politics and life of the people in the Punjab. In the decades after partition the economy of the Punjab was rebuilt with the Green Revolution.

In West Bengal the resettlement of refugees was not successful as the government failed at meeting the challenge of rehabilitation. Officials provided merely relief – temporary shelter in camps and rations on a daily basis. There was no long-term perspective. In 1957 the Dandakaranya scheme was introduced to colonize new areas, create employment and provide vocational skills to the refugees, but was not very successful. Mostly however, they had to rely on self – rehabilitation, specially those who lacked financial resources, resulting in squatter colonies on public land all over Bengal.

The partition changed the landscape and the life of the people in Punjab and Bengal. Lahore and Calcutta received a setback as did Amritsar. Capital investment moved away from these cities, industry relocated from these ‘border’ areas. Financial shortfall led to closure of industrial units, decline in labour force and economic crisis. Delhi too was burdened, by refugee seekers, rioting and creation of ghettos leading to alarm in the new government. Delhi became a city of refugees – its boundaries extended, population rapidly increased and placed pressure on civic amenities. City landscape transformed with ‘camps’, model towns, slums, squatter colonies and the development of satellite towns. Lahore changed from being Punjab’s pride and socio-cultural centre becoming a border town, Karachi served as temporary capital for Pakistan and also saw a rapid growth of population and size. Partition also led to the establishment of new capital cities – Chandigarh in East Punjab and Islamabad in Pakistan, both symbols of hope representing the new independent – status and future of the nascent nations.

#### **10.4.1 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II**

1. Which issues became matters of dispute between India and Pakistan?

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2. What were ‘camps’?

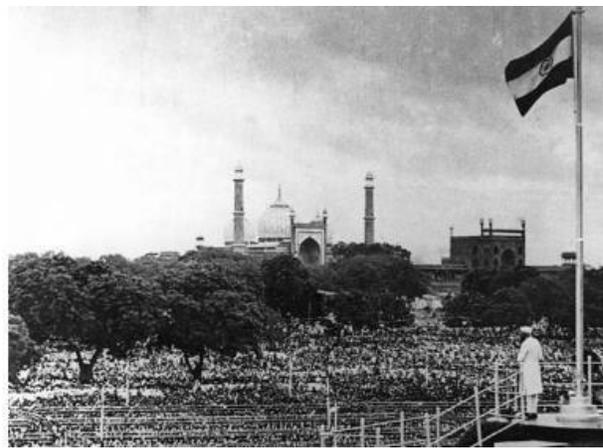
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3. How did partition impact the cities?

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*Train carrying Refugees, 1947*



*Nehru addressing the nation from the Red Fort, Delhi, on Independence Day 1947.*

*Source: Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, A Concise History of Modern India, pp. 220,222.*

## **10.5 SUMMARY**

Students, the legacies of the partition transformed the Indian subcontinent and continues to impact the two nations even today. Peace and stability have been major issues impacting the development potential and political, social and economic life in many ways. One of the ongoing issues is the unresolved one of Kashmir, which is central to a long-drawn dispute between India and Pakistan. India had control over about half of Kashmir including Jammu and Ladakh, while Pakistan has control over about one – third of Kashmir which is organized into two administrative areas – Azad Kashmir and Northern areas. About a fifth of Kashmir is under Chinese control – the Aksai Chin area. India had military conflict over this disputed zone with Pakistan in 1948-9, 1965 and 1971 and the more recent Kargil war, and with China in 1962. The stalemate created with partition persists and remains ‘unfinished business’. Security concerns were thus, significant in the independent nations. Disputes over water – sharing are also a source of tension in the relations of the two countries, and later formed Bangladesh. Partition left an indelible imprint on the people, places and institutions. Uprooting of people led to a series of migrations and the creation of diaspora in a global context. Post partition emigration was on the rise and continues even today and is essentially a family strategy to deal with loss of wealth and status. The partition also created a problem of ‘minorities’ – the Muhajirs in Pakistan, Muslims in India and Biharis in Bangladesh. Issues related to minorities have plagued the political environment on the subcontinent along with concerns of ‘nationalism’. The contradictory nature of reality of independence and partition continues to torment people in both India and Pakistan and has left a long-term legacy of mistrust, even hatred, disputes, fractured economies, unsuccessful political systems despite a socio-cultural similarity, a shared history and a long struggle to achieve freedom.

## **10.6 SUGGESTED READINGS**

Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia*, Norwick: Curren Publishing, 2000.

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010.

Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, Gurgaon: Macmillan, 1983.

Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

## **10.7 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

### **10.7.1 LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Write an essay on the historiography on the Partition.
2. Describe the formation and functioning of the Boundary Commissions.
3. Discuss the aftermath of the Partition and the issues faced by the refugees?
4. Comment on the legacy of Partition and Independence.
5. Write a note on the rehabilitation and resettlement programme of the government.

### **10.7.2 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. What were the limitations of Cyril Radcliffe?
2. What did 'other factors' mean for the Boundary Commission?
3. How were the Sikhs impacted by the Partition?
4. Why did Mountbatten delay the announcement of the Radcliffe Award?
5. How many people migrated due to the partition?
6. What are squatter colonies?

## CHRONOLOGY OF GOVERNOR GENERALS OF INDIA, 1774-1858

S. NO.	NAME	TERM OF OFFICE
1	Warren Hastings	20 October 1774-1 February 1785
2	Sir John Macpherson	1 February 1785-12 September 1786
3	The Earl of Cornwallis	12 September 1786-28 October 1793
4	Sir John Shore	28 October 1793- March 1798
5	Sir Alured Clarke	March 1798-18 May 1798
6	The Earl of Mornington	18 May 1798-30 July 1805
7	The Marquess Cornwallis	30 July 1805-5 October 1805
8	Sir George Hilario Barlow	10 October 1805-31 July 1807
9	The Lord Minto	31 July 1807-4 October 1813
10	The Earl of Moira	4 October 1813-9 January 1823
11	John Adam	9 January 1823-1 August 1823
12	The Lord Amherst	1 August 1823-13 March 1828
13	William Butterworth Bayly	13 March 1828-4 July 1828
14	Lord William Bentinck	4 July 1828-20 March 1835
15	Sir Charles Metcalfe	20 March 1835-4 March 1836
16	The Lord Auckland	4 March 1836-28 February 1842
17	The Lord Ellenborough	28 February 1842-June 1844
18	William Wilberforce Bird	June 1844-23 July 1844
19	Sir Henry Hardinge	23 July 1844-12 January 1848
20	The Earl of Dalhousie	12 January 1848-28 February 1856
21	The Viscount Canning	28 February 1856-1 November 1858

## CHRONOLOGY OF VICEROYS

S. NO.	NAME	TERM OF OFFICE
1	The Viscount Canning	1 November 1858-21 March 1862
2	The Earl of Elgin	21 March 1862-20 November 1863
3	Sir Robert Napier	21 November 1863-2 December 1863
4	Sir William Denison	2 December 1863-12 January 1864
5	Sir John Lawrence	12 January 1864-12 January 1869
6	The Earl of Mayo	12 January 1869-8 February 1872
7	Sir John Strachey	9 February 1872-23 February 1872
8	The Lord Napier	24 February 1872-3 May 1872
9	The Lord Northbrook	3 May 1872-12 April 1876
10	The Lord Lytton	12 April 1876-8 June 1880
11	The Marquess of Ripon	8 June 1880-13 December 1884
12	The Earl of Dufferin	13 December 1884-10 December 1888
13	The Marquess of Lansdowne	10 December 1888-11 October 1894
14	The Earl of Elgin	11 October 1894-6 January 1899
15	The lord Curzon of Kedleston	6 January 1899-18 November 1905
16	The Earl of Minto	18 November 1905-23 November 1910
17	The Lord Hardinge of Penshurst	23 November 1910-4 April 1916
18	The Lord Chelmsford	4 April 1916-2 April 1921
19	The Earl of Reading	2 April 1921-3 April 1926
20	The Lord Irwin	3 April 1926-18 April 1931
21	The Earl of Willingdon	18 April 1931-18 April 1936
22	The Marquess of Linlithgow	18 April 1936-1 October 1943
23	The Viscount Wavell	1 October 1943-21 February 1947
24	The Viscount Mountbatten of Burma	21 February 1947-15 August 1947

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1600: East India Company established in London.
- 1756: Bengal Nawab Siraj-ud-daula conquers Calcutta.
- 1757: Battle of Plassey; British control of Bengal.
- 1761: Afghans defeat Marathas at battle of Panipat; Haider Ali founds state of Mysore in South.
- 1764: British defeat combined forces of Bengal and Awadh *nawabs* and Mughal Emperor at Buxar.
- 1765: Emperor awards British revenue-collecting rights (*diwani*) over Bengal.
- 1772: Warren Hastings appointed first Governor-General.
- 1783: India Act establishes Board of Control.
- 1784: Asiatic Society of Bengal founded.
- 1793: Cornwallis restricts Indian Civil Service positions to Europeans; Permanent Settlement of Bengal.
- 1803: Conquest of Delhi; Mughal Emperor confined to his palace as pensioner.
- 1818: Defeat of Marathas; British control entire subcontinent outside northwest.
- 1819: Foundation of Hindu College, Calcutta.
- 1828: Raja Ram Mohan Roy founds Brahma Samaj.
- 1829: Bentinck abolishes *sati*.
- 1835: Macaulay's Minute of Education
- 1849: Second Sikh War; conquest of Punjab; Dalhousie arrives as Governor-General.
- 1853: Railway construction begins, with guaranteed interest for investors.
- 1856: Annexation of Awadh (Oudh).
- 1857: Mutiny and revolt throughout northern India, first Indian universities established.
- 1858: East India Company abolished; Mughal ruler exiled; Crown rule instituted.
- 1868: Muslim academy established at Deoband.
- 1872: First all-India Census.
- 1875: Sayyid Ahmad Khan founds MAO College, Aligarh; Dayanand Saraswati founds Arya Samaj.
- 1876: Empress of India Act
- 1877: Imperial Assemblage held by Lord Lytton.
- 1878: Afghan War, Vernacular Press Act.
- 1882: Liberal viceroy Ripon enacts local self-government for municipalities.
- 1884: Ilbert Bill guarantees Europeans trial by jury.
- 1885: Indian National Congress founded; final conquest of Burma.
- 1891: Age of Consent Act.
- 1893: Swami Vivekananda attends World Parliament of Religions; Tilak establishes Ganapati festival; rioting over cow protection.
- 1896: Plague in Bombay.
- 1899: Curzon arrives as Viceroy to 1905.
- 1901: Punjab Land Alienation Act prohibits transfer outside agricultural classes.
- 1905: Partition of Bengal; *swadeshi* movement begins; Gokhale founds Servants of India Society.

1906: Muslim League founded.

1907: Tata Iron and Steel Company founded.

1909: Indian Councils Act; Gandhi publishes 'Hind Swaraj'.

1911: Partition of Bengal undone; Delhi made capital of India.

1914: First World War begins; India participates on British side.

1916: Congress and League join in Lucknow Pact.

1917: Montagu Declaration of eventful responsible government.

1919: Rowlatt Acts; Amritsar Massacre; Montagu-Chelmsford Report offers dyarchy.

1920: Gandhi launches a non-violent campaign to secure Indian self-rule with the support of the Muslim Khilafat Movement and the Indian National Congress.

1922: Chauri Chaura killings; Gandhi calls off non-cooperation.

1925: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) founded.

1927: Simon Commission of British MPs, appointed.

1930: Gandhi inaugurates Civil Disobedience Movement with salt march to the sea to oppose British taxes; round table conferences held in London in effort to negotiate settlement.

1932: Communal Award and Poona Pact between Gandhi and Ambedkar.

1935: Government of India Act

1937: Elections under 1935 Act give Congress control of seven provinces.

1939: Second World War; Congress ministers resign.

1940: Muslim League under M.A. Jinnah adopts Pakistan Resolution.

1942: Cripps Mission; 'Quit India' Movement.

1943: Bengal Famine; Subhas Chandra Bose leader of INA in Singapore.

1946: Elections give Congress and Muslim League overwhelming victories in Hindu and in Muslim majority areas; Cabinet Mission seeks compromise; Calcutta Killing initiates cycle of violence.

1947: India wins independence from Britain and is partitioned, creating a new India and the 'Muslim Homeland' of Pakistan. Up to a million people lose their lives during this transition.